A STUDY OF COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES IN THE
CHINESE-ENGLISH ONLINE CHAT ROOMS IN CHINA

LING PAN

A THESIS SUBMITTED
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN
ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING
MA-ELT

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ENGLISH (GSE)
ASSUMPTION UNIVERSITY
BANGKOK, THAILAND.

NOVEMBER 2009

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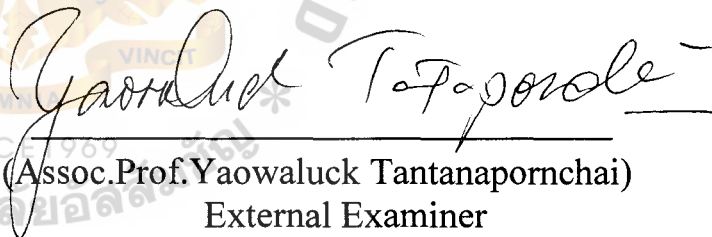|	
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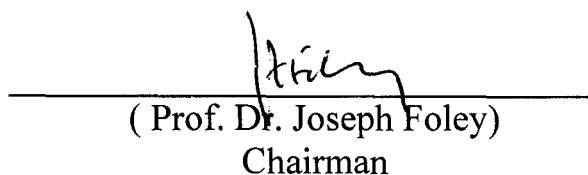
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PLAGIARISM STATEMENT

I certify that all the material in this study which is not my own work has been identified and acknowledged, and that no materials are included for which a degree has already been conferred upon me.

Signature: <u>Ling Pan (Nancy)</u>

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ABSTRACT

In computer-mediated communication, online chat rooms provide the Chinese learners of English additional opportunities for their acquisition and use of English.

The main aim of this research is to examine and identify the types and frequencies of communication strategies used by Chinese e-chatters of English and how the strategies reflect their Chinese linguistic and cultural background in the chat room interactions. The data of this study is in the form of thirty different online chat samples recorded from the different national English online chat rooms in mainland China. The identification of communication strategies is based on the typology of communication strategies by Dornyei (1995). The impact of the Chinese language and its cultural background on the Chinese chatters' English is analyzed and interpreted based on a framework adapted from Kirkpatrick's (2007) lexical summary of Chinese English.

The findings indicate that the Chinese e-chatters of English do adapt face-to-face communication strategies summarized by Dornyei to their online chat interactions. Among the strategies found, nonlinguistic signals (30.2%), literal translation (17%) and code-switching (7.6%) occur frequently. Due to the visual nature of computer-mediated communication and the shared purpose of learning English among the Chinese e-chatters, they also generate other strategies such as abbreviations, font types and text colours as well as doing cooperative learning with each other. These strategies thus enable participants to keep the smooth flow of

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Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This is a preliminary study that aims to investigate characteristics of Chinese chatters' communication strategies when they put their English into use by chatting with other Chinese in English in the Internet chat room in China. The study aims to elicit information on whether Chinese chatters can use communication strategies for facilitating their acquisition of communication competence of the English language via the synchronous online chat, and in particular, the use of their knowledge of English to communicate socially and appropriately with other users of the language. Furthermore, the relationship of communication strategies adopted by Chinese chatters in online chat to their L1 (Chinese) is discussed, in order to examine to what extent the English language used by these chatters as L2 learners are influenced by their L1 transfer.

1.2 Background of the study

As English is a world language, the communication among non-native speakers is getting more attention. One of the important goals for L2 learners is to gain communication competence. However, because not only do non-native speakers not have enough knowledge about target language itself but also they have different socio-cultural backgrounds compared to native speakers, many problems are likely to

occur in the actual communication due to L2 learners' insufficient competence. The ability to develop communication strategies (CS) is one of the important competences. Therefore, it is important and essential for L2 learners to master communication strategies during their development of communication competence.

China, with its large population of English learners, has been reinforcing learners' English communication competence both inside and outside the schools in its own particular ways for many years. More and more people realize that being able to speak English fluently is not just a demand at school, but also a valuable and social communicative skill. In the school, English is set up as a required course. Outside, there are many training courses in English that are open to the general public. However, even though there are many oppurtunities to learn English, most learners still complain that they cannot interact with non-native speakers or native speakers efficiently and their English is like a "deaf and mute", when they meet communication problems in the natural conversation. It is not surprising that, with limited time in class and more than forty-five classmates learning together, the L2 learners cannot be provided enough opportunities for the improvement of communication competence. In this way, there are limitations for L2 learners to get a "try" to use communication strategies for survival and overcome actual communication problems.

In order to foster communication competence, many Chinese learners of English try their best to create English-speaking environments outside class to develop their ability to use communication strategies. "English Corner" (Xu 2008) has

come into being, which offers L2 learners a casual environment which offers Chinese

learners of English face to face outside classroom. It provides learners with a natural,

relaxing and interactive environment to practice their English speaking. Participants

in "English Corner" are people who are interested in English and they can speak

English there at any time with any partner(s). However, it is normally conducted in a

fixed period of time. Participants can not get access to it every day when they want.

With the development and popularity of the Internet today, more and more

people are communicating with others by this means. According to the 20th Statistical

Report on China's Internet Development (China Internet Network information Center

2007), as of June 30, 2007, China's netizen numbers had reached 162 million. 69.8%

of netizens are using the instant communication and 55.4% of them are using

electronic mail. This report shows the Internet has come into people's lives and

brought a new challenge for traditional face-to-face communication way.

Synchronous online-chat as one type of instant communication allows

communication to happen anytime and anywhere. With the ease of the Internet, some

English learners create chatrooms which are a variation of "English Corner" existing

in online space. Thus, many English online chatrooms have been quickly set up in

national Chinese websites, particularly for Chinese learners of English who are

willing to interact with each other in their English. Just like "English Corner" in a

natural environment, the online English chatroom in China with its own traits serves

as a platform not only for entertainment, but also for interaction between L2 learners

in English freely and conveniently. In a way, chatroom produces a relatively natural,

convenient and instant environment for L2 learners to communicate in English. In various ways, L2 learners in China try to put their English into use.

Online English chatroom as a new mode, to some extent, offers the L2 learner more opportunity and convenience to communicate in English. Chatters' perception towards computer-mediated communication (CMC) is positive since they can automatically keep "talking" in English during the "conversation". CMC provides a worthwhile experience to the learners, hence the level of commitment towards their own learning is high (Ghazali, 1999). Accordingly, computers have a principal role in providing alternative contexts for social interaction to take place by facilitating the access to currently existing discourse communities as well as the creation of new discourse communities (Kern and Warschauer, 2000).

No matter what the current perceptions or future predictions of the medium may be, the fact is that CMC is here to stay and the research of this rapidly changing world has only just begun. This sheds some light on the importance of investigating CMC in relation to second language acquisition. CMC, such as online chat rooms, offers more authentic data for further analyses about language in use. With the Internet and CMC, traditional language use and development of communication competence for the contemporary L2 learners are being challenged, because L2 learners communicate in a virtual environment- online chat cyberspace.

1.3 Rationale of the study

Since these Chinese national English chatrooms are currently a new kind of

"English corner" existing online, a number of L2 learners, due to their limited resource of L2, get more convenient opportunities to practice English.

However, it is necessary to understand and find out how L2 learners/chatters acquire and use their English in the cyberspace of English-chatting environment. Discovering how L2 is used "means seeing how it relates to thinking, comprehension, and communication" (Cook 1995: 1). According to Hymes (1972), the use of L2 is covered by the speakers' communicative competence which means their ability to adapt language to communicate with other people. One aspect of communication competence is an ability to use communication strategies, which can assist L2 learners to keep an interaction channel "open". Communication strategies seems a process for managing momentary speech, "that is to say to do with the language use" (Cook 1995: 19). According to Cook (1995), by their language use, L2 learners can show how knowledge of English and their L1 is used by the same speaker psychologically and sociologically. Accordingly, it is necessary to understand the learner's language as a system in its own right and the development of an interlanguage.

Currently, in China the English online chatroom is appealing to more L2 learners. Although online chat communication is written and text-based, it takes place in real-time (it is synchronous) and shares many of the features of talk, which is between written and spoken language (Crystal 2001&2006; Thornbury and Slade 2006). English online chat, just as "English corner" in China, offers L2 learners a chance and a platform for the use of their stored L2 knowledge through mutually instant communication. In this way, English online chat of L2 learners perhaps finally

helps them develop their English communication competence.

The study of communication strategies of online English chat of Chinese learners will reflect how their knowledge of English is acquired and used during the actual performance of communication in the context of a certain discourse-online chat.

1.4 Purpose of the study

Due to insufficient competence of English knowledge and different culture background from native-speakers, communication problems are likely to arise during the real online-chat interaction. The strategies for solving the communication problems are various depending on individuals and culture as well.

In order to see how L2 learners use their English for online communication, the aim of this study is firstly to examine what types of English communication strategies are adopted by the Chinese chatters of English when they overcome these communication problems from their own or negotiation with other interlocutors in the CMC-synchronous online chat-groups (rooms), and how frequent communication strategies are used. Secondly, based on the investigation of communication strategies adopted by online Chinese chatters of English, the study aims to find out to what extent the L2 learners' language (interlanguage) is adapted into these specific communication strategies in their online-interaction, and this reflects their L1 transfer (Chinese), the cultural background, and a variety of World Englishes-Chinese English.

1.5 Research questions

This study aims to answer two research questions:

1. What are the types of communication strategies used among Chinese users of English in the chat room interaction in China and how often do they occur?

2. To what extent, do the communication strategies found reflect their Chinese language, its cultural background and their Chinese English?

1.6 Definition of terms

In this study, certain terms are used as defined below:

Communication problems refers to an obstacle caused by L2 learners' insufficiency of their existing L2 knowledge or insufficient means to put L2 to use reasonably under the prevailing situational conditions, when they are communicating with others in English.

Communication strategies (CS) refers to efforts by the L2 learners to solve emergent communication problems and keep interaction going smoothly, when L2 learners are expressing something because of the smaller resources possessed in the L2 compared to the L1. CS provides the L2 learners "with an alternative form of expression for the intended meaning" (Bialystok 1990: 35). These strategies include paraphrasing, literal translation, etc. (Corder 1978; Tarone 1980; Faerch and Kasper 1983 and Stern 1983)

Synchronous online chat refers to text-based chat which takes place in real time, normally in a chat room, and allows users to be in touch with each other simultaneously. Chat room is one type of synchronous online chat in

Computer-mediated Communication.

Chinese English (CE) is a distinctive Chinese variety of English, which is used by the Chinese People in mainland China, having Chinese characteristics at the levels of lexis, syntax and discourse. It is employed to express content ideas specific to Chinese culture by means of transliteration, borrowing and semantic transfer. (adapted from the study of Wang 1991; Li 1993; He and Li 2009)

1.7 Organization of the thesis

In *chapter one*, the researcher discusses the general information about background knowledge; provides a general idea about the rationale, aims of the study, research questions. It also offers the explanations about some specific terms occurring in this research.

In *chapter two*, the researcher discusses the literature concerning the various perspectives involved in computer-mediated communication) in particular, online chat-talk discourse and SLA including interlanguage, communication strategies, and L1 transfer; then the brief discussion about Chinese English is explored.

In *chapter three*, the researcher describes the context, in which this observational study will be conducted, the participants of the study, and the procedures for data collection and analysis.

In *chapter four*, the researcher analyses the data of thirty chat conversations collected from the Chinese-English online chat rooms for the communication strategies with interpretations in detail.

In *chapter five*, the researcher summarizes the research findings: the types of communication strategies used in the Internet Chinese-English chat rooms, and the reflections about Chinese language, Chinese culture and Chinese English through corresponding strategies. Finally, the limitations, the pedagogical implications and possible future research of the study are discussed and suggested.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This second chapter discusses important perspectives influencing this study, and also introduces other studies related to it. First, a general overview of the characteristics of natural conversation, computer-mediated communication and chat room discourse are provided, and then the interlanguage, the definitions and typologies about communication strategies are explored. Finally, a brief section of Chinese English is discussed.

2.2 Characteristics of natural conversation

Thornbury and Slade (2006: 5) compare three dictionary definitions of conversation:

*If you have a conversation with someone, you talk with them, usually in an informal situation (*Collins' COBUILD English Dictionary*).

*Informal talk in which people exchange news, feelings, and thoughts (*Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*).

*An informal talk involving a small group of people or only two; the activity of talking in this way (*Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*).

Three dictionaries define the conversation in different way, however, they all highlight the similar features of conversation: informal and spoken.

Based on the comparison of three definitions, Thornbury and Slade (2006: 25) offer a more detailed definition that "conversation is the informal, interactive talk

between two or more people, which happens in real time, is spontaneous, has a largely interpersonal function, and in which participants share symmetrical rights". This definition implies conversation is informal, interactive, real time, spontaneous and interpersonal.

Through the conversation, people share, negotiate and exchange information and ideas with each other, moreover, people establish, maintain and modify the social identities. Conversation "is a fundamental human activity and one in which most of us engage many times a day" (Thornbury and Slade 2006: 1). It becomes important part of the social life. "Conversational talk crosses age groups, gender, class, culture and ethnicity." (Thornbury and Slade 2006: 1)

As Thornbury & Slade (2006) and Eggins & Slade (1997) report, conversation in real conversational settings has the following typical characteristics of:

* It is spoken, which decides conversation is transient and it has features, for examples: sentence stress, intonation, rhythm, voice quality, etc.

* It takes place spontaneously, in real time. "The main factor which distinguishes written from spoken language ...is time" (Crystal and Davy 1975: 87). In conversation, people have to respond as soon as possible, conversely, during writing, it is not so urgent. According to Thornbury and Slade (2006) and Eggin and Slade (1997), the real-time spontaneity of talk accounts for a number of features that distinguish it from writing:

1. Hesitations

2. Word repetitions

3. False starts

4. Repairs

5. Unfinished utterances

6. Ungrammaticality [in terms of written norms]

7. Fillers

8. Borrowing chunks from the previous speaker's utterance

9. Frequent sequences of short clauses joined by *and, but, then, because*

10. Lexical density (Halliday 1985): content words (nouns and verbs) per clause. Normally spoken texts are not as lexically dense as written texts. The lower lexical density of talk is balanced by the fact that it is often made up loosely linked clauses and phrases maintaining a continuous flow of discourse.

* It takes place in a shared context. The participants share not only the physical context, but also the institutional, social and cultural contexts, which result in a high frequency of pronouns, the use of ellipsis and non-clausal expressions which can be interpreted according to situational factors.

* It is interactive, jointly constructed. In this sense, speakers respond to, build upon and refer to the previous utterances of other speakers. Conversation evolves through the taking of successive turns by the two or more participants. Like written language, conversation employs discourse markers, such as *so, well, oh, yes*, etc. which occur significantly more frequently in spoken language (McCarthy 1998). Due to the reciprocal nature of conversation, participants in conversations can provide "immediate feedback on each other' utterance, through, for instance, agreeing (*yeah*),

back channelling (*mm*), showing interest (*oh really?*), clarifying (*you mean...?*), or responding to questions" (Thornbury and Slade 2006: 17). According to Tannen (1989), conversation is "high-involvement style" which indicates that conversation is co-operative activity of both the listener and the speaker.

* Its function is primarily interpersonal. "Interpersonal meaning is meaning as a form of action: the speaker or writer doing something to the listener or reader by means of language" (Halliday 1985: 53). In conversation, the speaker normally fulfills this "something" by doing social work for establishing and maintaining of social ties.

* It is informal. Because of its spontaneous, interactive and interpersonal nature, conversation in the discussion here is informal. Its informality in speech is mainly characterized by lexical choices, such as the use of slang, and by pronunciation features, such as the use of contractions (e.g.: "don't", for "do not").

* It is the critical site for the negotiation of social identities, so it is expression of wishes, feelings, attitudes and judgments.

It is through informal talk that people establish and maintain their affiliation with a particular group, by, for example, the frequency of appraisal language, the use of "I" as the subject of the sentence, the use of nicknames and familiar address terms, etc. (Thornbury and Slade 2006).

"It is natural to conceive of text first and foremost as conversation: as the spontaneous interchange of meaning in ordinary, everyday interaction. It is in such contexts that reality is constructed, in the microsemiotic encounters of daily life" (Halliday 1978: 40). In this way, conversation should be treated as an exchange of

meanings, as text, and recognize its privileged role in the construction of social identities and interpersonal relations.

2.3 Computer-mediated communication (CMC)

With the Internet becoming popular in the contemporary world, questions about how computer-mediated communication (CMC) affects people's lives arise. The Internet makes people interact electronically with as much ease as they do in person. It is said by many linguists, such as David Crystal (2001 and 2006), that a new branch of linguistics—Internet linguistics is now emerging and booming. "The study of visual communication and CMC are growing areas in applied linguistics, and likely to be increasingly important in the future" (Cook 2003: 51). According to Crystal (2001: 6), "if we are to understand truly how the Internet might shape our language, then it is essential that we seek to understand how different varieties of language are used on the Internet." With the coming of the Internet, new communication technologies have generated new forms of text, which are not easily equated with traditional notions of written and oral communication. This also makes CMC so interesting and appealing to investigate. CMC "relies on characteristics belonging to both sides of the speech/writing divide" (Crystal 2001: 28).

CMC uses the computer as both the transmission and the reception system, and presents us with a number of possible media for the creation, transmission and reception of messages. The communication comes in two principal forms: synchronous as in the Internet Relay Chat and asynchronous as in e-mail. The former

allows users to be in touch with each other simultaneously; the latter allows users to respond at a later time and one message at a time. As Crystal (2001) suggests, CMC allows a new mode to exist which is between spoken and written language. CMC allows conversation to take place by means of writing; but users have the freedom to play their communication anytime. Thornbury and Slade (2006: 1) report that "the advent and rapid expansion of the use of email, text messaging and online chat have further blurred the distinction between spoken and written language, while underscoring the ubiquitous role of conversation in human affairs." CMC in its way eliminates the gap between spoken and written text, which "suggests that the spoken and the written language will probably come close together; and there are signs that this is already beginning to happen" (Halliday 2001: 189). CMC to an extent mixes the dichotomy between speech and writing and offers people private means of transmission which ensure that "the communicative function of writing has come to the fore, as people write to each other by electronic mail" (Halliday 2001: 188).

2.4 The discourse of the online chat room

2.4.1 Characteristics of chat-room conversations

Currently because of advanced technology, people begin to have conversation in different modes besides meeting each other and talking to each other face to face. People can have a conversation with other people far away through phones, through internet calling as well as by using different chatting tools to type to each other to talk silently on computer. In the light of development of computer-mediated

communication (CMC), such as internet chat rooms, where "communication takes place in real-time (it is *synchronous*), it is written...CMC shares many of the features of talk" (Thornbury and Slade 2006: 23).

Since online chat conversations happen in real time, "there is no strict turn structure because of the time lag between the posting of the message and its appearance on the screen, and because of the existence of multiple threads of conversation" (del-Teso-Craviotto 2008: 252).

CMC with its prominent features is more and more appealing to many researchers committing to this field. Through the CMC, specifically online chatting interactions, the boundaries between writing and speaking become so blurry that some researchers call Internet language "written speech" (Crystal 2001: 25).

Biber (1997) points out that "there is no single, absolute difference between speech and writing in English, rather there are several dimensions of variation, and particular types of speech and writing are more or less similar with respect to each dimension" (cited in Davis and Brewer 1997: 4). Davis and Brewer (1997: 2) comment that "electronic communication written on keyboards and read on computer screens has many characteristics of both speech and writing".

Graddol points out that "new forms of computer-mediated communication are closing the gap between spoken and written English which has been constructed laboriously over centuries" (2001: 27).

In online communication, the spoken communication is conducted via the medium of writing, which makes it carry both the features of writing and speaking. To

accommodate the inadequacies of a writing system as well as in the invisibility of each other's visual and audio gestures, writing systems will be accordingly adapted. Crystal (2001) gives a very detailed description of the "unique features" of English Internet language, including the hybrid combination of written and spoken features, among others.

Here is an extract of online chat as quoted in Thornbury and Slade (2006: 23-24). The first speaker's turns are indicated by the time at which they were posted (e.g. [12:40]); and the second speaker's are marked >:

Session Start: Sunday 26 May 1996 12:40

[12:40] How are you?

> good

> fine here

[12.41] Please tell me more about you ☺

> like what

[12.42] Ok, just to refresh memories. I'm 32, divorced, English, 8 old son…

[12.42] test beds for a living ☺

>well I've never really talked to you before so no refreshing was necessary- this
   is all new.

[12.42] Ok ☺

[12.43] What about you?

> I'm 40 single, American, no children

> And I'm an interior designer

From the example above:

• We see that speakers take turns

- They respond to previous turns

- Questions are asked by both participants

- Topics are introduced

- Opening moves: 'How are you?'

- Probably closing ones as well

- Evaluative responses: 'that's nice'

- Checking moves: 'Really?'

- Confirming moves: '[but very busy] she is'

- Discourse markers are used to mark shifts in the direction of the talk: 'well, yes, but'

- Emotions ☺ are used in order to compensate for the lack of visuals or intonational information.

- We can characterize such texts as 'writing to be read as if heard' (Hillier 2004: 213, cited in Thornbury and Slade 2006: 25)

<div align="right">(Thornbury and Slade 2006: 24-25)</div>

Crystal notes Internet language as "displaying features that are unique to the Internet, and encountered in all the above situations [internet], arising out of its character as a medium which is electronic, global, and interactive" (2001: 18). However, he also indicates that it is too early to say to what extent the Internet language will develop their own idiosyncratic features, both linguistic and pragmatic (Crystal 2001).

2.4.2 Context and chat-room conversation

Discourse analysis is "the study of how stretches of language in context are perceived as meaningful and unified by their users" (Cook 2003: 50). Context change may cause a difference on language use by people.

"Context in each of its five dimensions: linguistic, situational, interactional, as

well as cultural and intertextual, is shaped by people in dialogue with one another in a variety of roles and statuses" (Kramsch 1993: 67). According to this statement, it is necessary to consider the culture, the situation, the people who are involved, and the communication styles, when online chat conversation is studied, because chat room interaction does not happen in face-to-face communication. "Different contexts of situation and different contexts of culture call for different conversational styles" (Kramsch 1998: 47). That is to say, if the chatters in the chatroom are not sharing the same cultural background or from "different groups with different knowledge and values, communication can be conceived of as being cross-cultural" (Cook 2003: 53), thus this will cause more or less difference in their communication ways, even though they are speaking the same language: English. "The ways in which language means, both as sign and as action, differ according to the medium used"(Kramsch 1998: 51). This implies that studying the Internet chat conversation should not only look at the context of computer-based communication, but also at the culture which the chatters are from. "Interlocutors from another culture with a more literate conversational style, marked by brevity, conciseness, and a concern for exactitude, might interpret the overlaps, the frequent backchannel signals and the interjections not as co-operation, but on the contrary as so many violations of their conversational space" (Kramsch 1998: 48).

Therefore, culture, to some extent, puts its imprint on the conversational styles of members of a social group. Furthermore, "people are able to display a variety of conversational styles in various situations, and one should avoid equating one person

or one culture with one discourse style" (Kramsch 1998: 49). This makes the important point that IRC discourse analysis should pay more attention to the context of chatters, not just mechanically focus on the linguistic points.

For its users, instances of language are never abstracted, they always happen in specific situations. They belong to particular people and are used to realize those people's purpose. Many other factors shape or affect the language in use. These factors could be facial expression, the relationship between speakers, social status, sex, age, the time and place, and the degree to which speakers do or do not share the same cultural background. All these factors can be known as context, and they are relevant to the actual and particular action or utterance is appropriate. Therefore, it is essential to examine the conversation in chatrooms with consideration to the chatters' cultural background.

Liu and Huo (2007) expressed some concerns for CALL in China, pointing out that up to now, Chinese CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning) is still in its infancy, since the Chinese Ministry of Education launched a teaching reform in 2004 featuring the integration of the computer and networking in College English learning to stimulate students' motivation and to improve their communicative competence. The study of Liu and Huo shows that CMC, to some extent, can bring the new nutrition to L2 teaching and learning in China, and also for language use of learners.

"Communicative competence remains, however, an extremely powerful model for applied linguistics, not only in language teaching but in every area of enquiry", and it also contributes "to a growing interest in the analysis of language use, not only

as a source of examples illustrating an underlying system but also as social action with important effects both at the micro level of personal experience and at the macro level of social change" (Cook 2003: 48). The Chat room offers L2 learners a place to put L2 to use, but how successful and appropriate the language is used will partly vary with context; in particular, the language use will be influenced by their cultural background. In a way, Chinese chatters of English will perform L2 with the reflection of their culture and L1.

2.4.3 The reasons for chatting

It is believed that there are still other affective variables significantly influencing language learners' willingness to communicate, such as: attitudes, perceived competence, anxiety, etc. (MacIntyre and Charos 1996). Online chat allows the learners to feel less anxiety and makes them more open to using English. This is in parallel with the capacity of the Internet to have an anxiety reducing effect on the students (Schwartz, 1995). A low anxiety level increases the level of learning and using.

In the Internet chat room network, users meet on channels (rooms, virtual places, usually with a certain topic of conversation) to talk in groups, or privately. Sociolinguistically, the channels are to some extent equivalent to the real-life natural formation of conversational groups. On the other hand, the formation of a natural conversational group relies on geographical nearness. In online chat rooms participants in a conversation are usually not in the same natural room or setting. Rather, they are often geographically scattered. Moreover, they often represent

different backgrounds. There is no restriction on the number of people that can participate in a given discussion. Crystal (2001) explains two reasons why chat room is popular with people. First, chat room offers chatters a place where they frequently provide each other with expressions of rapport, and they can look for opinions to react to; chatters can get the social and personal gains of participating in an anonymous and dynamic world where the chatters may be familiar or totally strangers for each other, because of the inherent attraction of the presence of linguistic confusion and incoherence during the chat talk.

Gao et al. (2005) carried out a study to investigate Chinese college students' self-identity changes associated with English learning. 2278 undergraduates from 30 universities in China were examined. Results show that in the Chinese EFL context, English learning exerted influence on learners' identities, the most prominent being self-confidence. At the same time, learners' values and communication styles undergo some productive and additive changes. Based on Gao's study, the reasons of English chat for Chinese chatters perhaps is gaining a self-confidence, along with English use in actual communication. From the perspective of linguistics and sociolinguistics, the phenomenon of communication via the Internet attracts many researchers' attention, such as chat room communication.

2.4.4 Current research about online chat room discourse

Since the Internet is a distinct language domain with its own linguistic features, many researchers have paid attention to language in relation to computer-mediated communication (CMC).

Yang (2007) carried out a sociolinguistic analysis of adaptations of the Chinese Writing System on Chinese Internet language and he identified five types of adaptations in mainland China's Internet language which are stylized Mandarin (e.g., 漂漂 piāopiāo for 漂亮 'beautiful'), stylized dialect-accented Mandarin (e.g., 灰常 huīcháng for 非常 'very much'), stylized English (e.g., 伊妹儿 yīmèier for 'email'), stylized initials (e.g., bt 变态 biàntài for 'abnormal'; pk, short form for 'player kill'), and stylized numbers (e.g., 9494 jiùshi jiùshi 就是就是 'that is it'). He further pointed out that the Internet community is composed of highly mobile individuals and thus forms a weak-tie social network and the adaptations of the Chinese writing system in Internet language provide interesting evidence for the innovations within a weak-tie social network.

Al-Sa'di and Hamdan (2005) investigated the linguistic features of e-English, relying on a large corpus of authentic Internet-Relay-Chat (IRC) and Yahoo Messenger chat sessions, both public and private. Their research has detected major linguistic features: sentences are characteristically short and simple; many words are distorted and truncated in familiar and unfamiliar ways; abbreviations and acronyms are widespread; taboo words are very likely to occur in most chat sessions, especially in public ones. They also indicate that e-English can be viewed as unclassifiable as either written or spoken language despite the written medium in which it occurs.

Neuage (2004) carried out his Ph.D. dissertation on conversational analysis of chatroom "talks". In his study, he gave a very detailed analysis of chat in 7 case studies with all its variability, and he highlights the important fact about chatroom talk,

that it is a hybrid or "fusion" form of communication. It thus requires hybridity and fusion in its analysis, which implies that conversations in chat rooms are a combination of written and spoken medium. Likewise, Crystal (2001) points out this distinct feature as "written speech". Thus the analysis of online chat conversations should not purely put emphasis on its written or spoken features.

Some other researchers also make contributions to chat-room study in different contexts and different sorts of research investigation. One 'hot topic' is the investigation of chat room from the gender identity point-of-view (Ibarra and Galimberti 2006; Herring 1994, Herring and Panyametheekul 2003).

Even though research on online-chat already exists, there is still a need for further study of how chatters use communication strategies for negotiation of meaning. Online-chat is a kind of real time conversation, so how can conversations be successfully structured in this specific context? Most current research is conducted on conversation analysis or linguistic features about native speakers' chatting conversations. It is also worth studying how the chatters, who speak English as a second or foreign language, interact with each other in the CMC mode.

2.5 Computer-Mediated Communication and Second Language Acquisition

"Interacting with a computer is (at present) not the same as interacting with a human being. And strange things can happen to conversational language when people let an electronic device come between them" (Crystal 1995: 392). Nonetheless,

millions of people communicate with each other everyday through computer and the Internet. With the technology and the Internet, a new revolution of human communication has appeared. Computer as a medium plays a more and more important role in people's social communications and networks. "Internet information and communication technologies have amplified conventional communicative practices in the areas of audience, impact, and speed and also have enabled the emergence of distinctive communicative, cultural, and cognitive practices" (Thorne and Black 2007: 133).

Second Language Acquisition (SLA) "is the study of how learners learn an additional language after they have acquired their mother tongue" (Ellis 1995: 5). Computer-mediated communication (CMC), in its own way, offers people in different contexts a various and convenient communication environment for language acquisition. Chapelle (2007) points out that computer technology provides learners with new and varied options for language learning through interactive tasks delivered through CD-ROMs, Web pages, and communications software on the Internet. Researchers need to reconsider any approach to SLA concerned with explaining how language development is prompted by exposure to the target language in view of the dramatic differences in language experience learners engage in due to computer technology. Therefore, CMC not only makes communication more various, but also challenges the traditional ways of language acquisition.

A number of recent studies have been done about CMC tasks for the effects of SLA on learners. Chapelle (2007) generally discusses the technology and SLA, and

further indicates the influence of SLA in the pedagogy and research on computer-assisted language learning. Moreover, Chapelle gives a summary of recent research of CMC for SLA done by other researchers, such as negotiation of meaning (De la Fuente, 2003; Smith, 2004; Blake, 2000; Lee, 2001) and repair moves (Jepson, 2005). All of these studies contribute to CMC for SLA and also prompt researchers to look at the discourse from different perspectives. With the influence of CMC on language learning, "the new pragmatic contexts created through the use of ICT [Internet communication tools] afford new opportunities for studying the communication that L2 learners engage in and indentifying episodes within the communication that may be important for SLA" (Chapelle 2007: 106).

Ellis (1995) points out that SLA is not a uniform and predictable phenomenon. Thus, different learners in different situations can learn a L2 in different ways. CMC enables the language learners to learn L2 with more choices. By means of computer and the Internet, the learners can accomplish the process of language in use, and finally fulfill the goal of using language for communication. Communication is one of the most significant purposes of learning a second or a foreign language. It is more than a means of facilitating the language learning, it is in itself a goal of language learning. No matter what reasons the language learners have to learn a second or a foreign language, integrative or instrumental orientation, the primary purpose for them is to use the language to communicate and to meet their goals. Communication and second language acquisition are closely tied together.

2.6 Communication strategies in SLA

Communication strategies seem "a process for managing spur-the-moment speech, that is to say to do with the use question" of knowledge of L2 (Cook 1995: 19). When learners come to an actual communication situation, an ability to use communication strategies can assist them to overcome the communication problems in L2 use, to an extent.

2.6.1 Definitions of communication strategies

"Much of the L2 research shows that different experimental tasks elicit different behaviors, relevant to second language acquisition methodology but saying little about the L2 learner's actual ability to adapt speech to circumstance" (Cook 1995: 91) The L2 learner's mind contains a double system in which two languages are used. During the learning process of L2, the learners come to a stage where they develop their interlanguage. After storing a certain amount of interlanguage, L2 learner undoubtedly use IL in actual use. "The original interlanguage concept saw strategies of L2 learning and communication as two central process. In a learning strategy the learner attempts to bring long-term competence into being, in a communication strategy, to solve a momentary communication difficulty" (Cook 1995: 113).

Most L2 research has limited the term communication strategies to strategies employed when things go wrong rather than applying it to the processes of problem-free communication: a communication strategy is resorted to when the L2 learner has difficulty with communicating rather than when things are going smoothly, a spare tyre for emergencies. Essentially L2 speakers have problems in expressing

something because of the smaller resources they possess in the L2 compared to the L1, resembling the ignorance interpretation of transfer

In Bialystok's book *Communication Strategies*, she cites four definitions relating to the strategies of second-language learners (Bialystok 1990: 3):

(1) a systematic technique employed by a speaker to express his meaning when faced with some difficulty;   (Corder 1978)

(2) a mutual attempt of two interlocutors to agree on a meaning in situations where requisite meaning structures are not shared;
                                                                                (Tarone 1980)

(3) potentially conscious plans for solving what to an individual presents itself as a problem in reaching a particular communicative goal;
                                                                  (Faerch and Kasper 1983)

(4) techniques of coping with difficulties in communicating in an imperfectly known second language.   (Stern 1983)

All the above definitions reveal the same purpose of communication strategies, namely, to solve an emerged communication problem which has emerged by applying some kind of techniques. Among these, Corder's (1978) explanation seems to be more graphic and understandable from the viewpoint of a non-native speaker of English. The definitions from Faerch and Kasper (1983) and Stern (1983) also provide us specific and precise descriptions for communication strategies, which refer to the techniques employed when speakers have problems in expressing themselves.

"The choice of communication strategies will reflect the learners' stage of development" (Ellis 1997: 61). Learners in different stage of language learning will choose communication strategies individually and differently. Communication strategies enable language users to organize their utterances as effectively as possible to get their messages across to particular listeners. "It is a necessary part of all communicative interaction, the ability to organize and express one's message in a

second language has a rather special urgency about it. Much of the work done in the investigation of communication strategies has concentrated on how learners cope with situations in which there is a gap between communicative intent and the expressive means available" (Tarone and Yule 1995: 19).

However, in the Chinese-English chatroom, Chinese chatters as non-native speakers are using English as an expressive means in the exact situation, but with different communication intent, thus, how do they overcome the communication difficulty in this way? The investigation of communication strategies which they use will shed some light on understanding about the Chinese chatters' online communication.

2.6.2 Different typologies of communication strategies

Cook (1995) discusses that "L2 researchers into communication strategies tend to divide into two camps: sociolinguistically orientated researchers, such as Tarone (1980), who think of such strategies in terms of social interaction, and psycholinguistically orientated researchers, such as Faerch and Kasper (1984), who think of them as psychological processes. The aim of both camps is to list the possible strategies available to L2 learners" (1995: 119-120).

"There is no generally agreed typology of communication strategies" (Ellis 1995: 182). Various typologies have been devised by researchers. Here three typologies are presented and discussed.

Communication strategies (Tarone 1977, cited in Cook 1995: 120-121)

1. *Avoidance*. The learner avoids the communication problem by:

a *Topic avoidance*: not saying what he or she originally had in mind;

b *Message abandonment*: giving up speaking in mid-stream.

An example of an L1 avoidance strategy is that in England we now speak of 'hairdressers' rather than 'barbers', to avoid the association with the infamous barber, *Sweeney Todd*.

2. *Paraphrase*. Paraphrase strategies compensate for an L2 word that is not known by:

a *Approximation*: finding a word with as close a meaning as possible, such as "animal" for "horse";

b *Word coinage*: making up a word, say "airball" for "balloon";

c *Circumlocution*: talking round the word- "when you make a container" for "pottery".

Paraphrase strategies rely on the language resources of the second language to get the meaning across in one way or another without falling back on the first language or on general strategies.

3. *Conscious transfer*. Transfer from the L1 helps the participants out by:

a *Literal translation*: a German speaking student says "Make the door shut" rather than "shut the door";

b *Language switch*: for example "That's a nice tirtil" (caterpillar).

Transfer strategies rely on the knowledge of the first language or the ability to interact effectively, rather than on the learner's limited L2 resources.

4. *Appeal for assistance*. For example, "What is this?"

5. *Mime*. Non-verbal activities such as acting out a request for the time by pointing to

the wrist.

Communication strategies (Dornyei 1995, cited in Brown, 2000: 128)

Avoidance Strategies:

1. *Message abandonment:* Leaving a message unfinished because of language difficulties.

2. *Topic avoidance:* Avoiding topic areas or concepts that pose language difficulties.

Compensatory Strategies:

3. *Circumlocution*: Describing or exemplifying the target object of action (e.g. the thing you open bottles with for corkscrew).

4. *Approximation*: Using an alternative term which expresses the meaning of the target lexical item as closely as possible (e.g. ship for sailboat).

5. *Use of all-purpose words:* Extending a general, empty lexical item to contexts where specific words are lacking (e.g., the overuse of thing, stuff, what-do-you call–it, thingie).

6. *Word coinage:* Creating a nonexisting L2 word based on a supposed rule (e.g., vegetarianist for vegetarian).

7. *Prefabricated patterns:* Using memorized stock phrases, usually for "survival" purposes (e.g., Where is the ___ or Comment allez–vous?, where the morphological components are not known to the learner).

8. *Nonlinguistic signals:* Mime, gesture, facial expression, or sound imitation.

9. *Literal translation:* Translating literally a lexical item, idiom, compound word,

or structure from L1 to L2.

10. *Foreignizing:* Using a L1 word by adjusting it to L2 phonology (i.e., with a L2 pronunciation) and/or morphology (e.g., adding to it a L2 suffix).

11. *Code-switching:* Using a L1 word with L1 pronunciation or a L3 word with L3 pronunciation while speaking in L2.

12. *Appeal for help:* Asking for aid from the interlocutor either directly (e.g., What do you call…?) or indirectly (e.g., rising intonation, pause, eye contact, puzzled expression).

13. *Stalling or time-gaining strategies:* Using fillers or hesitation devices to fill pauses and to gain time to think (e.g., well, now, let's see, uh, as a matter of fact).

Communication strategies (Faerch and Kasper 1984, cited in Cook 1995: 122-124)

A. *Achievement strategies*, which explore alternative ways of executing particular forms or function; the learner attempts to solve the problem he or she confronts.

   1. *Non-cooperative strategies*

     i) *L1/L3-based strategies*, relying on a language other than the L2;

        --- *code-switching*: "Do you want to have some ah Zinsen?", the German word for "interest";

        --- *foreignizing*: trying out L1 expressions in the L2 with minimal adaptation, e.g. "green things" for "vegetables" as literal translation of the Danish expression "grontsager";

        --- *literal translation*

     ii) *interlanguage strategies*, based on the evolving interlanguage such as:

--- *substitution*: putting one item for another- "if" for "whether" if the learner

cannot remember if "whether" ahs an "h";

--- *generalization*: using a more general word for an unknown word-

"animal" for "rabbit";

--- *description*: describing something- "the thing to cook water in" for

"kettle";

--- *exemplification*: giving an example of something for which the learner

does not know the word- "car" for "transport";

--- *word-coining*: making up a new word to cover a gap- "heurot" for

"watch" in French;

--- *restructuring*: phrasing the sentence in another way. –"I have two- er- I

have one sister and one brother".

iii) *Non-linguistic strategies*

--- *mime*

--- *sound imitation*

2. *Co-operative strategies*, involving the help of another person and consist of:

i) *direct appeal*, e.g.: "What is Kunst?"

ii) *indirect appeal*

B. *Avoidance strategies*

1. *Formal reduction strategies*: the learner either avoids a linguistic form he or she

had difficulty with at one of the three linguistic levels of phonology, morphology

or grammar;

2. *Functional reduction strategies*: avoid a language function at the 'actional',

'propositional', or 'model level' by, for instance, abandoning a topic.

These taxonomies seem to overlap with one another to some extent, though set

up with different motivations. Each of these three typologies has different categories,

but in the subcategories, they are interactively similar. Even though the researchers

put different names to some of them, they appear to be partially or completely

equivalent. All have general categories for avoidance and cooperative strategies; all

describe literal translation, word-coining and code-switching. In particular, in Faerch

and Kasper's typology, for example, reduction strategies and achievement strategies

equate with avoidance and compensatory strategies in the typology of Dornyei.

In brief, the classifying criterion of Dornyei's and Faerch and Kasper's

taxonomy are very similar and share much with each other, except that some names of

strategies differ from each other. Both of these two typologies are based on the

consequences of communication, either success (compensatory/ achievement

strategies) or abandoned (avoidance/reduction strategies). In contrast, Tarone's

classification is much simpler, with similar sub-types placed in one category. Even

though it seems to be typical and explicit as Bialystok (1990: 39) states, it may not be

as systematic and integrative as Dornyei's and Faerch and Kasper's. Faerch and

Kasper claim that the strategies are signs of trying to solve the problems of using an

L2 and the types of strategies seem to reflect types of solution rather than types of

problem. However, According to Cook (1995), Faerch and Kasper have a finer set of

non-strategies, but "it is not obvious that either of them lives up to their respective

goals of seeing strategies as mutual interaction or as individual problem-solving respectively" (1995: 124). Thus, in general, Dornyei's typology of communication strategies is the most detailed and also directly shows each strategy in a systematic way.

2.6.3 Language transfer

According to the Interlanguage Hypothesis (Selinker 1972), learners create an interlanguage when they try to express meaning in a second language. Language transfer is the central element in the process of creating the interlanguage, because learners need to make use of available linguistic resources in creating the interlanguage, and these resources often come from their native language. Therefore, language transfer plays a very important role in second language acquisition.

Ellis (1997) indicates that psycholinguistics is the study of the mental structures and processes involved in the acquisition and use of language and L1 transfer is one of major issues. According to Selinker (1972), language transfer is one of basic reasons for development of interlanguage. When the learner comes to an actual communication environment, some communication strategies will be influenced by their L1, thus they may use language transfer for overcoming the difficulty.

The learner uses his or her own L1 as a resource. This used to be looked upon as a mistake, but it is now recognized that all learners fall back on their mother tongues, particularly in the early stages of language acquisition, and that this is a necessary process. As Ellis (1997) claims that transfer can have several different effects.

2.6.3.1 Negative transfer

L1 transfer refers to the influence that the learner's L1 exerts over the acquisition of an L2. This influence is apparent in a number of ways. If the learner's L1 is one of the sources of error in learner language, this influence is referred to as negative transfer. Here is an example from a Chinese chatter: "Give me other one spoon!" It is not difficult to see that the correct sentence should be: "Give me the other spoon!" The speaker was obviously affected by the grammatical structure of her mother tongue (Chinese) as she constructed this English sentence. If speakers of different mother tongues do, in fact, make different mistakes, and if these mistakes do appear to be related to structures in the mother tongue, then it would seem reasonable to speak of interference errors. In a way, negative transfer may cause the misunderstanding between non-native speakers and native speakers.

2.6.3.2 Positive transfer

Not all effects of language transfer are negative. In some cases, "the learner's L1 can facilitate L2 acquisition" (Ellis 1997: 51). For example, Chinese learners of English are unlikely to make errors as they express some typical Chinese sayings or slang expressions into English. For example, in Chinese: "三思而后行", and similarly in English: think twice before you act. In the above case some similarities between English and Chinese help learners easily get close to the target language. This type of effect could be seen as positive transfer. Where languages are historically and linguistically related to each other, the positive effects of transfer may be obvious. French-speaking learners of English and English speaking learners of French quickly

come to realise that they share an enormous amount of vocabulary. For Japanese speakers learning Chinese, there is a great advantage when it comes to studying the written language in the fact that the Japanese ideographs are based upon the Chinese. However, English and Chinese are quite different from each other. When Chinese learners of English tend to have L1 as recourse to their L2 should be very careful. Nothing is absolutely right or wrong, once L2 learners can utilize their L1 for help them learn and use L2, in fact, L1 sometime will be extremely helpful.

2.7 English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) and Chinese English

2.7.1 English as ELF

The British Council's English 2000 (*Global Consultation Report* 1995) presented 2000 English language professionals worldwide with statements on the development and growth of the English language to which respondents were required to agree or disagree. Several statements received overwhelming agreement from respondents:

1.4 English will remain the world's language for international communication for the next 25 years. (*97 percent agreed*)

2.11 English is essential for progress as it will provide the main means of access to high-tech communication and information over the next 25 years. (*95 percent agreed*)

5.9 The demand for English courses taught in combination with other disciplines or subjects will increase. (*89 percent agreed*)

From the high percentage of the agreement from the respondents to the questionnaire shown above, it greatly shows that the global use of English is getting more attention from people in the world. It is becoming a medium of communication and used by more and more people from different cultures. As the result of economic globalization and the communications revolution, rapid changes on a worldwide scale would seem inevitable: "The next 20 years will be a critical time for the English language and for those who depend upon it. The patterns of usage and pubic attitudes to English which develop during this period will have long-term implications for its future in the world. (Graddol 1997: 2)

Cook (2003) points out that English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) is a new variety of English which depends neither on childhood acquisition nor on cultural identity, and is often used in communication in which no native speaker is involved. What matters in ELF's use is "clarity and comprehensibility rather than conformity to one of the existing standards" (Cook 2003: 29). In this sense, there is no extreme distinction between native and non-native speakers in the present international communication. Sometimes, native speakers "may need to adjust their language to a new norm" (Cook 2003: 29). As the world's changing language, ELF in its own way quickly influences "everyone who learns or uses English, native and non-native speaker alike" (Cook 2003: 30). Thus, in particular, ELF may further reflect and influence the populations and purposes of language learners.

With the widespread use of English as a language of wider communication and with the shift of English "from foreign-language to second-language status for an

increasing number of people, we can also expect to see English develop a larger number of local varieties" (Graddol 2001: 27). According to Graddol (2001: 27), English has two main functions in the world: a vehicular language for international communication and the basis for constructing cultural identities. The former function requires mutual intelligibility and common standards. The latter encourages the development of local forms and hybrid varieties. However, Graddol (2001: 26-27) also indicates that the trends towards fragmentation of English into many mutually unintelligible local forms will necessarily threaten the role of English as a lingua franca, because the first records of the language put more emphasis on the major differences between varieties of English. If so, each variety with its own features will probably result in the intelligibility among different cultures, to some extent.

Nevertheless, Graddol meanwhile emphasizes the impact of the Internet on the global use of English and reports that people "have to communicate with others in the cyberspace community through the medium of English" and "local communication on the Internet is expected to grow significantly. This ...will encourage the use of a wider variety of languages" (2001: 35).

Crystal points out that "any history of English shows that the language has always been something of a 'vacuum-cleaner', sucking in words and expressions from the other languages with which it has come into contact.... But today, with more contact being made with other languages than ever before, the scale of the borrowing is much greater than it has been in the past.... And the borrowing is now found in all varieties of English" (2001: 56).

No matter the future of English will be, it is not predictable to give a definite answer now. However, as discussed earlier, English, 'colored' with new features brought by its various users in the world, is becoming a communication medium for more and more people, either face to face or in the Internet.

2.7.2 Chinese English

Englishes in global use of its rapid spread attracts much attention and is "the focus of a number of publications, including … some that deal with specific varieties of English in Asian contexts such as China English" (Murata and Jenkins 2009: 2). Chinese/ China English with its millions of English learners is becoming a new variety of world Englishes.

McArthur (2003) claims that the number of English users and learners in China ranges as high as 300 million, which will continue increasing with varying degrees of competence in English, because of its position as an international medium. He further indicates that "the immense number of Chinese now using the Internet both nationally and internationally, often sending one another emails that mix English and Putonghua" (McArthur 2003: 349). Thus, it is meaningful to explore how people operate in the use of ELF.

Likewise, Kirkpatrick states that "today the desire to learn English among the educated and urban Chinese is astounding….It seems inevitable that this number of people learning and speaking English will lead to a distinctive Chinese variety of English" (2007: 146). As "Chinese English" comes into being, which has been "the subject of debate among Chinese scholars since the beginning of the 1980s"

(Kirkpatrick 2007: 146). For example, Wang defines CE as "the English used by the Chinese people in China, being based on standard English and having Chinese characteristics" (1994: 7, cited in Kirkpatrick 2007: 146). However, the current 'national' standards of English (particularly US and British) will continue to be questioned (Graddol 2001).

According to McArthur (2003), on the one hand, the influence of English on Chinese has been mainly lexical, in the adoption of technical terms; on the other hand, Chinese has provided English, directly and indirectly with a vivid range of expressions, some "with intricate etymologies and intriguing associations" (McArthur 2003: 357). As Mc Arthur implies, "it seems highly likely that their influence on one another in future will transcend anything that has so far transpired between them" (2003: 358).

Yang (2005) indicates that the study of Chinese English has a shorter history, compared with the study of other varieties of world Englishes; the literature on Chinese English available seems to focus mostly on the attitudes toward English, the history and use of English, or the EFL industry in China, thus it is just "as a fledgling nonnative variety and a late arrival in the Asian English family" (Yang 2005: 435). Kirkpatick (2007: 146-149) summarizes the lexiogrammatical features of Chinese English with different categories.

Li (2007) claims that the majority of Chinese learners learn English from local teachers: most Chinese teachers of English learned English as a second or foreign language; their English is naturally characterized by cross-linguistic influence by their

mother tongue to different extents, which should be seen as a resource rather than a deficit. Hence, Chinese English has "its own distinctive features, ranging from phonology to syntax and from lexis to discourse pragmatics: features characterized above all by cross-linguistic influence from Chinese" (Li 2007: 12). Li also points out that NS-based competence is not needed: most Chinese learners learn English for intra-national purposes, or to interact with other NNSs in the region; most learners need English to talk about aspects of their own culture rather than Anglo-American culture. Li implies that Learners will become confident owners of Chinese English rather than frustrated imitators of a NS-based standard. Li points out that more and more World ELF researchers and teaching professionals in China are "in favor of developing localized norms of English, with the goal ultimately replacing the NS-based models with a local model" (2007: 12).

Based on the discussion about L1 transfer in interlanguage, perhaps it can be assumed that positive transfer of L1 to L2 by learners may contribute to Chinese English variety. However, in order to make Chinese English understood by people from other cultures, it is very significant for L2 learners to develop "a greater awareness of three of the dimensions of understanding (intelligibility, comprehensibility and interpretability)" (Smith 2009: 17). Thus, it is then meaningful to examine the L2 learner's actual use of language either in classroom or outside classroom, such as chat room communication, which may offer a plenty of vivid evidence and contribute to the consideration and the development of cross-cultural awareness in L2 communication.

2.8 Conclusion

Based on a review of the main related current theories about natural conversation, chat room interaction, CMC in relation to SLA, and discussion of communication strategies, language transfer and Chinese English, the literature offers a general background for conducting research on English chatroom talk among Chinese chatters by investigation of their communication strategies and how Chinese has adapted communication strategies in their English. Because of its systematic and integrative features, the topology of communication strategies done by Dornyei (1995) is used and modified as a framework for the study.

Chapter 3

Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the framework of the research design. It describes the background information of the participants involved, the procedures for data collection, the instruments for data collection and the method of analysis. The research employs a qualitative method.

3.2 Restatement of the research questions

The following are the research questions:

1. What are the types of communication strategies used among Chinese users of English in the chat room interaction in China and how often do they occur?

2. To what extent, do the communication strategies found reflect their Chinese language, its cultural background and their Chinese English?

3.3 Participants and context of the study

3.3.1 Research context

A number of various English online chatrooms exist in the Internet. In China, most large websites have set up chatrooms for people's online communication and entertainment. Most of them are purely Chinese chatrooms, but some are provided especially for English learners or English fans, that is, the chatters who log on to these

chatrooms are basically demanding to type English on the screen for communication. To some extent, these national Chinese-English chatrooms are different from international English-speaking chatrooms, because they have the purposes not only of entertainment but also of serving Chinese e-chatters as a platform of English practice and use. Some of these chatrooms are directly called "English Corner".

In this study, different Chinese-English online chat conversations have been saved from the websites:

1). http://chat.sina.com.cn/homepage/chat_index.shtml;

2). http://qun.qq.com.

Each website above is very popular with Chinese e-chatters. Once the chatters get access to it and they can find an English chatroom or a chat-group and log on at any time. Data of English chat rooms for this study are '英语角' ('English Corner'), and several 'QQ英语聊天群' (QQ English-chat Groups). All of these chat rooms are chosen, because of the relatively higher number of chatters than other Chinese-English chat rooms.

3.3.2 Research participants

All chatters in these Chinese-English chatrooms are Chinese but may not come from the same regions in China. Coming from the same cultural context, they feel less anxiety and threat, and thereby they can practice English freely and be understood by their interlocutors easily. They can assume a shared background.

Normally the number of participants typically ranges from ninety to one hundred-twenty in each chat room, over different periods of time. Some members are

regulars of the chatroom; however, the majority are simply visitors. Their occupation, gender, age and social background may vary. This study is to explore the communication strategies used and how it reflects Chinese English, based on a certain number of authentic text-based public chats recorded from the chatrooms, thus, a certain group of online chatters or the issue about gender and language is the focus. The purpose is to ensure a diversity of chatters and interests and to avoid emphasis on a particular group of chatters with a limited set of topics and expectations.

3.4 Data collection

The data for this analysis is the text-based online chats from chosen Chinese-English chat rooms and saved in different periods of time over one month. The main reason for the inclusion of chats at different times of one-month is the assumption that the topic or language use of chats may differ significantly at a different time, or the participation is not as active. The instrument used in this study to collect data is the save function on the computer.

For the data collection, the researcher adopted a participant-observer role and logged on to the three chosen public chat channels, using her own chat ID and nickname. In order not to interfere with the data, the researcher logged in without participating in the chat conversations being actually recorded; meanwhile, she ignored any messages received from online chatters while the recording of the session is going on. The job of the researcher was to observe the conversations among the chatters and save the data without intervention.

Since the researcher can not reveal the role as researcher and the purpose of the investigation, all data was saved without asking for permission of all participants. This may raise some ethical concerns about the data in terms of privacy and confidentiality, permission and appropriation of others' stories. However, the online chat conversations happen in a public medium, so it is accessible to anyone. In this study, all chat conversations for data analysis are public conversations, but not private ones, which partly avoid the concerns mentioned.

In this study, the total amount of data consists of thirty different chat samples recorded from targeted Chinese-English chat rooms during one-month's observation. The complete data is shown in the Appendix (the content of the Appendix can be read in CD). The researcher logged on to each chat room for at least one to two hours at different times of each day. Due to the number of participants and the liveliness of the conversation in the chatrooms, each chat conversation may have various lengths from one page to more than eight pages. Since the participants can log on or off at any time, it may result in a very different conversation layout: short or long.

3.5 Method of data analysis

For this study, all the examples for analysis are presented exactly without any corrections of any misspellings or typing mistakes as they are saved, but the researcher reformatted the data slightly without breaking of the contents for convenience for the study, for example, the nicknames and the ID numbers of the participants are replaced with the signs of A. B. C. D, etc. as their personal identity. In

doing so, it protects the participants' privacy.

The analysis of data consisted of two procedures.

The first step:

There is no exact framework for analyzing communication strategies (CS) of online chat conversations. Based on the discussion of communication strategies in chapter 2, the researcher applied the typology of communication strategies summarized by Dornyei in 1995 (see Table 3.1), which is more detailed and integrative, to investigate communication strategies used in the English chat room conversations. Because the adaption is from the face-to-face CS to analyze online conversations in this study, it is possible that each CS may be more or less used and some other CS may appear due to the CMC mode.

The second step:

Since the CS adopted in online chats are demonstrated in the text-based forms, and all chatters are in the same Chinese cultural context, the linguistic features of frequently used CS in the chat conversations probably reflect the features of Chinese English (CE) and they do appear in the data, thus, they were studied as reflections of Chinese culture and language and also showed features of Chinese English in this study.

Kirkpatrick (2007) summarizes the lexicogrammatical features which have been identified in Chinese English (see Table 3.2 below). In this study, the analysis of Chinese English in CS used by chatters in chatrooms applied Kirkpatrick's findings as a framework for the second research question, focusing on the interpretation of lexical

features of CE in communication strategies at the discourse level.

However, as discussed in chapter two, the linguistic descriptive research of Chinese English is still at its early stages, the framework in terms of features of Chinese English from Kirkpatrick's findings can only be regarded as a possible framework of lexical features of Chinese English.

Table 3.1 The framework of communication strategies (Dornyei 1995)

Communication strategies (Dornyei 1995)	Avoidance Strategies:	1. Message abandonment
		2. Topic avoidance
	Compensatory Strategies:	3. Circumlocution:
		4. Approximation
		5. Use of all-purpose words
		6. Word coinage
		7. Prefabricated patterns
		8. Nonlinguistic signals
		9. Literal translation
		10. Foreignizing
		11. Code-switching
		12. Appeal for help
		13. Stalling or time-gaining strategies

(see chapter 2 for examples for each strategy)

The following framework of lexical features of Chinese English is summarized from Kirkpatrick (2007) and also the framework of this research based on.

Table 3.2 Lexical features of Chinese English with examples

Transliteration of Chinese words	*Pinyin*
	Putonghua
	yanmen
	Dazibao
	tai chi
	Fengshui
	Ganbei
	Maotai
	xiaokang society
Direct translation from Chinese into English of "things Chinese" or Chinese cultural concepts	*Four modernizations*
	One country, two systems
	Running dogs
	Paper tiger
	Iron rice bowl
	To get rich quick is glorious
	Open-door policy
	Barefoot doctor
	The three represents theory
	Project 211
	A flowered pillowcase
	You can't squeeze fat out of a skeleton
	The three of them wear the same pair of trousers and breathe through one nostril.
Nativised English	*poker*
Other "English" words taking on specific Chinese cultural meanings	*face*
	Guanxi
	Lover: "People are supposed to know exactly the physical conditions of their lovers," Yao said.
	Comrade

Sources from Andy Kirkpatrick (2007: 146-147)

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter provides information on the research methodology, data collection, and explains the instruments used for analysis. The next chapter concentrates on the analysis and interpretation of the data collected to answer the research questions.

Chapter 4

Data Analysis

4.1 Introduction

There are thirty public chats chosen from one month of conversation recordings. In order to answer the first research question, all targeted chat samples are analyzed to find the types of communication strategies (CS) used by the Chinese users in English chats, based on the framework of communication strategies summarized by Dornyei in 1995. Each CS found in chats is listed with several typical examples. A short discussion about the presented examples follows in each section. To answer the second research question, the relationship of the CS used by Chinese chatters with the Chinese language, Chinese cultural background and Chinese English is further analyzed and interpreted with examples and discussion.

4.2 Communication Strategies in online chat rooms

First of all, based on the framework of communication strategies (CS) summarized by Dornyei in 1995, this section studies the general occurrence and frequency of CS used by Chinese users in English chats, and then each type of CS is presented with examples. Table 1 shows details of the CS. Since all conversations occur in online environment, the next section presents other strategies due to influence of the mode-computer-mediated communication (CMC).

The following are the explanations of the symbols appearing in this chapter.

AS	Avoidance Strategies
MA	Message abandonment
TA	Topic avoidance
CM	Compensatory Strategies
CI	Circumlocution
AP	Approximation
UP	Use of all-purpose words
WC	Word coinage
PP	Prefabricated patterns
NS	Nonlinguistic signals
LT	Literal translation
FO	Foreignizing
CO	Code-switching
AH	Appeal for help
ST	Stalling or time-gaining strategies
CE	Chinese English
CS	Communication strategies
CMC	Computer-mediated communication

Notes about the examples shown in this chapter:
    *Concrete examples are shown in italics.
    *The capital English letter before the concrete chatting time
        in the examples stands for a different participant in each
        chat sample.

see example below:

Example 5 (from Chat 11)
    D 14:26:28   *hehe*,why do you keep silence,all?
    B 14:27:42   *hehe~~*busy!

4.2.1 Chinese e-chatters' general use of communication strategies in chat rooms

Table 4.1 The quantity of each CS used in the thirty chat samples

chats	AS		CM										
	(1) MA	(2) TA	(3) CI	(4) AP	(5) UP	(6) WC	(7) PP	(8) NS	(9) LT	(10) FO	(11) CO	(12) AH	(13) ST
1)	3	2	0	0	0	1	0	5	1	1	1	5	2
2)	3	8	3	5	1	1	2	49	12	16	35	30	1
3)	2	2	5	11	2	0	0	37	9	7	5	7	6
4)	4	2	0	1	1	0	0	23	6	1	4	11	1
5)	3	3	2	7	1	0	0	22	2	0	3	0	6
6)	0	3	6	14	4	1	1	56	23	4	7	6	14
7)	1	1	2	11	2	1	0	28	6	2	2	4	6
8)	2	2	0	3	0	0	0	17	5	2	4	5	1
9)	1	3	4	8	1	2	0	24	8	0	5	6	6
10)	2	0	11	28	8	3	2	61	33	13	8	9	16
11)	0	0	16	21	5	0	2	18	25	1	5	5	11
12)	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	3	2	2	2	2	0
13)	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	2	7	2	3	2	0
14)	0	0	5	7	1	1	0	4	9	1	1	3	1
15)	0	0	15	12	4	1	0	38	29	2	5	6	8
16)	0	0	7	5	2	1	2	11	13	0	1	4	2
17)	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	5	7	2	4	3	0
18)	0	0	4	3	2	0	0	5	1	1	0	0	3
19)	0	1	6	4	0	0	0	2	8	0	0	2	1
20)	1	0	3	7	1	2	1	8	18	1	1	2	2
21)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	5	1	1	3	0
22)	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	3	0	3	2	0
23)	0	1	7	2	0	1	0	8	7	0	0	1	1
24)	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	8	3	0	3	2	1
25)	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	3	0	0	1	0
26)	1	0	4	2	0	0	1	4	3	0	2	2	2
27)	0	0	13	8	0	0	0	7	7	0	6	2	1
28)	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	2	0
29)	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	9	5	0	0	3	2
30)	0	0	3	2	0	0	1	0	1	0	4	0	0
Total	23	28	124	171	37	15	13	464	261	59	115	130	94

As shown in Table 4.1, basically each CS is more or less used by the Chinese chatters. In each chat sample, most CS can be found, in despite of some being in very low frequency. This indicates that even though Chinese chatters communicate through the mode of computer, they do adopt the communication strategies used in face-to-face communication.

Table 4.2 Totals and percentages of CS used in English online chats adapted from ordinary communications

	AS	CM											Total
No. (%)	51 (3.3)	1483 (97.7)											1534 (100)
	MA	TA	CI	AP	UP	WC	PP	NS	LT	FO	CO	AH	ST
No.	23	28	124	171	37	15	13	464	261	59	115	130	94
%.	1.5	1.8	8.1	11.1	2.4	1.1	0.8	30.2	17	3.8	7.6	8.5	6.1

As shown in Table 4.2, based on the framework of CS summarized by Dornyei in 1995, it is found that when Chinese chatters of English tend to keep the smooth flow of conversation in their computer-based communication with interlocutors, they prefer to solve communication problems or make communication more enjoyable and natural mostly by using nonlinguistic signals (NS, 30.2%), literal translation (LT, 17%), approximation (AP, 11.1%), appeal for help (AH, 8.5%), circumlocution (CI, 8.1%) and code-switching (CO, 7.6%). Among these high frequent CS, approximation and circumlocution are strategies based on the lexical ability from sentence level and word level. The percentages show the fact that Chinese users of English know how to

overcome communication problems by paraphrasing the words or sentence in alternate language choices. The result indicates again that paraphrasing is a universal way of solving communication problems (Bialystok 1990), especially when there is a lack of a specific word or phrase.

However, it is very noticeable in Table 4.2 that besides approximation and circumlocution, some other strategies have high frequency, for example: nonlinguistic signals (30.2%), literal translation (17%), appeal for help (8.5%) and code-switching (7.6%). The reason for the high frequency of these strategies can be explained by three factors: lack of language knowledge, same cultural background, and the communication mode. Not surprisingly, due to lack of language knowledge, it is possible and understandable for these Chinese chatters to produce a lot of ungrammatical expressions or inappropriate words while chatting in English. Since all chatters are from the same culture, it is easier to turn to their first language and share the same cultural background with each other. That's why they tend to use literal translation or code-switching consciously or unconsciously. Besides, the different communication mode from face-to-face conversation, computer-mediated communication, leads participants to have more choices to compensate for the lack of face-to-face convenience. Since the participants can not display the real vivid facial expressions, voice intonation and emotions face to face, they can use all kinds of emoticons to show their thoughts or overcome the temporary communication gap. That is why nonlinguistic signals can be the highest frequency in all CS.

4.2.2 The demonstration and discussion of CS with examples

About up to ten typical examples for each specific communication strategy (CS) from the thirty English chats are presented and discussed below. Each CS is displayed from their high frequency to low frequency in the chats. Their percentages are portrayed in Figure 4.1, based on Dornyei's framework.
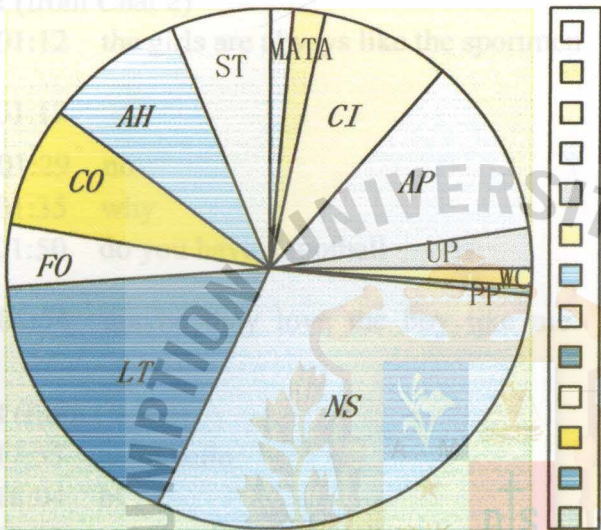
Figure 4.1 Percentages of Different Types of CS

NS (Nonlinguistic Signals)

This strategy is the most frequently used of all CS, and constitutes 30.2%. According to Dornyei, nonlinguistic signals refer to mime, gesture, facial expression, or sound imitation. However, in CMC environment, since participants do not really talk to each other face to face, but type and send posts, therefore, it is more convenient for them to turn to all kinds of emoticons or smiley which consist of different vivid facial expressions and imitate various feelings. Different from the face-to-face interaction, Chinese e-chatters of English are very likely to use emoticons to show their momentary feelings or facial expressions, however, adopting NS frequently prevents

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the e-chatters from using the target language-English, to an extent. This gradually

disobeys their purpose of practicing English through chatting.

The following are some examples.

Example 1 (from Chat 1)

    D 20:24:00   watch what

Example 2 (from Chat 2)

    C 19:01:12   the girls are always like the sportmen

    A 19:01:17

    D 19:01:29   no
    C 19:01:35   why
    E 19:01:50   do you have a football

    D 19:01:54   maybe they love the boy like me

Example 3 (from Chat 3)

    B 13:17:55   hello hello
    C 13:18:04   hi
    A 13:18:52   I am very happy can join you

    B 13:19:34

In the examples above, it shows that participants prefer to adopt some

emoticons with suitable facial expressions or specific meanings to make their

communication more understandable or interesting. In Example 1, the emoticon used

is to convey some kind of question in order to arouse the interlocutor's attention and

give the answer for what s/he is confused with. The emoticons in example 2 are signs

for laughing and smiling, which indicate the participants' friendly attitude. In

example 3, this sign stands for shaking hands which means that participant wants to

join the conversation in a very polite way.

    Besides the use of emoticons in the above examples, the participants tend to use

a lot of interjections such as "*haha*", "*hehe*" to take up the momentary pause or gap of

no response from the interlocutors or of having nothing to express, or make the tone

of typed words softer. As shown below.

Example 4 (from Chat 15)

    C 14:15:15   CHINA must be tired of this kind of question, *hehh..*

    F 14:15:28   *hehe*

    F 14:15:36   i am from china

    D 14:15:42   who is not chinese?

    F 14:15:58   i am born in fujian .china

    F 14:16:00   ok

    F 14:16:02   faint

    F 14:16:04   *hehe*

    H 14:16:06   *hehe*

    I 14:16:46   *hehe*, i am wrong, china, i thought you were a foreign

Example 5 (from Chat 11)

    D 14:26:28   *hehe*,why do you keep silence,all?

    B 14:27:42   *hehe~~*busy!

Example 6 (from Chat 6)

    K 22:03:59   *HaHa*!No ploblem!

    K 22:04:17   problem!

    L 22:06:58   that's very kind of you

    K 22:07:23   *HAHA*!

    L 22:09:32   if you say that here tomorrow,I am sure there will be many boys
                   and girls calling you elder sister

    K 22:10:25   ME?

    L 22:10:33   yes

    K 22:11:04   You don't know my phone number!

    L 22:11:11   *HaHa*!

    L 22:11:35

    K 22:07:23   H*AHA*!

It is difficult to see whether these participants are really smiling when they type

"*haha*" or "*hehe*" at that moment, however, by typing these interjections at the

beginning or in the end, they convey friendliness to the interlocutors and also help

them overcome the temporary lack of language output and embarrassment.

In order to create a relaxing chatting environment and obtain the good impression from the interlocutors, the participants are more likely to apply the emoticons and interjections "haha" and "hehe" as one of the communication strategies to their online English chats. In this way, the interaction is much closer to real face-to-face conversation, because these symbols, to some extent, make up for the absence of non face-to-face online communication. At the same time, these nonlinguistic signals, even though they are not real mime, voice intonation in real conversations, offer the participants more choices to show their feelings in a quick and easy way.

Nonlinguistic Signals as shown by the highest frequency of use among the communication strategies is popular with the Chinese e-chatters of English. It gives the participants the convenience of communicating. However, its high frequency partly indicates the insufficiency of English ability.

LT (Literal Translation)

LT as the second highest strategy is not surprising, since all participants share the same Chinese cultural background. Its frequency is 17%, less than NS. It is concerned with translating literally a lexical item, idiom, compound word, or structure from L1 to L2. As discussed in chapter 2, when the learner comes to an actual communication environment, some communication strategies will be influenced by their L1, thus they may use language transfer to overcome a difficulty. The following are examples which present how Chinese e-chatters of English use literal translation

as a CS to interact with each other.

Example 7 (from Chat 2)
    C 19:00:15   why i think it is the most beautiful game in the world
    E 19:00:21   dream is a girl
    A 19:01:12   Thanks,*very thanks*

Example 8 (from Chat 3)
    D 16:15:28   hi, buddies, it's time for going home , let's pack. see you tomorroe.
                  take care during the way home.
    I 16:16:09   see you.
    G 16:16:28   Be careful of *the color wolf* on the way back home, Sunny, hahhh
    I 16:17:13   hehe,*color-wolf*

Example 9 (from Chat 4)
    E 19:25:50   Chairman Mao used to always say *the state power came from the*

                  Firearm.

    ...
    J 20:41:31   can you tell me you know 1 *have a face* 。

Example 10 (from Chat 6)
    E 15:24:30   yeah,,,i will treat delicious food ,like *goubuli stuffed bun* and
                  seefood,,,so on,,,, to my frinds

Example 11 (from Chat 7)
    F 15:52:51   Who is this girl?
    E 15:53:32   *after 90's girl*

Normally, miscommunication occurs when one interprets communicative rules of one culture in terms of the rules of another culture. However, in this case, different from the inter-cultural communication, all participants in this communicative environment are Chinese. If they have a communication problem, they easily turn to their mother tongue language and directly transfer to English. L1 inevitably becomes their resource for interaction.

However, as Ellis (1997) points out that language transfer can be positive or

negative. In a way, negative transfer may result in misunderstanding between non-native speakers and native speakers. For instance, in the example 8, the expression "color wolf" is a direct literal translation from Chinese to English. In Chinese, it is "*se lang*", in which "*se* (色)" means "color" and "*lang* (狼)" means "wolf". However, in English it means "Lothario" or "lady-killer". The participant literally translates it according to Chinese word by word. What is interesting is that even though this expression can be seen as a negative transfer, it does not prevent understanding in the interaction, since both of participants are in the same Chinese culture. It is easy for them to comprehend each other. The similar situations can be seen in Example 9, the sentence is directly translated from the Chairman Mao's words. The original meaning is "power grows from the barrel of the gun"; in Example 11, "*after 90's girl*" means GEN-90s' girls who are born in 1990s. Literal Translation as a communication strategy does benefit the Chinese users of English chats to overcome the temporary communication problems, but it becomes an obstacle for developing the cross-cultural awareness to some extent.

AP (Approximation)

Approximation means using an alternative term which expresses the meaning of the target lexical item as closely as possible. That is to say, when language users can not express a specific word, they will use another similar word for replacement. In the English chats of Chinese users, this strategy is used by 11.1%. Examples are presented as below.

Example 12 (from Chat 9)

    D 13:17:04   *philosopher*   haha   i don't *recgnise* it

Example 13 (from Chat 9)

    B 13:31:57   Not cantonese, the huizhou *words*.

Example 14 (from Chat 10)

    J 15:30:02   i am afraid that i cannot deal with *contend* between people.

Example 15 (from Chat 11)

    D 14:44:45   but i *trust* you have been accepted by the college

    E 14:44:52   but now seems to be a little late,doesn't it?

    D 14:45:27   if you *lose* ,the *state* should not be '院校在读'

    E 14:45:43   if the second type cannot accept me ,I may go to the third typed one

    E 14:46:29   I *convince* that I can go to school,but I just *ganrantee* which school will be the *real* one

It is interesting to find out that the Chinese users in English chats are more likely to use directly infrequent words from their vocabulary storage for the temporary lack of a specific word. For instance, in the example 14, the participant can use a much easier word "fight" or "competition", however, she chooses the word "contend" which is not really appropriate. This indicates that even though the participants have problems for specific lexis, they tend to apply a word which may not be frequently used in their talk in this situation. The purpose can be that they want to keep practicing words stored in their memory.

AH (Appeal For Help)

The percentage of AH is 8.5% in the Chinese-English online chats, which means according to Dornyei's explanation, asking for aid from the interlocutor either directly (e.g., "What do you call…?") or indirectly (e.g., rising intonation, pause, eye contact, puzzled expression).

In the analysis of communication strategies in the online chats, Chinese chatters

of English prefer to ask for help either from their interlocutors directly, or use

question mark "?" and the emoticon such as "   " to imply the confusion or asking

for help.

Example 16 (from Chat 3)

G 14:05:08   Everyday?
C 14:05:28   no
C 14:05:45   just today.
G 14:06:06   It's much better than my hometown.

G 14:13:55

Example 17 (from Chat 2)

E 19:46:11   1 think enlish is language，too
J 19:46:46   *WHAT IS MEAN?*
J 19:47:40   I CAN'T UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU WROTE
K 19:48:27   me too
E 19:48:27   so 1 think 1 can learn english every much
E 19:48:51   so 1 think 1 can learn english every good
J 19:49:29   VERY
E 19:50:10   *what do you mearn ?*

Example 18 (from Chat 3)

G 13:57:48   The same here, we have been influenced by the typhoon for several
             days.
G 13:58:56   The weather is quite changeable, basically I don't know if I should
             take an umbrella every morning, you know, I still like to go out
             without anything in hand.
J 13:59:09   *What's the meaning of typhoon?*

In example 16, the way for asking help is much more indirect than the way

shown in example 17. Usually once the participant can not understand the meaning

totally or they have no patience to make a roundabout, they are likely to appeal for

help. It is more convenient and efficient for interaction. Since the interaction happen

in online cyberspace, the e-chatters have to use more question marks to indicate their

rising intonation. This is different from face-to-face communication.

CI (Circumlocution)

Circumlocution can be seen as a paraphrase strategy because it indicates "describing or exemplifying the target object of action". It is also used often by Chinese users in English online chats. The percentage is 8.1%.

Example 19 (from Chat 3)

I 14:44:19   I don't like he *change his skin to white*
A 14:44:59   very scared
I 14:45:33   yes
G 14:45:57   As per the report, it's said he didn't change his skin at all, and that was just caused by orthopedic operation.
G 14:46:55   Maybe there is really no *this kind of changing skin operation* yet.

Example 20 (from Chat 17)

A 23:09:58   do u play happy farm
B 23:11:18   what?
A 23:13:13   *a kind of game   on QQ*
B 23:14:43   *can play with a lot QQ friends*

In example 19, the two participants are talking about singer Michael Jackson. Because of lack of the expression "cosmetic surgery", they turn to describing it in more simplified words. In example 20, one participant tries to exemplify a computer game to the interlocutor. In an exact communicative situation, this strategy is much more useful and beneficial for improving the ability of language users. However, it is found that participants who prefer to use circumlocution are normally the relatively proficient language users. This indicates that most participants in this online English chats can not use English in a more flexible way and have no enough ability to use paraphrasing.

CO (Code-Switching)

While Chinese e-chatters in English are communicating with each other, CO with its high percentage of 7.6% is another way of overcoming communication problems. The following examples present the use of Chinese while chatting in English.

Example 21 (from Chat 2)
    E 19:17:34   why
    C 19:17:38   march means 行军

Example 22 (from Chat 4)
    C 18:55:52   i don/t know,what mean,is "check out her booty"
    A 18:56:29   看看她的战利品

Example 23 (from Chat 5)
    B 10:18:57   Sounds good, Sunny [The nickname of A], tell us a story just like you do it to your students.
    C 10:21:19   Sunny[The nickname of A],are you a teacher?
    A 10:23:33   ok, there is a boy named 子健，he is 结巴。how, how , how ,____ are you. he always open mouth a long time. it's very funny.

Example 24 (from Chat 8)
    G 15:07:16   you're showing other aspect of you,after all you're a little boy,
    F 15:08:06   aspect?
    G 15:09:17   方面
    F 15:09:39   i see

Example 25 (from Chat 9)
    B 13:39:25   It sounds you are working quite hard.
    D 13:39:28   促销
    B 13:39:43   Is this your part-time job?
    I 13:39:45   what?
    E 13:40:07   happy girl,i guess jimmy cursed you last night
    D 13:40:13   临时
    I 13:40:39   heidiiuu what areyou doing now

The examples show that when Chinese chatters of English have problems employing proper words or expressions, they easily depend on their mother language

and insert corresponding mother-tongue language in their L2 communication. Another interesting point is that when participants do not know a specific word and appeal for help, their interlocutor prefers to give the Chinese meanings directly. Despite its efficiency for overcoming lexical problems, this kind of code-switching does prevent participants from using much more positive strategy--- circumlocution.

ST (Stalling or Time-Gaining Strategies)

This strategy means using fillers or hesitation devices to fill pauses and to gain time to think (e.g., well, now, let's see, uh, as a matter of fact). Its percentage is 6.1%.

Example 26 (from Chat 10)
C 14:53:48   persioner [E]?
E 14:54:50   Yeah, this is Prisoner.
C 14:55:07   ═
C 14:57:42   come out,persioner

Example 27 (from Chat 10)

A 12:51:31
C 12:51:54   you are a beautiful girl

E 12:51:56

Example28 (from Chat 14)
A 20:11:16   *well*,you're welcomed here

Example 29 (from Chat 18)
C 14:31:11   in a small company
A 14:33:57   really, sorry, i think you are a boy, *you know*, as a student.

In the use of ST, even though some participants appear to be more fluent by using "well" or "you know", it is not frequently used by most participants. This greatly results from the mode of communication. It is not possible to judge whether

the participants need more time for thinking in online situation. Since they have no

strict time limitation, they are more likely to use some other symbols for time gap.

However, if a participant knows to use some fillers while chatting, at least it partly

shows that this user is good at spoken communication strategies.

FO (Foreignizing)

According to Dornyei, this strategy refers to using a L1 word by adjusting it to

L2 phonology (i.e., with a L2 pronunciation) and/or morphology (e.g., adding to it a

L2 suffix). However, probably Chinese users find it hard to use a Chinese character to

substitute the pronunciation of an English word; nor just simply add an English suffix

to it, for Chinese and English are very different types of language. This results in the

low frequency of 3.8%.

Example 30 (from Chat 1)
    G 21:31:35   hi,lilin,how *a* u?long time no see

Example 31 (from Chat 2)
    A 18:57:11   *he he*

Example 32 (from Chat 10)
    C 15:01:39 *3q*
    C 15:01:37 ok
    E 15:02:26 *Hehh*..I was reading news when I got your message just now.
    C 15:03:59 *en*
    C 15:04:43 i finished my work，but i should sent the team a mail，so i call you
             for help
    E 15:04:58 Okay, it's done.

It is found that Chinese e-chatters of English sometimes foreignize some words

by applying L1 pronunciation to L2 words, and then create some similar words in L2.

As shown in examples. "*a*" means "are"; "*3q*" means "thank you"; "*hehe*" means "ha

ha"; and "*en*" is similar to "er" or "uh". All these words have the same feature that the

Chinese pronunciation of these words is very close to English ones, thus, Chinese

chatters tend to create typical words using partial L1 pronunciation to L2 words. This

may be due to lack of correct spellings of these words or for the convenience during

communication.

UP (Use of All-Purpose Words)

It refers to "extending a general, empty lexical item to contexts where specific

words are lacking (e.g., the overuse of thing, stuff, what-do-you call–it, thingie)". The

percentage of occurrence is 2.4%.

Example 33 (from Chat 5)
>   B 15:03:40   Hi Sunny, I am a little hungry, do you have *something* delicious to
>   talk about?

Example 34 (from Chat 10)
>   F 13:15:55   ok
>   F 13:16:03   i'm a student
>   A 13:16:04   tell us *something* about yourself
>   F 13:16:23   now in summer vacation

Example 35 (from Chat 22)
>   E 17:26:44   what are you doing now?
>   F 17:27:12   play game
>   E 17:28:03   there are *sth* with the internet 。

All examples show that when Chinese chatters are lacking of a specific word,

they tend to use empty lexical words such as "something" or "anything". In example

35, the participant answered "*there are sth with the internet*", which shows that this

participant may not want to tell the exact thing s/he is doing, but to great extent, s/he

uses a convenient word 'something' for taking up the momentary lack of words in

order to keep interactive. In this way, it may not be good at these L2 users'

improvement of vocabulary. However, it is true that using these empty lexical words

in the exact or real conversation can be prompt and efficient, to some extent.

WC (Word Coinage)

WC means "creating a non-existing L2 word based on a supposed rule (e.g.,

vegetarianist for vegetarian)".

Example 36 (from Chat 1)
B 20:24:38   what *tving*
E 20:25:39   WHAT?

Example 37 (from Chat 9)
A 12:41:20   yeah
A 12:42:23   but if someone can specify my mistakes,i will feel *more happy*

Example 38 (from Chat 10)
E 13:38:31   Alright, you can fix it first.
F 13:38:52   no,hehe.just *resetup*

From the examples, this strategy can partly reflect the language users'

familiarity with language rules, even though it is a kind of misuse of words. In

example 36, the word 'tving' is actually a misuse of noun plus 'ing'. Here the

participant misunderstands the usage of present continuing tense of English in

English-interacting environment. However, in Chinese online chatting interaction, the

popularity of the suffix 'ing' added to a Chinese verb character does exist among

Chinese communication. Chinese learners combine this English rule with their

Chinese expressions. Normally, if a person wants to express a continuing action or

behavior in Chinese, he may type or write, for example: '吃 ing' means 'eating'; '玩

ing' means playing'. In Example 37 and 38, the creation of words using existing rules

are displayed: the correct form of 'more happy' and 'resetup' should be 'happier' and set up again', but they can show that the participant knows the part of the rules, but apply it carelessly.

In the examples from the chats above, they may be seen that the Chinese chatters of English misuse rules for word formation and create some non-existing L2 words, however, it also indicates that language learners of English are creative and they produce their new communication symbols for the ease of entertainment and efficiency. By now, it is too early to say this tendency is positive or negative, but the technology and the Internet do bring new influence to the language learning. Nevertheless, the strategy-WC is not frequently used, for if the participants may not know much about word rules, it will be a risk for them to create words by applying learned rules arbitrarily.

PP (Prefabricated Patterns)

It means using memorized stock phrases, usually for "survival" purposes. Chinese learners of English are well known for their diligence. Normally it is very common to notice that students rehearse typical sentences from the textbooks. Prefabricated patterns can assist learners to reach their basic communication goal, such as greetings, asking for directions or shopping. However, in online chatting environment, participants are not really face to face and do not know each other. PP is not popular with participants. The occurrence is only 0.8%.

Example 39 (from Chat 2)
 C 19:10:02   *May I ask you a qusetion*?
 E 19:10:07   yes

Example 40 (from Chat 10)

A 12:40:39   *nice to meet you* again

Example 41 (from Chat 10)

E 15:30:55   Sofia, *what do you do*?

C 15:31:01   but now ,i have nothing

J 15:31:04   i am a student

Example 42 (from Chat 10)

E 14:09:59   Joely, *how are you doing*?

I 14:10:41   *I AM FINE，AND U*?

As shown in examples, Chinese chatters apply some stock phrases to their exact

conversations, which offer them a chance to practice what they learned or memorized.

MA (Message Abandonment) and TA (Topic Avoidance)

Both of MA and TA are subtypes of avoidance strategies. These strategies may

be an effective way but are not a beneficial way for L2 learners. In real face-to-face

conversation, it is much easier to see the occurrence of MA/TA, if the learner who

does not know the answer and just keeps silent about it when a specific question is

asked. However, in cyberspace communication, participants have freedom to join in

or give up the interaction at any time; hence, they can freely choose or change what

they want to interact with each other.

In the analysis of MA and TA strategies used by Chinese e-chatters of English,

it is much more difficult to decide whether MA or TA is employed by users, since all

conversations happen in public, which means anyone who logs on can join in or leave

freely. That is to say, there is no strict turn-taking in the public online chats, due to

limitations imposed by computer-mediated messaging systems on turn taking.

Basically, once a chatter has something to say, s/he just types. The chatting message is

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normally short and incomplete. The percentage of MA and TA is 1.5% and 1.8%, respectively. Even though the percentage of these strategies is much lower, it does not mean that the participants have totally successful deep interaction with each other, due to their absolute freedom of entering 'in and out' of the chat room.

Example 43 (from Chat 1)

A 19:35:34   Hi
B 20:07:49   hello
B 20:07:56   what are you doing ?
C 20:21:34   *watching*
D 20:22:20   hello
D 20:22:34   watch what ?
C20:22:33   enha
C 20:23:13   wap
B 20:23:16   haha
B 20:23:28   hello everyone

D 20:24:00   *watch what*
D 20:24:09   hi
B 20:24:38   what tving
E 20:25:39   WHAT?
D 20:27:23   *is there someting interesting ?*
F 21:17:55   *any beauty here?*

G 21:29:35
B 21:29:49   哈哈
G 21:30:29   *good evening，guys*
F 21:31:18   hi Summer Lee

In this sample excerpt, even though it is very short, there are up to 7 participants joining in this conversation simultaneously. In this case, the topic keeps changing once a participant joins and interrupts. It is not surprising that the topic can not be extended and the conversation can not follow the turn-taking sequence found in face-to-face conversations. The way participants take or allocate turns in the online chatting environment is random and loose. Accordingly, most Chinese participants of

English in one public chatting conversation, which is full of multi-sub-conversations

just do a kind of superficial practice of greeting with different 'others'.

Example 44 (from Chat 3)
G 15:31:26   Jenny, *why did you come in this group?*
G 15:32:36   Sunny, it's kind of you.
D 15:32:45   Jenny, are you longly? *you are in GuangDong* by yourself, aren't you?
G 15:33:43   Sunny, you are really considerate.
K 15:33:52   *to improve my spoken English*
H 15:35:04   to pmprove my oral english
K 15:35:23   sunny,*where are you from?*
I 15:35:26   lonely
D 15:35:27   sorry , her name remind me of this.
H 15:35:29   and *to make firends*
D 15:35:44   i am in beijing.
I 15:35:50   promote
G 15:36:27   You are all diligent people.
K 15:36:51   isn't it a beautufull city!
I 15:36:57   *How to improve English listening.*
G 15:37:45   Watch Prison Break, King.
G 15:37:49   Hahhh...
I 15:38:44   OK

Example 44 shows that the Chinese participants in online English chats

normally have their own preference on topic choices, which are easier for them to

deal with and express. Most topics found in Chinese e-chatters of English in this study

are about hobbies, family, weather, purposes of online English chats, the methods of

learning English, occupations and locations. All these topics are frequently discussed

in all online chats, especially discussion about how to improve English, which does

reflect the main purpose of their English chatting online.

The reason for the preference of some certain topics tends to be that they have

not acquired basic knowledge of English and they seldom practice it. What is more,

they can easily build up the common ground for each other from these topics, and it is in this way that these Chinese chatters of English can obtain a sort of self-confidence from using English. However, since some e-chatters keep asking the same or similar questions to different people, the interaction seems very superficial. Furthermore, this chatting model dislocates the principle of Adjacency pairs, because the participants can have sufficient freedom whether they respond to their interlocutors or not. To an extent, it results in a regular opening, such as *"hello"*, *"how are you"* or *"where are you from"*. However, the online conversation may not have a relative closing, since the e-chatters can log on or off anytime.

4.2.3 Other strategies found in Chinese-English online chats

By means of the communication mode-CMC, it is found that the Chinese online chat participants of English are not only able to modify existing spoken and written communication strategies, but also to create other strategies to meet their communication needs.

4.2.3.1 Strategies influenced by computer-mediated communication

In order to keep the speed of online communication close to real face-to-face interaction, online conversations are often characteristic of

1) short utterances; (see Examples below)

2) incomplete, grammatically simple or incorrect utterances; (see Examples below)

3) omitted punctuation; (see Examples below)

4) lexical truncation; (see Example 43)

5) typographical errors or deliberate lack of capitalization; (see Example 45)

6) <u>abbreviations</u> (e.g., 'u' for 'you'; 'thx' for 'thanks'; 'be4' for 'before'); (see Example 47, 48, 49). It is interesting to note that not all words are simply defined as abbreviations, because it is far more than that. For instance, the words 'u' and 'be4' in 4 and 6 are kind of abbreviations for the complete words 'you' and 'before', but they also keep the approximate sound of the original word through matching it with a similar-sounding pre-existent word/morpheme in the target language. In example 32, the typical word '3q' is originally created by Chinese users of English. In Chinese Pinyin, '3' is 'san'; the expression 'thank you' is then divided into 'than---kyou' and replaced with '3 (*san*)q' correspondingly. In this case, the Chinese user not only retains the partial sound of created word through matching it with the similar-sounding word in the target language and their L1, but also they create some new abbreviations for efficiency of communication, which can reflect the Chinese language's phonology. Zuckermann (2003) introduces an analysis of 'multisourced neologization' which brings a new classification of multisourced neologisms, words deriving from two or more sources at the same time. Examples of such mechanisms are 'phonetic matching', 'semanticized phonetic matching' and 'phono-semantic matching'. Based on Zuckermann's research, the abbreviations used by Chinese e-chatters of English can show the mechanism of phonetic matching. It is also partly consistent with findings of Yang's (2007) identification of five types of adaptations in mainland China's Internet language.

7) <u>visual cues</u> and <u>other symbols</u> (e.g. the idiosyncratic use of word colours and pictures; particular font styles by participants; the use of emoticons '   ' to

represent a smile; ';-(' for unhappiness); (see Figure 4.2 below)
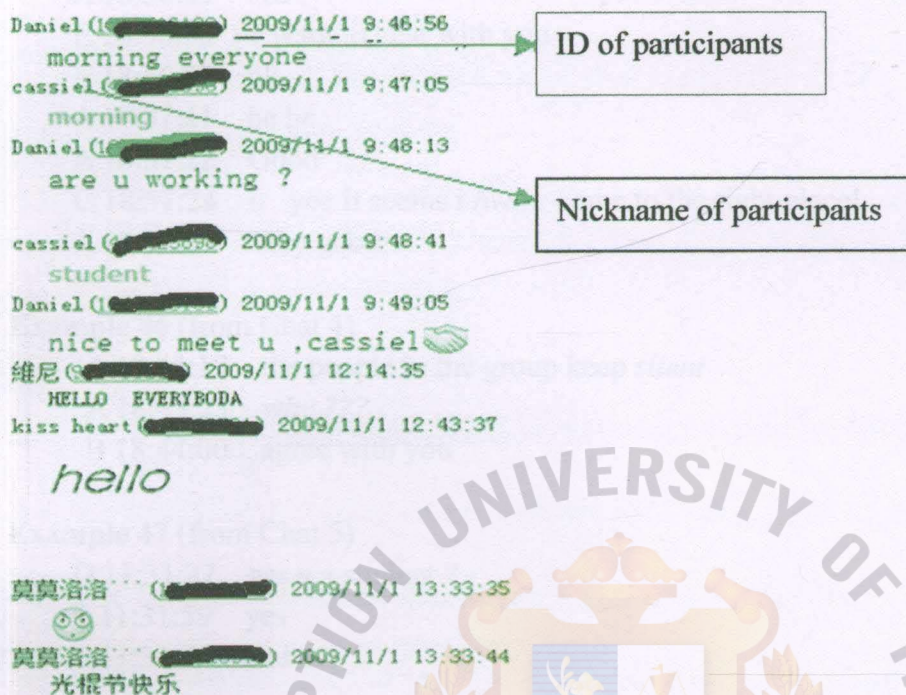
Figure 4.2 Log file from one Chinese-English chat room

Figure 4.2 illustrates how participants use visual cues and symbols such as word colors, different font style to facilitate their words to be traced easily.

8) application of conventional face-to-face oral conversation strategies (e.g., the use of a nickname that signals identity elements or affirms conversation partners); (see Example 51). In face-to-face conversations, speakers tend to call each other's names for a kind of relationship bonding. Likewise, in the online chatting interaction, participants have to use this strategy for getting the attention from their interlocutors or slightly showing the politeness or intinity.

9) adaption of conventional strategies from spoken language interactions to the written medium (e.g. repetition of part or all previous relevant utterance to signal what is being responded to, emphasis, or appeal for help); (see Example 52)

As shown in the examples below:

Example 45 (from Chat 2)

A 18:56:49 NO
E 18:56:53 1 want to chat with you
E 18:56:57 ok
A 18:57:11 he he
A 18:57:22 Good
C 18:57:24 o yee It seems i *hvave* come to the right place!
A 18:57:29 Very good!

Example 46 (from Chat 4)

A 18:43:19 the people in the group keep *slient*
A 18:43:23 *why ???*
B 18:44:00 agree with you

Example 47 (from Chat 5)

D 11:31:27 are *u* a student ?
E 11:31:59 yes
E 11:33:55 and *u*

Example 48 (from Chat 6)

E 14:57:30 hahhhhh
A 14:57:33 Never mind, we knew it.
E 14:57:39 yeah
E 14:57:41 *thx*

Example 49 (from Chat 29)

B 14:22:29 *sry* to hear it   can u learn *sth* from it?
A 14:23:07 yes,
B 14:23:47 *GZ*
A 14:24:13 great
B 14:24:09 *wat u* mean
B 14:24:41 actually not that great although i hopefully it would
B 14:25:02 *hv u* been here *be4*?

Example 50 (from Chat 9)

B 12:26:10

C 12:30:20 ;-(

Example 51 (from Chat 6)

A 13:03:35 You mean the Teterminal?

C 13:04:05   Y E S

...

A 13:10:35   [The nickname of D] Excuse me, what should we call you?
D 13:11:00   just call me *sophia*
A 13:11:24   Okay, *Sophia*, nice name, glad to see you join us.

Example 52 (from Chat 9)

E 12:47:09   *"Prisoner(664320943) 13:34:40Happy girl, you can ask for help
              from Heidiiuu"*. actually i can't deal with this problem.
A 12:47:19   ...you can help me
E 12:47:32   no

All these strategies found in online chatting environment are generated a great deal for maintaining conversational coherence. Besides, most of them indicate the linguistic features of Chinese e-chatters of English, to some extent.

It is worth pointing out that due to the influence of the visual nature of online communication medium, these strategies do occur in these online English chats. However, there are some exceptions. For instance, sometimes the participants tend to use some punctuations such as "*!*" and "*?*" to show strong feelings, questions; most abbreviations found in the chats are basically simple words such as "*u*" and "*r*". This may result from the level of the proficiency of online chat skills or users' language learning purposes that they communicate not only for fun, but also for language acquisition.

4.2.3.2 Strategies for acquiring L2 in language use

What is noticeable in this research is that Chinese e-chatters of English combine L2 use with L2 acquisition. Since they treat online English chatting as a way for practice and language use, the participants tend to create some strategies for their learning in language use. For instance, they may use self-repair for some word

spellings or obtain corrections from their interlocutors during interaction. It seems that

chat rooms for these Chinese users of English do not serve as a platform for

entertainment, but more as a temporary English learning forum, where the participants

exchange their learning experiences and learn from each other in a way.

Example 53 (from Chat 2)

E 19:48:27	so 1 think 1 can learn english *every much*
E 19:48:51	so 1 think 1 can learn english *every good*
J 19:49:29	*VERY*
E 19:50:10	what do you mearn ?
J 19:50:24	I REALLY WANT TO LEARN ENGLISH
J 19:50:30	应该这么说
J 19:51:26	*VERY, VERY, NOT EVERY*
E 19:51:42	why are you beat yourself
L 19:51:55	hehe
E 19:52:08	*why are you beated yourself ?*
H 19:52:28	多了个动词 啊
H 19:52:37	饭桶
E 19:53:05	*why are you beated yourself*
E 19:53:18	是它吗
H 19:53:30	....
H 19:53:55	why did you beat yourself ?
E 19:55:09	那如果是你为什么被打呀
E 19:55:26	该怎么改
I 19:55:43	被
E 19:56:03	why are you beated ?
E 19:56:16	*is ti ok ?*
E 19:56:29	*is it ok ?*
L 19:59:32	why were you beat by yourself?
H 19:59:56	....

In Example 53, it clearly shows how participants help each other with right use

of word spellings, grammar structures. One of participants 'E' turns to self-repair for

the word spellings. In this way, these e-chatters may obtain a certain help for their

English, however, it depends on the participants' real language competence.

Otherwise, the participants may focus on the surface of grammar structure, but not the

semantics.

Example 54 (from Chat 9)

B 13:12:26	*Well, what kind of new words did you get? Please share with us.*
E 13:12:37	i know nothing about stock market
B 13:12:56	Never mind, you can talk with about whatever you like.
E 13:13:04	*ok*
B 13:13:26	Hi, Lilin and Happy Girl.
G 13:13:52	Hi everyone
B 13:14:01	What's the weather like?
D 13:14:09	oh read in heart ,loneness will away.
E 13:14:12	*wedding reception.i cordially invited you.*
E 13:14:43	*wedding photoes.wedding album*
E 13:14:52	*outdoor scene*
B 13:15:18	*Sounds good, I am interested in something about wedding.*
E 13:15:43	*maid of honor 伴娘 best man 伴郎*
B 13:16:00	Happy girl, you seem like a philosopher, hehh
E 13:16:12	*hehe.beacuse you will get married very soon*
B 13:16:26	Hehh...maybe

In the example above, the conversation between the participants gives a good illustration about how they utilize chat talk for their acquisition of L2 vocabulary. One participant suddenly types some new expressions about a wedding for him/herself which are actually not relevant to the topic. In this way, this participant memorizes the words by typing them on the chatting screen and shares them with other participants.

Example 55 (from Chat 30)

A 20:08:34	*Have been reading the skill for shares*
B 20:09:34	t think you are a *fat cat*
A 20:09:54	No, I am *very thin.*
A 20:10:23	*less than 55 kg*
A 20:10:44	and I am *170cm*
B 20:11:01	*you know fat cat?*
B 20:11:34	胖猫
A 20:11:34	*fatcat*
A 20:11:40	富翁
C 20:11:59	吵死了
B	sorry, I don't know the mean.

A	20:13:17	*fatcat*-富翁　，有钱人
A	20:15:25	i will go . bey
B	20:16:37	OK
B	20:16:44	see you.
D	23:37:08	The night cat ?
E	23:38:48	so many night cats ni this qq group
D	23:44:22	Many can 't go to sleep ,too hot

The excerpt of sample above is a vivid example which shows how participants learn L2 vocabulary from each other during interaction, despite misunderstanding of the word 'fat cat' at beginning. In this way, the participants learn new words from each other. However, the strategy used for overcoming the language problem in this case is code-switching. This greatly manifests the participants' low L2 knowledge in exact language use and laziness in solving the language problem.

All examples show that Chinese users of English make use of online chat rooms not only for L2 in use, but also for a kind of L2 acquisition. However, the efficiency and effect of this way of learning is mixed in online interaction for the participants and should be evaluated carefully, since they use a lot of direct code-switching from their L1 to the English online chats. At the sociolinguistic discourse level, code-switching has its social functions. In this case, these Chinese participants are users of English online; more importantly, they are English learners with the purpose of developing communicative competence of using English via English chatting. Otherwise, there is no need for them to 'speak' English with each other in this cyberspace full of Chinese.

4.2.4 Summary of all CS used in online English chats

Generally speaking, in order to keep the certain flow of interaction and overcome the lack of temporary insufficiency of their L2 knowledge, the Chinese e-chatters of English utilize communication strategies of face-to-face interaction in their online chatting conversations. In addition, due to the influence of CMC, these participants generate some other strategies which may not be used during face-to-face communication.

As shown in Table 4.3 below, Chinese e-chatters of English adopt various strategies not only for their online English communication, but also for their English acquiring, to some extent.
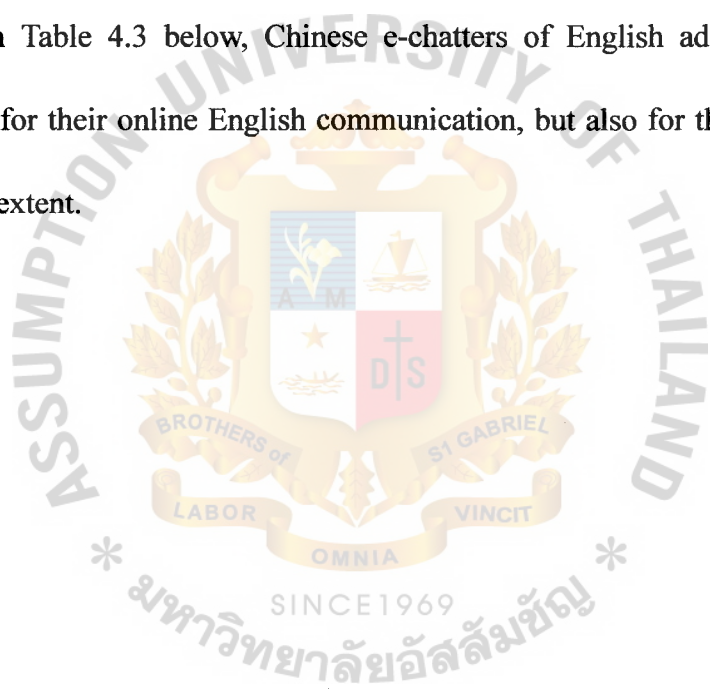
Table 4.3 The general types of CS used in Chinese-English chat rooms

CS used by Chinese e-chatters of English			
CS adapted from face-to-face conversation		**CS resulting from the mode of CMC & L2 acquisition**	
AS	CM	CS resulting from CMC	CS for L2 acquisition
MA (1.5%)	NS: 30.2% (emoticons, interjections representing feelings or facial expressions)	short utterances	self-repair
TA (1.8%)	LT: 17% (negative or positive transfers)	incomplete, grammatically simple or incorrect utterances	correction from interlocutors
	AP: 11.1% (new words practice and use)	omitted punctuation	
	AH: 8.5% (directly or indirectly)	lexical truncation	
	CI: 8.1% (exemplify a target word)	typographical errors or deliberate lack of capitalization	
	CO: 7.6% (words or phrases inserted)	abbreviations	
	ST: 6.1% (frequent use of "well", "you know", but not all participants good at using these words)	visual cues and other symbols	
	FO: 3.8% (frequent use of words e.g. 'hehe', 'o'…; low frequency)	application of conventional face-to-face oral conversation strategies	
	UP: 2.4% (e.g. 'something', 'anything', low frequency)	adaption of conventional strategies from spoken language interactions to the written medium	
	WC: 1.1% (low frequently used)		
	PP: 0.8% (low frequently used)		

4.3 Reflections on the cultural background and Chinese English through the Communication Strategies

As discussed in chapter 2, there is a very significant relationship between language and its culture. It is difficult to separate language learning from its culture. Language use is inevitably a clear manifestation of culture.

At the discourse level, the relationship between language, communication and culture is virtually inseparable. Therefore, the communication strategies (CS) adopted by Chinese chatters of English, to some extent, will indicate relationship with Chinese, cultural background and Chinese English. Among CS found in online English chats, literal translation (LT) and code-switching (CO) with their high percentage are frequently used by Chinese e-chatters. Due to the close link of these strategies to L1 (Chinese), examples about LT, CO and nonlinguistic signals (NS) are presented as below, respectively, in order to show how CS reflects Chinese cultural background and Chinese English. The analysis of Chinese English in chat rooms will focus on the interpretation of lexical expressions at the discourse level, based on the framework of lexical features of Chinese English summarized from Kirkpatrick (2007).

4.3.1 Reflection on the use of Code-Switching

Code-switching (CO) is one of the most frequently used CS among Chinese e-chatters of English, when they meet some kind of problems of language knowledge. The Chinese words applied to CO are not just for overcoming the communication difficulty, but also greatly indicate Chinese cultural background. See examples below.

Example 56 (Chat 2)

    A 21:21:58   Frank appear!

    A 21:22:39   Frank mean is *re gou*

Example 57 (Chat 15)

    C 13:46:20   *ni hao*

In this example, "re gou" and "ni hao" are typed in pinyin mixed with English

chats, which mean 'hot dog' and 'hello' in English.

Example 58 (Chat 3)

    D 13:39:13   by the way, why can't you pick up this name   "夏季"you know,
                    you scare me. i don't like this word"祭"

    …

    D 15:10:41   excuse me , i think *maotai* is the best to buy and hold. but , my
                    little brother don't think so.

    I 15:11:30   it is too hight now.

    I 15:11:45   but it reach 230 *Yuan* befor.

    I 15:11:48   before.

    G 15:15:03   Yeah, actually I don't like to busy those which price is higher than
                    RMB ten.

Example 59 (Chat 6)

    G 15:35:34   the *xiangsheng* artist?

Example 60 (Chat 17)

    B 22:33:54   hehe thank you   i have played *majiang* for many days

    A 22:34:15   when i am back

    A 22:34:20   teach me

    B 22:34:48   ok,but I play Y*ingshan majiang*,not *Chengdu majiang*

    A 22:51:31   i prefer *Chengdu majong*

Example 61 (Chat 7)

    A 16:02:14   三个臭皮匠顶一个诸葛亮

In example 58, the meaning of "祭(*ji*)" in Chinese is particularly connected to

death, and normally is a word people avoided in their daily polite communication.

The words in Pinyin "*maotai*", "*yuan*", "*RMB*", "*xiangsheng*" and "*majiang*" (Majong)

are all Chinese words written in pinyin. Among them, "*maotai*" is the brand name of a famous alcoholic drink in China; "*xiangsheng*" is a kind of Chinese traditional cross-talk show; "majiang" (majong) is a typically traditional Chinese gambling game which is very popular with people in Si Chuan (Szechwan) Province of China. In example 61, the participant typed a typical Chinese idiom phrase '三个臭皮匠顶一个诸葛亮'(in Pinyin, *san ge chou pi jiang ding yi ge zhu ge liang*) which means 'the wisdom of the masses exceeds that of the wisest individual' in English.

4.3.2 Reflection on the use of Literal Translation

Literal translation as a CS is broadly used by Chinese e-chatters during English interaction, since the mother tongue is considered an abundant resource for language transfer. By using LT, participants may transfer L1 to L2 positively or negatively. See the examples below.

Negative language transfer:

Example 62 (Chat 6)

L 21:57:42   thanks

K 21:57:54   *No thanks*!

Example 63 (Chat 15)

F 14:07:37   ok .no problem . u can *slow slow to say*?

Example 64 (Chat 22)

A 13:19:35   i really want to *up my english to a higher step*

In examples 62 and 63, participants directly translated English according to the Chinese meanings. However, they ignore the fact that not all English can be expressed literally from Chinese. In example 64, the participant used 'up' to mean 'improve' which results from the semantic meaning of 'up' in Chinese is literally '提高 (*ti gao*

in Pinyin)'. This is a typical example of reflection on negative transfer from Chinese grammar.

Positive language transfer:

Example 65 (Chat 6)

E 15:24:30 yeah,,,i will treat delicious food ,like *goubuli stuffed bun* and seefood,,,so on,,,,to my frinds

A 15:34:44 Summer, I wonder if *the laugh-making star* Fenggu is from tianjin?

A 16:00:43 I understand, maybe you are *the only son* in your family.

Example 66 (Chat 7)

E 15:31:20 heh,a famous sentence is *if you wana handle a man,you must handle his stomach first,so you should study cooking*

D 15:32:04 no

D 15:32:11 I do not agree with you

E 15:32:13 why

D 15:32:23 it is *new society*

Example 67 (Chat 8)

G 15:01:34 are you sure you can pass the *college entrance examination of peking university?*

Example 68 (Chat 12)

A 20:21:36 there some places near *changjian river* which can see this scence.

Example 69 (Chat 15)

C 13:19:21 Summer Lee, *you did flatter me*, thanks anyway.

…

C 13:48:18 According to chinese traditional polite, I should ask you: *did you have lunch?*

In all examples above, no matter whether the language transfer is positive or negative, the language produced by literal translation can greatly reflect the participants' cultural background and their Chinese English.

4.3.3 Reflection on the use of other communication strategies

It is interesting to note that Chinese e-chatters of English prefer to type "*haha*" or "*hehe*" during interaction, which are considered as nonlinguistic signals in

face-to-face conversation. "*he he*" comes originally from Chinese words "呵呵". Its

pinyin is very similar to English word "*ha ha*", thus, "*he he*" could be seen as a

nonlinguistic signal or code-switching. Interestingly, Chinese are more likely to use

"he he" than "ha ha" for representing laughing.

Example 70 (Chat 4)
    B 18:54:44   I think we should find a place to talk undisturbed.
    A 18:55:04   *hehe*

Example 71 (Chat 17)
    A 21:59:46   I'm coming
    B 22:01:12   *haha*   u r welcome
    A 22:01:35   *hehe*   刚吃完饭收拾完
    B 22:06:48   let's speak English
    A 22:06:50   OK？
    B 22:08:34   OK
    A 22:08:53   *哈哈*
    A 22:08:55   *haha*
    A 22:09:01   how about dinner?

From the examples above, there is an indication that most Chinese e-chatters

are very friendly in their online communication. Even though they are not really

smiling when typing "*haha*"/ "*hehe*" at that moment, they tend to show friendliness to

their partners. By using "*haha*" or "*hehe*" frequently, the participants can not only fill

in the temporary gap or pause caused by lack of language knowledge during

interaction, but also soften the communication. This again partly suggests Chinese

people's conversational style.

4.3.4 Typical Chinese English expressions

A word or a phrase can have cultural meaning. Cultural meaning refers to words

and expressions which represent cultural perception, values and behavior. Since all

the participants share the same cultural background, it is inevitable that their language

production during communication is characteristic of Chinese and its culture. Based

on the framework of Chinese English from Kirkpatrick (2007), the lexical features of

Chinese English reflected in online chats are analyzed and categorized according to:

* Transliteration of Chinese words

* Direct translation from Chinese into English of "things Chinese" or Chinese cultural

  concepts

* Nativised English

* Other "English" words taking on specific Chinese cultural meanings

Table 4.4 Transliteration of Chinese words shown in online English chats

Expressions of Chinese English	Possible gloss
Maotai (from Chat 3)	A famous name of alcoholic drink
Yuan (Chat 3)	Chinese monetary unit
RMB (Chat 3)	Chinese monetary unit
Xiangsheng (Chat 6)	traditional Chinese cross-talk show
Huangyaguan Great Wall (Chat 6)	
Majiang (Chat 17)	a traditional Chinese game
Goubuli (Chat 6)	a traditional food in Tianjin
peking university (Chat 8)	
changjian river (Chat 12)	
he he	Similar to "ha ha"

Table 4.5 Direct translation from Chinese into English shown in online English chats

Expressions of Chinese English	Possible gloss
the color wolf (Chat 3)	in pinyin: '*se lang*'; lady-killer
Chairman Mao used to always say the state power came from the Firearm. (Chat 4)	"power grows from the barrel of the gun"
the laugh-making star (Chat 6)	'*xiao xing*'; comic
stuffed bun (Chat 6)	steamed buns, literal Chinese "*bao zi*"
commemorative sites of the Chinese revolution (Chat 6)	Places for displaying revolutionary history of Chinese Communists
the eye of Tianjin (Chat 6)	name of a place in Tianjin
admire you (Chat 6)	literal expression to show compliment: '*pei fu ni*'
if you wanna handle a man, you must handle his stomach. (Chat 7)	'*yao zhua zhu yi ge nan ren, xian zhua zhu ta de wei*' in Pinyin
after 90's girl (Chat 7)	'*90 hou*'; GEN-90s' girls (girls born in 1990s)
college entrance examination (Chat 8)	'*gao kao*'; standardized national test
office lady (Chat 9)	woman who is working in the company
110 (Chat 10)	Emergency number in China
It seems you have been still getting drunk for her voice so far. (Chat 10)	'*chen zui/tao zui zai ta de sheng yin li*'; get totally attracted by her sweet voice
the first willing (Chat 11)	'*di yi zi yuan*'; the first college choice or aspiration for college entrance examination
government department (Chat 11)	'*zheng fu bu men*';administrative office
"YAO YEAR" (Chat 13)	TV Program about Yaoming
qq number (Chat 13)	"qq" is a very popular online chat application in China
you did flatter me (Chat 15)	'*ni guo jiang le*'; a modest expression for praise by others
Did you have lunch? (Chat 15)	'*ni chi le ma*'; a typical greeting way of Chinese
Faint (Chat 15)	an internet language adapted from Chinese word '*yun*(晕)'
Mountain City (Chat 16)	'*shan cheng*'; refers to Chongqing city in China
especially their skin just as water (Chat 16)	'*ru shui ban de ji fu*'; the smooth skin of girls
high school party (Chat 17)	'*gao zhong ju hui*'; a kind of class reunion party
his another half (Chat 19)	'*ling yi ban*'; spouse
the net of bar (Chat 24)	'*wang ba*'; Internet bar/cafe
just go with the flood (Chat 25)	similar to Chinese phrase '*sui bo zhu liu*'; to go with the current
Who got the fortune got the beauty.(Chat 29)	'*you qian jiu you mei ren*'; 'beauty' refers to physical appearance
night cat (Chat 30)	'*ye mao zi*'; Night owl; a person who goes to bed late

(Note: The Chinese meanings of each typical CE expressions are shown in Pinyin.)

Table 4.6 Other "English" words taking on specific Chinese cultural meanings shown in online English chats

Expressions of Chinese English	Possible gloss
Face (Chat 4)	Referring to the crucial importance of maintaining someone's sense of self-esteem and position
the only son (Chat 6)	Normally the only child is full of expectations from parents and currently has more social pressure.
new society (Chat 7)	In China, normally the society is called '*jiu she hui*'(the old days) before establishment of the People's Republic Of China in 1949.
the certificate (Chat 23)	Very important reference and representation for one's competence in China

As shown in Table 4.4, Table 4.5 and Table 4.6, in online chats of Chinese users, there are expressions which do reflect Chinese English and its culture, especially in transliteration of Chinese words and direct translation from Chinese into English. However, no expressions about nativised English are found in this analysis. This is due to the common ground of sharing the same L1 and cultural background. In this way, Chinese e-chatters consciously or unconsciously prefer Literal Translation and Code-Switching to other communication strategies during their interaction. To great extent, these strategies reflect the Chinese language, its cultural background and Chinese English.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to summarize the analysis of data discussed in chapter 4, thus giving a general view about the types and the use frequency of communication strategies among Chinese users of English in the chat room interaction in China, and the reflection about Chinese culture and Chinese English through communication strategies found so as to answer the research questions.

5.2 Review of research questions

1. What are the types of communication strategies used among Chinese users of English in the chat room interaction in China and how often do they occur?

2. To what extent, do the communication strategies found reflect their Chinese language, its cultural background and their Chinese English?

5.3 Main findings of this research

In this section, the main findings are summarized briefly in relation to the research questions stated above.

5.3.1 The summary of Communication Strategies used in online interactions

To answer the first research question, the following are summaries of the communication strategies used by Chinese users of English in their chat room

interactions.

5.3.1.1 The types and frequencies of CS adapted from face-to-face conversations

It is found that all communication strategies based on Dornyei's framework are used with different percentages by the Chinese e-chatters of English during their online interactions. The use of communication strategies are summarized as shown below.

CS adapted from face-to-face conversation					
Type		Use	Percentage (%)	Brief description	Intensity
AS					
	MA	√	1.5	low frequently used, due to mixed turn-taking, preference of certain chosen topics from participants	low
	TA	√	1.8	low frequently used, due to mixed turn-taking, preference of certain chosen topics from participants	low
CM					
	NS	√	30.2	emoticons, interjections representing feelings or facial expressions	very high
	LT	√	17	negative or positive transfers	high
	AP	√	11.1	rehearsal of new words in practice and use	high
	AH	√	8.5	directly or indirectly	high
	CI	√	8.1	exemplify a target word	high
	CO	√	7.6	Chinese words or phrases directly inserted	high
	ST	√	6.1	frequent use of "well", "you know", but not all participants good at using these words	Inter-mediate
	FO	√	3.8	frequent use of words e.g. 'hehe', 'o'…;	low
	UP	√	2.4	e.g. 'something', 'anything',	low
	WC	√	1.1	e.g. 'more happy'	low
	PP	√	0.8	e.g. 'how are you? "And u?',	low

5.3.1.2 Strategies generated due to the mode of CMC and for Chinese e-chatters' L2 acquisition

In addition to the use of communication strategies based on Dornyei's framework, it is also found that Chinese e-chatters of English create other strategies for their online communication, either resulting from the CMC mode, or for their L2 acquisition. The summary is shown below.

CS resulting from the mode of CMC & L2 acquisition	
CS resulting from CMC	**CS for L2 acquisition**
short utterances	Self-repair (word spelling)
incomplete, grammatically simple or incorrect utterances	Correction from interlocutors (lexical level)
omitted punctuation	
lexical truncation	
typographical errors or deliberate lack of capitalization	
abbreviations	
visual cues (fond types, text colors) and other symbols	
application of conventional face-to-face oral conversation strategies	
adaption of conventional strategies from spoken language interactions to the written medium	

5.3.1.3 Conclusion of CS occurring in online interactions

As discussed earlier in the chapter two, online chat conversations share many features with natural conversations. From the findings shown above, Chinese e-chatters of English do adapt various communication strategies from the face-to-face

conversation to their online English communication. However, due to the shared cultural background, it is noted that participants prefer to some specific communication strategies, such as literal translation and code-switching, whereas strategies such as 'word coinage', 'foreignizing', are relatively low in use. Due to the mode of computer-mediated communication (CMC), the users tend to make use of nonlinguistic signals, e.g. emoticons as miming facial expressions in natural conversations. In addition, it is noticeable that online chat is a written register that makes use of many of the stylistic features of spoken language. Therefore, the users generate more of other strategies by means of abbreviations, font types and text colours. In a way, these strategies enable participants to keep the smooth flow of communication.

It is interesting to find that since Chinese e-chatters of English as English learners are more likely to combine online communication with their language acquiring. Thus, they also generate some communication strategies for acquiring L2 by means of self-repair of word spellings, corrections from interlocutors about vocabulary use. As discussed in the literature review, CMC provides many opportunities for Second Language Acquisition (SLA).

Basically, the preference of some CS, such as LT, CO and NS adapted to online interaction, to the extent, offers the implications of interlanguage development of these Chinese e-chatters of English in this research that most of them have limited L2 knowledge.

5.3.2 Summary of Chinese English expressions in the use of CS

To answer the second research question, the following are summary of Chinese English reflected on the communication strategies used by Chinese e-chatters of English during their online interactions. As shown in Table 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3 below, Chinese chatters of English do produce abundant expressions of Chinese English through the use of code-switching (CO) and literal translation (LT).

Table 5.1 Transliteration of Chinese words shown in strategies

Chinese English	Possible gloss	via CS
Maotai	name of white spirits	CO
Yuan	Chinese monetary unit	
Xiangsheng	traditional Chinese cross-talk show	CO
Majiang	a traditional Chinese game	
Goubuli	a traditional food in Tianjin	
he he	Similar to "ha ha"; showing friendliness during chatting	NS/CO

Table 5.2 Direct translation from Chinese into English of "things Chinese" shown in strategies

Chinese English	Possible gloss	via CS
the color wolf	lady-killer	LT
Chairman Mao used to always say the state power came from the Firearm.	"power grows from the barrel of the gun"	LT
the laugh-making star	comic	LT
stuffed bun	steamed buns, literal Chinese "*bao zi*"	LT
commemorative sites of the Chinese revolution	Places for displaying history	LT
the eye of Tianjin	name of a place in Tianjin	LT
admire you	literal expression to show compliment	LT
if you wanna handle a man, you must handle his stomach.		LT
after 90's girl	GEN-90s' girls (born in 1990s)	LT
college entrance examination		LT
office lady	woman who is working in the company	LT
110	Emergency/alarm number in China	LT
It seems you have been still **getting drunk for her voice** so far.	"get totally attracted"	LT
the first willing	the first college choice or aspiration for college entrance examination	LT
government department	administrative office	LT
"YAO YEAR"	Program about Yaoming	LT
qq number	"qq" is a very popular online chat application in China	LT
you did flatter me	a modest expression for praise by others	LT
Did you have lunch?	a typical greeting way of Chinese	LT
Faint	an internet language adapted from Chinese word "*yun*晕"	LT
Mountain City	refers to Chongqing city in China	LT
especially their skin just as water	the smooth skin of girls	LT
high school party	a kind of class reunion party	LT
his another half	spouse/wife	LT
the **net of bar**	the Internet bar/cafe	LT
just go with the flood	similar to Chinese phrase "*sui bo zhu liu*"; to go with the current	LT
Who got the **fortune** got the **beauty**.	'beauty' refers to physical appearance	LT
night cat	night owl; a person who goes to bed late	LT

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Table 5.3 Other "English" words taking on specific Chinese cultural meanings shown in strategies

Chinese English	Possible gloss	via CS
Face	Referring to the crucial importance of maintaining someone's sense of self-esteem and position. However, this word has its specific Chinese cultural meaning, but it is not peculiarly appearing in Chinese culture.	LT
the only son	Normally the only child is full of expectations from parents and has more social pressure currently.	LT
new society	Opposite to the society before 1949	LT
the certificate	Very important reference and representation for one's competence in China	LT

As shown in Table 5.1, Table 5.2 and Table 5.3 above, by applying communication strategies such as Literal Translation and Code-Switching to online chats, Chinese e-chatters of English do produce typical expressions of Chinese English (CE). To an extent, these expressions do reflect their cultural background and the lexical features of Chinese English. Some expressions may be transferred positively or negatively in a way. However, the applications of strategy of direct translation from Chinese to English "add a special flavour to CE" (Kirkpatrick 2007: 147).

5.4 Limitations of the study

The study reports on only a small scale of Chinese online users of English. Data from within thirty public chat samples of different lengths in the chosen chat rooms is

not necessarily generalisable and not representative for all Chinese e-chatters of English. With the difficulty to contact chat room participants face to face, the author is described as a 'participant observer' in the chat room, in order not to interfere in the data collection. In this way, the author is more passive and can not obtain 'insider' interpretations of the conversations that participants produced. This makes the study more an 'observation' study than ethnography per se. Thus, the analysis focuses only on production of language use as presented in chat conversation printouts.

5.5 Pedagogical implications

Online English chat room, like other English-speaking environments, such as 'English Corner' (Xu 2008), provides Chinese learners more opportunities to test their knowledge of the target language English and develop their communicative competence.

Currently as educational institutions become more connected through technology, the use of computers and the Internet in language programs is increasingly encouraged. It is possible for teachers of ELT to utilize computer-mediated communication (CMC) and set up English chat room as a new means for simulating L2 learning and use in practice.

In this way, computer chat rooms can provide an opportunity for learners to communicate silently and immediately with their peers in English, since all interactions happen in the cyberspace. As Graham (1997: 89) states, key factors for communication strategies include the aim of decreasing anxiety and increasing participation. Undoubtedly, online chat room with its advantages can involve more

learners in participation. As a consequence, motivation for more learning can be enhanced. Moreover, since learners can communicate through writing in "real-time" for simulating a spoken conversation, learners in English chat room can get more chances to practice English than in a big class. In addition, teachers can design some activities to stimulate discussion by online chats. In this way, learners can practice new words, develop communication strategies, negotiate meanings and learn from each other during exact interaction.

In addition, different from the traditional classroom teaching, CMC brings many possibilities for exploring the new ways for English language teaching. Accordingly, it is important and meaningful for teachers to consider how they adjust themselves to the e-communities built in this new technology age and how they explore and interpret their new roles in the inevitable tendency of intervention of CMC in future.

Meanwhile, learners' chat can provide teachers and researchers with the first authentic data for further study of L2 learning, language evolution due to the mode of CMC, the hybrid of new varieties of world Englishes; and furthermore, for exploring the means of developing L2 learners' cross-cultural awareness in the realistic intra-cultural communication environment.

5.6 Future research

The study mainly focuses on communication strategies adapted to Chinese e-chatters of English and the Chinese English reflected through used CS.

Possible further studies can be a discourse analysis on how Chinese users of English in chat room negotiate meanings and exchange information with each other; the contrastive study of communication strategies used by Chinese users of English in international chat rooms and national chat rooms; the study of language and gender in Chinese-English chat rooms; the analysis about how CMC (e.g. chat room) and 'English Corner' stimulate learners' motivation and influence their conversational features; the characteristics of English language of Chinese e-chatters.

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Appendix:

Note: The complete thirty online conversation samples for this study can be read in

CD.