

第一章 中式英语

Chapter One: The Dynamics Of “Chinglish”

以我为鉴

中文（普通话）是我的第二语言，因此我在成都生活了几个月之后，就听得懂四川话了。四川话与普通话，发音相近，语调却大不通。学说四川话，着实花了我很多时间。主要是因为，在说每个字之前，我都要在心里反复酝酿，才能找准语调。一开始的时候真的很纠结，每要开口，必先将普通话与四川话之间的语调转换规则在脑子里过上一遍。这一纠结可就是七年啊！于我而言，知道这些规则，有好处也有坏处。好处是，我可以利用这些规则，先将普通话的语调转换成四川话的语调，再用我所知道的普通话词汇来讲四川话。说它不好是因为，每说一个字我都要动用这些规则进行加工，久而久之便产生了依赖。结果就是，在很长一段时期里，我讲四川话来总是磕磕巴巴的。现在想想，坏处还要大些。

An Analogy

As Mandarin is my second language, it took me a few months to understand Sichuan dialect while living in Chengdu. The pronunciations are mostly the same between Mandarin and Sichuan dialect but the tones are different. It took me longer to learn to speak it, though. That was because I depended a lot on my mind to process the proper tones in pronouncing the words in Sichuan dialect. Initially, it was a big struggle as my mind worked on the rules in changing the tones from Mandarin to Sichuan dialect for more than seven years! Actually, knowing these rules was both a blessing and a curse. As a blessing, it taught me how to switch the tones of the Mandarin words into Sichuan tones so that I could use existing vocabulary of my Mandarin in speaking the dialect. It was a curse because I had to process the changes a word at a time in my mind and I became dependent on these mental processes. Consequently, for a long time, I could not speak Sichuan dialect fluently. In retrospect, it was more of a curse than a blessing.

刚开始那几年，每回讲四川话至多不过三五句，后来有一天，我跟一位男士谈业务，整整一个下午嘴巴不停地讲。我根本来不及进行语调转换，只能张口就来，一切全凭感觉（纯用方言思考，不再依赖普通话）。有了那次经历，再讲四川话可就流利多了。当然，个别地方我做得还不够好，想是说得还不够多吧。要是还沿着以前的老路走，怕是到了今天我也还是说不好，就算勉强讲得来，想必也是干巴巴的，索然无味，搞

不好还会沦为“哑巴四川话”，连嘴巴都张不开。以我为鉴，大家或许可以得到一些启示，说到底，中国人想学好英文口语，一定要习惯英语思维，一味用中文思考是行不通的。

Previously, I never had to speak Sichuan dialect for more than five sentences in one encounter. Till one day, I had to discuss with a gentleman on a business matter throughout an afternoon in Sichuan dialect. I was forced to stop doing the mental processing and started to speak from familiarity of the pronunciation (thinking in Sichuan dialect and no longer dependent on Mandarin), my spoken Sichuan dialect became more fluent (albeit some tonal inaccuracies still persist due to infrequent use). Had I continued to depend on processing Mandarin to Sichuan tones in my mind, I would never have been able to speak it fluently. Whereas the result at best was rather tedious and jerky, at worst it was “Mute Sichuan Dialect” (哑巴四川话). This is the closest analogy I can come up with for Chinese learners trying to speak English by thinking in Chinese instead of in English.

我来中国没多久就听说了“哑巴英语”，然后是“中式英语”(Chinglish)。这让我想到了新加坡人讲的“新式英语”(Singlish)。新加坡人喜欢讲英语，新式英语自然也有很多人讲，可讲归讲，笔下却不常见。中式英文就不同了。本来中国人就很少开口讲英语，因而讲中式英语的就更少。讲的

人不多，写的人却不少——学生在作文里写，就连企业高管发邮件也照写不误。

It was not long after living in China that I first heard about “Mute English” (哑巴英语). Soon after, I also got to hear about “Chinglish”. It reminded me of “Singlish” in Singapore. As English is widely spoken in Singapore, Singlish could be commonly heard, but not often used in writing. Chinglish is not often heard in China since English is not often spoken, but it can be seen in the writings of Chinese students and the English emails of Chinese executives.

中式英语饶有趣味

中式英语现象在中国可谓家喻户晓。举一个大家都耳熟能详的例子吧。“好好学习，天天向上”是毛主席的名言，拿来用中式英语表述，直译成了“Good good study, day day up”。这种情况我倒不担心，如今的中国学生也没那么死脑筋，是不会犯这么低级的错误的。直译之外，还有音译，是中式英语的另一种表现形式。以中文音译英文的例子有“三颗油” (“Thank you”)、“古德拜” (“Goodbye”) 等；以英文音译中文的例子有“gelivable” (“给力”)、“No zuo no die” (“不作不死”)。说到底，这些只是为了好耍，算不得什么语言问题。而事实上，有些中式英语很可能是学中文的老外不经意间炮制出来的。

Chinglish can be Fun

Chinese are very aware of their local linguistic phenomenon called Chinglish. The most popular example would be a quote from Chairman Mao: “好好学习，天天向上” which in Chinglish is “Good good study, day day up.” This is called Literal Translation which I am least concerned about because the Chinglish of today’s Chinese students is not that blatant. Other well-known

Chinglish expressions are characterized by the way English words are pronounced, such as “三颗油”(sankeyou) for “Thank you” and “古德拜”(gudebai) for “Goodbye”, are known as Chinese Transliterations. There are also Chinglish which are English transliterations of Chinese words like “gelivable” for the Chinese word “给力”(geili), and the combination of Literal Translation and English Literation like “No zuo no die” for the Chinese expression “不作不死”(buzuobusi). These types of Chinglish are just a reflection of deliberate playfulness rather than a major flaw in learning English. In fact, some Chinglish could be the work of foreigners in China learning Mandarin.

中式英语俯仰皆是

需要指出的是，虽然不容易察觉，可中国学生笔下的一些英语句子，的确确是中式的。我可没有嘲讽的意思，写这本书的目的，也只是为了将中式英语的深层结构展示出来，给中国学生瞧个清楚，并唤起对该问题足够的重视。毕竟，这类问题不仅影响他们的英文表述，更会在将来羁绊住孩子们走向世界的步伐。我且把中式英语分作三类，分别阐释。

Living with Chinglish

What I need to point out are those English sentences constructed by Chinese students, which may not be obvious to many, that are actually Chinglish. As my intention is not to make fun of Chinglish, the purpose of writing about this is to bring greater awareness to Chinese students of the deeper forms of Chinglish that will blemish their English and affect their future in the international arena. I will group these forms of Chinglish

into three types.

看似不经意实则犯大忌

第一类中式英语，由语法错误造成，包括误用冠词和介词的情况。

其中有些问题很典型，所涉及的语法规则往往是英文独有的，于中文则不适用。下面举例说明：

1. 主谓一致：“She want to go home.”
2. 时态（过去时）：“I go out with my friends last night.”
3. 时态（完成时）：“I already eat my lunch.”
4. 时态（进行时）：“I like to watch TV when I eat my dinner.”
5. 冠词：“I take bus to school every day.”“There is the toilet in the restaurant.”
6. 单复数：“I think I hurt his feeling.”
7. Be 动词：“My attitude maybe are the problems.”“What is you do?” “Why are we must do that?”
8. 介词：“My teachers were interfering my studies.”
9. 介词与连词：“I study from general manager by he deal with

all kinds of things.”

10. 其他 :“I don’t feel like to go to school today.”“You promise to accompany with me to shopping.”“I had to walking to school yesterday.”

我将在本书第 16 章，专门探讨冠词与介词方面的问题，并针对相关问题给出解决办法。

Simple but Glaring Errors

The first type of these forms of Chinglish is due to grammatical errors, including the usage of the article and prepositions as described below. Some are very common because the grammatical features of English are not found in Chinese:

1. Subject-Verb Agreement – “She want to go home.”
2. Tenses (Past) – “I go out with my friends last night.”
3. Tenses (Perfect) – “I already eat my lunch.”
4. Tenses (Continuous) – “I like to watch TV when I eat my dinner.”
5. The Article – “I take bus to school every day.”“There is the toilet in the restaurant.
6. Plural – “I think I hurt his feeling.”
7. Be – “My attitude maybe are the problems.” “What is you do?” “Why are we must do that?”
8. Prepositions – “My teachers were interfering my studies.”
9. Prepositions and Conjunctions – “I study from general manager by he deal with all kinds of things.”
10. Mixed – “I don’t feel like to go to school today.” “You

promise to accompany with me to shopping.” “I had to walking to school yesterday.”

We will look into the problems and solutions of the article and prepositions in greater details in Chapter Sixteen (Areas of Main Weaknesses).

云山雾罩迷人眼

第二类中式英语，由句法错误造成，读之如云山雾罩，难解其意。

1. “I study English from my early age let me can master English.”

2. “My parents are always strict to me.”

3. “I enjoy the feeling of sharing knowledge and experience with each other.”

4. “Many people do not guard the rules then to crossing the road to get trouble.”

5. “When I grew up, I became a health life advocate and always concern about how to ensure healthy lives of people.”

6. “The part time job in free time let me get into hard working attitude.”

7. “We cannot give the absolutely full freedom so that the exist of rules is necessary to us”

8. “Any of your requirement would be get prompt response.”

9. “I am really very glad to take this opportunity to introduce our company for you, with hope may work with you in near future.”

Confusing for Foreigners

The second type is due to syntactical errors which make understanding the message of the sentence very difficult:

1. “I study English from my early age let me can master English.”

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疑惑成团意难解

第三类中式英语，由用词不当造成。当然，这三类问题很有可能在同一句子中集中出现。这就意味着，在某些中式英语句子中，除用词问题外，还可能存在语法、句法方面的问题。

1. "Thanks a lot for my parents providing me a pleasure childhood."

2. "It is my privilege to have the opportunity to show myself."

3. "I am a normal Chinese girl who was born in a teacher family."

4. "The party which is welcomed the newborn in university."

5. "There was once quarrel about the time for watching TV."

6. "I will try my best efforts to provide the best service and the most optimum suggestion."

7. "The anger came to me."

8. "One thing happening later shocked me and changed my mind."

9. “If you are interested in inquiring about our mold products, please contact with us, as we are very willing to work with you.”

May Cause Misunderstanding

The third type of these forms of Chinglish is due to wrong word usage. However, all three types of errors can occur together in a sentence. That means in this deep form of Chinglish sentences, there are grammatical and syntactical errors besides wrong word usage:

1. “Thanks a lot for my parents providing me a pleasure childhood.”
2. “It is my privilege to have the opportunity to show myself.”
3. “I am a normal Chinese girl who was born in a teacher family.”
4. “The party which is welcomed the newborn in university.”
5. “There was once quarrel about the time for watching TV.”
6. “I will try my best efforts to provide the best service and the most optimum suggestion.”
7. “The anger came to me.”
8. “One thing happening later shocked me and changed my mind.”
9. “If you are interested in inquiring about our mold products, please contact with us, as we are very willing to work with you.”

先丢分数再失机会

这些问题将来都会影响到中国学生。在国外留学的时候，他们会因书写中式英语，在考试中丢分，影响成绩；工作以后，当他们面对外国客户时，一开口就会给人留下不好的印象，还会因为表述不清而浪费客户的宝

贵时间。后果将是很严重的。错失机会，代价高昂，万不可掉以轻心。

Lower Grades and Missed Opportunities

These types of Chinglish would create problems for Chinese students in the future. When they write papers in college while studying overseas, they will lose marks and get lower grades. When they start their working life and communicate with foreign customers, they will give their customers a very poor image of their company or they will waste customers' time with unclear messages. The consequences can be serious. The missed opportunities can be costly.

欲速或不达

书读了一箩，课上了一堆，光阴耗掉了几年，英文还是没学好，连累青春与梦想都失了颜色。中国人学英语，走的是长征路，好些学生已经与我并肩作战八年之久。实话实说，他们的确很用功。假如我当年学中文的时候，赶得他们一半努力的话，教中文的老师一定会以我为傲的。然而没有，可见成功没有捷径。

Shortest Way may not be Fastest Way

Years invested in learning are not producing the desired outcome. Monies spent on guide books and courses are not getting the value as hoped. Youthful hopes and dreams hang in the balance. The struggles to master the English language are not only real but painful for the Chinese students. I had rubbed shoulders with many of them for eight years. No one can fault them for not trying or working hard. If I had worked half as hard

as them when I was learning Mandarin in school, I would have made my Mandarin teacher proud then. There is no short cut to success.

亡羊补牢为时未晚

我教过中学生，也教过大学生，从个人教学经验来看，中式英语现象是错综复杂的，单靠啃语法书、背单词、听听力、做阅读，是解决不了问题的。而实际上，中国学生已经读了很多语法书，背了很多单词，听说练习也做得够多，在学校考试中也大都有不错的表现。

How to Correct the Errors?

These types of Chinglish from my high school and college students are more complex and it cannot be solved just by studying more books on grammar (which they had already learned a lot) or memorizing more vocabulary (which they had already memorized more than enough vocabulary) or listening to and reading more English (which they already had plenty of practice). Most of them actually scored reasonably well in their school exams.

或许，你想知道改正示例中英文错误的方法；或许，你自己就可以改掉一些。老实说，上面有些句子，我甚至连意思都搞不清楚（尤其是当中存在句法错误的），想改都无从入手。个别句子我确实动手改过，可总觉得从长远来看，对大家不会有什么帮助，因为就算你记住了答案，

再写还是要出错。这就好比是吃止疼片，治标不治本，一时缓解或许可以，却无法祛除一世的病根。要一劳永逸地解决问题，就要从根上入手，不然中式英语的顽疾还是会复发的。

Perhaps, you would like to know the proper English to the above examples of errors. Perhaps, you could correct some of them yourself. Honestly, for some of the examples, I cannot understand what they were trying to express (especially syntactic errors), and therefore, I am not able to correct them. I had made available the corrections to some of them, but it didn't help in the long run because the errors would emerge somewhere else. It's like taking pain-killers for frequent headaches by dealing only with the symptoms but not the root cause of the problem. Unless the problems are solved at the root, it will not be easy to avoid writing these types of Chinglish. Unless the foundations are reset, the problems will continue to surface.

正确的方法+不懈的努力=想要的结果

我可不是象牙塔里闭门造车的外语教学专家，开不出包治百病的妙方。我所讨论的问题，都自己一一研究过，可能的原因与解决办法也都一一梳理过。我陪孩子们一路走来，因他们的苦恼而苦恼，因他们父母的担忧而担忧。现在，我终于可以拿出一套切实可行的方案来，帮助中国学生赢得英语学习这场攻坚战。我会先把所有问题罗列出来，尽可能讲述清楚，以便可以有的放矢。然后就看学生自己的了：你有多努力，

效果就有多显著。

Right Strategy + Sustained Effort = Desired Outcome

I am not a foreign language specialist sitting comfortably in a faraway land offering a one size fits all solution. I have studied their problems. I have been analysing possible causes and solutions. I have walked among them witnessing their plight and their parents' worries. And now, I am ready to present practical strategies that will help them win the battle in mastering English. First, I will define the problems as clearly as possible so that the strategies proposed will make more sense as a whole. Then, the speed in seeing desirable results will be determined by the students' amount of sustained effort.