

A STUDY OF THE LEXICO-GRAMMATICAL FEATURES IDENTIFIED AS PART OF ENGLISH AS A LINGUA FRANCA APPEARING IN NEWSPAPERS AND NEWS WEBSITES IN CHINA

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Abstract

In recent years, English in China has been attracting growing attention from linguists, researchers and educators. Chinese English is seen as an autonomous variety not to be confused with 'Chinglish'. Researchers into English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) see the necessity of codifying the localized English features and indeed have them incorporated into the national English curriculum. There is also the question of a raising of awareness, particularly among teachers as to the legitimacy of a non-native varieties. This research focuses on identifying the salient features of the structure and semantics of English as a Lingua Franca appearing in newspapers and electronic news sources in the context of mainland China.

The purpose of this paper is to stimulate further discussion from researchers and teachers in China to work towards a more informed account of what features of English are common to English as a Lingua Franca and at the same time establish those features that are specific to English as used in China.

Key words: Lingua Franca, English in China. News sources, 'Chinglish'

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to identify what lexico-grammatical features can be identified as part of English as a lingua franca (ELF) appearing in English newspapers and news web-sites in the context of mainland China.

It is only recently that the term 'English as a Lingua Franca (ELF)' (Foley 2007) has been used to reflect the fact that users of English, from bi- or multilingual backgrounds, use English more frequently as a contact language among themselves than with native speakers of English. However, the causes

and effects of the development or spread of English as a global language have long been a focus of critical discussion. Many arguments have arisen in terms of the standard and non-standard forms of English, the ownership of English, social value and identity, and even arguments about the globalization of English from a geopolitical perspective.

English as a lingua franca today

Language changes along with changes in society. For the first time in history, English has reached global dimensions. What is significant is that with this diffusion of English the native speakers (NS) who speak standard British/American English have become the minority, while the number of non-native speakers (NNS) have become too big to be neglected. Beneke (1991, cited in Seidlhofer 2004: 209) estimated that about 80 percent of verbal communication in which English is used as a second or foreign language does not involve any native speakers of English. While within those interactions, there are many participants who do not control standard grammar and whose lexis and grammar do not conform to standard norms but use the language effectively in such diverse contexts such as global business, politics, technology and media discourse.

English in China today

Though English in China can be traced back in the early seventeenth century, the British traders' arrival in Macau and Canton, but it was not developed until the late twentieth century. Indeed, English in China has developed comparatively late compared to other South and Southeast Asia countries. In 1972, English replaced Russian as the primary foreign language in China. Though English in China is not employed as a language medium as it is in South and Southeast Asian countries, its range and depth are growing constantly. Graddol (2006: 95) indicates that 'In 2001, China decided to make English compulsory in primary schools from Grade 3... more people are now learning English in China than in any other country. Within the formal education sector an estimated 176.7 million Chinese were studying English in 2005'.

There is a widespread perception in China that speaking English confers prestige on individuals and bestows the key to success in business, and academia. At the national level, English is playing an increasingly important role in international trade since China joined the World Trade Organization.

Though English does not have an official function in China, it is noticeable that since China launched the open-door policy in the 1980s, the need for English in international communications has risen dramatically. Appadurai proposed a model of 'transcultural flows'. Instead of using center-periphery theory, he uses 'transcultural flows' to capture the new reality of geopolitical relationships. In his theory, the geopolitical relationship is more multilateral and fluid.

- | | | |
|---|---------------|------------------------|
| • | ethnoscapes | flow of persons |
| • | mediascapes | flow of information |
| • | technoscapes | flow of technology |
| • | financescapes | flow of finance |
| • | ideoscapes | flow of ideology/ideas |

(Appadurai, 1996, cited in Canagarajah 2005: 15)

However, what he leaves out is the flow of language, which can be termed as glottoscapes.

This type of fluid interaction largely exemplifies the real instance of China's participation in the world. The modernization and rapid development of the economy and technology in China, the burgeoning international trade and the increasing significant role it plays in world affairs, make these flows become pervasive. More and more Chinese students go abroad to study, the increasing numbers of people participate in the world information, technology field, and more enterprises tend to invest abroad. However, it is language that serves as a medium. Inevitably, English is influenced by these flows, showing difference in its structure and functions.

The members of the expanding circle who do use English are an increasingly significant group who operate in an increasingly global economy which has an impact on the economy in all countries...the internet, mobile phones and other technology increasingly establish the potential for use of English which is quite independent of the controls offered by traditional educational systems, publishing outlets and radio/television (Brumfit 2002: 5).

There is some concern that the development of different varieties will ultimately cause mutual lack of intelligibility. However, in cross-cultural communication, it is the culture and context that is more likely to cause the greatest problems. It is easier to understand the ostensible intention

from a speaker, but, it can be difficult to interpret the underlying meaning. Furthermore, 'the fact that many bilingual users of English acquire the language in an educational context in which particular standards of use are emphasized will likely ensure some unifying norms' (McKay 2002: 53).

As a matter of fact, when we talk about variations in English, it does not imply that there are not any unifying rules governing English. Rather, the variations or features of the language will be regarded as characteristics that have been historically or culturally developed from a particular context. Compared with the cultural factor, they contribute little to the problem of intelligibility.

In this study, the purpose is not to try to find which lexico-grammatical features cause intelligibility problems, but rather to discuss what distinctive features appear in Chinese English in terms of the lexis and grammar.

Characteristics of Asian Englishes

ELF users in the spread and development of English are not just passively receiving but also dynamically taking part in the reshaping process of the language and its functions. In comparison, a great deal of research has been done on the phonology and pragmatics, while lexico-grammar in ELF is still at its beginning stage.

Lexico-grammatical features in ELF in Asia contexts

Kachru and Nelson (2006: 38-46) conclude some of the salient grammatical features appearing in Asia context.

- There is confusion in using definite and indefinite articles where they are obligatory in NS English, and inserting them where they do not occur in NS English.
- The distinction between count and non-count nouns is not institutionalized as in Inner-Circle Englishes. In Asian varieties of English, there is a tendency to simplify the system of marking count/mass distinction. It is common to see the forms such as *equipments*, *furnitures*, *fruits*, *a research* and *one evidence* in Asia Englishes.
- Verbs tenses are not marked consistently. Examples like: *He go to school yesterday*. *I have just finished last month*, etc.

Seidlhofer (2004: 220) also gives some general features based on VOICE (the Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English) data. She particularly identifies typical 'errors' that most English teachers would consider in urgent need of correction and remediation, and that consequently often get allotted a great deal of time and effort in English lessons, but in fact appear to be generally unproblematic and no obstacle to communicative success. These include:

- Dropping the third person present tense-s
- Confusing the relative pronouns *who* and *which*
- Omitting definite and indefinite articles where they are obligatory in English as a Native Language (ENL), and inserting them where they do not occur in ENL
- Failing to use correct forms in tag questions (e.g., *isn't is?* or *no?* instead of *shouldn't they?*)
- Inserting redundant prepositions, as in *We have to study about...*
- Overusing certain verbs of high semantic generality, such as *do, have, make, put, take*
- Replacing infinitive-constructions with *that*-clauses, as in *I want that*
- Overusing explicitness (e.g. *black color* rather than just *black*)

(see also Foley 2006)

Subjects of the study

In this study, there are ten news sources used: namely the electronic versions of three newspapers and seven news web-sites.

The location of the newspapers and news websites covers the main regions of China. In terms of the level of news sources, it covers different levels: from national level to provincial level, and city level. It can be said that the targeted samples are a fair representation of the news written in English from mainland China.

Name	Tibet.cn	Zhejiang Online	Qingdao News	Sichuan News	Tianshannet	ODTN (Oriental Dragon Tiger News)	Xinhua Online
Headquartered in	Lhasa (capital city of Tibet autonomous Region)	Hangzhou (capital city of Zhejiang province)	Qingdao city	Chengdu (capital city of Sichuan province)	Urumchi (capital city of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region)	Nanjing (capital city of Jiangsu province)	Beijing
Year of establishment	2005	2003	2003		2006	2003	1997
Level	Provincial level English news website	Provincial level English news website	City level English news website	Provincial level English news website	Provincial level English news website	Provincial level English news website	National English news website
Description	Aims at introducing Tibet to the world.	An English version of zjol.com.cn, which is under the supervision of the News and Information Office of Zhejiang provincial government.	Carries local news and messages	Organized by the government of Sichuan province, it represents voices from the southwest of China.	Established by the publicity section of the committee of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region and the News Office of the Government of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region.	Under the auspices of Nanjing's municipal government, it serves as an important tool for carrying local news and information.	It is the online news service of Xinhua News Agency and releases important news about China and world around the clock.

Data Collection Procedure

The main criteria for selecting the sample articles were:

- 1. To avoid news sources where native-speakers are the language consultants.
- 2. All the sample articles should be written by Chinese.
- 3. The length of each sample article should be about 200-300 words.
- 4. Considering the length of sample articles, the number of the targeted sample articles from each targeted news sources would be from 40 to 60.

Methods for Data Analysis

What follows are the lexico-grammatical features which have been identified in Chinese English. By applying these findings to the data collected in this study, it is hoped that the data will support previous findings reported in the literature and perhaps identify some additional features found in the written form of English in the context of China.

However, as mentioned earlier, the linguistic descriptive research of ELF is still at its early stages, the framework in terms of features of Chinese English which will be presented below can only be regarded as a possible outline of a framework of lexico-grammatical features of Chinese English.

It should also be noted that in this study, there might be some features appearing in Chinese English which are common to other varieties of English, and are not unique to Chinese English (CE). According to Kirkpatrick (2007), there are two possible explanations for this. The first is that the similarities across varieties are due to a ‘pan-linguistic grammatical simplification process. Another possible explanation for the “regularity” of these features is that they are derived from parameter settings in Universal Grammar (UG) (Kirkpatrick,1007:174).

Lexical features

Transliteration of Chinese words	Pinyin	the romanised script for Chinese characters
	Putonghua	Modern Standard Chinese
	yamen	Feudal administrative office
	Dazibao	big character poster

	<i>tai chi</i>	physical exerciser like shadow-boxing
	<i>Fengshui</i>	architectural tenets, literally wind-water
	<i>Ganbei</i>	Literally “dry glass”
	<i>Maotai</i>	white spirits
	<i>xiaokang society</i>	A society that ensures that all can become slightly better off in the future.
Direct translation from Chinese into English of “things Chinese” or Chinese cultural concepts	<i>four modernisations</i>	
	<i>one country, two systems</i>	
	<i>running dogs</i>	
	<i>paper tiger</i>	
	<i>Iron rice bowl</i>	
	<i>to get rich quick is glorious</i>	
	<i>open-door policy</i>	
	<i>barefoot doctor</i>	
	<i>the three represents theory</i>	
	<i>Project 211</i>	the policy to establish 100 key universities in China in the 21 st century.
	<i>a flowered pillowcase</i>	someone who is good-looking but otherwise useless
	<i>You can’t squeeze fat out of a skeleton</i>	You can’t get blood out of a stone
Nativised English	<i>Poker</i>	Has become pu-ke, but this refers to card games in general
	<i>Face</i>	Referring to the crucial importance of maintaining someone’s sense of self-esteem and position

culturally Chinese meanings	Guanxi	Relationships/contacts
	Lover: “People are supposed to know exactly the physical conditions of their lovers,” Yao said.	The word “lover” in this context is closest to airen (spouse) in Modern Standard Chinese
	comrade	It was originally the standard form of address. It represented an attempt to see everyone as equal, as required in Communist thinking. In recent years, however, it now refers almost exclusively to homosexuals, although it is still used in its original sense to refer to the highest leaders in the Party hierarchy.

Sources: Kirkpatrick (2007: 146-7); Xu Xi (2005: 85); Zhang H. (2002: 310)

Grammatical features

Adjacent default tense (ADT)	Last year, I write a letter... I write two letters every week.
Null-subject/object utterances (NS/O)	Sometimes_____ just play basketball, and sometimes_____ go to the Beijing library.
	We can see movies, and other activities about English. Yes, I like___ very much.
Co-occurrence of connective pairs	Yes, <i>although</i> it not as big as Beijing, <i>but</i> I like it, because I was born in it.

	<i>Because</i> in the canteen of our school, it is crowded at the first of this semester, so we wouldn't like to go... go there to have our lunch or supper, so we choose some small res... restaurant to have our food.
Subject pronoun copying	<i>Some of my college classmates they</i> like to dress up very much, and they don't like to study very much.
Yes-No response	Researcher: You mean your hometown is not so crowded? Informant: <i>Yeah</i> . Not so crowded.
Topic-comment sentence structure	You know, I think <i>this society</i> (topic), the people get more and more practical (comment).
Unmarked object subject verb(OSV) word order	So, um...I think the love is important, and <i>the money I don't care</i> .
Inversion in subordinate finite wh-clauses	I really don't know what <i>is international English</i> .
Nominalisation	
Head nominalised noun phrases	investment in the sectors of education, health and culture in rural areas
Premodification nominalised noun phrases	long-term land-use rights
Postmodification nominalised noun phrases	the top priority given to deepening reform in rural areas
Paratactic compound nominalised noun phrases 'NPs of equal weight'	rural prosperity and the well-being of farmers
Hypotactic compound nominalised noun phrases (one NP subordinate to the other)	the guiding principle for the development of agriculture.

Source: Xu Xi (2005: 315ff.) cited in Kirkpatrick (2007: 148-9)

The Data

Lexis

Transliteration of Chinese words

The design will probably contain the *Fuwas*, the Five Friendlies who were Beijing's Olympic mascots. (Olympic-featured lottery to be issued in March http://gzmp.dayoo.com/news/node_3811/2008-03/21/content_3339169.htm)

In Chinese, 'fuwa' means lucky baby. 'Fuwas' translated here is a combination of the transliteration form of Chinese words 'fuwa' and the postfix 's' to indicate the lucky babies.

To them I am being disrespectful and losing face which is hard for me to understand because I know that most of them dislike *baijiu* anyway. (The Economy of Face http://www.aboutxinjiang.com/Today/content/2008-01/10/content_2387677.htm)

'Baijiu' is a general name for Chinese white spirit containing high portion of alcohol.

We only see the *pinyin* and English which are often hard to understand. (The Impression of 闹笑话的翻译 (funny translations) http://www.aboutxinjiang.com/Today/content/2008-01/10/content_2387777.htm)

'Pinyin' is the romanized script for Chinese characters.

The stone-paved road had been brightened by thousands of disciples, who laid down their whole bodies and Kowtowed. (My pilgrimage to Tibet http://eng.tibet.cn/news/today/200802/t20080213_367978.htm)

'Kowtow' is the act of deep respect shown by kneeling and bowing so low as to touch the head to the ground. Kowtow in Chinese is used as a verb. As there are no verbal inflections in Chinese language, we can see that *kowtowed* used here is a combination of 'kowitz' plus the English inflection 'ed'.

Words which are directly translated from

Chinese into English of 'things Chinese' or Chinese cultural concepts.

Indeed, in a *one-child family* with parents both having busy work, a college student live-in tutor is a good helper to the child's psychological and security needs. (Sichuan-minted domestic helpers hotcake in capital city <http://english.newssc.org/system/2006/08/09/010084637.shtml>)

'*One-child family*' resulted from Chinese Family Plan policy, which means each couple can only have one child.

As March 29 and 30 is the last two-day weekend before *Chinese Tomb-Sweeping Day*, many people offered sacrifice to their ancestors and *swept their tombs* in advance on these days. (90,000 People Worship Ancestors in Rain http://gzmp.dayoo.com/news/node_3807/2008-04/14/content_3360833.htm)

'*Tomb-Sweeping Day*' is also called *Qingming Festival*, which is the day for Chinese people to worship their ancestors by offering sacrifice and cleaning their tombs.

'*Sweep tombs*' is a direct translation from Chinese. In the Chinese context, it actually means doing some cleaning work for tombs if needed.

Today is the *Festival of Lanterns*. *Rice glue balls* eaten in the Festival of Lanterns are sold hot. The handmade *rice glue balls* are popular by residents. The picture shows employees of a bakery are making *rice glue balls*. (Handmade rice glue balls popular by residents <http://www.odtn.com/odtn/news/nanjing/userobject1ai59691.html>)

'*Lantern Festival*' is a traditional Chinese festival. During the day, people eat *rice glue balls*, which are made of sticky rice.

Long formulas (socialist type of language being employed in the following examples become standard expressions in semi-political discourse).

Chinese leader Hu Jintao's work is reported as: "Hold High the Great Banner of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics and Strive for New Victories in Building a Moderately Prosperous Society in all Respects", to the Seventeenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China on Oct. 15, 2007 published in *China Daily* are the direct translations of Chinese "political jargon" which strongly bear characteristics of socialist type language.

In order to accomplish the arduous tasks of reform and development in a complicated and volatile international situation, the Party led the people of all ethnic groups in holding high the great banner of *Deng Xiaoping Theory* (dèng xiǎo píng lǐ lùn) and the important thought of *Three Represents* (sān gè dài biǎo), overcoming difficulties and risks, creating a new situation in the cause of *socialism with Chinese characteristics* and attaining a new realm in adapting Marxism to conditions in China.

(Hold High the Great Banner of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics and Strive for New Victories in Building a Moderately Prosperous Society in all Respects http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2007-10/25/content_6226673.htm)

'*Three Represents*' was firstly brought forward by Chinese leader Jiang Zemin. *Three 'Represents'*, namely is that the Party must always represent the development trend of China's advanced productive forces, the orientation of China's advanced culture and the fundamental interests of the overwhelming majority of the Chinese people.

'*Socialism with Chinese characteristics*' is an official term for the current state of the People's Republic of China.

Relying on the Party and the people, it stood the severe tests of political turbulences and economic risks at home and abroad, safeguarded socialism with Chinese characteristics, initiated the new, *socialist market economy* (shè huì zhǔ yì shì chǎng jīng jì) and ushered in a new phase of all-round opening up; http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2007-10/25/content_6226673.htm)

Rapid development represents the most remarkable achievement in the new period. The Party has been implementing the *three-step strategy for modernization* (xiàn dài huà sān bù zǒu), leading the people in working hard to promote China's sustained rapid development at a rate rarely seen in the world. http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2007-10/25/content_6226673.htm)

Direct translations of metaphors also add a special flavor in Chinese.

When asked why he has such a good memory, he joked: "I depend on it to keep my *rice bowl*." (Hoping the high spirits will last http://www.qingdaonews.com/content/2008-03/15/content_7823801.htm)

We will continue to implement the system of provincial governors assuming responsibility for the 'rice bag' (grain supply) program and city mayors for the 'vegetable basket' (nonstaple food supply) program. http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2008-03/05/content_7721024.htm)

The last group consists of words which are found in other Englishes such as Standard British/American English, but which are used differently in Chinese English.

Lexis is used inappropriately or wrongly in the following examples. This may be due to the influence of Chinese.

March 10 will see all the 697 *human tricycle drivers* in new uniforms to greet Olympics in Lhasa, capital of Tibet Autonomous Region, sources from Lhasa Human Tricycle Administration Company. (Human tricycles in Lhasa: New outlook for Olympics http://eng.tibet.cn/news/today/200803/t20080309_369720.htm)

Apparently, '*human tricycle drivers*' is a word to word translation of Chinese, in Chinese, it is called human (rén lì) tricycle (sān lún chē) drivers (sī jī). However, the use of 'human' to show the power of human physical strength is quite strange and might appear funny. According to the context, the actual meaning of '*human tricycle drivers*' is tricycles that are driven by people pedaling as would be the case with a bicycle."

Tibet Autonomous Region has received 4.02 million *person times* (rén cì) in 2007, realizing 4.8 billion yuan of tourism revenue which occupied 14.2 percent of the whole region's GDP, sources from Tibet Autonomous Region Tourism Bureau. (Tourism revenue occupies 14.2 percent Tibet's GDP http://eng.tibet.cn/news/today/200802/t20080217_368193.htm)

In Chinese, the collocation between 'receive' and '*person times*' is acceptable. Here, the '*person times*' seems to indicate tourists.

The sailing committee would like to *show grateful* (gǎn jī) to people from all walks of life, and also, to take this opportunity to encourage more and more citizens to take part in the voluntary works of all kinds. (The selection of volunteers for 2008 Olympic Games in QingDao is going to start http://www.qingdaonews.com/content/2008-01/10/content_7817943.htm)

This is simply one example of the wrong usage of lexis. It cannot stand by itself. 'grateful' should be used in its noun form, gratitude.

Amai Tsering, a Tibetan mom (yí gè zàng zú mā mā) celebrate her 117th birthday, photos from Xinhua, March 14. (117-year-old longevo in Tibet celebrates birthday http://eng.tibet.cn/news/today/200803/t20080316_370307.htm)

It is too colloquial to say 'mom' in this occasion. 'Tibetan woman' should be a better term to use.

According to Shenzhen resident Li Jinmu, a friend of Larry, the professor and his wife crossed Luohu Checkpoint to Shenzhen for a day trip between giving lectures at Hong Kong universities in February 1981. (American's 1981 picture shows a different SZ http://szdaily.sznews.com/html/2008-03/28/content_115809.htm)

Putting 'the professor' in apposition with 'Larry' is mixing formal with informal in terms of register.

Grammatical features of Chinese English

The grammatical features leave out the tense markers and signals the time reference with time adverbs (e.g. I talk to her yesterday).

In Chinese English, the verbs appear in their uninflected forms. The time or aspectual information that the verbal inflection in British or American English carries, is instead borne by a time adverbial.

Last year, farmers and herdsmen who take part in the new type of cooperative medical care system in rural areas *have all joined* in the commercial insurance of comprehensive arrangement for serious diseases for free in Hami. (Achievements On Development http://www.aboutxinjiang.com/news/content/2008-03/07/content_2478619.htm)

Yesterday, a reporter has an interview with three foreign students from Canada and Korea in Nanjing University. (Foreign students shocked by crazy Chinese Saint Valentine's Day <http://www.odtn.com/odtn/news/topstory/userobject1ai59634.html>)

The native of Linfen City in north China's Shanxi Province previously work in Guangzhou as a security guard *in April 2006*. (Court hands down five years for man in city's ATM windfall http://gzmp.dayoo.com/news/node_3807/2008-04/14/content_3360838.htm)

Tashilhunpo Monastery which means "luck" in Tibetan, with the coverage area of 237 thousand square meter, lies at the foot of Nyimari Mountain in the northwest part of the city of Xigaze. It is built in 1447 and made to be residence for the Panchen since 1713. (Tashilhunpo Monastery to have maintenance http://eng.tibet.cn/news/today/200804/t20080402_374584.htm)

Two border police officers *display* smuggled mobile phones *yesterday*. (Smuggled Cell phones http://szdaily.sznews.com/html/2008-02/28/content_76941.htm)

Even with clear past time indicators, the present perfect tense is still used in following sentences to 'emphasize' the completion of an act or action.

Early in 2004 the Chengdu government *has started* skill-training program for domestic helpers. (Sichuan-minted domestic helpers hotcake in capital city <http://english.newssc.org/system/2006/08/09/010084637.shtml>)

Last year 1,238 rural families of Dagze County in Lhasa, capital of Tibet Autonomous Region, *have moved* into new homes built with 17.675 million yuan from the government. (More rural people enjoy new homes http://eng.tibet.cn/news/today/200803/t20080312_370003.htm)

Dropping the third person present tense-s.

And after receiving the examination of The First Hospital of Hangzhou, he recognizes that he has fractures and *need* recuperate in bed. (Beautiful city, warmhearted people! <http://english.zjol.com.cn/05english/system/2008/02/04/009200270.shtml>)

Through this Nine Schools company, another British company *get* to know our felt rugs and *have* intent to cooperate with us. Now we are also making samples for this company. Besides, there is one company in Hong Kong, which also *want* to purchase our felt rugs. (Manual Felt Rug Draw Foreigner's Eye http://www.aboutxinjiang.com/news/content/2008-03/10/content_2480184.htm)

Amai Tsering, a Tibetan mom *celebrate* her 117th birthday, photos from Xinhua, March 14. (117-year-old longevo in Tibet celebrates birthday http://eng.tibet.cn/news/today/200803/t20080316_370307.htm)

Have/has

In Chinese, there is no corresponding verbal inflection indicating the plural/singular form of the subject.

John Wiker from Australia, being hospitalized in The First Hospital of Hangzhou, *have* a happy talk with reporters from ZJOL.com. (Beautiful city, warmhearted people! <http://english.zjol.com.cn/05english/system/2008/02/04/009200270.shtml>)

The staff of the hospital *has* given John thoughtful care when his wife is busy dealing with returning Australia. John describes the staff of hospital with “excellent” and has presented *them* toys of koala. He says, he will come back next year. (Beautiful city, warmhearted people! <http://english.zjol.com.cn/05english/system/2008/02/04/009200270.shtml>)

Through this Nine Schools company, another British company get to know our felt rugs and *have* intent to cooperate with us. Now we are also making samples for this company. Besides, there is one company in Hong Kong, which also want to purchase our felt rugs. (http://www.aboutxinjiang.com/news/content/2008-03/10/content_2480184.htm)

It is difficult to determine whether a linguistic feature that differs from British/American forms of English are indeed a feature of a new variety of English or whether it is a feature of learner English. English changes through its contact with other languages.

Subject pronoun copying

In Chinese, it is very common to find the phenomena of subject pronoun copying.

Chinese cultural art, Chinese drama art and types of facial make-up in Beijing opera, Chinese poems and calligraphy... These courses attract the attention of many people because a foreigner opens the institution. (A foreigner opens “Confucius Institution” in Nanjing <http://www.odtn.com/odtn/life/people/userobject1ai42775.html>)

Null-subject/object utterances (NS/O)

Firstly, we will organize (*) to learn the gist of the session as soon as possible. (XJ Cppcc Members Return http://www.aboutxinjiang.com/news/content/2008-03/17/content_2493239.htm)

On Saturday and Sunday, the Plum Blossom Hill in eastern suburb welcomed *the peak of viewing plum blossoms*. According to the introduction, about 60 *thousand* (*) toured Plum Blossom Hill. (60 thousand people viewing plum blossoms on Saturday and Sunday <http://www.odtn.com/odtn/news/nanjing/userobject1ai60452.html>)

Regulators have stepped up curbs on the property market, (*) worried that “bubbles” in property prices could collapse and trigger a financial crisis. (City’s housing prices continue to slide http://szdaily.sznews.com/html/2008-03/04/content_82538.htm)

Articles

The definite or indefinite article does not always occur in Chinese English in positions where it is obligatory in British/American English and vice-versa.

...we will establish (*) good environment for drawing businessmen, invite businessmen relying on industrial chain and draw foreign businessmen in our country to complete our task. (http://www.aboutxinjiang.com/Biz/content/2006-06/09/content_277.htm)

Actually during the fireseed runs in Guangzhou, another Olympic fireseed may be also going to (*) top of the Mount Everest at the same time. (Route of Olympic Torch Relay in GZ Unveiled http://gzmp.dayoo.com/news/2008-04/04/content_3360840.htm)

In *the* last year there was a steady increase in the registered total population in Guangzhou. (Guangzhou Permanent Population Exceeds 10 Million http://gzmp.dayoo.com/news/node_3807/2008-04/14/content_3360833.htm)

Lu was apprehended by the police while the injured driver and (*) shocked but uninjured *woman* were taken to hospital for treatment. (Police free bus hostage in Bao'an http://szdaily.sznews.com/html/2008-03/04/content_82493.htm)

"At the peak, the sales volume was several hundred, even a thousand a day," said a property agent with Centaline (China) in Shenzhen, who would only be identified by his surname Wang. "Nowadays, () volume is very low, with only a couple of apartments changing hands each day." (City's housing prices continue to slide http://szdaily.sznews.com/html/2008-03/04/content_82538.htm)

Nominalization

Chinese is principally left-branching so prefers the modifiers of a noun phrase subordinate to the headword. However, in this study, the data of the nominalization found in Chinese English does not particularly show the influence by Chinese in this aspect. Much of the data, on the contrary, indicates that the modifiers of noun phrases often appear after the headwords, this can be seen in features of 'head nominalised noun phrases' and 'postmodification of noun phrases'.

Head nominalised noun phrases

The central government and Tibet's regional government have stepped up *preservation of the vulnerable environment in the nature reserve of the Mount Qomolangma*. (Mt Qomolangma receives 40,000 tourists in 2007 http://eng.tibet.cn/news/today/200802/t20080222_368495.htm)

According to the data, the *contribution rate of Urumqi overseas-funded enterprises for XJ's economy* was 65%. (More overseas-funded enterprises encouraged to settle down in Urumqi http://www.aboutxinjiang.com/Biz/content/2006-06/09/content_277.htm)

In this course the Party has gained *invaluable experience in eliminating poverty, accelerating modernization, and consolidating and developing socialism in a large developing country of over one billion people*. (Hold High the Great Banner of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics and Strive for New Victories in Building a Moderately Prosperous Society in all Respects http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2007-10/25/content_6226673.htm)

Premodification nominalised noun phrases

Yesterday morning, *Qingdao Export Food & Agricultural Products Quality Safety Work Conference* was held at Huanghai Hotel, the guiding principles of Shandong province key cities and regions export food interim meeting were delivered, *the present food and agricultural products export status* was reported, the meeting also made arrangement on next step work to

further strengthen food and agricultural products quality safety http://www.qingdaonews.com/content/2008-02/28/content_7817965.htm)

Shoppers at each of the eight Carrefour stores in Shenzhen had to pay only one yuan (US\$0.14) for a slice of a 13-meter-tall and one-meter-wide cake made Thursday to celebrate the French retailer's 13 years in China. (Carrefour sells cake to help disabled http://szdaily.sznews.com/html/2008-03/28/content_115814.htm)

Such system will be installed in Lhasa's tour buses by Lhasa Public Security Bureau Traffic Detachment when conditions permitting in a bid to prevent from serious traffic accidents. (GPS overspeed alarm system to ensure safe driving in Lhasa http://eng.tibet.cn/news/today/200803/t20080302_369106.htm)

Postmodification nominalized noun phrases

Enterprises which may be included in the "growth program" are those involved in the areas of information technology, bio-technology, new materials, new energy, civil nuclear technology, modern manufacturing, the civil aerospace industry, farm produce processing and modern service sector. (Boosting Industrial Science <http://english.newssc.org/system/2006/07/10/010048152.shtml>)

By Tuesday, a campaign called "Ask the Premier," jointly launched by Xinhuanet.com and China Mobile for their 100 million plus mobile phone users, had collected over 250,000 short messages, a substantial portion of which were from blue-collars, farmers, and students. ("Taiwan independence" attempts doomed to fail http://gzmp.dayoo.com/news/node_3806/2008-03/07/content_3332281.htm)

Besides, it is planned to mend accessorial facilities including all equipments for gas, water, sewage, illumination and other devices for safety. (Tashilhunpo Monastery to have maintenance http://eng.tibet.cn/news/today/200804/t20080402_374584.htm)

The owner of a south China warehouse complex that was rocked by explosions of stored fireworks last week has prepaid three million yuan (US\$400,000) to nearby residents in compensation for damage caused by the blasts. (Chinese Firm Pays Initial 3 yuan for Fireworks Blast Damage http://gzmp.dayoo.com/news/node_3808/2008-03/06/content_3325403.htm)

Inspections on several water resources carried out on Sunday by the Shaoguan municipal environmental monitoring center (MEMC) also found no

link between the de-icing agent and water quality. (Salt used to de-ice roads in northern GD 'not hazardous' http://gzmp.dayoo.com/news/node_3808/2008-03/06/content_3325416.htm)

Implications for English language teaching

Even though ELF is still in its early stages of gathering descriptive linguistic features, the question as to what possible implications of ELF may eventually have for the teaching of English is still under discussion (LI, 2007). However, 'this is not to say that descriptive facts can, or should determine what is taught', and 'it would therefore be wrong to assume that "findings should directly and uniquely inform what is included in language courses"' (Widdowson, 2003: 106) cited in Seidlhofer, 2004: 225).

People would argue that English in China is still studied as a foreign language, and teaching models are still based on native speaker models. However, it is also worth thinking about the ever increasing number of English users in China and their growing participation on the world stage and the fact that Chinese English is already developing as a new variety of English and making a contribution to ELF.

Abandoning unrealistic notions of achieving native-like proficiency in English, but stressing capabilities rather than accuracy, would make more alternative approaches in pedagogic teaching possible. For example as McKay (2002) has suggested the main purpose would be:

1. Ensuring intelligibility among the speakers of English
2. Helping learners develop strategies to achieve comity-friendly relations when English is used with speakers from other cultures
3. Developing textual competence, that is to say, to develop reading and writing skills for learners' own choices.

Of course what is needed is to extend this small scale study into a corpus study which includes not only the standard written form of Chinese English from Chinese English language newspapers and news web-sites, but also informal writings from various sources. Spoken forms would also play a major role in any corpus, in particular recordings from the 'English Corners' which are popular meeting places for people to gather to speak English.

Conclusion

First, from the lexis we can see transliterations and direct translations of Chinese provide a rich resource of lexical features in Chinese English which gives it a certain uniqueness. However, inappropriate or wrong usage of lexis in Chinese English is also common. It is difficult to distinguish these features from the features of ELF in CE as this local variety is still developing. .

Second, some grammatical features appear distinctive in Chinese and there are others which appear in other varieties of English. For example, the non-marking of verbs in past tense, dropping the third person present tense-s, the confusion in using 'have/has' are quite common in other varieties. However, there are some which seem only to appear as CE and which may not been identified as features in other varieties of English, for example, the present perfect tense signaled by clear past time indicators and long nominalization.

Third, there are features identified by Xu Xi (2005) as grammatical features of Chinese English, but which have not been found or rarely found in this study, these include: null-subject/object utterances (NS/O), co-occurrence of connective pairs, yes-no response, topic-comment sentence structure, unmarked object subject verb (OSV) word order and inversion in subordinate finite wh-clauses. The possible reason for this is that this study has been confined to written CE rather than spoken CE.

Fourth, one tendency in nominalization in CE is the preference in employing long pre- or post modifications in modifying headwords in noun phrases. Chinese is principally a left-branching language, so it is quite understandable that it is common to find a long premodification before a headword. However, it is surprising to find that it is also common to find long postmodifications modifying headwords in Chinese English.

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