

A RESEARCH ON “CHINGLISH” PHENOMENON (3 Credits)

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Abstract

EXPLANATION ON “CHINGLISH” PHENOMENON

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Chinese image is becoming more and more important due to the increasing amount of trade between countries. Owing to this reason, more and more Chinese are starting to learn the English language. Learning the English language boosts cultural connections and trades but also produces a phenomenon known as “Chinglish”. This paper will analyze the causes of the “Chinglish” phenomenon and its negative influences and introduce strategies to correct it.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

“Chinglish” situation is the irregular English language situation in many fields because Chinese have been influenced by their mother tongue. Meanwhile, “Chinglish” always exists in process of learning English language. With social development, communication in English language becomes more and more frequent. Meanwhile, due to “Chinglish”, there is misunderstanding in many fields.

To “Chinglish” situation, no matter what, English teachers or others should pay more attention to it. Growing academic literature provides useful information and addresses substantive issues such as sociolinguistics on “Chinglish” phenomenon. In addition it is useful to analyze causes of “Chinglish” situation existence and negative consequence of “Chinglish” situation and strategies to prevent “Chinglish”.

There are several benefits to understand “Chinglish” situation. Academics, both Chinese and American scholars, can provide information for use by English teachers as well as English teaching in Chinese college. Further accurate information may lead to reductions in unintentional misunderstandings in daily life and social trade and communication.

Statement of the Problem

The questions to be addressed in this paper include the following:

1. What causes the “Chinglish” situation?
2. What are negative influences for “Chinglish situation”?
3. What methods can correct “Chinglish” phenomenon?

Definition of Terms

“Chinglish is commonly applied to ungrammatical or nonsensical English in Chinese contexts, and may have pejorative or deprecating connotations.” (Nury Vittachi 2000). From *Yinglish to sado-mastication*. *World Englishes* 19 (3), 405–414
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“Diversities are the variety of human societies or cultures in a specific region, or in the world as a whole”. (*Cultural diversity*. (2011, 1. 5). From http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_Diversity) no wiki allowed

Delimitations of Research

The research will be conducted over a period of 90 days using the Karrmann Library at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville and the library of South Central University for Nationalities. Primary searches will be conducted via the Internet through EBSCO host with ERIC and Wilson databases, Academic Search Elite and Google/Google Scholar as the primary sources. Key search topics included “Chinglish”, “Diversities”.

Method of Approach

A brief review of literature is concerning the research on “Chinglish” phenomenon. This will include three parts. First part is what reasons cause the “Chinglish” situation? And second part is what negative influences for “Chinglish situation” are? Last part is what methods can correct “Chinglish” phenomenon? Cases will be identified to illustrate the phenomenon more clearly. Meanwhile the findings will be summarized and recommendations made.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

1. Causes of The “Chinglish” Existence

Chinese language and English language are two totally different languages based on divergences of cultural background, pinyin, syntax, and so on (De, Yuan, H., & Li, D. S. 2009). Therefore, when learning English language, Chinese people will face plenty of difficulties. The “Chinglish” phenomenon is the main issue for Chinese to learn the English language. There are three main reasons for the existence of the “Chinglish” phenomenon.

1.1 Diversity of Culture

As is known to all, culture is unique and important to every nationality. Based on different cultural backgrounds, people’s expressional way and daily customs are largely different. Chinese express their own ideas indirectly but westerners are inclined to show their own ideas directly (Cheung, R., Nelson, W., Advincula, L., Cureton, V., & Canham, D, 2005). Therefore, Chinese express own ideas in terms of Chinese culture so diversity of culture leads to “Chinglish”.

For example, under situation when a boy expresses to a girl “I love you”, the Westerns will directly express their own idea “I love you”. But, compared with Westerns’ way of expression, Chinese will indirectly express their ideas. For instance,

“I want to make a friend with you” or “the boy will actively buy something that girl likes for the girl” or “the boy will often make some dates with the girl the boy love”. However boys will less directly say “I love you” to the girl.

1.2 Diversity of Thought

There is a close relationship between language and thought. Everyone has different thoughts. Thus, people use their own words to tell how they understand it on the same thing based on the different thought.

For example, thoughts on writing, Chinese organize their writing ideas according to thinking way of “spiral” but English organize their writing ideas based on thinking way of “straight” (Kaplan, 1966).

1.3 Misleading on Teaching

To plenty of learners of the English language, studying the English language is a process of translation. Chinese learners often use the thinking process of the Chinese language when studying English. Facing an English article or English writing, learners think about how to mechanically translate Chinese language into English language word by word. What is the reason for this? When teaching mechanically other grammar, more English teachers only pay more attention to passing on systematical grammatical knowledge and tell their own students how to use the English grammar, but English teachers capitalize a few on cultivating the western

thought on learning English language. This is why students who learn the English languages based on reciting English articles are better than other students who learn English language based on mechanical, grammatical knowledge (Green, P. J., Sha, M., Liu, L., & RTI, I. 2011).

2. **Negative Influences of “Chinglish”**

Learning language is a procedure, so it is usual that “Chinglish” situation may appear for a certain period. However, in the long term, “Chinglish” situations impact poorly on learning English and communication.

2.1 **Negative Influence on Communication**

Why do we have so many misunderstandings in our daily life? More or less, the answer is due to communication. Take body language, for example. In some areas, a “thumbs up” means “good” but in other areas the action means “bad” (Hong, T., 2011).

This next example comes from my own experience. When I was in junior high school, I began to learn English. My teachers said that an effective way of studying English was to translate Chinese language into English language word by word in a stable order. For instance, in China, there is an old saying that means “come straight to the point” but at that time we translated this old saying as “open the door to see the mountain” according to the teacher’s instructions. From this example, most native

English speakers looking at the “Chinglish translation” will totally misunderstand the old saying. Thus, this issue has a great influence on the communication between English-speaking foreigners and Chinese.

2.2 Negative Influence on the Individual

In school, “Chinglish” may have a few negative effects on communication because the teachers and fellow classmates will usually understand “Chinglish” phenomenon. However, some English learners complain that Chinese students cannot write “standardized English papers” even though they have been learning English for a long time due to “Chinglish”.

In personal work, “Chinglish” is always a barrier to attaining a job. For example, when we need to hunt for jobs, especially during an interview with native speakers, the Chinese person may lose the opportunity because of “Chinglish” causing a misunderstanding because interviewees and interviewers cannot understand each other.

2.3 Negative Influence on Society

In many public places, signs providing “tips” and “indicator diagrams” often use “Chinglish”. For example, “Welcome to come again” and “Slip carefully” and “No photoing no smoking” are some examples (Sun, Z. 2008). These situations we can

find with ease in many public places; they will easily trigger misunderstandings to any native English speaker. Therefore, we can imagine how these “Chinglish tips” impacted Chinese image if they appeared said, in the Beijing Olympic Games or at a national resort.

3. Strategies on Correcting “Chinglish”

It is hard to avoid the “Chinglish” situation in the process of learning the English language. Given the prominence of the issue, strategies to prevent or avoid “Chinglish” should be developed.

3.1 Paying More Attention to The Culture

English teachers should recognize cross-culture differences and explain them to students rather than teaching them to mechanically translate Chinese language into English language in the English lesson (Williams, B. T., 2008). For example, to begin with, according to different levels of students, English teachers should select different texts that are closer to cross-cultural life. For instance, English teachers should introduce some real-world situations that students can engage in such as dialogues common in restaurants and bookstores and how to appreciate certain movies and so on rather than simple greetings or complicated policies or economics. Indeed, realizing cross-cultural differences has a profound influence on “Chinglish” when students can engage in appropriate situations.

3.2 Capitalizing on Procedures of Translation

The “Chinglish” situation is not only related to diversities on thoughts but also in the procedure of translation (Malcolm, W., 2007). To begin with, plenty of “Chinglish” situations come from the poor translation of the Chinese language into the English language. Therefore, when students practice such translations, English teachers must guide the students in using English thought while translating. What is more, when translating an article, we not only focus more attention on vocabulary but also take appropriate expressions and meanings of the whole article into consideration (Jian, Y. 2005).

CHAPTER 3

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

“Chinglish situation” is always an issue to Chinese learners. How to face and deal with it? English teachers should think about this issue.

This paper definitely analyzes cause of “Chinglish situation” existence from cross-cultural influences and culture background and divergence on ways of thought and translation and so on. Meanwhile, the paper also presents “Chinglish situation” has some negative influences from social side and individual side. For solving these “Chinglish situations”, this paper also will show some advice. For example, paying more attention to the culture and capitalizing on procedures of translation.

For Chinese learners of the English language, to certain degree, it is hard to avoid being influenced by “Chinglish”. In the future, English teachers should adopt some reasonable ways to correct it. For English teachers, they should pay more attention to the “Chinglish” issue during English lessons, focusing on teaching students how to appreciate and admire the English language rather than studying it mechanically in order to pass English examinations.

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