

**Pragmatic borrowing between English and Chinese:
A comparative study of two-way exchanges**

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Declaration

I, Yingyue He, hereby declare that the work presented in this thesis, entitled 'Pragmatic borrowing between English and Chinese: a comparative study of two-way exchanges', is my own, and where other scholars' ideas and works are included, I have adequately cited and referenced these. This is also to certify that I have adhered to the principles of academic integrity, and have not fabricated any data sources, ideas, or analysis in this thesis.

Abstract

Through centuries of cross-cultural communication, English has been enriched by elements from other languages around the world, including Chinese; meanwhile, English has also exerted considerable influence on the Chinese language. Lexical exchanges between the two languages have been studied in previous research, and yet are mostly restricted to the lexical items themselves. This thesis particularly explores the pragmatic aspect of this language contact, examining items that are used to convey attitudinal or interpersonal meanings. I conduct a series of case studies on bi-directional pragmatic borrowing between English and Chinese, using a variety of data sources, which include dictionaries, corpora, social media data, and other online resources. I take a broad view of what constitutes pragmatic borrowing: I not only investigate the borrowing and integration of discourse-pragmatic items that are transferred between the two languages, but also examine the pragmatic motivations for the borrowing of other lexical items and even grammatical units. The items discussed in the thesis range from parts of words, specifically affixes, to individual words to longer structures, and contextual analysis shows that all of these have been used to achieve pragmatic effects. The study demonstrates the important role of cultural context, speaker creativity, and sociolinguistic factors in the borrowing, integration, and innovative use of linguistic items.

Impact Statement

In 2018, a Chinglish phrase *add oil* entered the *Oxford English Dictionary*, arousing great interests and heated discussion among Chinese speakers. Its source, ‘加油 (*jiayou*, to refuel an engine)’, is a common Chinese expression, used in a metaphorical way, to express encouragement or to show support towards others. Several decades ago when this Chinglish phrase was first created through literal translation, it was used as a joke by Chinese people, knowing that it was non-standard English and was unlikely to be understood among native English speakers. However, since this phrase has spread among larger speaker groups, it has become a well-established colloquial expression among Chinese-English bilinguals, especially in Hong Kong and Singapore. Such lexical innovations of using foreign elements to express certain discourse/pragmatic functions are very likely to occur in language contact settings, and yet are often taking place without being noticed by speakers. Taking *add oil* as an example, English speakers may have read it in the *OED* and have heard someone using it in their daily life, but they are not necessarily aware of its origins, and may not know that a phrase with the literal meaning ‘increase the amount of oil’ can be used as an interjection expressing encouragement or support, meaning ‘Go for it!’.

This thesis aims to raise awareness of the many expressions, like *add oil*, that show the influence of Chinese on English and English on Chinese, and which speakers of both languages use and encounter in daily conversations. Crucially, the thesis focuses on the social and cultural factors that motivate or constrain the acceptance and uses of these items as well, through detailed case studies and contextual analysis. By incorporating linguistics with other disciplines, such as sociology, this work can then inform readers about cultural differences and variation in different speaker groups.

This thesis takes a new direction in contact linguistic studies, examining the different

degrees of acceptance and integration of the items in different language varieties and text types, for instance, internet language. There is a research gap in this respect. The internet allows us to communicate easier and faster with people regardless of geographic boundaries, and provides us chances to embrace foreign languages and culture. Linguistic changes taking place online merit further awareness and investigation: knowing where the internet slang and buzzwords come from, how they are formed, and whether they have the same usages and functions in different languages can benefit our online communications.

My current project has taken an important first step in the study of pragmatic borrowing between Chinese and English, with ten informative case studies. However, this thesis does not cover all kinds of pragmatic borrowings and there is still more work to do on this fruitful strand in contact linguistic studies. In the future, I plan to publicize my ideas beyond an academic audience via social media, exhibition, and public report. For instance, I have asked for the permission of *Survey of English Usage* to use their official Twitter account to post interesting stories of Chinese-English pragmatic borrowings on a monthly basis; I will also create a YouTube/Bilibili channel and upload videos regularly. In my future work as a lecturer and researcher in China, I will encourage as many students who are interested in language contact and intercultural exchange as possible to attend to the project, collect more living examples, and make their own contribution to this field.

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Abbreviations

Dictionaries

OED: Oxford English Dictionary

CCD: Contemporary Chinese Dictionary (6th edition: CCD6; 7th edition: CCD7)

Corpora

COCA: Corpus of Contemporary American English

COHA: Corpus of Historical American English

BNC: British National Corpus

BNC-S 2014: British National Corpus Spoken 2014

GloWbE: Global Web Based English

CCL: Center of Chinese Linguistics PKU Corpus of Chinese

BCC: BLCU (Beijing Language and Culture University) Corpus Center

Terms

SL: source language

RL: recipient language

PM: pragmatic marker

DM: discourse marker

AmE: American English

BrE: British English

CPE: Chinese Pidgin English

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Chapter 1

Introduction

It is a well-accepted fact that English, as a *lingua franca*, has exerted considerable influence on other languages in the world. It has also been enriched by elements from other languages through worldwide cross-cultural communication, which has led to great interest in language contact. However, lexis and terminology are the major focus of current research, while little attention has been paid to other linguistic features. In this thesis, I will explore the pragmatic aspect of language contact, and conduct a series of case studies on bi-directional pragmatic borrowing between English and Chinese (see further illustration section 1.3). The strand of pragmatic borrowing in English-Chinese contact setting is seldom explored in previous research. This thesis will propose a first step on English-Chinese language exchange from a pragmatic perspective and shine some new light on the topic of pragmatic borrowing.

Recent research on language borrowing has shown that lexical borrowing seldom results in copying of all the semantic meaning of a form from the source language (SL). As van Coetsem (1988: 8–12) has noted, the process of borrowing often involves adaptation, involving shift in meaning when the borrowed items undergo integration into the recipient language (RL). It is reasonable to assume that such adaptation also happens in the process of pragmatic borrowing in terms of discourse functions. Therefore, the main focus of this research is the process of pragmatic adaptation, concerning changes happen to the pragmatic functions and meanings of linguistic units when they are borrowed and used across languages (see further section 2.3 and section 2.4). There often already are local items expressing the corresponding meaning or having similar illocutionary force in the RLs, and this study also compares the meanings and functions of inherited and borrowed terms.

There are two main goals of this thesis: firstly to give a detailed account of pragmatic

borrowing between Chinese and English, and discuss the uses, morphosyntactic properties, and most importantly pragmatic functions of the borrowed items within the RL; and secondly to analyse the under-explored factors in language contact that motivate or constrain the borrowing of foreign items. Moreover, pragmatic meanings and functions always depend on contexts, which is the truth in all pragmatic studies. Therefore, in this thesis, I will examine the uses of the borrowed items through contextual analysis, and subjectivity may be inevitable.

In addition, both English and Chinese include many varieties and the labels ‘English’ and ‘Chinese’ are usually used as general terms (see Kachru 1985 and later for the framework of World Englishes; and see *An Overview of the Chinese Language 2021*¹ for all regional varieties and dialects of Chinese). In this thesis, by saying ‘English borrowings’, I refer to words and expressions that are originated in British English (BrE) and American English (AmE), and ‘Chinese borrowings’ refers to items from major Chinese varieties and dialects, including Putonghua (Mandarin), Yue (Cantonese), and Min (Hokkien), although the case studies only involve items with Mandarin and Cantonese origins. However, due to the limitation of time, space, and data sources, I will not explore the uses of borrowings in all varieties of English and Chinese as RLs, therefore, only BrE, AmE, and Mandarin are the main focuses of the case studies (some Asian Englishes, such as Hong Kong English, Singapore English and Malaysia English are involved for specific reasons, e.g. in case study I; see further section 5.1.3).

In the Chinese-English contact setting, research on lexical borrowing has been well established during the past decades, but the study of pragmatic borrowing is still at an initial stage. Therefore, this research fills a significant gap in our current understanding of these borrowing phenomena. It builds on existing approaches to pragmatic borrowing in European languages to develop a novel model of analysis

¹ 中华人民共和国教育部 The Ministry of Education 中国语言文字概况 2021 年版(*An overview of the Chinese language 2021*)
http://www.moe.gov.cn/jyb_sjzl/wenzi/202108/t20210827_554992.html

suitable to the characteristics of this particular language pair. In the following sections, I will present some basic definitions and terminologies on the key notions involved in this thesis, including language contact and pragmatic borrowing. The final section gives an outline of the whole thesis.

1.1. Language contact

From a contact linguistic view, any language will be influenced and changed by contact with other languages through time (e.g. Winford 2003, Meyerhoff 2006, Matras 2009). To study the influences of one language on the other, an important distinction is firstly made between intense contact and weak contact (see also Onysko 2009, Zenner et al 2014), and such classification follows Bloomfield's (1933:461) distinction between 'intimate contact' and 'cultural contact'. Taking the spread of English around the world as an illustration, intense contact with English occurred because of colonisation by Great Britain over the centuries and the post hoc immigration of English speakers. In these intense contact settings, most speakers are bilinguals of both English and their native languages, and English usually has official language status (see Kachru 1986, Pennycook 2003, Wolf and Polzenhagen 2009). In weak contact settings, also termed 'remote contact' (e.g. Peterson 2017), English usually has some prestige compared to other languages (but is not the official language) and there is a group of speakers in that community who are speakers of English, but may not use it for their daily communication. No matter the contact between languages is intense or weak, there might be certain degrees of 'nativisation (nativization)' of a foreign language, which is detectable in a recipient speech community; such process of nativisation concerns the changes taken place on the borrowed linguistic elements to reflect and adapt to the political, cultural, and socioeconomic features of the receiving environment (see further Kachru 1992, Schneider 2003, 2007, Ma and Xu 2017). In this thesis, language contact between English and Chinese, especially in recent decades, is thus characterized as weak contact, and the languages are influenced indirectly through trade and intercultural communication by means of the Internet, television and other media. More

discussion of English-Chinese contact and its influences on both languages will be presented in Chapter 4.

Matras (2009) observes that the discussion of language contact crosses into different areas of linguistics, including second and foreign language acquisition, bilingualism, contact-induced products (such as borrowing and code-switching), language variety and typology, and discourse analysis. Central to all of these disciplines is the study of the individual speaker, as in the following quotation:

The relevant locus of contact is the language processing apparatus of the individual multilingual speaker and the employment of this apparatus in communicative interaction. It is therefore the multilingual speaker's interaction and the factors and motivations that shape it that deserve our attention in the study of language contact (Matras 2009:3)

Matras's focus on speaker behaviour and interaction therefore highlights the importance of pragmatics in contact linguistics studies. Here, by pragmatics, I generally refer to speakers' use of linguistic items to convey attitudinal and interpersonal meanings. Therefore, the study of language contact from a pragmatic perspective underlines speakers' creativity and capability in a contact setting, exploiting any elements within their repertoire to convey meanings in new contexts or to make their communication more effective. Following this understanding that the study of contact-induced changes coheres with research in pragmatics in its prevailing sense, this thesis will incorporate the investigation of the borrowing of pragmatic items and their pragmatic effects in contexts, as well as pragmatic motivations for any kinds of borrowing (see further section 1.3 for the scope of this thesis).

1.2. Borrowing: terminology and definition

Sapir (1970:193) notes that borrowing is 'the simplest kind of influence that one language may exert on another'. Language contact provides speakers opportunities to 'borrow' linguistic features from a foreign language, which is termed the SL, to

denote an imported thing or concept, or to express a concept in an alternative way which replaces the native expression in the RL for certain reasons. There is a chance that such borrowed items become well-accepted and conventionally used among RL speakers, so that these ‘foreign’ items may gradually become established borrowings. From the perspective of RL speakers and their native languages, Winford (2003:11) lists three main outcomes of such language contact, namely ‘language maintenance’, which denotes the preservation of the native language features, ‘language shift’, abandoning the native language features and adopting others, and ‘language creation’, restructuring or mixing linguistic elements from both native and foreign languages.

In Haugen’s work on linguistic borrowing (1950:212), he defines borrowing as ‘the attempted reproduction in one language of patterns previously found in another’. However, he points out the absurdity of the metaphoric use of the term ‘borrowing’, highlighting that ‘the borrowing takes place without the lender’s consent or even awareness, and the borrower is under no obligation to repay the loan’ (Haugen 1950: 211–212). However, the term ‘borrowing’ is ‘not applied to language by laymen’ (ibid.), so the term is still used by linguists as it does not cause ambiguity within the field of linguistic discussion.

Reflecting Haugen’s concern, some other scholars also propose new terms. For example, Weinreich (1953) uses the term ‘interference’, focusing on the interlingual influence between the two languages involved, but Clyne (1967) prefers ‘transference’ as less negative. Johanson (1993, 2002) introduces the term ‘copying’, which places great emphasis on creative uses of an ‘copied’ item by RL speakers, and following this point of view, Matras (2009) puts forward ‘replication’, noting that he uses this term:

to capture even more closely the fact that we are dealing not with issues of ownership or even direct imitation or duplication, but rather with the activity of employing an item, in context, in order to achieve a communicative goal

(2009:146)

Despite these suggestions for alternative terms, most scholars continue to use the term ‘borrowing’, as it is well-established and understood in linguistic discussion. In this study, I will mainly use the term ‘borrowing’, although in some case studies where the creativity of speakers and the integration of the borrowed items in the RL are particularly important, I will also follow Matras’s use of ‘replication’ and his related framework (see further discussion on his works in section 2.2 of Chapter 2).

Haugen (1950:212) lists criteria to determine whether or not an item can be regarded as borrowed:

- a. Every speaker attempts to reproduce previously learned linguistic patterns in an effort to cope with new linguistic situations.
- b. Among the new patterns which he may learn are those of a language different from his own, and these too he may attempt to reproduce.
- c. If he reproduces the new linguistic patterns, not in the context of the language in which he learned them, but in the context of another, he may be said to have ‘borrowed’ them from one language into another.

The three rules noted by Haugen here stress the necessary conditions of borrowing: it involves two languages, one of which ought to have ‘foreign language status’ on the other, and a borrowed item is conventionally used in the context of the RL to meet communicative goal. These criteria then give rise to the necessity for later research to distinguish the notion of borrowing from other contact-induced linguistic phenomena, such as code-switching (more on this issue will be discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.3).

Thomason and Kaufman (1988) give an influential definition of borrowing and the contact-induced change of a language from the perspectives of both the SL and the RL, as follows:

Borrowing is the incorporation of foreign features into a group’s native language by speakers of that language: the native language is maintained but

is changed by the addition of the incorporated features. (1988:37)

In their work, Thomason and Kaufman further point out that ‘any linguistic feature can be transferred from any language to any other language’ (1988:14), which broadens Haugen’s (1950) definition that borrowing only involves reproduction of ‘patterns’. Myers-Scotton (2002:234) also comments that ‘Haugen means largely lexical elements, not grammatical patterns’. And Haspelmath (2009:38) makes a distinction between ‘material borrowing’, which refers to the borrowing of ‘sound-meaning pairs, generally lexemes’, and ‘structural borrowing’ designating ‘the copying of syntactic, morphological or semantic patterns’. Moreover, these linguistic features are not equally likely to be borrowed. To account for this, linguists further propose the notion of a ‘borrowing hierarchy’, which is used as a scale to measure the borrowability of different linguistic elements (e.g. Thomason and Kaufman 1988, Windord 2003, Matras 2007, 2009). This hierarchy is discussed further in Chapter 2, section 2.6.

1.3. Pragmatic borrowing: a pragmatic turn in study of borrowing

As mentioned in the previous sections, language contact phenomena have aroused great interests among linguists, and most research on borrowing has considered lexical borrowing, and there has also been some work on phraseological/structural borrowing (e.g. Haugen 1950, Clyne 1967, Haspelmath 2009; see further section 2.1). In more recent research on linguistic borrowing, ‘a pragmatic turn’ can be observed, which focuses on the use of the borrowed items under various constraints such as social and cultural factors, rather than the items themselves (Andersen et al 2017).

Pragmatic borrowing as an empirical study is first explored by Prince (1988), focusing on the borrowing of discourse functions, i.e. the effect of an item used in a particular occasion. Further studies on the use of discourse markers (DMs) from pragmatic perspectives, including their borrowing and social constraints, have subsequently been carried out (e.g. Salmons 1990, Fuller 2001).

Andersen (2014) is the first to give a clear account of the scope of pragmatic borrowing studies, and to legitimize such investigations as a branch of borrowing. By defining pragmatic borrowing as concerning ‘the incorporation of pragmatic and discourse features of a SL into a RL’ (Andersen 2014: 17), he looks into forms with pragmatic functions, directly or indirectly borrowed from a SL, and their uses in a RL. Andersen also refers to pragmatic borrowing as lying ‘at the intersection between contact linguistics and pragmatics’ (Andersen et al 2017:71); therefore, the study may involve various strands of both sub-disciplines, including language changes, social motivations and constraints, and discourse-pragmatic functions. As mentioned before, Andersen further provides a lists of categories of ‘pragmatically borrowed items’ at the following levels (Andersen 2014:18):

- a. the direct borrowing of forms which serve pragmatic functions in the SL, such as interjections, vocatives and DMs;
- b. the contact-induced use of RL material which takes on new discourse functions as a result of external influence;
- c. clause-structuring phrases, greetings, leave-takings and other politeness formulae;
- d. intonation and paralinguistic phenomena that result from language contact, e.g. the finger-heart gesture.

These items are usually studied from a pragmatic perspective as they often indicate a speaker’s emotions or attitudes, convey certain speech acts, or function to show politeness, etc. Based on Andersen’s framework, this thesis consists of several case studies of pragmatic borrowing between Chinese and English, including direct borrowing of interjections, response markers, vocatives, and politeness markers; indirect replications of SL structure with RL materials; and grammatical or structural features borrowed and used pragmatically in the RL. Note that the use of the term ‘replication’ in the second type of case studies follows Matras’s terminology, as it concerns more the creativity of the speakers in the RLs, and considers post hoc integration and adaptation (see Matras and Sakel 2007, Matras 2009).

There are some overlaps between the study of pragmatic borrowing and other strands of research, such as lexical borrowing, contact linguistics, pragmatics, and sociolinguistics. For this reason, pragmatic borrowing studies also involve observing and analyzing the social and cultural motivations or constraints within the RL during the adaptation of the borrowed items, which may result in changes in pragmatic functions. Such motivations may include: the need of the language users to show novelty, globalisation, or coolness, etc.; particular pragmatic effects that a borrowed item carries which surpass its native alternatives; the cultural invasion of the SL culture and its prestige in the RL speech community; and the use of particular markers by certain groups of speakers to show a sense of alignment. Existing research on the motivations and constraints of borrowing is reviewed in section 2.6 of Chapter 2.

1.4. Outline of the thesis

This introductory chapter has introduced several key notions and issues relating to pragmatic borrowing between English and Chinese. The following thesis will elaborate the topic through discussions of previous theories, a descriptive overview of borrowing phenomena between the two languages, and specific case studies. The thesis consists of nine chapters, organized in the following way:

The second chapter reviews previous research in the field of lexical borrowing and the recent turn to pragmatic borrowing. Chapter 3 is concerned with the methodology of the study. A variety of dictionaries, corpora, and other data sources used in this work are introduced in this chapter. I also include a test case *OK* in the second part of Chapter 3 showing the basic structure of the case studies and the way these data sources facilitate my investigation. Chapter 4 gives an overview of the recent history of language contact between English and Chinese, focusing mainly on Chinese influence on modern English since the early 18th century and English influence on modern Chinese since the late 19th century. This chapter also briefly compares the differences between borrowing in each direction, and discusses social-historical

motivations at each stage. Chapter 2 to 4 give the background to the case studies in the following thesis.

Chapter 5 to 8 consist of nine specific cases of borrowings between Chinese and English, ranging from morphemes, single words, to longer chunks, covering different types of pragmatic borrowing (see section 1.3; Andersen 2014). Chapter 5 looks at the borrowing of interjections from Chinese into English, specifically *aiyah* (*aiyoh*) and *chin-chin*. The two cases studied in this chapter appear to show different levels of acceptance, and I also discuss the possible factors that result in such changes. Chapter 6 concerns another category of discourse-pragmatic items, vocatives, and investigates three types of English vocatives that are used in Chinese, the kin term 妈咪 *mummy*, the honorific *sir*, and several endearments (for example *baby*). By comparing the similarities and differences between their uses and integration in Chinese, I also analyze the motivations and constraints. Chapter 7 then examines two clause-structuring phrases that are formed by replicating Chinese structures using English elements, *no can do* and *long time no see*, and also observes their integration and adaptation in English speech communities, in both syntax and pragmatic functions according to particular contexts. And finally in Chapter 8, I look into a special type of pragmatic borrowing that is seldom observed in previous studies, which involves grammatical items. The uses of English suffixes *-ing* and *-er* in Chinese are studied in this chapter, demonstrating the possibility that grammatical units can be attached with pragmatic meanings in an RL setting, and should be paid more attention in the study of pragmatic borrowing.

Finally, Chapter 9 brings the thesis to a close, summarizing the findings of the study and tying up various approaches to the research of pragmatic borrowing. This chapter also stresses that borrowing studies can relate closely to contact linguistics and sociolinguistics, and provides suggestions for further research in light of my findings.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1. The shift in borrowing studies

In the earliest studies on borrowing, scholars generally focused on loanwords, studying the history and etymology of borrowed items and identifying their semantic categories. Most studies concentrated on one language pair and on borrowing in one direction only. The phonological, syntactic, and morphological adaptation of loanwords in the RLs often remained unexplored, and the pragmatic or sociolinguistic aspects of the process were entirely absent. These early studies are restricted in scope, as they are based on limited evidence and don't aim to make any generalisations (see further Romaine 1995:142). Rather than only giving lists of borrowed words to show their variety in forms and word classes, researchers thereafter attempt to create databases for lexical borrowings, such as the World Loanword Database (see further Haspelmath and Tadmor 2009) which records borrowings in 41 languages².

Bloomfield (1933), Haugen (1950), and Weinreich (1953) started to study language contact as a new field in the research of lexical borrowing. Following their work, the focus of borrowing studies has shifted from the borrowing phenomena, i.e. the loanwords themselves, to the process of borrowing, such as the motivation of such language changes. For example, many researchers turn to discuss the principles that motivate or constrain lexical borrowing, and generalise hierarchies of borrowability (e.g. Haugen 1950, Muysken 1981, Winford 2003, Matras 1998, 2009; see further section 2.6), aiming to establish universal principles of borrowing. Since Poplack et al firstly conducted a quantitative study to test these borrowing hierarchies in the 1980s (Poplack, Sankoff and Miller 1988), more empirical studies have been carried out and the notion of borrowability has been developed and explored in relation to

² See <http://wold.clld.org> Accessed June 10, 2021.

many language pairs around the world.

Thomason and Kaufman's (1988) study marks an important turning point in research on borrowing and language contact: it not only covers a wide range of language contact phenomena, including borrowing, interference, and convergence, but also investigates the mechanism of contact languages, such as pidgin and creole linguistics. It also synthesizes the study of sociolinguistics and various factors relating to speech communities.

In addition, with the increase of more frequent cross-cultural interaction and communication, bilingualism has also become a more frequently researched area, which concentrates on some linguistic phenomena in bilingual speech communities, including code-switching (e.g. Milroy and Li 1995, Queen 2001, Appel and Muyskey 2005, Myers-Scotton and Jake 2009). Many researchers go further to distinguish borrowing from code-switching and code-mixing (e.g. Appel and Muysken 1987, Matras 2009, Poplack 2018; see further section 2.3.2)

Prince (1988) is among the first linguists who put forward the notion of pragmatic borrowing as the incorporation of discourse-pragmatic features across languages. Since 1990s, the pragmatic aspects of borrowing, and the related motivations and constraints have begun to be explored. For example, the borrowing of discourse markers has become the main focus in many studies (e.g. Salmons 1991, De Rooij 1996, Matras 1998). Moreover, the pragmatic turn in linguistic borrowing studies has also been evident in many other strands, which include: the investigation of socio-pragmatic factors, such as novelty, coolness, exotic colour, and sense of globalisation, that are thought to motivate lexical borrowing; the focus on particular speech groups where borrowings are more established for the purpose of pragmatic effects; and the discussion of more general factors, such as prestige, which influence the direction of borrowing between two languages. In recent years, many empirical studies have concentrated on these issues (e.g. Onysko and Winter-Froemel 2011,

Andersen 2014, Peterson 2017) and the study of pragmatic borrowing has become a fruitful strand falling at the intersection between pragmatics, language contact, and sociolinguistics. Follow up this trajectory, my thesis aims at contributing to this growing area by exploring pragmatic borrowing phenomena particularly between English and Chinese, which has received little attention in the literature.

2.2. Classifications of borrowing

It is obvious that not every borrowed item enters into a RL in the same way or by the same means. For example, some are directly borrowed in the form of their models in the SL, such as the interjection *bravo* borrowed from Italian; some are formed with RL materials by translating the model, such as the English-German borrowing *Wolkenkratzer* (translated from English word *skyscraper*). Others do not involve changes in forms, but extend the meanings or functions of an existing form in the RL, owing to its resembling a foreign model in the SL: for example the German verb *realisieren*, which originally means ‘to make something come true’, borrows the meaning of the English form *realize*, and thus can be used to denote ‘to be aware of’, etc. Therefore, this section will introduce several taxonomic frameworks to help identify various types of borrowings.

2.2.1. Classical taxonomies of lexical borrowing

The earliest attempts to classify borrowings can be dated back to Bloomfield and other linguists in the early twentieth century. Bloomfield (1933: 444) distinguishes ‘dialect borrowing’ and ‘cultural borrowing’, which refer respectively to the borrowing of linguistic features from within the same speech area and from a different language. He also explores ‘intimate borrowing’ (Bloomfield 1933: 461), i.e. where borrowing occurs in one direction only when a language takes a predominant role in a language contact setting, and suggests that cultural, political and economical factors serve as external motivations of borrowing from a dominant language to a less prestigious language.

Haugen (1950) presents a more systematic framework to classify different types of lexical borrowing, according to the form (both morphological and phonemic) of the borrowed items, which is still very widely quoted and used in later research (e.g. Appel and Muysken 1987, Durkin 2009). By considering whether the borrowed item is imported with SL morphemes and phonemes, and whether there is substitution with RL morphemes or phonemes, Haugen (1950: 213) categorizes borrowings into three main types:

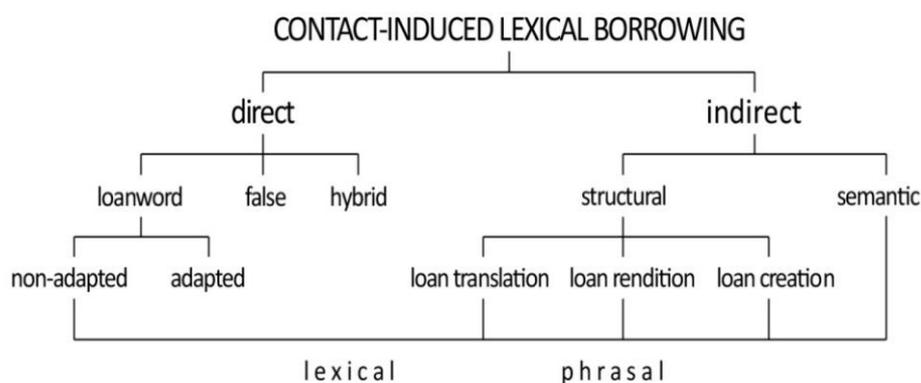
- a. loanwords: importation of both meaning and shape;
- b. loanblends (or hybrid): importation of meaning and a part of the phonemic shape, while the other has been analyzed and then substituted with indigenous material;
- c. loanshifts: importation of meaning through the substitution of the whole word phonemic shape.

Within the category of loan shifts, Haugen (ibid) further makes a distinction between what later scholars term ‘loan translations’ or ‘calques’ (see Betz 1959: 128, Onysko 2007: 12), e.g. German *Wolkenkratzer* mentioned before, and the extension of the meaning of indigenous material, also known as ‘loan meaning’ (Betz 1959 ‘Lehnbedeutung’) and ‘semantic loan’ (Durkin 2009: 134, Furiassi et al 2012: 6), exemplified by *realisieren* mentioned above.

Following Haugen’s taxonomy, Weinreich (1953, 1968) refers to ‘loanblends’ as ‘hybrid compounds’, as such borrowings consist of borrowed elements and indigenous materials. He also uses different terminologies like ‘loan renditions’ (the reproduction of RL materials modelling on SL forms), and ‘loan creations’ (new coinages stimulated by the need to match imported designations from the SL) (Weinreich 1968: 47). Onysko (2007), on the basis of the above studies, makes a reconstruction on loan influences into direct and indirect types: direct influences (‘loanwords’) include foreign words and assimilated loanwords; indirect influences (‘loan coinages’) include loan translations, loan renditions, loan creations, and loan meanings (Onysko 2007: 12).

Finally, to sum up the previous research, Pulcini, Furiassi, and Rodríguez-González put forward a comprehensive model of contact-induced borrowings shown below:

Figure 2.1. Classification of lexical borrowing by Pulcini et al (2012: 6)



In their work, by observing the influences of English lexis on European languages from words to phraseology, Pulcini et al reproduce this framework based on previous research and provide new terms like ‘(non-)adapted loanword’ and ‘false borrowing’, which account for linguistic phenomena overlooked by previous scholars. The modifier ‘adapted’ and ‘non-adapted’ concern the integration and adaptation of the borrowed items according to the RL orthographies and other morphological and/ or phonological rules (see further section 2.3). False borrowing refers to RL coinages that often consist of foreign elements, which appears to be forms of that foreign language, but do not exist in SL with the same meaning (see further Onysko 2007, Furiassi 2010). Examples include French *baby-foot* (‘table football’), German *Handy* (‘mobile phone’), Italian *autostop* (‘to hitchhike’). In English-Chinese contact setting, some Chinese speakers use *fighting* as an encouragement slogan (‘cheer up’)³, which is also a case of false borrowing.

However, the label ‘false borrowing’ may be controversial, because although they are independently coined within the RL, their morphological forms still come from the

³ Such usage is thought to originate from Korean contexts (see further the entry of *fighting*⁴, *int.*, which has been last incorporated into the *OED* in March 2022).

SLs. As shown in Figure 2.1, Pulcini et al include false borrowing in their taxonomy within the category of direct borrowing, owing to the fact that ‘the English component of their lexical make-up is still visible’ (2012: 10). Similarly, Onysko regards these items as a kind of lexical borrowing because they are ‘reworked by the receptor’, arguing that ‘even within English, words can derive new meanings that are different from their original meanings’ (2007:52). Therefore, in this thesis, I choose other terms such as ‘graphic loan’ or ‘lettered symbols’ instead (Cook 2018:13), to refer to borrowings of English forms in Chinese, that are used with new meanings/functions (see further Chapter 4, section 4.4.2, and Chapter 9, Table 9.1).

2.2.2. Cultural and core borrowings & necessary and luxury loans

The classic taxonomies discussed in the previous section are based on the formation of borrowed items and the way they are imported into the RL. However, a different kind of classification focuses on the meanings and functions of borrowings in the RL. An important distinction is made by Myers-Scotton (2002: 239) between ‘cultural borrowing’ and ‘core borrowings’. Cultural borrowings are imported to designate things and concepts which do not exist in the RL before language contact, and they are borrowed by necessity and serve to fill the RL gaps. Core borrowings, on the other hand, import SL forms to refer to things or concepts which already exist and have a native designation in the RL, and this borrowing may result in duplication or replacement of indigenous items. A similar criterion is used by other scholars to make a distinction between ‘necessary loans’ and ‘luxury loans’ (e.g. Carstensen 1965, Tagliavini 1973). Necessary loans are borrowed to designate new things and concepts introduced from a SL into an RL, and luxury loans refer to loanwords that already have a semantic equivalent in an RL. Other linguists use different terms again for these two categories, such as ‘need’ and ‘prestige’ loans (Winford 2003), or ‘gap’ and ‘prestige’ loans (Matras 2009), which are also discussed in 2.5.2.

However, some scholars have criticised these two sets of classifications as misleading and incomplete. For example, Haspelmath (2009:48) argues that the

concept of ‘core borrowing’ can be problematic⁴. The criteria of regarding some words as ‘core’ may vary according to different registers, geographic positions and historical periods, so the judgment of a core borrowing may also vary across languages and depending on other social cultural factors. He also claims that the classification doesn’t account for all types of lexical borrowing and puts forward a new terminology of ‘therapeutic borrowing’ (Haspelmath 2009:50). This type of borrowing usually occurs when an original form in an RL is unavailable, such as taboo words and homonymy. For example, Dixon (2002:27) notices the phenomenon that some Australian aboriginal words have been substituted with loanwords from neighbor languages, since they resemble the name of a deceased person; and because of homonymy, the Old English *bread*, which was once used to mean ‘roast meat’, is replaced by French borrowing *roast*, as to differentiate from its sense of ‘food made from flour’.

Onysko and Winter-Froemel (2011: 1551) argue that the contrastive labels of necessary and luxury loans are ‘implicitly judgmental’, as ‘necessary’ is usually regarded as a synonym of indispensable, and ‘luxury’ as ‘an epithet for dispensable borrowings’. Such interpretation is shown by Castellani (1987), who regards the overuse of luxury loan anglicisms in Italian as *morbus anglicus*, ‘anglicism disease’. Onysko and Winter-Froemel further claim that that ‘frequently so-called necessary loans are not really necessary’ (2011: 1552), and explain that speakers of an RL can always find an alternative way, using existing resources, to express a new concept introduced into the RL, for instance in an analytic way. On the other hand, Carstensen argues against the term ‘luxury’ that ‘from the perspective of RL speakers, there are no luxury loans at all’ (1965: 266), as there are always subtle differences in semantic or pragmatic connotations between borrowed items and native alternatives.

Although the distinctions of cultural vs. core borrowing and necessary vs. luxury

⁴ See also his argument that the distinction of core and peripheral members in a word category or in the vocabulary of a language can be problematic as well.

loans are not universally accepted, attempts to categorize borrowings from this perspective are still significant, as they focus on the comparison between loanwords and their native alternatives, and thus lead to the study of the integration of borrowed items into the RL.

2.2.3. Matter and pattern replication

As mentioned in the introduction, Matras (2009: 146) prefers the terminology of ‘replication’ to ‘borrowing’ in a contact linguistic setting, claiming that the word ‘borrowing’ connotes a sense of ownership and emphasizes the boundaries between the involved languages. He also argues that the use of ‘borrowing’ under-values the creativity of the RL speakers, as ‘[borrowing] diverts attention away from the dynamic process of sharing a structure or word-form, adopting, applying, and using it’ (ibid.). Therefore, he uses the more precise term ‘replication’, to refer to ‘the activity (such as modification, adaptation, and change) of employing an item’ by the RL speakers to achieve communicative goals; he therefore emphasizes a pragmatic perspective. Note that the term ‘borrowing’ is also used by Matras as a general term.

In Matras’s framework, contact-induced influences on languages can be classified as either matter replication or pattern replication, also known as material borrowing and structural borrowing (see further Matras and Sakel 2007). Matras (2009: 148) defines linguistic matter as ‘concrete, identifiable sound-shapes of words and morphs’, and a pattern as ‘the mode of organizing these units of speech’. The process of replicating a matter-item may affect its properties in various respects, including its phonological form, lexical or grammatical meaning, and its morphosyntactic properties, such as inflectional/derivational rules and position in sentences or utterances, according to the RL norms. The replication of patterns, however, requires more complex mental procedures, according to Matras (2009: 235), such as selecting linguistic items depending on their semantic meanings and functions, combining them to express new meanings, and changing word orders to meet grammatical rules. The aim of such selection and replication is to maximize communicative efficiency (more on this

motivation will be discussed in section 2.4). Therefore, the process of pattern replication, by changing and restructuring inherited items in the RL to model a structure in the SL, usually involves changes of the target structure or its distribution, which is called ‘grammaticalisation’ in Matras’s framework (2009: 238).

The term ‘grammaticalisation’ is first put forward in modern linguistics by Meillet (1912) to refer to ‘the attribution of grammatical characters to erstwhile autonomous words’ (quoted in Hopper and Traugott 2003: 19). As an illustration, historical linguists define the process of grammaticalisation as the lexical change in which a lexeme loses (some or all of) its semantic meanings and functions as a grammatical item. An example includes *Let us /Let’s*, where the lexical meaning of ‘allow us’ has been lost and the phrase has become an auxiliary to express a proposal or suggestion.

From a contact linguistic perspective, contact-induced grammaticalisation happens especially in pidgins and creoles, resulting in language changes under foreign language influences (Hopper and Traugott 2003: 212). In his study of East and mainland Southeast Asian languages, Bisang (1996) points out that language contact is a key determiner of grammaticalisation and the emergence of new constructions. Heine and Kuteva (2005) distinguish two sub-types of grammaticalisation, namely ‘replica grammaticalisation’ and ‘polysemy copying’: the former refers to the replication of a SL model form with its grammaticalisation paths which is ‘conceptually accessible to RL speakers’ (2005: 92); and the latter entails ‘meaning shift inspired by a model language, but without a change in the grammatical status of the item’ (2005: 100), which is similar to semantic loan in Furiassi’s (2012) classification.

Following previous studies, Matras and his colleague propose a ‘pivot-matching’ scheme (see further Matras and Sakel 2007, Matras 2009), accounting for the process of contact-induced grammaticalisation. The scheme mainly consists of replicating a SL model construction, maintaining the most important or ‘pivot’ features, and

creating a new construction by changing, adding or cutting RL elements (Matras 2009: 240-3). As the essential aim of this process is to achieve a communicative goal, so the new construction ought to be appropriate in the RL context and match RL grammatical rules. To fulfill this task, RL speakers may create context-appropriate constructions, by using native linguistic items, formations, and phrasal/sentential ordering rules, to make the construction more accepted by RL interlocutors. Therefore, through these efforts, the replicated construction may undergo an expansion ‘from minor to major used patterns, including an increase in frequency, an extension of its distributional context, extension across categories, and the emergence of new categories’ (Matras 2009: 239; also see Heine and Kuteva 2005, Matras and Sakel 2007).

Moreover, Matras (2009) notes that the replication and grammaticalisation process usually occurs spontaneously, with the aim of ensuring maximum communicative efficiency, and this motivation is also demonstrated in the replication of Chinese constructions in English. The discussion on such pattern replication and contact-induced grammaticalisation in Chinese-English setting will be further explored in Chapter 7 through case studies of *no can do* and *long time no see*.

2.3. Boundaries between borrowing and other contact-induced changes

2.3.1. Studies of borrowing and code-switching

Apart from borrowing, another contact-induced language change is also worth noting and is investigated by many linguists, especially in bilingual settings, namely code-switching (e.g. Poplack 1980, 1988, 2012, 2018, Myers-Scotton 2002, Winford 2003, Haspelmath 2009, Matras 2009, etc.). Studies of code-switching also help to define the notion of borrowing and the boundaries between borrowing and other contact-induced phenomena.

Winford (2003:14) defines code-switching as ‘the alternate use of two languages within the same stretch of speech, often within the same sentence’. His definition

suggests that the process of code-switching usually happens between bilingual interlocutors, which is different from borrowing items that can be used by monolingual speakers. Winford distinguishes between two sub-types of code-switching (2003: 103): ‘inter-sentential code-switching’ involves cases where bilingual speakers alternate between codes in a speech event or within a turn, and each sentence is made up by material from one language only; and ‘intra-sentential code-switching’, denoting that a bilingual speaker mixes elements from two codes within the same utterance, i.e. a single utterance contains material from more than one language.

Linguists have various views on clarifying the boundary between borrowing and code-switching, which can be difficult to establish in practice. For example, Poplack and Sankoff (1984: 103) highlight the notion of ‘social integration’ which refers to the degree of acceptance of a foreign element in the recipient speech community, claiming that ‘a higher degree of social integration signals a loanword, whereas a lower degree suggests an instance of code-switching’. Winford (2003: 107), as mentioned before, also puts forward two crucial points that distinguish code-switching from borrowing:

- a. Established loans are commonly used by monolingual speakers, whereas code switches tend to be transitory phenomena in bilingual contexts;
- b. Borrowings undergo morphophonemic integration, whereas code switches are less integrated.

As the criterion of social integration stressed by Poplack and Sankoff is hard to measure, Winford here focuses on morphophonemic integration, which is rather more evident and can be tested according to the form and sound of an item. But this criterion is also problematic, as some loanwords may not be morphologically adapted or changed. Mandeli et al (2015) then improve this criterion and argue that lexical borrowing is a distinct product of language contact, it involves integration and adaptation and is usually ‘glossed and analyzed’ in the RL (2015: 30). Compared to

other criteria, Mandeli et al emphasize the role of the RL speakers, rather than the changes of the borrowed items themselves.

As estimating the degree of integration can be problematic, linguists also put forward other criteria, such as frequency of use (Poplack 1988, 2012) and predictability (Myers-Scotton 2002: 41). Myers-Scotton argues that ‘one can predict [a loanword] definitely will reoccur because it has a status in the RL’, whereas it is unnecessary to predict whether or not a code switch may reoccur (2002: 41). And Ottolini (2014: 25) adds a criterion of ‘institutional acceptance’, measuring the status of loanwords or code switches by whether or not they are included in dictionaries. This criterion is clear and easy to verify, but since they are often slow to add new forms, dictionaries do not cover all living contact-induced material. However, it is still undeniable that dictionaries are usually the first-hand data sources for identifying established loanwords in studies of borrowing, as well as in this thesis, which will be further discussed Chapter 4 on methodology.

The criteria discussed thus far, including degree of integration and adaptation, bilingual or monolingual context, frequency of use, predictability, and institutional acceptance, are all significant in distinguishing between a borrowing or code switch. But in practice they are all vague or inadequate in attempts to draw a clear boundary between the two contact-induced products. From a diachronic point of view, scholars therefore note that code-switching and borrowing should be placed on a linear continuum (see Myers-Scotton, 2002; Thomason, 2003). Myers-Scotton views code-switching as a mechanism, ‘an avenue’, of lexical borrowing, arguing that ‘a potential borrowed form must first appear as a code-switching ...then they can move - as borrowed forms - into even monolingual speech in the RL’ (2002: 243).

Matras (2009), from a pragmatic perspective, agrees with such continuum, and creates a more dynamic multi-dimensional continuum on the basis of previous studies, taking into account various parameters such as bilinguality, composition,

functionality, integration, etc., shown as follow:

Figure 2.2: A continuum of code-switching and borrowing by Matras (2009: 111)

Bilinguality bilingual speaker ↔ monolingual speaker
Composition elaborate utterance/phrase ↔ single lexical item
Functionality special conversational effect, stylistic choice ↔ default expression
Unique referent (specificity) lexical ↔ para-lexical
Operationality core vocabulary ↔ grammatical operations
Regularity single occurrence ↔ regular occurrence
Structural integration not integrated ↔ integrated
codeswitching ↔ borrowing

From this multi-dimensional continuum, it is evident that the most typical code switches are those used by bilingual speakers only once, at an utterance level, and to achieve stylistic effects; and on the contrary, the most typical borrowing involves cases where monolingual RL speakers regularly use a structurally integrated item as a default expression, to designate a specific referent. Beside these extreme examples, most cases found in language contact situations are usually lying fuzzily in between.

In general though, linguists tend to view cross-language phenomena according to two main dichotomous criteria: whether the item is code-switching or borrowing, and whether or not the item is established in the RL speech community (e.g. Clyne 2003, Poplack 2018, Poplack and Dion 2012, Cook 2018). These two sets of criteria altogether result in four categories: ad hoc code-switching, established code-switching, ad hoc borrowing (see ‘nonce borrowing’ in the next section), and established borrowing. However, these categories again, as with many other models, are explicit in theory but not in practice. Moreover, it is also common to find in daily language use that many words and expressions, which were borderline cases, have

gradually developed towards one category or the other. In this thesis, for example, I study the borrowing of the interjection *aiyah* in English, which is recorded in the *OED* as a Chinese loanword (see further section 5.1, case study: *aiyah/aiyoh*). Data shows that this interjection is so restrictively used within Chinese speech communities or by speakers who intend to depict a ‘Chinese flavour’ that it is currently by no means a widely established borrowing. However, the word enters the *OED* very recently in 2016, and thus it is not possible to predict with confidence that it will continue to be perceived as foreign in English as time goes. Similarly, in Chinese the English politeness marker *thank you* (see further section 4.3.2, 4.3.3; other variants: 3Q, 三克油 *sankeyou*) was surely an example of code-switching used by Chinese-English bilinguals, but nowadays, after repeated use in daily conversations even by monolingual speakers, it has become an established borrowing.

2.3.2. *Nonce borrowings*

Another important notion put forward by linguists in studies of contact-induced products is ‘nonce borrowing’, also treated as a type of ‘lone other-language items’ (Sankoff, Poplack and Vanniarajan, 1990: 74) and ‘single word switches’ (Nortier 2020: 206). Nonce borrowing is usually defined as ‘the use of a singly occurring SL item preceded by words and expressions of an RL’ (see further Poplack and Meechan 1995, 1998), with relation to the notion of ‘nonce word’, designating a lexeme created to achieve an immediate communicative goal on a specific occasion (Crystal, 1995: 132). Similar to the continuum of code-switching and borrowing, nonce borrowings are also regarded as contrastive (in terms of degree of recognition and frequency in use) to established borrowings, which are typically well-integrated, widespread, and can even take place of its native alternatives among RL monolingual speakers. Moreover, some linguists regard nonce borrowing as a similar linguistic phenomenon to code-switching, for example, Appel and Muysken (1987) regard both of them as types of lexical interference, and Haspelmath (2009) argues that nonce borrowing should be included in the category of code-switching, as they are

non-conventional words used in speech ‘for the nonce’.

2.3.3. *Parallel developments*

Finally, in studies of borrowing, there are cases where similar forms or constructions are used in different languages, and it requires investigation to establish whether these are borrowings or parallel structures which have developed independently in different language systems. The notion of ‘parallel developments’ is illustrated from a historical linguistic perspective by scholars as ‘similar changes that take place independently in separate daughter languages, which yet do not exist in the protolanguage’, and such similarities usually result from ‘shared innovations or shared retentions from the protolanguage’ (e.g. Crowley 1991: 197-8). Scholars note that it is difficult to distinguish between contact-induced influence (especially loan translation or calque) and parallel developments (Ullmann 1966, Deroy 1980). For example, the previously mentioned term *skyscraper* is used to refer to ‘a very tall building’, and is first attested by the *OED* in this sense in AmE in 1883; its original meaning can be traced back a century earlier to designate ‘a skysail’ and later ‘a very tall hat, bonnet, horse, or person’. *Skyscraper* ‘tall building’ is often regarded as the model for the loan translation of German form *Wolkenkratzer* with the same designation (e.g. Haugen 1950, Onysko 2007). However, Ullmann (1964) considers that this is the case of ‘a metaphor or analogy’, which also develops and occurs independently in other languages. Indeed, it is also found in French *gratte-ciel*, Italian *grattacielo*, and Chinese 摩天大楼 (*mótiān dàlóu*, compound ‘touch-sky building’). There is not yet adequate evidence and justification to prove whether examples like these are borrowings or parallel developments, and this is worth exploring in future studies.

2.4. **Integration of borrowings**

When discussing post hoc influences of a borrowed item when it is imported into an RL language, a process known as ‘integration’ is often investigated by linguists. Integration is defined as ‘changes made to comply with the phonological,

morphological, and syntactical rules of the RL', and is an inevitable process for any potentially borrowed item which is accepted and used conventionally in a RL (e.g. Haugen 1950, Appel and Muysken 1987, Van Coetsem 1988, Myers-Scotton 2002, Onysko 2007, etc.).

McMahon (1994: 204) notes that a distinction can be made to describe two pathways of integration of borrowings, namely 'adaptation', referring to nativisation of a loanword and involving changes in properties to fit in with the RL patterns, and 'adoption', which means a borrowed item maintaining its SL features in the RL. Her view suggests that the integration process can occur explicitly without changes in form, depending on how similar the phonology/morphology of the language pair is; and the choice of either adaptation or adoption also depends on RL speakers and their specific communicative goals.

Appel and Muysken (1987) propose that a lexeme's meaning and its phonetic form are independent components, and thus are not necessarily borrowed together. They state that 'sometimes the entire phonetic form of a word is borrowed, and sometimes it is partly or entirely substituted by borrowing language sounds' (1987: 153). Treffers-Daller (2010: 26), on the other hand, further suggests that morphosyntactic integration is more often a compulsory process, owing to different grammatical rules in the RL and SL, while phonological integration is more dependent on the individual speaker's own choice and their proficiency in the SL; there are also cases where a loanword may be used in both indigenized and 'foreign' phonetic forms among RL speakers. Such co-existence of various phonetic forms of a loanword is prevalent in many contact situations, and scholars have identified some individuality factors that result in this phenomenon, such as bilingualism and age, gender, education level factors of different speaker groups (see further Thomason and Kaufman 1988, Poplack, Sankoff and Miller 1988).

With regard to English-Chinese language contact, the integration process of

loanwords is even more significant. The most distinct integration occurs in forms, i.e. the transcription between the two language spelling systems, (especially those well-established loans that have already been transcribed in the other language). For example, when a Chinese form is borrowed into English, it may either be transcribed in its *Pinyin* form and then adapted according to English morphology or translated into English words. For example:

- Through phonetic transcription:
哎呀(Chinese form, interj. to express surprise)
> *āiyā/ āiya* (*Pinyin* form, the latter includes a weak/ unstressed syllable)
> *aiyah* (English word in the *OED*)
- Through translation
好久不见(*hǎo jiǔ bú jiàn*, ‘haven’t seen one for a long time’)
> *long time no see*

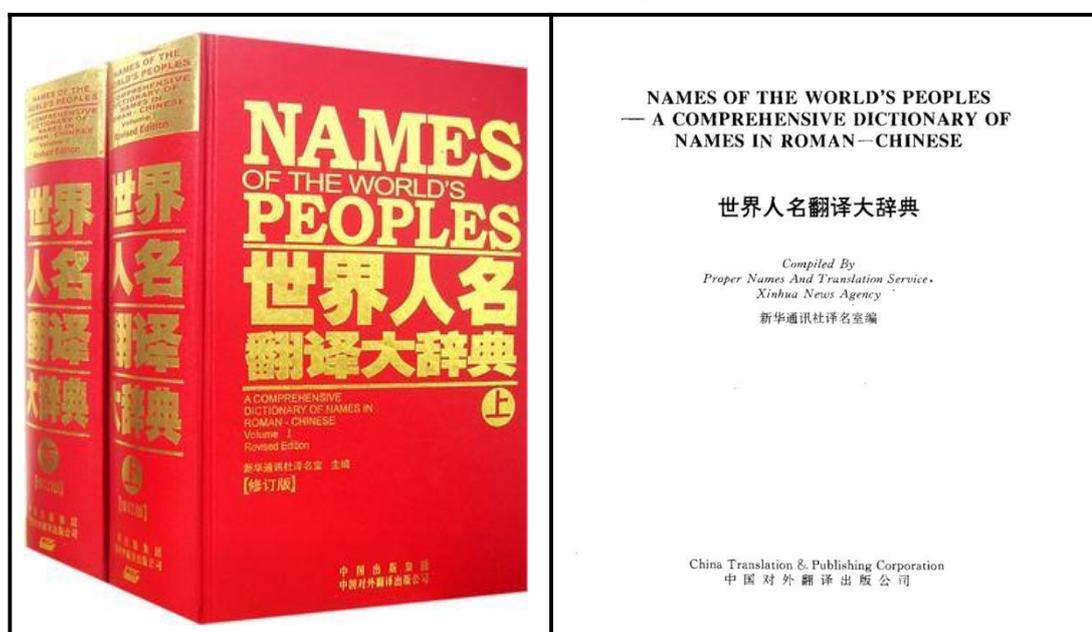
Since Chinese is a tone language, *Pinyin* transcriptions in Chinese can be annotated with tone markers denoting the pitch contour of each character, and this plays an important role in differentiating characters that share the same sound⁵. This property is lost during the integration of the borrowings in English, to meet with English phonological rules and writing system. In the current thesis, I will mostly use the non-annotated *Pinyin* forms for ease of legibility, and use the annotated forms if necessary.

On the other hand, when an English borrowing enters Chinese, it may maintain its original form in English letters, as most Chinese speakers are familiar with Roman letters, such as *OK*, *oh my god(OMG)*; English borrowings may also be transliterated in Chinese characters, using characters whose sounds most closely resemble the sounds of the original, such as *mummy* > 妈咪(*māmī*). Moreover, because there are phonemes in English (as well as other foreign languages) that are not found in

⁵ As shown in the examples here, the Chinese *Pinyin* transcriptions are usually annotated with tones, also known as ‘pitch contour’, which include 阴平 (*yīnpíng* ‘high/ even tone’), 阳平 (*yángpíng* ‘rising/ level tone’), 上声 (*shàngshēng* ‘falling-rising tone’), and 去声 (*qùshēng* ‘departing/ falling tone’), and marked on top of each vowels, e.g. ‘ā, á, ǎ, and à’.

Chinese, or because of the need to indicate the ‘foreignness’ of a borrowed item, a specialized subcategory of Chinese characters exists (some of which are even newly coined) to transliterate the foreign borrowings. For instance, as Chen (2013: 2) details, a list of reserved characters are used to transcribe most foreign names and proper nouns phonemically, as seen in Figure 2.3, the Archive of Names of the World’s Peoples (2007). More discussion of language contact between Chinese and English and influences on both languages will be presented in Chapter 4.

Figure 2.3: Pictures of Names of the World’s Peoples (2007)



Van Coetsem (1988) uses the terms ‘imitation’ and ‘adaptation’, corresponding to the distinction between ‘adoption’ and ‘adaptation’ mentioned above, and he also notes another type of adaptation of borrowed items other than change in pronunciation and morphosyntactic properties, namely change in meaning. He witnesses three pathways of semantic change when a loanword is borrowed and adapted into an RL: broadening, narrowing, and meaning shift (Van Coetsem, 1988: 8–12). On the basis of this view, a further assumption can be made here: through integration, the pragmatic meaning and functions of a borrowed item can also be adapted to the RL, i.e. pragmatic adaptation. In this respect, possible outcomes of pragmatic adaptation may include: a borrowed item maintains or loses certain meanings and functions, or

it is enriched with new meanings and functions owing to the RL speakers' creativity.

In short, the process of integration is complex relating to both RL rules and the SL models, as well as by macro-linguistic factors, like speaker's individuality. Therefore the outcomes of integration of each borrowed items may vary case by case, reflected in various aspects of properties, including phonetic and morphological form, syntactic properties, semantic meaning, and pragmatic meaning and function. In the contact setting between Chinese and English, the whole range of these phenomena of integration are involved in this thesis. Chapter 4 generalises some features of borrowings in both English and Chinese, according to their morphosyntactic forms (see further section 4.4.2 and section 9.2.1), and more discussions of the adaptation of specific borrowed items in terms of their pragmatic functions are presented via detailed case studies in Chapters 5 to 8.

2.5. Motivations

The research discussed above concerns the notion and classification of borrowing, the boundary between borrowing and other contact-induced products, and their integration after borrowing. Another issue is also significant to the study of language contact and borrowing, and this is the motivation for borrowing.

2.5.1. Borrowing for necessity

As discussed in section 2.2.2, scholars make distinctions between core vs. cultural borrowing and necessary vs. luxury borrowing (e.g. Carstensen 1965, Myers-Scotton 2002), which indicates one of the most important motivations of borrowing, necessity. Weinreich (1968: 56–7) argues that the majority of borrowings enter a RL to 'designate new things, persons, places and concepts', and the choice of using such foreign forms rather than coining new indigenous designation is simply made because they are 'more economical than describing things afresh'. Borrowings motivated by necessity occur in most foreign names (countries, cities, global institutions, etc.), words denoting new material objects (foreign crops, products,

animals, food or drinks, etc.), designations of new immaterial notions or concepts (political or economic issues, cultural traits, religion or beliefs, social events, etc.), and newly-introduced jargon or terminology in professional and academic fields.

Additionally, the various types of loanwords discussed here borrowed to fill language gaps are motivated by external factors, i.e. the importation of foreign objects and concepts; borrowing by necessity may take place as a result of internal factors where RL speakers automatically choose foreign forms to substitute their native forms and discard the latter. To account for such substitution, Weinreich (1968: 57) lists three internal factors: frequency, homonymy, and expressive force. Similar points are restated by Haspelmath (2009) through his classification of ‘therapeutic borrowing’ (as mentioned in section 1.2.2). According to Weinreich (1968: 57–9), loanwords are necessary either because:

- a. the native form is no longer ‘stable’ and frequently used;
- b. there are identical forms with different referents in the RL, which may cause ‘the clash of homonyms’;
- c. some indigenous forms have lost their expressive force through language changes.

However, there is criticism that the traditional distinction between ‘necessary’ and ‘luxury’ is problematic (see also 2.2.1), as there is no absolute ‘necessity’ in language change, because there is always a way to name something using the existing resources of a language (see section 2.2.2; see further Winter-Froemel 2011, Onysko and Winter-Froemel 2011⁶). As well as this, some borrowed items which are categorized as luxury borrowings are indeed motivated by certain communicative needs of the RL speakers, for instance, emotive or stylistic needs. Winter-Froemel (2017) then takes into account these pragmatic functions, and put forward the notion of ‘pragmatic necessity’. She adopts a usage-based approach and identifies several pragmatic motivations for lexical innovations, namely euphemism (i.e. to find a

⁶ In order to avoid the dispute of ‘necessity’, Onysko and Winter-Froemel (2011) put forward the labels ‘catachrestic borrowing’ and ‘non-catachrestic borrowing’, distinguishing borrowings which have an indigenous equivalent or not.

more polite expression), dysphemism (i.e. to express in a more drastic or offensive way), and playfulness. These pragmatic necessities seem to echo contextual motivations and other social factors, which will be further discussed in the following section.

2.5.2. *Other sociolinguistic factors*

Not only does need play a dominant role in borrowing, but some sociolinguistic reasons are also significant, as observed by many linguists (Winford 2003, 2010, Haspelmath 2009, Durkin 2009, Fischer 2013). For instance, Winford (2003, 2010) notes that ‘need’ and ‘prestige’ are the two most important motivations for borrowing and even result in many cases of borrowings in weak/remote contact settings. In order to elaborate the prestige motivation, Hickey (2010) distinguishes between the two languages in contact as ‘substrate’ and ‘superstrate’, denoting the language with less status and the language with more prestige respectively. He stresses that owing to the asymmetry in power, the superstrate language has more influence on the substrate language. For example, in Early Modern period, French and Latin exerted great influence on the English language, which was substrate at that time, and borrowings from these two languages into English are remarkable from 15th to 19th century (see also Durkin 2014). However, since such prestige is caused by economic advantage or cultural diffusion of the SL, whether a language has prestige over the other is relative and dynamic. For example, with the expansion of the British Empire and later the boosting global trade and communication, English has been regarded as a *lingua franca*, and thus has surely become a superstrate language around the world, importing loanwords into many languages. This prestige is, to some extent, spontaneous, as Matras (2009: 151) notes that RL speakers ‘tend to borrow elements of the speech of a socially more powerful, dominant community in order to gain approval and social status’. See Chapter 4, section 4.4.1 for the sociolinguistic background and the role of prestige in the Chinese-English contact setting.

Language efficiency is also a factor that can motivate the borrowing of a foreign

form when there is already a conventionally used form in the RL. The notion of language efficiency refers to the effort a speaker has to exert to get a message across to a listener, as measured by the length of a word or expression. Bybee (2007) witnesses a tendency for speakers to shorten expressions that are frequently used, e.g. *I am going to* > *I'm gonna* (2007: 11). Language change owing to efficiency is even evident in a context like text messaging. For example, the uses of shortened symbols like *btw* 'by the way', *cu* 'see you', and *thx* 'thanks' in English, which are also borrowed into Chinese (mostly in online discourse), are apparently created to reduce typing time, thus increasing communication efficiency (see further section 4.3.3.1). A similar process occurs in choosing a borrowed item to replace its native alternative on certain occasions, such as English speakers may borrow and use *long time no see* from Chinese construction 好久不见 (*hǎo jiǔ bú jiàn*) to substitute 'It has been a long time' or 'I haven't seen you for a long time', because the former is shorter and more efficient in communication.

Due to different situations between different languages in contact, the factors that motivate borrowings of specific items may also vary. For example, Galinsky (1967:71) identifies seven central functions of anglicisms in German, which reflect the motivations for borrowing in this context:

- 1) providing national colour of settings, actions, and characters;
- 2) establishing or enhancing precision;
- 3) offering or facilitating intentional disguise;
- 4) effecting brevity to the point of terseness;
- 5) producing vividness, often by way of metaphor;
- 6) conveying tone, its gamut ranging from humorous playfulness to sneering parody on America and 'Americanized' Germany;
- 7) creating or increasing variation of expression.

The list indicates the core motivations discussed before, such as to meet certain needs of speakers and to achieve communicative goals, to be brief and increase language efficiency, or to intentionally show features of the SL culture perceived as fashionable or prestigious. These functions also suggest that borrowing may result

from factors relating to speaker's creativity, such as the purpose of enriching the style of the language and expressing euphemism or humour. There are other pragmatic functions fulfilled by the use of borrowed items which relate to specific contexts. The case studies in this thesis will analyze borrowings and their functions in details in Chapters 5 to 8, and a thorough summary of all the linguistic and social factors that motivate such phenomena in Chinese-English language contact is given in section 9.3.1.

2.6. Constraints

Finally, borrowing does not take place randomly in language contact. It is usually constrained by a wide range of linguistic and extra-linguistic factors and depends on various contact situations. In existing studies, scholars have shown that items are more or less likely to be borrowed depending on their forms and functions, and on the intensity of contact in a particular context.

2.6.1. The borrowing hierarchy

It is well known that certain categories of words are more easily borrowed across languages than others; for instance, nouns and adjectives are borrowed more frequently than pronouns and conjunctions. Differences in 'borrowability' are, according to linguists, subject to a set of linguistic constraints, and on this basis several scholars have suggested a 'borrowing hierarchy', 'hierarchy of borrowability', or 'scale of adoptability' (e.g. Haugen 1950, Muysken 1981, Appel and Muysken 1987, Thomason and Kaufman 1988, Winford 2003, Matras 2009).

Haugen (1950) was among the first linguists to look into the notion of a borrowing hierarchy, and holds the view that nouns are the most borrowable categories followed by other parts of speech, while suffixes and phonological features are the least borrowable linguistic elements. Muysken (1981), and later Appel (1987), elaborate the hierarchy based on syntagmatic relations, noting that some categories which are more tightly integrated into a language system and 'more firmly embedded in the

syntagmatic relations in a sentence' are less borrowable than others (Appel and Muskey 1987:173). Their framework is listed below:

nouns > adjectives > verbs > prepositions > coordinating conjunctions > quantifiers > determiners > free pronouns > clitic pronouns > subordinating conjunctions (quoted *ibid*:171)

Winford (2003: 51) follows Muysken's hierarchy, and considers the reason for the greater accessibility of nouns and adjectives, stressing that 'they form less tightly knit subsystems of the grammar than functional morphemes do'. He also notes that these categories are the most frequently used items in contexts of language contact.

Linguists approach the question of why nouns are the most borrowable category from different perspectives. Matras (2009: 161) relates the fact to the core motivation of borrowing, a 'utilitarian' approach, arguing that words designating 'unique referents' such as specific institutions, procedures, and other concepts are mostly represented by nouns, thus are borrowed most easily. Myers-Scotton (2002: 240) takes a generativist view, adding that 'nouns receive, not assign, thematic roles', which may 'cause less disruption in predicate argument structure of another language', so that these words are less constrained in borrowing; by comparison, verbs that usually assign thematic roles and organize other components, are less borrowable than nouns.

Most studies discussed above draw conclusions about contact-induced changes based on the frequency of borrowed items or categories, according to data from large corpora (e.g. Thomason and Kaufman 1988, Winford 2003, Aikhenvald 2006). However, as Matras notes, 'corpus-internal frequencies are generally not an adequate measure of borrowability due to the difficulties in distinguishing frequency of borrowing from frequency of usage' (Matras 2009: 154). Therefore linguists attempt to put forward an 'implicational hierarchy', which goes beyond the approach of counting frequencies of different categories of words, and suggests that

contact-induced changes usually follow a relatively predictable pathway, so causal inferences can be made to account for the scale of borrowability (Moravcsik 1978, Matras 1998, Field 2002).

Moravcsik (1978) provides linear generalisations on the borrowability of different elements, which proposes comparisons: lexical items are more borrowable than grammatical items; nouns > non-nouns; free morphemes > bound morphemes; derivation > inflection; etc. These generalisations are recognized and elaborated by further studies (e.g. Matras 1998, Johanson 2002, Field 2002). Matras (1998: 283) further generalises and reinterprets them, and concludes that ‘elements that show structural autonomy and referential stability are more likely to be affected by contact than those that display stronger structural dependency and referential vagueness or abstractness’. Johanson (2002: 44) adds the factor of ‘attractive features’ of the borrowed items, suggesting that more ‘transparent and recognizable relations between form and content’ makes an item more easily borrowed.

2.6.2. Pragmatic constraints in the RL

Matras (1998, 2007, 2009) takes a further step to integrate pragmatic borrowing in the investigation of borrowing constraints, providing explanations for why pragmatic items, such as interjections and DMs (e.g. *well, anyway*) are also frequently borrowed in language contact situations. Apart from the syntactic factors mentioned before, Matras also puts forward pragmatic constraints, accounting for the differences in borrowability of ‘utterance modifiers’ (PMs) which have similar syntactic properties, i.e. are less integrated in a sentence structure.

From a pragmatic perspective and based on cross-linguistic samples, Matras (2007, 2009: 162) identifies the speaker’s initiatives in ‘monitoring and directing of the interaction’ and knowledge of both languages as important constraints on borrowing. He suggests the following hierarchy:

- a. modality > aspect > tense
- b. obligation > necessity > possibility > ability > desire
- c. concessive, conditional, causal, purpose > other subordinators
- d. factual complementizers > non-factual complementizers
- e. discourse markers, fillers, tags, interjections, greetings > function words
- f. prosody > segmental phonology

This set of regulations are based on the speaker's cognition of the other language, according to Matras, and can explain borrowing between many languages in close contact. However, between Chinese and English where the contact is relatively remote, there is not sufficient evidence to prove the applicability of each trend (see further case studies). Therefore, other culture-related factors needs to be considered.

2.6.3. *Extra-linguistic constraints*

Thomason and Kaufman (1988) present a 5-level scale to explain the borrowability of each category on a continuum, according to the degree of 'contact intensity' (which refers to the cultural pressure of a model language on the RL). The list below is presented from the most casual contact to the most intense contact, ranking from level 1 to 5 in their framework:

- level 1: content words
- level 2: function words, minor phonological features, lexical semantic features
- level 3: prepositions, derivational suffixes, phonemes
- level 4: word order, distinctive phonological features, inflectional suffixes
- level 5: significant typological disruption, phonetic changes

Contact intensity criteria may involve a wide range of factors, including the degree of exposure of a SL resulting from literary works, foreign language education, media, and the internet, the number of bilingual speakers in a speech community, the attitudes of RL speakers toward the other culture, and the degree of social interaction. All these factors then serve as extra-linguistic constraints on borrowing between languages involved in different contact settings.

The 5-level scale suggests that in the most casual contact settings (also called weak

or remote contact; see section 1.1, and also Onysko 2009, Peterson 2017), only content words are borrowed, mostly to fill lexical gaps. When the contact between languages gets more intense, more structural elements are borrowed. Language contact between Chinese and English is, for example, at around level 2, especially Chinese influence on English. English influence on modern Chinese, at least on speech and in specific contexts, is slightly more intense (see further section 4.2.3.1 and 4.3). At the levels of 4 and 5, where the influence of a language on the other is very significant, usually occurring between languages that are geographically close or have intense interaction, the SL may even affect the syntactic structure and cause phonetic changes in the RL. Thomason and Kaufman give an example of level 5 contact, examining Turkish influences on a Greek variety (see further Thomason and Kaufman 1988).

2.7. Summary

The current chapter reviews the existing literature on linguistic borrowing studies, and introduces the theories, frameworks, and issues that facilitate my work; I consider pragmatic aspects in the research of borrowing, different types of borrowing, the integration of borrowed items, and the factors that motivate or constrain language contact and borrowing. Building on this theoretical basis, the thesis investigates a wide range of borrowed items between Chinese and English, comparing their uses and functions in the SL and the RL, as well as their changes in morphosyntactic and pragmatic properties. More importantly, data shows that each specific item demonstrates different degrees of acceptance and integration in the RL, owing to various social and cultural factors, so the thesis also pays attention to the motivations and constraints of these pragmatic borrowings.

Chapter 3

Methodology

In this thesis, I mainly explore the pragmatic aspect of language contact and borrowing, and conduct a comparative study into the discourse functions of bi-directional pragmatic borrowing between Chinese and English. The borrowed items I investigate range from individual words of different classes to longer strings, and to particular morphemes as well, all of which have pragmatic meanings and functions. As mentioned in the introduction, this study mainly investigates the following four research questions:

- 1) What are the properties of the pragmatically borrowed items?
- 2) During their integration in the RL, what changes have each borrowed item undergone, in comparison to the item used in the SL, i.e. distributions, phonological features, morphosyntactic properties, and especially pragmatic functions?
- 3) Why might a borrowed item be preferred over an existing RL alternative (if this is the case)?
- 4) What social and pragmatic constraints in the RL influence or restrict the integration of pragmatically borrowed items?

As answering these questions requires substantial bodies of data from both English and Chinese, and various approaches to observe and analyse the collected data, in this chapter, I will introduce the data sources and research methodology of the study. This is followed by a sample study on the borrowing of *OK* (section 3.2), showing how the case studies are structured and how various data sources are used to analyze the pragmatic functions of the borrowed items and their integration into the RL.

3.1. Sources of materials

3.1.1. Dictionaries as sources for recognized borrowings

As mentioned in the previous literature, the study of borrowing and language contact

relates closely to bilingualism, and there is a fuzzy boundary between borrowing and code-switching. Although most studies note that there is no specific and neat boundary between these two language phenomena, scholars put forward a series of criteria that help distinguish borrowing from code-switching, which include the degree of integration and adaptation, the degree of bilingualism, frequency in use, and predictability, etc. On the basis of these criteria, the two categories are regarded as existing on a continuum (e.g. Poplack 1988, 2012, 2018, Myers-Scotton 2002, Onysko 2007, Matras 2009, see further Chapter 2, section 2.3.1). And at the most basic level, dictionaries serve as firm indicators that particular items have been borrowed and have gained ‘institutional acceptance’. This study therefore takes a few influential dictionaries as the first-hand data sources. If an item is recorded in these dictionaries, and its etymology shows it is of the SL origin, this suggests it can be regarded as a borrowing from the SL.

The study examines specific cases of pragmatic borrowing found in bi-directional language contact between Chinese and English, so I choose as initial sources the *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)*, 3rd edition online) and the *Contemporary Chinese Dictionary (CCD)*, also translated as: *A Dictionary of Current Chinese, Xiandai Hanyu Cidian*, 6th edition, 2012 and 7th edition, 2016) for English and Chinese materials. Both dictionaries are influential references works considered to be the most authoritative for English and Chinese, and provide extensive material on each item they have included, from etymology to quotations exemplifying usage. Other resources are also used in discussions of English borrowings into Chinese, and these are introduced in later sections.

3.1.1.1. The *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)*

The approach to finding all Chinese borrowings into English is relatively straightforward using the *OED* advanced search in the column of ‘Language of Origin’, as shown in the screenshot below:

Figure 3.1: Advanced search in the *OED*: Language of Origin

The screenshot shows the 'Advanced search' page of the Oxford English Dictionary. At the top, there are tabs for 'Entries', 'Senses', and 'Quotations'. Below these is a search bar with a 'Reset' button and a 'Search' button. A yellow box contains a '+ Add row' link. The main search area is divided into several sections: 'Subject' (e.g. Genetics, Theatre, Baseball), 'Language of Origin' (e.g. French, Japanese, Bantu), and 'Region' (e.g. Australia, Canada, Ireland). Each section has a 'Browse' link. To the right, there is a 'Part of speech' dropdown menu set to 'All' and a 'Restrict to entry letter or range' section with an 'Enter range' input field. The 'Language of Origin' section is highlighted with a red border.

The results show that there are 263 words and phrases of Chinese origin in *OED*. Within these 263 items, most (97%) are nouns (some of which can also be used as adjectives and verbs), designating imported products, food, and drinks, e.g. *chow mien*, *bok choy*; places, dialects, minority groups in China, e.g. *putonghua*, *Qing*, *Ming*, etc.; social norms, activities, and concepts in China, e.g. *yin*, *yang*, *tai chi mah-jong*; and some other concepts.

The 13 pragmatically borrowed items, i.e. words and expressions that are/can be used to express pragmatic meaning or have pragmatic functions, found in this collection include: interjections *aiyah* (*aiya*), *aiyoh* (*aiyo*), *wah*, and *pung*; phrases (either translated from Chinese or replicated from CPE) *can do* (*no can do*), *chop-chop*, *long time no see*, *add oil*; and two other forms that are used as noun phrases, verb phrases and also interjections, *ganbei* and *chin chin*. These pragmatically borrowed items are the main focus of this thesis.

The *OED* also provides a useful tool for the study of the borrowings, which is the frequency band, ranking from 8 to 1, showing how frequently an item is used in contemporary English. The data used for calculating word frequency in the *OED* is

retrieved from the Google Ngrams data (version 2)⁷. In the *OED*, each word, except for phrases or idioms under word entries, is assigned a frequency band, where a larger number means a higher frequency. The Figure 3.2 shows the band 3 frequency rate exemplified by the borrowed form *chin chin*:

Figure 3.2: *chin chin* and its frequency and etymology in the *OED*

chin chin, *int.* and *n.1*

Pronunciation: [?] Brit.  /tʃɪn'tʃɪn/, U.S.  /tʃɪn'tʃɪn/

Forms: 1600s– **chin chin**, 1800s– **tchin tchin**.

Frequency (in current use): ●●●●●●●●

Origin: A borrowing from Chinese. **Etymon:** Chinese *qǐ ng*.

Etymology: < Chinese (Cantonese) *ching*, (Mandarin) *qǐ ng*...

Table 3.1 show the frequency rate of each pragmatically borrowed items in the *OED*, where this is available. Phrases like *(no) can do* and *long time no see* are not included, because they are recorded under the entry of *can* and *long*, and are not assigned a frequency band.

Table 3.1: The frequency bands of pragmatically borrowed items in the *OED*

Pragmatically borrowed items	Frequency band	Approximate frequency
<i>chin chin, chop-chop, wah</i>	3	0.01-0.099 per million words
<i>aiya, aiyo, ganbei, pung</i>	2	< 0.0099 per million words
<i>aiyah, aiyoh, add oil</i>	1	- ⁸

Therefore, the approximate frequency rate given by the *OED* is the first criteria of choosing pragmatically borrowed items in this thesis. As an illustration, in Chapter 5, I choose *aiya(h)* and *chin-chin* as a pair of comparison, to conduct two case studies. The interjection *aiya(h)* is assigned to band 1 or 2, which means that it is used at a rate of fewer than 0.01 times per million words, indicating extremely rare usage and

⁷ The Google N-gram corpora offer great opportunities to study language change, but there are some problems with using it in frequency studies. The N-gram corpora consist of lexical bundles rather than complete texts, and they lack metadata regarding text types and registers (see further Michel et al 2011). In my thesis, I will only use Google Ngram Viewer as a supplementary data source, to give a rough sense of the changes in frequency of particular items (e.g. *long time no see* in Chapter 6).

⁸ *OED* Frequency Band 1 denotes extremely rare words unlikely ever to appear in modern texts, e.g. obscure technical terms, or terms restricted to occasional historical use.

something which is possibly unknown to most language users in the speech community. On the contrary, expressions like *chin chin*, in band 3, are used more frequently. According to the uses and quotations given by the *OED*, it is even syntactically integrated with English morphosyntactic features, producing inflected and derived forms such as ‘*chin-chins/ chin-chinned/ chin-chinning*’ used as nouns and verbs, rather than just interjections. Through comparison between these two cases, I will then discuss the linguistic and extra-linguistic reasons resulting in such differences.

Studying borrowed items that are used more restrictively, such as *aiya(h)* and *aiyo(h)*, is significant because it concerns the factors and constraints that restrict them from being widely accepted by AmE or BrE speakers, or limit them to particular English varieties, such as Asian Englishes. Studying more widely-accepted cases like *chin-chin*, on the other hand, allows us to investigate the linguistic and social motivations that influence language changes (see further discussion of the motivations of Chinese-English borrowing in Chapter 4).

However, it is notable that the *OED* is in the process of being revised and updated; and for some unrevised entries, while the *OED* records the history, etymology, and usages of the linguistic items, it lacks the most up-to-date material showing the present use of the borrowed items in everyday communications. Therefore, large databases and other additional data sources are also helpful (see section 3.1.2 and 3.1.3).

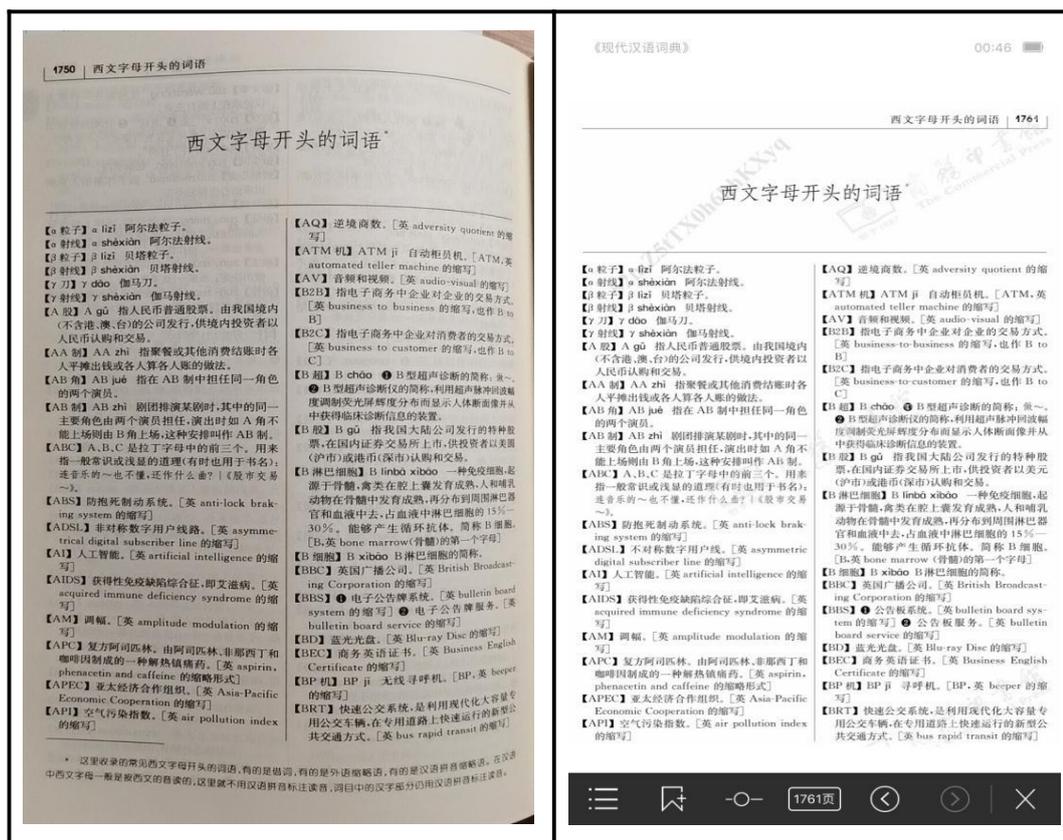
3.1.1.2. The *Contemporary Chinese Dictionary (CCD6 & CCD7)*

The *Contemporary Chinese Dictionary* is the first, most influential and most widely used dictionary for Chinese native speakers and Chinese learners (first edition in 1978 by Lyu Shuxiang and Ding Shengshu, two leading linguists in China). In 2012, and later in 2016, the *CCD* released its 6th and 7th editions, that collected more than 70000 entries for more than 13000 characters, words, and expressions. Therefore,

this thesis takes the *CCD* as an authorized source for Chinese materials.

However, it is problematic for editors to include borrowed items in this dictionary: difficulties may occur with the ‘adoption’ and ‘adaptation’ of the loan English words into the *CCD* (or any other influential dictionaries). English and other Indo-European languages use alphabetic spelling systems, and as noted by Bussmann ‘graphic signs represent individual sounds or sound segments’ (1998: 46). Chinese, on the other hand, uses a pictographic writing system, and each ‘sign denotes a morphological unit’ and a ‘meaning unit’ (ibid.), thus requiring another phonetic annotating system (e.g. the *Hanyu Pinyin* system in modern Chinese) to represent the sounds. Moreover, the different phonological features of Chinese and English may result in asymmetric relations between the phonemic features between the borrowed items and the indigenous forms for transcription. Therefore, there are large numbers of English borrowings in Chinese that still remain in their letter form rather than being transcribed into Chinese characters (also see discussions in Chapter 1, section 1.4), and which are termed as ‘letter words’ in lexicography (e.g. Liu 1994: 7, Kang 2001). For decades, these letter forms were not documented in the *CCD* or any other influential Chinese dictionaries, but unsurprisingly they are of high frequency in Chinese speech communities, especially in internet language, and even in some less formal written language, such as emails and magazines, e.g. *OMG*, *CU*, *p.s.(postscript)*, *btw*, etc. However, the 6th edition of the *CCD* includes a list of 239 words that consist of letters or combination of letters, characters, and numbers, in order to better reflect the reality of language use in current China and the trend of globalisation as reflected in language. Examples include *ATM* 机 (*ji* ‘machine’) ‘automated teller machine’, *PM2.5* ‘particulate matter 2.5’, *MBA* ‘Master of Business Administration’, and *PC* ‘personal computer’. (Zhao 2015: 109). And a further dozen lettered words have been included in *CCD7* five years later. A print copy and an electronic version of sample ‘letter word’ lists in the *CCD6* and *CCD7* are presented in Figure 3.3:

Figure 3.3: Lists of letter words in the CCD6 and the CCD7



However, this new practice aroused much controversy and dispute among Chinese speakers and linguists at first⁹. For example, Li, from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, regards such practice as sullying the purity of Chinese, and claims that mixed use of Latinized and native forms may lead to misunderstanding in Chinese speakers' learning and use of language, which is a threat to Chinese culture (see concepts of standard language and 'linguistic purism' also in Brunstad 2003: 52). In response, the editors of the dictionary highlight the significance of letter words, as they are inevitable outcomes of social development: these words are 'concise in form, easy to use in communication, and universally accepted' in international contact settings, thus are able to increase communication efficiency. And they also argue that lexicographers and dictionaries should take a descriptive view, rather than

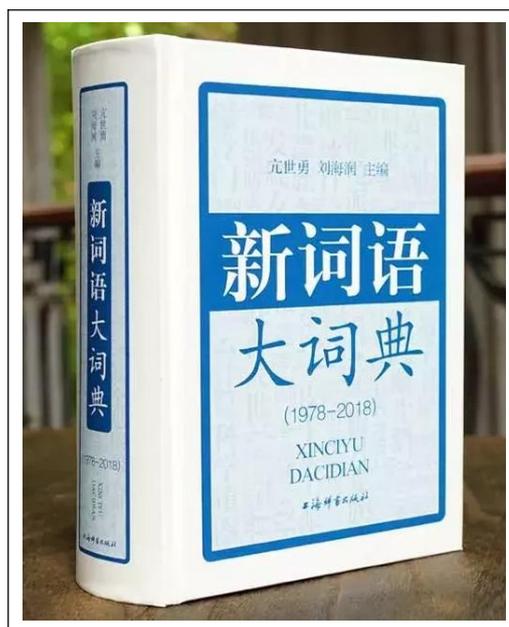
⁹ See further

https://web.archive.org/web/20140305131909/http://www.bj.xinhuanet.com/bgt/2012-08/28/c_112874197.htm

prescriptive view, which is to genuinely record how language is used, rather than make judgements which might constrain its change and development.

Because linguists hold different views on accepting letter words into the Chinese dictionary and argue about the degree to which they affect the ‘purity’ of Chinese, the editors of the *CCD* are still very cautious about accepting letter words, which may explain the exclusion of some of the frequently used borrowings that are peripheral vocabulary, such as *OK* and *OMG*. So this thesis also makes use of supplementary data sources which provide a more up-to-date and more descriptive collection of language use in contemporary Chinese. Such sources include *新词语大词典* (*Xinciyu Dacidian*)¹⁰, the *Dictionary of New Words* (1978-2018), as shown in Figure 3.4:

Figure 3.4: Picture of the *Dictionary of Chinese New Words* (1978-2018)



According to Kang and Liu, the editors of the project *New Words Information Dictionary*, their choices of entries are mainly based on two criteria: whether the item is ‘new’ or not, and whether it is relatively ‘established’. An item is regarded as

¹⁰ Based on the national social science research project 现代汉语新词语信息(电子)词典的开发与应用 Development and application of *Modern Chinese New Words Information [Electronic] Dictionary*. (Kang 2001; Reference number 01CYY002).

‘new’ if it is either a newly coined form that hasn’t been witnessed in history, or an existing item with new meanings and functions; an item is ‘established’ when it is conventionally used with a certain frequency, at least by a majority of the speech community, rather than used transiently at some time (Kang 2001, Liu and Kang, 2012). And in the *Dictionary of Chinese New Words*, Liu and Kang include more than 20000 words and expressions emerging in use since 1978, and provide annotations and quotations showing their meanings and uses. These new words and expressions consist of dialect forms, loanwords (including loan translations), blends, acronyms, initialisms, letter words, and internet idiomatic expressions. The dictionary also covers various fields and includes all parts of speech, i.e. not only nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, but also functional words, and it also collects 598 colloquial expressions and 141 idioms, including *OK* and *yeah*, which are not included in the *CCD*. It therefore provides helpful supplementary materials for this thesis.

In summary, the *OED*, the *CCD*, and supplementary dictionary sources can provide a sound basis for the study of borrowings of both English and Chinese, as SLs and RLs, in terms of their phonological, etymological, semantic, and morphosyntactic properties. It is a preliminary task in this thesis to observe and record the senses and functions of the borrowings that are documented in English and Chinese dictionaries, although many more pragmatic functions may not be included in dictionaries but emerge during actual language use. By comparing the items in both SL and RL, possible findings may include:

- 1) not all of the senses/ functions of the loanword recorded in SL dictionaries are documented under its entry in the RL, which suggests some senses/functions are lost during pragmatic adaptation into the RL for various reasons, e.g. different syntactic rules of Chinese and English, or the existence of more popular counterparts in English.
- 2) new senses/functions are found in the RL, indicating possible metonymic or grammatical extensions of the borrowing in the form of new senses/functions that have developed in RL post hoc.

According to these possibilities, it is reasonable to make assumptions about how the borrowing is integrated into the RL, and give an initial account of contact-induced changes (if there are any). However as mentioned before, dictionaries can only be used as a starting point for reference, and do not adequately cover all senses/functions of a borrowed item in actual language use in either SL or RL. Therefore, larger historical and contemporary data are needed.

3.1.2. Corpus data

According to Sinclair (1991, 1996), the meanings and uses of a linguistic item should not be studied alone, but in the context of larger chunks of language. He puts forward the four-level approach to studying the meaning and discourse function of an item, which considers collocation, colligation, semantic preference and semantic prosody (Sinclair 1991: 170, 1996: 85):

- a. Collocation: a frequent or statistically significant co-occurrence of words;
- b. Colligation: the tendency for grammatical choices to co-occur;
- c. Semantic preference: a word tends to be used with a set of contextual words that are drawn from a particular semantic field, i.e. the discourse topic;
- d. Semantic prosody: the tendency exhibited by some words to occur consistently with either positive or negative meanings, i.e. attitudinal meanings.

In terms of studying the meaning and discourse functions of the pragmatic borrowed items in this thesis, which in most cases are loosely attached to the sentence/utterance structures, the analysis of their contexts and co-texts is also important, and this necessitates the use of corpora.

3.1.2.1. English corpora: COHA, COCA, BNC, BNC-S 2014, and GloWbE

In order to investigate how Chinese borrowings are used in the RL English, and how changes have taken place through time, we need to rely on sizeable corpora. First of all, I choose to study the examples in COHA and COCA as representatives of AmE,

and BNC for BrE¹¹. Since the spoken data in BNC was extracted in the 1990s and COCA only records transcripts of conversations from TV and radio programs, they may not well represent genuine conversations of contemporary English speakers. Therefore, I also use data from BNC2014 Spoken (BNC-S 2014; Love et al 2017), which is the largest spoken corpus of present-day English conversations, covering a wide range of age groups, genders, and geographic identities. These corpora have balanced amounts of material of various genres and text types, and Table 3.2 below shows the composition of each corpus.

Table 3.2: Comparison of the size of English corpora (million tokens)¹²

Text types	COHA	COCA	BNC	BNC-S 2014
Spoken	--	127.4	9.9	11.5
TV/Movie	40	129.3	--	
Newspapers	45.2	122.9	10.4	
Magazines	106.2	127.3	7.2	
Fiction	222.4	119.5	15.9	
Non-fiction books	61.2	--	--	
Academic	--	121	15.3	
Non-academic	--	--	16.5	
Web (general)	--	129.9	--	
Web (Blog)	--	125.5	--	
Miscellaneous	--	--	20.8	
Total	475	1002	100	11.5

The corpora mentioned above only focus on AmE and BrE and they don't provide data for other Englishes. However, I have noticed that although expressions are borrowed in English, some of the borrowings have been restrictively used within Chinese or Asian contexts, generally by Chinese or Asian speakers of English, especially in the early stages. One reason for this may be that the borrowed items have native counterparts with similar functions that are used by native English speakers. Therefore, a parallel study of each borrowed item and its counterpart(s) in

¹¹ The BNC I will use in this thesis refers to the one completed in 1994, which was slightly revised in its third edition released in 2007, i.e. BNC XML Edition. (Compare its successor, the ongoing project BNC2014, which is build by Lancaster University and Cambridge University Press).

¹² Data comes from <http://www.english-corpora.org/>

RL is presented in this thesis.

The study mainly involves two English varieties, namely BrE and AmE, but evidence show that it is a gradual process for borrowings to develop from being used restrictively by certain groups of speakers, to being well-established and used more widely across different speaker communities. In some cases a borrowed item is more established in other English varieties than in BrE and AmE. So a comparable corpus is needed here to explore how the borrowings are used in a Chinese-English bilingual community context and in general international English. To obtain more corpus data for this part of research, GloWbE is a suitable supplementary data source.

GloWbE consists of more than 1.9 billion tokens of web-based English texts from 20 English speaking countries (where English is used as first or second language). It allows comparison of the use of linguistic items across different varieties of English.

The GloWbE corpus is especially helpful in Chapter 5, where I look into the different status and usages of the borrowed interjection *aiyah* in general international Englishes and in some Asian English speaking countries which are closely related to and influenced by the Chinese language and culture. This case study compares the uses of *aiyah* across varieties, including BrE, AmE, Australian English, and Hong Kong English, Singapore English, Malaysian English (see further Chapter 5, section 5.1). It is notable that the data in GloWbE is not evenly distributed across different varieties, so that it is important to be cautious when comparing the data. The size of each sub-section used in this thesis is listed in Table 3.3:

Table 3.3: The size of each sub-corpora in GloWbE (million tokens)

Great Britain (GB)	United States (US)	Canada (CA)	Australia (AU)	Hong Kong (HK)	Singapore (SG)	Malaysia (MY)
387.6	386.8	134.7	148.2	40.45	42.9	42.4

However as GloWbE is a web-based corpus, it contains quite different text types

from the other corpora mentioned before. All the texts are extracted from ‘randomly’ chosen web pages (i.e. generated through running high frequency n-grams in Google), which include ‘general’ material and ‘blog’ material.

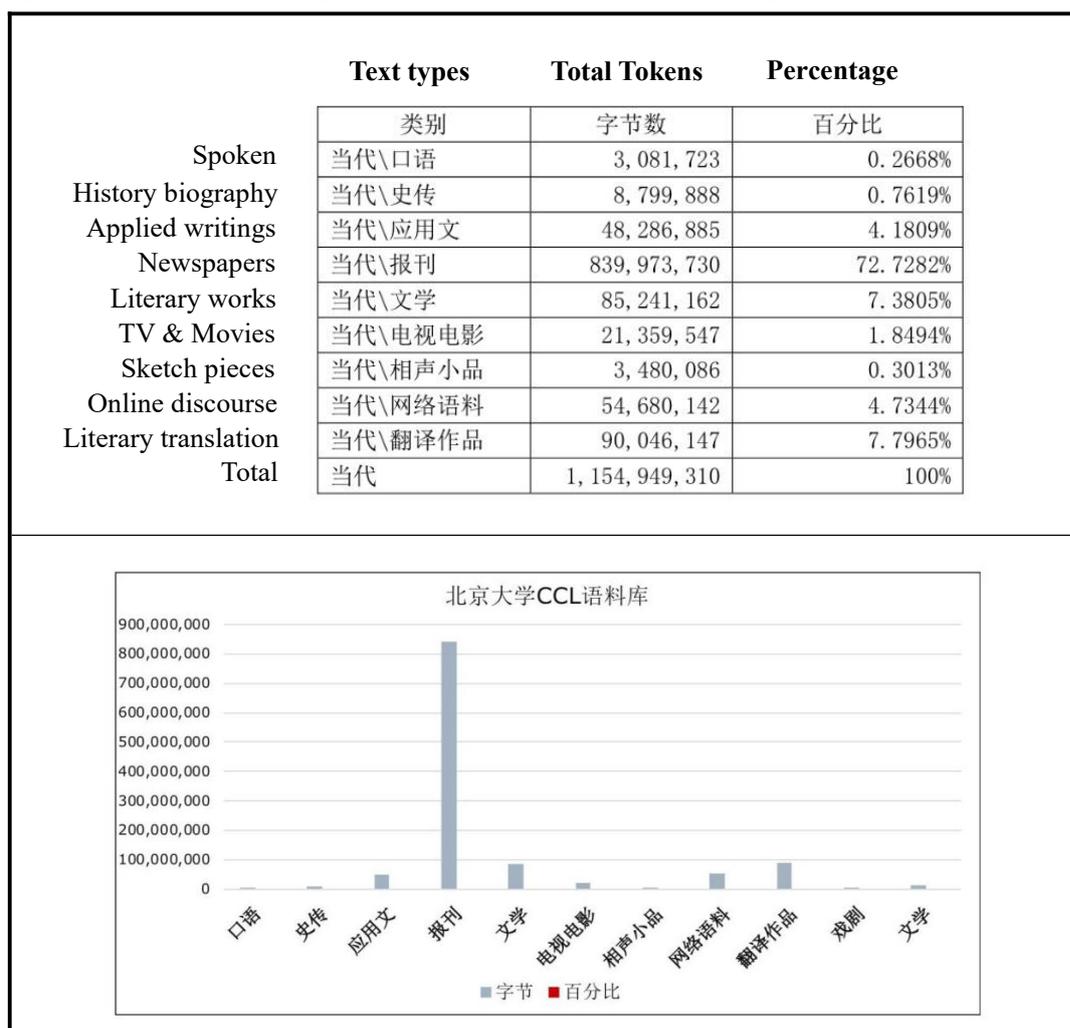
GloWbE is helpful in the current study: it has a widely-distributed collection of World English varieties from similar sources and text types; the corpus data in each variety are collected at the same period of time (in December 2012) and thus can provide a synchronic and fairly recent account of the contemporary use of the English language; and it contains a large amount of blog data, which provides evidence of everyday use of English to a great extent, and is relatively speech-like compared to other kinds of writing, as there lack sufficient spoken data in all other comparable corpora.

The English corpora introduced here are the main data sources in the current thesis, but there are places where some other corpora are used as supplementary sources. For instance, ICE-GB, as a syntactically parsed corpus, is used in the study of *OK*, for the purpose of demonstrating the frequency of *OK* used as a PM; and Chinese Web Corpus 2017, consisting of tens of billions of Chinese web language, is used in the case study of *mummy* in order to show its uses on the internet. More information on these corpora is given in the footnotes when they are used in the case studies.

3.1.2.2. Chinese Corpora: CCL and BCC

For the Chinese material, I choose the CCL (Center of Chinese Linguistics, PKU) Corpus of Chinese as the main data source, because it is the largest and most comprehensive corpus of Chinese, with over 500 million characters of Contemporary Chinese (over 1 billion tokens, 1949–present), covering nearly all text types including spoken materials, script lines, literary works, academic works, and historical documents.

Figure 3.5: Size and components of CCL Corpus of Contemporary Chinese



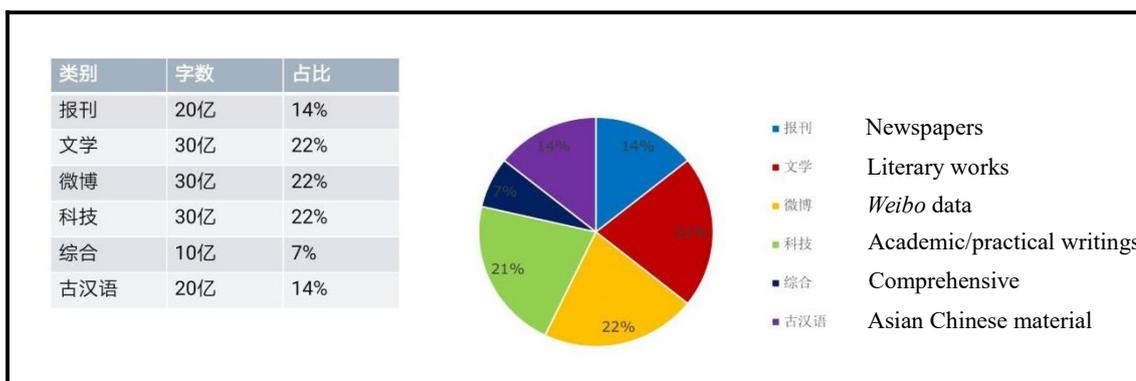
In section 2.4, I note that English borrowings in Chinese may appear in various forms, such as Chinese transliteration or meaning translation, or keep their original forms in letters. Unfortunately, as CCL is relatively small and its material for each genre is not balanced (Figure 3.5), the data is not adequate for the current study on its own, therefore other corpora are needed to fill this gap.

The BCC (BLCU Corpus Center) corpus consists of a large body of data (15 billion characters/tokens in total, 15 times larger than CCL), and covers text types with evenly distributed tokens, including newspapers (2 billion), literary works (3 billion), academic writings (3 billion), and *Weibo* data (3 billion)¹³. Figure 3.6 provides

¹³ BCC also contains a sub-corpus of Ancient Chinese, with 2 billion tokens, which are not used in

detailed information:

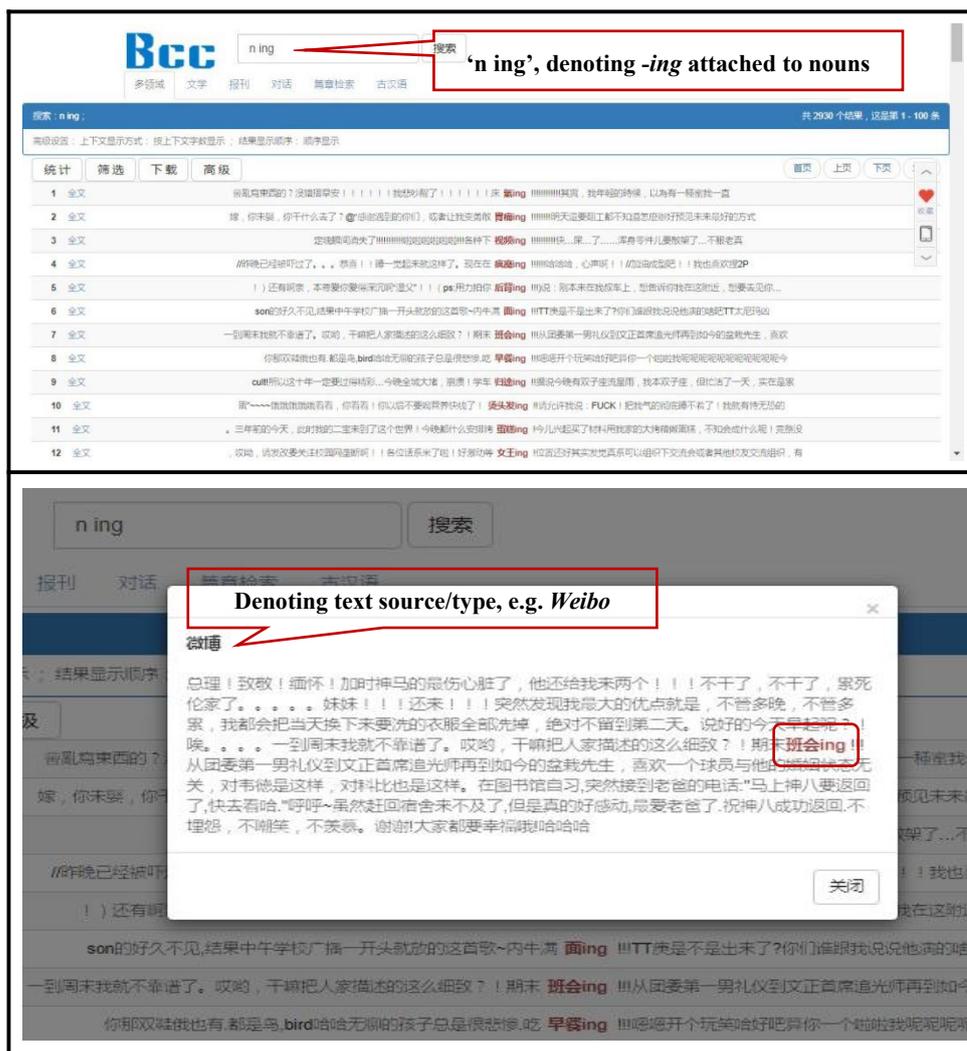
Figure 3.6: Size and components of BCC



Moreover, a considerable amount of lettered words and expressions is recorded in the corpus, which provides a authentic description of the uses of English borrowings in contemporary Chinese. The texts in BCC are also syntactically parsed, which is helpful for investigating the usages and functions of the borrowed items. The interface display of its search engine is shown in Figure 3.7 below, taking the suffix *-ing* as an illustration:

the current thesis. There is also another section called ‘综合 comprehensive’ which contains 1 billion tokens that are extracted from all other text type components, which can be used as a selective small-sized corpus.

Figure 3.7: Pictures of search results of ‘N+ing’ in BCC



3.1.3. Social media data and internet language

The current study deals with borrowed words or constructions with relatively subjective semantic and pragmatic meaning, and focuses on the pragmatic adaptation process which often involves changes in progress. Moreover, some of the cases involve particularly recent borrowings whose meanings and usages are not well documented in either dictionaries or corpora.

Therefore, a dynamic diachronic database of sufficient size which contains relatively informal material is also needed in the thesis, and which includes different text types and language users from all walks of life. For this reason, media data is a good choice. In most cases language borrowing results from intercultural communication,

and mass media is undoubtedly one of the main influences on contact-induced changes in languages. More specifically, through media communication, almost all languages are enriched with lexical innovations, such as technical terms used to describe operating systems, web names and addresses, browsers, e.g. 微软(*weiruan* ‘microsoft’); popular expressions/slang for certain activities, e.g., *to tweet*, 织围脖 (*to post a weibo*), etc.; and most importantly, use of abbreviations that arise because of the verbal limitations of the media (also DMs e.g. *btw*, *CU*), which is closely related to the topic of this study.

Taking media data as source material for linguistic study is a growing trend. Hjarvard has put forward the notion of a medialect, noting that an increasingly mediated society’s use of language must take into account the linguistic variants that arise out of specific media (Hjarvard 2004:75). An important advantage of using media data is that researchers can acquire a mixture of formal and informal styles and combinations of spoken and written forms, from the strictly private to the totally public.

Where, traditionally, research on borrowings relied on print media corpora or other public mediated data, in this study, I will use online social media like Twitter (English) and *Sina Weibo* (Chinese), as it allows the study of language contact in a much more dynamic environment that is caught between written and spoken, distance and proximity, and is hence specifically relevant for the observation of pragmatic change. It is notable that the name of the Chinese social media app ‘微博 *Weibo*’ itself is a loanblend (see Haugen 1950 and other linguists’ terminology), which consists of an indigenous adjectival modifier 微(*wei*, designating ‘small’ or ‘micro’) and a borrowed English word *blog* that is translated in Chinese as 博客 (*boke*, a piece of social media which has declined since the wide use of *Weibo*). Therefore the coinage of this loanblend shows the essence of the app as a ‘micro-blog’ that is to provide a social media platform which is shorter and more casual than blogs, for users to post or share their thoughts and emotions.

Twitter is a well known social networking service founded in 2006, designed for users around the world to post short messages. According to the most updated statistics released in 2020, Twitter has over 192 million daily active users (2021)¹⁴. However, it is worth noting that the world-wide reach of Twitter has made it necessary to sift the data to be included in this study, as my main focus is BrE and AmE. Therefore, in selecting examples for case studies, I have checked users' profile pages to establish their nationalities.

Sina Weibo (micro-blogging; henceforth *Weibo*) distinguishes itself as one of the mostly widely used social-networking platforms/applications in China. Launched in 2009, it has reached over 530 million monthly active users, around 80% of whom are educated and born in the 1990s and 2000s¹⁵ (updated in March 2021). Apart from personal users who post their stories, thoughts, or feelings on social media applications like *Weibo*, merchants, traditional media outlets, associations, and even authorities also regard these applications as a platform for information exchange and publicity. In May 10, *Weibo* announced first-quarter financial results of 2021, reporting a net profit of \$450 million, and showing that over 86% of the total profit (\$390 million) comes from advertising and marketing¹⁶.

Language used in social media is a mixture of formal and informal styles and a combination of spoken and written language features, making these two platforms suitable data sources for the current study, and for the investigation of the usage and integration of the borrowed items in both RLs. Additionally, thanks to the advanced search engines of both applications, I can restrict the data according to temporal and spatial parameters. It is also possible to access information about the language users,

¹⁴ Statistics come from *2020 Global Impact Report* Twitter Inc. See further *about.twitter.com* Retrieved January 6, 2022.

¹⁵ Statistics come from 'China Internet Watch' (*chinainternetwatch.com/statistics/weibo-mau/*) Retrieved September 29.

¹⁶ Statistics come from 'First-quarter financial report of Sina Weibo 2021' in *ZhongguoWangKeji* (*www.tech.china.com.cn*). Retrieved October 10.

as social media provide open access to their users. At the same time however, as social media constitutes a genre in its own right, for example, with character limitations and specific conventions such as hashtags and reposts, it is important to note that the discourse analyses cannot be straightforwardly generalised to other contexts.

3.2. Sample study: the borrowing of *OK* into Chinese

I use a variety of data sources in this thesis, as detailed in the previous section. In the remainder of this chapter, I present a sample study of *OK* to illustrate how these dictionaries, corpora, and social media data are used together and how the case studies in later chapters of the thesis will be structured. By studying the uses and pragmatic functions of *OK* in both English and Chinese, this study will give an account of its integration and pragmatic adaptation into the RL Chinese.

3.2.1. A brief introduction to OK

The first step in each case study is to give a brief introduction to the pragmatically borrowed item, which may include: its common properties; its general status as a borrowing; and relevant existing studies on the item.

OK appears to be one of the most adaptable words ever coined, used formally and informally in most languages in the world. A 2011 BBC news report represents this word as ‘taking over the world’, as shown in the picture below¹⁷:

¹⁷ Extracted from <https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine> Accessed July 20, 2019.

Figure 3.8: The use of *OK* around the world



According to the *OED*, there are various suggestions about the etymological origins of the word *OK*, but its first appearance in 1839 suggests that the word is formed within English, as an abbreviation of the phrase ‘oll korrekt’¹⁸. Later, due to its simplicity in written form and pronunciation, and its capability of functioning as different parts of speech and expressing various emotional meanings, the word becomes useful in communication and is accepted worldwide.

In the linguistics literature, multiple studies investigate the discourse functions of *OK* as a pragmatic marker (PM). There is some terminological diversity here: some linguists use ‘discourse marker’ and ‘discourse operator’ (e.g. Gaines 2011), and others term it as a ‘discourse particle’ (e.g. Merritt 1984). In this study I use PM. There are several empirical studies focusing on particular interaction settings and discourse contexts. For example, Merritt (1984) conducts an empirical study and identifies two basic functions of ‘*O.K.*’ in server-customer service encounter

¹⁸ *OK*, initials of the phrase *oll korrekt*, firstly appeared in 1839, was a deliberately coined colloquial expression for ‘all correct’, because of a fad for comical and humorous abbreviations in the late 1830s and 1840s (see further Cecil Adams 1985)

dialogues¹⁹. Specifically, it functions to signify approval, acceptance, or confirmation, and also serves as a bridge linking two stages or phases of the service encounter. Similar studies also include institutional contexts, such as academic lectures (Levin and Gray 1983), courtroom interaction (Beach 1990), medical interviews (Beach 1995), and police investigations (Gaines 2011). Besides, scholars also examine the use of *OK* in other language contexts, for example, Huddleston (2013) conducts a survey of PM *okay* in South African English examining its distribution and functions, and concludes that the PM serves as a conversation-management marker and has the role of signifying turn-taking; and Chen (2006) studies the pragmatic functions of *OK* in advertising slogans in Chinese and Minnan Dialect.

3.2.2. *The use of OK in English*

The use of the item in the SL should be considered at first, since it can be regarded as a model for the investigation of its uses in the RL in later sections, and the comparison helps analyze its integration and adaptation process. In this study, for example, the *OED* provides basic meanings and functions for the PM; larger corpora are needed to study its uses in various contexts: in this case COCA is used, because it provides sufficient results for *OK*, i.e. more than 170k, and it is larger than other corpora such as BNC. For some of the case studies in later chapters where the frequency of the borrowed items is relatively low, for example the Chinese borrowing *aiyah* (see Chapter 5, section 5.1.2) and *no can do* (see Chapter 7, section 7.1.2), more corpora are needed to determine their uses and functions as far as possible.

As mentioned, *OK* firstly has various syntactic functions. According to the *OED*, *OK* can be used as an adjective, an adverb, a noun, a verb, or an interjection, as listed below:

- ✧ Adjective: to designate the meaning of satisfactory or good quality; also

¹⁹ All kinds of spellings, including *OK*, *ok*, *okay*, and *O.K.*, refer to the same linguistic phenomenon. I use the spelling '*OK*' in this study, and when quoting from other scholars, I reproduce their spelling.

frequently used in weakened sense, which means ‘adequate’ or ‘acceptable’

Describing a person, a thing, or a process, used predicatively; ‘in good health/ condition/ order’	<i>I’m OK. everything is OK.</i>
Describing a place or a thing (attributive); ‘fashionable’, ‘prestigious’, ‘high-class’	<i>A socially OK college</i>
Describing a person (attributive); ‘decent’, ‘trustworthy’, ‘congenial’	<i>He is an okay guy</i>

- ✧ Adverb: *OK* means ‘Satisfactorily’, ‘acceptably’; e.g. *I’m doing OK.*
- ✧ Noun: an indication of approval, endorsement, or authorisation
e.g. *to give the OK (to)*
- ✧ Verb: derived by conversion, meaning to agree or to authorize something.
Usually used in the phrase e.g. *to OK something*
- ✧ Interjection.
 - a. Expressing assent, concession, or approval to a previous statement or question, signaling ‘yes’, ‘all right’;
 - b. Appended as an interrogative to a clause, phrase, etc., in expectation of agreement or approval.
 - c. Introducing an utterance or as a conversational filler, typically without affirmative or concessive force, but rather as a means of drawing attention to what the speaker is about to say: ‘well, so, right’.

In the *OED*, the discourse functioning *OK*, for example usage-b and usage-c listed above, is only categorized as a type of interjection, but in this study, to avoid overlaps between interjections and pragmatic (discourse) markers, I treat ‘interjection’ as a category referring to specifically ‘primary interjection’ in modern classifications (e.g. Bloomfield 1933: 176, Ameka 1992: 105, Crystal 2003) that is more characterized by emotional markers without specific semantic meanings, such as *aha*, *wow*, *ouch*, etc. Although *OK* has the function of ‘expressing emotional reaction towards certain events’ (see usage-a), it also has other discourse-pragmatic functions (usage-b, usage-c), that are borrowed and more commonly found in Chinese (see discussion in section 3.2.3). Therefore, I will only use the term PM, except when there is other terminology in the literature or data sources which I quote.

Before observing its uses in larger corpora like COCA, I refer to a syntactically parsed corpus to get an impression of how frequently *OK* is used as a PM, and for this I use ICE-GB²⁰. In ICE-GB, *OK* is used as a PM (ICE-GB use the tag ‘discourse marker’) in 484 hits out of the total 578 extracted samples. There are 84 further occurrences when *OK* functions as the head of adjective phrase, as in ‘an *OK* kind of guy’; and it is used as adverb phrase head in other 9 examples, e.g. ‘I’m doing *OK*’. Finally, in only one case, *OK* serves as main verb in the sentence, as in ‘to *OK* the proposal’. It can be reasonably estimated from results that more than 80% uses of *OK* serve as PM in English.

COCA data shows that the PM *OK* can appear in various positions in an utterance: standing alone, in an utterance-initial position, in a medial position, or at the end of an utterance. However, in spoken materials, which lack prosodic indications, there are very likely some instances of *OK* placed in utterance-medial position which are actually closing or opening units of the preceding and following sentences, and vice versa. Therefore, it is not applicable to give definite figures as the basis for a quantitative study, but only to show that *OK*, like other PMs, is used in various positions of utterances. Due to such flexibility in syntactic distributions, *OK* then has a wide range of discourse-pragmatic functions.

First of all, one of the basic functions of *OK* is to indicate transition in an interlocution. In terms of this function, *OK* plays an important role in turn-taking. This function of *OK* allows the speaker to acknowledge their turn, to open or end the conversation, or to change the topic, as illustrated in 1):

- 1) A: I'm not buying into that narrative, **OK**¹?
B: **OK**². We have -- we run out of time.
A: I don't..
B: **OK**³. Good. Thanks, guys. It's good to (INAUDIBLE) appreciate you being with us.
(COCA| SPOKEN: *CNN Newsroom* 2017)

²⁰ Note that ICE-GB is not used in other case studies in later chapters, because it is not big enough, but as a parsed corpus, it is used to identify the percentage/frequency of the uses of *OK* as a PM, which is helpful in this study.

In example 1), there are three uses of ‘transitional OK’ (see further Schegloff 1986) in this conversation. In the first round, when speaker A first claims that he is not convinced by a previously-mentioned narrative and he uses *OK*¹ to seek confirmation, intending to keep talking, speaker B responds with the PM to take his turn showing that there’s no need for elaboration, because of limited time, ‘we run out of time’. Here, *OK*² signals changing topic and closing conversation. However, speaker A doesn’t give up and keeps his argument, so B interrupts A using *OK*³, and this time he successfully holds the floor and closes the conversation. Such transitional *OK* is also termed as ‘conversation-management marker’ in Fraser’s framework (Fraser 1996: 197), as speakers use it to lead the conversation in a new direction.

Another basic function of *OK* in conversations is to serve as a response marker, sometimes used alone or collocating with words like *right*, *fine*, and *good*, etc. Such use is to show the speakers’ receptivity, approval, concession, or simply meaning ‘I am listening, keep talking’, illustrated in example 2):

- 2) A: We’re going to look at this camera here.
B: Right.
A: And we’re going to do on three a big clap.
B: **OK**.
A: Right in front of your face. Ready? One, two, three.
(COCA| SPOKEN: *PBS News hour 6:00am est. 2017*)

Here, *OK* and *right* simply signal B’s acceptance of doing what A ask him to do.

Sometimes, apart from introducing a speaker’s turn in a conversation, *OK* can also function as an attention getting device when used in an utterance-initial position, which scholars coin the term ‘attention getter’, a subtype of structural markers (see Levin and Gray 1983:197, Schleeff 2008), as shown in example 3):

- 3) A: I’m going to ask you to just play a few bars from that and to tell us the story behind that

because that story had - that song had a really big influence on your life.

B: **OK**, here it comes. (Playing guitar, singing)

(COCA| SPOKEN: *Loudon Wainwright III*. 171124)

By saying *OK*, along with *here it comes*, speaker B takes his turn not only in speech but in action as well. The PM serves to attract the listener's attention and an indicator of the speaker's following action.

When *OK* appears in the utterance-final position, it can be used as a tag question, giving the speaker a chance of asking for clarification or checking whether the other interlocutor understands what he/she has just said. This function is called 'tag-positioned comprehension check' (Gaines 2011: 3292). In example 1) discussed above, *OK*¹ has shown such use of the PM in a conversation, as the speaker asks for the listener's confirmation. Moreover, the tag-question *OK* can also be used in monologues and narratives, which is commonly found in academic contexts²¹, as shown in example 4):

- 4) You can't put grain in the pyramids because they're solid structures, other than a little -- a little thing for the pharaohs in the bottom, as you understand, **OK**? -- But the pyramids, as an example, they were not built for grain...
(COCA| SPOKEN: *Fox Hannity 10:00pm est*. 2015)

Here, *OK* is placed after a long descriptive speech which introduces new knowledge, and it functions to help the speaker check if the audience understands what he/she has said, and whether they are ready to move on to the following aspect of the topic. In many cases, speakers who use such tag questions are not expecting any formal answer, just like the situation discussed in example 4). The addressee often responds with body language, such as nodding the head and affirmative eye contact.

Similarly as the function of the tag-questioned *OK* in the monologue in 4), *OK* is also used in the middle of an utterance, functioning as a structural marker to mark

²¹ Such function is further discussed by Levin and Gray (1983) and they call it the 'lecturer's OK'. They also stress that sometimes lecturers doesn't necessarily use *OK* towards their audiences, but rather as a self-acknowledgement marker, showing themselves that a topic/section has been finished.

boundaries and to denote sequence in speech (see further Levin and Gray 1983). A primary reason of using such fillers is to allow a speaker time to collect their thoughts, but without a silent pause, as demonstrated in 5):

- 5) All right. Well, we're going to finish that up, right? **OK**, much more ahead, widespread outrage after a five-time deported illegal immigrant is cleared in the murder of Kate Steinle. Right back with our reaction.
(COCA| SPOKEN: *The Five 5:00pm est.* 2017)

In the broadcasting context in example 5), *OK* fills in the gap in the speech, as the speaker intends to sum up what he has just reported. Here, *OK*, as well as *alright*, *well*, and *right*, not only marks the end of the previous topic and the beginning of the following speech, but also gives him enough time to organize his mind and language to avoid silence or awkwardness (i.e. '*OK*'s embedded hesitations', see *ibid*: 197).

Last but not the least, the pragmatic functions of *OK* are also often combined in one occurrence, where the PM may carry attitudinal meanings, such as irony, sarcasm, and skepticism, which is illustrated in the example below:

- 6) A: How can someone fire a stolen gun, kill someone and not at least be convicted of involuntary manslaughter.
B: The defense said he fired it accidentally and it ricocheted and hit Kate Steinle. Is that...
A: A stolen gun.
B: Well, **OK**₁, we don't know for sure it was stolen. He claims he just found it on a bench, somewhere, **OK**₂. But they must've bought his story.
(COCA| SPOKEN: *Journal Editorial Report 2:00pm est.* 2017)

The speakers in example 6) are talking about a case and are both apparently skeptical of the testimony. After seeking confirmation from A that the lethal weapon is *a stolen gun*, speaker B uses *OK*₁ to hold his floor, using it alongside *well* with a concessive meaning, and argues that whether or not the gun was 'stolen' is not yet proved. Then he uses *OK*₂ again, as a comprehensive check or self-check of the preceding suspect's claim, which also expresses a sense of concession. Moreover, such repeated use of *OK* doesn't mean he is giving a positive response, but rather ironically

indicates that the speaker is still suspicious, expressing the meaning ‘I think what he has said is fake and I don’t believe him’.

As mentioned before, the PM *OK* is one of the most flexible words in English, and carries various emotional meanings and functions depending on stress, prosody and even volume. In English, especially in spoken contexts, the PM *OK* can play more than one syntactic/pragmatic role in a foregoing discourse, for example, closing and opening, and appearing as a boundary device in the organisation of communication. Moreover, a single instance of *OK* can also combine several discourse functions, such as turn-taking, checking for understanding and reassuring, filling a discourse gap, marking a topic change, and expressing suspicion, approval, or satisfaction.

3.2.3. *OK in contemporary Chinese*

After this investigation of the uses and functions of *OK* in English, I examine its uses in the RL, Chinese. The first thing to look up in this part of the study should be the definition in dictionaries. However, not all borrowings are recorded in the authorized dictionaries in the RL, and although it is a highly established English word in the Chinese speech community *OK* is omitted in the *CCD*. This is because the editors are cautious about accepting letter words in the dictionary (see further section 3.1.1.2). Some borrowings in later case studies such as *aiyah* and *chin-chin* (see section 5.1.2 and 5.2.2), have found their way into dictionaries of the RL, and their entries will be discussed. Otherwise, the data mainly comes from corpora, shown as follows. For all the Chinese material, I present my own English translation beneath each examples.

3.2.3.1. *OK in CCL*

In CCL, the PM *OK* is mostly found in sentence-initial (52%) and sentence-final (18%) positions, as well as being used alone (23%). There are also a few cases where *OK* occurs in the middle of a sentence or within a phrase; this is rare, but indicates the potential for syntactic integration of the PM into Chinese (discussed later in example 11).

Firstly, *OK* is used as a single PM which occurs independently in an utterance, in a narrative or conversation, and it functions to express the speaker's attitudes or emotions as an interjection, as the *OED* suggests. When *OK* is used in conversations, it also serves to achieve certain communicative goals. Example 7) below is extracted from a news report about a nuclear scientist:

- 7) 顿时，他兴奋地摘下了防毒面具，连声高喊：“OK！太棒了！太棒了！”
keep loud yell OK amazing amazing
Suddenly, he took off his mask and yelled again and again: “OK! That’s amazing!
Amazing!” (CCL: Newspaper, 1994)

Here, the scientist has just finished a nuclear test and the results are cheering. The speaker is apparently surprised and excited, so *OK* is firstly a positive evaluation on his achievement, indicating that ‘it is a good outcome’. Moreover, the use of an exclamation mark, and his repetition of *amazing* all express his pleasure and satisfaction at his success.

Example 8) is a dialogue between a scholar and a interviewer about Zhuang-zi (or Chuang Tzu) and Taoism, and *OK* plays the role of a response marker:

- 8) -- 他要想去讲这个宇宙的原因，他找不见一个合适的字，他只好借“道”。咱们看看“道”这个字啊。
-- OK
-- “道”这个字呢.....
-- He was going to explain the essence of the universe but failed to find the most suitable word, so he chose a newly coined character ‘Tao’. Now, let’s discuss ‘Tao’ first.
-- OK²²
-- The character ‘Tao’ ... (CCL: spoken *Conversation: Liang Dong & Wang Dongyue*)

This example shows how *OK* functions to help move along a conversation. In the dialogue, speaker A serves as a keynote speaker who leads the conversation, while

²² Throughout the thesis, word-for-word translations are usually provided beneath each Chinese sentences (e.g. example 7, 9, and 10) unless the borrowed item is used as a single sentence or is structurally independent (e.g. example 8).

speaker B is the listener and gives response when it is needed. In this context, the response marker *OK* is used as a ‘continuer’ (see Schegloff 2000: 5) to show acknowledgement and understanding of what A has said and approval for him to continue talking. It is both a turn-taking strategy and a signal of politeness.

There are also many results which demonstrate the structural marker *OK* that are used within running texts, functioning as an indicator of the boundaries between topics or the logical relationships of the co-texts. This is shown in examples 9) and 10):

- 9) 我想做一个网站，这个网站是如此这般、这样那样的，可我想完了一看，这不就是豆瓣吗？**OK**，如果是这样的话还着什么急呢，就这样继续做吧。

OK, if (it) is like this anxious/ rush what [Chinese colloquial structure]
Inspired by this, I would like to design a website in this way. But after I have thought about it carefully, I found it identical to Douban. **OK**, if so, then there's no need to rush, just keep doing... (CCL: spoken *Entrepreneurs*)

- 10) 文火煮 1 小时 左右，**Ok** 啦！蜜瓜，百合都烂了，莲子 gently cook one hour or so **OK** [interjection] 也很软。糖水香浓，软滑。

You need to continue simmering it very gently for around 1 hour, and **OK!** Now the melon, lilies and lotus seeds are all melted in the soup, smelling nice and tasting sweet. (CCL: practical writing\ *Collection of recipes*)

Although in both examples the clauses that contain *OK* are disconnected from the preceding or following clauses by period markers, it is indicated by the context that they are in a running text with sequential relationships. As in 9), the clause preceding *OK* and the one starting with *OK* are in the condition-consequence relationships, so here, *OK*, with the meaning ‘alright’, functions to both acknowledge the condition just mentioned and to provide an opportunity to change tones, and to indicate that the following utterance is about to give his ‘decision’. In 10), the author is writing a recipe where *OK* is used as a closing marker to signal that all the cooking procedures are finished, indicating ‘everything is ready’. It also functions to change the topic to describe the dish in following texts.

A: I have to tell you that I have no money with me.
B: Relax! I will not charge you. You can take them all. **OK?**
(CCL: Movie/Drama)

This conversation takes place between two speakers talking about the things that speaker B leaves behind after moving to another city. Here speaker B says that A could take all the items without giving money, so *OK?* in this context has multiple pragmatic meanings: 1. it serves as a comprehensive check to confirm that A understands his attitude and suggestion; 2. it is tag question asking whether A accept his ‘farewell gift’, these free-of-charge belongings; 3. speaker B’s words can also be interpreted as ‘don’t worry *OK?* I won’t charge you anything’, since he starts with *relax*. The third interpretation seems to carry slight irony, as B may tease speaker A because of his stingy, but due to limited background information, this can not be verified.

Finally, one example in CCL shows how language users play with the borrowed item *OK* is also worth noting. Example 13) involves a complex mix of various factors, such as indirect borrowing, loanblend, and the use of homonymy and pun:

13) 卡拉 未必 **OK** 。“卡拉”当然 可以， 只是一个国家、一个民族，
Kara not necessarily **OK** . ‘kara’ sure reasonable/acceptable
毫无顾忌地都在“卡拉”， 很少见到什么真正属于民族的优秀文化艺术形式、文
化艺术精品， 那么， 这个国家这个民族 就不该再 盲目地 “**OK**”了。
The nation should not blindly regard sth as ‘OK’
Karaoke is not necessarily **OK**. Of course, it is reasonable to take karaoke as a leisure
activity, but if the people of a nation all indulge in ‘kara’ and ignore protecting their
own national arts and artistic forms, then they should not ‘**OK**’ blindly any more.
(CCL: *People’s Daily*)

This example is from a commentary article about the popularity of *Karaoke*, referring to ‘singing with songs recorded and played by a machine’, as a leisure and entertainment activity. *karaoke* (Japanese: カラオケ) originates from Japan and is borrowed into various languages in the rest of the world. The Japanese form itself is coined by blending indigenous and borrowed material: the Japanese phoneme *kara*, which means ‘empty, void’ is attached to an English borrowing *orchestra* >

ōke(sutora) オーケストラ. When the resulting form is borrowed into English, speakers adopt its Romanji transcription *karaoke*. In Chinese, however, the sound of *kara* can be easily transcribed into Chinese characters 卡(*ka*) and 拉(*la*) with similar sounds, but it is hard to find corresponding phonemes or forms for *oke*, so Chinese speakers instead borrow letters O and K, which are already known in the speech community. Although the structure 卡拉 OK is usually used as a fixed noun phrase denoting the leisure activity, variant uses similar to 13) are not unfamiliar to Chinese speaker. For example, in the hit song 卡拉永远 OK, composed by the famous singer and actor Alan Tam in the 1990s, the adverb *yongyuan* ‘forever’ is inserted into the phrase to express the meaning that ‘singing can always cure anything’, which is the theme of this song.

卡拉永远 OK
kala yongyuan OK
kara forever OK

The combination of letters *O* and *K* as elements of the loanblend 卡拉 OK, functions to make a pun because it is a homonym of the PM *OK*.

Similarly in example 13), the sentence 卡拉(*kala*)未必(*weibi*, ‘not necessarily’) *OK* functions as a topic sentence of this paragraph, expressing the idea ‘karaoke is not always good/acceptable’. In the following discussion, the author deliberately keeps using the noun separately, and treats *OK* as a verb ‘to regard something as good’²³, as shown by *kara* and *OK* in single quotation marks. Such marked use then has the emphatic function of highlighting his viewpoint, urging that people should respect traditional arts and cultural products, while they embrace new inventions and importations, or it may not be *OK* ‘appropriate, acceptable’. Another interpretation of the last clause in the extract can be made that the author uses *OK* as a shortened form of 卡拉 OK *karaoke*, and verbalizes it to designate the action of singing karaoke. In a word, either interpretation shows that the borrowed item can be used to make puns

²³ Note that verbalisation of adjectives or nouns without changing their forms is a common rule in Chinese grammar (see further Jing 1985, Wang 2007).

with pragmatic connotations, and the various changes of its form and function based on Chinese grammar shows its syntactic integration and adaptation into contemporary Chinese.

3.2.3.2. OK in social media contexts

Owing to a limited number of examples of *OK* as a PM in the CCL corpus, the pragmatic functions may not be fully evidenced, therefore a larger corpus is needed in this case (as in later case studies in Chapter 5 to 8). BCC provides a large amount of data, including more than three billion words of online social media data. As mentioned in previous sections, it is problematic that there are no available spoken corpora of Chinese material, except for the spoken subset of CCL (around 3 million words, which only takes up 0.26% of the total). The social media data collected by BCC, either in chat rooms or in posts, may present a more informal text type, and more speech-like to some extent.

Example 12) discussed above shows how *OK* is used in sentence/utterance-final position and functions as an interrogative tag, for seeking confirmation or approval. However, BCC data shows that in a total of 491 uses of such interrogative *OK*, nearly 72% do not merely have the pragmatic function of checking comprehension or seeking for approval, since in context they are all used to express negative emotions or indicate the negative attitude of the speaker/ author. *OK* is also used to indicate irony and sarcasm (e.g. the third possible interpretation in example 12). The following examples 14) - 16) provide illustrations:

- 14) 你把工作，亲情什么的多写的能行不，除了悲秋什么的…咱换个话题，让我觉得您是个男人，**ok**?

Can you write something about your life and work, rather than just shed tears and emotions? Change a topic and man up, **OK**? (BCC: social media *Weibo*)

- 15) 好啦！在这里给你们真相，其实我素颜就是个大小眼的怪胎！**ok**?

All right! Here's the truth you want: I am actually a freak who have one eye bigger than the other if I don't wear make-up! **OK**? (BCC: social media *Weibo*)

16) 別太把自己當回事兒了, **ok**?

Don't take yourself too seriously, **OK**? (BCC: social media *Weibo*)

The speaker in example 14) expresses his/her dissatisfaction or boredom towards the other interlocutor because he is always expressing sad emotions in his writings. And the speaker uses expressions like 'man up' to cheer him up, and *OK?* is not only a question which expects an approval or a confirmation, but serves as an order or an urge. This can be interpreted as expressing neutral attitudinal meaning, although the speaker's discontent is indicated. Examples 15) and 16) show more negative attitude. In 15), the speaker has been judged and criticized for her appearance for a long time, so she deliberately portrays herself as a freak to express her anger towards those who 'attack' her. Here, *OK?* indicates ironic concessive meaning, with extra meanings like 'is this enough?', 'no need for you to say I'm ugly', and 'can you just stop bothering me?'. In 16), the critical comment 'don't take yourself too seriously' already expresses the speaker's negative attitude towards the other interlocutor, so *OK?* here is embedded with more sarcasm.

3.2.3.3. The use of the adjective *OK* and its integration into Chinese

Although the case study only involves the use of *OK* as a PM, the adjective *OK* is also borrowed into Chinese. However, unlike in English where it can function either predicatively or attributively, the adjective *OK* in Chinese is only used predicatively in sentences or utterances. Moreover, it also undergoes syntactic integration and adaptation, which makes it more conventionally accepted and used in more sentence structures in Chinese.

In a total 7038 instances of *OK* in BCC, 26% are adjectives, and most of these uses are similar to the following two examples:

17) „,现在我什么都不需要,,独立, 我 很 **ok** ,,请不要理我!!!!

I very OK

... Now I don't need anything... (I am)independent and I am very **OK**... Please leave me alone. (BCC: social media *Weibo*)

In examples 17), *OK* is used to describe the state of a person, denoting that he/she is in a good mood or a healthy condition. In English the semantic meaning of the adjective *OK* referring to ‘good quality’ can be graded from ‘acceptable’ (i.e. its weakened use, *OED*), to ‘appropriate’ and ‘good, all right’, and to a higher level of ‘excellent’. Similarly, in Chinese, the quality of *OK* can also be graded, depending on the adverbs modifying it, including 还(*hai*: a degree between ‘barely’ and ‘slightly’) < 比较(*bijiao*: ‘relatively, fairly’) < 很(*hen*: ‘quite’) < 非常(*feichang*: ‘very’) < 太(*tai*: ‘extremely’), etc. These collocations are all found in BCC, which shows the integration of the borrowed item in Chinese.

As discussed in the previous section the PM *OK* is syntactically integrated into Chinese indigenous constructions, such as ‘*OK* 连声’ in example 11). The adjective *OK* is also found naturalized in native Chinese AdjP structure, as shown in examples 18) and 19):

18) 爸爸 說 下次 有 BF 一定要 讓他看看 **O 不 OK** 先
 father says next time have boyfriend must let him meet O not OK first
 My father says that next time if I date a boyfriend, he would like to meet him first to check whether he is **OK or not**. (BCC: social media *Weibo*)

19) 看看 我 今天 混搭 得 **O 不 OK** , 礼服加毛衣
 Look I today mismatch [auxiliary] O not OK,
 Look, do I look **OK or not** in this mismatching suit with sweater.
 (BCC: social media *Weibo*)

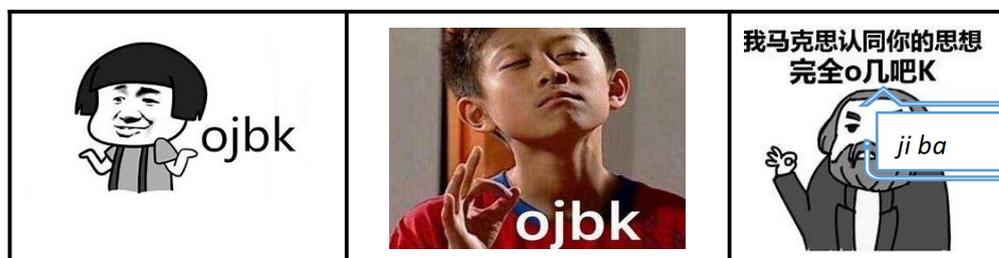
The construction ‘X 不(*bu*: not) X’ is a rather common pattern for adjective and adverb phrases, to designate the meaning of ‘X or not’, such as 好不好(*hao bu hao* ‘good or not’) and 快不快(*kuai bu kuai* ‘fast or not’). In Chinese, for adjectives or adverbs that are bi-syllable (character) expressions ‘X₁X₂’, the X element preceding *bu* should only retain the first character (syllable) ‘X₁’ of the expression > ‘X₁ *bu* X₁X₂’, as in 开不开心(*kai bu kaixin*: ‘happy or not’) and 厉不厉害(*li bu lihai* ‘strong/severe or not’). Therefore, *OK* in this case is then separated into O and K, fitting into the construction as ‘O 不 *OK* (OK or not)’ and functioning to express

various meanings according to contexts: in these examples, it describes a boyfriend as ‘a nice person or not’ in 18), and an outfit as ‘fashionable or not’ in 19). Moreover, *O 不 OK* in example 19) is even used as an AdvP through conversion, modifying the verb 混搭 (*hunda* ‘mismatch’). These examples all demonstrate that the integration of the English word *OK* has reached an utmost degree into Chinese grammar.

Apart from the corpus data presented above, the study also includes other supplementary material from *Sina Weibo*. Unlike the social media data in BCC, which were refined and selected years ago, the *Weibo* data, retrieved using an instant search engine can thus provide a more immediate account of how the item is used in daily communication, also in a more informal, dynamic, and speech-like context. For example, there are other ways of integrating the item with native elements in internet language, and these are popular among online users.

One particular case is notable and is widely used in internet slang (around 20 new quotations per day retrieved by the instant search engine, as a rough measure): the form of *OK* is changed by inserting two other letters ‘j’ and ‘b’, the initials of a Chinese *Pinyin* form *jiba*, which stands for ‘male genital organ’. Slang words containing such elements are usually used with negative connotations, e.g. *diaosi* meaning ‘loser’ (*diao* also denotes a male genital organ). So the form ‘*ojbk*’ is usually used to express the converse meaning to ‘OK’, as shown below:

Figure 3.9: Popular emoji of ‘*ojbk*’ retrieved from online social media²⁴



- 20) @1003 夜:刚试了一下白纸钢柳刃的切割效果, 完全 **ojbk**, 碰水即锈, 无解。
7/26/2021 totally **ojbk**

²⁴ Extracted from *weibo.com* Accessed November 12, 2022.

I have just tried my new High-Speed steel knife, totally **ojbk**. It easily gets stained, and I have no idea about it.

In these examples, it is clearly that the speakers are not satisfied with the current situation, so the use of *ojbk* means ‘unqualified’ or ‘unacceptable’.

Such slang uses of *OK* are wide-spread among Chinese online speech community, but some people who are not familiar with internet language may not understand it. However, the example listed here shows that social media data can provide the most up-to-date materials which may not be recorded in corpora, and can demonstrate the use of the borrowed items in a particular speaker group, the internet users, which is helpful in some of the case studies in later Chapters, e.g. the case study of vocative *sir* (see Chapter 6, section 6.2.2).

3.3. Summary

To sum up, in this chapter I have identified the core research questions of the thesis and the way I will address each of them. I have also discussed a variety of dictionaries, corpora, and social media data used in the thesis. In the second part of the chapter I present a sample study of *OK*. The result of this study demonstrates that there are various kinds of uses and functions of the borrowed item *OK*, owing to the creativity of Chinese speakers when it enters into the recipient speech community; and these creative uses are collected from a variety of data sources, so this sample study also proves the importance of using a wide range of data sources in this thesis.

In the remaining part of the thesis, I will firstly give a descriptive overview of the recent borrowing phenomena between Chinese and English, with data collected from all the above-mentioned data sources, and explain some social-historical factors which are significant to the language contact between the two languages. In the following chapters, I will present nine detailed case studies following the structure of the sample study *OK*, in order to elaborate the notion of pragmatic borrowing and explore related issues such as sociolinguistic motivations and constraints.

Chapter 4

Language Contact between Chinese and English

This chapter presents a historical-sociological survey of language contact between English and Chinese. Borrowings often bear the history and culture of a SL, and such culture-borne loanwords and expressions in turn serve as linguistic media to bring the two cultures closer. The level of borrowing between languages, and the kind of items that are borrowed, may vary throughout time, showing the status of the SL (and its culture) at each particular stage. Therefore, in this chapter, I will look into both directions of Chinese-English contact, investigating social-historical motivations, as well as different types of borrowings and their integration, in order to present an overview of the contact setting between the two languages.

4.1. A brief introduction to early Chinese-English contact

It is agreed by many scholars that language contact between English and Chinese has lasted for over three centuries, since the beginning of commercial intercourse between British traders and Chinese people in the Canton area (e.g. Reinecke 1937, Hall 1944, Romaine 1988, Shi 1991, Ansaldo et al 2010). However, some linguists and historians claim that the earliest attestation of C-E contact can be traced back to the Silk Road, especially since the time of the Tang Dynasty (around the 9th century) when the Silk Road emerged to serve as the main land route for trade between the Orient and the West (Miao 2005:23). The word *silk* is thought to have the longest history among all words of Chinese origin (*silk* < 丝 *si* in Chinese), first attested in the 9th century (*OED*). However, all commercial contact between China and English-speaking countries at that time was indirect, via Roman merchants. Therefore, *silk* is also commonly regarded as borrowed from Latin *sēricus* or from Greek *σηρικός* silken (see further the *OED*). It wasn't until the Yuan Dynasty (around the 13th to 14th century) that direct commercial and missionary contact took place between English speaking countries and China.

4.2. Chinese influence on English

Chinese influence on English language can be seen mainly through borrowing, and this takes several forms. Chinese borrowings in English include well-established loanwords and expressions in ‘general international English’ (see 4.2.1 and 4.2.2.2), borrowed items that are used restrictively to designate China-related referents, particular expressions in Chinese varieties of English (whether or not they are brought to native Englishes), and some popular expressions in Chinese Englishes on the internet that are familiar to native English speakers.

4.2.1. Previous research

Studies of Chinese borrowings into English have mostly focused on lexical borrowing, especially loanwords (Chan and Kwok 1985, Cannon 1988, Yang 2009, Adami and Ottolini 2014, Zhong 2019). Most research on Chinese loanwords in English looks at BrE and AmE, two main models of ‘general international English’, i.e. internationally accepted standard English (e.g. Cannon 1988: 9)²⁵. For example, Chan and Kwok (1985) present a thorough analysis of 108 Chinese (Cantonese) loanwords in English. Cannon (1988) selects 979 words and expressions of Chinese origin collected from dictionaries and standard publications, examines their occurrences in 8 official dictionaries of British/American English, and finds that only 196 of these could be regarded as accepted borrowings in general international English. Following Cannon, Yang (2009) further collects newly accepted Chinese borrowings in dictionaries currently in use, and compares them with the ones in Cannon’s list 20 years previously²⁶, showing a growing percentage (54%) of Chinese (mostly Mandarin) borrowings in English, due to closer cultural contact. Based on Cannon’s and Yang’s results, Adami and Ottolini (2014) choose one hundred lexical borrowings and investigate how the etymologies of these items have been revised/updated in dictionaries through further editions. Finally, Zhong (2019) takes

²⁵ Cannon chose 3 BrE Dictionaries and 5 AmE Dictionaries as his data sources and tested the occurrence and use of over 900 words and expressions of Chinese origin in these dictionaries.

²⁶ Yang (2009) cuts down half of Cannon’s lists which are blends or compounds.

a broader view of lexical borrowings, giving a comprehensive taxonomy of various types of English lexemes that show Chinese influence (more than a thousand items in total), including indirect borrowing via intermediate languages, such as Japanese. She also categorizes these lexicons based on their semantic meanings, such as words denoting the external world (e.g. food and drinks, animals and plants), the mental world (e.g. religion, mythology, language), and the social world (e.g. trade, technology, politics, leisure, etc.).

In some researcher's works, loan translations, loan blends, and other types of lexical borrowing other than loanwords are excluded (e.g. Moody 1996; for a typology of borrowing, see e.g. Haugen 1950, Durkin 2009, also mentioned in Chapter 2, section 2.2). These are not necessarily treated as borrowings of Chinese in authorized dictionaries either; for example, some translated expressions are included as sub-entries of non-borrowed headwords in the *OED*, such as *lose face*. In the following discussion, however, all these various types of borrowings are included, in order to give a more comprehensive explanation of the influence of Chinese and English on each other (see section 4.4.2 for a further typological discussion of borrowings between Chinese and English).

Among all the SLs of loanwords in English, Chinese has not been regarded as a major donor and has not exerted as great an influence as some European languages, such as Latin, French, and Greek²⁷. However, in recent years there have been an increasing number of studies of Chinese borrowings in English, and of other topics related to Chinese varieties of English, and these demonstrate a growing interest in and attention to Chinese influence on English, especially due to the closer language contact and the awareness of the increasing prominence of China in international communication. The following sections will discuss these Chinese English varieties

²⁷ See further Durkin (2014). In his examination of words starting with letters M to R and letter A (from *A* to *ALZ*) in the *OED* third edition (a total 92000 entries), he lists the 25 most prolific inputs of loanwords, in which Chinese ranks the 24th. However, a considerable amount of words with Chinese origin were firstly borrowed into English via Japanese (10th place).

and their influence on contemporary English.

4.2.2. *Chinese Pidgin English (CPE)*

Owing to the cultural and geographical superiority of the late Qing Dynasty (17th to 19th century) at the beginning of the eighteenth century, foreign trade was under strict limitations, and British merchants were only permitted to run commercial interactions in restricted trading ports like Canton (*Guangzhou*) (see further Imm 2009:453, Spence 2013:118). The restrictions blocked China from the outside world, until they were destroyed by the British Navy and the two Opium wars in the mid-nineteenth century (1840, 1860): in the following century the Qing government had to concede a series of privileges to foreign countries, including Britain, France, the US and Japan, (see further Jiang 1999:24, Spence 2013:5). This also resulted in an increase of foreign merchants and military personnel in China, especially in port cities and areas. Therefore, as a growing number of British traders arrived in the south-east coastal area of China, Chinese was in close contact with English, and thus a Chinese variety of English emerged, CPE.

CPE plays a significant role in contact linguistic studies, and has been given various names: some scholars use the term ‘Canton English’, which is characterized by jargon-like, ‘broken’ English and mixed dialect (see further Bolton 2002: 184, these terms are mainly used by writers and missionaries in China before the mid-nineteenth century); and ‘China Costal Pidgin (English)’ (e.g. Berncastle 1850 quoted in Hancock 1987:82, Selby and Selby 1995, Ansaldo et al 2010:63). In general, the term CPE is more commonly accepted by contact linguists. The word *pidgin* itself is thought to imitate the pronunciation of the English word ‘business’, which manifests the nature of the language variety that is used mainly for the purpose of intercultural trade communication (e.g. Hall 1944, Romaine 1988, Shi 1991:2, Crystal 2003).

4.2.2.1 History and linguistic features of CPE

CPE is a contact-induced variety of English, which originated in the early eighteenth century in Canton, and was well attested from the mid-eighteenth century; by the second half of the nineteenth century, CPE had expanded throughout the south-eastern Treaty ports, coastal areas, Yangtze Delta, and even some trade points along the Yangtze River (see figure 4.1 below). Its decline began at the end of the nineteenth century, because of the pursuit of standard English and the decline of foreign trade (see further Hall 1944: 95, Shi 1991, Zhong 2019).

Figure 4.1: Foreign trade in China during the eighteenth and nineteenth Century.



Crystal defines pidgins as simplified contact languages formed ‘for trade purposes owing to the lack of bilingualism’ (Crystal 2003:346), and argues that they ‘do not usually last for long, and few of them survive for more than a century’ (ibid:11). However, CPE lasted for around two centuries, and was temporarily used as a *lingua franca* along the coastal areas in China. Moreover, CPE has been described as the ‘mother of all pidgins’ (e.g. Li, Matthews and Smith 2005:79). It was brought by Chinese emigrants to western countries, including the US and Australia, and has also been influential in the expansion of other Asian-Pacific pidgins, such as Nauruan pidgin English (Kim 2008:329) and some Australian pidgins (Siegel 2009:306).

Previous research shows that the expansion of CPE and its frequency of use started to decline in the late 19th century (1890s), when the Western powers reduced their commercial activities and when China started ‘outward-searching’ (see Reinecke

1937, Hall 1944, Cheng 1983, Shi 1991). During this period, when intellectuals in China were seeking revolution and modernisation, many schools and colleges (*xinshi xuetang*, ‘modern schools’) were built for Chinese people to learn foreign languages (especially English) and advanced science and ideology (Li 2011:83; see also section 4.3.1). Although evidence shows that CPE continued to be used in Hong Kong until the 1960s, most linguists agree that this variety doesn’t exist anymore (e.g. Bolton 2002:188). However, the influence of CPE on Chinese Englishes and even on general standard Englishes can still be found in present-day English (see more in the following sections).

For much of its history, CPE has not had a good reputation, and has been stereotyped as ‘deteriorated English’ because of ‘bad’ (non-standard) grammar by many linguists (e.g. Reinecke 1937) and by English speakers and learners in China (e.g. the intellectuals mentioned before). However, there are some linguists (e.g. Lin 1933, Shi 1991) who do not consider CPE as an inferior version of its SL, but as a ‘glorious’ natural language which ‘has tremendous possibilities’ (Lin 1933:54). They cherish its significance in a contact setting since it helps ‘to accommodate immediate and limited communication needs between speakers of two mutually unintelligible languages’ (Shi 1991: 2).

As a contact language for trade purposes, CPE is characterized by unique linguistic features which combine the features of both Chinese (and its dialects) and English, and thus it arouses great interest among contact linguists (e.g. Hall 1944, 1952, 1966). Shi (1991), based on Hall’s works, gathered written data on CPE between 1836 to 1901, and summarized the linguistic features of this variety, including its lexicon, phonology, morphology, syntax, and features at the discourse level.

One of the most notable features of CPE is its limited vocabulary, formed in a restricted trade setting. Many words have been through meaning (and usage) changes in order to meet communicative needs. For example, the meaning of *catchee* shows

broadening from its source *catch*, and this word in CPE can be used to mean ‘catch’, ‘bring’, ‘fetch’, and even ‘marry’. There are a group of CPE words, based on Mandarin or Cantonese words, such as *chop* (速/快 *suk/kuai*, ‘quick’) and *chin* (请 *qing*, ‘to please/ greet’). Some CPE expressions, such as *chin chin*, use duplicated forms, a common feature in other pidgins.

In order to integrate with the phonological rules of Chinese, some English phonemes are replaced by the ones that are closer to Chinese in CPE. For example, /θ/ and /ð/ are mostly replaced by /s/, /d/ or /t/, e.g. *dat* (that), *tink* (think); and /v/ is often written and pronounced as /b/, such as in *hab* (have). Moreover, many CPE words that are based on English words only consist of Consonant+Vowel (CV) syllables and avoid Consonant-ending words (except for nasals), which is also influenced by the ‘initial (C) + rhyme (V)’ scheme in Chinese, and this results in morphological changes. For example, by adding *e* or *ee*, pronounced /ɪ/ to words that end with consonants, *make* becomes *makee*, pronounced [meɪkɪ] rather than [meɪk], so are *catchee*, *walkee*, and *piecee*; other vowel sounds are also added in this way, such as *allo* (all), *beefu* (beef), and *wifoo* (wife) (see further Shi 1991:16–17). In addition, such phono-morphological changes of English words in CPE, using Chinese orthographic rules, have also taken place or at least influenced English borrowings in contemporary Chinese (discussed in section 4.3).

With respect to grammar and syntax, CPE mainly uses simple sentences, and no (or little) marking of tense, gender, or passive voice is found in the data. Therefore, many linguists including Shi (1991:19) claims that CPE is closer to Chinese than to English in syntax²⁸, since both Mandarin and Cantonese lack inflection and grammatical markers, but English does not. However, Hall (1944:100) points out that an exception is *hab*, a marker of past tense or perfective aspect; Shi (1991)

²⁸ On the contrary, Hall (1952:142) claims that CPE is structurally ‘definitely closer to English than to Chinese’, as he finds out more linguistic features of CPE are influenced by English than by Chinese. There is currently no agreement on this issue, however, it seems safe to believe that both English and Chinese play significant role in structuring CPE.

acknowledges this exception and claims it is the only tense/aspect marker in CPE which is inherited from English *have*, as shown in *longtime no hab see you* (see *long time no see* discussed in Chapter 6).

Moreover, like other pidgins, CPE seems to be a simplified language, where the omission of subject, copula, or other elements and referents in sentences, is a very common phenomenon. All these features are due to the fact that CPE is mainly used in a restricted setting to meet less complex communication needs. They also demonstrate the Chinese influence on this English variety, and show that the transmission of information relies fairly heavily on context, while grammatical relationships are not overtly represented.

4.2.2.2 CPE influence on contemporary ‘general international English’

Although CPE is believed to have declined since the end of the nineteenth century, it is also notable that some words and expressions of CPE origin are still used today, even in general international English, such as BrE and AmE (see Cannon 1988: 9); these are ‘inner circle’ English varieties according to Kachru’s model²⁹. The *OED*, for example, records dozens of CPE words and phrases in its third edition, including phrases examined in this study, *chin chin*, *(no) can do*, and *long time no see*, as well as other examples like *chop-chop* and *look-see*.

Linguists claim that Chinese emigrants brought CPE to Australia, the western US, and later to other English-speaking countries (e.g. Reinecke 1937, Kim 2008, Zhong 2019). It is possible that native English speakers spontaneously borrowed useful words and expressions through contact with Chinese emigrants, to designate new concepts or objects; it would also be hard for Chinese-English bilingual emigrants to avoid the influence of their first language when speaking English. These processes

²⁹ The expansion of English around the world can be categorised according to Kachru’s models:
The inner circle: using English as the native and official language, e.g. UK, USA;
The outer circle: using English as the second language, e.g. the commonwealth countries;
The expanding circle: using English as a foreign language, e.g. basically the rest of the world (Kachru 1985, 1992:356)

may possibly explain the widespread use of expressions of Chinese origin, from being used only in Chinese communities (or bilinguals) to entering ‘general international English’. Therefore, through intense intercultural communication, many well-established expressions have remained and have been gradually accepted by native English speakers.

Furthermore, some remaining CPE expressions seem to have been through localisation and integration, in terms of their meanings, morphosyntactic properties, and pragmatic functions. Such integration then in turn results in an increase in their frequency in use and a wider distribution in a range of contexts. More discussions of the integration of CPE expressions in BrE or AmE will be presented in case studies in Chapter 5 and 7.

Similar to the disputes over CPE by Chinese speakers of English, native English speakers’ attitudes towards expressions of CPE origin also vary greatly, especially regarding their non-standard grammar. For example, some linguists accuse expressions like *no can do* and *long time no see* of being ‘evil products of language contact’, which ‘polluted English’ in terms of lexicon and syntax (e.g. Chen 1999: 54). In contrast, many native speakers agree that it is a colloquial phrase which is acceptable in informal spoken English, although some feel they should ‘save the phrase for close friends’ as it may sound over-familiar. As Nunberg et al (1994: 515) contend, ‘extragrammatical idioms’ of this kind cannot be parsed by general syntactic rules, and tend to be found most often in informal spoken language.

Therefore, although CPE has already declined as a variety of English, a group of words and phrases of CPE origin that have survived are still noteworthy in contemporary English. The ‘heritage’ of CPE is not only notable in general international Englishes, such as BrE and AmE, but also has great influences on some present-day Chinese Englishes. This will be discussed in the next section.

4.2.3. Contemporary Chinese Englishes

4.2.3.1 Learning English in China

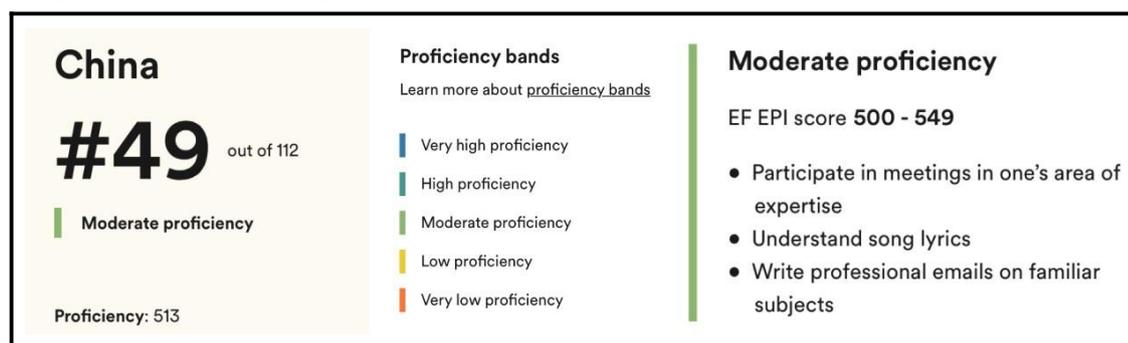
In the late twentieth century, scholars estimating how many English learners there are in China have concluded that ‘China has the largest number of learners of English as a foreign language in the world’ (e.g. Crystal 1985, Zhao and Campbell 1995). Zhao and Campbell estimate ‘more than 200 million’ English learners (1995: 381), which is supported by Bolton (2003: 48). This number has continued to grow, especially since English began to be included as a compulsory course from elementary schools in 2001, and went on to become one of the three most important subjects (together with mathematics and Chinese) in the ‘College Entrance Examination’ (*gaokao*). Ten years later, Bolton and Graddol (2012) give the updated number as ‘over 400 million’, taking up one third of the national population (2012: 3). Moreover, in the past two decades, proficiency in English has become a more important factor in the core competitiveness of graduates wishing to enter higher education and a professional career.

However, an English learner may not necessarily be regarded as a speaker of English, who is proficient in using conversational English. A survey of the SGO³⁰ (Steering Group Office) indicates that 7.3% and 23.3% of Chinese English learners use English ‘often’ and ‘sometimes’ respectively, while 69.4% of them ‘seldom’ use it (quoted in Wei and Su 2015: 179). Data from the English Proficiency Index provided by *Education First* (U.S.) shows that China ranks 49th out of 112 non-English-speaking countries, with an overall band of ‘Moderate proficiency’, as shown in Figure 2 below³¹. By comparison, three years earlier in 2018 (and before), Chinese English learners were measured in the band ‘Low proficiency’, ranking 44th out of 88 countries.

³⁰ *Survey of Language Situation in China* by Steering Group Office 中国语言文字使用情况调查领导小组办公室 Beijing: Language Press. (SGO 2006: 360)

³¹ English proficiency index provided by *Education First*. See further <https://www.ef.edu/epi/> Retrieved January 11, 2022

Figure 4.2. China's English Proficiency Index in the year 2021



The statistics also suggest that learners in first-tier cities and provinces, such as Shanghai, Beijing, and Guangzhou, are more likely to have a more proficient command of English, owing to more advanced education level; while those in other places, especially in rural areas, English is more of a 'foreign' language, and most people's competence in the language is limited to basic vocabulary.

4.2.3.2. Chinese Englishes

Previous research has recorded several labels for the English used in China, in Chinese speech communities, or relating to Chinese culture and society, namely 'Chinglish', 'Chinese English', and 'China English'. These varieties have been acknowledged and distinguished by many scholars (e.g. Ge 1983, Li 1993, Jiang 1995, Wei and Fei 2003, Eaves 2011), and each of them has exerted influence on general international English, especially in the borrowing of words and expressions. Early attempts at differentiation between these varieties appeared to be too broad (see Eaves 2011: 65). For example, Wei and Fei (2003:42–3), following previous linguists, present a three-stage continuum to describe the English used in China throughout time: CPE — Chinglish — Chinese/China English. Bolton (2003: 156) regards both Chinglish and Chinese English as successors of CPE, which have inherited many of its linguistic properties.

Chinglish is generally defined as English used by Chinese speakers, and as a slang language influenced by Chinese (e.g. Jiang 1995, Bolton 2002, 2003). Despite being

referred to by some in a derogatory way as ‘broken’ and ‘nonsensical’ English, it has still been well-explored by scholars and non-academic English speakers, owing to its unique characteristics. For example, some bloggers have deliberately collected interesting Chinglish slogans or signs, which they believe show absurdity and hilarious misunderstandings³². A popular and widespread example is ‘carefully slip’, or ‘caution landslide’, used as a sign to remind people to be careful of the slippery/wet floor. While the canonical version in Chinese should be 小心地滑 (*xiaoxin di hua*), the Chinglish word-for-word translation turns the phrase into something misleading. There are other signs shown as follows:

Figure 4.3: Other Chinglish signs popularly found online

	
CAUTION	Toxic waste
	
Return from here	Keep your child safe Be careful of deep water

In the model mentioned above, Wei and Fei regard Chinglish as an interlanguage, i.e. i.e. a variety of English used in non-English-speaking country when speakers are not yet fluent in standard English. Eaves (2011) objects to this view, and stresses the

³² More examples are found online:
<https://www.boredpanda.com/funny-chinese-translation-fails-english/>. Retrieved January 6, 2022.

nonsensical essence of most Chinglish expressions, resulting from poor translation and misspellings by Chinese speakers. Therefore, she defines Chinglish as an ‘erroneous, problematic form of English’, whereas Chinese English is the interlanguage used by Chinese English learners as they become fluent. She argues that Chinese English features common mistakes of language learners which can be found in many examples, and yet these mistakes do not make the language nonsensical or misleading, in comparison to Chinglish. Moreover, she also distinguishes China English from the other two varieties, defining it as the Chinese variety of English, which falls into the ‘expanding circle’ in Kachru’s model (Eaves 2011: 65).

Hu (2006: 231) also notes that Chinglish and Chinese English fall at ‘the opposite ends of a continuum’, where the latter is more comprehensible to listeners and to native English speakers. One of the most famous expressions of Chinese English is *long time no see*, which is inherited from CPE (*longtime no hab see*) and yet has been widely accepted by native English speakers who might not be aware of its origins, despite its ungrammatical properties in Standard English (see section 2.2.2 in Chapter 2 and later in Chapter 7). Other noteworthy Chinese English examples created by replicating Chinese structures using English elements include *good good study*, *day day up* and *people mountain people sea*, but these phrases are not as conventionalized as *long time no see*.

Unlike Wei and Fei’s model, many scholars view Chinese English and China English as different varieties, and China English (CE) is then agreed on by most scholars as the Chinese variety of English, which manifests Chinese linguistic characteristics and carries culture-specific words and expressions in China (e.g. Li Wenzhong 1993, Xu 2002, 2010, Wei and Fei 2003, Li Wei 2007, Eaves 2011, Wang 2017). Through intercultural contact, a group of China English expressions are borrowed into English, often to denote Chinese-specific concepts and objects, and many of them have even entered authorized dictionaries. Examples include:

- ✧ Political and economical concepts: *Reform and Opening-up* (i.e. China's economic & diplomatic policy issued in 1978 and lasted until present; see also section 4.3.2), *One Country Two Systems* (i.e. policy towards HK and Macao)
- ✧ Ideology: *Maoism, Taoism,*
- ✧ Culture: *the Spring Festival, moon cake, lose face,* etc.

Some of these examples, such as *lose face*, have definitely gained acceptance and have been used in a wide range of contexts in native English varieties; some have become established borrowings and are familiar to native English speakers, such as *moon cake, Spring Festival,* and *Confucianism*, but they are seldom used in daily conversations. The rest, especially those policy-related terms, are only used in restrictive contexts and often require further explanation.

4.2.3.3 New Chinglish neologisms

In the most recent research, linguists have recognized a new strand of Chinese English varieties, termed as 'New Chinglish', which is formed by 'translanguaging' strategies (i.e. using multiple languages simultaneously to communicate; see further Li 2016, 2018, Zhang 2015, Wang 2017, Xu and Tian 2017). Translanguaging practices between English and other languages have been studied by many scholars in the literature (e.g. Crystal 1998, Cook 2000). For example: Kachru (1985) was the first to put forward the notion of 'bilingual creativity', including the strategic combination or code-mix of different linguistic resources to generate new usages and expressions; Williams (1994) studied it as a pedagogical method among Welsh students who communicate using the medium of English in class.

The study of translanguaging in a Chinese-English contact setting is a relatively new field, but the emergence of New Chinglish has drawn a growing interest among scholars in recent years. A large number of New Chinglish hybrids have been recorded by linguists, but most of them are created and used restrictively in Chinese speech communities (see further Li 2016, Zhang 2012, 2015, Xu and Tian 2017,

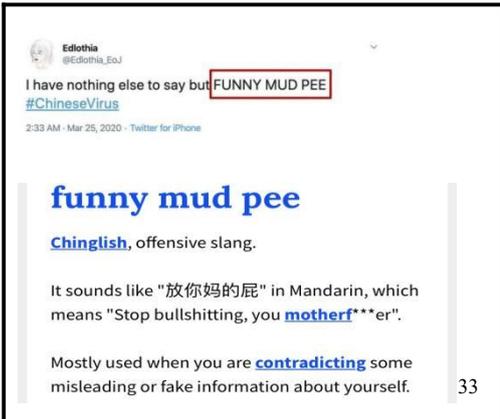
Zhang and Ren 2020, Qi and Zhang 2021). I will not discuss these in detail as case studies in this thesis, although I do quote and examine some examples of English+Chinese hybrids in section 4.3.3, which are particularly found to be used by Chinese speakers, showing the penetration of English in China.

Nonetheless, there are dozens of popular expressions, which have been ‘borrowed’ into native English via the internet, and have entered online dictionaries, such as *Urban Dictionary*, and even more authoritative ones like the *Merriam-Webster*. Table 4.1 and Figure 4.4 below presents several New Chinglish expressions which can be found on social media platforms like Twitter, with explanations given in the right column:

Table 4.1: Some New Chinglish expressions on Twitter

New Chinglish expressions	Explanation
<i>Niubi/ niubility</i>	<i>Niubi</i> : 牛逼 Chinese interjection, literally meaning ‘cow’s vagina’, which is used to express extreme feeling of surprise or excitement, or to describe something is ‘super cool’. <i>Niubility</i> is created owing to its morphological integration, by adding the derivational suffix, denoting one’s ‘capability of being super cool’
<i>Shabi/ shability</i>	<i>Shabi</i> : 傻逼 expletive, ‘idiot’. <i>Shability</i> denotes someone ‘always plays the fool’
<i>No zuo no die</i>	<i>Zuo</i> : 作, denoting the activity of being capricious and always making troubles. The phrase means ‘if you do not make trouble, you would not be dead’
<i>You can you up, no can no bb</i>	<i>bb</i> : 逼逼, ‘to talk too much, but do nothing’. <i>up</i> : literally translated from a Chinese word 上(<i>shang</i> : adv. ‘up’; v. ‘to go, to rush’) with its verb connotations The phrase means ‘go ahead if you can (succeed), or just shut up’
<i>Funny mud pee</i>	Phonological pun to a Chinese offensive expression 放你妈的屁 (<i>fang nimade pi</i>) ‘fart, your mother’s, wind’, which means ‘talk nonsense’, ‘bullshit’
<i>A bullet for bullshit</i>	Translated from a Chinese expletive slang, meaning ‘to shoot someone who abuses you’, which is often used along with internet memes.

Figure 4.4: Some New Chinglish expressions (memes) used on Twitter

	
<p>This phrase was firstly created by Chinese speakers to defend against those who defame China during the Covid pandemic in 2020. It was later recorded in the Urban Dictionary.</p>	<p>This expression became popular during the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics. Unlike <i>funny mud pee</i>, this phrase is much easier for native speakers to recognize and understand, and there is already evidence that native speakers use it on Twitter.</p>

Such neologisms, created through the combining/ code-mixing of both English and Chinese elements or literal translations, have subsequently spread and been used across cultural and geographical boundaries. Moreover, new meanings and functions have been attached to these expressions, as some of the phrases were created in particular social contexts and later become recognized by English natives (e.g. pictures in Figure 4.4), thereby giving birth to multiple dynamic ways to meet the expressive need of internet users communicating across languages. The example below demonstrates the use of the newly coined slang by native English speakers:

Our government doesn't put *a bullet for bullshit* here in the US even though there is a lot of bullshit...
(Extracted from @BigEwe1, *twitter.com*, 2022.2.7)

However, it is also questionable whether or not these New Chinglish hybrids are ad hoc borrowings: will they be accepted and incorporated into either the English or Chinese language system? Will they remain to be restrictively used online as popular buzzwords and colloquial catchphrases? Or will they perhaps exist just for a short time? Only time will tell.

³³ Illustration and explanation quoted from the Urban Dictionary. <https://www.urbandictionary.com/>

The discussion so far has examined the influence of Chinese on English throughout the history of Chinese-English language contact, including borrowed lexical items, Chinese varieties of English, and the contributions of Contemporary Chinese speakers to the English language. The following section will look in the other direction, investigating English influence on Chinese.

4.3. Contact-induced changes in Chinese throughout time

As mentioned at the beginning of section 4.2., close language contact between English and Chinese mainly started in the eighteenth century, owing to the commercial exchange which took place in coastal areas of southeastern China. However, the Chinese language at that time was rather different from contemporary Chinese, and is known as ‘Ancient Chinese’, or for some scholars ‘Early Modern Chinese’ (e.g. Wang Li 1980:35; for a further overview of the differences, see section 4.3.1). It was not until the late nineteenth century when Modern Chinese started to evolve and develop, that the influence of foreign languages, especially English, became significant.

There are three particularly significant periods when key events take place that trigger the penetration of English into Chinese: these are the New Culture Movement, the Reform and Opening-up Policy, and the thriving of world-wide internet. As well as acting as the major motivations for the borrowing of English forms or structures into Chinese, these periods impact upon the status of English in China. The following sections will describe the iconic events that take place during the periods and discuss English influence on the Chinese language at each stage.

4.3.1. The New Culture Movement: the Europeanisation of Chinese (1910s -)

The origins of modern Chinese can be dated back to the late nineteenth century, and its development accelerated from the beginning of twentieth century, taking the New Culture Movement (新文化运动 *Xin Wehua Yundong*) as a starting point. Earlier

stages of the language were the periods of the Ancient Chinese, prior to the 12th Century, and Early Modern Chinese, from 13th to 19th Century³⁴. Before the 19th century, Chinese, especially the written language, was famous for its simplicity and succinctness, using monosyllabic words and short sentences to express rich meanings. Such features were passed down by Chinese ancestors, mostly owing to limited writing medium, i.e. piles of bamboo slips which are hard to store and transport. It was not until the invasion of Western powers in the late 18th and 19th century that a series of contact-induced changes took place, resulting in the reforms that can be seen in the Modern Chinese language.

There were already loanwords and other types of lexical borrowings in Ancient Chinese, from the languages of neighboring countries and nationalities, and later from European countries. Many of the borrowed items are characterized by their word formation, with markers like 胡 *hu*, and 番 *fan*, which means ‘foreign’ added to already-existing Chinese words, as in 胡萝卜 *huluobo* (foreign turnip, ‘carrot’) and 番薯 *fanshu* (foreign yam, ‘sweet potato’). This kind of marking, to some extent, suggest the ‘self-centered’ or ‘self-superior psychology’ in Ancient China (see further Yang 2007: 25).

From the beginning of the twentieth century, and particularly the middle of the 1910s, the New Culture Movement started, led by intellectuals who had studied abroad, such as Chen Duxiu, Hu Shi, Li Dazhao, and Lu Xun. At that time, Chinese people had been through decades of war, and the corrupt Feudal Qing Dynasty had been destroyed. As a result, traditional Chinese culture and Confucianism, as well as the traditional variety of written language, 文言 (*wenyan*, ‘literary language’), were regarded as decadent by the intellectuals and were banned in modern schools and colleges (see section 4.2.2.1). They claimed that the reform in the standard language

³⁴ The division is explained in detail in *The Historical Literature of Chinese* (汉语史稿 *Hanyu Shigao*) by Wang Li (1958: 35). The topic of Ancient and Early Modern Chinese has not been systematically explored, and the division of the two has not always been clarified in previous studies and databases, e.g. CCL.

was required to meet the needs of modernisation of the nation, as stated in one of the slogans of the movement ‘advocate new literary, oppose traditional literary’³⁵. Therefore, the European countries and their experience in modernisation brought about xenocentric psychology and the urge to learn and borrow from the English language among Chinese intellectuals, as shown in large numbers of loanwords in the form of direct transliteration, such as 乌托邦(*wu-tuo-bang*, ‘Utopian’) and 理弗留显(*li-fu-lu-xian*, ‘revolution’)³⁶.

As the pioneer of the New Culture Movement, Chen Duxiu advocated ‘德先生 *De xiansheng* (Mr. De)’ and ‘赛先生 *Sai xiansheng* (Mr. Sai)’, which refer to ‘democracy’ and ‘science’ respectively³⁷, personified as role models. The names he used contain English borrowings: both *De* and *Sai* are the first characters of the Chinese transliteration of democracy (德谟克拉西 *de-mo-ke-la-xi*) and science (塞恩斯 *sai-en-si*), and these are combined with a Chinese element *xiansheng*, which means ‘Mr.’ or honorific address term for ‘teacher’. In terms of modernity in the Chinese language, Hu shi was the first (in 1917) to argue that the ‘new-style *baihua*’ (colloquial Chinese which is heavily influenced by Western languages) should be taken as the main standard language of the intellectuals in the Movement, and this view later gained more support from other scholars and writers (Chen 1999: 72). Moreover, as the founder of the People’s Republic of China (PRC), Mao Zedong also stressed in his article *Against Rigidity in the Communist Party* (反对党八股 *Fandui Dang-Bagu* 1942)³⁸, that the rigid style of traditional literary compositions (i.e. the so-called ‘eight-part essays’) should be opposed and writers should ‘learn and borrow the useful elements from colloquial language and foreign languages’.

³⁵ Retrieved from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Culture_Movement

³⁶ See more examples Shi Youwei (1991:232), but some of the direct transliterations have been discarded or replaced by meaning translations or indigenous forms, e.g. *li-fu-lu-xian* > 革命 *geming*.

³⁷ The main task of China’s modernisation in 1910s was to overturn the traditional Chinese autocracy and feudalistic norms, as well as to promote new culture based on western ideologies which include Democracy (i.e. individualism and egalitarian values) and Science (i.e. advanced natural science theories that can be used to study human and society).

³⁸ See further *Xuexi MaoZedong Guanyu Zhengdun Wenfeng de Sixiang* (Learning Mao Zedong Thought on Rectifying the Style of Writings). Accessed December 3, 2021.

Wang Li is regarded as the first and the most influential scholar who studied in depth the influences of Indo-European languages on Modern Chinese, especially on Chinese grammar³⁹, and he advocated the notion of ‘Europeanization’ (Guo 2007: 21, He 2008: 16). Other scholars use the term ‘Westernization/ Englishization/ Anglicization’ (e.g. Tsao 1978, Kachru 1989, Hsu 1994) because English has been the main source of most articles and literary works translated into Chinese since the 1910s. In his article *On language change* (语言的变迁 *Yuyan de Bianqian*; 1991b: 435), Wang Li suggested that reform of grammar is the most difficult, compared to changes in lexicon and phonology (this is also noted by many other western scholars in the field of contact linguistics; see further section 2.6.1 on the ‘borrowing hierarchy’, e.g. Haugen 1950, Moravcsik 1978, Thomason and Kaufman 1988, Winford 2003, Matras 2009). However, during the New Culture Movement Wang Li also proposed that the Europeanisation of Chinese grammar, especially in the written language was both easier and more fundamental. This is because such changes are caused by Chinese speakers, for the purpose of improving the Chinese culture, language, and literature, to catch up with the progress in political reform and changes in other aspects of society. Moreover, the attempt to grammatically reform the Chinese language also influenced Chinese speakers’ language style, using tightened structures with more grammatical items, to reduce vagueness, and to express a more explicit and logical meaning. A comparison of sentences structures of English, Modern Chinese and Ancient Chinese is shown in Table 4.2:

³⁹ Grammar is used here as a broad term; see the definition in Wang Li (1947), which includes lexicon, syntax, pragmatics, stylistics, etc.

Table 4.2: Sentence structures of English, Modern Chinese and Ancient Chinese

English	Modern Chinese	Ancient Chinese
I am eighteen years old this year	我 今年 十八岁 <i>wo, jinnian, shibasui</i> I, this year, eighteen years old	年十八 <i>nian, shiba</i> age, eighteen
He felt full when he was going to have dinner, so he went to the restroom. He fell down into the cesspool and drowned to death.	他要吃饭的时候, 觉得腹胀, 于是去厕所, 掉进坑溺亡。 <i>Ta, yao chifan, de shihou, jue de, fuzhang, yushi, qu cesuo, diaojin, keng, niwang.</i> He, about to eat, [temporal adverbial], feel, bloating, so/then [discourse marker], go to the toilet, fall into, pool, drown to death.	将食, 涨, 如厕, 陷而卒。 ⁴⁰ <i>Jiang shi, zhang, ruce, xian er zu.</i> to eat, full, go to the restroom, fall and die.

As the examples of Ancient Chinese (*wenyan*, written language) in the right column show, subjects and objects are often omitted and there are less likely to be conjunctions or DMs which function to indicate grammatical relationships between elements. As well as this, monosyllabic words are more often used in Ancient Chinese (as shown in the *pinyin* transcriptions), and many of them are polysemous and thus potentially ambiguous. For instance, *zhang* in the second sentence means that someone ‘is full’ or ‘feels bloated’, but it can also denote ‘rise of water’, ‘increase in price’, or ‘something gets bigger’. Therefore, the interpretation of sentence meanings in Ancient Chinese largely depends on context. In contrast, the corresponding sentences in modern Chinese feature more explicit subjects, temporal adjuncts (*jinnian*, ‘this year’), conjunctions (*de shihou*, ‘when’; *yushi*, ‘so/then’), DMs (*yushi*, ‘so’), and prepositions (*-jin*, ‘into’), which are all influenced by the grammar of English. The sentences appear to be more structured and more logical, and the meaning and information are more explicitly conveyed.

Wang Li generalises several new features of modern Chinese grammar that are

⁴⁰ Extracted from *Zuo Zhuan* (i.e. 左传 *The Zuo Commentary*, 722 BC -468 BC), an ancient Chinese historical biography. This is a famous example of a sentence in only 8 characters used to describe the death of a King, Jinggong of Jin (晋景公).

influenced by western languages, especially English, in his books *Modern Chinese Grammar* (中国现代语法 *Zhongguo Xiandai Yufa* 1947) and *Chinese Grammar Theories* (中国语法理论 *Zhongguo Yufa Lilun* 1955). These includes:

- i. Creation and increase of disyllabic/ polysyllabic words (and compounds)
- ii. Increase of subjects and copulas
- iii. Gender differentiation in personal pronouns
- iv. Extension of sentences
- v. Variation in mood (subjunctive) and increase of passive voice
- vi. Increase of DMs, connectives, and conjunctions

Additionally, Wang Li not only recognizes these changes in Chinese grammar during Europeanisation, but also advocates to take these new features as standard Chinese language in his article *On Standard Language of Han Nationality*. He argues that the Europeanized modern Chinese is more efficient for intercultural contact and can enable more outward-looking Chinese language, literature, and culture, as stated in Wang Li (1991a: 56) ‘most good articles can be translated into English, word for word, sentence for sentence, with little changes in sentence structure’.

Wang Li’s framework has been studied, adopted, and enriched by many other subsequent scholars in China (see further Li 1962, Ma 1963, Xie 1990, Guo 2007, He 2008, Zhang 2009). For example, Li Chi (1960, 1962) summarizes a series of new developments in Modern Chinese language which were unforeseen in Wang Li’s works, such as the increasing use of affixation and some newly created discourse connectives, including *yu-ci-tong-shi* (‘at the same time, meanwhile’), *suiran* (‘although’), *youyu* (‘because of’), and *cong’er* (‘thus, consequently, thereby’), etc. Xie (1990) raises issues about the ‘good and evil of Europeanisation’ in Modern Chinese, and claims that the borrowing of useful elements from English can ‘enhance the expressive power’ of Chinese language, as long as it does not violate the Chinese tradition. Wang (2002) stresses the significance of translation, including transliteration and liberal translation, in the increase of Modern Chinese sentence structures that imitate those in English.

Western linguists have also been interested in the Europeanisation of the Chinese language. For example, Kubler (1985) wrote a book on the Europeanized grammar of Modern Chinese, considering morphology and syntax, which thoroughly analyzed the use of affixation (e.g. the pluralizer 们 *-men* and the progressive suffix 着 *-zhe*), the increase in using functional words (e.g. the differentiation of pronoun *ta*⁴¹, the passive auxiliary 被 *bei*) and complex sentences (e.g. subordinate clauses and degree of embedding), as well as many other influences of English on Modern Chinese language. Gunn (1991) also studied stylistic innovations in Chinese prose writings since the language reform in the twentieth century.

Although lots of scholars have studied the notion of Europeanisation in the past century, others are skeptical, and believe that changes in Modern Chinese are not necessarily due to borrowings from English or other European languages. One particular issue that has been debated is whether the use of affixation is an indigenous morphological rule in Chinese or a borrowing from other languages. For a long time in the study of Chinese linguistics, it has been agreed by many scholars that Chinese, especially Ancient Chinese, is an isolate language which lacks morphological changes (e.g. Sapir 1949, Lyu 1979, Hu 1995), so that the increase of affixation is regarded as a contact-induced change influenced by English. However, some Chinese linguists take the view that affixation was rooted in Ancient Chinese (e.g. prefix 阿 *a-*, suffix 儿 *-er*, 子 *-zi*)⁴², and the borrowing of English affixes is an exterior motivation which enriches expressions, for example, 主义 (*-zhuyi*, ‘ism’, e.g. 资本主义 *ziben-zhuyi*, ‘capitalism’) and 化 (*-hua*, ‘-ation’, e.g. 现代化 *xiandai-hua* ‘modernisation’). They argue that affixation should be regarded as an inevitable trend

⁴¹ Male 他, female 她, and object (neuter) 它 have the same pronunciation *tā*, which are differentiated based upon Indo-European languages, e.g. *he*, *she*, and *it* in English. More variants of pronoun *ta* have been created thereafter, such as 祂 and 牠, which are used respectively with connotation of ‘theological person or object (originally: God, in Bible translations by missionaries)’ and ‘a particular livestock (recently often sarcastically refers to a human who is despicable/ worse than animals)’. see further Wang Li (1947: 316), Kubler (1985:76).

⁴² These three affixes are the earliest indigenous evidence (before the 6th century) of affixation developed in Ancient Chinese. By Tang dynasty (7th century), words formed by affixation take up around 8% of total polysyllabic words. See further Shi Cunzhi (1989: 99-100)

of natural languages where content words transform to serve grammatical functions, i.e. grammaticalisation (see further Wu 2001: 82). In summary, there is no clear consensus about the origin of Chinese affixation, or widespread agreement that it reflects borrowing from European languages. However, although it is possible that some of the features of modern Chinese grammar can be dated back to Ancient Chinese, the influence of western languages, especially English, should not be neglected as an exterior drive for the modernisation of Chinese language. Despite all these controversies, there are English affixes that are indeed borrowed into contemporary Chinese, especially in recent decades, such as *-ing*, which can be used in a wide range of contexts and even with various pragmatic functions. These cases will be studied thoroughly in Chapter 8.

Like borrowing from Chinese into English, mentioned in the previous sections, transmission languages, especially Japanese, also play an important role in borrowing from English into Chinese. As discussed by Wang Li and many other scholars, the increase of disyllabic and polysyllabic words and compounds is a core feature of Modern Chinese. Among them, a considerable proportion are created via Japanese speakers who use Chinese characters. These words are called *katakana* in Japanese, i.e. writing scripts that are created based on Chinese ideograms/characters, used to translate foreign words. Through such transmission, many English words and concepts are firstly borrowed into Japanese, and into Chinese thereafter. The role of transmission languages in English-Chinese contact have been studied by scholars of lexical borrowing (see further Moody 1996, Gunn 1991, Chen Li-wei 2019), but will not be the focus of the present study.

4.3.2. The Opening-up policy (1978 -)

One of the most influential events since the declaration of PRC is the Reform and Opening-up Policy issued in 1978, when the country and Chinese people genuinely started to embrace the global society, and international communication and cooperation have brought new concepts and objects into China in every aspect of

social life. As the *lingua franca* in the era of globalisation, English has thereby exerted greater influence on Chinese language.

Since then, a series of common English expressions, also including pragmatic items such as politeness markers and expletives, have found their way into Chinese and have been gradually naturalized and integrated in daily communications among Chinese speakers. These include *good-bye / bye* > 拜拜(*baibai*), *hello/ hi* > 哈喽/嗨 (*halou/hai*), *sorry* > 骚瑞(*saorui*; more often used in its original form), and *thank you* > 三克油(*sanke you*). In addition, the original form of *thank you* is also more commonly used, while the Chinese transliteration is sometimes used for fun. For example, *thank you very much* can be transliterated in Chinese as 三克油喂你妈吃, where each Chinese character stands for one syllable, as shown below:

Thank you very much
San-ke you wei ni ma chi
Three grams, oil, feed, your mother, eat

However, the literal meaning of this Chinese expression is ‘to feed you mother three grams of oil’, which is eccentric but also causes a lot of fun. There are many other pun sentences resulted from transliteration like this, demonstrating the acceptance of English expressions of daily conversation among Chinese speakers.

Moreover, it is a consequence of the Opening-up Policy that English was included in the educational curriculum as a compulsory course for secondary school and higher education students; this was extended to elementary schools in the 2000s. As a result, Chinese speakers have become more open-minded to loanwords and borrowings in English forms, while transliterations, loan translations, and other types of loan blends and hybrid forms are also increasing.

One of the most noteworthy changes in this period of time is the dramatic increase of 字母词 *zimuci* ‘lettered words’, i.e. words and expressions written in the form of

English letters, or consisting of at least one letter (see Huang 2004, Cook 2018, Kozha 2012), also known as ‘alphabetic words’ (see Huang and Liu 2017). Lettered words have been a focus in the literature of contact-induced changes in Chinese lexicon. There has been a heated debate among Chinese linguists and politicians about whether lettered words should be introduced into Chinese script or whether they should be rejected so that ‘language purity’ can be maintained (e.g. Wang 2002, Chen 2005, Qi 2012, Li and Zhu 2019). A number of linguists argue that the use of English letters in combination with indigenous elements in Chinese written language is ‘the most significant innovation in Chinese orthography since the abolition of seal script some 2000 years ago’ (see further Cook 2018: 13).

Because of the Opening-up policy in China and the dramatically increasing international communication within finance, technology, science, culture and tourism, a large number of loan acronyms in the related fields have been introduced to China and have been frequently used both in the media and in daily conversation. A list of some common English acronyms and initialisms is presented in Table 4.3:

Table 4.3: Selected loan initialisms and acronyms recorded in the *CCD7*

Fields	Examples in the <i>CCD7</i>
Science and technology	AI (Artificial Intelligence) AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) IT (Information Technology)
Culture and telecommunications	CD (Compact Disc) DVD (Digital Video Disc) DJ (disc jockey) MV (music video)
Economics and finance	ATM (Automatic Teller Machine) CEO (Chief Executive Officer) GDP (Gross Domestic Product)
Names of international organizations/brands	APEC (Asian-Pacific Economic Cooperation) WTO (World Trade Organization)
International units of measurement	kg g km m cm mm l ml

Many of these loanwords are still commonly applied in both formal and informal contexts nowadays, and all of the examples given here are recorded in the *CCD7*,

although there have been objections to their use. A typical example is *NBA*, abbreviated from National Basketball Association, which has been eliminated from all formal news press and broadcast, subjected to the regulation issued by the State Administration of Broadcasting Film and Television in 2010 that foreign words should be avoided in any formal broadcasts, interviews, or subtitles. However, *NBA* is still preferred by Chinese basketball fans and speakers more widely, as the acronym is so well-accepted and is easier to remember and speak than its full translated version 美国职业篮球联赛 *Meiguo zhiye lanqiu liansai* (or the shortened version 美职篮 *mei-zhi-lan*) in Chinese⁴³.

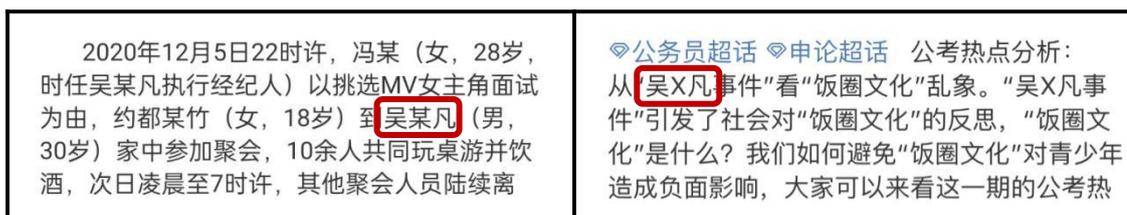
Additionally, owing to the wide acceptance of these loan acronyms and the convenience of using them as substitute for longer expressions, a group of indigenous coinages have been created by Chinese speakers, using English letters to simplify longer terms in *Hanyu Pinyin*. Such *Pinyin* abbreviations include: RMB (short for 人民币 *Renminbi*, ‘People’s Currency’; code CNY) denoting the official currency of China; and GB (short for 国家标准 *Guojia biao zhun*, ‘national standard’) used as a code for products that meet China’s national standard. The practice of using lettered words like these acronyms is a manifestation of the fact that some English scripts, or at least English letters, are well-accepted by Chinese speakers, and are less separated from contemporary Chinese language for certain communicative needs.

Apart from the high degree of acceptance of loan acronyms, English letters are often used in creating loan blends in combination with Chinese elements, the other type of lettered words in Chinese. Several particularly frequent letters are A, B, C, and X (see further Li 1999, Wu 2001). There are two main functions of using these letters, namely to signify a sequence and to denote an indefinite referent. For example, it is common in news reports or anecdotes that the characters are labeled as *A* 先生(Mr.A), *B* 女士(Ms.B), and *C* 小姐(Miss.C), etc., and the sequence can go on if there are more characters involved. This labeling is particularly frequent and important in

⁴³ See further ‘京华时报 *Jinghua Times*’ in *finance.ifeng.com*. Accessed November 25, 2021.

reports of criminal cases, where the reporter or writer must be careful not to disclose the personal identity of the party involved, be it a suspect or defendant (e.g. Li 1999). In this case, the use of letters helps to protect/conceal the information and helps readers to avoid confusion about different figures in a report. In contemporary Chinese, the celestial stems, i.e. ancient Chinese sequencing codes, such as 甲 *jia*, 乙 *yi*, 丙 *bing*, and 丁 *ding* are also found used in the same way, and both systems are acceptable, according to personal preference. Similarly, the letter X is also used for indefinite reference, but with more flexible distribution and a wider range of pragmatic features. For example, X can function as a character symbol, i.e. one X stands for a Chinese character, so the example ‘她的丈夫 (*tade zhangfu*, ‘her husband’) XXX’ refers to a woman’s husband whose name is three characters; and it is possible to find a name, suffixed or infixed with X, to give some of but not all the information about the person. Figure 4.4. below presents an example of this use. An alternative pronoun in Chinese is 某 (*mou*, ‘someone’), which is also shown in Figure 4.5. But *mou* can also be used in fixed phrases, such as 某人 (*mouren*, ‘a specific person’), 某地 (*moudi*, ‘a specific place’), and 某天 (*moutian*, ‘a specific date’).

Figure 4.5: 某 *mou* and X used in two extracted news posts on Weibo⁴⁴



The two pieces of news in Figure 4.5 involve the same celebrity, actor and rapper Kris Wu (Wu Yifan), who was arrested in 2021 and accused of enticing and raping under-aged girls. The screenshot in the left column (*Wu-mou-fan*) is extracted from the formal police statement of this event, while the right one (*Wu-X-fan*) from a commentary article which is less formal. The comparison shows that although *mou*

⁴⁴ Retrieved from *weibo.com*, November 22, 2021.

and *X* play the same role in this case, *mou* often appears to be more formal than its English counterpart.

The letters V, O, S, and T are specifically useful to describe a certain shape or appearance of an object, motivated by the graphical forms of the letters. For instance, V 领(*ling*, ‘collar’) is used to denote the V-shaped neckline of a sweater, a blouse, or a dress. As a comparison, the Chinese character 一(*yi*) also has the same usage, as in the phrase 一字领(*yizi ling*, ‘collar shaped like 一’; a wide neckline that runs horizontally); S 型身材(*S-xing shencai*, ‘S-shaped body’) is used to describe a beautiful body curve of a female; O 型腿(*O-xing tui*, ‘O-shaped legs’) denotes a physical abnormality that a person cannot close their knees together while standing; T 恤(*xue*, transliteration for ‘shirt’) and T 台(*tai*, ‘stage’) are used to signify a pullover shirt with short sleeves and round collar and a runway with an extending stage shaped like ‘T’ respectively. Similarly in Chinese, there are a few characters that have the same graphic-referent function to form the phrase ‘_字形(*zi xing*, ‘character shape’),’ such as 一(*yi*, mentioned before), 人(*ren*, in the shape of a reverse twill), 之(*zhi*, in an angular shape). Therefore, as shown from these examples, the use of English letters has the function of enriching the ways to describe the shape of the object that the speaker refers to, and thus the speakers can convey the information more efficiently than using long and redundant expressions. Letter words have become even more popular in the most recent decade with the emergence of internet language in China, and further examples will be introduced in the following section 4.3.3.

4.3.3. *The rise of internet language (21st century -)*

Within recent decades, the internet has brought closer bonds between countries in the world and the languages they use, and thus produced a new communicative reality in the online context. The development of the internet has accelerated since the end of the 1990s, and has been thriving in the past two decades. A report issued by CNNIC (China Internet Network Information Center) notes that the total number of Chinese

netizens has reached 1 billion in 2021, and the national penetration rate is over 70% (compare the statistics in 2011 which is 513 million, quoted in Yu 2014), as shown in the Figure 4.6 below:

Figure 4.6: Statistics of Chinese internet users⁴⁵



4.3.3.1. English borrowings in Chinese online communication

In much online discourse around the world, the role of English as a global language has been acknowledged (see further Crystal 2006). Internet language in China is no exception, and is flooded with buzz words, expressions, and abbreviations, most of which are either borrowed from English or created under its influence (Zhang 2012, 2015, Chen 2014, Kirkpatrick 2015, Li 2018, Li and Zhu 2019). The growing tendency for Chinese speakers to borrow and use more English words (or letters) manifests their need to catch up with the global trends and to facilitate their online communication, and this also influences their offline language styles.

As mentioned in section 4.3.2, lettered words are significant in contemporary English-Chinese contact, and in the period of closer multicultural communication via the internet, English letters and the lettered words formed in Chinese online discourse have become even more integrated and have spread more widely. Borrowed letters are both semantically and phonetically motivated. For instance, the

⁴⁵ CNNIC. *The 48th Statistical Report of China's Internet Development (2021.8)*. Accessed December 13, 2021.

letter N, which is a significant notion in mathematics that denotes ‘an indefinite number’, can be used in Chinese as a quantifier to designate an indefinite amount of persons or object and can combine with Chinese elements, as in N 个人 (N *ge ren*, ‘a number of people’). It is also used for emphasis as an adverb which modifies an adjective, with the meaning ‘a countless amount’ or ‘an incredible degree’, as in N 多 (N-*duo*, ‘great many’). The letter Q is used to mean ‘cute’ in online Chinese, and is highly integrated into spoken and written Chinese, in combination with native elements. Examples include: 好 Q 啊 (*hao-Q-a*, ‘so cute interj.’), the noun phrase Q 版 (Q-*ban*, ‘cute version’, usually denoting the animation of a person or an object), and the adjective phrase Q 弹 (Q-*tan*, ‘chewy’, i.e. Q stands for a homophone 食丘 (*khiu*) in *Minnan* dialect meaning ‘chewy’, and *tan* means the same). Figure 4.7 illustrates these uses:

Figure 4.7: Examples of the integrated use of the letter Q⁴⁶



Turning to the borrowed letter Q, the world-wide accepted polite expression in English ‘thank you’ is sometimes written as ‘3Q’ on the internet in China. As mentioned in section 4.2.1, the voiced and voiceless dental fricative sound /θ/ and /ð/ do not exist in Chinese phonology, and therefore the borrowed expression *thank you*

⁴⁶ Picture 1 is the portrayal of the leading intellectuals in the New Culture Movement and its cute version, retrieved from *weibo.com*. Accessed November 20, 2021.

Picture 2 is an advertising poster for shrimp pie, retrieved from *taobao.com* (online shopping website). Accessed November 24, 2021.

has been through phonetic integration, adapting to Chinese phonological norms. The /θ/ consonant is replaced by an approximative voiceless alveolar fricative /s/ in spoken language (although many Chinese speakers can still pronounce it correctly). The number three can be transcribed in Chinese *Pinyin* as *san*, so *3Q* (*san-khiu*) has become the Chinese equivalent for *thank you* in online discourse. Interestingly, this *3Q* expression was firstly created on an online forum for self-mockery and for fun, as an imitation of nonstandard pronunciation, it has since then gained more popularity because of its simplicity which fits in with the style of Chinese internet language. It has thus become more established in the speech community.

Apart from letters, some borrowed English words or morphemes are also found used in combination with Chinese elements, showing their wide integration into modern Chinese, not only in online discourse but also in daily conversation and other informal contexts (see further Kozha 2012, Ren 2021). For example, the preposition and adverb *out* is borrowed into Chinese and used to describe someone or something that is ‘outdated’ or ‘not fashionable enough’, or used as a verb meaning ‘to take someone or something out’, as in the following sentences:

- | | |
|--|------------------------------|
| a. 你这想法太 out 了吧 | b. 把他 out 掉 |
| <i>Ni zhe xiangfa tai out le ba</i> | <i>Ba ta out diao</i> |
| ‘Your views (are) too out-of-date [interj.]’ | ‘Eliminate him/ get him out’ |

Similarly, the adverb *up* can be used with the meaning that ‘something is accelerating/going up’, e.g. 好感 *up* (*haogan*, ‘favorable impression’) meaning ‘to like it more’; when it is used as a verb in social media contexts, *up* means ‘to like, repost, and bump up a thread’; and strikingly, *up* is used in a particular compound ‘up 主’ (*up-zhu*, ‘up host/owner’) to refer to a certain group of people who upload videos or posts on ‘Bilibili’, one of the largest video sharing websites designed for the younger generations in China; a global version is also available⁴⁷. Additionally, some English verbs are used to form constructions in combination with Chinese

⁴⁷ See further Bilibili corporation on *wikipedia.org* and *bilibili.com*. Accessed December 4, 2021.

elements, where only one or a few of the senses are borrowed from English. Two examples feature *get* and *hold*:

- | | |
|---|--|
| c. Get (不)到
get (<i>bu</i>) <i>dao</i>
'can (not) understand' | d. hold (不)住
hold (<i>bu</i>) <i>zhu</i>
'can (not) hold on/hang in' |
|---|--|

The verb *get* has many meanings and functions in English, which include being used as a linking verb meaning 'to be/become', 'to move/reach somewhere', or 'to cause'; and as a transitive verb meaning 'to obtain/receive/have' something (concrete or abstract). However, when it is used in the phrase *get (bu) dao*, it only means that someone can or cannot understand the other speakers. And the meaning of *hold* is also narrowed when borrowed in Chinese, which is used restrictively to mean 'to hold one's own'. These phenomena suggests that through integration into Chinese, the morphosyntactic features, meanings, and pragmatic functions of the borrowed items may be adapted to meet the communicative needs of Chinese speakers. More discussions and many other examples, which include the honorific term *sir* and the progressive suffix *-ing*, will be analyzed in detailed case studies in later chapters.

However, while the thriving internet means that information can spread far more quickly and widely than in the traditional mass media, it has also enabled the flow of harmful material, and borrowed letters and lettered words are also found in efforts to sidestep censorship. Networks are now monitored, supervised, and managed, so that words and expressions that are either 'indecent' or 'sensitive' are banned on websites, social media platforms, and other Bulletin Board Systems (BBS). Some examples include swear words, rude expressions, expressions that are considered violent or anti-government, and those that relate to acts of infringement. Chinese netizens have created a lot of lettered words and hybrid forms, using English words and letters to replace the sensitive elements, for the purpose of euphemism, in order to be more polite and avoid the censorship. For example, the letter X in 'X 你大爷', a swearing slang meaning 'fuck your daddy/uncle', is used to replace the obscene verb 操 (*cao*,

‘fuck’), and thus the expression appears less rude, or at least avoids explicit expression. This has a parallel in English, where the expletive *fuck you* is sometimes also written as ‘fxxx you’ to sound less aggressive, although the function of such strategies to mitigate aggression or offence seems questionable, since the audience knows what it stands for. However, from the perspective of the speakers, the use of foreign elements can, to some extent, make actions that violate social norms sound less shameful (e.g. Geipel et al 2015), so that they feel less guilty when using these ‘bad’ words. Therefore it is also common practice in Chinese online discourse that the *Pinyin* of sensitive/rude expressions are abbreviated, using English letters to stand for each character: such as *NB* (stands for *niubi*, rude colloquial, ‘awesome’), *SB* (*shabi*, swear word, ‘idiot’), *TMD* (*tamade*, literally means ‘his mother’s’) used to express ‘damn, hell, fucking’, and *FB* (腐败 *fubai*, ‘corruption’) which is a sensitive term usually used to describe civil servants or officials who embezzle public funds.

Moreover, limited space in the internet language context is also an important factor in the use of letters. Posts on BBS or social media are often restricted to a certain length limit, such as 280 characters on Twitter and 140 on *Weibo* (see further Boot et al 2019). In order to reduce the number of characters and be maximally efficient in online communication, netizens commonly choose to either cut off or abbreviate redundant expressions, or use symbols to replace words. In Chinese online discourse nowadays, a large number of buzz expressions consisting of letters are made for the purpose of simplification. Similar phenomena can be found in online discourse in English-speaking countries, some of which have been borrowed into Chinese internet language, and this penetration is perhaps one of the reasons why lettered abbreviation is trending in Chinese online discourse. Table 4.4 below gives several examples of these internet expressions on the internet, and glosses are presented in the right column.

Table 4.4: Common abbreviated buzzwords and expressions on the internet in Chinese and English⁴⁸

Language	Abbreviation	Full version & meaning
Chinese	<i>y1s1/u1s1</i>	<i>you-1-shuo-1</i> (letter U imitates the sound of <i>you</i>), ‘have one say one’, which means ‘to speak based on the facts’
	<i>yyds</i>	<i>yong-yuan de shen</i> , ‘forever the God’, used to describe something as the best of the best
	<i>xswl</i>	<i>xiao si wo le</i> , ‘laugh to death’
	<i>nsdd</i>	<i>ni shuo de dui</i> , ‘you are right’, used to agree with others
	<i>awsl</i>	<i>a wo si le</i> , ‘ah, I’m dead’, i.e. something or some person is so impressive/attractive that the audiences are smitten
	<i>12G(冲浪)/2G</i>	‘using 12th generation wireless communication technology’, i.e. someone always catch up with the newest trends; 2 nd generation, on the other hand, denote those who are always out-of-date
	<i>GG MM</i>	<i>gege</i> , ‘brother’; <i>meimei</i> , ‘sister’, used as friendly address terms for other netizens (male/ female)
	<i>Orz</i>	A graphic symbol, imitating a man prostrating down on the floor, to express extreme admiration; the <i>o</i> represents the head, the <i>r</i> the arms, and the <i>z</i> the bent legs
	<i>emo</i>	Emotional; unlike in the source language, <i>emo</i> in Chinese online discourse denotes specifically the negative emotion, meaning ‘feeling sad/frustrated’
		Other common English expressions: <i>ASAP</i> (as soon as possible), <i>OMG</i> (oh my god), <i>CU</i> (see you), <i>LOL</i> (laugh out loud), <i>sth</i> (something), <i>p.s.</i> (post script), etc.
English	<i>btw</i>	by the way
	<i>lmao</i>	laugh my ass off
	<i>aka</i>	also known as
	<i>IMO</i>	in my opinion
	<i>FYI</i>	for your information
	<i>Idk</i>	I don’t know
	<i>ttyl</i>	talk to you later
	<i>OMG</i>	Oh my god!
	<i>Thx</i>	Thanks
	<i>brb</i>	Be right back
<i>g2g</i>	got to go	
<i>2l84u</i>	too late for you	

As shown from the examples here, through using English letters (including *Pinyin* abbreviations), speakers can express rich meanings and emotions within the most

⁴⁸ Examples retrieved from *weibo.com* and *twitter.com*. Accessed November 20, 2021.

limited word length, which increases communicative efficiency online.

4.3.3.2. Controversy about the use of English elements in internet language

It is notable that the widespread use of lettered buzz words and expressions is criticized by many Chinese speakers because it causes confusion or misunderstanding among those who are not accustomed to using internet language. This is particularly the case for some speakers because newer uses of lettered words are very different from more traditional uses. Before the flood of lettered words, there were once a trend to form idiomatic compounds by combining the first character of each word (usually multi-character words) of a longer sentence, many of which are still widely used by Chinese speakers today, not only online, but also in daily conversations, such as 十动然拒 and 不明觉厉 listed below:

十动然拒 *shi-dong-ran-ju*

< 十分感动, 然而拒绝

very moved, but refuse

‘one feels very moved but he rejects the proposal’, ‘appreciate it, but...’

不明觉厉 *bu-ming-jue-li*

< 不能明白, 觉得厉害

cannot understand, think cool

‘one can’t understand what the other says, but/so he feels it is cool’

Chinese characters are ideographic and each of them carries semantic meaning, so that listeners can understand the intended meaning even when the idioms are simplified. However, unlike Chinese characters, English letters and *Pinyin* can only represent sounds, rather than denoting meanings. For example, in *y/s/l*, those who are not familiar with internet jargon would probably never understand what the letter *y* and *s* and the number *l* stand for, as there are so many characters in Chinese that begin with the consonant *y* and *s*; and similarly, if someone rewrote the above-mentioned idiom *shi-dong-ran-ju* as ‘sdrj’, it will also become confusing and even meaningless.

The vagueness and ambiguity caused by buzzwords formed with letters can also be manipulated intentionally. Another pragmatic function of lettered words and

expressions, especially in social media language contexts, is to create ingroup jargon which conceals information from others. Online communications are relatively individual and are mostly intended for a limited audience who share ‘communal common ground’ (e.g. Clark and Marshall 1981, Clark and Schaffer 1987) with the speakers. Often lettered expressions are not used for the purpose of communicating with all members of the wider speech community, so there’s no need for them to be generally understandable. As in-group jargon on Chinese social media, they are well-established among particular groups of netizens, and thus become their unique communicative codes.

Apart from the lettered expressions mentioned above, another strategy to create catch phrases on the Chinese internet is worth noting, since it is motivated by language play. The expressions in Table 4.5 are all created by replacing some part of a fixed idiom, phrase, or sentence with English words which are homophonic or similar-sounding:

Table 4.5: Examples of Chinese+English hybrid expressions⁴⁹

Idioms		
不可思议 > book 思议 <i>bu-ke-si-yi</i> ‘sth is unbelievable’	深藏不露 > 深藏 blue <i>shen-cang-bu-lu</i> ‘secretive, hide one’s feeling’	拖泥带水 > Tony 带水 <i>tuo-ni-dai-shui</i> ‘sth or sb is messy’
Swear words		
不得好死 > 不得 house <i>bu-de-hao-si</i> ‘die a tragic death, go to the hell’	大可不必 > duck 不必 <i>da-ke-bu-bi</i> ‘very unnecessary, nonsense’	无话可说 > 无 fuck 说 <i>wu-hua-ke-shuo</i> ‘have nothing to say, don’t give a shit’
Popular sentences		
厉害了, 我的国 > 厉害了, word 国 <i>Lihai le, wo-de guo</i> ‘so cool, my country’	一个笑到昏过去 > excel 到昏 Gucci <i>yi-ge-xiao dao hun guoqu</i> ‘almost laugh to faint’	

Forming idioms, swear words, and popular sentences by creating puns of this kind, which draw from both Chinese and English, is currently a very productive method,

⁴⁹ Examples retrieved from *weibo.com*. Accessed November 21, 2021.

and there are many other examples online that are used by Chinese netizens. Many of the examples are created just for fun, as being dynamic, rule-averse, and eye-catching is one of the typical characteristics of internet language (see further Crystal 2001:62). For example, the use of proper nouns, such as *Tony*, *Gucci*, and office software *word* and *excel*, makes the phrase or sentence funny and humorous. Some examples are more complex and ingenious, where the substitution of English elements can bring about connotative meanings to make the phrases meaningful or even sarcastic. For example, the swear word 无 *fuck* 说, is based on the form *wu-hua-ke-shuo* (no-speech-can-say) which originally means ‘someone has nothing to say’, and can express both neutral and negative meaning; the English word *fuck* is an expletive, and therefore the combined form becomes more offensive.

Some linguists uphold the view that internet language should be regarded as a special language variety in a speech community, because of its unique features, e.g. simplicity, creativity, vitality, and arbitrariness (e.g. Hudson 2000, Crystal 2001). Scholars and politicians have always discussed the topic of whether or not uni-scriptal policy should be stressed in online communication, considering the use of internet buzzwords and slang that contain English and other foreign elements (cf. Chen 2008, Tang 2010, Yang 2013, Yu Pengliang 2014). However, the inclusiveness of Chinese internet language provides more options for speakers to achieve communicative efficiency and dynamism, and this benefits Chinese internet users. Moreover, some specialized dictionaries of Chinese internet language have been open-minded towards these buzzwords, since the *Dictionary of Chinese Cyberword* (Yu Genyuan 2001), firstly included borrowed abbreviated English expressions that are used in chatrooms and BBS platforms, such as *CU*.

4.4. Summary

The overview and discussion of bi-directional Chinese-English contact in this chapter shows that the borrowing from the SLs to the RLs can vary from words and phrases to structural/grammatical elements. Borrowing strategies have also evolved,

as intercultural communication deepens via more convenient media, and as the nations learn more about each other. Moreover, the status of both languages in the other nation and their influence on each other relate closely to their political, economical, and social contexts in the contact setting. In this section, therefore, I firstly summarize the language contact and borrowing practice between the two languages, from a historical-sociological perspective, and then present a typology comparing the borrowed items in both directions.

4.4.1. A sociological perspective

Crystal (1997, 2003) describes the development of the English language and the way it has become a global language. He claims that from a historical point of view, the vocabulary of English contains borrowings from many other donor languages, and then because of ‘the political/economic/military power of its people’, English has been favoured as the global language and has thereafter exerted great influence on other languages through intercultural contact (Crystal 1997: 7–8). Such a paradigm is also manifest in the English-Chinese contact setting. In the other direction, as Adamson notes, the English language has been viewed in different ways at different times throughout the past few centuries, from the language of ‘military aggressors, barbarians, imperialist’, to the language of ‘trade partners, advanced techniques, academics, popular culture’ (Adamson 2002: 231). Therefore, the status of English in China has undergone different stages, from being resisted to having prestige.

Before the sixteenth Century, early contact between the two countries is remote and involves little cultural exchange, due to geographic boundaries and rather inward-looking attitude in Ancient China. Chinese loanwords in English are limited and mainly occurs through commercial intercourse, e.g. *silk*, *china*; whereas little evidence of English borrowings can be found in Chinese.

The expansion of British overseas trade brings about closer contact, resulting in the development of CPE and in many loanwords of products, food, and plants. Some

culture-related words have also entered English vocabulary, but cultural conflicts also occur afterward: some loanwords have undergone meaning changes, possibly because of the rejection of their embedded social norms by English speakers (see further section 5.2.3; the origin of *chin chin*). However, because of the self-seclusion policy of Qing Dynasty, the influence of English was restricted to the trading ports, so that it is still hard to find English borrowings in Chinese.

The power of the British Empire and its Navy forces China into a position of the so-called ‘semi-colonial-semi-feudal’ country from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. Because of its political and military power, Chinese people started to regard English as the language of a modernized country, and as a medium for transferring advanced science and ideologies. Because of the New Culture Movement, the penetration of English has speeded up in China: the Chinese language is reconstructed and improved, and an influx of English loanwords and expressions in all aspects of life enter into Chinese, through transliteration and loan translation. On the other hand, the political and social transformation of China over the twentieth century has in turn impressed the global society, resulting in the borrowing of expressions relating to characteristically Chinese concepts and culture, which also constitute an important part of Chinese Englishes, e.g. *paper tiger*, *Maoism*.⁵⁰

After the Opening-up and especially since the twenty-first century, language contact between English and Chinese are boosted, owing to globalisation and the development of the internet. The status of English and its role in education have become significant in China. Such intensive exposure to English results in the phenomenon that the two languages seem to be used less separately among Chinese speakers, especially the younger generation and in less formal contexts. Large

⁵⁰ Note that the contact between the two languages is slightly tricky during the first three decades after the foundation of PRC, which is metaphorically described as ‘roller-coaster’ by Bolton and Graddol (2012), because of the influence of Russian and some China’s national policy at that time: it was very limited compared to Russian in the first decade (1950s); boosted after Sino-Russian schism (1960s); outlawed in many parts of the country during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976); and popularised again after the Reform (1978–). (see further Adamson 2002:237, Bolton and Graddol 2012:4)

numbers of lettered expressions and forms which mix Chinese and English elements have been found in contemporary Chinese. Likewise, more and more Chinese words and expressions have also been brought into the English language and vocabulary via various channels, such as tourism, emigration, the mass media, Confucius institutes, and other cultural exchange activities. However, some Chinese English expressions may not be treated as established borrowings, since they are mostly used restrictively and by small groups of speakers, such as *add oil*, *funny mud pee*, *niubi*. The existence of such expressions still shows a growing awareness of the Chinese influence on the present-day English.

4.4.2. A typological perspective

As shown in the previous discussion, the influence of both Chinese and English on each other during language contact has taken place at many levels of language, including lexicon, syntax, and stylistic features. According to the borrowed items in each language from the other, a typological comparison of their borrowing strategy, approach, and word formation can be made as following. Generally speaking, the borrowing of a linguistic item between Chinese and English usually involves three elements, namely pronunciation, form, and meaning, and these elements may be borrowed together or separately.

In general, Chinese words and expressions can be borrowed into English through the following four approaches (the terminologies follow previous studies; see further Gu 2006, Yang 2009, Durkin 2009):

- a. Borrowing of pronunciation and meaning
 - i. Transliteration: phonetically transcribed according to either the traditional Wade-Giles transcription system or *Hanyu Pinyin* system since it's settled in mid twentieth century⁵¹, e.g. *feng shui*, *ganbei*, and interjections.
 - ii. Loan blend: formed by blending elements (words or morphemes) from both Chinese and English, e.g. *taikonaut*, *kung pao chicken*, *niubility*,

⁵¹ *Wade-Giles* and *Pinyin* differ in the way of transcribing a few consonants and vowels, and the use of markers, such as apostrophes and diacritics (See further Zhong 2019: 81–2).

no zuo no die, etc.

- b. Borrowing of meaning solely
 - i. Loan translation:
 - a) Literal translation: word-for-word translation from Chinese into English, e.g. *one country two systems*, *moon cake*, etc.
 - b) Explication (Gu 2006): to give explanatory information such as the origin of the borrowed word, e.g. *Chinese Wall* (the Great Wall), *Peking opera*, etc.
 - ii. Semantic loan: to extend the senses of an already existing English word or phrase with a borrowed meaning or concept from Chinese, e.g. *character* (*hanzi*, Chinese ideograph), *add oil* (cheer up), etc.

However, it is hard to find any structural or grammatical borrowing from Chinese into English beyond the lexical level, except for borrowing from CPE, which is thought to have already died out. This is perhaps due to the limited exposure to Chinese in native English speaking countries, compared to English in China. Nonetheless, from some remaining CPE expressions which do not follow the syntax of standard Englishes, such as *(no) can do* and *long time no see*, we can still detect the influence of Chinese.

In contrast, English borrowings into Chinese appear to be more variable. Unlike in English, the little knowledge of Chinese ideographs among English speakers makes it less possible to directly borrow Chinese forms into English; on the contrary, English letters and word forms are much more familiar and acceptable among Chinese speakers, especially in present-day Chinese. All approaches of English borrowings into Chinese are summarized below, and the terminologies follow Cook's typology(2018):

- a. Borrowing of pronunciation and meaning
 - i. Transliteration: the transliteration of English words in Chinese can be subdivided into two classes:
 - a) Bare transliteration: formed with randomly chosen Chinese character, 拜拜(*baibai*, 'bye-bye'), 达令(*daling*, 'darling'), etc.

- b) Phono-semantic match (Zuckermann 2003)⁵²: the Chinese form not only bears a resembling pronunciation, but also carries semantic value that matches its model in English, e.g. 奔驰 (*benchi*, car brand ‘Benz’; literal meaning ‘fast-drive’), 佳洁士 (*jia-jie-shi*, toothpaste brand ‘Crest’; meaning ‘good-clean-helper’), 妈咪 (*mami*, ‘mummy’; *ma* means ‘mother’), etc.
- c) Transliteration + explanation: compound of a transliterated form and an indigenous item serving as explanatory, e.g. 阿尔茨海默病 / 症 (*a-er-ci-hai-mo+bing/zheng*, ‘Alzheimer’s disease’), 路透社 (*lu-tou +she*, ‘Reuters agency/company’), etc.

b. Borrowing of pronunciation and form

- i. Graphic loan: use of an English letter or word in Chinese, denoting a semantically unrelated concept or referent, e.g. *Q* (‘cute’, ‘chewy’), *3Q* (‘thank you’), letters denoting the shape of an object, or a concealed or indefinite referent.

c. Borrowing of meaning only

- i. Loan translation: 瓶颈 (*pingjing*, ‘bottleneck’)
- ii. Semantic loan: 网 (*wang*, ‘evenly woven threads which people can see through’; new meaning: ‘the internet’), 粉丝 (*fensi* originally means ‘rice noodle’; it is later attached with the sense of ‘fans’, owing to similar pronunciations), etc.

d. Borrowing of pronunciation, form, and meaning

- i. Wholesale borrowing: e.g. *OK*, *OMG*, *p.s.*, acronyms and initialisms.
- ii. Hybrid: combination of Chinese and English elements, e.g. ATM 机 (*atm-ji*, ‘ATM-machine’), English suffixes *-ing* and *-er*, etc.

Moreover, it is a common phenomenon that loanwords in both Chinese and English undergo integration in the RLs, which results in changes in their pronunciation, form, and meaning, as well as pragmatic functions. The degree of integration and adaptation, either minor or noticeable, varies case by case, and is largely affected by both social and linguistic factors. More discussions of such post-borrowing integration will be presented via case studies in the next four chapters.

⁵² Some linguists use the term ‘combination transliteration’, i.e. to transliterate as well as to explain. See further (Wang 2002).

Chapter 5

Borrowing of Chinese interjections into English

Previous studies of borrowing tended to focus on open class words, such as the nominal, adjective, and verbal classes, as the most likely forms to be borrowed; however, contact-induced innovations are also demonstrated in other categories, and these include interjections. In written language, interjections can contribute to convey expressive meanings without using more descriptive words; and in daily conversations, interjections are particularly important, especially when people need to convey an emotion, such as anger, disgust, frustration, enthusiasm, and happiness.

Previous research suggest that it is particularly challenging to investigate interjectional borrowing in a quantitative way. Haugen's Norwegian-English study claims that only 1% of the total number of borrowings is represented by interjections; by comparison, nouns account for 73%, and verbs 20% (see further Haugen 1950:224)⁵³. In Thomason and Kaufman's scale of borrowability, interjections are not even considered (1988:74). According to other borrowing hierarchy studies, however, such as the influential one given by Matras (2007:61, 2009; see also section 2.6), interjections fall onto the middle position: they do not reach as many results as the lexical categories, such as nouns, adjectives, and verbs, which are comparatively very open to borrowing; on the other hand, borrowing of interjections appears to be more likely than that of pronouns or numerals, and much more than that of smaller units, such as affixes and other grammatical items⁵⁴. Therefore, generally speaking, interjections are regarded as a class which is relatively open to borrowing. In this

⁵³ However, such imbalance may be due to the percentage of interjections in a language. In English, for instance, according to the *OED*, words and expressions that are classified as interjections only account for 0.4% of the total entries. However, it is also possible that not all interjections in use are included in the dictionaries, e.g. unusual ones used in dialects or slang, so that the estimation of its percentage could be problematic.

⁵⁴ Nevertheless, grammatical items, especially some particularly common affixes are found to be borrowed and frequently used in the contact setting between English and Chinese, which will be discussed in chapter 8.

chapter, I will pay attention to the mechanism, process, and adaptation of two interjections borrowed from Chinese into English.

By grammatical definition, interjections are linguistic units that only convey expressive and attitudinal meanings, i.e. the states of mind, and do not alter the truth-value of a proposition (e.g. Bloomfield 1933, Ameka 1992, 2006, Crystal 2003); and they are only loosely attached to the syntactic structure of the sentence, so that the category of interjections often overlaps with fillers, DMs, and PMs (see *OK* in section 3.2; and see Fraser (1990) who categorizes interjections as a subclass of PMs). Therefore, this low level of syntactic integration (i.e. structural autonomy; see section 2.6.1) makes it more possible for interjections to be borrowed across languages.

However, precisely because of the grammatical properties of interjections, they are most likely to be ignored in most genres of written languages, especially in formal contexts, except for those intended to mimic the vividness of daily conversations or narratives. Interjections are also often overlooked in dictionaries. Most lexicographers provide only vague explanations of their meanings, defining them as expressive or onomatopoeic: for example, *ouch* imitates the sound when someone feels a sudden pain⁵⁵. This makes it even more difficult to study the etymology and linguistic adaptation of borrowed interjections, and requires the researcher to analyze usage in detailed discourse contexts. This chapter therefore presents two case studies of Chinese interjections borrowed into English and examines how these interjections contribute to the communicative needs in the RL, focusing on their pragmatic functions in context-bounded discourses. The two cases here demonstrate different processes of borrowing and uses in different speech communities, and thus have acquired different degrees of acceptance. This chapter therefore analyzes the factors, linguistic and social, that motivate or constrain the borrowing and integration of

⁵⁵ Some linguists manage to distinguish interjections from bare onomatopoeia by arguing that the former are typically responses to a particular event while the latter are imitations of that event (see further Meinard 2015)

these interjections.

5.1. Case study I: *Aiyah* and *aiyoh*

The first case study will focus on two interjections borrowed from Chinese into English, *aiyah* and *aiyoh*. The two items share many features and were included in the *OED* in its September 2016 update to widen its coverage of World Englishes.

5.1.1. 哎呀 *āiya* in Chinese

According to the *OED*, both *aiyah* and *aiyoh* are borrowings from Chinese (Mandarin 哎呀 *āiya*). These Chinese interjections are often used to express dismay, exasperation, surprise, etc. As there is little information in the *OED* about the origin of the borrowings and the way they are used in the SL, I have examined their uses in the *CCD* (*Contemporary Chinese Dictionary*) and the CCL (Center of Chinese Linguistics PKU) Corpus of Chinese. So before examining the use of the interjections in English, I briefly introduce these interjections in Mandarin, detailing their syntactic properties, discourse functions, and pragmatic meanings. The classifications of the pragmatic functions discussed here and in the following sections are based on the terminology in previous studies (see further Ameka 2006, Norrick 2009, 2014). For readers' convenience, the *Pinyin* form of these interjections will not be marked with tones in the following paragraphs; and in most analysis of corpus examples, I will mainly use their forms in English: *aiyah*, *aiyoh*.

According to CCL, 哎呀 *aiya* is the third most frequently used interjection in Mandarin (only after 啊 *a* and 哦 *o*), and is the most frequent polysyllabic interjection, with 2423 hits in the corpus. The earliest quotation of *aiya* in CCL can be date back to the 15th century, where the interjection is commonly found in classic novels. While *aiya* is among the most frequent interjections in Chinese, 哎哟 *aiyo* is slightly less frequent in CCL, with a total 981 hits. Similar to other interjections in Chinese, more than 90% of uses of these interjections are at the beginning of a sentence or utterance, around 6% are placed between clauses, and only 0.6% are in

final position; the rest stand alone and are used with an exclamation mark.

When 哎呀 *aiya* appears at the beginning of a utterances, its most usual position, it mostly functions as a signal of emotional status of the speaker (an emotion marker), a marker to attract the other interlocutor's attention, or a turn-taking marker. Specific examples are shown below:

1) Emotion marker

- a. 哎呀! 终于能睡觉了, 累死我了。真没功夫想那些, 太累了。
Aiyah! Finally, I can go to bed. I am too exhausted to think about it.(CCL: spoken| Interview)
- b. 宋美龄接过茶杯刚呷了一口, 旋即叫了起来: “哎呀, 好烫啊!”
After Meiling Song took a sip of the tea, she cried: “**Aiyah**, it is hot!” (CCL: Biography)

In both examples, *aiyah* is used as a marker of the current emotional state of the speaker, and usually helps to emphasize and strengthen the emotion. The sentence-initial position gives the other interlocutor a direct signal of how the narrator is feeling, so it makes sense that it is placed at the start of the utterance.

2) Attention getter

- a. 我装作不经意地说: “哎呀, 大姐, 我还没有吃早饭呢, 你陪我吃一点好不好?”
aiyah madame
I pretended to ask her accidentally, “**Aiyah**, Madame, I haven't had breakfast yet, would you join me? (CCL: newspaper| collection 1993)
- b. 高力士装作惊讶地说: “哎呀, 李白这小子 在这些诗里 侮辱了贵妃, 您还不知道吗?”
aiyah Li Bai in these poems
Gao said surprisingly: “**Aiyah**, Li Bai has insulted Consort Yang in his poems, don't you know it, your majesty?” (CCL: Social science| *China History About 5000 Years*)

Aiyah here, as an attention getter (Levin and Gray 1983), has a similar function to a vocative expression. It is used to attract others' attention and begin a conversation, usually with an ascending rising tone.

3) Response to preceding information

- a. “我叫李佑心，陕西西安人。”
高团长听毕，惊讶地 说道：“哎呀，我们文工团有个李幼鸾，也是西安人。”
surprised said aiyah our group there is Lee
“My name is Youxin Lee, come from Xi’an.” The Director said surprisingly, “**Aiyah**, there’s also a Mr. Lee in our dancing group who comes from Xi’an.” (CCL Newspaper 1994)
- b. 医生了解事情的缘由后，拿起金子看了看突然跟他大喊：“哎呀，这根本不是金子，只是一堆铜块。”
aiyah this not gold
After the doctor got to know the whole story, he looked at the gold for a while and suddenly cried, “**Aiyah**, this is not gold at all, it’s just a pile of copper!” (CCL: Eating Heath)

When *aiyah* is used at the beginning of a sentence which is a response to the preceding utterance or background information, additional functions are attached to the interjection. *aiyah* in 3a) serves as both a memory-retrieval marker and a turn-taking marker: i.e. the director interrupts Lee’s self-introduction and takes his turn as a new interlocutor by recalling and nominating a fellow-townsmen. *aiyah* in 3b), functioning as a disapproving exclamatory marker, expresses the doctor’s annoyance and disagreement with the others.

4) Tension mitigating/increasing marker

- a. “哎呀，没关系，没关系。我发现您还真行啊。要不别人怎么叫记者，您叫主编呢！”
Aiyah that’s alright (repeat)
Aiyah, that’s alright, that’s alright. Good for you. No wonder you are the editor-in-chief!
(CCL: Movie/drama *Story of Editors*)
- b. “我从不伤人，何况是她呢！”
“哎呀，这可有点危险，现在是关键时刻，你不能迟疑！”
Aiyah this is dangerous
--“I have never hurt any people, let alone her!”
--“**Aiyah**, this is dangerous, it is now a key point, you shall not hesitate!”
(CCL: Literary works *People’s Home*)

Generally, the use of *aiyah* relates to the tension of the utterance, and it can either mitigate or increase the tension based on context. Specifically, *aiyah* in 4a) shows the use of the tension-easing marker *aiyah* that expresses the speaker’s encouragement to make the other interlocutor more relaxed. By contrast, dialogue 4b) gives an example of how *aiyah* is used to increase tension during a conversation: after the speaker A

expresses his hesitation in hurting her, speaker B starts to emphasize the danger and urgency of making a decision, and the interjection helps by contributing a more commanding tone.

The illustrations above have given a detailed analysis of the possible discourse functions *aiyah* may have when it is in sentence-initial position, and these are its main functions in most contexts. However, *aiyah* is less frequently placed between clauses, and there is evidence that it has unique functions in this special position. These functions relate more closely to the coherence of the discourse, and usually aim at drawing listeners or readers' attention to the information following.

5) Indicating sequential relations between clauses

我忽然闻到一股浓重的棉布焦味，扭转头 一看，**哎呀**，火烧到邱少云身上了！

turn around see aiyah fire on Qiu body

Suddenly, I smelled something burning and turned around, **aiyah**, Captain Qiu was on fire! (CCL: Newspapers 1994)

Besides expressing a sense of shock and terror, *aiyah* also connects two clauses that are logically in a sequential relation, although they have different subjects. The fact 'captain Qiu was on fire' is what the narrator saw after he had smelled burning. There is a neat time order among these movements and facts, which relates closely to the progression of the event and the emotion of the speaker at the time, and if we change the position of the interjection or omit it, the pragmatic effect will be weakened.

6) Indicating cause and effect

a. 试卷拿到手一看，打开来《我的母亲》，我写过，**哎呀**，我高兴得要疯了！

I wrote aiyah I excited madly

When I opened the paper and found the given topic, My Mother, which I had prepared before, **aiyah**, so I was excited!

(CCL: TV show)

b. 有个别北方同志到上海去了吃我们上海饭就有点不爽，“**哎呀**，你们上海人太抠门，弄那么一个小碗，吃不饱。”

aiyah you shanghai

The guests from Northern China are annoyed after they have tried Shanghai cuisine, "**aiyah**, because people in Shanghai are too stingy, and food is served in such a tiny

plate that they are still hungry.” (CCL : TV show)

The two sentences above clearly exemplify the use of *aiyah* to indicate a cause-and-effect relation between its preceding and following clauses. In example 6a), the interjection *aiyah* not only expresses a feeling of surprise and excitement, but also links to the result that ‘I was excited’ because of the coincidence the author has mentioned in the preceding clauses. In 6b), the clause after *aiyah* indicates the reason why ‘the guests are annoyed’.

7) Marker of denial/opposition

“好吧，咱就下去 给你看看，哎呀，不行！这一下去，鞋子不就湿了吗？”

let’s go down look aiyah no

“Well, let’s jump down and have a look, **aiyah**, no way, we might wet our shoes!”

(CCL: History story *Nu’erhachi*)

Sometimes the clauses before and after *aiyah* are logically connected but the latter negates the former. When speakers find their words inappropriate or incorrect, they can use the interjection to correct themselves or to change their tone, and it precedes more appropriate expressions.

8) Marker of supplementary information

这个人最后脑袋会肿胀然后死去，当时不知道 怎么治， 哎呀，这些大夫们
don’t know how to deal with it, aiyah these doctors
翻医书啊，然后到处去拿药来试验，都没效果.....

The man would finally die with a swollen head because there was no cure to the disease at that time, **aiyah**, the doctors kept reading medical works and doing clinical trials of various medicines, but ended up with no solution... (CCL: Spoken|
Conversation)

Another unique function of the interjection is that a speaker uses *aiyah* as a marker to indicate that additional information about what has already been asserted will follow. In example 8), the author first states that the disease was incurable, and then by using the interjection he expresses his pity and also adds a further explanation of how hard

it was to find a treatment. Such supplementary information then makes the former statement more convincing.

9) Signal of topic change

“让我的近侍坐你的车子一同去吧，**哎呀**，对了，我原来忘记了，我和死者有一笔旧帐。……” go with you aiyah oops
“My butler will go back with you, **aiyah**, I forgot that the dead man owes me money...”
(CCL: *War and Peace*)

In occasions when speakers want to change topic to mention something else, as in 9), the interjection *aiyah* signals this change to other interlocutors. Where *aiyah* is used in this way, speakers are likely to increase the volume of their speech and speak in a falling tone, using body language like a waving hand.

When the interjection is placed at the end of an utterance, the only function is to express the speaker's attitude towards a previous event, situation, or opinion, usually in an emotional manner, as shown in 10):

10) Commenting/ attitudinal marker

不是我不想打，实在是脚抽筋动不了呀，**哎呀**！
My foot hurts can't move aiyah
I don't mean to quit, but my foot hurts. I can't even move, **aiyah**! (CCL: Movie)

In this example, the speaker explains that he has stopped fighting because of the pain in his foot, and ends with *aiyah* to express his upset and shame about not being able to keep fighting.

11) Sarcastic/ humorous function

Last but not the least, one of the most frequent pragmatic functions of *aiyah* in contemporary Chinese, especially in spoken language, is to indicate sarcasm, a function which is also common in other Chinese interjections. However, owing to the limited spoken material in CCL, it is hard to find a suitable example of this usage.

Figure 5.1 below extracted from the *Weibo* data provides an example:

Figure 5.1: *aiyah* used to express humorous/sarcastic meanings⁵⁶

<p>哎呀👉//@奇葩童小童:哎呀//@林嘎嘎儿:👉// @吃瓜群众CJ:怎么这么不小心👉//@春光灿烂 桔八戒:哎呀//@磊磊漂亮:哎呀//@风吹铃铛响 叮叮:哎呀//@插花大师:哎呀//@姬方凌:哎呀// @皇族普通人:哎呀//@心动收藏站:哎呀👉//@ 烫金真爱册: 哎呀👉</p> <p>界外编辑部 +Follow</p> <p>众所周知，短道速滑是韩国队传统强项，不过由于本届冬奥会韩国队出现了犯规等意外状况，最终男子、女子全部无缘决赛。</p> <p>#韩国队无缘短道速滑决赛# #短道速滑太刺激了# #北京冬奥会#</p>	<p>Aiyah[emoji]//@xxx: Aiyah//@xxx:[emoji]// @xxx: How could you be so careless[emoji]//@xxx: Aiyah//@xxx: Aiyah//@xxx: Aiyah//@xxx: Aiyah//@xxx: Aiyah// @xxx: Aiyah//@xxx: Aiyah[emoji]//@ xxx: Aiyah[emoji]</p>
	<p>(the original blog)</p> <p>A piece of news about South Korean short track team getting penalized because of their foul play in Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics.</p>

As seen from the picture, several *Weibo* users repost the original blog, along with the interjection *aiyah*, which literally expresses that they feel sorry about the results. However, all of the emojis used here express emotions like happiness and cheerfulness, or applause, and this suggests that *aiyah* is actually used to express sarcasm, indicating something like ‘poor you, but you deserve it anyway’.

It is also notable that in many cases, two or three discourse functions coexist in a single use of *aiyah*. For instance, almost all uses - over 98% in the results of CCL – express the emotions of the speaker, and many of them also function as a DM, as discussed in the examples above.

As mentioned before, *aiyo* is slightly less frequent in CCL, but it is used in a similar way to *aiya*, and each one of the 11 basic functions mentioned above are evidenced in CCL. But there are subtle differences in terms of their emotional meaning, and this determines which interjection is used in a particular context. For instance, *aiyo* is more often used particularly when someone feels a sudden pain. In general, they have a lot in common in both form and function. This can, to some extent, account

⁵⁶ Examples from *weibo.com*. Retrieved February 9, 2022.

for their being used interchangeably, and entering the *OED* at around the same time.

As interjections are usually words that can cover a relatively wide range of emotions and can easily be influenced by context, their meanings are, in many cases, undetermined and ambiguous. However, through the interpretation of the use of *aiyah* and *aiyoh* above, I have also summarized three types of pragmatic functions of the two interjections, relating to speakers' states of mind: expressing one's emotion, declaring one's attitude, and proposing one's will.

➤ To express emotion

The first and most basic pragmatic meaning of the two interjections is to express the speakers' emotion. The examples in the corpus have shown that both interjections can be used to express positive emotions like surprise, happiness, excitement, and appreciation, as well as negative emotions like annoyance, anxiety, pain, and disgust.

➤ To declare an attitude

Apart from expressing emotions, the two interjections can also be associated with a speaker's attitude towards an event or an opinion previously mentioned. At this level, there are examples showing that both interjections are used to indicate disapproval or indifferent attitude, but neither of them can express positive attitude.

➤ To express a wish

As I have mentioned before, while the interjections serve to gain attention or as a marker of response, they can also have illocutionary force to ask the listener to be cooperative in the conversation or even in actions. More specifically, by using *aiyah/aiyoh*, a speaker can signal a desire to change topics (see example 9), remind others of something (see example 3), or ask them to do or not to do something (e.g. 4b).

In the following sections, I will then observe how they are used in English and

whether they experience pragmatic adaptation (whether there are changes taken place in their pragmatic meaning or functions; see section 2.4) .

5.1.2. *Aiyah and aiyoh in the RL English*

Generally speaking, as borrowings by transliteration from the SL, both interjections have many variant spellings, such as *aiyah*, *aiya* (distinguishing from the Sri Lanka borrowed noun *aiya*, referring to any older male relative or acquaintance), *aiyo*, *aiyoh*, and *aiyyo*, which make no difference in meaning and function.

As mentioned before, interjections are syntactically unnecessary linguistic units only used to convey emotions, and are usually omitted in formal written contexts. *aiyah* is, unsurprisingly, of extremely low frequency in the corpus and only occurs in direct speech, more precisely, in fiction and newspapers, where dialogues and narratives are often presented in a realistic way. A search across several large corpora (BNC, COHA and COCA) results in only 8 hits in total. The earliest example is from 1947, in an article from TIME Magazine:

- 12) The day after the Government troops entered after the street-sniping ended, Yang came down. **Aiya!** His shop was intact, but Government soldiers had taken his bedding and wares of toothpaste and Yen-an brand cigarette... (COHA: TIME A WALK IN YENAN)

These words describe the situation of a Chinese person and his shop after or during a war, and his relief that his shop is still in relatively good condition. By using the interjection *aiya*, the author emphasizes the surprise and relief of the protagonist, so here *aiya* serves as a signal of his emotional state. This is the most frequent function of the interjection.

The second example comes from fiction published in 1957 as excerpted below. Unlike in the first example, where *aiya* appears in a descriptive story, here *aiya* is not only as an emotion marker, but also has an emphatic function to attract the listener's attention:

- 13) Chang grabbed Charlie's hand and pumped it half a dozen times before the proprietor recognized him. "**Aiya!** Mr. Chang!" the little man cried happily. "It is you! For a moment I thought you a gangster!" (COHA: *The Flower Drum Song* 1957)

Here, Charlie's crying 'Aiya!' is to positively respond to the other interlocutor's enthusiasm and convey his recognition of his acquaintance. The interjection thus functions as a memory-retrieval marker indicating that the speaker has managed to recall a piece of information. At the same time, it also seems to qualify as a emotion marker, since suddenly recalling something one has forgotten generally brings about a (short-term) sense of accomplishment or even happiness, so *aiya* also expresses surprise and pleasure.

Together with body language, the interjection can also convey illocutionary information, as the example below shows:

- 14) Mah was inconsolable. ... She held the black mouthpiece with two hands and shouted, "Ai! Ai! **Aiyah!**" Her cries told the whole story: the runaway husband, the child in school, the red in her face. Her heavy, heavy face. Her child's matted hair... (COHA: *Harpers Magazine* 1989)

According to the co-text in this passage, *aiyah* here expresses negative emotions. We could reasonably indicate from the extract that after suffering from an unexpected blow of fate, the speaker is filled with frustration and exasperation. She shouts, repeating one word syllable by syllable, signaling her increasing anger. Although it is a literary work where the authenticity of such descriptive line is to be questioned, within the narrative the interjection conveys the implicature that the speaker has gone through miseries.

The most recent example found in these large corpora is presented in example 15):

- 15) She turned toward me, "Put on your coat, Mae. You bring this to the Changs." # "Take, Ma. Take this to the Ch#" "**Aiya!** Take-bring. Bring-take. You know what I mean. Come on." # "But, Ma..." (COCA: FIC *Frontier* 2000)

In this example, which follows a passage where the daughter is correcting her mother's poor use of verbs, the mother responds impatiently before her daughter finishes her words. One participant in the conversation specifically reacts to what the other has said in a previous turn, commenting on its appropriateness or expressing an objection, and the interjection *aiya* therefore bears the message 'I don't care what you're going to say', besides just signaling impatience. Therefore in this excerpt, *aiya* serves as a turn-taking marker, indicating that the interlocutor intends to end the previous turn and begin a new turn.

Likewise, *aiyoh*, whose earliest use is found in 1930s, is also mainly used to express annoyance, pain, and surprise. Generally speaking, corpus data shows that *aiyoh* is used similarly to *aiyah*, in that they are both used in direct speech and they are of similarly low frequency (*aiyoh* only occurs 5 times across BNC, COHA, and COCA). Unfortunately, some of the results in the corpus are difficult to analyse, because they lack co-texts which clarify their meaning. Here I list two examples (which show different written forms, *aiyoo* and *aiyyo*):

- 16) As she unraveled the tape measure around my figure farther than she'd ever unraveled it, her reaction to my big beefy bones, bouncing off noodle houses and bath houses and rotting fruit and fly-infested alleys. # "**Aiyoo!**" (COCA: FIC The Massachusetts Review 2016)

Example 16) is a narrative, describing a business woman's reaction while shouting *aiyoo*. Here, the interjection serves to signal the speaker's emotional state, expressing her shock.

In example 17), *aiyyo* is employed not only as emotion marker, but more importantly, it has obtained illocutionary functions.

- 17) Why did he have to pick the entire bunch? She always made it a point to pick only the blooms. She couldn't stop herself: "**Aiyyo!** Don't pick the buds! You're wasting the

flowers!" (COHA: FIC A disobedient girl 2009)

By shouting out *aiyyo*, the woman not only expresses her annoyance and anxiety, she also tries to prevent the other speaker from picking the buds, thus the interjection has the implicature ‘stop doing something’. In the following sentence, she makes this explicit by saying ‘don’t pick the bud’.

Current data from all three corpora shows that in English narratives and conversations, the uses of *aiyah* and *aiyoh* have several pragmatic functions, including expressing feelings, getting attention, signaling turn-taking, back-channeling, and having illocutionary force, which are inherited and borrowed from their SL. However, data from CCL shows that in Chinese they have many other functions. These include transitioning functions, e.g. signaling cohesion between two portions of a speech, a marker of self-repair, a marker of opposition; expressing attitudinal meanings, e.g. disapproval, sarcasm, concession; and mitigating/relaxing the atmosphere or tension (see section 5.1.1).

Moreover, while the pronunciation of the borrowed items has not changed significantly, they have slightly different syntactic features, and in English they are restricted to a sentence-initial position. This perhaps explains why they have both lost the transitioning discourse functions they show when used between clauses in a single utterance.

The analysis here is based on the examples found in the corpora. The low frequencies of the borrowed interjections in these corpora suggests that they are not widely accepted by native English speakers. Correspondingly, results in *Twitter* also demonstrate that *aiyah/aiyoh* are seldom used by BrE or AmE speakers, but are commonly used by Asian speakers. For example, Figure 5.2 below presents five examples of *aiyah/aiyoh* used on *Twitter*, with the users’ nationalities/locations stated beneath. Note that the last example in Figure 5.2 particularly shows that *aiyoh(ayo)*

can be used with negative/sarcastic connotations among Singaporean speakers, echoing the Chinese examples in Figure 5.1, which is not found in AmE or BrE.

Figure 5.2: Examples of *aiyah* and *aiyoh* on Twitter⁵⁷

<p>gigi 🌻 · 1d · @_ji... · 1d · #chengxian</p> <p>JC: what are you laughing for?! They just walked in on us! 😂</p> <p>WWX: Aiyah~ A-Cheng, don't be mad! *whispers* we'll finish when they leave</p>	<p>AsukaPyon @AsukaPyon · 5d</p> <p>The portal literally takes 5 mins for it to refresh aiyah get a better server lah</p>	<p>Eil... · 2d</p> <p>My dad & also my cousin laughed at me, apparently I got angmoh leeks which are 'wrong', should get Chinese leeks. Aiyah. I get angmoh husband needs angmoh leek luck. Whatever I tried</p>
Chinese	Philippine	Singaporean-Australian
<p>whatever you do no... · 21/09/2021</p> <p>Aiyoh this makes me soft 🤔</p> 	<p>paurial... an account @p... · 3d</p> <p>gen z singaporean: ayo good job on the project</p> <p>gen x singaporean: thanks... but what's wrong</p> <p>gen z: huh</p> <p>gen x: why u say aiyoh</p>	
Korean	Singaporean	

These findings show that although *aiyah* and *aiyoh* are treated as Chinese borrowings in English and have entered the *OED*, demonstrating so-called 'institutional acceptance' (see section 2.3.2), they are by no means among the core vocabulary of English, and are still mostly used by Chinese or Asian speakers of English and bilinguals, or in contexts that relate to Chinese/Asian people to show exotic colour. In the next section, I will discuss the pragmatic functions of these interjections further in Chinese and English bilingual contexts.

5.1.3. *Aiyah and aiyoh in Chinese-English bilingual communities*

In previous sections, I have investigated the forms and functions of two borrowed interjections *aiyah* and *aiyoh*, and have found that they are not commonly used in BrE or AmE. But evidence show that in some Asian English-speaking regions and countries, which are bilingual communities and closely relate to the Chinese culture, these interjections are widely used in daily conversations. In this section, I will

⁵⁷ <https://twitter.com> Retrieved February 2, 2022

discuss several features of *aiyah* and *aiyoh* in these Asian English varieties that have not yet appeared in either AmE or BrE, and compare them with their sources in Chinese.

In order to obtain more corpus data for this research, here I have used a larger corpus, GloWbE, which allows me to carry out comparisons between different varieties of English. Unsurprisingly, I have found many uses of *aiyah* in Singapore English (78), Malaysia English (99), and Hong Kong English (13), than in AmE or BrE, as shown in the following table 5.1:

Table 5.1: The frequency of *aiyah* across English varieties (per million words)

English variety	GB	US	Singapore	Malaysia	Hong Kong
Occurrences	8	10	78	99	13
Frequency	0.020	0.026	1.815	2.33	0.32

Note that the frequency rates counted here are not accurate enough due to the fact that *aiyah* is an onomatopoeic interjection and there might be other written forms in some Asian English varieties, such as *aiya*, *aiyaa*, and *aieeyaa*. For example, Figure 5.3 below shows that the variant form *aieeyaaa* is commonly found in a famous comic series in Hong Kong:

Figure 5.3: The use of *aieeyaaa* in Lily Wong Comics⁵⁸



In these Asian varieties, we can easily find similar usage of *aiyah* as in Chinese.

⁵⁸ The picture is retrieved from the comic *The World of Lily Wong*, which was famous in Hong Kong in 1970s and 1980s (*lilywong.net* Retrieved October 28, 2022).

Table 5.2 presents examples from the Asian English sub-corpora of GloWbE, and briefly explains the pragmatic functions of the interjection in each case.

Table 5.2: Example uses of *aiyah* in Asian Englishes (in GloWbE)

Examples	Functions
18) “ Aiya anyway I’m not against him lah , I’m sure he’s got a big heart.” But we won’t accept words without proof anymore. (Singapore: General)	Tension-easing marker: shows that the speaker doesn’t mean to object the other person
19) I simply brushed his worry off by saying “ Aiya! Small matter lah! Take it as a design lor! ” (Singapore: Blog)	Turn-taking marker: starts a new turn with advice
20) Thanks for linking to me. Ahhhh, I miss the long and lengthy red chilies from home. The red chili I get here is short and plump and not very fiery, and too watery. Aiya , the texture is just not the same. (Singapore: General)	Emotion: express disappointment when something wrong/ bad happens
21) “ Aiya! you are expert in all these already!!!” (Singapore: Blog)	Back-channeling: refer to previous utterance about what the speaker is capable of
22) I can no longer support my cab taking habit: I was lazy recently and kept taking cab to work, giving excuses like “ Aiya , on-call charge is only \$2.50...”... (Singapore: Blog)	Marker of self-repair and self-comfort
23) I rattled off some qualities, got frustrated with her interrogation and said, “ Aiya! I don’t make a list. I’ve never made a list because making a list means Mr. Perfect and that don’t exists!!” (Singapore: Blog)	Emotion marker: annoyance & Attitudinal marker: signal of disapproval
24) yet we have ignorant people who still says, “ aiyah! whoever wins also the same lah! ” (Malaysia: Blog)	Attention getting marker
25) But today’s tone was more urgent than angry. “ Aiyah! You still sleeping? Time to wake up already!” (Singapore: Blog)	Emphatic function

The basic pragmatic functions of *aiyah* which are discussed in 5.1.1, are all evident here, according to the analysis of contexts where the interjection is applied. Within the function of emotion marker, I can still find a relatively wider range of emotions

conveyed by using the interjection than in BrE and AmE. The reason for such differences is easy to interpret, as it is known that Singapore is a bilingual community, where Chinese and English are both official languages. Moreover, *aiyah* in examples 18), 19), and 24) is found to appear with other interjections like *lah* and *lor*; which also have Chinese origins (啦 *la* 咯 *lo*) and are characteristic of Asian Englishes. Utterances starting with *aiya* (or other interjections and DMs) and ending with *lah* are common in both Chinese speech communities and in the English used by Chinese and Southeast Asian speakers, and this is the result of language contact and bilingualism.

Surprisingly, variant forms of both *aiyah* and *aiyoh* are also found, and these enrich the discourse with further pragmatic functions. These variants are formed by the same morphological rule: the repetition of the last morpheme, pronouncing as /aijaja/ and /aijəujəu/ (or even more repetition in special occurrences). Here the rule of forming variants is exactly borrowed from Chinese, i.e. repeating the last character, as in 哎呀呀 *aiyaya*. In Chinese, variant forms of the interjections like these may express a wider range of emotions depending on the context. For instance, 哎呀呀 *aiyaya* can have an emphatic function with particular intonation; 哎哟哟 *aiyoyo* can express negative humor, including sarcasm and irony; and both of them can add playfulness, reduce seriousness, or serve as a marker of exaggeration in daily conversations.

The examples below are all extracted from GloWbE, and give a sense of how these variants function in discourse and how they differ from the bare forms of the interjections *aiyah* and *aiyoh*:

- 26) “This is one of the new friend she made, Ethan, lol.” They joked, saying Raeann is Ethan's new gf! **AIYOYO!** # Then Ethan's bro??? LOL! (Singapore: Blog)
- 27) Ahhhh!!!! I felt so doused! Rain came falling on me... totally drenched! # The email came and we were notified that the final bake has to consist of Nutriplus jumbo eggs and Tropical fruits! **Aiyoyo!** The current months are soooooo bad for tropical fruits. (Malaysia: Blog)

- 28) “You'll feel a little better if you drink a bit of this” She passed me a cup of white-coloured liquid, and from the smell, I judged it to be roughly a cup of milk. But I won't just accept it so rashly like that. “**Aiyaaya**, I've forgot that you're a person who liked to be suspicious of everything.” She drank a mouthful of milk. (Malaysia: General)
- 29) After receiving the money, Chen-bo politely bowed towards Qian, and later when he reached home, he took out a bottle of white wine that he had just purchased that morning, while humming an old song from decades ago, as he switched on his 42 inch big newly bought television that he had just “earn’t”. “**Aiyaya**, as expected, the prettier a woman gets, the dumber she becomes in return, she can't even detect such an obvious act, **heh heh**, maybe I should find a time to trick her over to have some fun with her body” (Singapore: General)

Examples 26) and 27) give two different uses of *aiyoyo*. The former occurs with other markers indicating the context where the utterance take place: the frequently collocated marker ‘lol’ and the joke and laughter mentioned in the co-text indicate humour and joyfulness. Moreover, as in a written materials, *aiyoyo* here is in capital letters, again exaggerating the emotion of the speakers. The second *aiyoyo* is then employed in a painful or embarrassing situation, where the adverb *so* is also lengthened with the repetition of ‘o’ to display an intensification of the (emotive) difficulty caused by the lack of fruit, thus the interjection is used emphatically with a slightly wronged tone.

In examples 28) and 29), the use of *aiyaya* also shows two different pragmatic functions. The first *aiyaaya* is, on the surface, used as a memory-retrieval marker, indicating that the woman has thought of something; but actually her repetition of the second syllable and lengthening of interjection indicates a sense of negative humour, expressing her sarcasm at the protagonist’s suspicion. By contrast, the second *aiyaya*, along with the previous description and the protagonist’s laughter *heh heh* (Chinese origin: 嘿嘿 *heihei*, imitating ‘an evil/sardonic/cunning grin’) cooperatively portrays an exaggerated villain character.

To sum up, the first case study of the borrowing of Chinese interjections *aiyah* and *aiyoh* into English shows that although the borrowed items are institutionally

acknowledged and accepted by English dictionaries like the *OED*, they currently demonstrate different degrees of acceptance and conventionality in different varieties of English. They are used restrictively among Chinese speakers of English, by speakers who would like to portray a Chinese context, or within Asian English communities which are influenced by the Chinese language including Mandarin (Putonghua), Hokkien (Minnan dialect) and Cantonese.

The future prospect of whether they can be used in a wider range of contexts by native English speakers, or whether they are more likely to become extinct, is hard to predict. At present, considering the fact that these two interjections are so restrictively used, I would conclude that they are peripheral members of Chinese loanwords in general international Englishes, such as BrE and AmE, which feature as ad hoc borrowings (see further Poplack 2018): they are restrictively used in specific Chinese-related context and only for the purpose of presenting a Chinese/Oriental colour. By contrast, in Asian Englishes, they are more established borrowings. Additionally, this case study also shows that the continuum of ad hoc forms and established forms (see section 2.3.2; Matras 2009, Poplack 2018) not only involves the status of a borrowed item or its development through times, but also serve to categorize a particular item in different language varieties, depending on the speaker groups who use the item and the context where it is most commonly applied.

5.2. Case study II: *chin-chin*

A different situation is presented by another interjection of Chinese origin, *chin-chin* (or *chin chin*, written without a hyphen), which demonstrates higher frequency in use and deeper integration into the RL.

According to the *OED*, the interjection *chin-chin* is borrowed from a Chinese politeness expression *qing*, i.e. Mandarin 请(*qǐng*) and Cantonese 請(*chǐng*), one of the most high frequency words in Chinese. However, it is worth noting that the use of *chin-chin* in English does not parallel the original form 请 *qing* in Chinese, but is

derived from its use to invite others to drink in general situations, as a toast. Figure 5.4 below, extracted from a website for a wine factory based in the UK, displays an advertisement poster for ‘free tasting’ activities, and this ends with a typical use of *chin-chin*.

Figure 5.4: Advertisement for a wine factory in the UK⁵⁹



In the final sentence ‘See you then, chin chin!’, the writer uses *chin chin* as a salutation to all guests who would like to try their wines. In fact, of the most recent twenty posters displayed on this website, seven end with *chin chin*, or use the borrowed item in the same way, as shown in the following two examples:

So pop in and join us from midday on Saturday and see if we can send you home with something for the weekend. **Chin chin!**

So join us Saturday and let's see if we can introduce you to a new favourite. **Chin, chin.**

(ibid.)

Similarly, *chin chin* is also found in other online publicity slogans for wines and alcohols, for example in the sales promotion below:

⁵⁹ See further information <http://www.duncanmurraywines.co.uk/our-tastings> Retrieved 29 Aug 2021

This special Dry London Gin is a phenomenal evening tippie, but heck it tastes good at any time of the day, **chin chin!**

(<https://www.prezzybox.com/personalised-hello-fifty-gin.aspx>)

These examples show that *chin chin* (sometimes *chin-chin*) is often used as a toast salutation/marker, and in this narrow meaning it is relatively well-accepted by native English speakers. However, *qing* has a much wider range of meanings in Chinese. In this section, I will analyse the use of the items in both Chinese and English, to investigate the motivations and constraints of the borrowing and acceptance of this item.

5.2.1. Chinese politeness formula: 请(*qing*: 'please')

As mentioned before, in the *OED*, the etymology of the borrowed item *chin-chin* shows that it comes from Mandarin 请 *qing* (*Pinyin* form *ts'ing*, Cantonese *ching*), which is a common politeness formula used to express a request or indicate deference, dating back to ancient China. The following couplet is said to be composed based on an anecdote about one of the most famous poet and artists in China, Su Shi (Song dynasty, A.D.960), which relates a visit to a temple. This couplet perfectly illustrates how the formula is used to express respect and politeness:

坐 <i>zuo</i> 、	请坐 <i>qing zuo</i> 、	请上坐 <i>qing shang zuo</i> ;
Sit,	please take a seat,	please take a fine seat;
茶 <i>cha</i> 、	敬茶 <i>jing cha</i> 、	敬香茶 <i>jing xiang cha</i> 。
Tea,	serve tea,	serve good tea.

The story starts when Su steps into the temple. The monk in the reception doesn't recognize him and says to him casually: 'Sit', and then asks an inferior monk to serve him tea by just saying 'Tea!'. However, having chatted with Su for a while, the abbot notices that the guest is unexpectedly eloquent, so he changes his attitude and speaks more politely using markers like *qing* ('please') and *jing* ('to serve' in a

respectful manner, usually with both hands). And finally, when Su introduces himself as the new governor in that province, the abbot is so surprised that he assembles all the monks, and treats Su with the highest standard of politeness, saying respectfully in shame: ‘please take a fine seat, serve good tea’. Although it is uncertain whether the story is true or not, the couplet has become a famous example which shows different politeness formulae along a scale and their embedded attitudinal meanings.

As one of the most commonly used politeness markers in Chinese, *qing* has a range of semantic and pragmatic functions and can be found in a wide range of settings. The *CCD7* gives four basic senses of *qing*:

- qing*₁: to request, as in 请假(*qingjia* ‘to ask for a leave’);
- qing*₂: to invite, e.g. 聘请(*pinqing*, ‘to hire’), 请医生(*qing yisheng* verb phrase ‘to invite/hire a doctor’);
- qing*₃: to entertain or treat, e.g. 请客(*qingke* ‘to give others a treat’);
- qing*₄: a politeness marker signaling that a speaker asks an addressee to do something, e.g. 请坐(*qing zuo* ‘please sit’); 请进(*qing jin* ‘please come in’).

Qing in the first three senses is usually used as a transitive verb; the fourth sense of *qing* is a politeness marker, regarded as the etymon of the borrowed form *chin-chin*. A preliminary search in CCL shows that the frequency rates of each sense of *qing* occurring in the corpus are 42%, 38%, 6%, and 14% respectively. There are far more occurrences of *qing*_{1/2}, which is perhaps because of their common uses in compound verb forms with other verbs denoting similar meanings, such as *shenqing*₁ ‘to apply’, *qing*₁*qiu* ‘to request’, and *yaoqing*₂ ‘to invite’, and *pinqing*₂ ‘to hire’; these compounds are more often used in formal written contexts, and thus are more widely distributed in CCL, where written texts take up more than 80% of the total data (see further Figure 3.4).

Like other common verbs in Chinese, *qing*_{1/2/3} can be used to form fixed verb phrases by adding another element, usually a verb or a noun, as in *qingjia* and *qingke* (V+N);

the V+V compound verbs mentioned above also belong to this category. Scholars of Chinese linguistics use the term ‘disyllabic words/compounds’ for these structures (see Lyu 1979: 21, Huang 1984: 53, Duanmu 1999, Robson 2018: 94). Such compounds can also be used in a similar way to nouns, and are usually categorized as ‘verb-noun conversion words’ (Lu 1981, Hu and Fan 1994), i.e. verbs that are also used as nouns without changes in semantic meaning (compare verbalizing use of nouns and adjectives in Chinese; see further Jing 1985, Wang 2007). This is illustrated in the following examples:

30) 请假 *qingjia* (ask for + leave/absence): ‘to ask for leave’; ‘n. leave, time off work’

公司 规定 请假_a 要 提前 申请, 可是部门经理觉

The company rules ask for a leave should in advance apply

得工作太多了, 就禁止员工请假, 这就 破坏了 公司的 请假_b 制度

This break company ‘off-work’ regulations
, 甚至会造成人才流失。(CCL: 应用文\人力资源规章)

The company has set rules that (staff members) should apply in advance if (they want to) **ask for leave**, but the manager sometimes refuses to approve of them or forbids them to do so, owing to an increased workload. This conflicting situation may result in disruption of ‘**off-work**’ regulations and even brain drain.

31) 请教 *qingjiao* (ask for + teach): ‘to consult’; ‘consultation’

a) 现在我又有了新问题, 不知 能否 继续 请教_a (CCL: 口语\对话)
don’t know whether continue consult

Now I have got new problems, so I am wondering whether I can continue to **consult** (you).

b) 在 一次次的 请教_b 无效、反受其累、大失所望之后,
after again and again consultation useless tiresome frustrated

他也曾产生过疑虑、抱怨以至愤懑。(CCL: 报刊\读书\vol-138)

After several useless **consultations** which let him frustrated and disappointed, he was anxious and depressed.

In examples 30) and 31), compounds *qingjia_a* and *qingjiao_a* are used as verbs to mean ‘to ask for leave’ and ‘to ask for someone’s advice (to consult someone)’; *qingjia_b* and *qingjiao_b* then have the syntactic properties of nouns, that are used to form NPs *qingjia zhidu* (N+N ‘off-work’ regulation) and *qingjiao wuxiao* (N+Adj).

consultation useless, i.e. ‘useless consultation’).

Besides, *qing*_{1/2/3}, as a transitive verb itself, can also be used as the main verb in the predicate of declarative sentences/utterances, followed by NPs (and/or other complements), as in the construction of ‘*qing*_{1/2/3} + NP + VP/clause/void’, shown in examples 32), 33), and 34):

- 32) 单位有辆废弃的破旧吉普，他们如获至宝，连忙请 人 帮忙 修了修
(*qing*₁) ask someone help fix
There was a discarded jeep in the garage. They were so thrilled and immediately asked someone to help them fix it. (CCL: newspaper 1994)
- 33) 那今天 我们 请来 这个 曲老师 和我们正本清源讲讲什么叫国学。
we (*qing*₂)invite this professor Qu
So, today we invite professor Qu to give a lecture of Chinese philosophy. (CCL: spoken/conversation by Liang Dong)
- 34) 寒暄过后，局长先生立刻说 晚上 请 我 吃饭...
night (*qing*₃)treat/offer me have dinner
After a short greeting, the director immediately offered me dinner that night. (CCL: newspaper 1993)

As the above examples show, the verb *qing* usually aligns an agent (*they*, *we* and *the director*) and a patient (*someone*, *professor Qu*, and *me*), and it is used to designate the reciprocal relationship between the two sides, i.e. ‘asking’ and ‘being asked’; ‘inviting’ and being invited’; ‘offering’ and ‘being offered’.

The fourth sense of *qing* is one of the most commonly used politeness formulae in contemporary Chinese, and it is this use which is the main focus of this study. It is usually used in imperative sentences/utterances, as shown in the couplet and anecdote mentioned before. The *CCD7* assigns *qing*₄ to the verb category, like the other three senses, and notes that it is usually used as a 敬辞 (*Jingci*: ‘expression of politeness/respect’), expressing a speaker’s wish for others to do something in a polite and respectful manner.

However, Chinese linguists have different views on this categorisation. For example, Lyu (1980: 339, 1999) classifies *qing*₄ as a verb, based on the syntactic property that it can take VPs as complements. Hu (1995) follows Lyu's categorisation in his edition of *Dictionary of Ancient and Contemporary Chinese (Xinbian Gujin Hanyu Dacidian)*. But Zhu (1982:37) points out that *qing*₄ is a 句子副词 'sentential adverb', because it is mostly used alone or in a sentence initial position which shows less attachment to the main clause, and serves primarily as a PM to achieve certain communicative goals. Additionally, through comparison between the uses of four senses of *qing*, it is evident that *qing*₄ has many other syntactic properties that differ from the other verb senses, as shown in sentences in i) and ii):

- | | |
|--|---|
| i. 你生病不请 ₂ 医生会很严重
*不请 ₄ 进 | If you <i>do not invite</i> a doctor when you get sick...
* <i>Not please</i> come in. |
| ii. 他请 ₁ 了三天假
*请 ₄ 坐了 | He <i>has asked</i> for a three-days leave.
* <i>Please took/have taken</i> a seat. |

In these examples, *qing*_{1/2/3} can be negated by adding an adverb 不 (*bu* 'no/not') while *qing*₄ can not. *qing*_{1/2/3} can also be modified by temporal adverbs like 了 (*le*, denoting past tense or perfective) whereas *qing*₄ can not.

The uses and the uncertain category of the politeness marker *qing*₄ echoes its counterpart in English, *please*, which has similar semantic meanings and pragmatic functions. *please* also shows politeness in a request, command, or agreement, and is usually used in imperatives, standing alone or collocating with VPs (the verb *please* and interjection *please* are not discussed here). Most dictionaries, including the *OED*, define *please* as an adverb used in a polite request or in an agreement to a previous offer. The BNC corpus tagset categorizes it as an isolate element that doesn't fit into any of the regular productive categories, i.e. in ITJ ('Interjection or other isolates'). Many other scholars of pragmatics would not give a definite word class, but use the term 'discourse marker' and the subclass 'politeness marker' (e.g. Murphy and De

Felice 2019:77). Therefore, in this thesis, following *OED* and Zhu's classification (1982:37), I will treat *qing*₄ as a 谦敬副词 (*Qian-jing Fuci*: 'modest adverb' in Chinese terminology) and *please* as an adverb at sentence level. I will also use the term politeness marker in the analysis of extracted texts as both *qing* and *please* can be used as functional words to express politeness in communicative contexts.

One of the basic uses of *qing*₄ is in imperatives, where *qing* is placed in a sentence-initial position, followed by a VP or a clause, which politely expresses one's requirement or hope that the other person will do something. As VPs or clauses after *qing* are themselves imperative, sentence meanings and functions are not changed by the presence or absence of *qing*, which is only a sign of respect, as is shown in examples 35) and 36):

35) 下午 2 时, 中苏文协将举行茶话会, 请 准时 到会...
please on time come

The Literary Association will hold a tea party at 2pm. **Please** come on time. (CCL: newspaper 1993)

36) 李嘉诚在裁减工人时表示: “请 大家 放心,”
please everyone feel relieved

Li Jiacheng says at the redundancy meeting: “**please** calm down, everyone, ...” (CCL: biography)

Example 35) is a short notice to require all the members of the association to attend the party on time, so the use of *qing* shows politeness and a sense of formality. In example 36), as the president of a company who is going to dismiss his staff, the speaker needs to calm down the crowd. So rather than just saying ‘be at ease/be relieved, people’, he uses the politeness marker to show his kindness and consideration, before offering his compensation or solution, which also has the function of mitigating the tension in this context.

*Qing*₄ is also commonly found in ancient and contemporary Chinese spoken contexts. In most situations, *qing*₄ is used on its own as a speech act, and can express various

implicatures, such as ‘this way please’, ‘please come’, ‘please eat’, ‘please drink’, etc., according to different conversational contexts. This specific usage is the main source of the borrowed item *chin-chin* and its pragmatic functions.

Examples 37) and 38) from CCL show how the speech act is used in daily conversations:

37) 伸右手斟了两大碗酒，说道：“请！”

He pours two bowls of liquor and says: “please!”

(CCL: literary works)

38) 开始吃的时候大家擎着筷子接连点筷头。“请！ 请！ 请！”互让首先下筷，显得很客气。

please please please

When the dinner starts, people hold their chopsticks and tap a few times in the air, saying to each other: “Please! Please! Please!” They are letting others start first to show politeness. (CCL: literary works)

Examples 37) and 38) are extracted from two famous literary works in China, and both depict groups of people dining together. *Qing* in 37) is a speech act and has the illocutionary function of asking the other interlocutor to drink the liquor, without saying explicitly 请喝酒(*qing hejiu*: ‘please drink the liquor’). Speakers in 38) say *qing* repeatedly alongside particular gestures, reflecting traditional Chinese table etiquette: one should always let others start to eat or drink first, especially in less casual situations or with less familiar people. Such table manners and use of the politeness marker *qing* can be frequently found in almost all banquet scenes in either ancient or modern Chinese culture.

Another situation where *qing* is commonly used is in traditional martial arts contests, and in other modern confrontational activities, such as chess games and dance battles. Before the contest begins, both sides say ‘qing’ to each other, usually together with a greeting gesture like holding their fists (left palm covering right fist), shaking hands, or stretching their arms. In such situations, the use of *qing* expresses the speaker’s

respect for his/her rivals and the sportsmanship in the game, as shown in example 39), extracted from a historical biography of one of the Emperors in ancient China (Yuan dynasty A.D.1279):

39) 吴华人也把剑丢下，说：“**请!**”便又拳过式，交上手了。

please

Wu Huaren throws away his sword and says: “**Please!**” Then he holds his fists and continues to fight with others with bare hands. (CCL: biography)

Here the speaker says *qing* before he starts to fight with the other soldiers to show his respect. The marker also functions as a speech act, indicating that the other person can start the fight now, as shortened from 请出招 (*qing chuzhao*, ‘please move/attack’) or 请赐教 (*qing cijiao*, ‘please show me your ability’).

Finally in some formal contexts, an address term can be added prior to *qing*, with an optional comma in between, as in the construction ‘void/NP (terms of addressee) + *qing*’. Note that although the NP occurs in a subject position, it is interpreted as the patient of the speech act *qing*, while the speaker is the agent. Examples 40) and 41) illustrate this use:

40) 证件验过，安保人员彬彬有礼：“大使先生，**请!**”

Mr Ambassador, please

The security guard checked his ID and then said politely: “**Mr Ambassador, please!**” (CCL: newspaper 1994)

41) 韩楚风哈哈一声大笑，做了个非常绅士的手势说：“**您 请! 您 请!**”

You please You please

Han Chufeng laughs out loud, gesticulating like a gentleman, and says: “**You (honorific pronoun) please! You please!**” (CCL: TV/movies)

According to the context, the conversation in example 40) occurs in a rather formal occasion where the speaker is talking to an ambassador, and politeness is one of the top priorities in diplomatic reception. So the use of *qing* here expresses his politeness and respect, and has the effect of telling him ‘come this way, please’. In example 41) the NP the politeness marker is preceded by an honorific pronoun in Chinese, which

already shows respect. The co-occurrence of both politeness markers sounds even more polite, and the repeated expressions have a stronger illocutionary force.

The CCL data shows that there are over 4000 occurrences where the politeness marker *qing* is used in imperative sentences, whereas the stand-alone *qing* occurs in fewer than 300 examples. However, this stark contrast doesn't accurately reflect use in contemporary Chinese, since CCL only contains 0.26% spoken texts, and 15% movie scripts and literary work texts which include speech-like material (see corpus information in section 3.1.2). *qing* used on its own as a speech act is therefore underrepresented, as it is mostly found in spoken language.

5.2.2. The borrowed item *chin-chin* in English

Compared to the interjections *aiyah* and *aiyoh* discussed above, *chin-chin* seems to be used more frequently, especially among BrE and AmE speakers. The *OED* presents the frequency rate of *chin-chin* as level 3 (0.01-0.099 per million words), which is among the most frequently used pragmatically borrowed items of Chinese origin in contemporary English (see section 3.1.1). By comparison, one of its counterparts in English, the interjection *cheers*, is at level 4 in frequency (0.1-0.99 per million words). In this section and the study which follows, I will examine the uses and functions of *chin-chin*, based on examples from corpora, dictionaries and social media data, and consider why it is borrowed and how it has become integrated.

5.2.2.1 *Chin-chin* in corpus data

The following examples are collected from BNC-S 2014, but some transcriptions are slightly simplified in this thesis. For instance, markers like '</u>' indicating unspecified speakers identity and '</unclear>' for unclear words are deleted to make the extract clearer; and some of irrelevant material in longer extracts is cut.

- 42) A: was quite a few of you playing?
B: yeah yeah it's was XX's twenty-first last night so

C: yeah it's better when there's a lot
 B: went out for a few
 A: yeah
 B: a few shandies
 A: on a school night?
 B: yeah, on a
 D: what are we
 A: **chin chin**
 D: are we celebrating?
 A: dad's off next week to Saudi... (BNC: SPOK *Farewell dinner with Reg* 2015)

The conversation in example 42) occurs when a group of speakers are chatting at a farewell dinner party. According to the co-texts, speakers A and C talk at first with speaker B about what he did the night before. Speaker D, a newcomer, joins them and asks 'what are we', probably short for 'what are we doing/discussing?'. However, his interruption stops speaker B from continuing to talk about his experiences last night. In this situation the interlocutors can either repeat what they have said to let him get involved, or ignore the interruption and change to another topic. Rather than talking about something which is not relevant to D, speaker A starts a new conversation and says 'chin chin' instead, which has the implicature that they are giving a toast for something. Speaker D therefore changes his question naturally to '(what) are we celebrating?', and learns they are celebrating 'dad's leaving'.

Materials in BNC-S 2014 show that the interjection *chin-chin* is used as a toast marker in nine results; one example is discussed below (example 47). In most conversations found in the corpus, *chin-chin* usually goes after (or together with) an English counterpart *cheers* said by the other interlocutors, as shown in examples 43) and 44):

43) A: a bit more?
 B: ... a bit more spaghetti carbonara thank you. a little do do thank you stop
 A: That was perfect timing
 B: Yes
 A: Cheers

B: **Chin chin** (BNC: SPOK *Unpacking new phones while abroad* 2015)

44) A: anyway here we go, cheers

B: alright cheers

A: mm

C: **chin chin**

B: nice to go to a good film that we could actually all sit through

C: yeah

A: yeah

B: and not complain

(BNC: SPOK *Friends discussing films and joining the Arts Picture House* 2014)

In both examples, *chin-chin* is used while toasting in response to another interjection *cheers*, which has the same meaning and function in such contexts. The reason for using the borrowed form may be to avoid repetition, as shown in example 45) where speaker A and B have already said *cheers* twice. Moreover, the interchangeable use of these expressions here also indicates that each speaker and addressee know what they mean, and that the borrowed item *chin-chin* is quite well-established among them.

Additionally, there is a category of DM, including *hm*, *yeah*, *right*, etc., which can be used in conversations without disrupting the conversation or violating politeness. They are termed as ‘continuer’ (see further Schegloff 1982, 1993, Young and Miller 2004)⁶⁰. The main pragmatic function of these particles is to help encourage the prior interlocutor to continue his turn. Interestingly, neither *chin-chin* nor *cheers* belong to this category of interjections which function to prompt a conversation; and yet when they are used during conversations, they do not interrupt the prior speaker’s turn too. Examples 45) and 46) are shown below:

45) A: ... you can pay a provider to supply the service

B: Cheers

A: or you can set it up so you’re gonna need the IT guy

⁶⁰ Some linguists use the sub-category term ‘backchannel’ for these words (Yngve 1970:568, and many others), and others use ‘receipt/reactive/acknowledgement token’ (e.g. Heritage 1984, Drummond and Hopper 1993, Clancy et al 1996, Gardner 2001)

C: Cheers everybody Yeah
B: Yeah
A: to do that
D: Cheers
A: but you just set it up **chin chin** all up on a separate thing
(BNC: SPOK *Lunch on holiday* 2014)

- 46) A: ...you just have to say what kind of conversations you were having like were you discussing explaining complaining arguing
B: Yes
C: um huh cheers
A: how many units is this? **Chin chin**
B: Congratulations.
A: Thank you... (BNC: SPOK *Friends chatting* 2012)

In example 45), while speaker A is talking about an IT related topic, his turn is ‘stopped’ several times by speaker B, C, and D’s saying ‘cheers’ and their acknowledging marker ‘yeah’, and his last utterance is also cut in between by his own toast marker ‘chin chin’. And similarly in 46), speaker A is telling her experience of being invited to a spoken corpus recording, and is interposed by speaker B and C by using continuers ‘yes’, ‘um huh’, and toast marker ‘cheers’. These examples show that although *chin-chin* and *cheers* don’t function as continuers to help progressing conversations, their occurrence is at least not a disruption of another interlocutor’s turn. Moreover, in situations like dinner parties where drinking is rather common, the interjections *chin-chin* and *cheers* are accompanying verbal signs while giving a toast, which carry no semantic meaning or function, and thus have little influence on the turn-taking pattern.

One occurrence of *chin-chin* is found in example 47), where it is not used simply as a toast marker. The conversation in this example takes place during a family gathering dinner party when the speaker is about to announce news about himself:

- 47) A: how do you make the ting ting ting?
B: just say a ting
A: **chin chin chin** attention please everybody attention on me I would like to let everybody know that the new Zanetti brand name from Giuseppe has now been passed

to me... (BNC: SPOK *Family eating* 2016)

As shown in the extract, speaker A asks B how to make the ‘ting’ sound, a common attention getting gesture, often at a banquet, which is accompanied by tapping the body of a champagne glass with a spoon (or a fork) to make a light, clinking sound. Figure 5.5 below shows this action:

Figure 5.5: Tapping against a wine glass and making ‘ting/ chin’ sound⁶¹.



In example 47), in order to seek attention so that he can announce the news at the dining table, *chin chin* is metonymically used to imitate the sound of clinking a glass, and as a sign of giving toast with a speech in this context. This example also provides a possible motivation for the borrowing of *chin-chin* as a toast marker: its pronunciation coincidentally resembles the sound of two glasses clinking.

A search in a larger corpus, COCA, also shows that *chin-chin* is used most frequently as a toast marker. However, there are a few extracts from movie scripts that indicate other usages of the borrowed item, as shown in examples 48) and 49):

48) “Eight years at Berlitz, that’s what you learn? He learned **chin** the first month and then **chin-chin**. Am I right?” (COCA: MOV *Leaving Las Vegas* 1995)

⁶¹ <https://google.com> Retrieved 05 Oct 2021

The plot of this extract is about a Hollywood screenwriter, Ben Sanderson, who is suffering from severe alcoholism and almost drinks himself to death in Las Vegas, and the above lines are said by his ‘savior’. In this example, *chin-chin* and *chin* are metaphorically used as nouns to denote the action of drinking. Moreover, as *chin-chin* is a repetition of *chin* in terms of word form, the pair of words are used correspondingly to emphasize the sense of an increase in quantity, so that the speaker expresses an implicature that ‘he learned to drink a little, and then to drink a lot’. Although this novel, rhetorical usage of *chin-chin* is unusual, and this is the only example in any of the corpora, it still shows how the borrowed item has become integrated into the RL.

49) A: I’m going home.

B: You’re not going to watch the parade?

A: No. I think I’ve had quite enough for one day, thank you. I will see you in the morning.

B: O.k. **Chin-chin**. Merry Christmas. (COCA: MOV *Miracle on 34th Street*)

Example 49) is also extracted from an American Christmas comedy script, where the use of *chin-chin* relates to one of the original senses/functions of Chinese *qing*, as a DM to express politeness while the interlocutor is about to leave/depart, with the implicit speech act of 请走吧(*qing zou ba* ‘go/leave please’). Here in this example, speaker A decides to leave B’s house and B walks him out, so by saying ‘chin-chin’, speaker B gives a polite farewell salutation, expressing the meaning ‘you just go this way, please’, or ‘goodbye’.

5.2.2.2. Chin-chin in Twitter data

In order to examine more recent uses of the borrowed item *chin-chin* in contemporary English, I choose Twitter as a supplementary social media data source. The daily occurrence of *chin-chin* in Twitter is about 150, excluding those found in users’ accounts or used with other senses (e.g. a type of fried cuisine; see Figure 5.6), and those with usages and meanings that cannot be determined from the context.

Figure 5.6: Example uses of ‘chin chin’ that are excluded in Twitter data⁶²

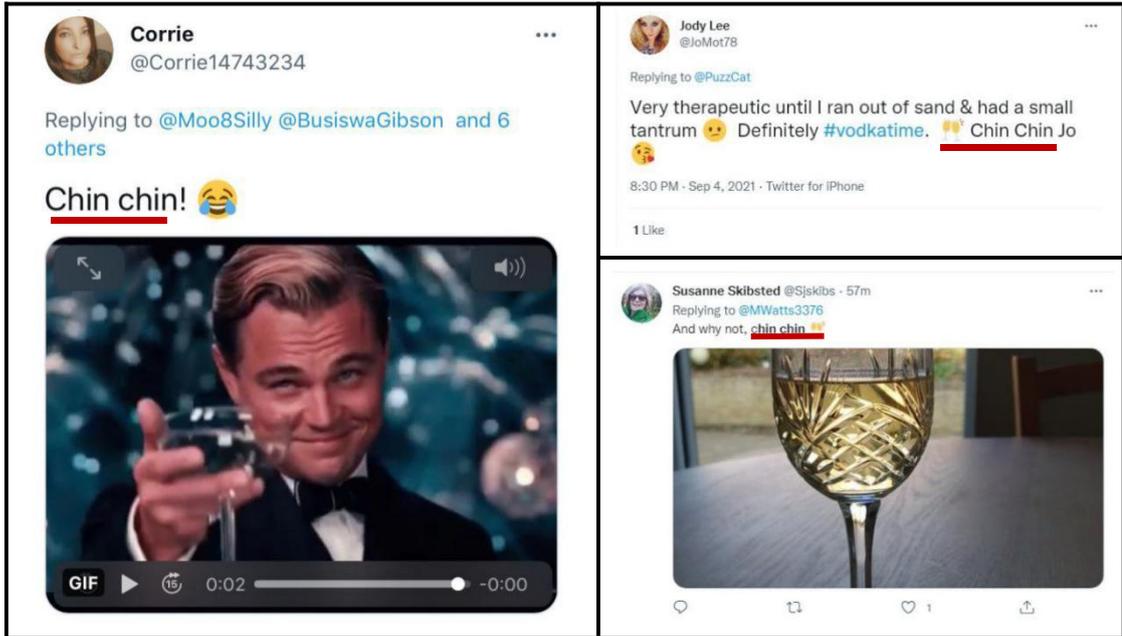


One of its counterparts in English, *cheers*, occurs more than 4500 times per day, although it is notable that *cheers* is also used with the sense of saying ‘thank you’ in BrE, resulting in a higher frequency. The ratio of frequencies is therefore slightly higher than the results in BNC-S 2014 (9 *chin-chin* v.s. 317 *cheers*).

Some of the tweets and conversations taking place online are not actually situated at dinner table or even in person, so that most of the results of the toast marker *chin-chin* are accompanied with motion graphs (GIF) and pictures of drinking, toasting, and wine-glasses-clinking, or with emojis signifying clinking glasses, as shown in the following screen shots in Figure 5.7:

⁶² <https://twitter.com> Retrieved 29 Sep 2021

Figure 5.7: Screen shots of the uses of ‘*chin-chin*’ in *twitter.com*⁶³



Interestingly, however, there are several examples found in *twitter.com* indicating that the toast marker *chin-chin* is used with other functions, as shown in the following quotations:

- 50) @kimberleyseddon: Dinner for one! [picture of a dinner set]
 @iusedtobeabat: Looking good. **Chin-chin!**
 (<https://twitter.com> 2021 retrieved Sep 4, 2021)
- 51) @mstewart_23: Leadership demands the ability to make tough decisions and unfortunately it's clear that @RangersFC lack any real leaders to deal with the problems they have.
 @LawTRICIA: What is your problem? Clearly there's something underlying...
 @BowfinAre: Still bitter that he couldn't make it as a footballer
 @1arfurfuxake: Really? What teams did you play for?
 @bazmccann79: Played for Man Utd, Hearts and Hibs, want to know anything else
 dick ask yir maw
 @rikkij57: Calm down **chin chin**
 @bazmccann79: No bother no face with no **chin**
 (<https://twitter.com> 2021 retrieved Sep 5, 2021)

In example 50), the first user posts a picture of her dinner, and the second posts a comment on this using *chin-chin*. Clearly, the second person is not drinking or giving

⁶³ <https://twitter.com> Retrieved 4 Sep 2021

a toast, so his *chin-chin* is used in a rather generalised sense to wish someone enjoyment of the food and drinks, like the politeness marker ‘bon appetit’. Example 51), on the other hand, shows another pragmatic function of *chin-chin*, shared with any other toast marker. In this comments list, all the users are discussing (or even quarreling) about a piece of tweet posted by a former football player. Here, the function of *chin chin* seems to be markedly different: it appears to be used to express the speaker’s intention to ease the tension among others, with the implicature of ‘let’s go for a drink and relax, guys’.

Owing to insufficient co-texts, the pragmatic meanings might be misinterpreted, example 51) here being a typical example, but it does show some more functions of *chin chin*, other than just a toast marker.

5.2.2.3. Other senses and uses of *chin-chin* in the *OED*

The modest adverb 请 *qing*₄ is therefore borrowed into English as an interjection and used mostly as a salutation or a toast marker, but the *OED* also includes an entry in which *chin-chin* is as a verb, derived through conversion within English. The verb form of *chin-chin* can be both transitive and intransitive, and it is used with tense/aspect inflections, such as *chin-chined* and *chin-chining*. There are two main senses and usages of the verb *chin chin*, according to the *OED*, following different patterns of borrowing and semantic changes.

The first verb usage of *chin-chin* is to denote the action of showing respect or expressing a request to someone who is usually superior to the speaker, by clasping both hands together in front of the chest while bowing or kneeling down, and saying *chin chin*. This usage is shown in the first attestations of the borrowed form *chin chin* in English, specifically in CPE, which is derived from the sense of *qing*₁ mentioned in section 5.2.1, ‘to request/ask/beg someone for something’. Two examples from the *OED* are presented below:

52) He **chin-chinned** and bowed, and said: ‘Good-day, gentlemen’ in French with an air of offering himself as our guide.

(From *Lands of Exile* Clara Bell tr. *Propos D’Exil* Pierre Loti, 1887-1888)

53) The boy found his master’s grave, produced from his sleeve the menu of the forthcoming dinner, **chin-chinned** his late master, and left the menu on the headstone.

(*T. P.’s & Cassell’s Weekly* 13 Mar 1926)

Example 52) is extracted from an autobiography written by the French Novelist Pierre Loti on his journey to Oriental islands in China’s offshore areas, and *chin-chin* is used as an intransitive verb here to designate the character’s gesture to express respect, so is ‘bow’. In 53), a quotation from a British magazine, *chin-chin* is used as a transitive verb, taking ‘his later master’ as object, denoting that ‘the boy was gesticulating respectfully to his master’s grave’.

However, this usage of verb *chin-chin* is rather outdated, as most quotations in the *OED* are dated back before the 20th century, and is not found in any contemporary corpora of English. As mentioned in section 4.4.1 of Chapter 4, *chin-chin*, similar to *kowtow*, is associated with traditional Chinese culture or customs, i.e. the social norm of kneeling down and bowing to people of higher rank/status; this is not a practice shared by speakers of the RL⁶⁴. Therefore, even though this verb sense of *chin-chin* is found in English, it has subsequently undergone meaning and function adaptation, and is now used to denote a respectful salutation (low frequency).

The second sense of the verb *chin-chin* denotes the action of giving a toast, clinking glasses, or saying ‘chin chin’ to someone before drinking, which is semantically related to the current well-established interjection *chin-chin*. The following quotations from *OED* show how it is used:

54) We ‘**chin-chinned**’ over foaming beakers. (*Cornhill Mag.* Sept. 268. 1892)

⁶⁴ See also (Kissinger 2011:64): the British ambassadors Macartney and Amherst were requested to ‘kowtow’ when meeting the emperors of Qing Dynasty, but they were not willing to do this, which was one of the earliest instances of cultural conflict between the two countries.

55) ‘Someone told me it’s illegal here for me to **chin-chin** with you if you’re drinking alcohol and I’m not... Ahh, to heck with it!’ We clink glasses.
(*Sydney Morning Herald* in *Nexis* 2000)

Example 54) is the earliest attestation for *chin-chin* used as a verb to designate the action of drinking and clinking beakers. But the verb is in quotation marks, indicating a new or unusual use which is not conventionalized. In 55) and other recent quotations (e.g. in other *OED* attestations), the verb *chin-chin* is not marked in this way, and is clearly more established in English.

The recent data on Twitter also proves that only the second sense of verb *chin-chin* is used by native English speakers today, although at a very low frequency (about under 5 tokens per year). *Chin-chin* in example 56) expresses the meaning of ‘I’ll be toasting you (to congratulate you)’:

56) @LamaHasan: Reply to @MaxFosterCNN @BBCSimonMcCoy and @mollymhunter
I wish but there are too many talented people heading your way, no room for little old me but I will be **chin chining** you from across the pond xx.
(<https://twitter.com> 2018 Retrieved Sep 5, 2021)

Examples like this show that, although the borrowed item *chin-chin* is not used frequently in its verb form, it is still established to some degree. RL speakers have therefore taken the initiative in syntactically and pragmatically adapting the borrowed item.

5.2.3. Summary

Through the preceding discussion and comparison of the uses of *qing* and *chin-chin* in both Chinese and English, the results show that:

- a. only the use of *chin-chin* as a toast marker, which is modeled on the use of *qing*₄, a Chinese politeness marker, is now widely used in English; the other verb uses of *qing*, although they have influenced the earliest borrowing of *chin-chin* in CPE, do not survive;
- b. the function of *qing*₄, occurring in a sentence-initial position with an

imperative, to express respect and politeness in requests, orders, or commands (similar as *please* in English) is also not found in the uses of *chin* or *chin-chin* in contemporary English;

- c. the second usage of *qing₄*, which is usually used solely as a politeness marker in Chinese to indicate various speech acts (and sometimes used repeatedly to express emphasis or urgency), also narrows in meaning and function so that it is only as a toast marker;
- d. among all the current pragmatic functions of *chin-chin* attested in English, its use as a toast marker is predominantly the most widely accepted, while other uses are either rare or outdated.

** It is notable that in this thesis the function of chin-chin to give toast is regarded as modeled on the use of 请 qing₄ as a politeness marker in Chinese, which undergoes meaning narrowing because of pragmatic adaptation. However, the role of transmission languages should also be considered in this case: the Chinese word was also borrowed into Italian (cin cin), which is widely accepted as a toast marker in contemporary uses, probably due to onomatopoeic reasons (see also Figure 5.5 and example 47). Therefore, the form of chin-chin clearly has a CPE origin whereas its function as a toast might also associate with the continental culture.*

Based on the above findings, the remainder of this section will analyse possible factors that motivate or constrain the acceptance and adaptation of the pragmatic functions of the borrowed item *chin-chin* in English.

Discussions in 5.2.2.3 show that the loss of the semantic meaning ‘to bow or to kneel down showing respect to the other’ of *chin-chin* possibly results from the cultural differences between Chinese and English-speaking countries when this CPE phrase was first brought to the RL by immigrants or merchants. Therefore, such usage was relatively marginal, only occurring in articles or other materials picturing Chinese culture or in contexts related to ancient Chinese feudalistic society, so it seems unsurprising that it has not survived.

The functions of giving respectful salutation and expressing requests are also either infrequent or lost when it is borrowed into English. This perhaps relates closely to the existence of its native counterpart in RL, *please*, which is the most commonly used politeness marker in English (e.g. Watts 2003, Murphy and De Felice 2019).

To illustrate, the *OED* presents a wide range of uses of *please*, obsolete or current, and involves all usages of the verb and its derived forms. Table 5.3 summarizes the most frequent ones:

Table 5.3: Main usages of English *please* (based on the *OED*)

Category	Meaning & Function	Example
Verb:	1. To be agreeable to; to gratify, satisfy, delight.	<i>His wiles pleased her.</i>
	2. To be pleased, to like; to have the will or desire; to have the inclination or disposition	<i>As you please</i> <i>If you please</i>
	3. In imperative use, to introduce a respectful request. ‘Please + to-infinitive’	<i>Would you please to open the door?</i>
Adverb	1. Derived from the third verb <i>please</i> . Used in polite request or agreement, or to add a polite emphasis or urgency	<i>Please take the bis out.</i> <i>Can you help me please?</i>
	2. To show politeness when accepting something	<i>Yes, please.</i>
Interjection	1. To express incredulity or exasperation, meaning ‘for goodness sake’	<i>Please, that’s not even a big deal!</i>

The senses and functions of *please* highlighted in the table in pink overlap with those of *qing₄*, and are very well-established among English speakers. It is reasonable to predict that native speakers would not prefer using a borrowed item, whose use is not well-accepted, to express these meanings in their daily conversations (see further Durkin 2014:41), except to stress a Chinese characteristic. The comparison of a highly frequent indigenous form and a less established borrowed items then explains why the borrowed form is unlikely to gain widespread use, and this seems to be shown in the corpora, where *chin-chin* as a polite salutation only occurs once in example 49).

5.3. Summary and implication: patterns of interjection borrowing

This chapter presents case studies of two types of interjections recorded in the *OED*

as Chinese borrowings in English, *aiyah/aiyoh*, and *chin-chin*. In terms of their forms, *chin chin* is formed by transliteration of Chinese phonemes with English elements by early adopters in the 17th century, and showing the duplication typical of CPE, whereas *aiyah* and *aiyoh* are based on modern Chinese *Pinyin* forms.

As the case studies discuss, the current status of these borrowed interjections and the extent to which they have integrated into English is very different. This shows that even within the same category, each pragmatically borrowed item follows a unique trajectory of adoption and integration, depending on the strategies of borrowing, the contexts where the RL speakers first encounter the word, and the motivations and constraints of their borrowing and integration into the RL. *Chin-chin*, as discussed in previous sections, has a long history in English dating back to CPE, and is now quite established in native English speech communities. Even though many of its pragmatic functions in the SL have been lost through pragmatic adaptation for various reasons (see section 5.2.3), its usage as a toast marker is relatively common in daily conversations.

In contrast, *aiyah* and *aiyoh* are much more recent borrowings: they are first included in the *OED* in 2016, which shows that they are institutionally acknowledged as Chinese borrowings. However, the current study has examined data from several sizable corpora of general international English and up-to-date online social media platforms which manifest the contemporary English use, and this suggests that they are not conventionalized in either BrE or AmE. Rather, both interjections are used restrictively among Chinese speakers of English, in China-related contexts, or within other Asian English communities, such as Singapore English and Malaysian English. The study also suggests that this is the result of the influence of the Chinese languages, including Mandarin, Hokkien, and Cantonese, on the languages spoken in South Asian countries, where multilingual communities are very common. Given the current status of these two items, I would argue that they have a slightly different status in AmE and BrE and in Asian Englishes. In my view they are most accurately

classified as ad hoc borrowings from Chinese in AmE and BrE, and as established borrowings in Asian Englishes. In previous research on lexical borrowing, the issue of language varieties and different speaker groups in the RL isn't discussed much, but here the case of *aiyah/aiyoh* shows that this topic is worth further investigation.

In addition, several linguists have argued that many words and expressions that are classified as established borrowings today started their life as nonce borrowings, or ad hoc borrowings (e.g. Myers-Scotton 2002, Thomason 2003, Matras 2009, Poplack 2018, Cook 2018), and these gradually became more widely used. This suggests the degree of acceptance of a linguistic item is dynamic, and there is a chance that these interjections might become more widely established among native speakers. Besides, one of the reasons why the *OED* records such restrictively-used interjections is perhaps to show the awareness of and attention to speakers of Asian English varieties and immigrants of Asian origins, and to recognize their contributions to the English language in the era of globalisation⁶⁵.

⁶⁵ Since 2018, the *OED* has been undergoing a major revision for its third edition. One key aim is to increase its coverage of other varieties of Englishes used outside of the UK and US, to acknowledge the diversity of English and the needs of its increasing global audience. See further <http://public.oed.com/world-englishes/>

Chapter 6

English Vocatives in Chinese

In Chapter 4, I discussed the way that political-commercial exchange and cultural contact contribute significantly to the borrowing of linguistic items, including interjections, PMs, and other words and expressions which have pragmatic meaning. The kind of pragmatically borrowed items discussed in Chapter 5, interjections, seem particularly easily adopted and borrowed during language contact because they are syntactically separate from their surrounding utterances, either in written or spoken language, and usually play a communicative role (for a further discussion on borrowability in literature, see section 2.6 of Chapter 2).

Another group of terms, vocatives, have similar features. Vocatives are often neglected in studies of pragmatic borrowing, because they are mainly used as forms of address, and in many (though not all) cases are treated as instances of code-switching or translation. For example, it is often the case in a multicultural context that interlocutors who come from different linguistic societies address each other by their names; or that a speaker from a bilingual society uses endearments like ‘hey bro’ to greet an English speaker and ‘嘿，哥们儿 (Hi, my friend)’ to greet a Chinese speaker, to show hospitality and intimacy. However, there are a few conspicuous cases in contemporary Chinese where the English vocatives adopted and frequently used within Chinese speech community are better regarded as pragmatic borrowings. In this chapter, I will examine the borrowing of these specific English vocatives and discuss their integration into Chinese.

The term *vocative* is not a category tag which is as clear as *noun*, *verb*, or *interjection*, so I will firstly begin by defining it from formal and functional perspectives, based on Leech (1999) and other scholars’ frameworks. Formally, vocatives are usually NPs, proper nouns or pronouns; there are other cases in which a vocative consists of

adjective phrases, showing the characteristics of the addressee. Vocatives occur initially, finally or medially as part of a C-unit (communicative unit), and can solely constitute a C-unit as a stand-alone element (1999:108). Functionally, vocatives serve to refer to the addressee of the utterance in which they occur, and play the role of summoning attention, showing identification, or establishing social relationships between the interlocutors (Biber et al 1999: 1112).

In English, according to Leech’s framework, there are at least 8 types of widely-used vocatives, listed in table 6.1 below:

Table 6.1: 8 types of vocatives (Leech 1999:110–111)

Types of vocative	Examples
Kin terms:	<i>mom, dad, mummy, daddy, grandma, granny, etc.</i>
Familiarizers:	<i>guys, bro, dude, buddy, mate, folks, etc.</i>
Endearments:	<i>dear, darling, baby, sweetie, love, etc.</i>
Full names:	<i>Cate Blanchett, Robert Downey, etc.</i>
Familiarized first names (often shortened or end with -ie or -y):	<i>Nat (short for Natalie), Jack/Jackie (Jacqueline), etc.</i>
Titles or surnames:	<i>Mister, Mr.X, Dr.X, etc.</i>
Honorifics:	<i>Sir, Madam, Ma’am, your Majesty, etc.</i>
Others (pronouns, APs, elaborate NPs, and compound vocatives):	<i>everyone, you, silly, Uncle John, those who break the laws, etc.</i>

Of these 8 types, full names and shortened nicknames, which are hardly ever borrowed across languages, only appear in the translated works of other languages. Admittedly, some names found in different languages are in similar forms but share the same origin, for example, male name *Paul* in English and the Italian name *Paolo* seem to derive from the same origin, Roman/Latin name *Paullus*⁶⁶. But such name modelling process seldom occurs between languages from remote families with very different naming systems, e.g. between Chinese and English, owing to their cultural-geographical boundaries and hence their different naming systems. Vocatives with complex constructions are also less likely to be borrowed; and those bearing

⁶⁶ See further *Paul* in *Wikipedia*, and in *Male & Female Names* (Igor Katsev 2013). Retrieved February 20, 2022.

cultural characteristics and slang-like items are usually regarded as examples of code-switching, for instance, the use of *bro* mentioned in the previous paragraph.

In the following study, I will investigate three types of vocatives, specifically the kin terms *mummy* and *daddy*, the honorific *sir*, and endearments *baby* and *darling*, and discuss their borrowing and integration into Chinese.

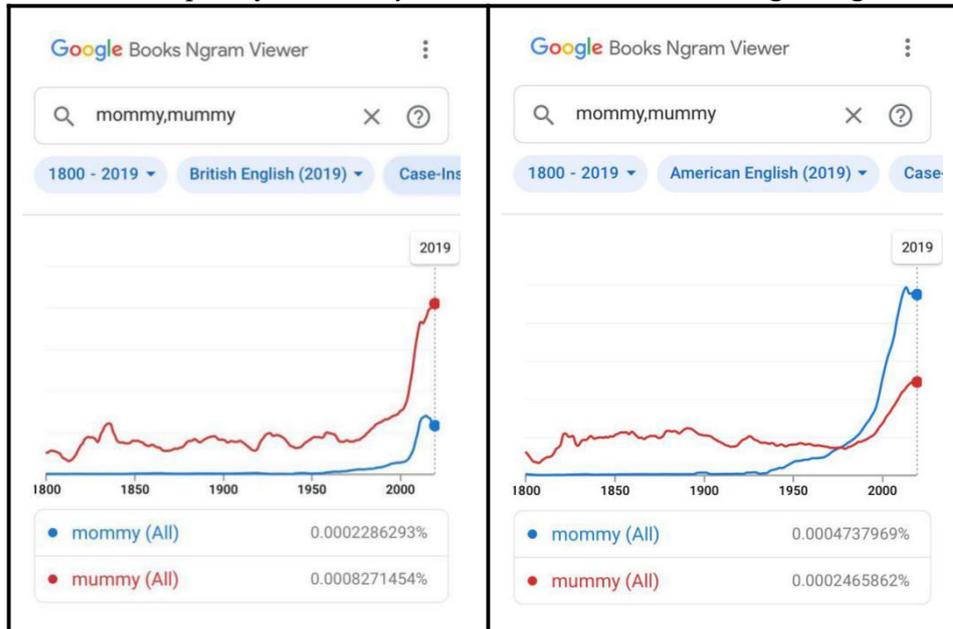
6.1. Case study III: Kin terms *mummy* and *daddy*

Mummy and *daddy*, the pair standing for ‘mother’ and ‘father’ showing intimacy, are the most common kin terms in English and are both borrowed from English into Chinese. However, they have totally different outcomes during their adaptation into the RL. In this section, I will study the use of *mummy* and *daddy* separately in both English and Chinese, and discuss the reason why there are such distinctions between them.

There are several forms of intimate address term for mother in English, such as *mummy*, *mommy*, and *mammy*, all of which only differentiate from the others slightly in pronunciation. *mammy* seems to be colloquial, obsolete or at least restricted to a few varieties, and not as widely accepted as the other two forms in AmE or BrE⁶⁷. *Mummy* and *mommy* are more commonly used across a range of varieties, with *mummy* more widely accepted in BrE, compared to *mommy* in AmE, according to the *OED*. Figure 6.1, a Google N-gram shows clearly that *mummy* is far more frequently used in BrE, while *mommy* is the more common spelling in contemporary AmE:

⁶⁷ According to the *OED*, *mammy* is often used offensively to refer to a black woman with responsibility for the care of white children; it is also thought to be a preferred pronunciation in other varieties, such as Irish English.

Figure 6.1: The frequency of *mummy* in BrE and AmE from Google N-gram



In this study, due to limited time and space, I only focus on *mummy* in BrE corpora, since both forms have similar functions and it is more manageable to deal with only one item with mass of examples.

6.1.1 Mummy in English.

The *OED* shows that *mummy* occurs most commonly in children's language as an equivalent to *mum*; its use by adults is sometimes indicative of a particular social or regional background; it is chiefly used as a form of address, or preceded by a possessive (as 'my *mummy*'); and it is also used without a possessive in the manner of a proper name. This suggests that *mummy* is more frequently used in speech, like other vocatives. In order to obtain evidence on the distribution and discourse functions of *mummy*, I use data from BNC and BNC 2014 spoken.

As show in the tables below, in BNC (96,134,547 tokens) and BNC spoken (10,495,185 tokens) materials, *mummy* is used as subject, object, complement of a preposition phrase in adverbial, and stands free as separate component of an utterance or sentence; it can occur together with other NPs linked by conjunctions; and finally it can occur in the possessive and can also be preceded by possessive

pronouns The frequency rates of *mummy* in the two corpora are respectively 24.49 and 55.64 (per million words), while 69.9% of total occurrences in BNC are found in its spoken material. This suggests that *mummy* is used predominantly in speech rather than in written language. I have counted the occurrences of *mummy* in each syntactic position, and have given the most common collocations as examples.

Table 6.2: The distribution of *mummy* in BNC (69.9% of total found in spoken)

POSITION	OCCURRENCE	PROPORTION	EXAMPLES OF COLLOCATION
<i>mummy</i> as subject	535	22.7%	<i>mummy wants, mummy</i>
<i>mummy</i> as object	460	19.5%	<i>tell mummy, ask mummy...</i>
<i>mummy</i> in prepositional phrases	202	8.6%	<i>with mummy, for mummy, from mummy...</i>
<i>mummy</i> stands alone	679	28.8%	Usually separated from the main clause with a punctuation.e.g. <i>Can I play outside, mummy?</i>
<i>mummy</i> in possessive case	78	3.3%	<i>Mummy's boy, mummy's birthday...</i>
<i>mummy</i> preceded by a possessive	187	7.9%	<i>my mummy.</i>
<i>mummy</i> and/or ...	267	11.3%	<i>mummy and daddy</i>
Total	2354	100%	/

Table 6.3: The distribution of *mummy* in BNC-S 2014

POSITION	OCCURRENCE	PROPORTION	EXAMPLES OF COLLOCATION
<i>mummy</i> as subject	99	16.9%	<i>mummy wants, mummy loves...</i>
<i>mummy</i> as object	118	20.2%	<i>tell mummy, ask mummy...</i>
<i>mummy</i> in prepositional phrases	47	8%	<i>To mummy, with mummy, from mummy...</i>
<i>mummy</i> stands alone	178	30.5%	Loosely attached to other elements.
<i>mummy</i> in possessive case	19	3.2%	<i>mummy's birthday</i>
<i>mummy</i> preceded by a possessive	42	7.2%	<i>your mummy</i>
<i>mummy</i> and/or ...	38	6.5%	<i>mummy and daddy</i>
Total	584	100%	/

Through cross comparison between Table 6.2 and 6.3, we can summarize that:

- a. *mummy* is frequently used as a stand-alone element, occurring in either initial, medial, or final position (more discussion on this part later) of an utterance or sentence, and this tendency is even clearer in spoken materials;
- b. *mummy* in NPs functioning as the subject and the object in an utterance or sentence are the second and third most common usage, and the object position is slightly more frequent in spoken language;
- c. even if *mummy* is used in NPs like a common noun, it is seldom accompanied by determiners, such as definite and indefinite articles, and yet it can still be determined by possessive pronouns, at a relatively lower frequency.

Generally speaking, the pragmatic functions of a vocative can be studied from the following four types of functions: denoting interpersonal relationships, managing conversation, presenting information and functioning illocutionary forces. After considering each of these, I will discuss the functions of *mummy* with examples extracted from the corpora.

A. Indicating interpersonal relationships

The most fundamental function of vocatives is their role of signaling the relationship between the interlocutors or between the speaker and the addressee. Almost all examples of *mummy* in the corpora have this function: *mummy* itself, as a kin term, literally shows a mother-child relation. With its -y suffix distinguished from *mum* or *mother*, *mummy* also indicates a closer and more intimate relationship between the speaker and the addressee, as in the examples below:

- 1) ... I know what you mean just less less to do for **mummy** ain't there? And alright well actually she doesn't have to make them... (BNC SPOK2014| *Family chatting over dinner on a weekend break* 2015)
- 2) I would give **mummy** a big birthday kiss she's gonna be fifty-eight this year wow getting old daddy 's going to be... (BNC SPOK2014| *Evening catch-up with housemate over preparing dinner* 2015)
- 3) ... next year it's your fiftieth. Oh yes, **mummy**, isn't it? Oh god yeah this year this year dad let's go to Bulgaria to celebrate it... (BNC SPOK2014| *Chatting over coffee* 2015)

When *mummy* is used as NP in the position of subject, object, or as complement of prepositional phrases, it rarely shows the pragmatic functions of other three aspects, simply indicating interpersonal relationships, as in examples 1), and 2). However, in example 3), where *mummy* stands alone and is loosely attached to the utterance, it has multiple pragmatic functions. This is a fairly typical case, and I will focus on similar examples below.

In spoken corpora, punctuation is usually assigned to the utterance subjectively, which makes it harder to distinguish the stand-alone elements in an utterance simply by identifying commas, question marks or full stop periods. But we can still infer from the content whether the single utterance is paused or continued by the vocatives. I therefore include those examples where *mummy* is syntactically isolated in a sentence, even if there is no punctuation to mark this.

Among all the occurrences of *mummy* in both corpora, the vocative is more frequently used in the final position of an utterance (about 55% of the total), which is around four times more than its use in the initial position (12%); the medial positioned *mummy* then accounts for approximately 9.5% of the total; and there are other occurrences where it is hard to tell the exact position, owing to different annotations of spoken data. Although the figures are only indicative, a basic pattern is evident and *mummy* is preferred in sentence-final position, where it is thought to have more pragmatic functions.

B. Conversational management functions

A vocative, as an inevitable component of conversations, usually has the role of maintaining successful communication. Conversational management functions usually include identifying someone as an addressee, getting the addressee's attention, and signaling a cue for turn-taking. When the vocative is placed at the end of an utterance, these functions are often combined. Take 4) and 5) as illustrations:

- 4) --...any back up power?
 --yeah
 --then why don't you just do this? [pause] **Mummy, mummy**, </unclear> could you hear it? (BNC SPOK2014| *Dinner conversation about fixing computer and warranty* 2015)
- 5) --Could we have the salt, **mummy**?
 --It's in the top right cupboard in a tall squirry thing not squirry grindy thing... (BNC SPOK2014| *ANON's home* 2016)

In example 4), *mummy* is in sentence initial position, while in 5), the speaker ends his question by addressing his 'mummy'. The content of the conversation suggests that speaker A in 4) is talking to B (Mummy) on the phone probably and B is suddenly offline because of low battery. Speaker A realizes this, and then tries to attract *mummy*'s attention by using the vocative repeatedly. Example 5) is a question and answer conversation, where speaker A uses the vocative *mummy* with a rising tone after a modal question, to ask for a response about where the salt is. Here the utterance-final vocative shows a combination of several pragmatic functions: 1. identifying the addressee; 2. attracting the addressee's attention; 3. indicating turn-taking by giving a positive response; 4. having the illocutionary force of asking the addressee to pass him the salt, (though here the addressee doesn't do so).

C. Information packaging function

Apart from making the communication progress smoothly, vocatives can also function to add emphasis, along with other information packaging devices, as shown in example 6):

- 6) --oh dear, dear, dear, you alright now?
 --I'm sorry, **mummy**, I had to rush us so much this morning it's just when we're in a rush we have to get to school on time... (BNC SPOK2014| *In Dad & ANON's house* 2014)

Hear, fronting is used as an information management strategy, by which *I'm sorry* is given the thematic prominence in this context, and followed by the vocative *mummy*.

After the vocative there is also a short pause while the speaker waits for the addressee's attention before giving his explanation. In general, this set of information packaging devices helps the speaker to show his guilt and to get this message through to the addressee.

In 7) the vocative is used to show that the speaker is listening to the addressee and as an affirmative response:

- 7) --What, has it got little things on the bottom?
--No. I said a dress and a the little trousers a underneath.
--Yeah.
--That's what I said.
--Yeah, **mummy** ... (BNC SPOK2014| A meal for father's birthday 2014)

Examples like this show another information packaging strategy, combining a response marker and a vocative to intensify the speaker's attentiveness. This is also a strategy to show positive politeness (Brown and Levinson 1987).

As the examples and analysis above show, the information packaging function is not accomplished solely by the vocative, but the use of the vocative contributes to a smooth conversation.

D. Illocutionary forces

The last pragmatic function of *mummy* relates to the theory of speech acts. In most cases, although vocatives seldom have actual semantic meaning, they can still be given illocutionary force. And because vocatives are directed toward an addressee, the speaker's intention is more easily conveyed. Examples are as follows:

- 8) --Have I got the longest? Who's got the shortest now? (A)
--Daddy has got the shortest! **Mummy**? (B)
--Is it me now? Can't be many left, can there? (C)
(BNC SPOK2014| *Dinner with Family* 2014)
- 9) --You had them.

--Well I use to have, but I threw them away cos you don't really need two .
--Oh **mummy**.
--Oh I'm sorry. I didn't know you were so interested in them. You hadn't looked at them.
(BNC SPOK2014| *A Chat in John Lewis* 2012)

In example 8), speakers A, B and C appear to be in a turn-taking game, and their conversation prompts the relevant player to take their turn. B answers A's question and then his turn is finished, so here he uses the vocative to manipulate the turn-taking pattern, and thus it has the illocutionary force of informing his mother that it is her turn to play. In example 9) the speaker conveys the strong attitudinal meaning of feeling annoyed and disappointed, as well as demanding an apology and explanation, by using this vocative only.

Vocatives are also commonly used with imperatives. As Biber et al. (1999: 144) point out, 'vocatives after imperatives are important because vocatives are used to single out the addressee of a message'. The structure of imperatives does not normally include a subject, but they implicitly refer to the addressee. Vocatives used before or after imperatives function to specify the person the imperative is directed to, and they can reinforce the illocutionary force of the imperative. However, whether the force is mitigated or strengthened depends on the choice of vocative forms, like the example below:

10) --that's been erm quite difficult, and as I said (A)
--**Mum!** Watch me! (C)
--I work. (A)
--But you can't take it to work. (B)
--I've got erm (A)
--Watch me **mummy!** (C)
--Shush! Ethical problems with, you know, there's some super patients I'd love to take it to... (A) (BNC SPOK2014| *Chat in the house* 2015)

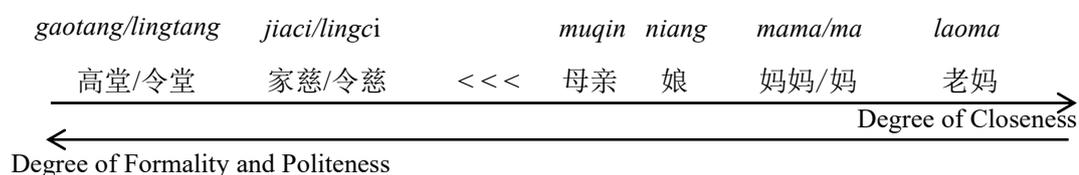
As mentioned several times before, *mummy* is a child-language-like vocative, indicating a rather close relationship between the interlocutors. So in example 10), while speaker A and B is having a conversation, the speaker C uses two different

vocatives in turn, *mum* and *mummy*, to attract his mother’s attention, or in other words, to distract his mother from talking to others. Regardless of politeness, the second imperative obviously has more power than the first one, when he shouts ‘watch me’ ahead of using a more intimate kin term, which seems to be conveying the attitude that ‘I am the more important one here’.

As the discussion above shows, *mummy* has several pragmatic functions in English, some depending on its distribution, and many uses combine these functions. As a borrowed item in Chinese, it shows slightly different functions. In 6.1.2, I present further data from Chinese corpora and discuss how *mummy* is borrowed and used in Chinese.

6.1.2 妈咪(*māmī*) in Chinese

There are a series of widely-accepted forms of addressee to refer to ‘mother’ in contemporary Chinese. The most frequent and common terms are listed as following, according to the degree of closeness and formality⁶⁸:



The *CCD* gives the information that *gaotang* and *jiaci*, *lingtang* and *lingci* are mostly used to refer to a ‘mother’ who is not present at the communication scene; the first pair means the speaker’s mother, while the latter pair refers to the addressee’s mother. These terms are more likely to be found in formal writing, like business letters and invitation letters, or on formal occasions, such as official meetings between strangers, and conversations between speakers who have unequal social status. Except for these four terms which signal a much higher degree of formality, the other five kin terms

⁶⁸ The kin terms listed here are the relatively common ones in contemporary Chinese. There are other forms used in restrictive context or dialects: for examples, ‘额娘(*eniang*)’ is used in a northern Man minority group in China; ‘阿娘(*a-niang*)’ and ‘娘亲(*niangqin*)’ in ancient or some colloquial contexts; and ‘先妣(*xianbi*)’ referring to the speaker’s mother who has passed away.

can be used with fewer restrictions, yet still indicate an increase of closeness from *muqin* to *laoma*, as the scale above shows. The frequencies of these kin terms in CCL are shown in Table 6.4 as follows:

Table 6.4. The occurrences of different kin terms for ‘mother’ in CCL Chinese corpus

<i>gaotang/lingtang</i>	<i>jiaci/lingci</i>	<i>muqin</i>	<i>niang</i>	<i>mama</i>	<i>ma</i>	<i>laoma</i>
197	34	38916	12501	21280	6277	228

As table 6.4 shows, the most frequently used kin terms are *muqin*, *niang*, and *mama*, while the more intimate term *ma* (a shortened variant of *mama*) is used less frequently. *Laoma* is used even more infrequently, and is used mostly on more private and casual occasions, with a sense of intimacy.

Chinese speakers therefore have a relatively wide choice from the most formal to the most casual terms, and in terms of the function of showing interpersonal relationships, *ma*, *laoma* and *mummy* have basically the same effect. Yet the English term *mummy* is still borrowed into Chinese and has specific functions that these native counterparts don’t have.

There are 257 occurrences of 妈咪 *mummy* in CCL. Note that the borrowed word *mummy* is represented with Chinese characters rather than a lettered word, and I will use either the *Pinyin* form *mami* or the English word in the following discussions for convenience. Although the frequency of the borrowed item is lower than the Chinese counterparts mentioned above, this is still a significant number, and its distribution and pragmatic functions merit attention.

Table 6.5 shows the possible positions where *mummy* can occur in sentences or spoken utterances. Compared to table 6.2 and table 6.3, it is surprising to find that *mummy* is far more frequently used as the subject of a sentence in Chinese than in English; conversely, there are only a few occurrences when *mummy* serves as the

object in Chinese. Apart from this, the stand-alone *mummy* is found to take up 32% of the total occurrences, which is the second most frequent usage, and this result is consistent with how *mummy* is used in English.

Table 6.5. The distribution of *mummy* in CCL

POSITION	OCCURRENCE	PROPORTION
<i>mummy</i> as subject	115	44.7%
<i>mummy</i> as object	10	3.9%
<i>mummy</i> in prepositional phrases	33	12.8%
<i>mummy</i> stands alone	82	32%
<i>mummy</i> in possessive case	12	4.7%
<i>mummy</i> preceded by a possessive	5	1.9%
<i>mummy</i> and/or ...	32	12.4%
Total	257	100%

Noting that *mummy* shows a remarkable preference for the position of subject in Chinese, I turn to look at *laoma* and see whether this is a common characteristic of Chinese vocatives. However, in the corpus there are only 49 sentences or utterances with *laoma* as the subject, and this is 21.6% of the total number of uses, which shows that apart from features of Chinese grammar, there are other reasons for this language phenomenon. One possible assumption might have to do with language users' subconsciousness: when the speaker chooses to use a borrowed item in an utterance, the element is usually marked and might therefore 'pop out' first in his mind. However, further research is needed to substantiate this claim, and the limited evidence in the corpus may not reflect wider usage.

Like *mummy* in English and other native vocatives, in Chinese *mummy* keeps its original pragmatic function of signaling interpersonal relationships. The subtle difference in terms of intimacy between using *mummy* and *laoma* is hard to measure; however, there is one feature that distinguishes *mummy* from its local counterparts. As already explained, *mummy* is often associated with child language, yet in Chinese

there is no word like this. So apart from indicating the addressee's identity, which is the mother of the speaker, the use of *mummy* is more child-like, and thus expresses more sentimental attachment. Example 11) gives a good illustration:

- 11) “爸爸！妈咪！”一声清脆的招呼，把宋氏夫妇从沉思的天涯拉回到阳光下的现实。宋蔼龄扑过来了，围着父母旋转、叫嚷，搂爸爸的脖子，贴 妈咪的 脸颊。

kiss mummy's cheek

“Dad! **Mummy!**” A dulcet calling aroused the Songs from deep meditation. Ailing run to her parents, dancing and laughing happily. She then gave her father a big hug and kissed her **mummy** on the cheek. (CCL: Biography *Biography of the Song's Family*)

In this scene, the speaker is described as child-like, and shows her happiness and deep love for her parents. Also, her attitudes towards ‘dad’ and ‘mummy’ perhaps indicate that the speaker is rather more intimate with her mother, and arguably this may be why she kisses her mother and only hugs her father. The vocative also shows the conversational function of getting the addressees’ attention.

Data from CCL also shows that in Chinese *mummy* has some functions which do not have equivalents in the SL data. The examples below give three different metaphorical and metonymic senses of *mummy* in Chinese:

- 12) 有些 药物 妈咪 服用 后，会对宝贝产生不良反应，有时甚至很严重，
Some medicine mummy take after
如引起病理性黄疸、紫绀、耳聋、肝肾功能损害。

Mummy's mistaking medicine may do harm to her baby, and sometimes the damage could be severe, such as causing pathological jaundice, cyanosis, deaf, and liver function lesion. (CCL: Web material C000013)

- 13) 公安机关在清扫统一行动中，发现一些“发廊”的卖淫活动，竟有“妈咪”（鸨婆）带领，
even ‘mummy’ lead
并有打手作控制和扯皮条。

The police officers have found series of illegal prostitution trade in this ‘saloon’, and they are even leaded by ‘**Mummy**’ (the procuress), as well as hatchet men who are in charge of soliciting and controlling. (CCL: Newspapers *Collection of 1994*)

- 14) 假村内，每 9 人组成一个临时家庭，选出“爹地”、“妈咪” 男女 混住一起，
select daddy mummy male female live together

上课时不停地握手和拥抱。

In this hotel, every group is formed of 9 staff, and they elect a ‘Daddy’ and a ‘**Mummy**’ and all live together. They practice shaking hands and hugging each other during the classes... (CCL: Newspapers *People’s Daily* 1998)

Example 12) shows the use of *mummy* to refer to those who are pregnant, emphasizing their current state of expecting a baby. This is the most common metonymic use of *mummy*, specifically naming pregnant women or women in their lactation period. Figure 6.2 below presents pictures of a famous chain store of maternity clothing in China, called *Shiyue Mami* (*Octmami*)⁶⁹:

Figure 6.2: Examples of *mami* used as a brand name denoting pregnant women



Such examples show the metonymic use of 妈咪 *mami* as a collective noun to refer to pregnant women in certain contexts, rather than used as a vocative as it was first encountered by Chinese speakers, and this special usage seems to be well-accepted in China. This is evident from the Chinese web corpus 2017 (13.5 billion tokens), which contains a larger quantity of online discourse from Chinese websites than CCL⁷⁰. In the total 72,804 occurrences of *mami*, 59,464 collocate with words relating to pregnancy, childbirth, and lactation, more than 80%. Correspondingly, *mummy* used to specifically refer to pregnant women is also found in BrE, especially in

⁶⁹ *Octmami* is actually a loan-blend translation of the Chinese name: *Shiyue* > October. However, in the original Chinese phrase, *Shiyue* doesn't mean the tenth month of the year, but refers to the ten-months' pregnancy.

⁷⁰ China Web 2017 (zhTenTen) is a corpus made up of texts of Chinese internet language, crawled by the *SpiderLing* web spider in 2017, consisting of materials from over 40 million web pages. See further <http://www.sketchengine.eu/zhtenten-chinese-corpus/>

medical settings when talking to doctors or pharmacists, but this type of usage does not overwhelmingly show up in the British web texts, as shown in the BrE data of the GloWbE. Therefore, the large proportion of such use in Chinese online discourse shows very clearly that the particular metonymic sense of the borrowed word *mummy*, referring to women in pregnancy related contexts, is much more established in Chinese than its other senses, especially on the internet.

In example 13) *mummy* is used with a metaphorical meaning, to refer to a woman who takes charge of procuring girls as prostitutes (English equivalent *madam*). Actually, the word ‘妈妈 *mama*’ was not commonly used as a term of address to refer to ‘mother’ in all varieties of Ancient Chinese (this usage is found in Wu dialect⁷¹), but referring to ‘aged or married women’ and also used as a byword of women who worked in brothels and theaters. Over the following centuries, as the social status of women has gradually improved and the trade of prostitution has lost legitimacy in China, the original meaning of *mama* has vanished, and the word is used only to refer to ‘mother’ in modern Chinese, also less formal than *muqin*. However, illegal, underground prostitution is still resurgent in some rural areas. As *mama* is no longer used to name these women, the borrowed item *mami* has taken over this metaphorical role. As an important addition, neither *mama* in ancient Chinese nor *mami* in contemporary Chinese have negative connotations here. They are the so-called ‘elegant names’, and it is a Chinese cultural tradition to give people who have vulgar or degrading works an ‘elegant name’, as do procurers (鸨 *bao* in Chinese).

Finally, *mummy* in example 14) has a relatively specialized usage, the original meaning of which is eliminated in this context, and it is used more like a name tag. According to the co-texts, people mentioned in this sentence are members of a multi-level marketing organisation (MLM), which usually has an extremely strict

⁷¹ 魏朝张揖《广雅·释亲》：妈，母也。（‘Ma, refers to mother’; quoted from *Guangya·Explaining Kinship*, edited by Zhang Ji, Wei Dynasty, around 220-589AD)

scheme, sometimes considered to be brainwashing, to force people to work for their boss. Here *daddy* and *mummy* are used to refer to group leaders. So although it is apparent that there is no blood relationship or kinship between the ‘mummy’, ‘daddy’, and other workers in this MLM organisation, the use of these two borrowed words are metaphorically used as a device to emphasize a close bond among members, and force them to work hard as a team for the so-called collective interests. However, this use only occurs once in the CCL data, which may not be regarded as an established function.

6.1.3 Comparing the borrowing of *mummy* and *daddy*: social constraints

mummy is therefore widely used and integrated in Chinese, and there appear to be specific reason why new senses and functions have emerged. *daddy* is also borrowed, but provides a marked contrast.

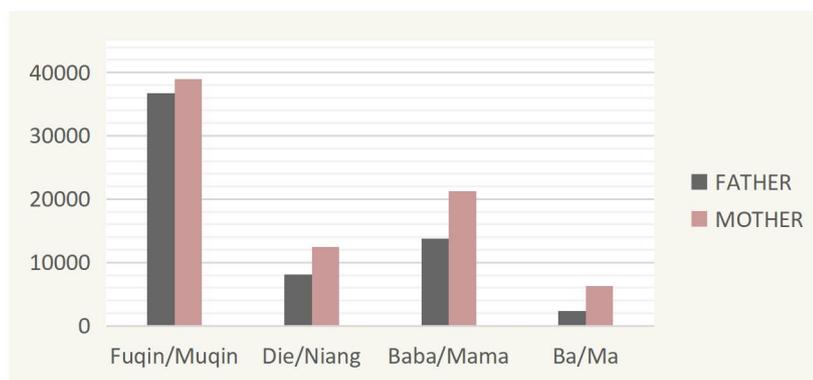
Like *mummy*, *daddy* also has a form in Chinese, 爹地 (*diēdì* or *diēdi*). However, in CCL, there are only 40 occurrences of 爹地, nearly all from translations of western novels or literary works about western culture. The only two examples that show integration into the RL are like the one in 14) where it occurs together with *mummy*.

To try to explain this phenomenon, I turn to look at the counterparts of *daddy* in Chinese. As with ‘mother’, there are a series of terms to refer to ‘father’, such as 父亲 *fuqin*, 爹 *die*, 爸爸 *baba*, and 爸 *ba*, and these terms vary in intimacy too, from *fuqin* to *ba*, just like the mother terms above. The frequency of each term in CCL is shown in Table 6.6, whereas Figure 6.3 (combining statistics of Table 6.4 and Table 6.6) presents a comparison of the frequencies of pairs of kin terms for ‘father’ and ‘mother’ in CCL corpus.

Table 6.6: The occurrences of different kin terms for ‘father’ in CCL

父亲 <i>fuqin</i>	爹 <i>die</i>	爸爸 <i>baba</i>	爸 <i>ba</i>	<i>daddy</i>
36766	8106	13811	2735	40

Figure 6.3: Comparison between kin terms of ‘mother’ and ‘father’ in Chinese corpus



Compared to terms for ‘mother’, ‘father’ terms are all much less frequently used than their counterparts, with the exception of the formal term *fuqin* which is of almost equal frequency with *muqin*. This result indicates that the casual and intimate use of ‘father’ kin terms is less preferred than ‘mother’ kin terms, which may partly explain why the borrowing of *daddy* appears to be restricted in Chinese.

Moreover, the marginal status of *daddy* might also be regarded as a possible outcome of the Chinese patriarchal tradition, where the image of the ‘father’ is always thought to be prestigious and respectable. Taking 11) again as an example, the girl presumably loves her father and mother equally, but she still doesn’t use the most intimate kin term to address her father. When looking back in CCL, ‘unbalanced’ matches are very typical, and may demonstrate an embedded cultural bias that prevents *daddy* from being widely accepted in Chinese as *mummy* does.

In summary, there are marked differences in the use of *mummy* and *daddy* in Chinese. *mummy* keeps its original pragmatic functions, including signaling interpersonal relationships and showing intimacy and affections; some of its functions have

developed to be more well-established in the RL, such as the metonymic use to refer to ‘a pregnant woman’. It has also developed new functions, such as designating ‘a procuress’ and ‘a leader of a specific community’, although they are less common in the corpus. By contrast, the borrowing of *daddy* seems not to be common, and it is less established and integrated in Chinese than *mummy*. It may be that this is because of Chinese patriarchal tradition. In the following sections of this chapter, I will look at other types of vocatives and observe their trajectories of borrowing and integration.

6.2. Case study IV: Borrowing of honorific *sir*

Honorific address terms are used to show respect for the addressees. English is thought to have fewer honorific terms than other European languages (Brown and Gilman 1960), for instance in terms of pronouns. In many other languages the second person pronoun has two forms (*vous* and *tu* in French, *Sie* and *du* in German, *usted* and *tú* in Spanish), indicating differences in formality and in the social status of the interlocutors. There are similar pairs in Asian cultures, including Chinese, which will be discussed further below. This distinction also existed in Early Modern English centuries ago (*you* and *thou*), signaling a difference in power. In old English, *thou* is used as a second person singular pronoun and *you* as second person plural. By the 13th century, however, people began to employ *you* as a singular pronoun to convey politeness or formality. In Shakespeare’s works for example, *you* is used to show respect, especially in public settings, or to indicate a distant or cold emotional register; while *thou* is used to address social inferiors or to indicate friendship and intimacy (e.g. Walker 2007, Buyle and De Smet 2018).

In Modern English, the most commonly used honorific terms are ‘Sir’ and ‘Madam’, titles such as ‘Mr.’ and ‘Mrs.’, words used to refer to nobles like ‘Lord’ and ‘Majesty’, and rank and professional titles such as ‘President’, ‘Captain’, ‘Dr.’, ‘Professor’, etc. Among all honorifics in English, *sir* is the only term borrowed into Chinese. So in this section, I will mainly focus on the use of *sir* in English and its

integration in Chinese, as well as presenting some contrastive analysis of several Chinese honorific terms.

6.2.1 *The use of Sir in English*

According to the entry in the *OED*, there are four main functions of *sir* in Modern English, as summarized below⁷²:

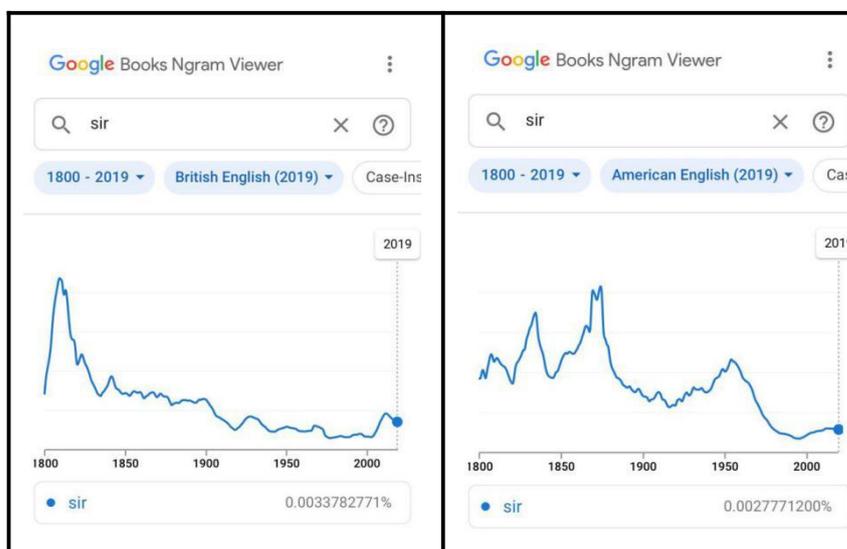
- a. Placed before a personal name to form a title of honour of a knight or a baronet. Or applied retrospectively to notable personages of ancient, esp. sacred or classical, history.
- b. As a respectful term of address, and related uses: 1. Used as a respectful term of address to a superior; 2. currently also used to address people with equal power; 3. used by schoolchildren in addressing a teacher; 4. used in formal occasions to address the Speaker of a legislative assembly; etc.
- c. Used with scornful, contemptuous, indignant, or defiant force. (Also *Sirrah*: used to address men, expressing contempt, or assumption of authority on the speaker; sometimes employed less seriously in addressing children.)
- d. In *yes, sir*, used as an emphatic assertion.

sir is generally used in formal situations, and apart from being used as a title, it is more often found on occasions where the addressee's name is unknown to the speaker, or the interlocutors are not acquainted with each other. *sir* is also frequently used in service industries as an address form, such as in hotels, restaurants, and many other places that involve staff-customer relationships.

It is notable that there are some differences between the use of *sir* in BrE and AmE, especially from the end of the 19th Century to the first half of 20th Century, when *sir* is far more frequent in AmE than in BrE, shown in Figure 6.4 below. But all the usages and functions of *sir* listed by the *OED* can be found in both varieties, and the preference of using the honorific seems to vary individually (even within the language community).

⁷² Some archaic uses like 'attaching to catholic names' are not listed here because the most recent quotation is earlier than the 19th Century, thus they predate the borrowing of the term into Chinese and are irrelevant to this study

Figure 6.4: Frequency of *sir* in BrE and AmE on Google N-gram



Since this is not a diachronic study of BrE and AmE, and I study the use of *sir* in English to compare how it is borrowed and used in Chinese, I will only use materials from BrE in the following discussions. The data is more manageable in the BNC, so the functions of *sir* listed above will be illustrated with examples extracted from the BNC.

Example 15) shows how *Sir* is used as honorific address term of a person of higher social status, i.e. a member of the nobility:

- 15) **Sir** William Ross, you're an MP for East Londonderry... erm internment is something that you believe in. (BNC: *Central Weekend Live*)

This conversation takes place at an interview and the addressee is a local MP, who is, in this situation, socially superior to the speaker. So, *Sir* here is an official title which is also a symbol of the addressee's nobility and is used to express respect and formality. By contrast, in 16), the superiority of the addressee is not overtly stated in the context, but can be inferred by the use of *sir*.

- 16) "... that's like in business when he deleted all my work in year and I literally cried, I was like crying, I was like 'no please **sir!** please don't delete it. I never redid it'...

(BNC SPOK2014| *Friends discussing 2015*)

Here, the speaker is crying and begging the addressee urgently not to delete her work, and in this situation, using imperative mood and *sir*, she appears to be inferior to the addressee who has more power. Compared to 15), *sir* here in 16) isn't used for someone who officially has that title, but just to show respect.

In example 17), *sir* is found to be used in two different ways:

- 17) In his classroom, Mr Trotter was taking the role. "Simon." "Yes." "Peter." "Here **sir**." "David." "David," Mr Trotter repeated. "Here piggy," David answered. "Did you say what I thought you said?" Mr Trotter fumed. "How dare you," he continued, "Get yourself into the headmaster's office, now." "Yes **sir**" David calmly answered, rising from his seat and walking across the cold classroom. (BNC [essays] 2481 s-units)

The first *sir* spoken by Peter is a respectful way of addressing his teacher, and the usual way in this context. But the latter given by David shows deeper defiance, according to the co-text where he has ignored the first roll-calling and then addresses his teacher *piggy* with impolite manner. This shows that the honorific *sir* can be used impolitely to achieve a sarcastic force.

Similarly in 18) below, the context suggests that Christina responds with a mock salute *yessir*, which is a compound variant of *yes, sir*, to express her discontent with the man she addresses because she feels he is being rude to her by giving her orders.

- 18) He didn't even say hello, merely demanded, 'Give Victor a shout, Christina. I could use a strong vodka and tonic.' '**Yessir**.' Standing to attention, she gave him a mock salute. It was done to antagonize, not to amuse. He frowned. 'What's wrong with you these days, Chrissy?' (BNC *Platinum Coast* 3487 s-units)

Example 19) and 20) show the most common usage of *sir*, which is to address men whose names are unknown in a respectful way:

- 19) The colonel introduced him to the Doctor. “And your name, **sir**?” the colonel asked. “William Blake.” (BNC: *The Pit* 4346 s-units)
- 20) Dear **Sir** /Madam I am in receipt of your letter of and have to advise you that I have searched my records from to and can find no trace of a divorce between and during that period in the Court of Session. (BNC *A Guide to the New Simplified Divorce*)

Although examples like 20) seems to be more of a formulaic usage in formal correspondence where *sir* being used as appellation at the beginning of a letter, it still indicates an unidentified or unspecified addressee, whereas in other cases the name of the addressee would be clearly written. Such usage is globally conventional in formal correspondence contexts. Additionally, in the situations like 19) and 20), the two interlocutors may not differ in power or superiority, and the honorific *sir* only serves to signal mutual respect and formality.

6.2.2 *The use of Sir in Chinese.*

The pragmatic adaptation of *sir* in Chinese turns out to be surprising in several respects. Firstly, the form of the borrowed item remains the same as in English, unlike other borrowings which are usually transliterated into Chinese characters, yet it is still well integrated into Chinese. Secondly, compared to its usage in English, the address term indicates closeness rather than formality in Chinese. And finally, *sir* loses its basic pragmatic function as an honorific which shows respect, and is used more often in a casual or even sarcastic way.

In CCL there are only 90 occurrences of *sir*. 47 of these are used as official title to quote the work or speech of an author or a scholar, as in:

- 21) 乔健教授给我寄来了一本书：Sir Edmund Leech 写的 Social Anthropology。

Professor Qiaojian sent me a book called Social Anthropology written by **Sir** Edmund Leech. (CCL: *Newspapers Reading 109*)

Other uses of *sir* mainly occur in translated literary works or conversations in a bilingual setting where the examples are not suitable for the study of borrowing. For

example:

- 22) 他想试试外国人能否听懂自己的英语,便鼓起勇气大声问: ‘Where are you going, sir?’
(您去哪儿?) ‘Great wall hall.’

He wanted to know whether that foreigner could understand him speaking English, so he pluck up and asked loudly: ‘where are you going **sir**?’... (CCL: Newspapers 2001)

The lack of data in this corpus may relate to the nature of the material, which is mainly collected from newspapers (over 70%). These are the text types that are characterized to be factual. So the conversation in 22), taking place in English in a conversation between a Chinese speaker and an English speaker, is directly quoted here, and ‘where are you going, sir’ can only be regarded as happening in the context of code-switching, rather than borrowing.

The only occurrence of *sir* which is relevant to this study is 23) below, quoted from a famous literary work which has also been adapted into a drama:

- 23) “你的意思，我们家翻个底朝天就这两万存款?”
“Yes, Sir”
“那还差 10 万啊!”
“两条路：要么叫你爸妈找他们七大姑八大姨再凑，要么放弃。”
“没有第三条路了?” 亚平坏笑着用手去探丽鹃的胸。
- A: So you mean that we’ve only got 20 thousands now?
B: **Yes, Sir.**
A: But we still need 100 thousands!
B: There’s two solutions: either borrow from your parents or give up...
A: No third way? (A laughed and reached for B’s breasts)
- (CCL: Literary works *Double Side Tape*)

This conversation happens between a young couple who are short of money and they are in a very intimate relationship, according to the paragraph following where A starts to flirt with B to change the topic. So, *Yes, sir* here, does not function to give an emphatic response as in formal occasions, but only to respond in an upset tone

together with a little coquetry to the speaker's husband /boyfriend.

Because CCL lacks data on the use of *sir* in contemporary Chinese, I turn to BCC and social media data source like *Weibo*. In BCC, rather than being used to address any unknown male, *sir* is mostly used to refer to policemen, and is a more casual and informal title than 警官 (*jingguan*: officer) or 老师 (*laoshi*: teacher/experienced person). It is usually placed after the family name, and sometimes Chinese speakers use the prefix 阿 (*A/ Ah*) to replace the family names to express rather more attitudinal meaning, including intimacy and admiration. *A/ Ah* itself is commonly used as a morpheme in nicknames to show closeness, for example 阿娇 (*A-Jiao*) is the nickname of the famous actress Xintong Zhong. 24) and 25) illustrate these uses:

24) 张 *sir* 用 一系列 针对 老年人的 诈骗案例向长者们讲解

Zhang-sir use series of targeting the elderly fraud cases

相关的防骗知识, 轻松幽默的语言引得老人捧腹大笑。 (BCC: Weibo)

Zhang-Sir uses series of fraud cases towards seniors to teach the old men how to avoid being tricked. They are amused by his humorous speech and laugh all the time.

25) 从最初的治安警到如今的社区民警, 5年来, 他兢兢业业、恪尽职守, 成了市民交口称赞的暖心“阿 *sir*”。 (BCC: Weibo)

From a security guard to a policeman, he has always been working hard and devoted to his people for more than 5 years. And now he is so nice that the citizens all like him and praise him as warm-hearted “**A-Sir**”.

In both 24) and 25) *Sir* is used to refer to a police officer. Both examples indicate a close bond between officers and citizens, but we can still distinguish that the policeman in 25) who is called *A-Sir* is more affectionately regarded by the citizens.

There is another interesting usage of *sir* in BCC, where the borrowed vocative is used to self-address the speaker:

26) 阿 *sir* 发现 有些 小伙伴 帐号 被封禁、 屏蔽

A-sir found some people account [passive] ban block

或帖子被删后, 不知道自己为什么被处罚, 那么此帖是为了更多小伙伴们了解到贴吧

的规则，更好营造贴吧和谐的社区氛围。(BCC: blog)

A-sir has found that many of our friends don't know why their IDs are banned or why their posts are blocked or deleted, so I am writing this notice for more friends to know the rules of our forum and to build a more harmonious community.

This is an extract from a post written by an administrator of a forum towards all the members in this forum. So *sir* here has the function to emphasize the speaker's position and his duty to set the rules, and by adding 阿 *A/Ah* to serve as the subject makes his words less 'bureaucratic' and expresses friendliness.

In addition, social media data shows that *sir* is becoming more integrated into Chinese, especially in informal contexts. A typical example is the newly formed expression '不是吧阿 Sir (*Bushi ba, A-sir*)' which usually means 'no way!', 'seriously?', or 'that can't be possible!', but indicates sarcasm. As the picture memes in Figure 6.5 below show, people who use this slang are often expressing sarcastic feelings, such as worry, scorn, indignation, skepticism, or incredulity, as indicated by the facial expressions of the comic characters:

Figure 6.5: Internet memes of '*Bushi ba, A-sir*'⁷³



The caption in each case consists of two parts: a negative exclamation, and the vocative *Sir* together with the intimate morpheme *A/Ah*. This expression can be used either at the beginning or the end of a sentence or utterance. Moreover, what makes it

⁷³ Memes retrieved from *weibo.com* Accessed February 9, 2022.

interesting is that *A-Sir* in this kind of context can be used to refer to anyone the speaker is disappointed in, or anything that makes the speaker upset; sometimes there is no addressee, so it functions just like an interjection. This is further illustrated in examples 27) to 30).

This use of the slang expression *Bushi ba, A-sir* is a rather new item which does not feature in the corpora. The earliest instance of its use in *Weibo* was in the October of 2018, and it wasn't frequently used until the beginning of 2020 (with only 6 occurrences throughout the year 2019).

Figure.6.6: The Total Occurrences of 'Bushi ba, A-Sir' in *Weibo* Data (monthly)



Figure 6.6 shows a dramatic growth in the popularity of *Bushi ba, A-Sir* from February 2020 onwards, rising from 42 occurrences a month to 749 a month in May. Its frequency remains steady during the summer and then rises further from August and reaches the peak (980 occurrences) in October. By 20 November 2020, the total occurrence of *Bushi ba, A-Sir* has passed 1000. These results are only acquired from one social media source, *Sina Weibo*, but the expression is also found on other internet platforms and in daily spoken materials, which show how it is trending currently. The following examples 27) and 28) are quoted from two *Weibo* users:

27) 这个点儿了，别的女生在朋友圈里发婆婆做的爱心宵夜，我还在电脑前一边掐着人中 一边 回复 工作 信息， 不是吧，阿 sir 😊 (@Phoebew-)

while reply work message no way, a-sir

At this time in the evening, other girls are posting night snacks made by their loving mother, while I am still reading and replying business emails. **No way, a-sir.**

28) 不是吧, 阿 sir, 我不想生病啊!! (@红茶玛奇朵限定璇璇)

No, a-sir, I really don't want to be sick!!

In example 27), the speaker is complaining about working late at night, compared to her friends who have plenty of leisure time and are well looked after by their mothers. So here she uses the expression, along with a smiling emoji, which usually indicates a fake smile among younger generations in China, to express her frustration about her current status and to show slight anger. Here, *sir* is used to refer to the situation. In 28), the speaker starts with *bushi ba, a-sir* to strengthen her emotion and expresses her fear of getting sick, and the expression here has no addressing function, but is only used to express her worry.

It is also worth noticing that since the structure *bushi ba, a-sir* has become more and more frequently used in Chinese, several variants have emerged which indicate similar meanings, but which can express more specific emotions and can be adapted to wider occasions. Similar structures include 不至于吧 (*bu zhiyu ba*) indicating incredulity 'it's not necessary that...', or 不要这样吧 (*buyao zheyang ba*) meaning refusal 'don't do that'; all these expressions can collocate with *A-sir* to add a sarcastic meaning. This again suggests that the number of total occurrences of all structures similar to *bushi ba, a-sir* in Figure 6.5 is significantly higher. Examples are given in 29) and 30):

29) #圣代被剪# 难道就因为为女性发声? 不至于吧 阿 sir! (@仙草 Whisky)

not necessary a-sir

Hashtag#Shengdai being deleted# Is all this because they speak for women? **How can it be? A-sir!**

30) 不要 这样 对 我吧, 阿 sir, 20 连就这? (@園田菌)

Don't like this against me a-sir

Don't treat me like this, a-sir, I have played 20 rounds to only get this?

Example 29) is an angry accusation to a TV programme which the speaker alleges has deleted all the scenes of the guests mentioned, because they support feminism (probably). The speaker then expresses her indignation and indicates that the producer (or director) has acted unreasonably, by saying ‘*Buzhiyu ba, A-Sir*’. In 30), ‘*Buyao zheyang dui wo ba, A-Sir*’ is a complaint about a disappointing result after 20 rounds of a mobile game.

As a catchphrase which has emerged on the internet, it may be that this example will be short-lived. Xia (2012: 92) notes that catchwords have limited lifespans and are usually specific to a particular time; their novelty results in popularity, but once the novelty of a catchword has decreased, it will probably become extinct. The lifespans of catchwords may vary case by case, according to the nature of online catch expressions given by Duan (2017:140–141), and each item will go through the stages of emergence – development – erosion & extinction. During these stages, further catchwords may be formed, which imitate the style of the existing one, perhaps due to crowd psychology⁷⁴, i.e. individuals imitate or replicate communal behaviour; and examples 29) and 30) seem to show this kind of process. This is called the flourishing stage (ibid.), and this process will lengthen the lifespan of the catchword, as well as help maximizing its pragmatic functions. We do not know how long expressions like ‘*bushi ba, a-sir*’ will remain frequent in Chinese, and its contexts of use are rather limited. But it is still reasonable to say that even if *sir* has lost many of its basic functions during its pragmatic adaptation, it is used with new senses and functions and is well-integrated into Chinese, especially online discourse, at this flourishing stage. Therefore in the next section, I turn to analyse some possible factors that result in this phenomenon.

6.2.3 Constraint and motivations: *sir* and its counterparts in the RL

⁷⁴ Crowd psychology (crowd behaviour, mob psychology): it refers to the theories explaining the interactions between the crowd and the individuals within it (e.g. Gustave Le Bon 2007). https://wiki.dcldesign.co.uk/wiki/Crowd_psychology
See also ‘group psychology’ (Freud Sigmund 1921)

In ancient China, the social structure is basically hierarchical in nature, and Confucian philosophy is regarded as a set of mainstream values which have dominated throughout history. These values are still very influential in shaping the ethics of Chinese people. One of its most important concepts ‘Li’ (礼: meaning social norms) sets almost all the norms or rules for every social member to behave appropriately according to his or her position, which results in an orientation of mutual respect, politeness, and love in modern Chinese society.

Accordingly, in terms of interpersonal relationships, authority and power are highly valued in daily interactions. In China, power relates to characteristics such as age, education, social class, social positions, ranks and family relations (Hao and Chi 2013: 38). Correspondingly, there are various ways in Chinese to indicate power and to show respect between interlocutors, from single terms to features at discourse level, such as intonation, style, and the use of idioms. Owing to these different options, it seems less necessary to borrow honorific terms from other languages, and this accounts for the only borrowed term *sir* losing most of its functions and being used in a restrictive way.

Common indigenous honorific terms in Chinese behave in particular ways. First of all, *Lao* (literally meaning ‘old’) can be suffixed to the addressee’s surname, as a shortened form of *Laorenjia* (elderly person) or *Laoxiansheng* (those who are knowledgeable in a certain area), to show respect for the addressee, as seniority has some prestige in Chinese culture. For example, an elderly person whose family name is Liu is usually called ‘*LiuLao*’ by those who respect him as a senior or authority figure. There are other honorific terms used with or without surnames, such as *Xiansheng* (Sir/Mr.)⁷⁵, *Furen* (Madam/Mrs.), *Laoshi* (refer to teachers, or those who are experienced in some fields), and *Gexia* (refer to those who are superior in

⁷⁵ Note that in formal contexts, *Xiansheng* can also be applied to respectable and learned scholars in research fields, both male and female, for example, ‘Qian Zhongshu *Xianshen*’ (a famous writer and scholar in China), and ‘Yangjiang *Xiansheng*’ (Qian’s wife, who is also a famous researcher, translator, and professor).

political status; formal).

Chinese honorific expressions are also found at discourse level, and there are usually several elements functioning together, including honorific pronouns like 您 *nin* ‘you’, expressions with embedded honorific meanings, imperative mood, and even non-lexical factors such as intonation, rate of speech, and pause. An example of this co-occurrence of features is given in 31):

31) 楚王看他身边带着剑，又听他说话那股狠劲儿，有点害怕起来，就换了和气的脸色对他说：“那 您 有 什么 高见， 请 说吧。”

Well you have what kind suggestions please say

Noticing that the man was armed with a sword, Chu felt a little frightened and asked in an friendly tone: “do **you** have some **kind suggestions**? **Please**.”

(CCL: *China History About 5000 Years*)

The description of Chu’s thoughts and emotions before his words reveal that he is currently in an inferior situation to the other person in terms of ‘power’. The honorific function here is achieved by several factors at discourse level, including a friendly tone, an honorific pronoun 您 *nin*, the use of imperative mood+*please*, and 高见 (*gaojian*: ‘kind suggestions’). *Gao* here is used as an expressive honorific morpheme (see further Hui et al 2016: 9), which is usually used to modify things or actions, to express respect to the addressee, e.g. *gaotu* ‘the students of a respectable scholar/master’, and *gaomen* ‘a family of high social status’.

Another feature in Chinese is the use of modesty terms, such as ‘Biren’, ‘Zaixia’, ‘bucai’, etc. Speakers usually use modesty words like these to refer to themselves, so as to express respect to the other interlocutors, as in ‘敝人初来乍到，承蒙各位多多指教 (*this is the first time I come here, and it’s a great honor that everyone is so welcoming and helpful*)’

All of these indigenous counterparts in Chinese make it harder for the borrowed item

sir to become widely established among Chinese speakers with similar functions, but some of its special usages, such as denoting a police officer or a teacher, and its productivity in forming catchphrases like *bushi ba a-sir*, still prove that *sir* is frequently used and well-accepted, at least in some contexts. Its adoption can perhaps be traced back to the wide spread influence of the Hong Kong movie industry in Mainland China in the past few decades, as gangster films were so popular throughout Asia that address terms for policemen, such as *Surname-sir* and *Ah-sir*, became widely-acknowledged among Chinese fans and audiences. This specific usage of *sir* has subsequently become even more established and productive in contemporary Chinese, especially in order to achieve fashionable or humorous effects in daily communications.

Although *sir* is not necessarily used to express respect in Chinese, as in its SL, its pattern of ‘rebirth’, i.e. acquiring new pragmatic functions and used to form new hybrid structures in combination with indigenous elements through integration, seems significant, and echoes the way the kin term *mummy* gets new functions in Chinese. In the last section of this chapter, I study the borrowing of a third type of vocatives, endearments, and examine their similarities and differences.

6.3. Case study V: Borrowing of endearments

Poets have said that love is a universal language, and it is an instinct of human beings to express love and emotions. So there is no surprise to find that English is packed full of terms of endearment, used colloquially. During intercultural communication via literary works, movies, dramas, and social media, many of these endearments are borrowed into Chinese. In this section, I discuss several popular endearments, considering their use in English and their integration in Chinese.

6.3.1. Popular endearments in English

Chinese has borrowed several terms of endearment, including *dear*, *darling*, *honey* and *baby* (with the variant *babe*), which are widely used in English. Their entries in

the *OED* show that these terms share many senses and functions. For example, *darling* is used to address a person who is very dear to another, or an object of a person's love; *dear* is similarly used in addressing a person, in affection or regard, also in the superlative, '*dearest*'; *honey* is defined as a term of endearment meaning 'sweet one, sweetheart, darling'; and *baby*, also in the form *babe*, is used as a familiar form of address, referring to 1. a lover or a spouse, 2. a person of either sex, without romantic connotations, 3. an attractive (esp. young) woman, or a sexually attractive man (more often in the variant form *babe*). The senses and functions listed here relate to use as terms of address; other uses such as *baby*, *honey* used as common noun and *dear* used as as a formulaic address form in a letter or email are not discussed in this study.

Generally speaking, these endearments are all used by speakers to express friendliness or affection in some way to their addressees. But the choice of different terms and the identity (including gender, occupation, and social status) of the speaker and the addressee will sometimes affect the connotations and pragmatic functions of particular endearments. Previous research into daily conversation also shows that although both men and women use endearments, in most varieties of English heterosexual men generally only use them to address women, and almost never same-sex interlocutors (Lakoff 1975, 2004:99). Moreover, scholars suggest that sometimes when men use these terms towards women it conveys a sense of 'benevolent sexism' (Boasso, Covert and Ruscher 2012: 533), implying heterosexual intimacy and protective paternalism, which maintains stereotypes and upholds traditional views of gender differences. For example, when a woman is addressed as *baby*, she may be stereotyped as 'childlike' and probably seen as someone needs to be protected. However, whether using endearments is considered offensive or not varies between speakers. In the following paragraphs, I will analyse the pragmatic functions of these endearments in the corpus data, and try to infer their acceptability on different occasions. Judging from the information given by the *OED*, *baby/babe* originates from and is still more commonly used in AmE, so I will mostly refer to

COCA as data source.

baby/babe is one of the most common terms of endearment in English, and there is a very good reason for this: our beloved ones and babies tend to evoke a similar kind of emotion because we want to care, love and protect them. So the word is often used for lovers, indicating them as precious and expressing the speaker's protective affection, but for some speakers, it is also a default term of address, for instance in showbiz contexts. Compare examples 32) and 33):

32) I hadn't even, like, flirted, you know? It's Danny Glover. I was a little intimidated. And then you got this whole love scene. And then Danny comes to me and says, 'You know, **baby**, I don't -- I don't -- I don't do stage kisses. I've never done one.' And I said, 'Me either,' thinking he's talking about... (COCA: SPOK *CBS_Morning*)

33) A: Hello?

B: Hi, **baby**.

A: What did you do?

B: I helped Sam cover some stuff up and that's it. I didn't murder anybody.

A: Did you help him actually cover the body up?

B: Yes, I helped them cover up the body and my payment was supposed to be everything in his account.

A: **Babe**, why on earth would you try and cover for him?

B: Because we needed the money.

A: No, we never need money. We need to be good people and just have each other.

(COCA: SPOK *ABC News: 20/20*)

Example 32) is a narrative of a female celebrity describing the filming of a love scene, where the male actor Danny Glover called her *baby* to show intimacy. The usage of endearment *baby* here is relatively common for (at least some) actors/actresses to show friendliness, not necessarily indicating that the addressee is attractive to the speaker. But according to the speaker, saying she is a little *intimidated*, the interpretations would be: 1. the speaker feels awkward about being approached) by an already-famous actor; 2. she is not ready to film the love scene with Danny, and thus she is uncomfortable with him being intimate to her in public. Such interpretation again shows that *baby/babe* is seen as problematic term by some speakers, and indicative of casual sexism, and thus it would be better restricted to

relatively private occasions, otherwise the addressee may feel uncomfortable.

In example 33) however, the conversation is a phone call between a murderer B and his fiancée A. The first *baby* sounds just a normal term of address that might be what they usually called each other, which does not express strong emotions. But the latter *babe* said by his fiancée expresses her worry and anxiety about what her lover has done, showing her strong affection and care for speaker B. This is also proved by her next turn 'be good people and just have each other', indicating that she still loves him despite his actions.

baby/babe can also be used to address friends that have no romantic relationships with the speaker, for example in 34):

- 34) A: And you wrote it?
B: I did. It's called I Can Do Hard Things. It is ...
A: And where does that come from in you?
B: You know what, **babe**, it is when I - I really think it is the story of being a grown woman... (COCA: SPOK NBC News: Today)

This is the interview of a celebrity by an interviewer who is also a friend. Here the interviewee answers the question by addressing the female interviewer as *babe*, and adding an idiomatic phrase *you know what* beforehand, which helps to attract her attention and indicate he is about to announce something important, as well as shortening the distance between the two of them. As this is a broadcast where the interviewer stands for the audience to some extent, the celebrity's intention is also to get closer to his audience.

Similarly, *honey*, shortened to *hun* to express more intimate affection, is also frequently used on private occasions and is typically used between couples, as in 35):

- 35) Stewart wants to show Skylar as a loving husband -- not the controlling person depicted in those texts. He points to the scores of other texts from Skylar. Ones like: "I'm going to bed **hun** I love you." "Hey **babe** how was your day." (COCA: SPOK CBS

48 HOURS 10:00 PM EST)

According to this account, Stewart wishes to show that he is a *loving husband*, so that the use of endearments *hun* and *babe* functions to meet this goal by demonstrating his love and kindness toward his wife.

Honey can also be used between close friends, especially between girlfriends, as shown in example 36) where the two women are discussing their workouts and achievements, calling each other *honey*:

36) A: So do you prefer doing the most or doing the least?

B: I think always doing the least but, you know.

A: But today, I think you're doing your most. Okay. Finally, thick neck, thin ankles.

B: Yes. I have broad shoulders, I got a thick neck, but those ankles, **honey**, they never gain a pound. I don't know if you can show them but those are some thin ankles.

(COCA: SPOK NBC News: Today)

dear and *darling* can also be used with similar pragmatic functions to *baby* and *honey* to express affection in intimate interpersonal relationships, and these will not be discussed further here. Another feature of *dear* and *darling* is that they are also conventionalized to address strangers in many English speaking countries. This usage usually depends on several sociolinguistic factors and is common among certain groups of people, e.g. people in service industries. For instance, a woman who works in a grocery shop might call her customers '*darling*', or a taxi driver may give a passenger a friendly greeting by saying '*good morning, my dear*'. They are also used by elderly persons to address younger speakers: for instance, an old lady may express her gratefulness to the person who has helped her by saying '*thank you, darling*'. The use of endearments in these situations apparently has nothing to do with expressing love and affection, but is a manner of politeness and friendliness.

6.3.2. Borrowed endearments in Chinese

Section 6.3.1 has introduced several common occasions where endearments are used

and discussed their pragmatic functions in English. For instance, they can be used between lovers and couples or among close friends (especially girlfriends); they are also found in speech between family members (particularly the elder to the younger); and *dear* and *darling* can also be used to address strangers. However, when these endearments are borrowed into Chinese, they are used in a much more restrictive way.

Some of the borrowed endearments in Chinese have two forms, the original form and the transliterated form (in Chinese characters), such as *darling* and 达令 (*dáling*), *baby* and 北鼻 (*běibì*), *honey* and 哈尼 (*hāní*). There is no corresponding Chinese transliteration of *dear*, probably because the English word form *dear* is much more common and familiar to Chinese language users as it frequently appears at the beginning of letters and emails. The total occurrences of both forms of the borrowed endearments in BCC are listed in Table 6.7:

Table 6.7: The occurrences of different forms of endearment in BCC

darling	达令	baby	北鼻	honey	哈尼	dear
141	533	4274	3276	975	1499	603

* Note that the statistics here have excluded examples where the items are used in the direct quotation of English texts, such as lyrics and movie scripts.

As shown in the Table, *darling* and *honey* appear more commonly in transliterated form in Chinese, while *baby*, the most frequently used item, is well-established both in lettered form and in Chinese character form. Moreover, the English word *baby* is even more frequent than the Chinese 北鼻 *beibi*. Such difference is perhaps because of the widespread use of *baby* in social platforms, pop culture and mass media, so that the English word is very familiar to Chinese speakers, similar to *sir* and *dear* (for a further discussion of the motivations, see section 6.4).

In the following paragraphs, I discuss the use of these borrowed endearments in

Chinese. Owing to insufficient spoken materials and up-to-date corpora in Chinese, the data presented here will also include examples from BCC and *Weibo*.

In Chinese, the endearments *honey* and *darling* are restrictively used between lovers, as shown in examples 37) and 38):

37) HONEY~生日快乐! 未来无限大, 我们一起走, 然后各自幸福! 爱你哟! (BCC: Weibo)

Honey, Happy birthday to you. Wish you a bright future, and I will always be with you. Let's be happy forever! Love you!

38) 亲爱的, 我们一起承载着彼此的梦想在浩瀚星河中扬帆起航~... darling、我在这向你求爱, 你会答应吗? (BCC: Weibo)

My **darling**, let move together to the future with our dream!... **darling**, will you marry me if I propose to you now?

In 37), *honey* is used by a girl to address the boy she loves and to celebrate his birthday. Along with the wishes she makes here, it shows her affection. In example 43) a man proposes to his girlfriend, and uses two endearments: one in Chinese 亲爱的 (*qinaide*: 'darling') and the borrowed term *darling*, to emphasize his deep love for his girlfriend and to indicate his sincerity.

dear is not used as frequently as *darling* and *honey* as a term of endearment. When it is used, it seldom addresses others, but functions as an adjective to modify the noun referring to the person whom speaker wants to address, as in example 39):

39) Dear 我的 姑娘, 爱情它一定会来的。你要等, 别怕有我陪你呢! (BCC: Web)

Dear my girl

My **dear** girl, you will find your true love one day. The only thing you need to do is to wait. And don't worry, I am always here for you.

Here, when the speaker is telling the girl to wait for true love and showing his support for her, his use of *dear*, rather than merely *my girl*, expresses his kindness and emphasizes his caring tone.

Finally, *baby* is the most frequently used term among all borrowed endearments in Chinese, and it can be applied on more occasions. Apart from being used to address the beloved ones like the other three, it has additional functions:

40) 各位 北鼻 们, 2016 年只剩两天就要结束啦! 年初制定的计划又泡汤了吧!

Every baby(plural suffix)

Everyone, there's just two more days left before the end of 2016! I guess you haven't finish your annual plan, have you?! (BCC: Jianshu)

41) 今天的互动, 大家一起晒女神吧! **Come on, baby** ~ 表羞涩!

Our activity today is sharing our favorite female celebrities together! Come on, **baby**, don't be shy! (BCC: blog)

The speaker in examples 40) uses the endearment *baby* in the plural, by adding the plural suffix 们 *men*, and such phenomenon is seldom found in the SL English (only if *babies* is used as a noun denoting infants), whereas in 41) *baby* is used collectively; and both cases is to address people who are not familiar to the speaker on a public occasion. The speaker's intention in using the term is not to express any affection or emotion, but to create an exciting atmosphere and attract the audience, and that is why *baby* is often used with the conventional phrase *come on* in Chinese, as shown in 41). This usage of *baby* in informal online discourse echoes the way endearments are used in media contexts and service contexts in English (see example 32, and the discussion of endearments addressing strangers in section 6.3.1). The next section will analyse similar uses of native endearments in Chinese.

6.3.3. Social factors: using endearments to address strangers in Chinese

In 6.3.2, I discussed the use of *baby*, *darling*, *dear*, and *honey* in Chinese and analyzed their functions of expressing affectionate feeling to the beloved ones of the speaker and showing intimate interpersonal relationships. However, the function of using endearments to address strangers in order to express hospitality is seldom shown in formal or public occasions in Chinese. An important factor is the influence

of ‘Li’, traditional Chinese social norms, also mentioned in section 6.2.3. According to these norms, in the first meeting with strangers, politeness and respect should always be regarded as the priority, however much we wish to show attraction or friendliness to them. It may therefore be offensive if a person is called ‘darling’ by someone he or she barely knows.

It is worth mentioning that there is actually a special term ‘亲 *qin*’ in Chinese that frequently functions in a similar way as *dear* and *darling* and can be used to address strangers. But this term is used mostly in web language and informal contexts, especially in text messages, even more commonly, online customer service interactions. The etymology of *qin* is uncertain. Some scholars (Wang and Chen 2010, Zou 2011) regard it as a shortened variant of the intimate address term and adjective ‘亲爱的 *qin’ai de*’ (meaning *darling*, *dearest*) which is used mostly between partners. Note that when this expression stands alone, it can only be used between lovers and sometimes among **girlfriends**; but when it serves as an adjectival premodifier of other address terms, such as names or titles including relatives, teachers, police officers, and government officials, it has the function of indicating that the addressee is well-respected and much-loved by the speaker or everyone, e.g. 亲爱的毛主席 *Dearest Chairman Mao*.

Comparing to *qin’ai de* (‘*darling*’, ‘*dearest*’), *qin* was firstly spread and mostly found in online customer service interactions, and scholars regard it as an example of ‘淘宝体 (*Taobaoti*, *Taobao* language style)’⁷⁶ (see Ye 2011, Liu 2012). I contend that it is best regarded as an abbreviation of a longer address term ‘亲爱的顾客 (*qin’ai de guke*, *dear customer*)’, to show the seller’s hospitality. The expression is later used more generally as a catchword on other informal occasions, which has the function to address acquaintances or strangers, showing friendliness.

It is interesting to notice that 亲 *qin* is the only term of endearment in Chinese that

⁷⁶ *Taobao* is the largest internet e-commerce and retailer platform in China.

has the function of addressing strangers, like *dear* and *darling* in English. This raises the question of whether such usage is borrowed from western culture or it is a native Chinese usage developed in parallel with its counterparts in English. Unfortunately, there isn't any research discussing such issue, but analyzing the cause and effect of using *qin* in this way helps to answer the question here. *qin* is first used in web contexts, and the biggest difference of this type of text from other context is that the interlocutors do not meet in person and their identity are usually anonymous, which virtually reduces the restriction of social norms on using polite terms. Because of the nature of electronic commerce to pursue larger profit in less time, online shop owners are motivated to choose simple but efficient verbal tricks to communicate with their customers, and to create the impression that they are friendly. Compared to *qin'ai de guke* ('dear customer'), *qin* expresses the same attitudinal meaning and is much shorter, which also meets the maxim of quantity and manner (being informative and brief), according to Grice's (1975) cooperative principles.

Having become widely accepted and proving its efficiency in customer service contexts, *qin* is also found in interpersonal conversations. In addition, the term is shortened from '*qin'ai de X*', of which the modifier has two component characters *qin* and *ai* (*de* is an auxiliary to form adjectives), meaning 'close' and 'love' respectively. In Chinese, especially in addressing others by using their names, using monosyllabic terms shows more intimacy than full address terms (similar to English shortened nicknames). So the use of *qin* to address strangers, on one hand, expresses the speaker's kindness and helps them to get closer quickly; on the other hand, it avoids the ambiguity of the connotation of *ai* (love) in the full term and sounds more appropriate in communication. *qin* has therefore emerged as a catchword in internet language, because of speakers' pursuit of novelty and crowd psychology (see Shi 2013; also mentioned in the discussion of *sir* in section 6.2.2).

However, even though *qin* is a catchword and has been used for more than ten years now, it is still controversial, and language users have varying opinions about it.

According to a sociolinguistic study of *qin* by Ye (2011: 80–81), women are more likely to use *qin* than men, and young people more often use *qin* while the seniors seldom use the term. This indicates that the use of such intimate endearments in Chinese are restricted by social hierarchy, especially relating to age and gender.

According to research on *qin* (e.g. Ye 2011, Liu 2012, Zou 2013), it is again obvious that it is not usual to use such intimate address terms, except in certain contexts like online chat or between close friends. This finding in turn might explain why the borrowed items *dear* and *darling* have lost their function of addressing strangers during their adaptation in Chinese.

To sum up, results show that except for *baby*, borrowed endearment terms can only be used on the most private occasion, between people with close romantic relationships. The supplementary study on *qin* also proves that the Chinese social norms of mutual respect, decent social distance, and politeness have an important influence on the acceptability of such intimate terms of endearment (both borrowed and native), thus resulting in certain degree of narrowing in the pragmatic functions of these terms.

6.4. Summary and implication: the integration of English vocatives into Chinese

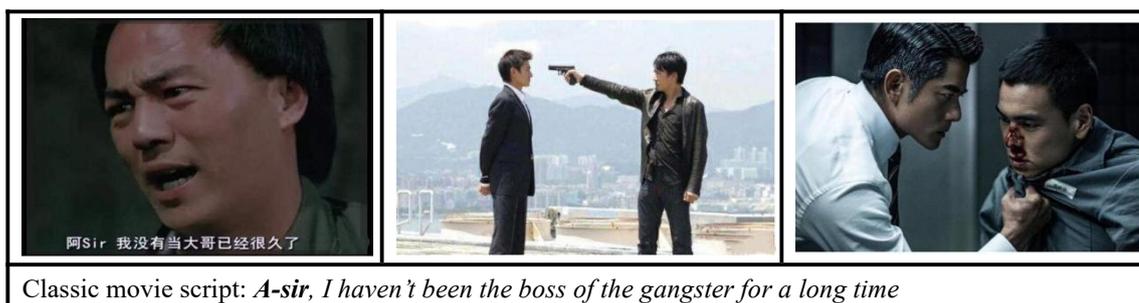
Chapter 6 has examined three particular types of English vocatives that have been borrowed into Chinese, namely kin terms, honorific terms, and endearments, which are all frequently found in daily conversations, and are especially common in online discourse. Similar to the findings of the comparative study of Chinese interjections in English in Chapter 5, each cases of these English vocatives also show slightly different patterns of borrowing and integration into the Chinese language.

Like interjections, the background of the borrowed vocatives and the contexts in which where these vocatives are encountered by Chinese speakers, both initially and most commonly, play significant roles in the uses of these words in Chinese. Among

all three types of vocative, *mummy* has the longest history in Chinese, and the very first attestations can date back to the early twentieth century, according to CCL data. These occur in biographies of intellectual families at that time, usually influenced by Western culture as these people all had studied abroad, and in translations of western literary works. Therefore, the kin term may have gradually become familiar to ordinary Chinese people through these literary works. Moreover, as mentioned in section 4.3.1, loanwords during this time are mostly transliterated in Chinese character forms, so that *mummy*, unlike the other two types, is more stable and established in the form of 妈咪, rather than *mummy*. 妈咪 has been used in many other metonymic and metaphorical meanings, but its basic meanings and functions in English have also remained frequent in Chinese.

In contrast, the English honorific *sir* seems to be seldom used in its basic meaning, signaling social ranks and showing respect to the addressee, during its pragmatic adaptation in the RL. Apart from the fact that there are already abundant expressions in Chinese to express respect and indicate ‘power’ in social interlocution (see section 6.2.3), the popularity of HK gangster movies in mainland China has led to *sir* entering the Chinese speech community, as shown in Figure 6.7:

Figure 6.7: Screenshots of famous police&gangster movies where *sir* occurs⁷⁷



In these movies, *sir* is particularly used to address police officers and occurs in many punchlines and famous movie scripts, which later have become widely known among

⁷⁷ Movie extracts are collected from 1.英雄本色(*A Better Tomorrow/Gangland Boss*) 1986; 2.无间道(*Infernal Affairs*) 2002; 3.寒战(*Cold War*) 2012. Retrieved February 12, 2021.

Chinese audiences. Therefore, until now, the honorific term is still most frequently used of police officers. At the same time, movies and TV series are highly productive sources of material for spoof recreations, and this may explain why the term, after its adoption into Chinese, is more widely used and integrated in a humour or sarcastic way in informal occasions, and used to create new catchphrases like *bushi ba*, *a-sir*, giving the borrowed item a ‘rebirth’ in the RL.

Similarly, the widespread use of the endearments in the Chinese speech community is also, to a great extent, encouraged by pop culture, which includes movies, TV series, and a particular medium in this case, the pop songs. Endearments like *baby*, *honey*, and *darling* are extremely frequently applied in English song lyrics, especially in love songs. As a result, Chinese song writers tend to use these words in their pieces, perhaps owing to prestige. For example, Figure 6.8 presents several extracts from the some popular Chinese love songs in the past two decades, where *baby* is extremely frequent:

Figure 6.8: Pop songs with high frequencies of ‘baby’⁷⁸



The singer in the right column, Zee Tao (David), is a well-known R&B songwriter, who has been given the title ‘the godfather of R&B’; because he uses *baby* so much

⁷⁸ Materials collected from <http://y.qq.com> Retrieved April 20, 2021.

in his lyrics, people also call him ‘the godfather of baby’ as a ironic title. This shows that some people have negative attitudes towards the overuse of English endearments in love songs, although such popular culture indeed contributes to the integration of these borrowed items.

Finally, unlike 妈咪, the endearments, as well as the honorific *sir*, are more familiar to Chinese speakers in their lettered form, as they are borrowed in more recent decades, when the English language has deeper penetration in China and English forms are no longer ‘foreign’ among most Chinese speakers (see further section 4.3.3). As a comparison, the case study of *aiyah* and *chin chin* in Chapter 5 are also borrowed into English in different time periods, the former in the most recent decades and the latter dating back to the CPE period; however, none of them has adopted the Chinese scriptal forms, demonstrating a weaker influence of Chinese on English than English on Chinese (see further section 9.2.1).

Chapter 7

CPE expressions in Contemporary English

In the previous chapters, I discussed direct pragmatic borrowings between Chinese and English and presented several case studies which examined interjections and vocatives. This chapter focuses on pattern replication (i.e. the process of changing and restructuring inherited items in the RL to model a structure in the SL; see section 2.2.3), which resembles loan translation in studies of lexical borrowing as a type of indirect borrowing. In this thesis, I follow the approach of Matras and his colleagues (see further Matras and Sakel 2007, Matras 2009) and use pattern replication to refer to any construction that is created with RL elements based on a SL structure; the particular examples of pattern replication I examine in this chapter are constructions that are used for pragmatic reasons. This chapter includes two case studies of expressions created through pattern replication in CPE and revived in contemporary general international English.

CPE, which is thought to be a language contact-induced variety, is well attested in the mid 18th and 19th centuries (Hall 1944:95; see section 4.2.2 for a more detailed account). In this variety, many unique structures were formed with English elements, modelling native Chinese constructions. Two of these, *no can do* and *long time no see*, provide examples of contact-induced pattern replication which have gradually been accepted by native English speakers and are still used colloquially as idioms. These phrases are the focus of this chapter.

As discussed in Chapter 4, close communication between Chinese and English speakers firstly started in a trade setting in Canton, China, when most Chinese workers knew little English, and relied on intermediary merchants, either from China or English speaking countries, who could speak both English and Chinese. The workers were usually uneducated and only did work that was assigned to them, so it

was less likely for them to master fluent English during their transactions with foreign employers. However, it was possible for them to pick up a few English words related to their duties and the daily routines of their lives. Having learned some English words, but not many sentence structures, the workers had to find a way to construct sentences with those words. As they had already mastered their native language, the workers sometimes used Chinese structures to build sentences with the English words they had just learned. The resultant linguistic product was CPE, a variety with limited English vocabulary and sentence structures based primarily on Chinese; many typical CPE expressions are therefore word-for-word translations of Chinese. When CPE was first created, it was mostly used by a relatively small community of speakers in particular situations for a specific function. Through more intense cultural communication and the pursuit of standard languages, many non-standard CPE expressions have been lost. However, a small number have gradually been accepted and have become more widely and frequently used by native English speakers.

Often, after a SL pattern has been replicated in the RL, the structure of the resulting phrase changes. The pivot of the structure, i.e. the most important part carrying its semantic meaning, tends to be retained, but other elements are added to match the model construction, thus resulting in the creation or recombination of a new structure or new category in the RL. For example, the CPE phrase *no can do* is the basis for variant structures, such as ‘*no can + adj.*’, ‘*no can + clause*’ (see section 7.1.3); *long time no see* also undergoes a similar process (see section 7.2.3). Such a process is called by contact linguists ‘grammaticalisation’ (see Matras and Sakel 2007: 830, 858). The extension of the new structure’s distributional context will further result in an increase of its frequency in the RL. The process of grammaticalisation will be further discussed in the case study below⁷⁹.

⁷⁹ It is also worth noting again that the term ‘grammaticalisation’ used in pragmatic borrowing studies is different from its use in historical linguistics, which refers to the process that a lexical word or word cluster loses its lexical meanings and starts to function as a grammatical unit, also mentioned before in Chapter 2 section 2.2.3.

In the following sections, I will investigate how pattern-replicated expressions are used in the SL Chinese and in native English contexts through two case studies and observe their changing of forms/structures and discourse functions as they have undergone integration and pragmatic adaptation.

7.1. Case study VI: *No can do*

As mentioned in the previous section, the existence and development of CPE is mostly the result of intercultural communication between people from different language communities, the kind of contact situation in which some expressions are discarded for certain reasons, while others are gradually accepted by native speakers. *No can do* is one of the CPE remains, used as a marker of rejection in contemporary English⁸⁰. Like other CPE phrases, it does not conform to the rules of the grammar of standard English, which is because it was originally used by Chinese people in their attempt to speak English by directly translating words from Chinese into English.

7.1.1 *The source of no can do in Chinese*

According to the *OED*, in terms of its syntactic structure, *no can do* comes from a literal English translation of the Chinese can-wish verb 不可以 *bù kěyǐ*, which means *cannot*:

不 *bù* 可以 *kěyǐ*
No *Can*

The English verb *do* is added to this phrase, meaning somebody ‘cannot do it’ or something is ‘not going to happen’. The *OED* only gives one possible etymology *bu keyi*; however, there are two other can-wish verbs in Chinese, *bu neng* and *bu xing*, which should also be considered as the possible sources of *no can do*⁸¹. These three

⁸⁰ According to the *OED*, *no can do* is created in pair with *can do* in CPE: *can do* is a simple expression of ability or power, and is often used as the synonym for ‘yes’, while *no can do* is a favourite negative response for ‘no’. This thesis only investigates *no can do*.

⁸¹ In other dictionaries, these sources are also recorded. For example, the Wiktionary regards *bu neng* as the origin.

have many properties in common, but they can express slightly different meanings according to different contexts, which will be discussed in the following sections.

7.1.1.1 Can-wish verbs in Chinese

Generally speaking, in a Chinese context, the three main can-wish verbs are 不行(*bu xing*), 不能(*bu neng*), and 不可以(*bu keyi*), and all three express rejection of certain actions or denial of certain statements. The modal meanings of these can-wish verbs can be interpreted in epistemic, deontic or dynamic way. This division is also found in the use of *can* in English:

- a. You can't be serious. (epistemic or dynamic)
- b. I can play the guitar. (deontic or dynamic)

There are two ways of interpreting example *a*: the epistemic interpretation expresses the impossibility that the other interlocutor is being serious, based on their knowledge of the facts of the situation; while the dynamic interpretation relates to the speaker's attitude towards the other interlocutor's personality, meaning the he or she is incapable of being serious, because he or she always makes jokes. Similarly, example *b* can also be interpreted in two ways: the deontic use of *can* means that the speaker is allowed to play the guitar; while the dynamic interpretation denotes the speaker's ability to play the instrument.

In Chinese, when the can-wish phrases above refer to what things should or should not be done because of certain norms, standards, or personal desires, they are deontic (see examples c and d); when used to express somebody's will or ability, they are dynamic (see e); and when they deal with people's prediction or judgment on something based on their own knowledge, they are epistemic (see f). *bu neng*, as shown in example f, is the only one among the three can-wish phrases which can be used to express epistemic meaning.

- c. 不行, 我觉得 我们 谈生意 不能 这么个谈法。
No I think we do business no can like this

No, we **cannot do it** in this way. (CCL: Literary work)

- d. 野兽便会来把他们的躯体吃掉。不行，这样的事决 不能 让它 发生！
No this thing indeed no can let it happen
wild beasts will come to eat their bodies soon. **No**, this is **not gonna happen!**
(CCL: Literary work)
- e. -- 我讨厌这事儿，请求推迟一下。
-- 不行——现在就得办妥。
-- I hate it, and I'd like to postpone the mission.
-- **No**-- it should be done right now. (CCL: Literary work|Translation)
- f. -- 你说他会不会因为这事儿辞职啊？ -- 不能吧
-- Do you know whether he might quit his job because of the accident?
-- **No, I don't think so.** (CCL: Literary work)

bu xing, *bu neng* and *bu ke yi* therefore all belong to the same sense group of Chinese can-wish verbs, but each of them has some subtle but significant properties that differentiate it from the others. So before we turn to their pragmatic functions in Mandarin and make comparisons with the borrowing item *no can do*, it is necessary to investigate each of them in terms of sense and function.

A. 不行 *bu xing*

Bu xing is, according to its root, a more peripheral member of the can-wish verbs/expressions. Although it is now mainly used to express modality in contemporary Chinese, 行 *xing* itself (without the negative component) was originally a main verb meaning 'walking'. This is clear from an entry in the earliest authorized dictionary of ancient Chinese: 行，人之步趋也 'Xing refers to people walking or running' (《说文-行步》，p121)⁸².

According to the *CCD*, the other senses of *xing* can all be regarded as having developed from this basic meaning 'walk'. As the ultimate goal and outcome of

⁸² 说文解字 *Shuowen Jiezi*, firstly composed by Xu Shen, a lexicographer and scholar in Dong Han Dynasty (the Eastern-Han, 25-220), from 100 to 121 AD, consisting of around ten thousand Chinese characters. This is the first comprehensive dictionary edited to record the formation, development, meaning, and functions of Chinese characters, which has been the foundation of Chinese lexicography.

walking is to reach a destination while that of any other human actions is to fulfill some kind of task, and such internal relation makes walking and other actions identical from a cognitive perspective, hence *xing* becomes generalised to refer to a broader concept of human actions, as in the phrase 行为 *xingwei*, a collective noun phrase referring to all human actions and behaviours. Therefore, *bu xing*'s original and basic meaning was 'not walking or unable to walk' in ancient Chinese, and later shifted to 'not doing/ unable to do something'.

The second derived sense of *(bu)xing* emerges because of language users' subjective orientation, since every human action is expected to have an outcome whether good or bad, a success or a failure: *xing* comes to mean 'good, excellent, helpful', and *bu xing* 'bad, terrible, useless'. As *(bu)xing* undergoes transition and abstraction from the domain of actual 'action' to 'evaluation', a sense of modality seems to be attached to the expression, for example:

- 1) ... 现在 体力 不行, 每天就养养花, 种种菜。
now strength no good
I am **not in good condition** now, and can only do some gardening. (CCL: literary works)
- 2) 不行不行! 你快打消这样的念头, 我不能跟你走!
No! No! Just forget about it, I cannot go with you! (CCL: literary works)

In example 1), *bu xing* is used to indicate the speaker's health condition, while in the second example, repetition of *bu xing* shows the speaker's strong resistance to the proposal. These examples show that the modal use of *bu xing* is also derived from its evaluative meaning, which expresses a bad and terrible situation, because the speaker in 2) has evaluated the proposal as no good, and for that reason he or she expresses very firm rejection.

Finally, owing to its multiple meanings and uses and its relatively flexible position in a sentence structure, the last important use of *bu xing* is found in the structure 'adj./v.+ 得 *de* (auxiliary)+ 不行 *bu xing*', where *bu xing* is used as a degree

complement to stress an extreme state. For example:

- 3) 这屋里屋外的男男女女都 兴奋 得 不行, 止不住说笑打趣。

excited [de bu xing]

All of them are **so** excited **that** they can't help laughing and teasing.(CCL: literary works)

- 4) 自从有了欢欢, 我才开始特别不满足, 总是 想 得 不行。

always missing [de bu xing]

Since the arrival of my son Huanhuan, I have been so needy and I **can't stop** missing him.
(CCL: literary works)

The two examples above show clearly for how *bu xing* can function to signal degree in actual language use, where in 3) and 4) the speakers use *bu xing* to modify the words for excitement and missing, highlighting the degree of the emotions. From a psychological point of view, language users usually express exaggeration by using words expressing negative attitude than neutral or positive ones, and this is why many derived degree components or modifiers (those not having such functions originally) have an earlier negative sense, such as **bloody awful**, **terribly ill**, 累得慌, etc. These have shifted to be used as degree components, and *bu xing* shows the same pattern.

Bu xing is the most frequently used can-wish phrase according to CCL, and its way of developing the senses discussed above is slightly different from the other two can-wish verbs. The four basic senses of *bu xing* relates closely to its pragmatic functions, which will be discussed in section 7.1.1.2.

B. 不能 *bu neng* and 不可以 *bu keyi*

Unlike *bu xing*, which is thought to be a derived can-wish expression, *bu neng* and *bu keyi* have always been used with modal meaning, according to the *CCD*. These two phrases are similar enough that they can substitute each other on almost all occasions, but there are still subtle differences in their use.

First of all, when language users indicate possibility, as mentioned at the very beginning of this chapter, *bu neng* is the only option, because *bu keyi* is seldom used with epistemic meaning. And it is noting that when *bu neng* is used to signal possibility, the speaker must have a high level of confidence that something is unlikely to happen based on observation or evidence rather than intuition alone. This is evident in examples 5) and 6):

5) 如净宗行人也在疑: “我这样念佛能生西方吗? 恐怕 **不能** 吧!”

Afraid no can [interj.]

He is also doubting, “can I go to heaven if I obey these rituals? I’m afraid **that’s impossible!**” (CCL: Social Science)

6) 你咋的? 你把人家打出去? 你 **不能** 吧!你咋也得请人吃顿饭吧!

You no can [interj.]

What are you gonna do? Beat them? **No, you won’t!** I think you would still treat them with a dinner! (CCL: Movie/Drama)

The speaker in 5) uses *bu neng* to comment that it is impossible for a person to go to heaven, based on ‘scientific materialism’. And in 6), the speaker predicts that the other interlocutor will not beat those people based on his knowledge of his prior behaviour.

There is a further difference between *bu neng* and *bu keyi* when used to express dynamic meaning and refer to one’s ability. *Bu keyi* tends to be more focused on whether or not somebody has the ability to do something, while *bu neng* indicates how well someone can master that ability, usually evident in the response to questions. For instance, if two people are asked a question about whether they can eat spicy food in a Chinese context, and speaker A answers with *bu neng*, whereas speaker B answers *bu keyi*, A may indicate a sense of degree that he or she can eat spicy food, but cannot handle too much; while B means that he/she is not able to eat any spicy food, maybe because of health condition or something similar.

7.1.1.2 Discourse functions of *bu xing*, *bu neng*, and *bu keyi*

As mentioned before, Chinese can-wish verbs have epistemic, deontic or dynamic interpretations, just like English modal verbs. All three expressions *bu xing*, *bu neng*, and *bu keyi* are also used variously as PMs. In the following section, I will analyse their pragmatic functions in CCL in detail. *bu xing* is not used only as a can-wish expression, but can also be a main verb, and seldom collocates with other main verbs. For this reason, the main focus will be on its other discourse functions.

The most common function of the three phrases according to CCL is to express modality, serving as modal auxiliaries and placed before main verbs, as in example 7):

- 7) 过去的历史人类无能为力, 即使 有缺陷 也不能 更改。但眼前的历史是可以掌控的。
 Despite flaw no can change
There is no way to change the history, even if it is not as we wish, but we can at least manage the things happening at the present. (CCL: Newspapers *People's Daily* 1994)

The can-wish phrases *bu neng* in example 7) doesn't have other pragmatic functions than expressing deontic modal meaning that history should not be changed. *bu keyi* can be used interchangeably in this context.

As well as serving as auxiliaries in verb phrases, can-wish verbs are used in a number of other structures or positions. Although these phrases are all negative constructions expressing disagreement or rejection, they can also be interpreted with various pragmatic functions according to different contexts, for example expressing emotions and attitudinal meanings. Compare 8) and 9) below:

- 8) “你练田径好不好?” “不行! 我一定要练舞蹈。” (CCL: Spoken| Interview)
 --“How about joining the running team?” -- “No! I must join the dance team”

- 9) 老头一听, 又来劲了: “原来是这样的, 想私了啊。那 可 不行!
 That very no can
 您说是不是, 他们做了昧良心的事, 就得让他们丢回丑!” (CCL: Movie|冬至)

The old man became arrogant again, and said: “So that is what it is. They want a deal?”

Impossible! They have done shameless business, and they have to pay the price!”

In each of the examples above, *bu xing* functions as a marker of rejection, but it expresses different degrees of rejection. In example 8), speaker 2 replies with *bu xing* to reject a proposal and gives her own reason for this, and there seems to be no conflict between the two parties. Here the subject of both two actions ‘joining the running team’ and ‘joining the dance team’ is speaker 2 herself, so *bu xing* expresses rejection and indicates a sense of preference in a relatively mild tone. On the contrary, in examples 9), the degree of rejection is stronger. *buxing* follows the structure consisting of a demonstrative pronoun 那 *that* and a modal particle 可 *ke* (meaning *so, very*), which serves as tone indicator. This phrase expresses the speaker’s strong contempt and his rejection of the preceding action or proposal.

Apart from the uses of *bu xing*, *bu neng*, and *bu keyi* as rejection markers, they can also be placed in a clausal structure, functioning as conditional adjunct, which expresses ‘if not’. For example:

10) 你打个电话给她亲戚, 看看能不能来接她, 或是安排一辆车送她回去。实在 不行,
就安排她去睡觉。 (CCL: Literary works) Indeed no can

Call her family and see whether they could come here to take her home, or you can also arrange a car. **If there’s no other way**, you just lead her to your bedroom.

In 10), the speaker initially gives a few possible options to deal with a current situation, and provides a compromise proposal if all options fail. Here the concessive meaning is not explicitly expressed by common conditional words like 如果 (*ruguo*, ‘if’), but indicated by *bu xing*, because it is embedded with the sense ‘fail to do something’.

Similarly, as *bu xing* originally has the sense of expressing a terrible situation or health condition, examples 12) and 13) indicate the other two unique functions of *bu xing*:

- 12) 住了几天之后，我琢磨，这 不行啊，这样下去也不是个事儿啊，准备得

This no can [interj.]

太不充分了，又回去了。(CCL: spoken| TV interview)

After I've lived here for a few days, I think that **things are not OK**, because I am not well-prepared and could last for long, so finally I decide to go back.

- 13) 他躺在师父的怀里，对师父说：“师父，我 不行了，我 死后，

I no can [tense] I die afterwards

请您把我埋在能看见月牙的地方” (CCL: Literary works)

He lay in his father's arms and said, "I am afraid I **am about to die**, could you please bury me where I can see the moon after I die?"

Bu xing in example 12) is not intended to reject any proposal or oppose any idea, but to express the speaker/narrator's self evaluation/prediction of a current situation, with an unpleasant result; he then decides another option. In example 13), *bu xing* is used to describe the speaker's health condition, indicating that he is going to die. This function also echoes the second derived sense of the can-wish verb (*bu*) *xing*, meaning 'the good/ bad condition or the outcome of certain actions' (see section 7.1.1.1 subsection A, and example 1).

There are other occasions where *bu xing*, *bu neng* and *bu keyi* are embedded with illocutionary meaning, or have perlocutionary effect, as illustrated in the following examples:

- 14) “四凤碰着那条走电的电线。二少爷不知道，赶紧拉了一把，两个人一块儿中电死了。”

“这，这，——这 不能够，这 不能够！” (CCL: Literary works)

This this This no can this no can

--“Sifeng touched the leakage part of the wire, but young Master dragged her without knowing it. The two of them died of electric shock!”

-- “**No way, NO WAY!**”

- 15) 伤心欲绝的兰妮公主，拔出短剑来，就要往自己的胸口刺去。这时，王子及时赶到。

「兰妮！不可以！」王子连忙将她手中的短剑夺下。(CCL: Translations)

Lanny no can

The Princess was inconsolable, and then drew her dagger and stabbed towards her heart.

“Lanny! **NO!**” Fortunately the Prince made it in time, and saved her.

- 16) “建国, 我不希望仅仅是活着,” 小西一字字道, “我希望能活得有一点点品质, **不可以?**”
(CCL: Movie/Drama|结婚时代)

“Jianguo, I don’t want to be just staying alive,” Xiaoxi said word by word, “I wish to enjoy a life of high quality, **isn’t that OK?**”

In example 14), the speaker is told the sad news that his son is dead because of a maid who is later found out to be his daughter, so he repeats himself by crying *bu neng*. According to the preceding sentence, ‘how could it be?’, we can then infer that *bu neng* here does not only express the epistemic wish of the speaker that the accident was just a rumour, it also conveys deep emotion that the speaker is too sorrowful to be convinced. *Bu keyi* in example 15) also shows how this can-wish verb is functioning as a perlocutionary act. The Princess is experiencing a moment of crisis when the Prince cries ‘*bu keyi!*’, so here *bu keyi* functions as an order to her to stop hurting herself, which accomplishes its perlocutionary effect. On the other hand, *bu keyi* in example 16) is used in another way, in the form of a rhetorical question. Judging from the context, it seems clearer that by asking *bu keyi*, the speaker actually expresses emotion and gives information rather than only asking for permission. The dialogue is between an ordinary couple, and the husband has just complained about the wife’s improvident way of spending money, so here the speaker’s question in response conveys her unhappiness that her husband is not supportive, and at the same time indicate that she doesn’t need her husband’s permission to spend money.

Additionally, the use of *bu xing* and *bu neng* as complements of adjective phrases is also found frequently in the corpus, with various pragmatic functions. Such expressions are structured in the form of ‘adj.+ 得 *de* (adverb auxiliary) + 不行 *bu xing*’ and ‘adj. + 得 *de* + 不能 *bu neng*+adj.(comparative)’. Similarly to examples discussed in examples 3) and 4) and the English counterparts *terribly* and *bloody*, the can-wish verb used here is to express the degree of the emotion. Example 17) below shows the discourse functions of *bu neng* in such variant constructions.

- 17) 我不会像某些人那样，干了一辈子坏事，死后还要让人给他开追悼会，把他说得好得不能再好，光荣得不能再光荣。
great de no can greater, glorious de no can more glorious

I will never like those people who have done so many bad things and then force others to hold memorials after their death, especially when people are asked to say that they **couldn't be** more great and glorious. (CCL: Literary works|十面埋伏)

From the translated version of example 17), it is evident that *bu neng* doesn't express its original meaning, as the construction, as a whole, has the meaning of 'so/ too' or 'couldn't be more'. This special uses of can-wish verbs here have the function of emphasizing the whole adjective phrase and focusing on degree. 'Couldn't be more great/glorious' is foregrounded among all other information and become the focus of the whole sentence or utterance. Therefore, using such expressions makes it easier for speakers to convey their subjective attitudes, emotions, or preferences. In 17), the so-called great and glorious people were actually very bad, according to the contexts, so here *bu neng* has the function of showing the speaker's sarcastic attitude.

From a theoretical point of view, the uses of *bu xing* and *bu neng* in such constructions also fulfill certain discourse functions by violating the maxim of quality, where the speaker deliberately says something which is thought to be false or for which they lack evidence (i.e. exaggeration). For example:

- 18) 水果批发市场，在本该生意红火的新年，一连几天，简直门可罗雀，然而，与之相比，附近个体批发商的生意却红火得不行。(CCL: Newspapers 1994)
business but busy de no can

The wholesale market was nearly empty during the New Year Vacation, on the contrary however, the nearby retailers **couldn't be more busy**.

In example 18), the speaker use *bu xing* plus adjective construction to exaggerate his description, which violates the quality maxim without misleading other interlocutors, and at the same time helps to express the speaker's subjectivity, indicating such phenomenon is surprising.

The discussion above has investigated various senses, uses and pragmatic functions of three can-wish verbs in Chinese, which are the possible sources of the borrowed (pattern-replicated) phrase *no can do*. In the next section, I will investigate *no can do* and observe how it is used and its process of integration in the RL English.

7.1.2. *The use of no can do in English*

The *OED* gives the first attestations of *no can do* as below, in W. Chanter's novel *Nautch Girl* (1868):

lay aloft there, you feller, and lash up that head rope to the yard, sabe! said the boatswain Speed to a Chinese... "**No can do**," was the response.

The dialogue here is a typical CPE-style conversation between a boatswain and a Chinese worker, who refuses to take an order. This is the most common use of the phrase, as a negative response to an order or a requirement, indicating something cannot be done, or to imply that 'it could be possible, but I'm not willing to try'. Likewise, the other citations for *no can do* in the *OED* all have a similar function to Chanter's use.

'**No can help you** here in Falesá; **no can do**—too far off.'
(*Beach of Falesá* by R. L. Stevenson 1892)

The author integrates the fixed phrase *no can do* into a more structured sentence as in *no can help you*, where *help you* is a more concrete action than just *do*, showing that it is possible to use *no can do* in either position in a sentence with variant structures. Further investigation of this kind of adaptation is presented in section 7.1.3.

The supporting quotations for *no can do* in the *OED* are all collected from 19th and early 20th century texts, and show that the expression is mostly used in a Chinese or southeastern Asian context, and only functions as negative response. In order to

investigate how this expression is used in contemporary English and how its uses have changed through time, I choose to study the examples in COHA and COCA. These are larger corpora and therefore have many more examples of *no can do* than in BNC, where the 6 occurrences are all examples of its basic function, mentioned previously. In addition, I compare material from GloWbE to see how *no can do* is used in online English and other varieties of English.

As expected, in 7 hits of *no can do* before the 1930s, the phrase is restricted to a Chinese context, such as in fiction and stories of Chinese immigrants' or western people's lives or adventures in China. Take 19) and 20) as examples:

- 19) Young Withers was dumbfounded. " But you can't go America! " he explained, " no can go. What become of business here in Tientsin if you go America? **No can do.**" (COHA: FIC *Civilisation Tales of the Orient* 1919)
- 20) Cojuati for a time watched how clumsily Machado worked, then took the trousers out of his hands and said: "Me fix' em up fine. You **no can do.**" (COHA: FIC *Years of Grace* 1930)

In each example here, the authors also choose other non-standard expressions like 'go America', 'what become of', and 'me' as a subject, to imitate a non-native style of English spoken by Chinese people. Sentence 20) additionally gives an example of another function of the phrase (also in a Chinese/Oriental context), which is to express not only a negative response but also as an instruction or a command.

By the 2000s, the phrase seems to be more and more accepted in AmE, and the frequency of native speakers using it increases. Although *no can do* originates from a non-standard pidgin English, it can also be used to achieve certain discourse goals, such as functioning to give a more direct and brief response, because it is simple in structure and easy to understand. However, despite nearly a hundred occurrences in COCA over several decades of use, the discourse functions of *no can do* haven't been enriched and it is still mostly used as a separate element in an utterance. Moreover, there are no examples showing pragmatic adaptation of the phrase as it

becomes better-accepted and more frequently used in the RL. So I turn to another corpus consisting of online discourse of other English varieties, the GloWbE, which shows several interesting changes in the contemporary use of this borrowing.

In this web-based corpus which includes different varieties of English, the phrase is found in almost all English varieties. Considering the different sizes of different sub-corpora of the GloWbE, Table 7.1 below presents more absolute statistics of the frequency of the phrase in each varieties:

Table 7.1: The frequency of *no can do* across English varieties (per million words)

English variety	GB	US	Australia	Canada	HK	Singapore	Malaysia
Occurrences	40	29	10	9	4	2	2
Frequency	0.103	0.075	0.067	0.067	0.098	0.046	0.047

Unlike the interjections mentioned in Chapter 5, which are used restrictively in Asian countries and districts, *no can do* is more often used in western English varieties. However, it is also notable that the phrase is quite frequent in HK English compared to other Asian varieties, which may perhaps due to its CPE origin, as Hong Kong is geographically adjacent to the Canton area where CPE originated.

The following paragraphs will then discuss the uses and pragmatic functions of in such web-based contexts using examples extract from the GloWbE.

First of all, in examples 21) from *The Guardian* and 22) from the *Daily Mail* website, *no can do* is used in a political context:

- 21) Obama, “Yo, Cameron, Need you to help us bomb Iran” Cameron, “**No can do** Mr President.” Obama softening his tone, “But Dave remember the special relationship, don't tell me you're renegeing on that.” Cameron, “Of course not Mr President...”. (GB 2012)
- 22) we keep getting told due to the euro dictator that we must allow all immigrants status to live here thanks to phoney tony [...] we are told **no can do** because its against European human rights laws (GB 2012)

Example 21) seems like an exaggerated or sarcastic description of the conversation, from which we could still infer that Cameron's saying *no can do* shows his toughness and unwillingness, to some extent, judging from Obama's softening his tone after his firm objection. Therefore, one of the pragmatic functions of *no can do* is shown to express a firmer refusal to a proposal than just using words like 'I/you/someone cannot do it'. Example 22) also shows how *no can do* can be integrated in a sentence, similar to the structure 'we are told not to do so'. We can tell from this that the non-standard grammar of this expression has been neglected by native speakers and it is more like a fixed collocation.

Beside the fact that it happens to act as an object, the following two examples then present another new function. *No can do* is usually used as a modifier of NPs to express a negative attitude toward a previous-referred action or statement. The same usage is demonstrated by 'can do', e.g. *can do attitude*, which is also accepted in general international Englishes. In the following example 23) it is used in a predicative position as a premodifier in the NP *the no can do attitude*, while in example 24), the phrase is used in a similar function but to modify 'people':

23) My husband having 2 strokes this past year and the way he was treated in the hospital was a disgrace, urine bottles were never emptied and always left on the eating table, no one to help you when needed, seems to be the **no can do** attitude. (GB nhs.uk 2012)

24) He and his preferred candidate are both '**no can do**' people while Marvin Rees' ambitions are plain for everyone to see. Two stadiums, an arena, 4000 affordable homes, more childcare... (GB Bristol Post)

Here the pragmatic meaning of using *no can do* is not explicitly expressed and can only be interpreted according to the following comparison with another officer, from which we then understand that the phrase refers to people who are skeptical about any policy and unwilling to do anything. Additionally, example 24) marks *no can do* with inverted commas, which suggests that the newly enriched function is used colloquially and is to some extent unusual or marked, or only accepted by a restricted

group of people.

In the GloWbE corpus, *no can do* is found most frequently in BrE with 40 hits (as mentioned before). The discourse and grammatical functions discussed above with reference to examples 21) to 24) all emerge in recent years, and are not witnessed in Chinese. In other varieties like AmE and Australian English, similar functions are also frequently spotted. For example, there are instances of ‘*no can do*’ laws and *no can do attitudes* in 25) and 26)⁸³:

- 25) They can do NOTHING as long as taxes paid and structure was boarded up and (ahem) ‘considered safe’.... just a stupid waste of human effort gone the way of selfish heirs and ‘**no can do**’ laws! (US blog 2012)
- 26) He accused council of a “**no can do** attitude” and claimed red tape was delaying the project. (AU express 2012)

Moreover, among the results in AmE, there are a few examples that indicate other different functions of the phrase. As the sense of modality can be interpreted in various ways, examples 27) and 28) below start with *no can do* but convey two different meanings:

- 27) LOL LOL LOL Lolllllll... **No can do** comment... Laughing too hard. (US: Blog)
- 28) Rest of the lawyers would remind caveman not to use that stick and bow to create fire. **No can do**, or he must deliver 2 squirrel furs every time he setups a fire that way. (US: Blog)

No can do in 27) is interpreted in a dynamic way, meaning ‘it is not physically possible for me to comment (because I am laughing too hard)’, which is used as an exaggeration of the speaker’s emotion state. The phrase in 28) is also interpreted in a dynamic way, but *no can do* here seems to be used with conditional meaning,

⁸³ Note that there is another phrase ‘can-do attitude’ commonly used in English, usually denoting a proactive and optimistic attitude towards life. However, due to the lack of data, it is not clear whether *no can do attitude* derives from negating ‘can-do attitude’ or from modifying ‘attitude’ with the fixed phrase *no can do*.

Judging from current data, phrases like *no can do laws* and *no can do people* (although occur only few times in the corpora) may support the latter, i.e. the formation of the structure ‘no can do + Noun’.

indicating ‘if he is not able to do so’. This echoes the use of it model *bu xing* in the SL Chinese, as shown in example 10), but there are no other examples in the corpora, so no evidence that such usage is well-accepted in English.

The sentence structure in example 29) is more or less unique among all other examples:

29) As for the overwhelming scientific evidence in support of biological evolution, there is substantially far more proof for it than there is for string theory in physics. **No can do** on the 98 % claim. (US Blog)

The example is an elliptical sentence where *no can do* seems to be the head and replace a subject and verb, and it licenses the prepositional phrase, meaning that *98% claim* is incorrect. Here, in my opinion, the author intends to make the comment more briefly, and to emphasize the inaccuracy and absurdity of the claim.

Finally, example 30) shows a prose-like group of parallel sentences to prove there is nowhere to hide and smoke in modern cities:

30) Can't hide at home anymore - it's NOT a smoke-friendly environment. And has become less so than ever. Coffee shops are out of the question - no smoking allowed, but incessant yacking on cell-phones and laptops encouraged. Bars are not part of the picture - deafening sports waffle at present, though that may change soon... Parks also **no can do** - it is now illegal to light up there... (US: 2012)

The author uses variation in each sentence, choosing phrases such as ‘out of the question’ and ‘not part of the picture’, which all express the same idea that these places are not good for people to hide. In the last sentence, the author chooses *no can do* again to convey the same meaning, and to avoid repetition.

The analysis above gives a detailed discussion of how *no can do*, as a fixed phrase, is used across English varieties and in different sentence structures. In the next section,

I will further study the variants of the phrase, which indicate its integration into English.

7.1.3. *The variants of no can do*

According to the COCA data, the expression *no can do* is not only used as a fixed phrase: as it has become more commonly accepted by English speakers and has adapted pragmatically, it has been grammaticalised (Matras and Sakel 2007: 830). In this process, the pivot *no can* has been retained, but the verb *do* has been substituted with other elements, resulting in the creation of new structures. 35 examples of such variants are found in the COCA data, some of which are discussed in the following paragraphs.

First among them, the verb *do* can be substituted by other verbs which express more specific meanings. This is common when the phrase is used as a negative response to a suggestion or an order, as in example 31):

31) 1st REPORTER: Sir, what would be the one piece of information that would be most dangerous for the Iraqis to know? "

PENTAGON BRIEFER: **No can answer.** I have time for two more questions.

(COCA: SPOK: ABC_Nightline)

Example 31) occurs at a press meeting, where the military officer refuses to answer the question from the reporter. According to the officer's response, he doesn't have time to answer many questions, so rejects any that he is unable or unwilling to answer, perhaps for security reasons. Therefore, the three-word rejection here sounds clear and efficient.

In some cases when the verb or verb phrase substituting *do* is transitive, like *hear* and *trace back* in examples 32) and 33), the expression can have an object added after this verb:

- 32) --Polly.
 --**No can hear you**, Greggie! I am on to you with the blender. (COCA: TV *How to Live with Your Parents*)
- 33) The only disadvantage of the skids is that they are not microchipped, so if I ever drop them off on a lonely road- **no can trace them back** (COCA Blog 2012)

In example 32), speaker B tells A that she can't hear him because of the noise of the blender, while the speaker in example 33) is commenting on the disadvantage of a new type of skids, and 'no can trace them back' indicates the consequence of dropping these off. Both speakers add a pronoun to the phrase to indicate the object.

Finally, the phrase can be further extended by adding adverbials and various modifiers, which help to express more concrete meanings, as in examples 34) and 35):

- 34) BHO's college records have been sealed; and it seems **no can validate much at all about his past**, other than what he has written about himself. (COCA Blog 2012)
- 35) Since **no can actually know for sure how Buffett feels about any management and how this prompts him to buy**; they can never duplicate his success; no matter how well they duplicate the financial criteria. (COCA Web)

It is possible that there is a missing word 'one' in these two examples as in 'no **one** can validate/know...', which makes the sentences grammatical in Standard English. However, since more than one examples of these are found in the corpus, I regard them as intentional uses of 'no can' structure. In example 34), the basic structure *no can do* has been altered by at least four steps: 1. *do* is substituted with a specific verb *validate*; 2. the pronoun *much* is added as the object of *validate*; 3. the adverbial *at all* is attached to *much*; 4. *about his past* is added as the complement of the verb *validate*. This extended phrase means 'nobody else can find evidence of this person's past'. Similarly in example 35), the phrase is even longer as it has been extended with more elements, which include two adverb phrases *actually* and *for sure* which modify the verb *know*, and two coordinated subordinate clauses starting with *how*,

which function as the object of the verb *know*. These two examples show very well-integrated use of the borrowed item in English.

7.1.4. Summary

In the first case study of *no can do*, I have investigated the process of indirect borrowing through the English pattern replication of Chinese can-wish phrases *bu xing*, *buneng*, and *bu keyi*. By comparing the uses and pragmatic functions of the model forms in Chinese and the borrowed form in English, I have also analyzed the process of pragmatic adaptation into the RL.

The replicated structure *no can do* has fewer functions in English because it is restricted by its syntactic structure. It is mostly found used as a fixed phrase, functioning to give refusal or a negative response, which is consistent with the basic pragmatic function of the original items in its SL. However, the uses of *bu xing* in Chinese to indicate a current situation or health condition is not found when it is replicated as *no can do* in English; and the use of *bu xing* and *bu neng* as post-modifiers of adjectives to indicate degree (the extreme state) also have no counterpart when the phrase is borrowed. On the other hand, the replicated form *no can do* is used as a pre-modifier of NPs, as in ‘*no can do* attitude’, which is a new function which shows pragmatic adaptation in the RL, although this usage is sometimes marked. The results also show that *no can do* undergoes the process from being used restrictively within a Chinese context imitating CPE speakers to becoming gradually accepted and more integrated into different varieties of English. Additionally, through pragmatic adaptation, *no can do* also grammaticalises: variants are structured by adding more elements to the pivot, such as objects, adverbials, and complements, and this results in more pragmatic functions and an increase in frequency.

7.2. Case study VII: *Long time no see*

The expression *long time no see* is a second Chinese borrowing into English which

shows the process of pattern replication, and is also influenced by CPE. The phrase was written as *longtime no hab see* in CPE (see further discussion of syntactic features of the CPE phrase and its development in Chapter 4, section 4.2.2). The current English structure is formed after the Chinese pattern 好久不见 *hao jiu bu jian* and translated from Chinese into English word for word, as shown below:

好久 <i>hǎo jǐu</i>	不 <i>bù</i>	见 <i>jiàn</i>
long time	not/ no	see/ meet

According to the *OED*, in English this is mostly used as a greeting marker, meaning ‘it is a long time since we last saw each other’. However, the *OED* doesn’t give detailed information about the etymology of the phrase, but notes CPE as the more likely source, because of its word-for-word rendering of the Chinese structure⁸⁴.

7.2.1 好久不见 *in the SL Chinese*

In contemporary Chinese, *hao jiu bu jian* is one of the most frequently used greeting markers, both in spoken and written language. Usually, the phrase is used on occasions where the interlocutor wants to show hospitality and requires a common opening topic to ‘break the ice’, and the other interlocutor often responds with the same expression. It can be used in a wide range of contexts, from casual to formal, and to addressees of almost all age groups and social status. In this section, I will discuss the pragmatic functions of *long time no see (hao jiu bu jian)* in the SL Chinese and analyse the various emotions it can convey in different contexts.

The basic function of the phrase is to greet an interlocutor(s), and this is the case in all examples in the corpus. The following discussions will focus on the different

⁸⁴ Note that the origin of *long time no see* is not yet proved. Shi (1991) regards it as simplified form of a CPE expression *longtime no hab see you*; some language users argue that the phrase originated in native American pidgin English; it is also simply treated by some scholars as modeled on contemporary Chinese English (e.g. Fang 2008).

The current study follows the etymology in the *OED*, regarding the phrase as ‘apparently of CPE origin’ and ‘modeled on a Chinese phrase’, because evidence show that the original phrase was already established in CPE and has had significant influence on the language spoken by Chinese immigrants.

emotions or intentions of the speakers using this greeting term in different contexts, the illocutionary forces it might have in conversations, and how the addressees (if there are) interpret it according to their responses.

First of all, in CCL, *hao jiu bu jian* is found most frequently in literary works when it is used not only as a common greeting marker, but also an affectionate expression between speakers who have a close relationship. One of the most famous love songs in China, written by Eason Chan, is named ‘好久不见 *Long Time No See*’, and tells a humble love story of a protagonist who still loves and misses his ex-lover so much after their break-up that he dreams of meeting her again, even if it only means that he can say *hao jiu bu jian* to her. However, the depth of his emotion is indicated by the song and the lyrics, as every verse ends with this simple phrase.

Example 36) below is extracted from a fictional work, and the dialogue depicts a reunion scene between a couple who have been apart for decades, while the conversation in example 37) occurs when the speaker is missing his lover. Again, the deep emotion of both protagonists is fully conveyed by their saying the phrase:

36) 当他将要从市子身边走过时，猛然转过身，“好久不见了。”“好久不见了。”

“Long time no see.” “Long time no see”

清野沉静而又郑重地说了两遍 ... 他声音虽有些沙哑，但却蕴藏着深深的情感，宛如从胸膛中发出的唤海的强音。

Qingye didn't even look at Shizi. But when he was about to pass by, he turned around suddenly and said, “**Long time no see.**” “**Long time no see**” he repeated his words again, quietly and sincerely, ... His voice was low and hoarse, but expressed strong feelings, from the heart of hearts, like the storm on the sea. (CCL: Literary works)

37) 卢嘉川好像没有听见一般，仍然望着窗外稀疏的竹林出着神。过了一会儿，忽然低声自语道：“已经 好久不见啦。……”

has been long time no see

“是不是为她——为林道静苦恼起来啦？”罗大方很善于观察人的思想、感情的变化。“我看你有些喜欢她——为什么不大胆地表示一下呢？”

Lu was looking at the view outside and lost in thoughts. Then he spoke in a low mumble, as if to himself: “**it's been such a long time...**”

“Are you worrying about Jing?” Luo is sensitive about others' feeling, “I know you

like her, why don't you just be brave and talk to her?" (CCL: Literary works)

In example 36), speaker Qingye and Shizi were a couple years ago but were separated and then lost contact with each other because of unexpected events; neither of them have forgotten their love during this time. This is the scene when the two speakers suddenly meet at a street. Qingye says *hao jiu bu jian* twice, but in different tone and manner each time. The first time, he seems calm and casual, as he doesn't say anything or even look at Shizi, until he is about to pass her by, but we can still infer that he is actually so emotionally affected that he can't find other words to talk to her. Then he repeats *hao jiu bu jian*, and this time his voice and tone are described in more details: 'quietly, sincerely, low and hoarse...'. So in this example the repetition of *hao jiu bu jian* shows the changes of Qingye's emotional state after seeing his long-lost lover, from nervous and excited to firm and sincere. In using this greeting marker, Qingye expresses profound feelings, stronger than any other/more words, which include years of concern and worry, the regret for the time gone by, the happiness of reunion, and most importantly, the thankfulness of making sure that they are still in love with each other despite all changes and difficulties. In example 45) however, Lu does not actually have an addressee, and his *hao jiu bu jian* is apparently not a greeting marker, but more like an exclamation said to the speaker himself. But judging from the emotion of the speaker in speaking aloud, and the description of his current status, such as 'lost in thoughts', his words can be interpreted as said to the girl he is thinking of. The illocutionary meaning and emotions he conveys by simply saying *hao jiu bu jian* can be indicated by Luo's response. According to his words, what he learns from Lu is that firstly, Lu is thinking of Jing, and secondly, Lu cares about Jing very much but he can't express his affection to her, only saying *hao jiu bu jian* to himself. And this is also the reason why Luo comforts Lu and encourages him to be brave. So here the use of *hao jiu bu jian*, and the speaker's unspoken words (the rest of '.....'), expresses complicated emotions, including missing the girl he loves, worrying about her life, regretting not being with her currently, and being hesitant to propose, etc. The discussion of the

meaning of the expression here and the analysis in the following paragraphs are based on context of use, and in some cases the lack of wider context or background information about the text makes it more difficult to interpret a particular instance. However, I suggest as full an interpretation as I can in each case to help analyze the use of *hao jiu bu jian* and its pragmatic functions.

Apart from the cases where *hao jiu bu jian* is used to express love and affection, the expression also has illocutionary functions, and such functions are usually accomplished in particular contexts. Take 38) and 39) as illustrations:

38) 大太太站了起来迎上去说：“真是稀客！好久不见了！”

really is rare guest long time no see

自从“五反”运动以后，徐家的亲戚朋友很少往来，今天见了她，显得格外亲热。

(文学\上海的早晨)

The housewife rushed up and greeted her guests: “I didn’t expect you to come! **Long time no see!**” Her relatives and friends seldom showed up since the Rectification Campaign, so she was extraordinarily happy to see them. (CCL: Literary works)

39) 这几年我同他虽然平时接触不多，但每隔一两个星期，我总是去他家看望他，否则他就会来电话询问：“你忙什么呀？好久不见你啦！”

you be busy with what long time no see you [interj.]

Although I didn’t see him much often at work these years, I used to visit him every few weeks, otherwise he would call and ask “**Long time no see**, what are you busy with?” (CCL: Newspapers)

The speaker in 38) is so glad to have guests, as she hasn’t had friends or relatives visiting for a long time, probably because her family fame is affected owing to the current politic campaign. After being lonely and isolated, her saying *hao jiu bu jian* here expresses her surprise and gratefulness to finally have someone’s company, after days or months of grievance of her life being influenced during the hard time. Moreover, this expression also implicitly indicates that she hopes the guests will keep in touch, because she feels neglected and frustrated by their lack of contact. Similarly, apart from the basic function of greeting and checking on the other interlocutor, *hao jiu bu jian* in example 39) also has the implicature of informing the addressee to get in touch with the speaker more often, which helps to express the

speaker's attitude towards the other interlocutor, and his request to 'remember to call/ visit me regularly, and don't be too obsessed with work'.

In the examples above, the expression is mostly used to express positive emotions or attitude, such as love, hospitality, gratefulness, and concern. On other occasions, it also has the function of showing negative emotions, and expresses the speaker's discontent towards the addressee, as in examples 40) and 41):

40) 冯永祥一坐到卡座里，马上就微愠地质问林宛芝：“好久不见，连电话也不愿接的样子，大概把我给忘记了。” (CCL: Literary works 上海的早晨)

Yongxiang interrogated Lin with slight anger once he arrived at the table: “**long time no see**, and you seems unwilling to answer my phone; you must have forgotten me!”

The description of the speaker's manner in example 40) suggests that he is in a bad mood and feels angry when talking to the other interlocutor, so *hao jiu bu jian* in this context shows his discontent and criticizes the other speaker for not seeing him and ignoring his phone call. However, another possible interpretation of this conversation is that the speaker is actually not angry, but only feels unhappy about the girl's behaviour and indifferent attitude towards him, and his 'scolding' here can be regarded as a slight complaint in a flirtatious manner. Owing to the lack of context for the extract, it is hard to tell which interpretation is more likely, but both of them show that the expression can convey relatively negative connotations, compared to the earlier examples.

Mostly, the phrase is used between interlocutors who haven't seen each other for a long time, but there are also examples where the speaker doesn't actually part from the other for long, and they say *hao jiu bu jian* at reunion. In this case, the expression is given additional pragmatic meaning and functions. 41) and 42) provide examples:

41) 五反运动以后，潘信诚第一次出来参加这样的宴会，见了徐义德，马上想到朱延年，不禁感慨万端，意味深长地说，“好久不见了，你好。”
Long time no see hello

“你好，”徐义德会意地说，“真的，好久不见了。”

Really long time no see [tense]

他们两个人的感慨立刻传染了大家，宋其文抹一抹胡须说：“我们好像有多少年不见了，简直如同隔世，仔细一想又没有隔多少时间。这是怎么一回事呀？”

Since the Rectification Campaign, it was the first time Pan had been out to attend such dinner party. When he met Xu, he suddenly thought of their friends and sighed emotionally, “**Long time no see**, how are you”

Xu quickly understood and repeated, “yes it’s **been really a long time**”.

All the other guests immediately resonated with them. Song said, “it seems that we haven’t met for ages, but it isn’t that long. Why?” (CCL: Literary work 上海的早晨)

In example 41), Pan, Xu, and Song meet at a party after a political campaign. Pan and Xu say *hao jiu bu jian* to each as greetings, expressing their relief at meeting and their care for their best friends. However, according to Song’s words, the campaign hasn’t gone on for a long time, but has still felt lengthy, so it is reasonable to infer that this campaign must have resulted in great hardship in people’s lives that make them feel that a long period has passed. Therefore, *hao jiu* here indicates tough times and difficulties, and for the speakers, using the phrase also expresses their regret about others’ suffering, and their wish that things will improve soon so that they can meet each other more flexibly.

hao jiu bu jian also has humorous or rhetorical functions when it is used on occasions where the interlocutors are actually rather close and have seen each other lately, as in 42), which is extracted from a famous memoir (of Chairman Mao Zedong):

42) 毛主席是一位伟大人物，又是非常慈祥的长者，和蔼可亲的普通人。...我在门厅里等候主席一起出发，当主席走出办公室在门厅里见到我时，幽默地说：“好久不见了”（实际上几天之内已见过好多次），引得身边卫士都笑了。（CCL: reader’s digest)

Chairman Mao was a great man and an amiable elder... when he saw me waiting in the hallway, he gave me a humorous greeting: “**Long time no see**” (we had actually met several times already these days) and amused all the bodyguards.

The anecdote about Chairman Mao in 42) shows that he is making jokes with the

narrator by saying *hao jiu bu jian*, because they have actually met each other frequently, judging from the narrator's comment in parentheses. So here, the expression used to greet a person who the speaker has met frequently over period of time has a joking and humorous function, reducing the social distance between the speakers and expressing opposite pragmatic meanings, such as 'we have met so often recently' or 'It's you again!'. It is notable that this use of *hao jiu bu jian* is usually restricted to particular addressees, such as close friends or junior colleagues, as it is less likely that it would be said jokingly on serious occasions or to someone more powerful.

Finally, there are cases when *hao jiu bu jian* has special pragmatic functions which are not common among greeting markers, and these cases usually result from particular contexts. For example, the conversation in 43) occurs between two speakers who have separated for a long time and are no longer friends:

- 43) 马慕韩匆匆走进去，并没有注意徐义德惊慌的神色，伸过手去，一把紧紧握着徐义德的手，关切地说：“好久不见了，你好吗？”“好久不见了，”徐义德冷冷地重复了一句。他也握着马慕韩的手，应付地说，“你好呀”

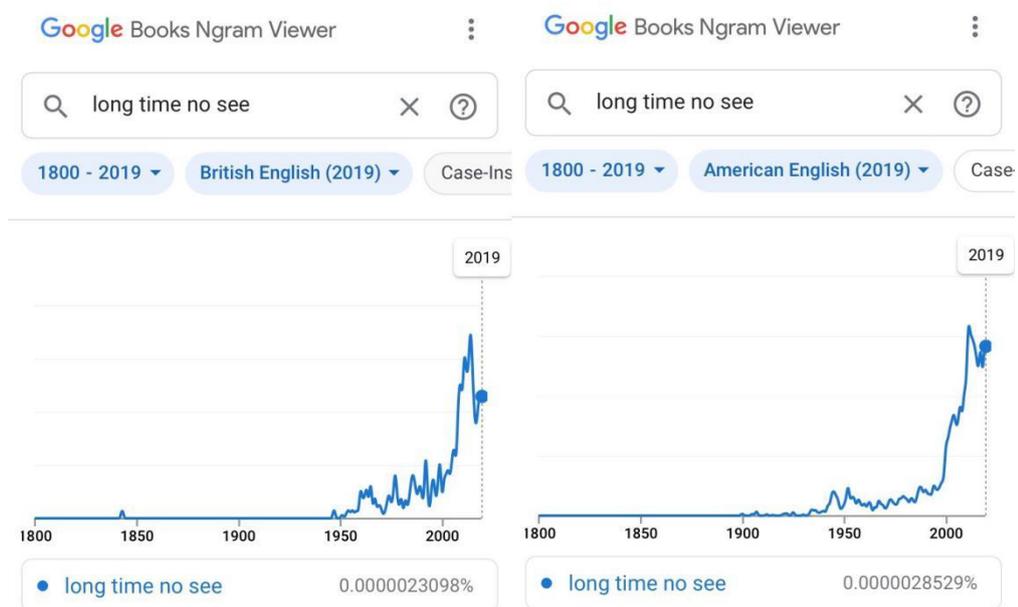
Mamuhan walked in rapidly and held Xu's hands without noticing his awkward look, he asked solicitously: "**long time no see**, how are you doing?" "**Long time no see,**" Xu responded, indifferently. He then held back his hand and said perfunctorily: "How are you" (CCL: Literary work)

In this example, the attitude of Ma and Xu towards each other are in stark contrast: while Ma is described as talking 'solicitously', Xu has a 'perfunctory' and 'indifferent' manner. So even though both of them use the expression *hao jiu bu jian*, their emotions and intended pragmatic meanings are obviously different. The former expresses the speaker's concern about the other and happiness at seeing him again. The latter however, is just like an automatic polite response, and by ignoring Ma's caring attitude, Xu shows his coldness and nonchalance towards him.

7.2.2 The use of long time no see in English

As the *OED* suggests, *long time no see* was first used in North America, and its level of use in AmE and BrE varies, as Figure 7.1. shows:

Figure 7.1: The frequency of *long time no see* in BrE and AmE (Google N-grams)



The data for *long time no see* collected from Google n-gram viewer shows that although the general growth movement of its frequency in BrE is basically in line with AmE, the use of the idiom has been slightly more frequent in AmE than in BrE since 2000. Correspondingly, figures from the GloWbE also suggests that the phrase is more established in AmE than in other general international Englishes, as shown in Table 7.2:

Table 7.2: The frequency of *long time no see* across English varieties (per million)

English variety	GB	US	Australia	Canada	HK	Singapore	Malaysia
Occurrences	28	34	6	5	9	14	14
Frequency	0.072	0.088	0.04	0.037	0.22	0.32	0.33

Interestingly, it is evident that *long time no see* appears to be more popular in Asian English varieties where speakers are mostly Chinese-English bilinguals, e.g. in HK, Singapore, and Malaysia, in contrast to *no can do* mentioned in section 7.1.2. The similar structures of the phrase and its Chinese source may be the most likely reason,

as it has developed from the original CPE form *longtime no hab see* and replicates the pattern of *hao jiu bu jian*, and has therefore become well-accepted by bilingual speakers in these speech communities. The main focus of the current study is to study the borrowing and integration of the phrase in BrE and AmE, so I will not discuss further its usage in Asian Englishes here.

There is no obvious explanation for the greater frequency of the phrase in AmE than in BrE in recent decades, but comments from speakers suggest that it may relate to the slightly different way it is perceived. Some comments extracted from an online forum for English users suggests that AmE speakers use the expression more commonly, as a relatively informal greeting to someone close to the speaker, while in BrE the idiom is strikingly perceived as rather old and dated. Table 7.3 presents these comments:

Table 7.3: Native English speakers' comments on using *long time no see*⁸⁵

BrE SPEAKERS	AmE SPEAKERS
I've used it and heard it used - but only last century! I don't think it is very common these days - not archaic or even really old-fashioned. Just not very popular any more. (Scotland)	It's certainly alive and well in my part of U.S. It's hard to imagine that anybody would find it offensive. (NY)
In Europe or the UK, it most certainly wouldn't be considered offensive - or even remarkable. However, it just sounds strange to hear this old expression coming out of young student mouths! Very old and dated. This one was a phrase used in Trading English - a kind of	A perfect greeting no matter what age. (NY)
	Very commonly used, however I would suggest saving it for a close friend, as it may sound overly-familiar, otherwise. (Iowa)

These comments are based on speakers' intuition, and do not represent the whole speech community, so cannot be assumed to be representative or definitive, but they may be indicative of more widespread attitudes.

Therefore, in the following case study of *long time no see*, I focus on data from

⁸⁵ Extracted from *forum.wordreference.com*. Date: June 2016. Retrieved August 20, 2020

COCA because the phrase is slightly more frequent in AmE. In COCA, the idiom appears 362 times in total, and is not evenly distributed among different text genres: 271 tokens occur in movie/TV scripts, 48 in fiction (almost all of the examples are in quoted dialogues), 14 in spoken materials, 27 in blog or other web data, and only 2 in newspapers or magazine. These statistics apparently show that *long time no see* can be used in various text types, but is most frequently used in speech as a greeting marker.

The pragmatic functions of the idiom in different genres and contexts can be analyzed in examples extracted from COCA. First of all, example 44) is a recorded broadcast interview, and the excerpted dialogue is an opening warm-up talk between the host and the guest.

- 44) [McEWEN Reporting]This morning, as part of our official countdown to the Academy Awards, we want to look back with Robert Osborne. He is the author of “65 Years of the Oscar: The Official History of the Academy Awards.” Robert joins us this -- this morning.
Mr-ROBERT-OSBORNE-: Good morning.
McEWEN: Good to see you, Robert. Good to see you. **Long time no see.**
Mr-OSBORNE: Yes, it is.
McEWEN: Well, let's get right to it. A question... (SPOK: CBS_Morning)

In this example, the host firstly intends to express his warm welcome to his interviewee by repeating ‘good to see you’, and then he adds *long time no see* to finish his greeting, showing that the guest is an old friend and he is glad to meet him again. So here *long time no see* functions as a greeting that shows hospitality and is intended to foster a closer interpersonal relationship, or at least to give the sense of a close relationship to the audience.

In example 45), the dialogue takes place between crew members, and the speaker hasn't seen the other interlocutor for a long time:

- 45) A: We need to see the lieutenant.

C: Okay, hang on. Lieutenant, you got company.

B: Well, well. **Long time no see**, John. I almost didn't believe it when I heard you were alive.

A: Yeah, still alive and kicking. (COCA *The Orville*)

Here, the lieutenant has assumed John dead because she hasn't seen him for a long time. So *long time no see* in this situation functions as a warm greeting, according to the speaker's tone (and his repeating 'well'), and it perhaps also expresses his care about John during this period and his surprise and happiness at meeting him again.

Unlike the two examples above, *long time no see* isn't always used to someone who the speaker physically sees, as shown by example 46) which is extracted from a blog post:

46) Hey guys, **long time no see!!** I'm really sorry I've been MIA.. I haven't had time to read at all which makes me really sad.. I have tons of books to read for uni...(COCA: blog)

In this example, the author writes to his followers to apologize for having been *MIA* (missing in action) for a long time. Here the author's use of *long time no see* is not to someone who he is meeting in person; in fact, the phrase is a common greeting in this kind of online context. And the emotions the author would like to express by using this idiom are his regret for not writing blogs posts very often, the fact that he has missed his followers, and his delight about 'seeing' them again after a long period of time.

The last example is a bit unusual, and is a use of *long time no see* found in the genre of newspapers and magazine:

47) **#Long time no see**: Cody Allen returned from the paternity list on Friday, as the Indians optioned right-hander Adam Plutko to Triple-A Columbus. # (NEWS: cleveland.com)

Here the idiom is not treated as a greeting marker for communicative use, but as the

headline of a sports news about a baseball player's comeback from paternity leave. The four word idiom used in this situation describes the current status of the baseball player, who is playing again after being on leave for a long time, and the attitude of his fans and audiences, who have missed him a great deal.

To summarize, it is evident that in its process of integration into English, *long time no see* becomes more accepted as an colloquial idiomatic expression, despite its non-standard syntax. And most examples of *long time no see* in COCA show that the phrase is usually used as a greeting marker, expressing speakers' emotions and attitudes, including friendliness, happiness, surprise, concern, and sometimes pity and sadness. These results show consistency with the pragmatic functions of the borrowed item in its SL. However, the functions of the phrase to express deeper emotions and affections found in Chinese discourses seems not to manifest in current results in English. In other words, the Chinese phrase *hao jiu bu jian* can be used in either formal or casual ways, and it carries the connotation 'caring about or missing the other person' already; but when a native English speaker intends to express deeper emotions, they may perhaps choose another expression which is more formal, rather than use this simplified and colloquial phrase, e.g. *I haven't seen you for a long time*, or just to be straightforward: *I have missed you so much*.

In the next section, I will list and analyse a few variants of *long time no see* using examples from COCA. Though the phrase appears to be used most frequently as an idiomatic fixed phrase, it can be used in other ways and this shows how its pragmatic functions have changed.

7.2.3. *The variants of long time no see in English*

According to data from COCA, several variants have been created by speakers of the RL, based on the borrowed structure, again showing grammaticalisation (Matras and Sakel 2007; see also section 7.1.3 above). Such a process in turn contributes to an extension of the structure's distributional context and potentially an increase in its

frequency, and sometimes results in changes to its pragmatic functions.

There are 63 examples of variants of *long time no see* in COCA, which can be syntactically summarized into four categories:

- a. *Long time no* VP (with a verb other than *see*)
- b. *Long time no see* + complement/object (NP)
- c. *Long time no see* + Adv.
- d. *Long time no* + complement (usually NP)

The first variant is the most frequently used, and mostly keeps the basic pragmatic function of the original structure, serving as a greeting marker. Different verbs, such as *hear*, *speak*, *visit*, etc., are used to substitute *see*, modifying the phrase for a wider range of occasions, including letters, telephone communications and online chatting. Examples are shown below:

48) Hey Amanda, Monique Ortiz here. **Long time no speak!** (COCA Web 2012)

49) --Eric! **Long time no hear.** You married yet?
--October, Ari. I assume you'll be there. (COCA: TV *Entourage*)

Example 48) is a greeting taking place in a telephone communication, and the interlocutors have not met each other in person. So Monique's use of *speak* rather than *see* is suitable for a telephone context. Other examples of this in COCA include *long time no talk* and *long time no visit*, where the variant uses of the phrase adapt it to a wider range of contexts. In example 49), however, the speaker's intention by greeting the other interlocutor with *long time no hear* is not to focus on his initiative, but on Eric the listener's feedback, as *no hear* is short for *no hear from you*. So here Ari's greeting has an implicature that he intends to ask for information from his listener, specifically about his wedding, and to encourage Eric to contact him more often.

Summing up these four different variants of *long time no see*, it is obvious that by

substituting *see* with other verbs which describe actions of communication, like *talk*, *speak*, *hear*, etc., the speaker's intention and emotion towards the listener is more specifically expressed. Apart from these common verbs, there are other verbs or verb phrases which can also be used in the structure *long time no VP*, as 50) exemplifies:

- 50) A: Oh, hey, Scott. **Long time no beat up**, huh? What are you doin' here?
B: Oh, actually, I was - - I was tryin' to buy some beer, but, uh, you know, they carded me, so... (COCA:Grounded for Life)
(*the speaker A and his brother Neil used to beat B up all the time in elementary school)

In this dialogue, as the given background information shows, speaker B has previously and repeatedly been abused by A, so A's use of *beat up* in place of *see* is provocative. A's intention is not to express that he has missed Scott or show his happiness at meeting him after a long time. On the contrary, A is being domineering and threatening B, which can be inferred from his tone of contempt (using short sentences and the interjection *huh*), and this also explains why B's response is hesitant and stammered.

Other types of variants are relatively less frequent in COCA. As the borrowed item *long time no see* is a word-for-word replicated structure from Chinese (or pidgin language), and is an extragrammatical idiom, it is thought to violate rather than adhere to common grammatical rules for the Standard English, which limits its productivity. In other words, in the case of the first type of variation, language users still treat the item as a fixed expression to some extent, and usually only substitute the verb *see* with other verbs without changing the syntactic structure, so that the process does not radically change the pragmatic meaning or function. However, since the syntactic property of the phrase makes it less likely to fit into the standard sentence structure, language users may find it harder to treat it as a compositional phrase. This may account for the rarity of types B, C and D.

As noted before, due to the extragrammatical nature of the expression *long time no see*, it is relatively hard to define an accurate term/ category for the added part of the

variant structures. In the following discussion, I will treat them as complements or adverbials of the idiom as a whole. For instance, in example 51), a pronoun *you* is added at the end of the structure to give it an ‘object’:

- 51) A: Hello! Hey, black! I mean, Sharonne. What’s up man? It’s... It’s Kevin.
B: Are you there?
A: Yes! **Long time no see you**, right? (COCA: Video Playback: TNN's First 15 Years)

Here, *long time no see* has a specific addressee *you* which is the person to whom the speaker is talking. This usage dates back to CPE, and in recent years, other NPs are also used in the same way, such as *him*, *her*, *celebrities*, and *strangers*.

The idiom can also be modified by adverbials. This usage is even rarer and I could only find one case in COCA, as shown in example 52):

- 52) A: Hello, Stan. **Long time no partially see**.
B: Oh, my God!
C: Stan, who is this? Just the most awesome super spy that ever lived!
B: Kids, meet Jack Smith, my real dad. (COCA: Movie *American Dad*)
(*A claiming to be Stan(B)'s real father shows up at a funeral, not long after Stan explains that the man to whom everyone knew to be his father was in reality a stranger)

In this dialogue, speaker A inserts an adverb *partially* into the structure, (probably) meaning that A and B haven’t seen each other to some extent, but are not completely out of touch. The context suggests that speakers A and B may have been reaching out to each other constantly, but no other person present knows that.

Finally, the last type of variation of *long time no see* involves replacing the verb element with an NP complement, which changes the greeting expression into something very different. Examples are listed as below:

- 53) There's something in the air? Shadows everywhere? (owl_hoots) (Rustling) (Laughter)
Henry! Henry! Hey, Dude, **Long Time No Scare!** (COCA: Movie *Girl Vs. Monster*)
54) [off-screen voice] More and more Hollywood stars are using the indie showcase to

establish credibility, show new sides of their talent and maybe revive a stalled career. Here are some stars to watch at this year's festival, which runs through Saturday.
Host: **Long time no hit** for the Field of Dreams star... (COCA: MAG Time)

In example 53), the speaker is telling a ghost story while the background soundtrack creates a frightening atmosphere. So here *long time no scare* shows the excitement of the speaker in telling a horror story after a long period, and it also gives advance warning to his listener(s), indicating that the speaker is about to make the story even more scary. Example 54) is the opening comment of a new item on a broadcast programme on entertainment. The host of an entertainment programme often gets exciting news, so *long time* here is used in an exaggerated way. And this exaggeration expresses his surprise and excitement about reporting the upcoming news, and also has the function of attracting his audiences' attention and informing them that the movie he is going to introduce is exciting and everyone should pay attention to it. It can also be interpreted as indicating that the actor who is about to be discussed hasn't been in a successful film for a significant period.

7.2.4 Summary

In the case study of English pattern replication of Chinese structure 好久不见 *hao jiu bu jian*, I have investigated the pragmatic functions of the structure in Chinese, and have also studied its uses when it is replicated into English in the form of *long time no see*. In Chinese, the phrase is used on occasions where the other interlocutor is either present or not, to express the speaker's deep affections. It can also function as normal greeting marker to start a conversation, or respond to others, without carrying any emotion. It is found usually to have an illocutionary force of asking the addressee to keep in touch. Moreover, the speaker's emotions and attitudes conveyed by using the phrase can be either positive or negative, according to different contexts. Finally, the phrase sometimes has a rhetorical function when used between close friends who meet often, and it is intended to be humorous and reduce social distances.

The replicated structure *long time no see* in the RL English is also mostly found used as a greeting marker to express a speaker's emotions and attitudes, including friendliness, happiness, surprise, concern, and sometimes pity and sadness. The results show consistency with the pragmatic functions of the borrowed item in its SL. However, the function of using the phrase to achieve a humorous effect is not found in the data collected in this study. More importantly, in the course of its pragmatic adaptation, beside the instances where the borrowed phrase is used as a fixed idiomatic expression, it has also grammaticalised and becomes more integrated in the RL. Evidence shows that more variant syntactic structures of the phrase have been created and have increased in frequency, and this results in an extension of its distributional context.

7.3. Summary and implication: the present and future of expressions of CPE origin

This chapter investigates the third type of pragmatic borrowing in Andersen's (2017) framework (see further section 1.3). Through the two case studies of the CPE borrowing *no can do* and *long time no see*, I have discussed the process and mechanism of pattern replication of Chinese phrases, and analyzed their integration into English, focusing on changes in pragmatic functions and on grammaticalisation.

Compared to the two cases studies in chapter 5 about borrowed interjections (and politeness markers) from Chinese into English, corpus data shows that the two expressions are more widely accepted and used more frequently in English, perhaps due to their longer history, and deeper integration into English. Both expressions change from being used restrictively within a Chinese context imitating non-native English speakers to being gradually accepted and integrated more and more into the RL.

In the course of pragmatic adaptation into English, both expressions have lost some of their meanings, usages, and pragmatic functions, resulting in the restrictive uses.

For example, the uses of *bu xing* in Chinese to indicate current situation or health condition and to emphasize degree (especially extreme state) are lost after its being replicated into *no can do* in English; and while in Chinese, the three forms of *bu xing*, *bu neng*, and *bu keyi* each have particular functions, found in various constructions, *no can do* has fewer functions in English because it is restricted by its fixed syntactic structure; finally, the humorous use of *hao jiu bu jian* to indicate the opposite meaning is not found in the current data when it is replicated into *long time no see* in English.

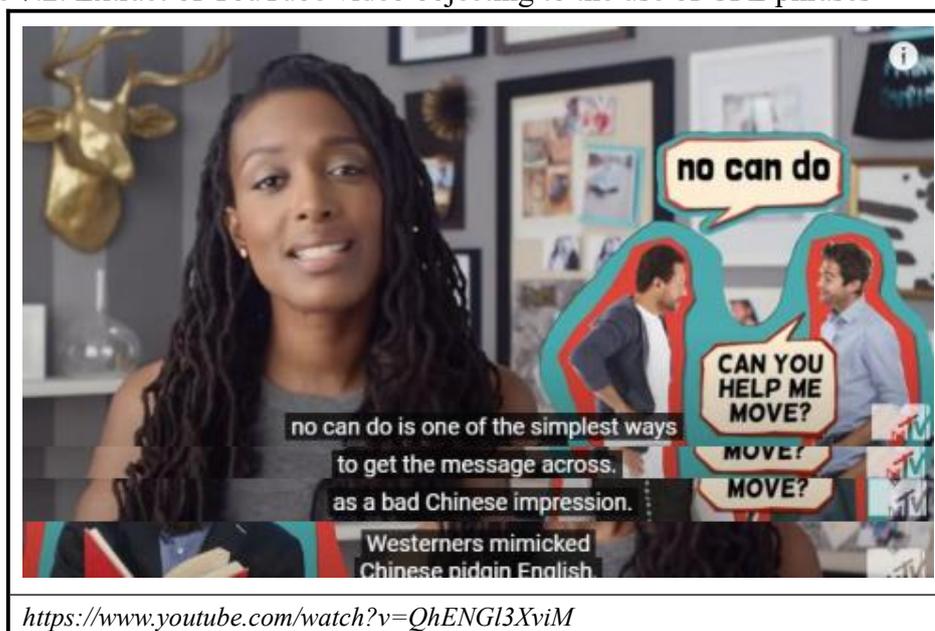
As a result of pattern replication, the two expressions have both undergone grammaticalisation, so that more derived variants have been formed and used. In turn, this has contributed to the extension of the new structure's distributional context in the RL. For example, English speakers may keep the pivot elements of the replicated items (*no can* of the negative response marker *no can do*, and *long time no* in the greeting marker *long time no see*), and add more elements, such as lexical verbs, NP complements, adverbials, or subordinate clause, to form new structures, which are used in more contexts and have new pragmatic functions.

There have always been disputes over CPE (see section 4.2.2), owing to its lack of standardisation. Similarly, attitudes among native English speakers towards using such expressions of CPE origin, also vary greatly. For example, some linguists accuse expressions like *no can do* and *long time no see* of being 'evil products of language contact', which 'polluted English' in terms of lexicon and syntax (e.g. Chen 1999:54). Additionally, the term 'mock language' has been applied to describe the way RL speakers deliberately use expressions or linguistic features of clearly SL origin to imitate SL culture (see further Hill 1995)⁸⁶. 'Mock language' is sometimes used between native speakers to portray ethnicity, thus is often questioned about its

⁸⁶ Hill first investigates this phenomenon around 1990s when 'mock Spanish' is commonly used in the southwestern United States. E.g. adding 'o' or 'el' to the end of an English word imitates Spanish, such as *no problemo*, which shows a stereotype that Spanish speakers sound 'loose' and lazy. (Retrieve online, November 11, 2022)

appropriateness. Misuses of certain expressions may lead to ignorance, misunderstanding and even racism, especially when globalisation becomes much faster than in the past (see further Rampton 1995, Hill 1998, Reyes and Lo 2009, Kroskrity 2020). Therefore, some linguists and native English speakers uphold the view that speakers should be cautious about using such phrases, noting that their CPE origin may demonstrate racism (see also section 9.4.1), as shown in Figure 7.2:

Figure 7.2. Extract of YouTube video objecting to the use of CPE phrases



Heated discussions are found about whether *long time no see* is ‘proper’ English, and most native speakers agree that it is a standard colloquial phrase which is well-accepted in informal spoken English, but a few comments also suggest that it is appropriate to ‘save the phrase for close friends’ as it may sound over-familiar (see also Table 7.3). Nunberg et al propose the concept of ‘Exagrammatical Idioms’, i.e. idioms that cannot be parsed by the general syntactic rules for the language (Nunberg et al 1994: 515), justifying the use of such non-standard phrases in colloquial language. They argue that structures such as *long time no see* and *no can do* are idiomatically combined expressions which are lexically regular but syntactically and semantically irregular, and it is acceptable to use such idioms, especially in informal spoken language.

Additionally, the expressions of CPE origin discussed in this chapter are simple enough in structure, compared to their equivalents in standard English, such as ‘I haven’t seen you for a long time’, ‘it has been a long time’, and ‘no, you/I can’t do it’. This may account for the preference of using the CPE phrases in particular contexts, i.e. for purposes of communicative efficiency (see further section 2.5.2 and section 9.3.1.3). Therefore, although CPE has already declined as a variety of English, some words and phrases of CPE origin that have survived should still be cherished in contemporary English, because of their unique pragmatic functions, especially in spoken language; and through the initiative and creativity of English speakers, the popularity of the CPE expressions, as well as more examples like these, looks unlikely to decrease in the near future.

Chapter 8

Borrowing of Affixes into Chinese

In the field of language borrowing, there has been a great deal of discussion among scholars about whether grammatical items or syntactic structures can be borrowed or replicated from one language to another. For example, Sankoff (2002) claims that the borrowability of grammar or syntax is questionable. However, Yaron Matras and his colleagues have done a series of empirical studies on the borrowing of grammatical structures, which include the borrowing of affixes. Elvik and Matras (2006) firstly analyze a variety of borrowed grammatical items, including affixes, in Romani languages. Matras (2007) conducts a quantitative analysis and case studies on borrowing of structural categories in 27 languages, from phonemes and morphemes to syntactic structures and word order. He then sets out a borrowing hierarchy, on the basis of previous studies (Matras 2009; for a further explanation of borrowing hierarchies, see Chapter 2, section 2.6), and summarizes a set of rules, including the following: free forms are more easily borrowed than bound forms, and the borrowing of derivational items is more frequent than that of inflectional items. As an interpretation, bound forms are usually inherently related more closely to their external structure than free forms, and items that have functional properties, e.g. expressing inflection, are also less easily borrowed. This is the reason why the borrowing of affixes is relatively more constrained, since they are bound morphemes which express abstract meanings and function to denote grammatical relations. Nevertheless, these studies conclude that although grammatical items are thought to be less borrowable than some lexical items, there are still many examples of borrowing of this kind, and these are worth exploring.

The borrowing of affixes has received considerable interest in more recent research on language contact. For instance, Gardani (2008) focuses on the borrowing of inflectional affixes in 12 pairs of SLs and RLs. Seifart (2015) makes a difference

between direct and indirect affix borrowing, and suggests the criteria that lead to productive loan affixes. And finally, based on Seifart's (2013) AfBo (affix borrowing) database of 656 affixes borrowed across 100 language pairs, he conducts a quantitative investigation on the scale of borrowability of different types of affixes, e.g. inflection vs. derivation (Seifart 2017). However, little work has been done on the borrowing of affixes particularly between English and Chinese.

It is worth noting that English and Chinese have been in remote contact for centuries and have grammar systems entirely distinct from each other, which makes the borrowing of grammatical units less likely to happen (for a further discussion, see section 8.1.2.1 and section 8.2.2.1); it is questionable whether an English grammatical item can be adopted by Chinese speakers and integrate into the Chinese language. However, in recent decades, there has been an increase in Chinese learners of and greater penetration of English as a *lingua franca* in China, especially through more intense cross-language communication via the internet (see also section 4.3 in Chapter 4), and this has led to some grammatical items being borrowed. Some English affixes have been found used in Chinese, and are commonly used, particularly in Chinese internet language, including the progressive suffix *-ing* and the agentive suffix *-er*. Importantly, these affixes not only function as markers of grammatical relationships, as they do in the SL, but they have also been enriched with unique pragmatic meanings and functions in daily conversations, especially in specific contexts.

In the current study, I observe and analyze the borrowing of English affixes into Chinese. The case studies in this chapter discuss the suffix *-ing* and *-er*, which are both frequently used in contemporary Chinese. Unlike much recent research which focuses mainly on the syntactic/grammatical properties of the borrowed items, this study aims to observe the usage, integration, and pragmatic functions of the borrowed affixes through integration, and analyze the motivations for their borrowing and acceptance in Chinese.

8.1. Case study VIII: Borrowing of *-ing*

In contemporary Chinese, especially in spoken language and informal written contexts, the inflectional suffix *-ing* is used relatively frequently, and usually carries pragmatic connotations. For instance, the progressive suffix is frequently used in promotional advertising slogans, as in ‘大促销 *ing*’ (*SALES ing*), and in headlines of postings or articles, functioning to attract a reader’s attention. Unlike the case studies of borrowed English kin terms and endearments in Chinese in Chapter 5, which have been transliterated and can be used in Chinese scripts, the characters (e.g. 妈咪 *mami*, ‘mummy’ and 达令 *daling*, ‘darling’); the borrowed affixes discussed here are not translated or transliterated into Chinese characters, and they keep the original form from English in Roman letters *i*, *n*, and *g*. The following images in Figure 8.1 give visual evidence of the use of a combination of Chinese characters and the borrowed suffix *-ing*.

Figure 8.1: The suffix *-ing* used in posters, text emoji, subtitle design, and lyrics⁸⁷



The first picture in Figure 8.1 is a poster designed for a music chart. The borrowed item *ing*, capitalized and placed in large type at the most central and eye-catching

⁸⁷ Examples retrieved from *weibo.com* Accessed January 28, 2020.

position, is used as the name of the music chart and expresses a sense of immediacy and currentness, emphasizing that the music chart records the most trending and popular works at present. Examples like the text emoji 无语 (*wuyu*, ‘speechless’) plus *-ing* in picture 2 are also commonly used, especially in social media platforms, where normally the word before *ing* is an adjective denoting a person’s emotion. The combination of Chinese adjective and the borrowed suffix *-ing* serves to express the current emotional state of the speaker. Picture 3 shows one of the explanatory subtitles for a variety show, designed to give an immediate interpretation of the situation or the guests for the audiences. Here, the English borrowing *-ing* is attached to the phrase 等待上菜 (*dengdai shangcai*, ‘to wait to be served’), functioning as an attention-getting device to explain the reason why the guest has stopped talking and is looking elsewhere, which is also suggested by his stomach rumbling. Finally, picture 4 is the name of a hit song in 2005 composed and written by one of the most famous Chinese band, Mayday, which tells the story of people who are in love with others, and the suffix *-ing* is attached to the verb 恋爱 (*lian’ai*, ‘to be in love’).

8.1.1. *-ing in Modern English*

There are a number of distinct morphemes used in Modern English that share the form *-ing* and the phonological sound /iŋ/. In the *OED*, two main functions of the suffix *-ing* are listed: 1. to form nouns of action; 2. as the present participle suffix, which can often be used as an adjective by conversion. Note that some scholars would treat these as separate morphemes, and this is further discussed in section 8.1.1.1.

Within entry 1, *OED* also provides different subcategories of NP that *-ing* can be used to form, as shown in Table 8.1:

Table 8.1: Nouns that are formed by *-ing* (based on the *OED*'s classification)

Nouns that are formed by suffixing <i>-ing</i>	Examples
Continuous action or existence	<i>crying, falling, flying, kicking, living, etc.</i>
Action limited to that of a single or particular occasion	<i>wedding, meeting, sitting, etc.</i>
Simple action passing insensibly into that of a process, practice, habit, or art	<i>drawing, smoking, swimming, etc.</i>
Concrete or material accompaniment, or product of the action or process	<i>binding, blacking, dripping, dubbing, etc.</i>
A material thing in which the action or its result is concreted or embodied	<i>covering, holding, landing, shaving, winding (of a river), etc.</i>
Collective designation of the substance or material	<i>bedding, carpeting, ceiling, edging, flooring, etc.</i>

The different types of *-ing* morphemes are more specifically noted by Milsark (1988: 614), as listed below in Table 8.2, with my own examples added:

Table 8.2: Different types of *-ing* morpheme and examples

Types of <i>-ing</i> morpheme	Examples
a. the nominalizing affix	<i>She needs to practice her writing skills.</i>
b. the gerundive-forming affix	<i>His eating so many chilies at the competition was astonishing</i>
c. the progressive aspect affix	<i>I am reading a book.</i>
d. the adjective-forming affix	<i>The movie was interesting.</i>
e. the verbal participial affix found in various sorts of small clauses and adjuncts	<i>I saw him walking in the garden yesterday.</i>
f. the mass noun-forming affix seen in the "object" or "material" senses of words	<i>The local government has offered sufficient food and clothing to the refugees.</i>

In the above examples, the suffix *-ing* is attached to the verbal base to form the NP *writing*, sentential gerundive⁸⁸ *eating*, progressive aspect of VP *reading*, present participle of VP (adjectival) *interesting* and (verbal) *walking*, and collective NP *clothing*.

⁸⁸ Sentential gerundive structure here is a term referring to gerund forms which have internal structures, while externally, are distributed in the place of subject; as shown in example b), the gerund *eating* has internal structure consisting of the NP *so many chilies* and the PP *at the competition*, which functions as the subject of the sentence. See further discussions in Wasow and Roeper (1972), and Chomsky (1970).

8.1.1.1. -ing: inflectional or derivational?

The discussion above has introduced the most common grammatical functions of the suffix *-ing* in Modern English. However, it is difficult to determine whether these types of suffix *-ing* should be regarded as the same morpheme, or whether they are distinct morphemes which are accidentally related because of homophony (e.g. Seifart 2017; Milsark 1988), and whether the six types of *-ing* morphemes can be regarded as inflectional affixes or derivational affixes. For instance, the present participle form of a verb, formed by attaching *-ing* to the base, can function as an adjective or a noun (examples a and d), whereas the construction of progressive aspect also consists of a verb in present participle form, which is a complement to a tensed form of the verb *be* (as in c). Although the three cases here show different grammatical functions of the morpheme, they share the same form. Huddleston and Pullum (2002: 540-542) note the vague boundary between adjectives and gerund-participles in the progressive aspect (and also past participles in the passive voice) in this case. In their work, they provide two sets of tests for adjectival status: i.e. whether the verb *be* can be replaced by other complex-intransitive verbs, such as *seem* and *become*; and whether the tested item can be modified by adverbs like *very* and *too* (Huddleston and Pullum 2002: 541). In their framework, these tests suggest that the progressive affix *-ing* should be regarded as a different morpheme from the adjective-forming *-ing*. So in the current thesis, I will assume that all these types of *-ing* are different morphemes which have similar morphological properties: they are mostly used to suffix verbs, and can form lexical items of various categories, including NP, VP, and AdjP (for some cases of mass NP-forming *-ing* where it is unclear to tell whether the stem is N or V, e.g. *cloth/ clothe*). From a semantic point of view, most of the NPs, VPs, and APs formed by the suffix *-ing* denote an abstract meaning of a continuous status or existence, though there are exceptions.

Most uses of the suffix *-ing* function to express abstract meanings and to denote grammatical relations, such as to form a lexeme of another category or to signify an

ongoing or incomplete process. There are still some cases where *-ing*, or more specifically, the inflectional affix used to signal the progressive aspect, takes on pragmatic functions. Therefore, since this thesis concentrates on pragmatic borrowing, I will only investigate the use and pragmatic functions of the progressive suffix *-ing*. In later sections (e.g. section 8.1.2.2), the adjective-forming affix *-ing* (e.g. *exciting*, *amazing*, *interesting*) is also mentioned.

8.1.1.2. The progressive affix *-ing* in English

Recent research has noted a change in the way the progressive is used in some specific contexts, where it has pragmatic functions. The most famous example is McDonald's global advertising slogan '*I'm loving it*', first attested in 2003, where the progressive is used to achieve a marketing goal. According to traditional prescriptive grammar, verbs denoting mental status and attitude or verbs of cognition are less commonly used in the progressive form (Leech 2004: 26), because these verbs generally signify continuous, ongoing states themselves. The progressive tense is therefore more compatible with verbs that associating with dynamic events, usually indicating temporary human activities. Payne (2011) also points out that:

a stative situation is one in which there is no movement or change. Therefore, putting a stative verb into the progressive construction sets up a logical contradiction -- an action cannot be both dynamic and stative at the same time! (Payne 2011: 292)

However, Huddleston and Pullum (2002: 170) note that some stative verbs, including verbs of cognition, emotion, and attitude (*like*, *love*, *believe*, *know*, *understand*, etc.), usually 'occur in simple present tense with imperfective meaning', but they do not 'completely exclude the progressive'. Huddleston and Pullum here discuss the use of *loving* in progressive and regard it as a sense of 'activity', which has a similar discourse function of *enjoying*, as shown in their example 'They're loving every minute of it'. Levin (2013: 188) further notes that in the example 'I'm loving every minute of it', the use of progressive *-ing* has an intensifying or emphatic function,

which is the main pragmatic function of this usage.

Smitterberg (2005: 207), following Scheffer (1975), classifies such emphatic uses as ‘not-solely-aspectual’ functions of ‘potentially experiential and interpretive progressive verb phrases’, to express something beyond grammatical meaning, such as emphasis, subjectivity, and speakers’ emotion. Apart from the progressive form of stative verbs mentioned above, he also points out another type of progressive which has ‘not-solely-aspectual’ connotations, which is the progressive modified by adverbials like *always* and *all the time* (Smitterberg 2005: 210), as in ‘*she is complaining all the time*’. More discussion of the use and pragmatic functions of this construction will be presented later. This pattern often indicates the speaker’s negative evaluation of a current situation where the progressive verb phrase is used, expressing annoyance or irritation. In the following discussion, I will analyze these ‘not-solely-aspectual’ functions in detail, using examples extracted from the corpora.

The *OED* gives an explanation for the use of the construction of *I’m loving it* mentioned above, relating it to a weakened use of the verb *love*, ‘with a thing as object in a weakened sense: to like, to be partial to’, and noting that it is ‘chiefly used in the US’. Data from COCA also suggests that the phrase is quite frequently used to mean ‘to like something’ or ‘to enjoy doing something’, as shown in examples 1) and 2):

- 1) TRUMP: ...I’m building buildings all over the world right now -- all over the world. I’m probably the largest real estate developer there is and I’m having a lot of fun doing it. So I really -- and I’m **loving** it, I’m just **loving** it. (COCA: *CNN_Situation - Donald Trump Interview 2007*)
- 2) I’m definitely **loving** the information. I’m bookmarking and will be tweeting this to my followers! (COCA: *BLOG drjudithorloff.com 2012*)

The weakened sense of the verb *love* meaning *like* and *enjoy* is evident in these examples, and is particularly eye-catching to readers or audiences. Apart from such

hyperbolic use of *love*, using the progressive form of this stative verb ‘*be loving*’ makes the utterance grammatically marked, and thus emphatic. In example 1), after telling his story and expressing how he is proud of his real estate business, the speaker (Trump) repeats ‘*I’m loving it*’ twice and adds intensifiers like *really* and *just*, indicating a much stronger emotion toward it. As well as this, the use of the progressive form here rather than the simple present functions to emphasize a more continuous state of the speaker’s loving and passion in his real estate business. Similarly in 2), beside words like *definitely* and *love* that are semantically hyperbolic themselves, the author’s use of the progressive aspect here expresses a stronger excitement about the news. Moreover, the use of the progressive aspect in these two examples not only expresses a continuous state of the speaker’s enthusiasm of something, but also expresses a sense of currentness about the speaker’s emotion.

Like *love* and *loving*, other verbs of cognition, emotion, and attitude often have subjective connotations, and the progressive aspect often stresses the state of currentness. Therefore, in some contexts the co-occurrences of stative verbs with the progressive suffix *-ing* can thus have an interpreting and commenting function, expressing the speaker’s current subjective interpretation of or attitude towards specific things or situations. The following examples show that other stative verbs can also be affixed with progressive *-ing*, and their pragmatic uses are established and conventionalized.

- 3) Out of the darkness and into the light of love though for now it seems this struggle has only begun. # **I’m** still **believing** our day is going to come when we step out of the shadows and into the sun. (COCA: BLOG *The Year We Want to Forget* - Pensburgh 2011)
- 4) Uh, unfortunately I don’t think there’s anything else that can be done. That’s all of the law provides for and, ... This thing is happening to front line health care professionals all the time. We’re very sorry. We have to make them use this. ... the hospitals **are knowing** they’re putting their employees at risk (and) letting them get hurt. People are dying... (COCA: Movie *Puncture* 2011)
- 5) I **am wanting** to go back to school in January, I have the nursing school application and everything fill out to send in but because I have student loans I’m paying on

already(. W)will I be able to get any assistance? (COCA: *Wanting to go back to school in Oklahoma, outstanding student loans?* 2012)

In example 3), the author uses the progressive aspect to express her strong faith and expectation of her brighter future ‘our day’, after struggling in the ‘darkness’ for a long time. Rather than using the plain form of *believe*, the hyperbolic use of the progressive form *be believing* has the function of emphasizing the author’s current emotional state during this specific period of time, and shows her ongoing optimistic attitude. Example 4) is extracted from a movie script, and the plot here is about a drug-addicted lawyer accusing a health supply corporation of selling illicit drugs and improperly sterilized needles that result in fatal diseases among nurses and patients. In his statement, he uses *are knowing*, rather than *know*, in this emphatic way, aiming to indicate that the hospitals are currently aware of the crime they are committing, and yet they still continue to let more people get hurt. Moreover, in the last few lines, ‘hospitals are knowing’ along with ‘they are putting ... letting’ and ‘people are dying’ are all in the progressive form, and the parallel use here also provides a clear contrast between the actions of the criminals and the suffering of victims. So the marked use of the progressive aspect has at least two pragmatic functions, first to emphasize currentness, and secondly with a commenting function to express the protagonist’s grief and indignation towards the situation. Example 5) is a post asking for help or advice. By using the progressive form of *want*, stressing the speaker’s continuing wish to ‘go back to school’ until the problem ‘unpaid student loan’ finally solved, the author aims to express his/her urgent desire to ‘go back to school’ and the need for assistance.

The discussion above analyses the pragmatic functions of the progressive used with cases of stative verbs. However, there are also abundant examples suggesting that the progressive forms of dynamic verbs can also have the so-called ‘not-solely-aspectual’ (Smitterberg 2005) functions which are mentioned before. For instance, the co-occurrence of the progressive and adverbials denoting frequency, such as *always*, usually has the function of indicating the speaker’s negative evaluation of a current

situation. Additionally, it is worth noting that such collocation can be used to exaggerate, as *always* here has an emphatic meaning of ‘an action which takes place continuously or at a frequent intervals’. Examples 6) to 8) below show uses of this construction in COCA:

- 6) The first few weeks were so fun - being in a new city, decorating our little apartment. I was all ready for a new adventure! But soon the “newness” and excitement wore off. I was **always working** - teaching school, tutoring students after school, and working several nights a week at a clothing store at the mall. (COCA: BLOG *Sunny Side Up* 2012)
- 7) See?? She’s **always making fun of** my name... (COCA: Drama *The Good Fight* 43 episodes 2019)

In example 6), the speaker uses the past progressive *was working* modified by the frequency adverb *always* to describe her busy work. As is also clear from her complaint that ‘excitement wore off’, her intention is to express her negative attitude towards that ongoing situation, indicating that she is unhappy with her busy work schedule and is no longer enjoying her new life in the city. In example 7), the speaker is apparently complaining about one of her colleagues who makes fun of her name. By using the progressive and *always* together, she stresses the relentlessness of the teasing, and expresses her annoyance and irritation.

However, COCA data also shows that the construction ‘the progressive + adverbials of frequency’ do not always have the subjective function of expressing the speaker’s negative evaluation, as shown in example 8):

- 8) I eat lots (lots) of veggies and fruits, healthy (healthy) food and **always walking or doing** something active. Yet I’m still over weight. its hard because everyone in my family is in great shape an (and) I’m the only one that is overweight. (COCA: *Don't You Realize Fat Is Unhealthy?* | *Shapely Prose* 2013)

In this example, the author uses the progressive modified by *always* to describe his ordinary lifestyle. According to the context, the author doesn’t express any unwillingness or dissatisfaction about this healthy lifestyle (he is only complaining

about his being overweight anyway in the following lines). But here the use of progressive aspect also has the emphatic function of indicating his frustration that he is working out on a continuous basis but this has yet to have much effect.

The discussion so far has analyzed the properties and functions of the suffix *-ing* in English. Primarily, the *-ing* suffix is used to signify a grammatical relationship, and more specifically, the progressive affix *-ing* usually denotes the continuous and imperfective aspect. But sometimes it also has pragmatic functions with the present tense, such as the emphatic function of expressing a sense of currentness and the commenting function which expresses the speaker's current emotion or attitude. Besides, the co-occurrence of the progressive and adverbs of frequency can also have the function of indicating the speaker's negative evaluation of the situation. The following section explores the use of the borrowed form of the progressive affix *-ing* and its pragmatic adaptation into Chinese.

8.1.2. The use of -ing and its pragmatic adaptation in Chinese

In this section, I study the use of the borrowed suffix in contemporary Chinese and analyze its pragmatic functions. The data in this section are extracted from BCC.

8.1.2.1. The morphological rules of Chinese and the concept of tense and aspect in Chinese grammar

Most scholars of Chinese linguistics agree that Chinese is fundamentally an analytic language that seldom uses morphology to mark grammatical categories such as tense and aspect, and this is an essential characteristic of the language (e.g. Lyu 1979: 11, Xing 1991: 9, Hu 1995: 18). This basic property then results in specific features of Chinese in use, such as:

- a. it depends on specific auxiliaries and word order to indicate grammatical relations;
- b. there are minor restrictions on the consistency of form and function (for

example, verbs and adjectives can function as the subject; noun phrases can be modified by a verb phrase; etc.);

- c. it places great emphasis on pragmatics, so that its meaning is closely related to contexts, rather than indicated by grammar.

Therefore, compared to English as well as other European languages, it is hard to find any morphemes which indicate number, tense, aspect, or case in Chinese⁸⁹; rather such concepts are conveyed by using various adverbs and auxiliaries, and usually they can be omitted. For example, there are neither morphemes like *-ed* and *-ing*, nor structures like *have done*, *be doing*, and *have been done/doing* in Chinese grammar and vocabulary to indicate tense and aspect, but instead, words like 着(*zhe*: progressive aspect), 了(*le*: past tense), 过(*guo*: past tense or perfective aspect), and temporal adverbs like 正在(*zhengzai*: progressive aspect), 中(*zhong*: progressive aspect), 已经(*yijing*: perfective aspect) which can be added to verb phrases to express these concepts (see further Chao 1968, Sun 2006, Liu 2015). But unlike in English which has strict grammatical rules, the use of such auxiliaries and adverbs denoting tense and aspect is not compulsory in Chinese, and native Chinese speakers tend to avoid using them, especially in speech, because utterance meaning is closely related to and usually indicated by context, as mentioned before.

English suffixes denoting tense and aspect, such as *-ing* and *-ed*, and some related grammatical terms for specific tense and aspect in English such as 正在进行时(*zhengzai jinxing shi*, ‘present progressive’), 过去完成时(*guoqu wancheng shi*, ‘past perfect’), have become gradually familiar to Chinese speakers through EFL (learning English as a foreign language), due to the compulsory education in China (see further section 4.2.3.1. and section 4.3.2). These terms are also conventionally used to express certain situations or conditions in literary works and daily conversations, as shown in the following examples:

⁸⁹ As mentioned before in Chapter 4, section 4.3.1, the pluralizer 们 (pronounced as *men*) was created imitating Indo-European languages, for example English plural suffixes *-s* and *-es*, while alternatively, Chinese speakers would use quantifiers to denote plural forms. Words like 着 *zhe* and 了 *le* mentioned later in this paragraph are also examples of contact-induced changes of this kind.

我们的爱情是正在进行时 <i>women de aiqing shi zhengzai jinxing shi</i> our aux. love is present progressive 'we are in love with each other at present.'	vs.	我们的爱情已经是过去完成时了 <i>women de aiqing yijing shi guoqu wancheng shi le</i> our aux. love already is past perfect tense aux. 'we no longer love each other any more.'
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8.1.2.2 The use of the progressive suffix *-ing* in Chinese

As discussed in section 8.1.1, *-ing* is used as a suffix of verbs only in English, to form the gerund or present participle denoting the progressive aspect. However in Chinese, the use of the progressive *-ing* is more flexible: it can be used as a post modifier of almost all word categories, including NPs, VPs, AdjPs, and longer strings of characters. Such flexibility is influenced by the above-mentioned features of the Chinese language (see section 8.3.1 for a further discussion). The various types of bases of the suffix *-ing* in BCC and their frequencies are presented in Table 8.3.

Table 8.3: Semantic-syntactic sketch of the bases of *-ing* in BCC

Types of base	Proportions	Examples
VP	36%	<i>nuli ing</i> (working hard), <i>jiaban ing</i> (working overtime), <i>dali paida ta de bei ing</i> (punching on his back heavily)
Action NP	6%	<i>huoguo ing</i> (eating hotpot), <i>koushui ing</i> (drooling), <i>bairimeng ing</i> (daydreaming)
Emotional state (VP or AdjP ⁹⁰)	32%	<i>jidong ing</i> (being excited), <i>fanzao ing</i> (being irritated), <i>tongqing ing</i> (feeling sympathetic)
Health condition (usually NP)	8%	<i>fashao ing</i> (having a fever) <i>shimian ing</i> (suffering from insomnia)
Event description (AdjP)	3%	<i>jingcai ing</i> (something is fantastic), <i>ciji ing</i> (something is exciting), <i>wuyu ing</i> (something is ridiculous)
Advertisement (longer phrase or more complex clause)	10%	<i>XXX xianshi mianfei/ zhekou ing</i> (something is now free of charge/ for sale in a limited time), “ <i>wenyi shujia – zoujin guosetianxiang” ing</i> (‘art vacation – approaching the classic beauty’ is taking place)
Unspecified	5%	<i>e.g. in names, alphabet texts, or random codes</i>

⁹⁰ In contemporary Chinese, it is common that a stative verb and the adjective that describes the corresponding emotional state share the same form, e.g. *jidong* (adj. & v.) in *wo hen jidong* (‘I’m very excited’) and *zhe jian shi jidong renxin* (‘the event excites everyone’). See further the Contemporary Chinese Dictionary, Wheatley (2006:4), and Teng (2009: 1).

The following paragraphs will provide detailed discussion of the uses of *-ing* with examples extracted from BCC.

First of all, when *-ing* is used after a verb or verb phrase, it has the same function as in English, indicating the continuous status of a movement or action. By using the structure of VP + *ing*, the subject and other elements in the sentence can be omitted, as shown in examples 9) and 10) below:

9) 开会 **ing** ++ 话说、怎么会 头疼!! 听 这会 就晕.....
Attend a meeting *ing* The thing is how headache listen a little while dizzy
(I am)**attending a meeting** now. Oh, I have a headache and feel dizzy!! What can I do...
(BCC: Weibo)

10) 公司 年会 现场 准备 **ing!**
Company annual party at present prepare *ing*
The company is now **preparing** for an annual dinner party! ...(BCC: Weibo)

The speaker in example 9) is complaining that he doesn't feel well during a meeting. As the whole utterance is about his current status, so the subject of the VP *attend a meeting* is omitted, but is unlikely to cause misunderstanding. The sentence in 10) is extracted from an announcement that a company is in the process of preparing to hold a dinner party. The use of *-ing* here emphasizes the situation that everyone in the company is engaging in the preparation works, and expresses the speaker's excitement and anticipation. Besides, because of the special and novel form of the English element, the suffix also has the function of attracting the reader's attention, which is helpful in publicity material. More about the function of attracting the reader's attention will be further discussed in section 8.3.

However, sometimes when speakers apply *-ing* to emphasize an ongoing condition, they might use the English suffix and Chinese progressive adverb 中 (*zhong*: short for 进行中 *jinxing zhong*, meaning that something is in process) at the same time, as shown in example 11):

- 11) 头晕目眩~浑身无力...继续 "百里" 排舞中 **ing**
 Dizzy tired continue "Baili" practicing dance -ing

I feel dizzy and tired... I still have to keep on **rehearsing** the dance *Baili (A Hundred Miles)*. (BCC: Weibo)

In this example, when the speaker is describing her current mood and health condition, and the work she needs to do, she uses *zhong* followed by *-ing* at the same time. Such redundant use of elements which have the same function is usually ungrammatical in Chinese, but as *-ing* is a borrowed item and keeps its original form, it seems more acceptable. Moreover, the suffix here functions more as a rhetorical device rather than a grammatical unit denoting a continuous situation, emphasizing the speaker's unhappiness and unwillingness to continue to rehearse because of her physical condition.

The other most common usage of *-ing* is when it is attached to a noun, which expresses the current condition (physical or mental) of the speaker or the state of affairs. NPs modified by *-ing* can be categorised into three types, according to their grammatical function in the sentence. The first type includes NPs serving as the object or complement in the sentence, where the main verb or the subject are usually omitted. Examples 12) and 13) provide illustration of this type, and I have added the omitted elements (in brackets) in the translations:

- 12) 哇，我闻到洋葱炒肉片的味道了，真香！ 口水 **ing** !姑娘整装待发咯！
 It smells so good drool ing

Wow, I can smell fried pork slices with onions! It's so nice and is even **(making my) mouth water!** I'm ready to taste it!(BCC: Weibo)

- 13) 如果我有交好的小学妹或者小跟班这个位子还真是适合里应外合哈哈说不定还能顺便把房子给转手了[白日梦 **ing**]
 Daydream ing

If I had a good buddy or a close junior, I might have sold the apartment to them. It is really in a nice neighborhood! [(I am **having**) **a daydream**] (BCC: Weibo)

In example 12), *-ing* is attached to 口水 (*koushui: drool*), meaning that something makes the speaker's mouth water. Here the subject and the main verb are omitted, but the pragmatic meaning and the speaker's intention conveyed by this expression are not reduced, but rather emphasized: because *mouth watering* is the current status of the speaker, his saying it implicitly indicates how delicious the food is and expresses the fact that he is so eager to taste the food that he wouldn't want to waste any breath. Similarly in 13), other elements except for the noun are omitted, and 白日梦 *ing* (*bairimeng: daydream*) in brackets is a comment on the speaker's own previous statement, expressing that this plan is only his daydream and he doesn't take it seriously.

NPs that denote a state of mind or a specific health condition can also be modified by *-ing*, as shown in examples 14) and 15) below:

- 14) 沒錯摺早安!!!! 我悲吵醒了!!!!!! 床氣 **ing**!!!!!!
Morning temperament ing
Good morning!!!! But I have been woken up!!! (I am **in a morning temperament**!!!!!!
(BCC: Weibo)
- 15) 冬天的早上。起不来啊起不来.....嗜睡症 **ing**!(~O~)zZ>____<
Hypersomnia ing
It's so difficult to get up early in winter... (I am **getting hypersomnia!** (BCC: Weibo)

The speaker in 14) is in a bad mood as he/ she has been woken by others in the early morning. By using *-ing* to modify the NP, the speaker emphasizes his/her current emotional state and stresses that this is the serious consequence of being woken up. In example 15), the speaker is complaining about his drowsiness throughout the winter because of hypersomnia, so the use of *-ing* attaching to *hypersomnia* denotes his current physical condition, and indicates that Hypersomnia may continuously appear affecting his regular routine.

Finally, the third type of NP modified by *ing* is the specific name of a place or a date (e.g. a holiday), meaning that the speaker is now at that place or enjoying that

whether the suffix *-ing* is still a borrowing of the progressive suffix denoting the currentness of the situation, i.e. ‘something exciting is going on’, or it is a borrowing of the adjective-forming affix, imitating the original English adjectives *interesting*. This distinction also refers back to the dispute discussed in section 8.1.1.2 about the boundary between adjectives and gerund-participles in the progressive aspect. Apart from 精彩 *ing*, there are many occurrences of similar phrasal structures expressing emotions in BCC, as listed below, and examples 17a) and 17b) are provided here to give a comparison:

激动(<i>jidong</i>) <i>ing</i>	感动(<i>gandong</i>) <i>ing</i>	失望(<i>shiwang</i>) <i>ing</i>	好/搞笑(<i>h/gaoxiao</i>) <i>ing</i>	
exciting	touching	disappointing	amusing	
excited <i>-ing</i>	touched <i>-ing</i>	disappointed <i>-ing</i>	amused <i>-ing</i>	etc.

17a) 无聊等待中学妹知道我们今天没时间吃饭，特地送来的饼干……感动 *ing*
touched *-ing*

Our junior colleagues know that we haven’t had lunch and they come here with some snacks. (I am so) touched (now). (BCC: Weibo)

17b) 也谢谢你啊亲爱的 时时 让我感动 *ing* 2012 我们要过得更好! 加油!
Every time *touching -ing*

Thank you my dear. (it is) touching every time. We have to live a better life in 2012!
 (BCC: Weibo)

Unlike in English where adjectives that derived from gerund-participles and past participles are used in a different way (e.g. *interesting* is used to describe a thing or a situation while *interested* is used to signify human emotions), there is only one form in Chinese to denote both cases, as shown in 17a) and 17b). In 17a) the borrowed suffix *-ing* is attached to *gandong*, which is used to describe the speaker’s feeling after being taken care of, and *-ing* in 17b) is suffixed to *gandong* referring to something the addressee has done which is touching. But in both cases, the use of the *-ing* has a commenting function of expressing a current subjective emotion or attitude towards somebody or something. Therefore, in this thesis I tend to treat *-ing* attached to adjectives as showing borrowing of the progressive suffix, since *-ing* can be attached to both gerund-participle forms and past participle forms (which share the same form in Chinese), and the suffix used in this way has similar pragmatic

functions to the present progressive suffix, including the commenting function.

As well as attaching *-ing* to VP, NP, and AdjP, there are other examples in the corpus showing that the borrowed suffix *-ing* can be attached to longer structures, such as 18):

- 18) 2011 再见, 新年快乐 **ing**
Happy new year ing
2011 Good bye. **Happy new year** (BCC: Weibo)

In example 18), *-ing* is used to modify *happy new year*, which helps to express the speaker's continuous happiness about celebrating the new year, and indicates his/her wish for the state of happiness to last longer.

Finally, as shown in Table 8.1, the suffix is also frequently found in particular contexts for pragmatic use, especially commercial slogans and advertisements, as in 19) and 20):

- 19) 仅 限 50 台哦! 限时 免费 **ing!**
only limited 50 [quantifier] limited time free of charge -ing
Last 50 mobile phones left! They are **right now free of charge for a limited time!**
(BCC: Web)
- 20) 奖品好给力啊! 赶快参加! "为浙江影视喝彩·明星签名台历派发" **ing!**
"Applause for ZJTV & Get Signatures of the Celebrities" -ing
Hurry up to take part in the activity and win a big prize! -- 'Applause for ZJTV & Get Signatures of the Celebrities' **is underway right now!** (BCC: Weibo)

In examples of product promotions like 19), the main purpose is to attract as many buyers as possible to purchase the product. Therefore, the copywriter combines the progressive *-ing* and words like *xianshi* 'limited time', which implies that 'time is passing and the sale will end soon'. Similar expressions in BCC also include '倒计时 (*daojishi*: 'countdown') *ing*' and '限量抢购 (*xianliang qianggou*: 'rush for limited amount of products') *ing*'. These expressions all emphasize the sense of ongoingness

or even urgency, and thus have the particular pragmatic function to attract buyers' attention and to encourage consumption. *-ing* is also often used in advertisements, especially in internet language, as in example 20), which is extracted from an online advertisement about an activity held by a TV station *ZJTV*. The suffix *-ing* is placed after the slogan showing that the activity is currently underway.

These two examples show that by using an English word which stands out from Chinese characters, the advertiser can attract the reader's attention with this novel linguistic item on the one hand, and on the other, can use fewer words and express meaning with maximal efficiency (for a further discussion of such motivation, see section 8.3).

8.1.3. Summary

The discussion so far has analyzed the properties and functions of the suffix *-ing* in English and Chinese. In English, apart from signifying the progressive and imperfective aspect, *-ing* also has pragmatic functions, such as the emphatic function of expressing senses of currentness or continuity, and the commenting function to express the speaker's emotion or attitude. Besides, the co-occurrence of the progressive and adverbs of frequency can also have the function of indicating a speaker's negative evaluation of a situation.

The suffix *-ing* has undergone integration in Chinese through various kinds of pragmatic adaptation:

- a. In terms of syntactic properties, the suffix *-ing* is more flexibly used to attach to notional elements of almost all word categories, including NPs, VPs, AdjPs, and longer strings of characters. VPs and NPs that denotes mental or physical states are among the most common bases of the suffix.
- b. Phonologically, it still keeps its original form and is pronounced as three separate sounds corresponding to the letters *i*, *n*, and *g*.
- c. As in English, the borrowed suffix *-ing* can also be used in an emphatic way to

denote a sense of continuity or currentness, and has a commenting function of expressing the current subjective emotion or attitude; but it is also used in particular in Chinese to attach to AdjPs, functioning as a commentary on or description of a situation.

- d. In most cases where the borrowed item is used in a marked form, it has the pragmatic function of attracting readers' attention, hence it is often used in publicity, and has been gradually adopted by more and more writers and commercial agencies.

8.2. Case study IX: Borrowing of derivational suffix *-er*

As mentioned in the previous sections, grammatical items, including affixes, are usually less borrowable than lexemes and phrases, according to Matras and others' borrowing hierarchy and research on the borrowability of different linguistic items discussed before. Scholars also point out that a derivational affix is more likely to be borrowed than an inflectional affix (see Winford 2003, Matras 2007, Seifart 2017).

The only derivational suffix borrowed into Chinese is the agentive *-er*⁹¹. According to the BCC data, *-er* is used less frequently than the inflectional suffix *-ing* (less than 500 occurrences vs. more than 12000 occurrences), and it shows relatively less integration into contemporary Chinese too. The two suffixes are the only English morphemes that are found widely accepted and used in Chinese⁹², and both of them are relatively new borrowings in Chinese, compared to other lexical items, which makes it difficult to generalise or assess how significant the difference between them is. In the current case study, I will analyze the functions of the suffix and discuss the motivations and constraints of its integration into Chinese, in comparison to *-ing*.

8.2.1. *-er* in English

In Modern English the suffix *-er* has only grammatical functions, and is a

⁹¹ Note that this study only involves the noun-forming derivational suffix *-er*, denoting agentive meanings, as in *singer* and *blender*, which differs from the inflectional suffix *-er* used to signify the comparative degree in adjectives and adverbs, as in *stronger* and *faster*.

⁹² Other affixes, such as *anti-*, *-ed*, are also used by some Chinese speakers (e.g. Zhang 2010: 130, Kozha 2012: 118), but in an extremely low frequency and by restrictive speaker groups. I will not treat them as borrowing in the current thesis.

derivational affix denoting an agentive relationship. According to the *OED*, the suffix is originally used to form nouns derived from verbs, with the sense ‘a person who has to do with something’ denoted by the base, as in *reader* and *receiver*, and hence to designate certain profession and occupation, such as *teacher*, *cleaner*, and *commander*. Besides, the *-er* formative can also be used to signify ‘a thing related to’ the base, and designate certain equipment, appliances, or devices, as in *boiler* and *opener*. The *OED* also gives the possible etymological sources of the suffix which shows its Latinate origin since Middle English: i.e. its sense of ‘a person connected with’, and the designations of occupation or profession, comes from Latin *-ārius* (masculine), and its sense of ‘a thing connected with’ and ‘a receptacle of’ then comes from the Latin suffix *-ārium* (neutral).

-er is also quite well-established in Modern English as a suffix to the names of cities/countries or places to designate the sense of ‘a native or resident of’, such as *Londoner*, *New Yorker*, *Hong Konger*, and *villager*, *cottager*. And similarly, *-er* derivatives are also formed from certain adjectives, indicating place of origin or residence, such as *foreigner*, *outsider*, *northerner*, and *southerner*.

In Modern English, there is another suffix *-or* which is also commonly attached to verbs to form nouns and denotes the agentive sense. But the suffix *-or* is seldom used to designate nationality, origin, or residence. The *OED* notes that the distinction between the two suffixes is ‘purely historical and orthographical’, i.e. the derivative nouns formed on verb bases from Latin origin are usually suffixed in *-or*, which is ‘partly assimilated to Latin analogies’. *-er* and *-or* usually share the same pronunciation, except in certain borrowed Latin cases where *-or* is not fully naturalised and is still pronounced /ɔ:(r)/, such as *guarantor*. The choice of the two formations is often unpredictable in the cases where both forms are applicable, although *-er* is more productive than *-or*, and sometimes there is still a slight distinction between technical and general senses, as in *accepter* and *acceptor*.

Unlike the inflectional suffix *-ing* in section 8.1, which signifies the progressive aspect at the level of syntax, and has pragmatic meanings and functions dependent on context, the suffix *-er* only denote morphological relationships between lexicons, and thus seems less likely to have pragmatic functions. However, when it is borrowed and adapted into Chinese, it has developed a few pragmatic functions, and these are discussed in section 8.2.2.

8.2.2. *-er in Chinese*

As discussed above, the suffix *-er* and its alternative form *-or* in English can both be used to form derivative nouns, and has the function of denoting the agent (a person or a thing). *-er* is also attached to some nouns and adjectives to designate nationality, origin, or residence. However, only *-er* is borrowed into Chinese (more on this will be analyzed in section 8.2.2.1).

Just like the borrowing of the progressive suffix *-ing*, *-er* also keeps its original form in English when used by Chinese speakers, so that it is not included in the *CCD* or *CCL*, but is found frequently applied in speech and internet language. According to data collected from *BCC*, the suffix is usually used in the following structures:

- a. Names of Cities + *-er*
- b. Names of universities or schools + *-er*:
- c. Professions or occupations + *-er*
- d. Verbs denoting certain actions or activities + *-er*
- e. Specific cultural industry/ product + *-er*:

Because Chinese lacks morphological derivation (see also section 8.1.2.1), the words and constructions formed by the *-er* suffix do not occur in plural form, as *teacher* < *teachers* in English. More detailed analysis of the specific uses and functions of each structure will be presented in section 8.2.2.2.

8.2.2.1. The motives for borrowing *-er* into Chinese and its phonological properties

As discussed previously, in contemporary Chinese, there is no such word formation

rule as affixation in English, and the means of referring to an agent of an action or thing is by analytic strategies. The simplest and most common way is to extend the construction by adding more elements. For example, to refer to a person (or persons) watching something, like a movie or a show, Chinese speakers usually add 的(*de*, determiner auxiliary) and 人(*ren*, ‘people’) to the phrase denoting the action, while the phrase is treated as the determiner of ‘people’, as shown in example A below:

A. 看 电影 的 人 <i>kan dianying de ren</i> watch movie aux. people ‘people who watch movies’	a. 观众 <i>guan-zhong</i> watch-people ‘audience’	(<i>guanzhong</i> is a collective noun, general referring to audience of all kinds of show, concert, movie, etc.)
B. 做 学问 的 人 <i>zuo xuewen de ren</i> do research aux. people ‘people who do research’	b. 学者 <i>xue-zhe</i> study-people ‘scholar’	

In official or academic written language and other formal contexts, the construction of ‘的 *de* + 人 *ren*’ can be alternated by the suffix 者 *zhe*, which has the same agentive meaning, and the VP it attaches to is correspondingly simplified, as in *zuo xuewen de ren* > *xuezhe* (see examples B. and b. above). In the cases where speakers need to designate a more general reference, the construction can be shortened and generalised, such as *kan dianying de ren* > *guanzhong* (see A. and a.). Such generalisation is common, especially to denote professions and occupations, like 司机 (*siji* < *jiashi de ren*, ‘people who drive a car, bus, train, etc.’), 职工 (*zhigong* < *shangban de ren*, ‘people who work in a company, factory, office, etc.’). Similarly, 的(*de*: determiner auxiliary) and 东西(*dongxi*, ‘thing’) are also used in the same way to refer to the thing as ‘receptacle’ or related to what the determiner designates. There are still some cases where the structure of ‘VP + *de* + *ren*/ *dongxi*’ is preferable, for instance when the speaker needs to specify the action or when there’s no general term available.

The sense ‘a native of’ or ‘a resident in’ is also formed by adding ‘的 *de* + 人 *ren*’ to

the names of cities/ countries, NP denoting places, and some adjectives. In most cases, the determiner auxiliary *de* can be omitted, as in 中国人 (*Zhongguo ren*, ‘Chinese people’), 北京人 (*Beijing ren*), 农村人 (*nongcun ren*, ‘villager, people live in rural areas’).

Despite these various alternative way of denoting similar senses, the suffix *-er* is still borrowed and used in Chinese, and it can therefore be considered a ‘luxury loan’. To account for this ‘luxury loan’ (see also section 2.2.2 in Chapter 2), I will analyse its motivations of borrowing in this case study, focusing on two factors:

- a. The form of *-er* resembles a Chinese native form 儿 *er* (with diminutive function), which might have resulted in a combination of the pragmatic functions of both items, making *-er* more familiar and easily accepted and integrated into the Chinese language;
- b. *-er* is borrowed to fulfill extra-grammatical functions in Chinese.

The reason why only *-er* is borrowed, other than its alternative *-or*, is also related to the fact that it resembles the pronunciation and the *Pinyin* form of the Chinese character 儿 (*ér*). This is further analyzed in the following section 8.2.2.2, Here I will first briefly discuss how diminutive devices, including 儿 *er*, are used in Chinese, compared to English diminutives.

In English, as well as other European languages, diminutive terms are usually formed by the addition of a special suffix, which denotes the sense of smallness or connotes endearment and intimacy, such as *-ie* in *Charlie* (from *Charles*) and *-y* in *Timmy* (from *Tim*). In some cases, diminutives can also be formed by clipping, as in *Beth* (from *Elizabeth*), or by adding a special modifier, such as *tiny/little*, as in *little Jimmy*. Huddleston and Pullum define diminutives as ‘affixes which indicate small size and also, by extension, ones which mark the off-spring of animals, affection or informality, resemblance or imitation’ (Huddleston and Pullum 2002:1677), which suggests the function of expressing the emotional or attitudinal meanings of the speakers. The emotions conveyed by diminutive devices can vary across contexts and

depend on the nouns they modify or attach to. For example, in contrast to ‘cute little Jimmy’ which expresses intimacy and kindness, diminutives can also be embedded with negative connotation to denote that someone or something is childish, weak, or inadequate, such as ‘your funny little head’, indicating the speaker’s contempt and mockery.

Correspondingly in Chinese, there are also devices and analytical ways of forming diminutives, which include:

- a. adding specific characters as pre-modifiers to names (usually surnames), terms of addressee, or some nouns and adjectives, like 小(*xiao*, ‘little’) and 老(*lao*, ‘old, but not necessarily used of older speakers’);
- b. suffixes like 儿(*er*, originally means ‘son’, or in general reference, ‘the younger generation’), and 子/仔(*zi/zai*, the same meaning as 儿 *er*);
- c. through reduplication (usually on the ending character of a name or an addressee), imitating a child’s speaking repetitive syllables, as in 月月 (*Yueyue*, for *Yingyue*) and 猫猫 (*maomao*, repetition of the character for ‘cat’).

The devices mentioned here cannot achieve the diminutive function solely; their pragmatic function of expressing the speaker’s friendliness and showing intimacy is reached by the combination of the modifier and the word or phrase it is attached to.

For instance:

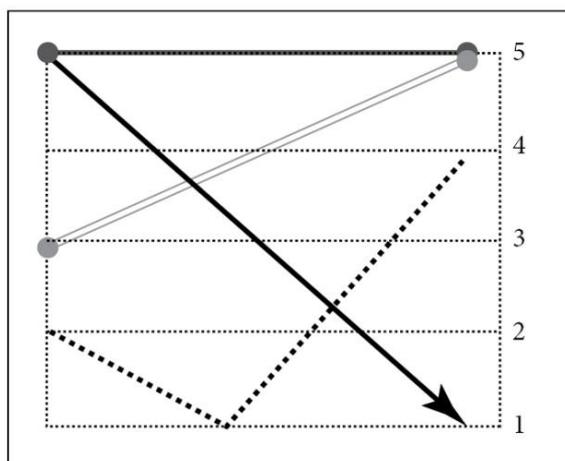
我的 *wo de* 小 *xiao* 可 *ke* 人 *ren* 儿 *er*
 My little cute person [diminutive suffix]
 My little beauty/ sweetie/ cutie/ lover

In this construction, the phrase 可人 (*ke ren*, used to address someone beloved) is modified by two diminutive devices 小 *xiao* and 儿 *er*, to indicate the closeness and deep affection between the speaker and the addressee. The two particles here do not have specific semantic meanings when being used as diminutives, though *xiao* is originally an adjective meaning ‘small’ and *er* is a noun meaning ‘son’ or ‘younger generation’ when they are used alone.

In terms of its phonological properties, the borrowed morpheme *-er* in English is usually not stressed, as it is placed in the end position, while in Chinese, this is not the case. Similar to the distinction between stressed and unstressed syllables in English, in Chinese standard phonological rules, there is also a distinction between normal/ full syllables and weak syllables (Duanmu 2000: 81-83). Full syllables are those tonal syllables (which will be mentioned later) that are pronounced in full length. Weak syllables are usually toneless and are shorter than full syllables, and these includes grammatical markers like auxiliaries 的 *de* and 了 *le*, and the second syllable in some of bi-syllabic compound words, such as in 嘴巴 (*zuǐba*, ‘mouth’), 胡同 (*hútong*, ‘alley’, especially in Beijing).

Additionally, in Chinese most words consist of two characters (two syllables). There are also cases of polysyllabic words or compounds (three-/four-character phrases), sometimes containing all stressed syllables, such as 城市 (*chéngshì*, ‘city’), 机动车 (*jīdòngchē*, ‘motor vehicle’), and 十字路口 (*shízì lùkǒu*, ‘crossroad’). The diminutive items which occur in the suffix position discussed above are also in weak syllables in most cases. It is a typical characteristic that Chinese word meanings are distinguished by pitch contour, referred as tone, over different syllables. Generally there are four basic tones in Chinese, namely 阴平 (*yīnpíng*: [55] ‘high/ even tone’), 阳平 (*yángpíng*: [35] ‘rising/ level tone’), 上声 (*shàngshēng*: [214] ‘falling-rising tone’), and 去声 (*qùshēng*: [51] ‘departing/ falling tone’), also known respectively as T1, T2, T3, and T4 (see Chao 1930, Duanmu 2000, Zhu and Wang 2015). The figure 8.2 below firstly proposed by Chao (1930) presents the four basic tones and denotes their height and contour of pitch in Contemporary Chinese.

Figure 8.2: The five-point scale (FPS) representation designed by Chao (1930)



In some cases, there is also a neutral tone (T0) which is regarded as lack of tone. It is usually related to weak syllables and often has a shorter sound than tonal syllables. The diminutive 儿 *er* discussed here, (not with its original meaning denoting ‘son’ or ‘the younger generation’) is mostly spoken in neutral tone and in weak syllable. In many northern dialects of Chinese, especially in Beijing dialect, the diminutive even undergoes a reduction of the vowel sound [e], for example in 花儿 *hua’er* (‘flower’), the pronunciation can be omitted as [hwār], reduced from [hwā er].

However, the English *-er* borrowing is not pronounced in the same way in Chinese as its native counterpart. Based on Chinese standard phonological rules, a suffix or syllable which occurs in the word/phrase-final position of *-er* and serves as a grammatical marker or auxiliary is usually unstressed and in neutral tone, and sometimes undergoes vowel reduction. *-ing* is pronounced in full length, and in a rising tone, just like a full syllable. Such marked use foregrounds the item and emphasizes its pragmatic functions. In the next section, I will discuss its pragmatic functions with more examples from BCC.

8.2.2.2. The pragmatic functions of *-er* in Chinese

When the suffix *-er* is borrowed into Chinese and used to form constructions, besides its original function of denoting an agent or referring to the sense of citizen or

resident, it can also express pragmatic meanings, such as functioning as a diminutive suffix and expressing emotional attachment. Here I will use examples extracted from BCC to analyse its pragmatic functions in contexts.

First of all, a frequent use of *-er* in Chinese is to attach to cities or places to denote ‘a resident of’ that place, which is also a basic use of the suffix in English. Usually speakers use it to refer to themselves or those who relate closely to them, as shown in example 21):

- 21) 我想念我的家乡“北京”，想念那安静的四合院领里亲热的小胡同，
想念 那些 操着 “京片子” 的 北京 er ...
miss those speak Beijing dialect [modifier auxiliary] **Beijing -er**

I miss my hometown Beijing. I miss the quiet courtyards and hutongs where my friendly neighbors live. I also miss **the people in Beijing** who speak Beijing dialect.
(BCC: Weibo)

In this example, the speaker expresses his/her nostalgic feelings when talking about hometown and old neighbors. So here the use of *Beijing-er* takes on a combination of functions of both a ‘resident’ *-er* suffix and a diminutive 儿 *er* suffix, i.e. ‘北京+人+儿 *Beijing ren er*’ (with vowel reduction [renr]), and indicates the speaker’s deep affection towards his old fellows and the city he loves.

Similarly, the formation also occurs in denoting the sense of ‘a member of an institution’ such as a university or a school, as shown in 22). This is a newly derived usage in Chinese, which is less commonly found in the SL English⁹³. It seems to be an extension of uses where *-er* attaches to the names of cities and places. In some cases, but not all, this use emphasizes a sense of affiliation, as shown in 22a) and 22b) which express different connotations:

- 22) 今天正跟建哥联系来着，情系母校 应该是 清华 er 主场，
‘Homecoming’ should be **Tsinghua University -er** home

⁹³ The use of ‘college/school + *-er*’ is not quite established in English, however, there are some examples like *Ivy Leaguer*.

field

我们配合他们就行啦，想到不用联系什么校长校领导我就开心许多。

Jian told me today that **the students of Tsinghua University** should take the lead in this ‘homecoming’ activity, and we just try our best to coordinate them. The very thought of avoiding contacting the headmaster and other school leaders delights me so much. (BCC: Weibo)

22a) 相比 清华 -er, 北大的学生更理想主义, 也更愿意为不公平发声。
compare **Tsinghua -er**

Compared to **students at Tsinghua**, the students of Peking University are more idealistic and more willing to appeal against injustice.(BCC: Weibo)

22b) 母校, 我 以后 也 是 清华 -er 了 @清华大学
home university, I later also be **Tsinghua -er** [perfective auxiliary] @..

My home Uni, I will have been a **student of Tsinghua** later. (BCC: Weibo)

In example 22), the *-er* suffix is used by the speaker to designate the students and staffs of Tsinghua University without any subjective emotion or attitude. However, examples 22a) and 22b) show two different uses of the suffix to express contrastive pragmatic meanings. As shown in 22a), the speaker uses different phrases to refer to students of both Tsinghua and PKU, and apart from avoiding repetition, he also expresses a different evaluation of these students in context. Unlike the full construction of ‘N + *de* + *ren* (*students* in this case)’ which normally conveys a neutral attitude, the diminutive suffix *-er* here then carries the speaker’s emotion to denote the students of Tsinghua. The speaker himself is apparently not one of these students, and indicates his criticism or even pejorative attitude towards them. On the contrary, the speaker in 22b) refers herself as a Tsinghua-er and the context shows that she is glad to have received a gift from the university. Besides, she uses personification and the second person pronoun to refer to Tsinghua in this example, treating her dream school as someone listening to her. So here, the use of *-er* suffix with diminutive functions expresses intimacy and a sense of belonging towards the university.

The use of *-er* suffix to denote an agentive meaning is also found in Chinese. It is usually attached to a VP, referring to the person who takes part in or who is

concerned with the action, as shown in 23) and 24):

- 23) 千万要小心啊!给俺们健健康康的回来! 去 阿根廷 的
to Argentine [modifier auxiliary]
穷游 er 也 要 小心~!!!
travel on budget -er also should take care

Do take care please! Wish you all safe journey! And you **budget travelers** in Argentine should also take care!!!(BCC: Weibo)

- 24) 大家 好好 上课! 争取 都是 过 er!(^o^)/
everyone carefully take courses try one's best all be pass (the exam) -er

We should all concentrate on the course carefully and wish that **everyone try our best to pass the exams.** (BCC: Weibo)

In example 23) the suffix *-er* is attached to a VP ‘travel on a budget’ to denote the traveler with a limited budget. The speaker’s intention in this text is to give tips or advice to travelers and to tell them to take care, so apart from the function of denoting agentive meaning, *-er* here also has a diminutive function to show friendliness and intimacy, expressing that the speaker cares about the addressee. Example 24) then is a particular case that achieve the effect of pun, which is quite commonly applied on occasions relating to taking exams. To illustrate, the suffix *-er* is attached to a verb 过 *guo* to form a phrase referring to those who pass an exam successfully. This verb has a relatively wide range of vague meanings, including ‘to pass’, ‘to go beyond’, ‘to spend’, ‘to cross’, etc., and usually requires a complement to form a verb phrase to denote specific meanings, such as 通过考试 (*tongguo kaoshi*, ‘to pass an exam’), 过日子 (*guo rizi*, ‘to spend a life’), 过河 (*guo he*, ‘to cross a river’). So the structure of ‘V + 的 *de* + 人 *ren*’ or the suffixation of *-er* to bare verbs like this to designate a sense of agency are normally not applicable. But in the case of 过 *er*, it is an idiom, which is homophonic with the nickname of a famous character ‘过儿 *Guo'er*’ from a literary classic (i.e. 过 *Guo* is the name of that character and 儿 *er* is used with diminutive function, see section 8.2.2.1). As the novel and this character name are well-known in Chinese speech community, the idiomatic expression has gradually been conventionalised and used specifically in

exam contexts, with the diminutive function to show intimacy and kindness, and as encouragement to exam candidates to wish them success.

In English, according to the *OED*, the use of the *-er* suffix to form nouns designating profession or occupation is thought to derive from its agent-denoting function, as it attaches to the relating verb base, such as *teacher*, *worker*, etc. However in Chinese, the borrowed suffix can either attach to verb/ VP base, or to noun/ NP base denoting certain professions, as shown in example 25):

25) 全世界 回 短信 最快的 就是 公关 er ~
The whole world reply text messages the fastest is **PR(public relations) -er**

I bet that **people working in PR** are those who can reply to text messages the most quickly in the world! (BCC: Weibo)

Example 25) shows that *-er* is attached to an NP which is already a phrase denoting the profession of PR, so the diminutive suffix's pragmatic function is more valued that it helps to express the speaker's satisfaction and positive attitudes towards the PR for their efficiency in replying to messages quickly.

Finally, the borrowed suffix *-er* is also found attached to a group of proper nouns and NPs relating to cultural or social media industries and their products, and this use starts up and has become popular particularly in the internet language. In English, although the *OED* doesn't record the use of *-er* to suffix to these types of word, the use does occur in the cases like *Youtuber*, and *Facebooker*, which matches the RL Chinese. Take 26) and 27) as illustrations:

26) 偶尔上个淫淫网就会看到这些来气的东西。。。最 鄙视 这样的 豆瓣 er
most hate these **Douban -er**
。。。。动不动什么都往淫淫网上传。

Such annoying news and articles pop up every time when I visit the Renren website. I really hate these **users of Douban** most who always post these rubbish here. (BCC: Weibo)

27) 正常的 二次元 **-er** 在 三次元 也 过得 很好啊
normal **2-D (two dimensional) world -er** in 3-D world also live well
不要拉仇恨啊

There are many **fans of 2-D world** who also live happily in reality (in the three dimensional world). Don't make sensational claims. (BCC: Weibo)

In 26), the speaker expresses his contempt and annoyance about the misbehaviour of users of an app and website. The use of *-er* again combines of the function of denoting people who use the app and the diminutive function of indicating the speaker's negative emotion and attitude towards them. In example 27), the *-er* suffix is directly attached to a cultural industry term, referring to cultural products such as animations, comics, games, and novels, etc., and the resulting combination designates the fans of such products. The speaker here shows solidarity with fellow members of the group, and the use of *-er* suffix with diminutive function indicates intimacy among them. Although this use is relatively new, its mechanism can be thought of derived from the 'resident of' sense of the suffix, similar to attaching *-er* to names of schools or institutions. This denotes that the person it refers to is a member of the NP base, i.e. the users or the fans in the cases discussed here. And because of the informality and simplicity characteristic of the internet chatting/posting context, the use of *-er* suffix also makes the sentence structure simpler and efficient.

8.2.3. Summary

To sum up, the investigation of the uses of *-er* in Chinese shows that through its integration into the RL, the suffix can be used to attach to a wide range of VPs and NPs, including phrases denoting a particular action, a place, or a professional occupation, echoing its usage in English; its sense of 'being a resident of some place' has even been enriched as it can also commonly suffix to names of institutes, social media platforms, and phrases denoting an industry or a sub-culture group.

More importantly, the suffix has been through pragmatic adaptation to fulfill

extra-grammatical functions in Chinese. Owing to the ‘coincidence’ that the borrowed item *-er* resembles the Chinese diminutive 儿 (*er* [ér]), both in pronunciation and in its *Pinyin* form, *-er* suffix also inherits the diminutive function of its native counterpart. Therefore it can be used pragmatically to express emotional attachment and attitudinal meaning, and in this respect it varies across contexts.

Additionally, because of the efficiency of using this two-letter suffix which denotes the same amount of (or even more) meanings as a longer Chinese construction ‘XXX 的人 (*de ren*)’, it has become more frequently applied and more integrated into Chinese.

As mentioned before, *-er* is less frequently used, compared to *-ing*, according to the BCC data, but this does not mean that the former is not as established as the latter, especially in spoken language and online discourses. One possible reason to account for its lower frequency is that the ‘resident’ meaning of *-er* sometimes makes it into an ingroup marker, which shows some sort of restrictiveness in use, i.e. only used by certain groups of people or towards certain groups of audiences, for example members of a community; whereas *-ing* does not have such constraint. The example below in Figure 8.3 is extracted from an official account for a high school on *Tencent WeChat*, who posts an article about the learning experience of students with outstanding performance, showing the use of *-er* to express ingroupness. Only users/students who have subscribed to the account (and they are indeed the target group of the account) can get access to this article.

Figure 8.3: Example of *-er* used as a marker of ingroup status⁹⁴



There is no doubt that both suffixes are currently productive items in Chinese, and I would predict that they will become more integrated into the Chinese language and will be used in a wider range of contexts in daily conversations. The next section will then summarize and further discuss the linguistic and social factors that motivate their borrowing and integration.

8.3. Summary and implication: exploring the integration of English suffixes into Chinese and their pragmatic adaptation

Chapter 8 has taken a different perspective from the previous chapters and case studies which investigate words and phrases that mainly have pragmatic functions in daily conversations. This chapter explores the pragmatic aspects of grammatical items in English and observes their borrowing and integration into Chinese. Despite being grammatical items, these borrowed affixes acquire a number of pragmatic functions in the RL, in line with the socio-pragmatic motivation for borrowing. Therefore, this makes them an important and novel contribution to the study of pragmatic borrowing.

⁹⁴ Example retrieved from private interpersonal social media *Wechat*. Online at <http://wx.qq.com/> Accessed June 30, 2020

As the results show, *-ing* can flexibly suffix various word categories, including NPs, VPs, AdjPs, and longer strings of characters, such as idioms and clauses; and *-er* can also attach to VPs and NPs in a wider semantic range. To a large extent, this integration results from the grammatical features of the Chinese language, which is less restricted in terms of the form-function consistency or tense/aspect marking, as mentioned in section 8.1.2.1.

Additionally, an important aspect of the integration of borrowed suffixes in Chinese is that some of their structures and functions tend to be modeled on that of indigenous Chinese items. As mentioned in section 8.2.2, *-er* combines the properties of an agentive suffix and some features of a diminutive item 儿 *er* in Chinese, owing to their resemblance in form (*Pinyin*) and pronunciation. More importantly, because of the attached diminutive function, the suffix becomes more well-accepted and established within certain communities as an ingroup marker, showing the sense of intimacy, inclusiveness, and unity.

Compared to *-er*, *-ing* shows even more changes during its integration into Chinese, modelled on its native counterparts. For example, most morphosyntactic properties of *-ing* replicate the uses of a Chinese aspectual adverb phrase *zhengzai jingxing zhong*, often shortened as *zhong*. A particular feature of *zhong* is that when it is used to mark progressiveness of longer chunks, e.g. VPs that carry an object/complement, it is mostly distributed at the end of the whole construction, having a scope over all preceding elements. Correspondingly, *-ing* is used in the same way in Chinese, standing separately from the main verb, like a free form, which is not the case in the SL English. Table 8.4 presents a pair of examples extracted from BCC, showing this sentence pattern:

Table 8.4: Comparison of structures formed by *-ing* and indigenous item 中 *zhong*

用力	拍	你	后背	ing	焦急	等待	结果	中	(的人)
<i>yongli</i>	<i>pai</i>	<i>ni</i>	<i>houbei</i>	ing	<i>jiaoji</i>	<i>dengdai</i>	<i>jiieguo</i>	zhong	(<i>de ren</i>)
heavily	slap	your	back	ing	anxiously	wait for	result	ing	(aux. people)
'slapping you on the back heavily'					'(people who's) waiting for the result anxiously'				

In these examples, *ing* functions to denote the progressive aspect of the action *pai* 'to slap', and *zhong* describes the action *dengdai* 'to wait'. However, they are not attached directly to the main verbs here, as in *yongli pai-ing ni houbei* or *jiaoji dengdai zhong jiieguo*, which sound very awkward in Chinese; their distributions in a sentence-final position follow the linguistic customs of the Chinese language.

There are still limitations that constrain the borrowed suffixes from replicating all of the syntactic properties of their indigenous counterparts. For instance, the Chinese progressive adverb *zhong* can also be used to form phrases/structures when placed in the middle of a sentence functioning as a premodifier or an adjunct, as in an elaborated construction of the example in Table 8.4 above *jiaoji dengdai jiieguo zhong de ren* 'people who wait for the results anxiously'. The borrowed item *ing*, in contrast, would never occur in the middle of a structure.

The borrowing of the English suffix *-ing* also happens in a diverse range of languages, including languages that are also in remote contact with English, such as Korean. For instance, *-ing* is used in 소개팅 (*sogae-ting*, introduction + dating, 'blind date') and 책팅 (*chaek-ting*, book + meeting, 'meeting where books are shared or sold'), both of which are created by combining native Korean words with the borrowed English element (see further Kim 2016: 52). However, the suffix seems to only occur as a bound morpheme and even is clipped from the English loanword *meeting* 미팅 and *dating* 데이팅. Besides, its uses in Korean don't demonstrate any pragmatic meaning or function.

A particularly interesting use of *ing* in BCC, which illustrates the suffix's flexibility

in Chinese and its pragmatic meaning, is given below:

无聊 *ing & ing*
wuliao, 'boring/ bored'
(I'm)feeling bored.../ (It's)boring...

In this phrase, the speaker describes a situation that he has been stuck in, which makes him feel bored, and the use of *ing & ing* signifies that this situation is going on and on. The ellipsis mark used at the end, rather than a full period, also indicates that he is tired of this never-ending situation. This repeated use of *ing* is similar to the combination of *zhong* and *ing* discussed in example 12), although there isn't sufficient evidence to determine whether such usage is well-established. However, the flexibility of *ing* in social media language in Chinese suggests that it is no longer a bound suffix, but can function as a free word/particle with pragmatic meanings, i.e. to indicate an intensified negative emotion in this case. Other cases of free form *ing* include its being used after the name/slogan of the activity, functioning to emphasize the sense of immediacy and to attract more audiences (e.g. see example 21). Such pragmatic functions again result in a wider distribution and acceptance of the suffix in Chinese.

The case studies and discussions so far have shown that the borrowed suffixes *-ing* and *-er* have plenty of pragmatic functions when they are used by Chinese speakers in different contexts, for example: *-ing* is most often used to emphasize the sense of currentness, immediacy, or continuity, so that has commenting functions to express a speaker's emotion or attitude; collocation of *-ing* and expressions indicating 'limited time/ products' can function to stimulate consumers; *-er* used with diminutive functions can express a speaker's attitudinal meanings towards the referent, either indicating intimacy or showing humour.

Other socio-pragmatic motivations of the use of English suffixes in Chinese are also worth noting. Both *-ing* and *-er* appear in their original forms, i.e. the lettered form, and have not undergone any orthographic adaptation to the Chinese scriptal system,

compared to some of the pragmatically borrowed items discussed in previous chapters, such as *aiyah* and *chin-chin*, 妈咪 and 达令. This is also a striking feature of the contemporary Chinese language in most recent decades – the use of lettered words, especially in online discourse, spoken language, and other less formal contexts (for more discussions, see section 4.3.2 and 4.3.3 in Chapter 4). Apart from using novel forms to attract readers' attention, scholars of sociolinguistics also notice that the use of a foreign form takes more cognitive effort for audiences to read and understand, so that they may spend more time on this element and are more likely to remember the information given in surrounding utterances (e.g. Piller 2001:153). This is particularly significant in the use of *-ing* in advertising slogans where the English suffix is marked and eye-catching in strings of Chinese characters, and requires relatively longer for Chinese speakers to process, which probably helps the ad to be remembered.

Finally, linguistic efficiency also plays an important role in the borrowing and use of *-ing* and *-er* in Chinese. Efficient communication is usually achieved by both the speaker and the listener making least effort, i.e. keeping the shortest length of sentence and making sure messages are transmitted successfully (e.g. George 1949, Jaeger and Tily 2011, Gibson et al 2019). Compared to the indigenous expressions in Chinese, *zhengzai*, *jingxing zhong*, and *XXX de ren*, the two suffixes are short and precise enough to denote the same amount of information, and thus are preferred by many speakers.

Compared to case studies in previous chapters, the borrowing of affixes, especially its pragmatic aspect, is seldom examined in the literature. Linguists note that the integration of borrowed affixes is the 'most complicated stage of the process of borrowing', which indicates that language contact and interaction 'has approached its utmost degree' (see further Kozha 2012:115). Therefore, at the current stage of English-Chinese language contact, the acceptance and frequent use of the two affixes *-ing* and *-er* suggest that the penetration of English in China and Chinese speakers'

knowledge of the English language have reached an unprecedented height. A prediction can be made that affixes like these two will be further borrowed and integrated into Chinese, as well as being accepted and used by a wider speech community.

Chapter 9

Conclusion

The current thesis presents a bi-directional study of borrowing between English and Chinese, focusing on elements with pragmatic meaning. The data and discussions have shown that pragmatic borrowing between Chinese and English takes place across several different lexical categories, and borrowed items undergo different degrees of integration into the RL, with some restrictively used by particular groups of speakers and others well-established across varieties. Moreover, the status of each borrowed item in the RL is significantly affected by various motivations and constraints, including lexical, cultural, psychological, and social factors, and can change over time.

Building on the overview of the history and present of English-Chinese contact and the detailed case studies of particular types of pragmatic borrowing between the two languages presented in the previous chapters, this final chapter will observe trends and draw conclusions about the motivations and constraints of Chinese-English pragmatic borrowing, which might have implications for contact situations between other languages. Additionally, as a cross-disciplinary study which cross the fields of contact linguistics, pragmatics, and sociolinguistics, this chapter also provides new insights about pragmatic borrowing which build on previous literature. Finally, some suggestions for future studies are given in the last section.

9.1. The significance of the study

Previous research has shown that discourse-pragmatic items that apparently serve pragmatic functions, such as DMs, interjections, vocatives, expletives, and other communicative markers, can be borrowed between languages; and they often undergo pragmatic adaptation in the RL, due to specific cognitive or social factors. This is usually the focus of studies of pragmatic borrowing. However, some

expressions and units which are usually categorised as content words or grammatical items have also been shown to be borrowed for the purpose of achieving pragmatic effects. Owing to their specific pragmatic functions, they are sometimes even preferred over existing alternatives in the RL. Additionally, speakers in the RL create neologisms, remodel native linguistic items and grammar, and attach new functions to already-existing items, often because of influence from this RL. Such language changes and related pragmatic effects are less explored, but have resulted from language contact situation between Chinese and English, and should not be neglected.

Therefore the current thesis covers a rather broad view of what constitutes pragmatic borrowing: it not only concentrates on the borrowing and integration of discourse-pragmatic items that are transferred between English and Chinese, but also examines some lexical items and even grammatical units which are borrowed for pragmatic reasons. The borrowed items discussed in the thesis range from individual words to longer structures, as well as affixes, and all of these have been used to achieve pragmatic effects. Some borrowed items inherit some or all of their pragmatic functions from their models in the SL, and others acquire new pragmatic meanings after borrowing (see further section 9.2.2).

In the case studies, I have mainly investigated the uses and pragmatic functions of the borrowed items in the RL, and compared their functions and uses in the SL, but some changes in the distributions, phonological features, and morphosyntactic properties are also considered. Moreover, the case study of each specific borrowed item demonstrates different degrees of acceptance, establishment, and integration in the RL, which can be related to various social and cultural factors (see further elaboration in 9.2.2). Through comparison between these cases, the thesis concludes with a series of generalisations about the motivations and constraints of pragmatic borrowings between Chinese and English (see section 9.3).

The data which informs the thesis is drawn from a wide range of text types and contexts, drawn from several sources: large-scale authorised dictionaries, primarily the *OED* and the *CCD*, which provide the basic senses and usages of the borrowed item in the SL and RL; large-scale corpora, including COCA, BNC, CCL and BCC, covering all kinds of text types; and data extracted from websites and social media platforms. This final category is particularly useful in this study as the internet media data are dynamic and up-to-date, showing the creativity of language users. Such varied data sources help to provide a comprehensive description of all the uses of the borrowed items in different contexts. However, the diversity of these sources has meant that it is difficult to take a quantitative approach to the data, and information about the frequencies of different uses of borrowed items can only be taken to be indicative.

9.2. Summarizing the key findings

9.2.1. The influence of Chinese and English on each other

Prior to the case studies, Chapter 4 firstly explores the history English-Chinese language contact, and gives an account of this context as a background for the discussion of pragmatic borrowing through time and in the present. By introducing extensive examples of pragmatic borrowings between the two languages in each time period, this chapter also discusses borrowing strategies and integration into the RLs, as well as analyzing the social-historical motivations for such changes at each stage, such as commercial transactions, prestige owing to political and social reform, intercultural communicative needs, foreign language education, and the development of the modern mass media. All of these facilitate language contact of particular kinds.

Chapter 4 also compares the different types of borrowings in either direction and provides a classification of the borrowed items according to borrowing strategies. To illustrate, the three main elements of lexical borrowing, the borrowing of form (F), pronunciation (P), and meaning and function (M/F) can be borrowed solely or together; and this distinguishes different types of borrowing (see also section 4.4.2).

Table 9.1 below briefly concludes all types of borrowing between English and Chinese:

Table 9.1: Comparison of types of borrowings in Chinese and English⁹⁵

Direction	Elements			Types of borrowing	Examples
	Form	P	M/F		
Chinese ↓ English	×	√	√	Transliteration	<i>niubi, ganbei, aiyah</i>
	×	×	√	Loan translation	<i>hotpot, mooncake</i>
	×	×	√	Translation + explanation	<i>Beijing (Peking) Opera</i>
	×	×	√	Semantic loan	<i>add oil, lose face</i>
	×	×	√	Inherited CPE expression	<i>can do, no can do</i>
	×	√	√	Hybrids (loan blends)	<i>no zuo no die, niubility</i>
	×	√	√	Phonological pun	<i>funny mud pee</i>
English ↓ Chinese	×	√	√	Transliteration (bare)	拜拜(<i>bye-bye</i>), 达令(<i>darling</i>)
	×	√	√	Phono-semantic match	奔驰(<i>Benz</i>), 佳洁士(<i>Crest</i>)
	×	√	√	Transliteration + explanation	路透社(<i>Reuters + Agency</i>)
	×	×	√	Semantic loan	粉丝(<i>fans</i>), 网络(<i>internet</i>)
	×	×	√	Loan translation	瓶颈(<i>bottleneck</i>), 热狗(<i>hotdog</i>)
	×	×	√	Translation + explanation	鼠标(<i>mouse + cursor</i>)
	√	√	×	Graphic loan	<i>S, V, O, Q, orz</i>
	√	√	×	Lettered symbols	<i>Indefinite X, sequential A, B, C..., quantity N</i>
	√	√	√	Initialisms/ Acronyms	<i>IT, OMG, GOAT, proper names</i>
	√	√	√	Wholesale loanwords/ morphemes	<i>OK, fuck, sir, baby, phrases suffixed by -ing</i>
√	√	√/×	Hybrids (Chinese characters, English letters/ morphemes/ words, numerals)	<i>3Q (thank you), 5G, up 主 (Vlogger), hold 住, 无 fuck 说 (no-fuck-to say)</i>	

This typological list allows detailed comparison between all types of borrowings and neologisms in English and Chinese because of the influence of the other language in the contact setting, and several differences appear to be striking. First of all, it is conspicuous that none of the Chinese borrowings or contact-induced neologisms in English has borrowed SL forms, i.e. all the borrowings from Chinese into English, no

⁹⁵ The examples listed in Table 9.1 are mainly pragmatic borrowings, but I also present examples that don't carry pragmatic meaning in some categories, such as explanatory loan translation (also known as 'explicitation'; see Gu 2006), which lack evidence of pragmatic borrowing.

This table also involves items that are not so established in the RL and nonce borrowings, such as the phonological pun *funny mud pee*, in order to demonstrate all possible contact-induced language changes that have taken place in English and Chinese.

matter in the form of transliteration or in loan blends, appear with Romanisation, and there isn't any case where Chinese scripts (characters) are used. In contrast, there are various forms of lettered words in contemporary Chinese. However, in the history of English and its contact with other European languages, non-English scripts have been found in some of the loanwords, such as *déjà vu*, *fiancé*, and *cliché*, both of which have French origins and can be used with the accent marks in written texts and remain their French pronunciation (although some are also used without accent marks sometimes, and often these are lost over time). That said, accent marks appear less significant than a different alphabetic system, and the intensive contact between French and English over a long historical period means that these accents are generally recognised; correspondingly, these words are quite well-accepted and established in English. Chinese scripts, however, are logographic, with the form closely related to meaning, rather than sound, which makes it harder for English speakers to recognise and adopt them in their daily conversations; the general level of knowledge of the Chinese language among English speakers is also relatively low.

Such comparison also indicates that Chinese has exerted much less influence on English than that in the other direction. As shown in the table, under the influence of English around the world, borrowings from English into Chinese appear to be far more variable in terms of strategy: not only English letters, morphemes, and words have been directly borrowed and used in Chinese, they have also integrated into Chinese and been combined with Chinese characters or numerals to form new constructions. This is perhaps also due to the growing number of English learners in China and the knowledge of English among Chinese speakers. Moreover, the English influence demonstrated by these borrowed lettered forms is also manifest in the initialised buzzwords and expressions built within Chinese using *Pinyin* alphabets (e.g. *yyds* < *yongyuan de shen*; see also section 4.3.3.1 and Table 4.4). Although many examples of these hybrid forms are more likely to be encountered in less formal contexts or in online discourse, the existence of such neologisms in contemporary Chinese still indicates that the Chinese written language seems not to

be restricted with Chinese characters anymore, but to absorb ‘non-standard’ elements as well, at least in certain fields.

Additionally, it is also notable that in the contact setting between English and Chinese, especially in recent decades, Chinese speakers seem to play a more active role in either creating new Chinese English and New Chinglish expressions, which are later brought to native English speech communities, or integrating English elements into native constructions for their own communicative needs. Such creativity is, to a great extent, due to the prestige of English in China (see section 9.3.1.2 for further discussion) and Chinese speakers’ needs in intercultural communication.

9.2.2. Findings of the case studies

Chapter 5 presents the first two case studies in the thesis, examining a core category of discourse-pragmatic item, interjections. I investigate two Chinese interjections *aiyah* (and its near-synonym *aiyoh*) and *chin-chin*, that have been directly borrowed into English and recorded in the *OED*. Echoing the frequency bands assigned to each Chinese borrowings in the *OED* (*chin-chin* 3 vs. *aiyah/aiyoh* 1; see Table 3.1 in section 3.1.1.1), the case studies also show the different status of the two interjections in English, especially in BrE and AmE. While *chin-chin* is more established and used more frequently by native English speakers, *aiyah* and *aiyoh* are restrictively used among Chinese speakers of English, or by speakers/authors who would like to give a Chinese or Oriental colour to their writing. Further searches in GloWbE show that *aiyah/aiyoh* are also found in other Asian Englishes, where they conventionally accepted and used with a fuller range of functions. The history of *aiyah/aiyoh* may result in their restrictive uses: they were firstly adopted by Chinese immigrants or by English speakers who intended to show a Chinese or Oriental colour in their works, therefore they are less likely to be encountered in daily conversations of BrE and AmE speakers, and thus their uses seem to fossilised in the speech community (see 5.3; for a further conclusion on these constraints, see 9.3.2).

This chapter also stresses the important role of cultural differences which constrain the development of some pragmatic meanings and the functions of borrowed items: for example, the basic meaning of *chin-chin* in CPE, denoting a hierarchy-related respectful gesture, has become obsolete during pragmatic adaptation, and the item is now mostly used as a toast marker (see 5.2.3).

Chapter 6 involves the direct borrowing of another category of discourse-pragmatic items from English into Chinese, the vocatives. There are three particular types of English vocatives examined in this chapter with examples, namely the kin term *mummy*, the honorific term *sir*, and several endearments such as *baby*, *honey*, and *darling*, which are all frequently found in daily conversations in contemporary Chinese. These items have demonstrated different trajectories in the changes of their word forms and their degree of acceptance and integration in Chinese, which relate to the time and strategy of borrowing. But they share a lot in common: for example, owing to pragmatic adaptation, the pragmatic meanings and functions of the items in the SL are not equally borrowed or established, and they have all developed some new pragmatic functions that are unique in the RL to achieve certain communicative or rhetoric goals. This chapter also discusses the social factors which includes the media and contexts where the items are firstly, or mostly, encountered by Chinese speakers, and notices speakers' initiative in creating new forms which are playful, humorous, or have other pragmatic effects. These are especially common in mass media and other online discourse (see section 6.4; for a further conclusion, see 9.3.2).

Chapter 7 looks into two phrases of CPE origin which have survived through time and show deep integration into contemporary English. In contrast to the previous case studies where the items are direct loanwords or are borrowed through transliteration, these phrases show a process of structural borrowing, which involves the mechanism of using English elements to form new constructions based on a Chinese model, i.e. pattern replication. The case studies analyze their integration into English, focusing on changes of pragmatic functions, and more importantly the ways

in which these phrases grammaticalise. The chapter suggests that the two phrases, even though not conforming to the grammar of standard English, are still established among native speakers as colloquial idiomatic expressions; the variants formed on the basis of their pivot structures also demonstrate their syntactic integration into contemporary English. However, this chapter also shows that the replicated Chinese structures in English which have gained integration and conventionality all date back to centuries ago, and there seems no comparable borrowing in modern times.

Such asymmetry is perhaps due to the less intensive contact between Chinese and English since the trading period, and the fact that Chinese does not have prestige in later contact settings. Chinese immigrants who brought these characteristic Chinese expressions to the native English speaking countries have all settled down and more standard English is pursued by the second and later generations. In recent years, with the greater influence of China in international communication, several Chinese English expressions have gained currency (e.g. *good good study, day day up*; see also section 4.2.3), and some of these seem to be recognised by native speakers. Nonetheless, none of them is as widely established as these two phrases, and most are restrictively used by only Chinese speakers. Research suggest that it often takes a rather long period of time for a new expression to be adopted, accepted and finally become widely established in the RL, so the future of these newly coined or replicated expressions is yet to be determined.

Finally, Chapter 8 examines the pragmatic borrowing of grammatical units, i.e. the English suffixes *-ing* and *-er*. The study focuses on their uses and pragmatic functions in Chinese and also analyses their levels of morphosyntactic integration in contemporary Chinese. The two suffixes demonstrate different degrees of conventionality: the progressive suffix *-ing* is more established and has a wider distribution of contexts than the agentive suffix *-er*, probably because it was adopted earlier and can be used in many cases as a free morpheme (see 8.3). However, both

are commonly used English suffixes in Chinese, and they seem to have great potential to catch on and become more integrated because of their unique pragmatic functions. This chapter also demonstrates that affix borrowing, and probably the borrowing of other types of grammatical items, is only likely to take place from English into Chinese, because of the penetration and status of Modern English on the Chinese speech community; it is much less likely to occur in the other direction, at least at the present. Such findings suggest that in the current English-Chinese contact setting, English penetration in Chinese has reached a high level, whereas modern Chinese has not obtained the same status in English. More importantly, the prestige of English in China, as well as the Chinese speaker's knowledge of the English language, play a significant role in the direction of pragmatic borrowing (see further in 9.3.1.2).

In summary, the overview of language contact between Chinese and English and the detailed case studies of pragmatic borrowings have shown that both English and Chinese have contributed a significant number of pragmatic borrowings and contact-induced neologisms for pragmatic reasons into the other languages. These borrowed items have reached different degrees of acceptance and conventionality in their RLs, and their usages, meanings, and functions have all changed through pragmatic adaptation. A number of factors, such as speakers' creativity and social-cultural background, result in these variations. Therefore, in the next section, I summarize and analyse the key motivations and constraints manifest in the English-Chinese language contact which have impact on contact-induced changes.

9.3. Motivations for and constraints on pragmatic borrowing

9.3.1. Motivations for borrowing and integration

The findings of the case studies have shown that even though English and Chinese are in relatively remote contact, compared to some other language pairs such as English and French, there is substantial evidence of borrowed pragmatic items and lexical items borrowed for pragmatic needs. While some of these borrowings have

become extinct or are used in relatively low frequency, many have survived for long periods and have integrated into the RL and gained new functions. A wide range of factors motivate their borrowing and development in the RL, including linguistic and social factors. Some of the motivations summarized by previous research have been discussed in section 2.5 (see also Galinsky 1967, Winford 2003, Durkin 2009, Matras 2009, Winter-Froemel 2017), but a few factors are specifically significant in English-Chinese contact setting. These factors can generally be categorised as pragmatic necessity, prestige and fashion, and communicative efficiency. Moreover, these motivations are even more important taking account of speakers' preference between borrowed forms and native forms.

9.3.1.1. Pragmatic necessity

The study of pragmatic borrowing is defined by Andersen (2017: 71) as falling at 'the intersection between contact linguistics and pragmatics'. The analysis of the motivation in this thesis therefore takes a usage-based approach. As mentioned in section 2.2.2 and 2.5.1, from a usage-based point of view, every borrowed item is adopted and used for certain communicative needs in specific contexts.

These communicative needs often result in speakers' creativity in the RL, so that pragmatically borrowed items in particular contexts usually achieve a mixture of pragmatic functions. Several common functions are demonstrated by the case studies of Chinese borrowings into English in the current thesis, which include enriching the style of expressions and providing a 'Chinese flavour'. For example, in the case of *aiyah*, corpora data shows that native English speakers use the interjection, they often intend to provide the sense of an oriental setting and to shape characters, especially in literary works or depictions of Chinese immigrants. However, other borrowings which have a longer history and are more established and integrated into the English language through pragmatic adaptation do not seem to have this function of denoting foreign colour. *Chin chin*, *no can do*, and *long time no see* illustrate this: even though they were created centuries ago in CPE and were firstly treated as

representatives of non-standard English, they have been through long periods of integration after being brought to English speaking countries by Chinese immigrants; they are now used as alternatives to native expressions, which enrich the variety and style of the language, and many native speakers are unaware of their origins.

Many English borrowings into Chinese also demonstrate similar motivations. Some pragmatic items borrowed from English to Chinese differ from those in the other direction in their more various forms, for example, hybrid structures mixing both English and Chinese elements or items borrowed in pure English lettered form (see section 4.3.2 and 4.3.3). In these cases, there is another significant pragmatic necessity worth noting, which is to get the reader's attention. Sentences consisting of a mixture of distinctive scripts are immediately eye-catching, and also require more cognitive effort for audiences to receive, and this makes them memorable. Therefore, such uses of borrowings and strategies of code-mixing are likely to result in the emphatic effect of the information, as shown by the English suffix *-ing* used in posters and advertising copy (see 8.1.2 and 8.3). Many other examples include foreign forms used in brand names and publicity slogans.

It is also worth noting that while the borrowing of foreign items enriches the language style and speakers' choice of expressions, the co-existence of both borrowed items and native equivalents sometimes causes language change. The consequences may include a change of meaning or function for either of them. For example, owing to the existence of various vocatives denoting 'mother' in Chinese, the borrowed item has developed a new meaning and function, and can be used as a more polite (euphemistic) address term for 'a procuress'; its use to denote a pregnant woman has also become more common in Chinese than in English (see 6.1.2).

Euphemism is another important pragmatic motivation for using a borrowed item in place of an indigenous equivalent, showing the RL speaker's intention to express their meaning or emotion in a 'more polite' way. In Galinsky's study of the

motivations of lexical borrowing, he also notices a similar factor which is ‘to offer an intentional disguise’ (1967:71; see also section 2.5), as the borrowed item is not as semantically transparent as the native equivalent. Such factor functions even more commonly in the speaker’s choice of expletives and expressions which may be regarded as rude or taboo. For example, the borrowed expletive *fuck* (and similarly, the indefinite symbol *X*), is used in place of the Chinese alternative item, usually in order to make the expression less rude, or at least to avoid explicit aggression (see 4.3.3).

Finally, in some case speakers use various expressions and produce lexical innovations, using elements from both the SL and the RL, in order to be playful or to achieve a humorous effect. Playfulness has motivated in a wide range of marked expressions, i.e. unexpected elements in conventional structures, which have an emphatic function and also have specific pragmatic meanings, depending on context. For example, the borrowed honorific term *sir* is used in the idiomatic structures like *bushi ba*, *a-sir* functions to indicate the speaker’s sarcasm towards something incredible (see 6.2.2).

9.3.1.2. Prestige and fashion

Case studies show that prestige is another fundamental social motivation resulting in many pragmatically borrowed items in English-Chinese contact settings. The notion of prestige has been overtly studied in previous literature as a complex sociolinguistic factor in language contact, and it plays a significant role influencing the direction and the borrowing strategy in contact settings (e.g. Weinreich 1953, Thomason and Kaufman 1988, Winford 2003, Matras 2009, Hickey 2010, Fischer 2013). From a psychological point of view, such ‘prestige’ relates to the social-political dominance of a SL community, which RL speakers are perceptibly or imperceptibly influenced by, and they tend to ‘learn’ from the SL by borrowing useful expressions and sometimes also language habits. Such prestige-motivated language changes can occur in all areas, including lexis, pronunciation, syntax,

stylistics and other pragmatic choices.

English has contributed loanwords to many languages through global trade and communication, partly owing to the influence of the British Empire and the status of English as a *lingua franca*. In the English-Chinese contact setting, for example, English has had prestige ever since the mid-nineteenth century (the two Opium Wars). The discussions in section 4.2.3.1 and 4.3.1 show that English has exerted great influence on the Chinese language since the late nineteenth century. This has motivated the borrowing of loanwords in a wide range of semantic categories and the reform of the Chinese grammar, known as the modernisation of Chinese, because of the urge to learn from the powerful country in the West. In the new century, English has been a compulsory course in China's educational system, and proficiency in English has become a core element of competitiveness of graduates and interviewees, helping them to gain approval in work and in the society. English also serves as an important language for popular culture and pastimes across the world, and has exerted great influence in daily conversations in China through the internet and all kinds of mass media.

With the prestige of English and the growing penetration and knowledge of the English language among Chinese speakers, there is a trend for direct borrowing or simply adoption of lettered forms. English scripts are more commonly found in contemporary Chinese language and seem to be used more integrated into native forms/structures, such as *O* 不 *OK* ('OK or not'), 不是吧阿 *sir* ('it shouldn't be like this! A-sir'), 无 *fuck* 说 ('have nothing to say'; with negative emotion), *hold* 住 ('hang in there'), 期待 *ing* ('expecting'), and 清华 *er* ('Tsinghua students'). Similarly, although smaller in number compared to the above-mentioned items, there are some neologisms showing Chinese characteristics imposed upon English, formed by mixing elements or by literal translation (mostly created by Chinese speakers). Some of these have become popular and spread across cultural and geographical boundaries via the internet, and are even recorded in dictionaries and used by some

English natives, e.g. *niubi* ('fantastic, awesome') and its derived noun form *niubility*.

Such integration of borrowed items and foreign forms is more prevalent in internet language and in less formal contexts such as daily conversations, and one factor is the language user's pursuit of 'fashion'. In recent decades, various types of pop culture and mass media, such as pop songs, variety shows, movies, and TV series, internet gaming, and social media platforms have also provided a breeding ground for a wide range of lexical innovations and borrowings between the two languages, which in turn facilitate intercultural communication (e.g. see section 4.2.3.3 and 4.3.3).

9.3.1.3. Communicative efficiency

Efficiency is also a factor that motivates the borrowing of a foreign form when there is already a conventionally used form in the RL. Often, speakers choose the most simplified and shortest expression in their daily conversations, which costs the least effort to get a message across to the listener. Contexts where efficiency is particularly important include online communication, text messaging and advertising. In addition, efficiency has a rather decisive influence in the choice of a borrowed item to replace its native alternative. For example, English speakers may use the borrowed phrase *long time no see* to substitute 'It has been a long time' or 'I haven't seen you for a long time' in some cases, mainly because the former is shorter and more efficient in communication (so is *no can do*; see 7.2.2). Similarly, the borrowing of English suffixes *-ing* and *-er* and their use in a wide range of sentence structures in contemporary Chinese also seem to be motivated by efficiency in daily communications (see 8.3).

The language efficiency factor not only results in the direct borrowing of foreign pragmatic items, but also motivates lexical innovations within the RL taking the SL item as a model. For instance, the widespread usage of shortened/initialised phrases online, such as *btw* 'by the way', *cu* 'see you', and *asap* 'as soon as possible', are

familiar in many countries in the world because of the internet. While some of these have been adopted by Chinese internet users (and are even widely used in daily communications), they have also influenced the word-formation rules of Chinese phrases, e.g. *yyds* ‘*yongyuan de shen*, greatest-of-all-time’ and 886 ‘bye-bye *lo* (interj.)’ (see 4.3.3.1), apparently formed to reduce the time taken by typing full characters.

9.3.2. Factors that constrain the acceptance and integration of borrowed items

My findings also show that even though there are considerable numbers of pragmatically borrowed items as a result of Chinese-English language contact, not all of these have gained the same degree of acceptance and frequency in the RL. Many borrowed items have also lost some or even most of their pragmatic meanings or functions after being adopted, accepted and used by the RL speakers. There are various reasons for such restrictiveness.

In traditional studies of lexical borrowing, linguists have proposed a borrowing hierarchy, showing that some categories of linguistic items are more borrowable than the others because of their ‘structural autonomy and referential stability’ (e.g. Matras 1998:283; see further section 2.6.1). Such observation can be further applied in the study of pragmatic borrowing: pragmatically borrowed items, which include PMs, interjections, vocatives, and phrases/idioms expressing pragmatic meanings discussed in Chapter 5, 6, & 7, usually function as modifiers of utterances in particular conversational contexts and are less integrated in the main sentence structure. They are thus more likely to be adopted and later borrowed in contact settings, echoing the framework proposed by previous studies where these categories fall at the middle of the borrowing hierarchy. This linguistic constraint also implies that grammatical items are less borrowable than lexical items, and this is borne out by Chapter 8: the suffixes *-ing* and *-er* are currently the only two affixes frequently used in Chinese (although between the two, *-ing* is far more widely-accepted than *-er*) and no Chinese grammatical item is borrowed in the other direction. Such asymmetry

is then due to the different degrees of penetration of the SL in the RL speech community mentioned in section 9.3.1.

It is difficult to tell which category expressing pragmatic meanings is more borrowable than the others, because PMs, interjections, vocatives, and phrases/idioms of the type included in this study are all syntactically autonomous items, according to the borrowing hierarchy. Moreover, considering the frequency, degree of acceptance, and degree of integration of different items within each category, borrowability seems to vary case by case. For all the reasons discussed above in section 9.3.1, it may be even harder to make generalisations. For instance, within each category borrowed from Chinese into English, different items examined in this thesis appear to be accepted to varying degrees: for example, *chin-chin* is far more established in English than *aiyah*, and used by a wider range of speaker groups; different types of English vocatives borrowed into Chinese are all quite frequently used, but demonstrate different trajectories of integration. Therefore, it is rather simplistic to argue that vocatives are more borrowable than interjections, or that English words expressing pragmatic meanings are more likely to be well-accepted in Chinese than Chinese words in English. Pragmatic and social factors play a significant role in each case which accounts for this diversity, and thus these factors are the main focus of this thesis. There are two parameters which may influence the status and usage of a borrowed item in an RL: namely the speakers, both in the SL and the RL, and the social and cultural background.

First of all, one of the most important factors is **the context where an item is most likely to be encountered** in the contact setting, and more specifically, the medium by which the borrowed item is carried to the RL speech community. This gives an impression about the most common usage of the borrowed item to RL speakers, although such usage may or may not be the basic one in the SL. Besides, if one use is overwhelmingly more frequent than the others, most RL speakers might not even be aware of the other different ways to use the borrowed item, so that its other

pragmatic functions might be restricted, shift, or be lost. For example, as shown by the case study of *sir* (see 6.2.2 and 6.4), the English honorific term is brought to Chinese speakers through the mass media, especially in Hong Kong action movies from the 1980s onwards, generating many famous punchlines and catchphrases containing the address term for policemen ‘阿 sir *A-sir*’ or ‘Surname-sir’. These expressions are popular among Chinese audiences, with the result that *sir* becomes most established in this function. However, its basic meaning to signal the higher social rank of the addressee and to show respect is relatively less encountered by Chinese speakers, and thus is used more restrictively during its pragmatic adaptation in Chinese. Similar examples include *baby* used in social media and other popular culture to address either beloved ones or strangers to show intimacy in Chinese (see 6.3.2), and *long time no see* losing almost all of its affectionate or humorous connotations to be used only as a greeting expression in English (see 7.2.2).

Secondly, speakers in the RL are also responsible for the constrained use of pragmatic borrowings. This includes the group of **speakers who firstly use the foreign items and why or how these early adopters use them**. As previous literature has noted, two approaches should be distinguished in terms of borrowing strategy, namely adoption and imposition (also known as ‘interference through shift’; see further Van Coetsem 1988, Thomason and Kaufman 1988, Winford 2005, Haspelmath 2009), depending on the speech community who use the borrowed item in the RL. If an item is adopted by native speakers from another language (the SL), either necessity-based or prestige-based, it is more likely to be generally accepted and established (see also 9.3.1); on the other hand, if an item is imposed into an RL by non-native speakers from their native language, there is a chance that the item might be more constrained. For instance, the Chinese interjection *aiyah* found in the AmE and BrE corpora is mostly used by Chinese immigrants, within Chinese-related contexts, or sometimes by native English speakers but for purpose of a ‘Chinese flavour’. This shows that the interjection is imposed into English and thus is not at all accepted by the general speech community. However, in some Asian Englishes,

where the speakers are natives of both respective countries, the interjection is adopted by larger groups of speakers and thus is more well-established and used in full range of pragmatic functions. In addition, if an imposed item becomes accepted by larger groups of native speakers, perhaps through adaptation, it might have an impact on the RL and integrate into that language, as shown by the grammaticalisation of *no can do* and *long time no see* (see 7.1.3 and 7.2.3).

Contact-induced borrowings are usually embedded within the culture of the SL, so the third influential factor that may constrain the use of pragmatically borrowed items is **the cultural background of the RL**. Examples of Chinese-English language contact show that cultural conflict may occur when Chinese culture-related items and expressions enter the English language. There are two possible consequences: either the borrowed item becomes a ‘nonce borrowing’ or is used with extremely low frequency (as shown by many loanwords of Chinese origin in the *OED* with frequency band 1, e.g. *aiyah*, *aiyoh*); or it loses some of its meanings and functions and adapts pragmatically. A typical example of the latter in this thesis is the interjection *chin chin*, firstly used to designate a ‘bowing’ gesture to show respect and social hierarchy, which was not well-accepted by native English speakers. It has now undergone adaptation and meaning change, referring to a general polite salutation, but more frequently it is used as a toast marker (see 4.4.1 and 5.2.2.3).

Finally, **RL speakers’ preference and the existence of indigenous items** which have similar pragmatic functions is also relevant when considering constraints on pragmatic borrowing. In general, some restrictions on uses of the pragmatically borrowed items discussed in this thesis are the result of existing indigenous counterparts which are more well-established and preferred by the native speakers. Examples include: *aiyah* expressing ‘a sudden surprise/pain/astonishment’ (compare *oops*, *ouch*, *oh dear*, etc.); *chin* used to express politeness (compare *please*); *sir* used as a general honorific term (compare *xiansheng*, *gexia*, *biren*, and other expressions at discourse level). The more commonly used indigenous items make these

senses/functions of the borrowings less frequent in the RL, which inhibit them from spreading widely. However, as mentioned in 9.3.1, the co-existence of both indigenous and borrowed items does not necessarily seem to constrain the borrowing, but can result in the development of some particular functions of the borrowed items in the RL, especially for the purpose of prestige or communicative efficiency.

In general, the various linguistic and social factors in both SL and RL summarized here often function together to influence the choice of borrowings, and more importantly, the adoption, acceptance, integration, and conventionalisation of the borrowed items in the RL.

9.4. RL speakers' attitudes towards pragmatic borrowings

While studying pragmatic borrowings and observing their uses in the RL, it is also relevant to consider RL speakers' attitudes towards these borrowed items. In the current thesis, two specific issues appear to be relevant to Chinese-English contact: how English speakers view expressions with CPE origins, and how Chinese speakers feel about using English scripts.

9.4.1. The use of expressions of CPE origins: racist or not?

As mentioned in Chapter 7, the two phrases *no can do* and *long time no see*, are inherited from CPE. These were first used in trade settings in China's Treaty ports and then brought to English speaking countries by merchants and immigrants. This pidgin variety is now extinct and many of its expressions have been discarded, but these two phrases, as well as some other items like *chin chin*, have survived and evolved in the contemporary English language. They have not only been used more frequently in the past half century, but also gone through all kinds of integration into English sentence structures, resulting in their established uses in wider range of contexts in both spoken and written texts.

Nevertheless, there is also concern that the use of CPE expressions, especially those

which are not formed in standard English, might be problematic. Such feelings mainly result from awareness of sensitivity around issues relating to race in recent years (see also section 7.3.2), and specifically the idea that the uses of non-standard CPE expressions may sound offensive to Chinese people or immigrants. Lyons, for example, includes *long time no see* and *no can do* in his list of 11 frequently used words and phrases of racist origins, and warns that people should be cautious about using them because of their problematic past (see further Lyons 2020⁹⁶).

These attitudes also show a growing awareness of the importance of language inclusiveness, claiming that language users should be aware of social factors such as gender, race, and class (see further Schulzke 2014). However, an opposing view is that the expressions are so widely accepted in casual conversation that they are no longer associated with their origins, and are simply regarded as non-standard or colloquial, if the message being said is crystal clear. Besides, as the phrases have gone through centuries of integration and adaptation in English, few people would know their history, so that listeners are unlikely be offended because of their origin.

Additionally, Gladwell has noted a cultural difference in communication between the West and the East: Western communication is more likely to be ‘transmitter oriented’, that the speaker has the responsibility to transmit information clearly and unambiguously and to avoid confusion or misunderstanding; whereas speakers in many Asian countries tend to communicate based on ‘receiver orientation’, and depend on the listener to make sense of the message being conveyed (see further Gladwell 2008). So this may explain native English speakers’ concern about the possibility that the uses of CPE phrases may cause racism as taking the responsibility of the transmitter. On the other hand, from the receiver’s perspective, if most Chinese speakers or descendants of Chinese immigrants feel they are appropriate to use in daily conversations, and they are not concerned by their origins, *no can do* and *long*

⁹⁶ Lyons, D. 2020. ‘11 Common English Words And Phrases With Racist Origins.’ Online at <https://www.babbel.com/en/magazine/common-racist-words-phrases> (Accessed September 28, 2021)

time no see are very useful idiomatic expressions which facilitate effective communication.

9.4.2. Using English forms in Chinese texts

In the discussion of English influence on the Chinese language and the case study of English pragmatic borrowings in Chinese, there are many examples showing that some borrowed English forms have entered the Chinese scriptal system and have been used to combine with Chinese characters, resulting in hybrid constructions (see also section 9.2.1). Previous chapters reveal that such phenomena occur more often in internet language and some less formal written texts, owing to the influence of intercultural communication via mass media, and especially the internet in most recent decades. The reasons why English forms are frequently found in online Chinese discourses relate to both external and internal factors, including the dominant role of English on the internet and the communicative needs of Chinese netizens. Having been the *lingua franca* around the world for centuries, English undoubtedly serves as a predominant language medium on the internet, so that all the cutting-edge research, technology, and news, and all kinds of popular culture are firstly brought to China in English. Chinese internet users, the majority of who consist of the younger generation who privilege novelty and individualism, and more educated groups having a relatively good command of English⁹⁷, appear to spontaneously incorporate English elements into their online communications for the purpose of prestige or fashion.

Moreover, it is conspicuous that the borrowed items in Chinese which take English forms are often basic vocabulary items or linguistic units. English letters are very familiar to all Chinese speakers as the *Pinyin* system has been popularised since the 1950s. *thank you*, *sorry*, *see you (CU)* and *hi* are among the most common and basic greeting markers and politeness formulae; *baby* and *sir* are simple both in

⁹⁷ See also section 4.3.3. For a further statistic depiction of Chinese netizens, see CNNIC (China Internet Network Information Center) annual report.

morphological structure and in pronunciation; the progressive suffix *-ing* is, according to Krashen's 'natural order hypothesis' of language acquisition (see further Krashen 1982, 1985), one of the grammatical items that are acquired at a very early stage by Chinese EFL learners; other English words that are commonly applied in Chinese online discourses are all basic vocabulary (see section 4.3.3 for more examples). Therefore, it is quite natural that the internet helps the spread of these common words, items, and hybrid structures, which are thus gradually accepted by larger groups of speakers.

As mentioned in section 4.3 and in later chapters, some linguists and politicians in China have been critical of the use of English forms in Chinese written texts, suggesting that translanguaging practice of this kind is a potential subversion of the standard Chinese language, and may even undermine nationalism in China (e.g. Li and Zhu 2019: 15). Their concerns have resulted in certain restrictions in using lettered words or hybrid forms in formal and public occasions (see the example of *NBA* in section 4.3.2). However, in my opinion, such restrictions should not be pushed too far, especially in relation to online discourse and other informal contexts. According to linguists in China and Western countries (see further Yu 2001, Crystal 2001), internet language is a variety that is often defined as informal, speech-like written language, and can be characterised as dynamic, succinct, and diverse in forms, and containing various creative neologisms. The lifespan and trajectory of expressions found in internet language, whether they are standard or not, is often determined by various factors. In many cases, items that survive into more general use are often the ones that are more adapted to the Chinese language, which achieve unique communicative functions, which can be used in wider range of contexts, and which relate more closely to speakers' daily lives; items which do not meet these criteria are likely to die out naturally within a relatively short time.

Generally speaking, the integration of English lettered elements in Chinese reflects the initiative of speakers in creating new pragmatic devices which meet their

communicative needs and enable them to express themselves, especially in the most dynamic variety of internet language. The wholesale borrowings of English forms and new combinations of English and Chinese characters exhibit unique pragmatic functions, demonstrate linguistic diversity, and in some cases achieve language efficiency in the RL Chinese, as shown in many case studies in this thesis (e.g. *sir* used in online buzz expression, *-ing* used in copy writing, and the hybrid Chinese idiom 无 *fuck* 说). Furthermore, the investigation of such practices, facilitating communication in contemporary online discourse, is an important element of the study of internet language and of contact between English and Chinese.

9.5. Suggestions for future studies

This thesis has taken both the study of pragmatic borrowing and the study of language contact between English and Chinese into new directions. My study of pragmatic borrowing particularly incorporates the creativity of speakers, concerning their exploiting lexical items and grammatical structures to form neologisms, in order to meet communicative needs. This shows that the field of pragmatic borrowing has the potential to cover a wider range of borrowing phenomena, i.e. any discourse-pragmatic features that are borrowed from a SL into an RL. Moreover, all the case studies prove that sociolinguistic factors play significant roles in the borrowing, integration, and use of pragmatic items and linguistic items expressing pragmatic meanings, which shows that the combination between sociolinguistics and pragmatic borrowing studies, and even linguistic borrowing studies, will be a fruitful avenue in future works.

However, as mentioned in the introductory part of the thesis, little research has been done into pragmatic borrowing between Chinese and English, and the current study has taken an early step into this field. I do not aim to investigate all pragmatic borrowing phenomena between the two languages in this thesis, but I have conducted several representative studies, and have suggested approaches and various data sources for this kind of research. The lack of previous studies also means that I have

encountered many difficulties. In the following paragraphs in this section, I consider the challenges and limitations of this thesis and offer suggestions which will benefit future studies in this field.

First of all, the lack of a large corpus of Chinese spoken material is a significant challenge in this thesis. As mentioned in Chapter 3, the spoken data in CCL only takes up 0.26% of the total and there is currently no spoken material in BCC. This makes it difficult to generalise about the uses and pragmatic functions of borrowed items in Chinese speakers' daily conversations, and means that conclusions are necessarily based on a relatively small sample of material. In order to meet this gap, in this thesis, many of the examples quoted in the case studies are indirect speech extracted from newspapers, script lines, and literary works, and speech-like written material such as social media data (e.g. *Weibo*), which demonstrate the spoken language to some extent. However, if more suitable and more comprehensive spoken corpora existed, the discussion and analysis would be better evidenced. Therefore, a comprehensive spoken corpus of Chinese, or at least a larger component of spoken data in the current corpora, is needed as soon as possible for future studies, not only in the field of pragmatic borrowing and language contact, but also to benefit other areas of research in Chinese linguistics.

Secondly, the thesis incorporates discussion of internet language in both English and Chinese, which many linguists agree is a unique variety of language in its various characteristics (see also section 4.2.3.3, 4.3.3, and 9.4.2). The internet has boosted the creation and spread of all kinds of lexical innovations induced by Chinese-English language contact, and this thesis only covers a small number of examples. The speed of contact-induced language changes in this new intercultural communication setting, which demonstrates speakers' creativity, merits more detailed investigation.

Finally, the thesis compares several cases of pragmatic borrowing from English to

Chinese and from Chinese to English. Similarities and differences are summarised in terms of different types of borrowing, factors in each cases that motivate or constrain the borrowed items, and speakers' attitudes towards borrowings. This study also acknowledges that both English and Chinese include many varieties and the use of a borrowed item may be different depending on different speaker groups, for instance, Chinese borrowings in AmE and BrE are likely to differ from their uses in some Asian English varieties. However, in terms of the influences of the Asian English varieties on both the English and Chinese languages and how they interact with each other, more questions remain to be explored, for example:

- a. which variety of English (AmE or BrE) has exerted more influence on Chinese? Has this changed over time?
- b. how do Asian English varieties function as intermediate between Chinese and general international English, leading to indirect borrowing between these languages?

Moreover, the thesis also acknowledges that some transmission languages have also exerted influences on language contact between Chinese and English, such as Japanese, French, and Italian (see section 4.3.1, section 5.2.3). However, due to limited time and space, this thesis doesn't go any deeper into these questions. The topics mentioned here merit more in-depth study in the future, and a more comprehensive study on these questions would help investigate language contact and pragmatic borrowing phenomena.

Besides, much more detailed comparison within specific categories in each direction of pragmatic borrowing could be made, and would build on the findings of this thesis. It would be helpful to look further at other possible topics, including:

- a. how far the borrowing of Chinese interjections in English differs from that of English interjections in Chinese, for example: to compare the general acceptance of interjections of one language in the other;
- b. how the use of politeness markers/formulae in English or Chinese affect speakers of the other languages in intercultural communication, e.g. to investigate the uses and functions of a borrowed politeness marker (and its

indigenous counterparts) in various contexts, such as in monolingual and bilingual contexts, and in formal and casual contexts;

- c. the possibility that Chinese-English language contact takes place in stylistics or beyond the verbal level, for instance, paralinguistic phenomena, such as gestures (see section 1.3 for the 4th level of pragmatic borrowing).

This thesis both raises these questions and suggests a model for future studies, demonstrating the potential for future work.

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