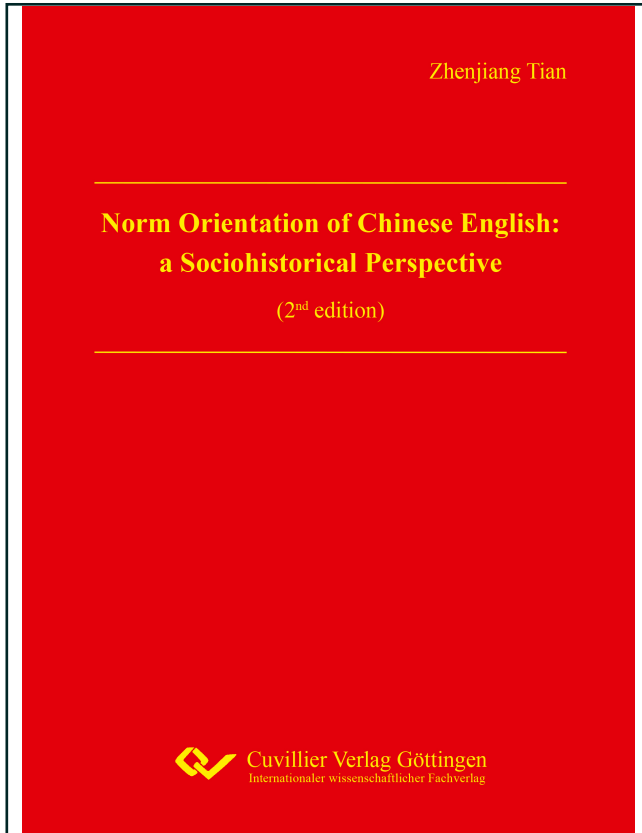




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**Norm Orientation of Chinese English**  
a Sociohistorical Perspective



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## Introduction to the study

### 0.1 Study content

The global diffusion of English accompanies its localization, which results from English contact with local language in certain socio-cultural situations. English in China, where there is the largest number of English speakers and an ever-increasing potential number in the world, is leading to an increasing focus of study especially at a time of a rapid development in China in social economic respects since the new century. With the theoretical framework of world Englishes and the literature review of Chinese English studies, this research is to investigate norm orientation of Chinese English in a sociohistorical perspective. Here is the introduction to the study.

Chapter 1 is to present a theoretical framework of world English and a literature review of Chinese English study, to introduce the approach and methodology of this research, and to claim the importance and necessity of English norm studies in China.

Chapter 2 is to give a brief history of English in China since the first Chinese trade port was forced to be given to the UK and English started to be imported into China. Historically English in China experienced the nation of a semi-colonized society (1842–1949), a new nation with the full sovereignty (1949–1966), a political nation with movement of the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), and a nation toward modernization (1978 – the new century). In these different sociohistorical contexts, Chinese English represented its variant with special linguistic features and two linguistic forms of Chinese Pidgin English and Chinese Politicized English came into being. These are the earliest examples of language contact between Chinese and English. This presentation of the brief history is a historical profile of Chinese English before the new century.



Chapter 3 is to present the current social situation of Chinese English since the start of the new century. With the Open Door policy being expanded, China has stepped into the process of internationalization, in which English plays an important role as an international language. China is participating into more world issues actively, and as a result, the context of Chinese English is changing with English policy, English education reform, English environment, English social functions, etc. This social context could bring a new orientation in the functions of Chinese English and some practical problems. This chapter tries to present social profile of Chinese English.

Chapter 4 is to present the linguistic features of Chinese English on the phonological, lexical, syntactical, and discourse level in order to review linguistic features of Chinese English. With the influence of Chinese language, Chinese English in the context of China retains its local features which could show the identity of Chinese English speakers. For the exploration of the reasons behind, this is also to discover the convergence between Chinese and English language in China's social context. This chapter is meant to give a linguistic profile of Chinese English.

Based on the historical, social, and linguistic profile of Chinese English, Chapter 5 is to demonstrate the norms of Chinese English with the three divisions: the practical norm or behavioral of Chinese English performance, an oughtness norm or code norm of Chinese English in pedagogical contexts, and the acceptance of the pragmatic norm of Chinese English by Chinese English speakers, to explore the trend of Chinese English development and give a hypothesis of its norm orientation in the linguistic, functional, and ideological perspectives (for details of language ideological study, read 5.3.4).

This study also includes an empirical investigation of college English majors and their teachers into Chinese English norm orientation in Chapter 6. It is to show the trend of English norms in pedagogical field: a comparative study between the exonormative English norms of British and American English, and on which levels Chinese English can be accepted or to what degree it can be

accepted by Chinese English speakers. Meanwhile, this is to show the pragmatic convention of Chinese English in linguistic, functional and ideological perspectives.

The conclusion part is in Chapter 7. All the contents above are for presenting English in China in the respects of history, context, and norm orientation.

## **0.2 Approaches and methodology**

This research is to apply the English studies approach and the sociolinguistic approach with its sub-classifications of the linguistic situation approach, the linguistic features approach, the socially realistic studies of world Englishes and the sociology of language approach (for details of study approaches of world English, see 1.2.2). The methodology of the empirical investigation is used as well.

The English studies approach is applied in a broad framework of this research, which includes the study of the history of Chinese English, the usages and features of Chinese English, and the orientations of Chinese English development. The sociolinguistic approach is used in the forms of its sub-classifications as following:

The linguistic situation approach is used in presenting the sociohistorical profile of Chinese English before and after the new century (in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3). The historical profile includes the historical context before the new century and the evolution of Chinese English from the formation of Pidgin English to the stage of depidginization (school instruction of English), the political movements and the formation of politicized English; the social profile includes social context of China after the new century, English policy and attitudes towards English, English education reform, functional distribution of English, etc.

The linguistic features approach is used in describing the different characteristics of Chinese Pidgin English and Chinese politicized English in the historical profile presentation (in Chapter 2). It is used as well in presenting the linguistic profile of Chi-



nese English on the phonological, lexical, syntactic and discourse levels, and the language convergence of English and Chinese (in Chapter 4).

The socially realistic studies of world Englishes and the sociology of language approach (mentioned in Wolf & Polzenhagen 2009) are used in demonstration of English norm orientation in China (in Chapter 5). Based on the development of Chinese English in the context of English education and beyond, this approach is focused on the norm orientation of English to explore the problems of the linguistic creativity, educational norm of English, functional development of Chinese English, the awareness of the ideological connotations when bilinguals use English. With the three divisions of the practical norm of Chinese English performance, an oughtness or code norm of Chinese English in the pedagogical domain, and the accepted norm of Chinese English, this study is to predict some orientations of Chinese English development.

The empirical investigation (in Chapter 6) includes the methodologies of interviews and questionnaires. The data analysis is on the historical evolution and present orientation of norms of Chinese English.

### **0.3 Scope**

This study is focused on mainland China as for the historical and sociolinguistic research; as for the empirical study, it is on the students from two universities, one of which is in Beijing, capital city, and the other Hulunbuir, a remote city with the ethnic minority of Mongolia. The first goal is to study Chinese English as a whole: whether the pedagogical English standard is exonormative English and whether American English or British English is preferred; whether there is an orientation of the acceptance of Chinese English. Secondly, as the capital of China, Beijing can reflect the present context of English use while Hulunbuir city, a remote city in the autonomous region of Inner Mongolia, can present the context of English used in the place of the ethnic minority. China



is large and different places have different social contexts. It is significant to discover whether the differences or similarities in conceptions between the subjects from the two places.

## 0.4 Significance

In the past few decades since Kachru pointed out the theory of three circle English (for details, in 1.1.2), world Englishes research and scholarship have produced a great deal of information and insight into the spread, function, and status of English especially in New Englishes of the outer circle. As a new variety of English of an expanding circle country, Chinese English has been given more and more focus by both Chinese and world scholars. This study takes consideration in the following points:

Firstly, the sociohistorical profile of Chinese English can display a habitat of Chinese English and show the contact of English and Chinese languages with examples. In addition, it is to show that the consequence of language contact is the appearance of pidgin language or language with typical features which distinguish themselves from their original forms.

Secondly, the linguistic profile of Chinese English can demonstrate the existence of Chinese English, as an English variety. The presentation on the levels of phonology, lexicon, syntax, and discourse could systematically show the differences of Chinese English from norms of native English variety. These differences could result in the complaints and contradictions between “high-cost” and “low-efficiency” in English learning in China.

Thirdly, the analysis of Chinese English norms with the three divisions interprets the cause of the complaints and contradictions mentioned above. Further more, it is pointed out that the norm orientation of Chinese English relies on the development and the acceptance of its behavioral or pragmatic norm, which contains three respects of linguistic, functions and self cultural awareness or consciousness.

The fourth, the empirical study could demonstrate the hypothesis of Chinese English norm orientation. The collected data



in pedagogical, functional, and ideological respects is to predict the development of Chinese English.

All in all, the study is to apply the sociolinguistic approach to explore English norm in China and all the findings will be referenced for theories of world Englishes, China's English reform, and language policy making in China.



## Chapter 1 Studies on World Englishes and English norm study

The world wide diffusion of English as a lingua franca has led to the variation of English and the existence of the English varieties with different localized features has become the main trend of modern English. In the process of the social development and world globalization, Kachru's three circle theory of world English (1982) has met its challenge such as in distinguishing the outer and expanding circle countries. In order to explore the linguistic and sociohistorical situations of world Englishes, the relevant studies have been launched with different study approaches, of which there comes a multi-dimensional study trend. The studies and arguments on standard English and English norms in non-native countries are becoming important and necessary in China because they are related to the conceptual shift, criteria for the existence of English varieties, and the recognitions of the innovations. All these problems are crucial for the development of Chinese English. With the presentation of a theoretical framework of world English and the literature review of Chinese English study, this chapter is to introduce the approach and methodology of this research, and to claim the importance and necessity of English norm studies in China.

### 1.1 The spread of English and its consequences

#### 1.1.1 *English as a world lingua franca*

As early as in 1985, it was expressed in Quirk et al.'s (1985: 2) *Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language* that "English is the world's most important language". The ever increasing number of English speakers around the world has been supporting his point of view as noted in David Crystal's *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Language and Languages* (1992: 121): "it is spoken by





a large and ever-increasing number of people is 800,000,000 by a conservative estimate and 1,500,000,000 by a liberal estimate”. Some details are also provided in recent *English Today*: “it has official status in over 60 countries. One out of five of the world’s population speaks English to some level of competence. Demand from the other four-fifths is increasing. English is the main language of printed products in the world. Over two-thirds of the world’s scientists read in English. Three quarters of the world’s mail is written in English. 80% of the world’s electronically stored information is in English” (Jiang 2008: 23). Besides its functional position in practical work or study as a universal language, English means much value because for those who do use English are amongst the best educated and the most influential members of their society (Kachru, Y. et al 2008). English has become a requirement for the development of a country and the promotion of individuals. Its spread, status, and functions around the world are impressive indeed. In the places where English is the primary language, or in the previous colonies where English is a second language with an official status, or in the countries with their sovereignty where English is as a foreign language, English is playing more important role. Around the world, there is no territory in which English is not learnt and used for some purposes unless this territory is closed to the world. As a natural language, English for the first time in human history has attained the status of a world lingua franca or an international language in many respects of communication world wide.

### ***1.1.2 Diffusion, variation, and English varieties***

English has only a history of about 1500 years. The geographical and demographic diffusion started with the expansion of British colonial power in the 17th century. It was brought to the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand where it became the dominant language, to the Caribbean by the sailors who shipped black slaves from Africa, to South Asia where the British East Indian Company was established, to South East Asia by the London



Missionary Society, to Africa with the establishment of colonies there. Since the 20th century, the emergence of the United States as the leading economic power keeps and expands the international status of English. All countries tend to catch up with world steps and English spread is taking on a more important look than ever before. In countries and regions which were previous British colonies or members of British Commonwealth, English keeps its status of a second official language; in any other countries around the world, English is spreading with ever-increasing number and functions. English has for decades been a world lingua franca not only between non-native speakers and native speakers, but also among non-native speakers internationally and intranationally. As was shown in the BBC documentary *The Story of English*, English is frequently used among interlocutors when no so-called “native speaker” of English is present. The contexts for the use of English may be academic conferences, business, commerce, diplomacy, educational institutions, manufacturing, mining, print or audio-visual media, or tourism. This geographical and demographic world diffusion of English has caused its variation.

Based on geographical and ethnic factors, the global diffusion of English has resulted in English varieties in different sociocultural contexts. Kachru (1985, 1992) presents this sociolinguistic profile of English in terms of three concentric circles: the inner circle, the outer circle and the expanding circle. The inner circle represents the traditional basis of English, where English is the primary language in countries such as UK, the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, etc. The outer circle comprises the institutionalized non-native varieties of English in such countries as India, Nigeria and Singapore. The expanding circle comprises countries where performance varieties are used. In such countries as China, Germany and Japan, English functions as an international language. The varied English in different locations are termed as English varieties such as British English, American English, Australian English in the inner circle countries, African English, Indian English, Singaporean English in the outer circle countries, and Japanese English, Chinese English, and European



English in the expanding countries. This phenomenon of English localization or indigenization is a main trend of modern English development, and it has led to more linguistic investigations and studies of the even more varieties of English all over the world.

### ***1.1.3 Nonnative English in the outer and expanding circle***

“The stimulus given to the question of English used as an international or auxiliary language has led to the emergence of sharp and important issues that are in urgent need of investigation and action” (Smith 1981). One of the important issues is on the development of the nonnative English varieties because some nonnative varieties of English in the new locations accumulate their uniqueness in linguistic, ethnic, and sociolinguistic levels and consequently are going through processes of nativization in the new contexts (B. Kachru 1983). The studies of institutionalized non-native varieties of English (e.g. Braj Kachru 1985, 1992; Strevens 1990; Nelson 1992) have argued for the recognition and acceptance of these varieties in their own right and the term New Englishes is suggested to represent these varieties such as “Indian English”, “Nigerian English”, and “Singaporean English”. At the same time, the studies of English development in expanding circle countries also earn much attention (e.g. Bolton 2003; Berns 2005).

The situations of English between the outer and the expanding circle, however, are different in historical, sociolinguistic, attitudinal and political levels. The countries in the outer circle have a colonial history with the users of the inner circle. English is used quite intensively and extensively in the domestic daily lives of the people and has established, on many levels, new varieties shaped by new sociocultural and sociolinguistic contexts. The countries are undergoing an independence of national language after they have had the independence of the nation. The process of English variety recognition and acceptance are much involved in politics, for it's a general rule that a nation needs a national language to reflect its identity and recognition, firstly by its people