

An overview of world englishes



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1. 1 English as an international language

Among thousand languages in the world, English has become an “International English” since it is a multinational, multicultural and multifunctional language. The term, “English as an international language” (EIL) can be shortened as “International English”, highlights the international use of English rather than wrongly suggesting that there is one clearly distinguishable, unitary variety called ‘International English’. McKay (2002: 132) in her book entitled “Teaching English as an International language” makes use of the shorthand term and gives a definition like this: “International English is used by native speakers of English and bilingual users of English for cross-cultural communication. International English can be used both in a local sense between speakers of diverse cultures and languages within one country and in a global sense between speakers from different countries.” From her statements, we can see that the uses of English internationally include speakers of English as native language (ENL)/English as mother tongue in all its dialects, as well as speakers of New Englishes/World Englishes/indigenized/nativized varieties. Chosen as the preferred option for cross-cultural communication, it can be referred to as EIL. Besides, some other terms can be used more or less interchangeably with EIL, such as English as a lingua franca, English as a global language, English as a world language, and English as a medium of intercultural communication. In fact, the dramatic development of modern science and technology, the coming age of information superhighway, and the shrinking of the world into a global village are all accelerating international exchanges and intercultural communications and, for that matter, the wider spread of English.

Recently, another term for EIL has been introduced: *World English* (Brutt-Griffler, 2002: 110). She provides a carefully researched and well-argued basis for acknowledging the active role of EIL users as agents in its spread and in its linguistic development: they are not just at the receiving end, but contribute to the shaping of the language and the functions it fulfils. This is a perspective with considerable implications for English education all over the world.

1. 1. 1 An overview of World Englishes

There are several researches of varieties of world English, two famous scholars Quirk and Krachu are worth mentioning. Quirk divides the varieties of English into three kinds: English as native language (ENL); English as second language (ESL); English as foreign language (EFL). He maintains that all the varieties of world English should base on the established rules of British English or American English. He is the typical representative who suggests the only criterion for the varieties of English in the world. However, with the fast development of the society, with the quick trend of internationalization of English, it is neither possible nor practical to hold on the sole criterion for different kinds of English all over the world. Being a very popular pioneer of the theories for the internationalization of English, a promoter insisting on the pluralistic criterions of English and a variationist, Krachu put forward the notion of World Englishes in 1970s. And in 1985 he proposed the three concentric circles to view the varieties of English that are similar to Quirk's division. The inner circle refers to the traditional culture and linguistic bases of English. It includes the USA, UK, Ireland, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. The outer or extended circle represents the

institutionalized non-native varieties. It involves the earlier periods of the spread of English in non-native settings, where English has become part of a country's institutions, and plays an important 'Second Language' role in a multilingual setting. The countries are Singapore, India, Malawi, and more than fifty other regions in the world. The expanding circle includes the regions where the performance varieties of the language are used essentially in EFL contexts, as in China, Japan, Greece, Iran, etc. China English belongs to this circle. There are some seventy-five territories in which English has held or continues to hold a special place, as a member of either the inner or outer circles (Crystal, 2001: 53).

Crystal (2001: 54) gives the following estimates for the speakers of English in terms of Kachru's (1985, 1992) 'concentric circles': the inner circle, first language, 320-380 million; the outer circle, additional/second language, 150-300 million; the expanding circle, foreign language, 100-1000 million. Kachru (1996: 241) himself maintains " There are now at least four non-native speakers of English for every native speaker." McArthur (1992: 355) has a more conservative estimate, namely " a 2-to-1 ratio of non-natives to natives." And to cite a voice from what Kachru calls the expanding circle, the German author Gnutzmann (2000: 357) adds another way of looking at this: " It has been estimated that about 80% of verbal exchanges in which English is used as second or foreign language do not involve native speakers of English." The statistics show us its power and effect in cross-cultural, cross-lingual communications during the worldwide development of English. Besides the researches done by the above mentioned scholars, many other linguists also have done the similar researches about the internationalization

of English, such as Smith (1983), Platt (1985), Stevens (1992), Graddol (1997) and so on. The common marked trait of their researches is that they all go against linguistic chauvinism.

On the whole, World English is the product of the development of a world market and global developments in the fields of science, technology, culture and the media; World English is learned by people at various levels of society, not just by the socio-economic elite; World English tends to establish itself alongside local languages rather than replacing them, and so contributes to multilingualism rather than jeopardize it; World English spreads due to the fact that many people learn it rather than by speakers of English migrating to others; thus two processes happen concurrently: new varieties are created and unity in the world language is maintained. With the vast spread and quick speedy internationalization of the English language, it will lead to nativization of English in different parts of the world.

1. 1. 2 Nativization of English and Englishes in Asia

A non-native English situation is basically an innovative situation involving certain well-known processes of nativization (Bamgbose, 1998: 1). English has become international in character, it cannot be bound to any culture. That is, any culture can use English as its vehicle of communication (Smith, 1983: 9). Kachru (1982: 5) has pointed out “ once English was adopted in a region, whether for science, technology, literature, prestige, elitism, or ‘modernization’, it went through a reincarnation process, which is unique to another culture.” Native English, unable to adequately express what is unique to another culture, should be reincarnated, changed or varied in order to fit the given culture. Such variation or reincarnation of language is

called “ nativization”, “ indigenization” or “ hybridization” (Kachru, 1981; Moag & Moag, 1977; Whinnom, 1971).

Development of English in most parts of Asia was due to contact with native English-speakers through colonialism. Many Asian countries of “ the outer circle” and “ the expanding circle” were former colonies or semi-colonies of countries of “ the Inner circle”, typically USA, UK and Canada, etc. The English language was first introduced to these Asian countries, like India, Singapore, and Pakistan, as the medium of instruction in a western system of education, and was adopted as the official language by some governments for easy communication between the rulers and the ruled. The introduction of the English language may have three purposes: religious purpose, commercial purpose, and political purpose.

However, it is certain that the colonist’s arm has not always been decisive for spread and development of English in Asia. There are some other reasons. English has often been learned because of the status it may confer on the readers and speakers, because it opens doors in modern science, technology, trade, diplomacy, and intercultural communication. In Japan, a country under little colonial influence of an English-speaking power, even though English continues to be a performance variety, it has penetrated deep into the Japanese language and culture. In its localized form, English has acquired a stable status in Japanese culture.

Once English was adopted in any region of Asia, whether because of colonialism, or for science, technology, literature, prestige, or modernization, it went through various changes and adaptations, which were partly

linguistic and partly cultural. The changes were essentially caused by the new bilingual or multilingual settings, as well as new cultural contexts in which English has to function. Such linguistic and cultural changes are especially well established in the regions where it has been used as an international language, in addition to serving intranational purpose, which is the case of Singapore, India, etc. Establishment of a non-native variety of English in any new culture is well illustrated for its linguistically deviation from standard native English varieties. It usually distinguishes itself from other non-native or native English varieties in terms of phonology, vocabulary, grammar, syntax, semantics, or discourse. The most conspicuous is the vocabulary, because nativized English varieties have to include some borrowed words from local languages in order to express some unique phenomena and ideas of local culture that is quite different from that of other cultures. This is also the case of China English. At present, most of the evidences for the recognition of China English are mainly from some of its distinctive vocabulary carrying unique Chinese culture. Besides the above countries mentioned, English is playing its international and intranational roles in many other Asian countries, as well as in other parts of the world.

The fact shows that English varieties developed in Asia are either performance varieties in the expanding circle or institutionalized varieties in the outer circle. Performance varieties include those that are used as foreign language, such as in Japan, China, Indonesia and so on. They have a highly restricted functional range in specific contexts, for example, those of tourism, commerce, and other transactions. Institutionalized varieties are those used as the second language, such as in Singapore, Malaysia, India,

and so on. These varieties have a more extended range of uses, registers and style range in the social context of a nation. According to Kachru (1992), The main characteristics of an institutionalized variety are the following: the length of time in use; the extension of use; the emotional attachment of second language users with the variety; functional importance and sociolinguistic status. Under the circumstance of institutionalized varieties, English is not only used in the domains of government administration, law, military, education, commerce, media religion, etc., but also in the more private domains of family and friendship.

From 1990s, the wide and fast spread of English in Asia has aroused the interest of many English scholars worldwide. In the early 1990s, Japan established an organization called “ the Japanese Association for Asian Englishes”. And in 1999, the association published a magazine named “ Asian Englishes”, which is committed to the study of varieties of English in Asia. A lot of well-known linguists like Kachru (1999), Smith (1999), Kirkpatrick (2000), and McArthur (2002) all published articles entitled “ English as an Asian Language”. They all have acknowledged the common features of Asian Englishes, which decide that different varieties of English in Asia belong to the family of World Englishes from the perspective of functional nativeness. In recent years, among western academic circle, there has been a distinct change in attitudes towards English varieties (either institutionalized or performance varieties) developed in Asia, as well as in other parts of the world. Currently most institutionalized varieties have been gradually accepted by native English speakers. However, the development and nativization of institutionalized varieties has been traditionally

unacceptable to majority of native English speakers. These varieties have once been considered deficient models of language acquisition. This attitude has not only been restricted to speech performance, but extends to lexical and collocational items that are determined by the new social and cultural context. But, this kind of negative attitude began to change step by step with the growth of linguistic tolerance after the Second World War. A survey (Chen Linhan/ ,# X, 1996: 46) on remarks from native English speakers on China Daily and Beijing Review shows that even in such important English newspaper and magazine there are some misuse of article or prepositions. Nevertheless, all the interviewees have acknowledged the existence of China English.

1. 1. 3 China English in EIL context

English in China, when used as a vehicle of Chinese culture, will also be nativized or sinicized linguistically and culturally. “China English” was first presented by Ge Chuangui(- , 1 ‘ I) in 1980. He used the term to refer to the distinctive vocabulary carrying unique Chinese culture in Chinese-English translation, but he did not suggest China English as a variety of English. Since then, this term has aroused great interest of many scholars in China. Wang Rongpei 1991: 1-8) in his paper entitled “China English – an objective English variety” points out, “provided that English is widely used in a non-native area with certain characteristic of indigenization, whatever its function might be, it can be regarded as an English variety. There are no reasons to deny the fact that China English is an objective language phenomenon in China.” Since then, China English has been popular among scholars home and abroad. Chinese speakers or learners’ appropriate communication in

English has become one of the more heated topics for all the Chinese scholars of English teaching, translation, linguistics and cross-cultural communication. On the whole, the popularity of English has pushed forward the nativization of English in China. With the open-up and reform policies, more and more foreign people and different institutions flood into China, and more English expressions that are typically

2. 3. 1 Pidgin English and China English

A Pidgin is a lingua franca that arises in order to facilitate communication between speakers of different languages who are in sustained contact with each other, e. g. in trade or plantation situations (William, 1992: 224).

Although it is no one's native language, a pidgin usually involves mixture or compromise between the native languages of its users; in comparison with these, it is restricted in social role, and simplified or reduced in linguistic resources.

Pidgins flourish in areas of economic development all over the world, and Pidgins are based on English, French, Spanish and Portuguese. Actually, Pidgin English in China originated from Pidgin Portuguese that is a hybrid language with the combination of Portuguese, English, Hindi, Malay and Chinese Cantonese. Evidences in the history show that the Portuguese were the earliest Westerners who came to China to undertake the cause of colonial expansion and activities after the establishment of the new route in the 16th century. When they first arrived in Macau, they found it was very difficult to communicate with the local people, and the local people, who were eager to find ways of livelihood during the contact with the Portuguese and other western people, also felt hard to exchange ideas with them. Both

needed a shared language as a tool for communication to open up new prospects. Gradually Canto-Portuguese (j'~,*l-, j iq) came into being, which was a business term in commercial exchange between China and Portugal. It was a language used by the Portuguese traders and the local businessmen. Later the language became very mature with abundant vocabulary, stable speech sound, morphology and syntax, which had been used by the local people for 300 years. It did not disappear until 19`x' century when the English colonists came to South China to extend trade. With the increase of trade volume of Britain in China, a new Pidgin, Canton English, emerged as the times demanded. Many English words gradually replaced those Portuguese words. Pidgin Portuguese had a great effect on late Canton English, now known technically as Chinese Pidgin English or China Coast Pidgin.

Chinese Pidgin English was greatly influenced by the earlier Cantonese Pidgin Portuguese. But little has been known about how Canton English was reborn from Pidgin Portuguese. Anyhow, it developed into a lingua franca of the Pacific that influenced the Pidgins of Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Queensland, and elsewhere. With regard to its origin, the linguist Chin Chuancheng notes: " The Chinese held the British, like all foreign devils, in low esteem, and would not stoop to learn the foreign tongue in its full form. The British, on the other hand, regarded the heathen Chinese as beyond any possibility of learning, and so began to modify their own language for the natives' `benefit" (' Chinese Varieties of English', in B. Kachru (ed.), *The Other Tongue*, 1982). Pidgin English with typical Cantonese grammatical structures spread rapidly when the Treaty Ports were

established in China in 1843, but declined towards the end of the 19`h century as Standard English began to be systematically taught in schools and universities. Before liberation, there was Shanghai Pidgin English too. Pidgin English is now extinct in the People's Republic of China and marginal in Hong Kong.

In fact, Chinese Pidgin English that had been demoted by people was the earliest embryo of China English. People always consider Pidgin English as a term with derogatory sense. But it was the initial stage when we Chinese people began to get in touch with English in the specific historical times. What Pidgin English reflected was how Chinese people learned English at the initial and the most superficial stage. With the development of the society, it has been discarded. However, the traces left over by history can never be removed, and they will influence our behaviors, thoughts and attitudes unconsciously. So, facing the phenomenon of China English, we should not have the attitudes of evasion towards Chinese Pidgin English.

Both Pidgin English and China English are the combined result of English with China, which are with typical Chinese language models and thought patterns to different degrees. But they can't be equated and regarded as the same thing. Du Zhengming (* 1998: 6) notes: To Chinese people, Pidgin English was an imposed English, which was the product of colonial expansion. So, they had no motives or conditions to learn Standard English, they just imposed Chinese speech sound, vocabulary and grammar into English, thus became a mixed language. However, China English is a formally learned language. People learn and master it actively and systematically through formal education at schools and universities. They can't treat it entirely as

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they please. Pidgin English was a language by putting English, the so-called super-state language, together with Chinese, the so-called sub-state one. It was neither English nor Chinese. It reflected the inequality in culture and society. But there are no such compositions as the so-called super-state and sub-state in China English. It is English with typical Chinese social and cultural characteristics.

2.3.2 China English and Chinglish

As discussed earlier, China English is used to refer to special things of China and it exists objectively and contains three implications: China English is used only by Chinese people in China; China English takes normative English as its nucleus English; it has its own characteristics. But the first implication doesn't correspond to practice, because some words are used not only by Chinese people but also by western people. The difference between China English and Chinglish lies in the communicative effect depending on the recognition of Normative English speakers. So, Chinglish can be converted into China English, like “ long time no see”.

Many teachers and scholars home and abroad have noticed this language phenomenon and studies of Chinglish are scattered in books or articles in the field of English teaching and learning. Nevertheless, due to the unsystematic and unsteady nature of Chinglish, people do not always resonate a clear and unanimous voice on what Chinglish is and hereby present diverse and incomplete definitions from different angles in light with their own understanding. Pinkham (2000: 1-) defines it is a hybrid language that is neither English nor Chinese but that might be described as ‘English with Chinese characteristics’; Deng Yanchang and Liu Runqing (1989)

views it as speech or writing that shows the interference of the influence of Chinese; Li Wenzhong (1993: 18) considers it as abnormal or deformed English that is produced by Chinese English learners or users when they are influenced by Chinese language rules.

The above-cited definitions indicate that Chinglish is mainly caused by language learners' mother tongue interference; it is caused not only by linguistic interference, but more importantly, by the interference of the language learners' home culture and the thought patterns peculiar to the home culture. Whether there is a clear-cut distinction between China English and Chinglish or Chinese English is a heated debate, because people think the term "Chinglish" is derogatory. Actually, Chinese English and China English are at different points on the same continuum of interlanguage between Chinese and Standard English in the Chinese context, at different stages of acquisition or proficiency level. Due to insufficient acquisition or proficiency level, some of the English-using Chinese often make errors in grammar. These errors do not have an underlying sociolinguistic explanation, and English inflicted with such errors can hardly be recognized as the educated form of English, or teaching model in China. The violation of cultural norms may be common, however those grammatical errors are more or less related with the inadequate acquisition and insufficient proficiency of "Chinglish". In chapter four, we are going to discuss this problem in detail according to the relevant theories of SLA TEFL.

3. 2. 1 Lexical level

At the lexical level, Kachru (1982) has pointed out that a part of the lexicon is nativized in two ways. On one hand, native items are used in localized

registers and styles in order to contextualize the language. On the other hand, English lexical items may acquire extended or restricted semantic markers. During the process of the nativization of English in China, the former is called “cultural words”, the latter, “semantic shift”. There is a great difference between Chinese and English culture, many a time we can’t find equivalent English expressions to convey peculiar things in Chinese culture. Under this situation, people will employ different translation strategies, such as domesticating and foreignizing translations, literal and free translations, to interpret Chinese words of material and spiritual cultures into English. Domesticating translation refers to the translation strategy in which a transparent, fluent style is adopted in order to minimize the strangeness of the foreign text for target language readers, while foreignizing translation designates the type of translation in which a target text deliberately breaks target conventions by retaining something of the foreignness of the original. Words and phrases in China English are the main manifestations of the nativization of English in China. They get into English through the following ways.

(i) Transliteration

Many Pinyin words have directly entered English because of linguistic relativity and intranslatability of the applied language. Transliterated expressions in Pinyin can be considered a most conspicuous feature of China English with the technique of literal translation and the strategies of foreignizing translation. Chinese personal and geographical names and even some other China-unique facts can be romanized in Chinese Pinyin either in completeness (e. g. Wen Jiabao; Shanghai) or in part (e. g. Maotai Liquor).

Actually, transliterated words from Chinese into English originated in the early 19th century. At that time, lots of Chinese personal names and geographical names were translated into English according to the phonetic system called Wade System, a system of Romanization of Chinese, widely used in representing Chinese words and names in English, esp. before the adoption of Pinyin. It is also called Wade-Giles with some characteristics of English spelling, but it didn't stick to the principles of English spelling fully. And in the early times there were some transliterations from Guangdong dialects and Southern Fujian dialects, such as tea (*); chow mei (r);); won ton (t; Bohea (RA*t,) ; cheongsam (1> 4) and so on. A system using the Latin alphabet, called Pinyin, has been developed in China since 1950s, and it is now in common use. Pinyin is the official standard for transliteration of Chinese language in the People's Republic of China now. It has been widely used by the international communities and foreign countries since the International Standardization Organization passed ISO7098: Documentation Service - A System for Romanizing Chinese Characters into the Roman Alphabet in 1982. So, we can see transliteration in China English keeps on developing and advancing with the passing of time. Now let's compare the following different transliterated words: In the Wade Giles system - In the Pinyin system, Mei-kuo - Meiguo, Chung-kuo - Zhongguo, Pei-tai-he - Beidaihe, Mao Tse Tung - Mao Zedong, Peking - Beijing, Chonghwa - Zhonghua, Tsinghwa - Qinghua, Taipei - Taibei

With the fast increasing of publicity and exchange with the outside world, China has been greatly affecting the world in many different fields, like politics, economy, culture, education, science and daily life. In this case,

more and more Chinese words expressing peculiar things in Chinese culture have been translated into English through transliteration and have become loanwords of English. They greatly enrich English vocabulary. Let's look at some vocabulary in China English. China English words transliterated under specific historical and cultural background:

Confucius (L); Lao-tzu (Z-T); Tao Te Ching ((, t,)); Yamen (Tf1); Xiucan (A. A'); Yin (M); Yang(11F9); qipao (h4); doufu (J); litchi (k); wushu (A*); quyi(1); gongfu (i), etc. Some Chinese brand names entering China English through transliteration: Many of them are Pinyin words, but some of them are translated by using English words similar in pronunciation with Chinese words. For example, Tun Huang (Wl), Da FU Gui (111'-ft), E Mei(), Chang Hong(Kt), Maxam (-X.)3116.), Hisense (l; Haier (Cl:), Stone ma), Lucky (ff: 01,), Star (" it), Rising (AW.), Transit (lifiY,) and so on, to name but a few.

The above examples show that the transliterated China English words possess different traits in different periods. They reveal the significance and vitality of transliteration in the development of China English vocabulary. Nevertheless, there exists a great difference between Chinese and English, their pronunciation and spelling are quite different from each other. If we simply replace English words with Chinese Pinyin words, it will cause misunderstandings in cross-cultural communication. So while transliterating Chinese words and expressions into English, we should pay attention to translatability, readability and understandability.

(ii) Loan translations

When there are no transliterated borrowings, or hybridization, loan translations will be adopted. Many Chinese words and expressions have been translated into English by borrowing English words and phrases directly.

There are three forms of loan translations. They are compound words, clipped words, and phrases (Zhou & Feng, 1987: 111-125). The essence of their ideas can be summed up as follows:

One form of loan translations is compound words. Some examples of this type are loan +English, like Canton ginger (Canton is a transliteration, and ginger is a native word); teacup (from Chinese word chabei); teahouse (from Chinese word chaguan), etc. Other examples of this kind of loan translation are the English calque, like beancurd (from Chinese compound word doufu; dou= bean or soy, fu - curd); red bean (from Chinese compound word chidou; chi - red, dou= bean), etc.

The second form of loan translations is some special clipped word that is formed according to the pattern: a number + Chinese character (word translated into English literally). For example, sishuwujing= Four Books, Five Classics (Sishu refers to four classic Chinese books, namely: The Great Learning (da xue); The Doctrine of the Mean(zhong yong); The Analects of Confucius gun yu) and Mencius(meng Wijing stands for The Book of Songs (shi jing); The Book of History (shujing); The Book of Changes (yijing); The Book of Rites (li ji) and The Spring and Autumn Annals (chun qiu). Besides Four Books and Five Classics, it also includes Three Cardinals and Five Permanent Virtues, the Theory of Five Elements and so on.

The third form of loan translations refers to English phrases translated from Chinese phrases literally. All these English phrases possess the peculiar characteristics of Chinese culture that can't be found in English culture. They manifest the different features of Chinese culture and things during the development of history and society. For example, things originating from the culture of Buddhism, philosophy and Chinese ancient literature: Taoism (i); Buddhism (T9 1); The Analects (((itih))); The book of Changes (((1))) and so on. Loan translations in specific historical and cultural developing periods of China: red guard (iEJ L); one big pot (ik i^WX); ideological remoulding (LRR CiA); paper tiger (J);); four modernizations (IThi` (tf-); spiritual civilization material civilization (t1JAX OA); Three Represents (~ IM-M); rule by virtue (1'i1); laid-off workers (TliIA); two-hundred policy ((~one country, two systems (- ~1 Ilj); cross-strait relations etc. When discussing Chinese words and expressions, we will never fail to mention those idioms, mottos, proverbs and set phrases that carry unique Chinese culture. Some of them have the similar meanings to English idioms, mottos and proverbs, but when translated into English by applying English versions mechanically, they will be against the natural and original meanings of Chinese. In this situation the measure of loan translations or semantic shift can be adopted to translate Chinese idioms, mottos and proverbs. China English created by the way of loan translations or semantic shift can better retain the features and the detailed content of splendid Chinese civilizations. For example, to spend money like dirt (ii f) ; to draw a snake and add feet to it (i i ,); people mountains and people seas (A W); like bamboo shoots after rain (C JA#); seeking truth from facts (k *RE); no discord, no concord (4T7) x); one arrow, two hawks (- Mj~X), etc. All these set phrases and expressions in China

English manifest cultural activities of the different ages in human society of China. Actually, Chinese people have a preference for four-character phrases both in writing and conversation. The exis