

THE LEXICAL ACCULTURATION OF ENGLISH IN THE CHINESE CONTEXT*

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This paper presents a data-based analysis of the lexical nativization of English in the Chinese context. In light of the analysis, the paper shows that although English in China functions primarily as a performance language variety, yet it has been acculturated, which in turn helps to argue for the legitimacy of the claim that there exists a Chinese variety of English. A brief survey of the functions of English in China — in both the international and the intranational domain — is also included in the paper, which provides the sociolinguistic background in which the nativization of English is taking place.

1. Introduction

It is now well recognized that English as an international language has reached virtually every corner of the globe (e.g., Crystal 1997). In China, some relatively recent sociolinguistic surveys (e.g., McArthur 1992; Zhao & Campbell 1995) claim that there are approximately 200 to 300 million users of English with various degrees of proficiency. This is the largest number among countries in the Expanding Circle (Crystal 1985).¹ Cheng (1992) labels World Englishes in the Chinese context 'Sinicized English'. Others (e.g., Zhang 1997) term the same variety of English 'China English'. Whatever the label, it is significant that these terms are used with reference to the acculturation of English in lexis, syntax, phonology, discourse, etc., which in turn has substantial bearing on the issue of the nativization of English in different sociocultural contexts (e.g., Kachru 1965, 1983).²

Studies of the contact between English and Chinese and their resultant convergence have already been documented (e.g., Hsu 1994; Zhou & Feng 1987). Regarding the contact between English and other languages, Kachru (1992) points out that whenever English starts to be used by a country or region in which English is not the native language, be it for science, technology, literature, or modernization, it undergoes a process of reincarnation that is linguistic as well as cultural. Kachru considers most such changes pragmatically determined, given the fact that a nonlocalized variety of English is not capable of adequately expressing what is unique to a certain culture. In addition, Kachru (e.g., 1986a) notes that bilinguals' creativity also plays a role in the nativization of English. Therefore, it is only natural that when English is used in China, it is also nativized linguistically as well as culturally.

English in China is considered primarily a norm-dependent or exo-normative variety. In other words, it mostly functions as a foreign language.³ This assump-

tion derives essentially from the limitation of the penetration of English in China, in both the range and depth, which is closely related to China's sociohistorical background. It is also true that in the Chinese context, the degree to which English is acculturated is not as large as that in Outer Circle countries, where English is now institutionalized. It is basically due to these realities that some scholars are still hesitant to acknowledge the existence of a legitimate Chinese variety of English.⁴ It seems to me that it is actually an attitudinal issue whether there exists 'Sinicized English' or 'China English'.

2. The data

In this study the data examined were collected primarily from two sources — *Beijing Review* and *China Daily*. *Beijing Review* is one of the major China-based English magazines, which was first published in 1958 and is now published weekly. *China Daily* is one of China's most widely-read English newspapers, which was started in 1981. It is generally assumed that English used in these two publications is representative of the Chinese variety of English. Although native speakers of English⁵ were, and still are, on the editorial staff of both publications, a number of usages of English still carry with them unmistakably Chinese characteristics.

The data analyzed in this study were collected from the articles published in *Beijing Review* in the year 1968 and 2000 and also those published in *China Daily* in the year 2000. The motivation for the selection of data from two different periods is to establish a basis for the comparison and contrasting of different features of China English in different historical periods. The gathering of data from both journal and newspaper articles is to demonstrate that the acculturation of English in China is not confined to just one type of publication. Other than these considerations, the collection of data was random.

3. The lexical nativization of English in China

For the purpose of this study, the denotation of LEXICON is extended to include both words and phrases. In order to facilitate the comprehension of the acculturated English expressions, some of which may be opaque to non-Chinese users of English, the denotations of all nativized expressions are provided in the immediately following parentheses. Moreover, whenever possible and also appropriate, Chinese characters are provided together with their English equivalents.

3.1 General overview

In the Chinese variety of English, vocabulary is the level at which the influence from Chinese sociocultural elements is the most evident. An examination of the use of English in *Beijing Review* and *China Daily* confirms this point. This is only natural considering the fact that the lexis of a language is typically more open and receptive than other aspects, such as the syntax. One relevant point, which is crucial and yet usually ignored, is that whatever the distinctive characteristics are of the different varieties of World Englishes, for these varieties to be still called 'English', they must share certain important linguistic features in certain aspects.

Generally speaking, syntactic features are more likely to be shared than lexical usages.

This paper focuses on the discussion of the lexical contextualization that took place over relatively recent stages of the contact between Chinese and English.⁶ Examples of contextualized English expressions found in the Chinese variety of English are provided in (1-4).

- (1) 三八式工作作風
the three-eight working style (a firm, correct political orientation; and liveliness)
(*Beijing Review*, January 3, 1968)
- (2) 無產階級文化大革命
the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (the movement started by Mao Tse-Tung to purge the Party, which, however, brought China political turmoil and caused enormous destruction to the country. Since this movement began in 1966 and ended in 1976, it is also called the 'Ten-Year Calamity')
(*Beijing Review*, February 2, 1968)
- (3) 三代領導集體的領導
the collective leadership of three generations (the three generations of leadership represented respectively by Mao Tse-Tung, Deng Xiaoping, and Jiang Zemin)
(*Beijing Review*, January 3, 2000)
- (4) 兩大關注
two major concerns (the so-called 'strategic thinking' proposed by the late Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping; one is to expedite the development of the eastern coastal areas, the other is to quicken the development of the central and western regions when China develops to a certain stage)
(*Beijing Review*, February 7, 2000)

As Xu (1987:66) observes, such contextualized expressions are 'English in the lexical form but Chinese in cultural content'. Xu further notes that this is, as a matter of fact, an inevitable phenomenon, given that Chinese culture possesses certain unique values and concepts that are hardly even imaginable to non-Chinese users of English.

Although for pragmatic reasons, native speakers of English may use such acculturated English expressions, these usages are not necessarily in their lexical repertoire. In most cases native speakers can easily recognize the foreignness of these words or phrases. Furthermore, in order to accurately comprehend and interpret such expressions, average non-Chinese speakers of English need to have been exposed to the very facet of Chinese culture with which these expressions are associated. In addition, among these speakers of English there exists a cline of familiarity with the nativized expressions. Certain usages, e.g., *the Cultural Revolution*, may be more familiar than others, e.g., *two major concerns*. The latter kind of expression is normally seldom used by non-Chinese speakers of English. Instead,

they are mostly found in books or articles written or translated by Chinese (Zhou & Feng 1987).

3.2 Means of acculturation

According to Zhou & Feng (1987), the impact on English from the Chinese language is manifested in loanwords, loan-translations, and semantic shift. This observation provides a helpful framework within which the acculturation of English used in China may be studied. However, English loanwords from the Chinese language, such as *litchi*, which comes from the Chinese word 荔枝 (with the pronunciation *lizhi*), are excluded from the discussion in this study, since these words have already become part of the English vocabulary in the sense that they are entered in English dictionaries. In other words, these words are no longer distinctive of the Chinese variety of English.

3.2.1 Loan-translation

The majority of the acculturated English expressions observed in China English are word-by-word translations of Chinese expressions, although the position of each word in the whole phrase may be different in these two languages. These nativized English expressions are used mostly because no English expressions in the native variety adequately or precisely match both the denotation and connotation of the relevant Chinese expressions. Primarily out of necessity, these Chinese expressions are translated directly into English so that the unique Chinese culture can be communicated to the outside world. Interestingly, some of the acculturated English expressions have already developed their own abbreviations, which bespeaks bilinguals' creativity.⁷ English expressions of this kind are provided in (5-8).

- (5) 國營企業
state-owned enterprises (SOEs) (nonprivate enterprises)
(*China Daily*, November 21, 2000)
- (6) 經濟特區
special economic zones (SEZs) (areas that enjoy privileged policies in their economic development, which were designated in the very early stages of China's opening to the outside world started in the late 1970s and early 1980s')
(*China Daily*, November 15, 2000)
- (7) 階級敵人
class enemy (those that are against the working class, used particularly during the Cultural Revolution)
(*Beijing Review*, January 27, 1968)
- (8) 紙老虎
paper tiger (a term used to refer to the imperialist countries, particularly between the early 1950s and early 1970s, which denotes the notion that although these countries appear to be strong and powerful, they are weak in actuality)
(*Beijing Review*, January 12, 1968)

3.2.2 Semantic nativization

The semantic nativization of English expressions involves their semantic shift in the Chinese context. Although semantic acculturation may occur at the sentential level, in the Chinese variety of English most of the striking cases occur in the lexical domain. Concerning semantic approximation, Kachru (1992) comments that as lexical items are contextualized, their denotation and/or connotation are/is usually either extended or restricted. In other words, there occurs an alteration of the constraints on mutual expectancy. Cheng (1992) also notes that in different societies words may have different connotations.

On the same issue, Zhou & Feng (1987) identify four different situations, i.e., semantic extension, reduction, amelioration, and deterioration. This proposal provides a helpful guideline for the analysis of semantic shift. As is shown below, however, the four directions of semantic shift proposed here must not be deemed mutually exclusive. In the following, the semantic nativization of certain English words in the Chinese context is analyzed. In order to obtain the meaning of the English vocabulary as defined in the native variety, which constitutes the basis for the comparison, this study takes as reference *The Oxford English Dictionary* prepared by Simpson and Weiner (1989) (henceforth *OED*).

(9-10) Carry On the Revolution Under the *Dictatorship* of the
Proletariat

(*Beijing Review*, January 19, 1968)

Dictatorship: According to *OED*, *dictatorship* is a derogatory word. It denotes a form of government in which absolute power is grasped in the hands of an autocrat or a small clique. In the above context, although *dictatorship* denotes the concentration of power, it is definitely loaded with commendable connotation. In this sense, this usage exemplifies SEMANTIC AMELIORATION.

Proletariat: *OED* defines *proletariat* as people of the lowest social or economic class. In the above context the word *proletariat* does not refer to people of the lowest social class, although their economic status may not be as high. On the contrary, the *Proletariat* is the leadership in the Chinese revolution and social life. Hence, the usage in this context is also an example of SEMANTIC AMELIORATION.

(11-12) The Poor *Peasants'* League is conducting a sharp struggle against Tsui, the biggest *landlord* in the area. The people confiscated his fields, houses and other property and divide them among the poor and lower-middle *peasants*.

(*Beijing Review*, January 3, 1968)

Peasants: One of the relevant definitions of *Peasants* in *OED* is uneducated people who are of low social status. In the above context, though the word may denote being uneducated, *peasants*, especially *poor peasants*, are of very high social status. They were supposed to be highly respected, and were also the major force in the land reform. Even later, those who were of peasantry origin were still privileged in society. For example, they enjoyed priority in being recommended to receive higher education. This is also a case of SEMANTIC AMELIORATION.

Landlord: One of OED's definitions of *landlord* is an owner of land. In this sense *landlord* is a neutral word. In the above context, the word *landlord* denotes an owner of land who, as a rule, cruelly and mercilessly exploited poor laborers who did not have their own land to farm on. So *landlord* acquires the derogatory connotation. Landlords were targets of the revolution during China's land reform, whose fields, houses, and other properties were confiscated by the Government. So, in this context the word *landlord* has undergone SEMANTIC DETERIORATION.

The definitions of the word *landlord* in OED also include the person in whose house one lodges or boards. The master of an inn is part of the definition as well. Nevertheless, in the above context and also in most other usages in China English, both these senses were lost. In other words, the original semantic content of *landlord* has been REDUCED. So, this usage by itself exemplifies two types of semantic shift.

One of the words that Zhou & Feng (1987) draw on to illustrate SEMANTIC EXTENSION is *intellectual*. They hold that in the native variety of English, this word designates people who are engaged in those activities requiring the creative use of mental power, such as scholars, professors, et cetera. In China English, in addition to the denotation found in the native variety, the word *intellectual* also means college students, or even high school graduates, especially in the countryside.

Nevertheless, it should be borne in mind that with the ever-rising educational level of the Chinese people, the sense of the word *intellectual* is gradually dwindling. In other words, what was in the past categorized as an *intellectual*, e.g., a high school graduate, is not regarded as such today. In big cities where the educational level is usually higher than in the countryside, even college graduates are not viewed as *intellectuals* anymore. In this manner, not only when English enters into the Chinese context will semantic shift occur. Even within the Chinese context itself, semantic shift also occurs as society changes.

3.3 Fields in which lexical acculturation occurs

An examination of the acculturated English lexicon used in China indicates that in a certain historical period it is the nativized expressions belonging to a certain field that tend to be used with high frequency. Furthermore, for those nativized English expressions used frequently in one historical period, they may not be used as often in another era. In contrast, acculturated English expressions in certain other fields occur with relatively identical frequency even in different historical periods. Moreover, acculturated English expressions in certain fields are seldom found in China English, which may suggest that in these domains values, beliefs, and concepts of native English users and those of Chinese are roughly parallel. It is even possible that there exists cultural universality in these areas.

3.3.1 Politics

Cheng (1992) observes that Chinese politics, especially during the Proletarian Cultural Revolution when China was thrown into domestic political struggles, is one of the major sources of numerous loan-translations. On the other hand, most

of these localized English expressions are short-lived. When the political movement ceases, these politicized phrases, unintelligible to the ordinary English reader would normally be out of the linguistic market, except when people talk about what happened during that political turbulence. Examples of politicized loan-expressions from before the early 1980s are provided in (13-16) and an example of the relatively few such expressions from current Chinese politics is given in (17).

It is noteworthy that the loan-expression in (13) is not a word-by-word translation. Instead, the verb 走 ('walk') in the Chinese expression is lost in the translation, which reflects the syntactic difference between Chinese and English. Moreover, by analogy the Chinese people created the word *roadster* to meet their need, which again reflects bilinguals' creativity. In (15) the English translation is only an incomplete representation of the original meaning of the Chinese expression.

- (13) 走資派
capitalist roadster (those who choose the capitalist way of living, used particularly during the Cultural Revolution)
 (Beijing Review, January 3, 1968)
- (14) 紅衛兵
Red Guards (young people who have a high sense of revolution and are politically alert, used particularly during the Cultural Revolution)
 (Beijing Review, January 12, 1968)
- (15) 牛鬼蛇神
demons and snakes (intellectuals and those whose family members were capitalists or landlords, used particularly during Cultural Revolution)
 (China Daily, November 21, 2000)
- (16) 先進分子
advanced elements (This expression has different senses in different contexts. During the Cultural Revolution it was used to refer to those who were active in repudiating "the revisionist line" in the Communist Party.)
 (Beijing Review, January 26, 1968)
- (17) 一國兩制原則
the principles of one country, two systems (one of the solutions to achieving China's unification proposed by the Chinese government, i.e., although mainland China practices the socialist system, Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan may maintain their capitalist system for a relatively long period of time if/after they are united with mainland China)
 (China Daily, November 24, 2000)

3.3.2 Trade and economy

An examination of the use of English in articles published in 2000 demonstrates that political expressions like those in (13-16) are indeed rarely used. In their

place, loan-translations related to business, trade, and economy abound. Examples of this type are given in (18-21).

- (18) 引進 外資
foreign capital introduction (attracting the financial investment from foreign countries)
 (Beijing Review, July 3, 2000)
- (19) 社會主義市場 經濟
socialist market economy (the type of market economy that possesses socialist characteristics)
 (China Daily, November 24, 2000)
- (20) 外資企業
foreign-funded enterprises (enterprises that are funded by foreign companies)
 (Beijing Review, August 7, 2000)
- (21) 支柱產業
pillar industries (pivotal industries)
 (Beijing Review, August 21, 2000)

The key factor leading to the emergence of such loan-translations as in (18-21) is that China is currently pursuing an economy-oriented policy, which is drastically different from the one adopted during the Cultural Revolution. Language and the society in which it finds itself are inextricably intertwined. When society changes, language, especially its vocabulary, changes with it and reflects such social changes. It is then only natural that the social changes in China have caused such acculturated expressions as in (18-21) to burgeon. Meanwhile, these changes have left those political epithets as exemplified in (13-16) with no market. In this sense, the use of translated lexical items in China English functions, to some extent, as a barometer of the policy that the Chinese government is following.

3.3.3 Traditional customs and arts

Some loan-translations are connected with a certain aspect of traditional Chinese culture, e.g., festivals. These expressions generally do not have their ups and downs together with changes in Chinese society. The reason is that whatever policy China is pursuing, she simply cannot completely eliminate her cultural heritage. Examples in this vein are provided in (22-25):

- (22) 春節
the Spring Festival (the 1st day of the year in the lunar calendar, which is the festival celebrated most extensively by the Chinese people)
- (23) 元宵 節
the Lantern Festival (the festival that falls on the 15th of the 1st lunar month)
- (24) 端午節
the Dragon Boat Festival (the festival that falls on the 5th of the 5th lunar month)

- (25) 中秋節
the Mid-Autumn Festival (the festival that falls on the 15th of the 8th lunar month)

Provided in (26-29) below are some more examples of acculturated English expressions related to other aspects of Chinese culture.

- (26) 敦煌藝術
Dunhuang art (the art recorded in the murals in Mogao Grottoes, Gansu province)
 (Beijing Review, July 17, 2000)
- (27) 京劇
Peking opera (the type of opera that originated in Beijing — the most popular opera in China)
 (Beijing Review, August 7, 2000)
- (28) 毛式書法
Mao-style calligraphy (the unique style of handwriting characteristic of the late Chinese leader, Mao Tse-Tung)
 (Beijing Review, January 3, 2000)
- (29) 地壇
the Altar of the Earth (one of several altars located in Beijing, which was built by ancient Chinese to worship the Earth)
 (Beijing Review, February 28, 2000)

3.3.4 Education

Loan expressions in the field of education are also found in the published articles in *Beijing Review* and *China Daily*, although such expressions are not as numerous as those in any of the three fields above. The quantitative difference of loan expressions between the fields of economics and education may imply that the focal task of the present-day Chinese government is not to improve education but to develop economy. It may also be the case that, compared with education, China's economic activities share fewer concepts or practices with those countries where English is a native language. Examples from education are given in (30-32).

- (30) 四級考試
Band Four (The full name is Band Four College English Test. In China undergraduates are required to pass this comprehensive English test before they can receive the Bachelor's degree.)
 (China Daily, September 7, 2000)
- (31) 六級考試
Band Six (The full name is Band Six College English Test. This test is required of undergraduates in certain majors, such as foreign trade and international law. In certain universities, graduate students are also required to pass Band Six before they can get their Master's degree.)
 (China Daily, September 7, 2000)

(32) 211工程

Project 211 (a project launched in 1995, whose aim is to turn 100 Chinese universities into centers of advanced scientific research so that they may help the national economic development in the 21st century)

(*China Daily*, December 7, 2000)

3.3.5 Other areas

In addition to the contextualized English expressions in politics, economy, traditional Chinese cultures, and education, localized expressions in other spheres of life are also observed in the articles published in *Beijing Review* and *China Daily*. Some examples of this type are presented in (33-38).

(33) 十個五年計劃

the 10th Five-Year Plan (a comprehensive development plan drawn up by the Chinese government for the years 2001-2005)

(*China Daily*, November 20, 2000)

(34) 改革開放

reform and opening-up undertakings (a series of tasks involved in the reform and opening-up to the outside world, which was initiated in the late 70s by the late Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping, who has been called the architect of the Chinese reform and opening-up policy')

(*China Daily*, November 15, 2000)

(35) 尋根

root-searching (a trip that aims at finding out one's place of birth or visiting the place where one's ancestors lived)

(*Beijing Review*, September 11, 2000)

(36) 自治區

autonomous region (any one of the five regions that enjoy more independence from the Chinese central government than a province. These *autonomous regions* are not entirely self-governing. Each of these regions is home to one of China's major minority nationalities.)

(*Beijing Review*, September 25, 2000)

(37) 健身操

body building exercises (exercises designed to make one healthy and strong)

(*Beijing Review*, June 19, 2000)

(38) 白色的新年

a white New Year (a New Year with snow)

(*Beijing Review*, January 3, 2000)

In claiming that English has been acculturated in the Chinese context, it is not meant to assert that expressions like the examples above are found ONLY in China. It is true that similar or exactly the same English expressions may also be used in other countries that are not in the Inner Circle, which happen to have an analogous sociocultural background to China. Nevertheless, this does not make the

claim that English has been nativized in China, given the fact that when discussing the nativization of English, it is with reference to Inner Circle English that English used elsewhere is investigated.

4. The functions of English in China

English in China functions in international as well as intranational domains. The international use is primarily found in foreign trade and international business, tourism, and science and technology. Intranational domains mainly cover media, education, and translation. It should be borne in mind that the international versus intranational dichotomy is not intended to be categorically clear-cut. It is instead only an approximation. The survey of functions provides the most up-to-date information about the sociolinguistic profile of English in China, which helps to better understand the acculturation of English in the contemporary Chinese context.

4.1 The international functions of English

4.1.1 Foreign trade and international business

With the endorsement of the open-door policy, China's foreign trade and international business are developing rapidly. *The Far East and Australasia 2000* (henceforth *FEA 2000*) reports that the volume of China's foreign trade totaled US \$325,057 million in 1997. China's major trading partners include not only countries like the United States, but those like Japan, which has been China's major trading partner throughout the 1980s and 1990s, accounting for approximately 19% of total Chinese foreign-trade volume in 1997 (*FEA 2000*). Since English is the predominant language used in international communication, for employees working in foreign trade and business, a good command of English is a prerequisite. For instance, English is needed when a contract is negotiated with foreign business people. English is also needed in daily work.

4.1.2 Tourism

China has a long history of civilization and boasts numerous historic sites and scenic spots. With large numbers of people coming to travel in China, the tourist industry is growing rapidly. According to *The Europa World Year Book 2000*, in 1998 a total of 63,478.4 thousand tourists visited China, and receipts from tourism amounted to US \$12,602 million. Excluding some 56,250 thousand tourists from Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan, most of whom can speak a certain variety of Chinese, approximately 7,228 thousand still need to be serviced in a foreign language, which is English in most cases. The largest proportion of these 7,228 thousand tourists were from Japan (1,572 thousand), which was followed by Russia (692 thousand), the republic of Korea (632.8 thousand), and Singapore (316.4 thousand). In the same year only 224.8 thousand tourists were from the United States. People doing various kinds of jobs related to the tourism industry need to speak English. They include, but are not limited to, tourist guides, interpreters, hotel staff, and even peddlers.

4.1.3 Science and technology

One of the most immediate incentives for China to encourage Chinese to learn English is to learn from the developed countries (e.g., Dzau 1990). In recent years many researchers, professors, etc., have been sent abroad, e.g., to the United States, or Singapore, to study, attend conferences, or do research. For these people, English is so important that most of them are, to some degree, selected on the basis of their ability to use English. In addition, these people are often offered short-term intensive English training before they go abroad.

4.2 The intranational functions of English

4.2.1 Media

Recently it is in the media that the use of English in China has increased most rapidly. China has more than a dozen English publications, which include newspapers, e.g., *China Daily*, and magazines, e.g., *Beijing Review*, *China Reconstructs*, *China Pictorial*, *Chinese Literature*, and *China Today*, which cover a broad variety of topics. As Zhao & Campbell (1995) suggest, although most of these publications are for foreign consumption, many readers are Chinese. Particularly for the intranational consumption, China has English publications as well, e.g., the newspaper *Shanghai Star*, and *21st Century*, and the magazine *The World of English*.

China also broadcasts English programs on both radio and television. These include not only English-teaching programs, e.g., *Follow Me* and *Family Album USA*, but also nonteaching programs whose contents range from news to investment guides, travel guides, advertisement, et cetera. China Radio International is one of the radio stations and China Central Television is one of the television stations that broadcast the greatest number of English programs.

Concerning the spread of English in the media, one of the most significant developments is that China Central Television, the one that has the largest number of viewers in China, opened an English-only channel on September 25, 2000. Even more significantly, this channel is not foreigner-oriented (personal communication, March 12, 2001).

4.2.2 Education

Except in foreign-language schools, English is a subject of instruction and taught mostly in Chinese in elementary and secondary schools. However, in college-level classrooms, especially for English majors, English is frequently used as a medium of instruction. In recent years, some private primary schools not only started teaching English in English, but also teaching other subjects, e.g., mathematics, in English (Zhao 1991). This is just one of the many barometers that point to the growing penetration of English in China.

In 1997, China had 60,179 thousand students in general secondary schools, 3,743 thousand in secondary technical schools, 911 thousand in teacher training schools, and 3,174 thousand in higher education (FEA 2000). English is a required course for students throughout the six years of secondary and two (or three) years

of teacher-training schools. College students are required to study English for at least two out of the total four years. (So it is reasonable to assume that half of the college students at any time are taking English courses.) This is tantamount to saying that in 1997 alone, roughly 66,240 thousand Chinese students were studying English.

4.2.3 Translation

The translation profession is prospering in China. Most major cities have organizations where people are engaged in translating from Chinese to English and vice versa. As China becomes more and more internationalized, countless things need to be translated into English, e.g., business cards and product descriptions. Numerous English novels are also translated into Chinese for those who do not know English or whose English is not good enough for them to read English novels. These translated books sell very well in China.

Although China's Four Classic Novels have been translated into English (i.e., *the Dreams in the Red Mansion*, *the Outlaws in the Marshes*, *the Journey to the West*, and *Stories of Three Kingdoms*), a great many of China's novels, both classic and modern, are still waiting to be translated into English and introduced into the world. This situation promises further thriving of China's translation profession.

5. Conclusion

This paper examines the lexical nativization of English in the Chinese context. In doing so, it implicitly recognizes the legitimacy of claiming that there *is* a Chinese variety of English, be it labeled 'China English' or 'Sinicized English'. Provided that English is going to maintain its status as an international language for an indefinite period of time, the use of English in China will become more and more widespread as the country is gradually integrated into the international arena. This in turn foretells the greater degree to which English is to be acculturated. It is even not impossible that in the future English may become an institutionalized variety of language in China.

Most of the research on the nativization of English deals with the situation in the Outer Circle countries, whereas the acculturation of English in the Expanding Circle is relatively inadequately documented. By investigating the lexical acculturation of English in China, a country in the Expanding Circle, this study aims to provide some documentation that is lacking in the research on World Englishes.

6. Further discussion

The survey of the international functions of English in China shows that Chinese use English not only with those people from countries where English is a native language, but also with those from countries where English is either a foreign language, e.g., Japan, the Republic of Korea, and Russia, or a second language, e.g., Singapore. In light of this situation, in the teaching of English, it may not be advisable for China to adopt invariably the established norms of English in the Inner Circle, e.g., BBC English or General American English. It is more sensible to

teach the model determined by the interlocutors with whom English is (going to be) used.

Given that in China, English is used with people not only from the Inner Circle but also from the Outer Circle and the Expanding Circle countries, students must be exposed to all major varieties of English in the world — native and non-native varieties as well. Kachru (1992) points out six fallacies about the users and uses of English that provide strong theoretical support for this standpoint.⁸ Several researchers (e.g., Smith 1992) suggest that the unintelligibility problem in World Englishes is mainly caused by the lack of exposure to the variety of English at issue, which further helps to support this argument.

NOTES

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¹ English-using countries are often categorized as three concentric circles in Kachru's model of World Englishes (1985): the Inner Circle, the Outer Circle, and the Expanding Circle. The Inner Circle contains countries where English is used as a native language, such as the US. The Outer Circle countries are those where English has been nativized and institutionalized for intranational communication, such as Singapore. And in the Expanding Circle are countries where English is learned and used as a foreign language, such as China.

² Kachru has conducted extensive research on various issues of World Englishes. For the issue of bilinguals' creativity, see Kachru (1986b, 1995a). For the issue of EFL pedagogy, see Kachru (1988, 1995b). And for the issue of language contact and convergence, see Kachru (1990, 1994).

³ This is largely true. However, as Pride & Liu (1988) comment, based on the amount of English used in the Chinese media, the degree to which Chinese policies favor English, and the favorable attitude toward English by the general public, in China, English may be regarded as a second language, ranking only second to Chinese.

⁴ Related to the issue of the existence of a legitimate Chinese variety of English, some scholars distinguish between China-English (or Sinicized English) and Chinese English (or Chinglish). Whereas the former is considered to be a legitimate variety by these scholars, the latter is not. For detailed discussions see, e.g., Jiang (1995) and Zhang (1997).

⁵ In recent years the construct 'native speaker' has been subject to scrutiny and become the object of heated debate. For a thorough discussion of this issue, see Paidkay (1985). In this article 'native speaker' is used merely as a working concept.

⁶ Early stages of the contact between Chinese and English have produced English words borrowed from Chinese, e.g., *litchi*, *chow mein*, *kowtow*, *kung fu*, *typhoon*, and *mahjongg*. McArthur (1992) points out that English has nearly 1,000 such Chinese loanwords.

⁷ Zhang (2002. Forthcoming) contains a detailed examination of the creativity of bilinguals expert in both the Chinese and the English languages. In so doing, Zhang investigates the writings in English by a Chinese novelist and examines the bilinguals' creativity at both lexical and discursive levels.

⁸ Three relevant fallacies out of the six are: (1) in the Outer Circle and the Expanding Circle, English is essentially learned to interact with its native speakers; (2) English is learned as a tool to understand and teach what is generally termed the Judeo-Christian traditions; and (3) the goal of learning and teaching English is to adopt the native models of English.

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