From Competition to Mutual Accommodation: Mechanisms Underlying Linguistic Convergence Processes

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ABSTRACT: A process approach is adopted in examining language contact induced linguistic convergence, with a view to uncovering possible mechanisms at work. Chinese-English bilinguals' natural speech is analysed at the structural level, as against monolingual Chinese speakers' natural speech. Four deviations from the Chinese norm mark the contact-induced approximations to English and these are increased use of pronouns, increased use of *shi* 'be', longer modifiers of head nouns, and increased use of the indefinite article-like device "*yi* +classifier". Contact-induced change is also found to occur at the discourse level. Features of both the unbalanced and balanced bilinguals' speech are identified and it is postulated that competition and mutual accommodation of the two structural systems involved underlie the process of linguistic convergence.

Key words: linguistic convergence; language contact; bilingual

1. Introduction[1]

Linguistic convergence, as is described in McMahon (1994: 213),

occurs only in cases of widespread and stable bilingualism and requires the participating languages to be perceived as socially equal. ... convergence is mutual, with features being shared among converging languages; and it is not always possible to identify the source of a particular feature.

As we can see, at least three conditions are necessary for linguistic convergence to occur. First, the two languages in question are of equal social standing. Second, the users involved are stable bilinguals, presumably equally proficient in both languages. Third, and inexplicitly, the users must be equally identified with both languages. Here, convergence seems to be discussed in terms of an end product and the sociolinguistic prerequisites which enable it to occur.

Convergence, on the other hand, can be viewed as more process-oriented, as achievement of greater structural similarity, which transfer may lead to, in a given aspect of the grammar of two or more languages, assumed to be different at the onset of contact

(Gumperz & Wilson 1977). There would be, it follows, instances and degrees of convergence to speak of. Conditions that facilitate its occurrence would go beyond those stated above. For example, bilingualism/multilingualism in general may lead to instances of convergence or ultimate convergence of the languages concerned.

As a form of language change, convergence is seen to result from internal and external causes which interact. Indeed, as Weinreich et al. postulate (1968: 188),

> Linguistic and social factors are closely inter-related in the development of language change. Explanations which are confined to one or the other aspect, no matter how well constructed, will fail to account for the rich body of regularities that can be observed in empirical studies of language behavior.

The present study is couched in the more process-oriented perspective. It examines whether, in a Chinese setting where English is encouraged, Chinese-English bilingualism leads to structural changes in the spoken Chinese of the bilinguals involved, with a view to illuminating the processes of linguistic convergence in general.

Before the details of the study are presented, it is necessary to outline the language situation in China.

2. Language situation in China

In this section, only the most relevant facts are discussed. A suitable starting point is perhaps the evolution of modern written Chinese since the turn of the last century.

As witnessed in modern history, China was traumatically defeated in the Opium War (1840-1842). The lesson which took quite some time to dawn on the Chinese was that the country must be revitalised and that the only way to revitalisation was through modernisation. By the eve of the 1920s, this trend of thinking brewed into a rigorous movement, known as the New Culture Movement 1919, which, among other things, marked the beginnning of a major linguistic move from diaglossia towards a "standard-with-dialects" situation (Chen, 1993). Classical Chinese was then a target of the movement, for being largely literary in flavour and highly condensed in its expression of meaning it was considered largely responsible for wide-spread illiteracy, a barrier to modernisation. In the 80 years or so that followed, along with social changes efforts were made to reform the written language. As a result, the vernacular, based mainly on the grammatical norms of Northern Mandarin and the Beijing sound system, has replaced Classical Chinese and won the status of Modern Standard Chinese, otherwise known as *Putonghua* or Mandarin[1]. Grammatical norms for modern written Chinese were gradually established (e.g., Wang, 1951 [1943]; Chao, 1968; Li & Thompson, 1981; Liu et al., 1983).

In their formation, however, three major types of influence have found their way into the process. These have been influences from the non-Northern dialects, from Classical Chinese, and from foreign languages. Of the three kinds of influence, foreign languages is considered the most important source of influence on the evolution of modern written

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[1] For the definition of various terms used for Chinese, such as *Hanyu, Baihua, Putonghua*, etc., see Chen (1993).

Chinese norms (Chen, 1993: 513). Of the foreign languages, major European languages have exerted the strongest influence.

Generally, three influxes of the influence of the European languages are documented (Chen, op cit.). The first took place in the 1920s and 1930s following the New Culture Movement. In this period, translated works, mainly from European languages, were widely read by the educated Chinese for fresh ideas. The second occurred during the 1950s, when translated works of Marx, Lenin, and Stalin were stipulated as providing the guiding ideology. Russian was then the chief foreign language of influence. The third influx started in the late 1970s and onwards, when a vigorous modernisation plan was being developed and when China opened her door to the outside world. This very recent influx has been unprecedented in scale and rigor in the whole history of China. With the transformation of her economic structure, China has drawn foreign investment on a large scale, and along with it there has been an inflow of foreign enterprises, the setting up of numerous joint adventures, and exchanges and dialogues of all kinds. Not only have written works of translation of a far greater variety been introduced, but also foreigners have arrived in large numbers, not as tourists but as long-term personnel, often bringing with them their whole families. Language contact, in both the written and spoken modes, has been on a fast increasing scale. Of the various languages involved, English plays a predominant role in daily communication and in transactions of all kinds between the foreign community and the Chinese community involved. Its impact can perhaps be seen through the single fact that in the matriculation exams, English has recently been designated as a compulsory subject, on a par with the original two subjects, Chinese and mathematics.

If we compare the influence of European languages on Chinese in the 1920s and 1930s with that of the very recent years, a notable difference is that contact of Chinese and Western languages, particularly English, has extended from that in the written mode in general to that in the spoken mode. When Wang Li, the late, renowned Chinese linguist, published his *Grammatical Theory of Chinese*, written in the early 1940s, he already devoted a whole chapter discussing the influence of European languages on Chinese grammar (1951 : chap 6: Europeanised Grammar [1943]). Six major areas of Chinese grammar were listed as being influenced by European languages with examples from works in Chinese by established authors. These were: (1) Creation of substantially more disyllabic words; (2) Increased use of subjects such as *ta* 'he', *tamen* 'they', *wo* 'I' *ni* 'you', etc. and the link-verb *shi* 'be' and the …*shi…de* construction; (3) Sentences are made longer by embedding into them clauses or subject-predicate constructions; (4) Extended, Europeanised use of the modality terms , passive markers, and certain other markers such as *hua* '-isation', *-men* (marker of plurality), etc.; (5) Increased use of conjunctions; (6) New forms of personal pronouns such as the gender distinctive and neuter *ta* 'he/she/it', Europeanised measure words and classifiers, and the use of the indefinite article like "yi 'a/an' + classifier" modifier. The source of such influence was identified as translated works.

Wang was, however, cautious in his claim, proposing that "Europeanised grammar cannot be considered modern Chinese grammar, for it is only a kind of special grammar pertaining only to the rather small intellectual society and appearing only in the written mode" (op cit.: 256). He further claimed that Europeanised grammar had nothing to do

with the Chinese spoken language at the moment, though he was far less sure about the future. When Chen Ping (1993: 517) published his major paper *Modern Written Chinese in Development* 50 years later, he documented three "newly emerged grammatical norms in modern written Chinese" as "clearly outcomes of the Europeanisation process". These are the extension of the use of *bei* as a passive marker, long modifiers before head nouns, and the increase of affix-like morphemes (op cit.: 517-519).   But Chen's treatise is discreetly confined to modern written Chinese.

Just as history may repeat itself, the Chinese language scene seems also to be witnessing repetition of not an exactly identical kind. Certain Europeanised tendencies which could not be considered modern Chinese grammar in the 1940s are, in 60 years or so, accepted as grammatical norms of modern written Chinese. Here in the 2000s, contact of Chinese and English is not uncommon in spoken communication in the Chinese-English bilingual communities in China and elsewhere in the world. The question that arises is: Does Wang's earlier claim that Europeanisation has nothing to do with spoken Chinese still hold? Already, as will be shown in what follows, contact-induced modifications in the grammar of Chinese speech by bilingual subjects of the present study can be observed. Although no firm claims can be made at the present stage, owing to the exploratory nature of the study, one can hardly rule out the possibility for the Chinese spoken language to develop fresh tendencies among its bilingual users for certain genres in certain settings, as a result of the impact from Western languages, English in particular. The natural affinity between the written and spoken modes of the same language would, also, not preclude their mutual influence.

Such is the language background relevant to the present study treated in an extremely brief manner. At this point, it is perhaps necessary to restate the aim of the present study. We are not addressing contact-induced changes in Chinese-English bilinguals' spoken Chinese per se. Rather, we take some of these bilinguals' speech samples as data for analysis, as access to some issues concerning linguistic convergence. We now turn to the study.

3. The Design

3.1 Subjects

The subjects of the study were four staff members of Motorola University of Motorola, Beijing Branch, China.   For ease of exposition and anonymity, we name them respectively as Zhao, Qian, Sun, Li, the first four of the well-known *One Hundred Surnames*. Their demographic and other relevant information is given below.

Name	Sex	Age	Nationality	Education	Native language	English experience
Zhao	F	34	Chinese	University	Chinese	English major
Qian	M	32	Chin. Am.	University	Chinese	10 years in US
Sun	F	28	Chinese	University	Chinese	English major
Li	F	30	Chinese	University	Chinese	English major

As can be seen, all the four subjects are of the same age group and have received university education. Their native language is Chinese, and they all speak *Putonghua*. They differ, however, in their nationality and their experience of English. While Zhao, Sun, and Li studied English as majors in the Chinese language environment, Qian, who

majored in science while he was in China, improved his English mainly in the US where he further studied and worked for 10 years. Zhao, Sun, and Li all spoke competent English, but they are unbalanced bilinguals, their English still some distance from that of a native English speaker. Qian, on the other hand, spoke native-like American English and is considered a balanced Chinese-English bilingual, at least in the areas concerned.

3.2 Setting

Motorola is a well-know American enterprise engaged in the production and marketing of tele-communication products. In the early 90s, it set up a branch company in China, the headquarters and University of which are located in Beijing.

Motorola's language policy is that English is the official language and that it is encouraged for everyday communication. Extensive English language courses are offered at various proficiency levels for all its staff members, organised by Motorola University. English is prerequisite to employment at Motorola and crucial for promotion.

The subjects' speech was collected in two sessions, one in a conference room of Motorola University and the other in a conference room of the Royal Club mansion in Beijing which housed the classroom training sessions for Motorola's personnel.

3.3 Method

Data collection took the form of interviews, with one researcher as the chief interviewer and the other assisting. Chinese was used throughout, though all the participants involved code-switched. Two general prompts were used to elicit the subjects' speech: (1) "Suhua is a friend and colleague at *Beiwai* (short and known for Beijing Foreign Studies University where both researchers teach). She is interested in what you are doing. Would you tell her about your programme? (2) What would you say is the greatest challenge in your work? These prompts were expected to be able to elicit the subjects' spontaneous talk on familiar topics.

The atmosphere was very relaxed, for several reasons. First, the interviews were conducted in the subjects' territory. Second, the chief interviewer had earlier on participated in the work of CAMP, a programme of Motorola University which is designed to train prospective high-level managers, and had established rapport with the CAMP team, to which all the four subjects belonged. Third, they knew that the other researcher was a friend and colleague of the chief interviewer and speaks good English. They were ready to be cooperative, ready to talk, and ready to share. As a result, natural speech was elicited from all the four subjects.

All the interviews were tape-recorded and the recordings were transcribed. The recorded speech and the transcripts constituted the data for analysis.

It was not until after the interviews that the purpose of the study was made known to the subjects upon their request.

3.4 Data analysis

Sorting out the spoken data was a rather trying experience. In identifying what constituted an instance of a tendency for change, cautions were taken to distinguish between the following three types of grammatical deviation from the norms: (1) Deviations due to influence of the English language; (2) Deviations due to characteristics

of the spoken language; (3) Deviations due to individuals' speech habits, such as influence of local speech, of social dialect, and/or idiosyncracies. It was the first type of deviation, i.e., grammatical deviations due to influence of the English language, which were of concern to the researchers.

Grammatical deviations of this kind were identified separately by the two researchers as a first step. The results were then compared and an agreement was reached on the broad types of deviation found and typical instances of each type. A Chinese linguist was then consulted, who examined the complete scripts, along with the broad types of deviation and typical instances of them agreed upon by the researchers. Valuable feedback was obtained from him.

4. Findings

In reporting the findings, we first present deviations from Chinese grammar found in all the four subjects' speech production. We then look at the features of the speech of the unbalanced bilinguals and those of the balanced bilingual respectively.

4.1 Deviations from the norm

4.1.1 Increased use of pronouns

Like English, Chinese has developed a three-person pronoun system[2]. But unlike English, pronouns are used rather sparingly in Chinese discourse, which is characterised by wide-spread zero anaphora in the subject, object and modifier positions (Chao, 1968; Li & Thompson, 1979, 1981; Lü, 1980; Chen, 1984, 1986; Xu, 2003). In discourse comprehension and discourse production as well, semantic/pragmatic relations often enter as controlling factors leading to meaning. Zero anaphora is the norm especially when the entity (including person) in question can be processed without difficulty after its first mentioning. In addition, the Chinese third-person pronoun neuter *ta* 'it' and its plural form *tamen* 'they' are seldom used in modern Chinese, especially for the inanimate.

Compare the Chinese and English sentences which contain the same proposition in (1) below[3].

(1) John went to bed as soon as <u>he</u> came home.

Yuehan	hui	jia	hou	like	jiu	shuijiao.
John	return	home	after	at once	ADP	sleep

(ADP: advervial particle, function word, denoting immediacy here)

In the Chinese version, the equivalent of the English <u>he</u>, *ta*, is missing, because without it there's no misunderstanding that the agent/actor of "sleep" is John and therefore the pronoun *ta* is unnecessaary. On the other hand, insertion of *ta* in between

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hou 'after' and *like* 'at once' might mislead the addressee to take it to refer to a person other than John.

(2) The trouble with these people is <u>they</u> are too smart.

Zhexie   ren   de   maobing shi   tai   congming le.

These   people GEN   trouble be   too   smart   CRS

(GEN: genetive *de*; CRS: current relevant state *le*)

In (2), the Chinese equivalent of the English *they*, *tamen*, is considered unnecessary. Pronouns are used much less frequently in Chinese discourse than in English discourse.

Now, examples of increased use of pronouns by the subjects.

(3) [Talking about the LEAD programme, which is set up for intermediate-level managers. CAMP is aimed to train high-level managers.]

<u>ta</u> nege gainian   shenmede   jiben   gen   *CAMP*   chabuduo +

it that   concept   and the like   basically   with   CAMP   similar +

its concept is similar to that of CAMP in general

<u>ta</u> shi   fen   jige   bufen + <u>ta</u> shi zheige shijian bijiao   duan

it   be   divide   several part   + it be   FL   time   relatively   short

it has several phases +   it takes a shorter period of time

(FL: filler)   (Li)

As was mentioned above, neuter *ta* 'it' is seldom used in Chinese discourse; even less is it used for inanimate entities. The repeated use of *ta* 'it' to refer to the LEAD programme is considered a deviation of the norm concerned. One more example:

(4) [In explaining what "rotation" means]

<u>tamen</u> yao   *rotation* + <u>tamen</u> jingguo   le   *phase* 1   *phase 2*

they   need   rotation+ they   experience PFV phase one   phase two

they will be put on rotation + after they complete phase one and phase two

(PFV: perfective aspect marker)

yihou + dao disan ge *phase*   de   shihou +   <u>tamen</u> yao   dao   guowai qu

after + reach third CL phase MM   time +   they   need reach abroad go

+ during the third phase + they are expected to go abroad

 (CL: classifier; MM: modifier marker *de*)   (Sun)

In (4) either the second or the third *tamen* 'they', or both, would normally be replaced by a zero anaphor. In the subjects' speech, not only was there an increased use of the third-person pronouns, but also that of the first- and second-person pronouns. The frequent occurrence of the pronouns, especially at the clause initial position, results in far more rather neat SVO utterance structures than are found in normal spoken Chinese.

4.1.2 Increased use of shi 'be'

Although the Chinese *shi* 'be' is often considered a counterpart of the English *be*, they are not exact equivalents[4].

First, in traditional logic, almost every proposition is expected to be composed of a subject and a link verb + a predicative or a predicate. But in Chinese, the subject and *shi* 'be' are not always necessary (Wang, 1951). Second, in Chinese grammar, *shi* is classified as a special kind of verb, denoting affirmation in general and *shi* sentences are often used to pass on judgment of a kind (Liu et al., 2001). On the other hand, descriptive sentences in Chinese are often formed of a subject directly followed by an adjective, for adjectives alone can fulfill the grammatical role of predicate. Such sentences do not need a *shi* 'be'. When a *shi* is inserted between the subject and the adjective predicate of such a sentence which usually ends with a nominaliser *de*, the resulting sentence tends to turn from one of description to one of judgment. Regarding the descriptive and judgmental function, the English *be*, on the other hand, is more embracive and English *be* sentences can be either descriptive or judgemental or both at the same time. Compare (5) and (6) below:

(5) Fangjian ganjing zhengqi.   (descriptive)

    room   clean   tidy

    The room <u>is</u> clean and tidy.

(6) Fangjian <u>shi</u> ganjing zhengqi <u>de</u>.   (judgemental)

    room   be   clean   tidy   NOM

    The room <u>is</u> clean and tidy.

    (NOM: nominaliser *de*)

While the Chinese sentences (5) and (6) are different in that (5) is descriptive and (6) is judgemental, their English translation versions are identical and can convey both a descriptive and a judgemental meaning.

The tendency to insert a *shi* 'be' between the subject and the adjective predicate and to attach the nominaliser *de* at the end of the sentence, as is shown in (6), was first documented in Wang (1951) as an instance of Europeanisation of Chinese grammar found in writing. Data from the present study showed that this tendency in writing is also found in the bilinguals' speech. (7) below is a typical example.

(7) Tamen de   fankui   <u>shi</u> hen   zhongyao <u>de</u>.

    they   GEN   feedback   be   very   important NOM

    Their feedback is very important.

<div align="center">(Qian)</div>

As a matter of fact, the "*shi* + adjective + *de*" construction has found its way in both the writing and speaking of a section of the population, i.e., the intellectuals, bilingual or otherwise. It is considered grammatically acceptable, though it has not yet been accepted as a grammatical norm.

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[4] For a detailed description of the various grammatical and functional roles of *shi* 'be' in Chinese, see Liu et al. (1983: 425ff.).

Further extended use of *shi* 'be' alone was found to occur with the increased use of pronouns at the subject position. This resulted in what seemed like a SVO construction, which on closer examination is often found to be grammatically unacceptable.

(8) ta <u>shi</u> fen jige bufen + ta <u>shi</u> zheige shijian bijiao duan

    it be divide several part + it be FL time comparatively short

    it has several phases + it takes a shorter period of time

<div align="center">(Li)</div>

The insertion of *shi* 'be' before the verb *fen* 'divide' in the first clause of (8) and in the second clause right after *ta* 'it' makes the whole utterance ungrammatical. If the norm were followed, the neuter *ta* 'it' and *shi* 'be' in both clauses would be unnecessary. Utterances like (8) raised interesting questions concerning what was going on in the subjects' production process, which we will turn to in 5, the discussion section.

4.1.3 Long modifiers

Lengthy modifiers, though grammatical, are seldom used in Chinese. Traditionally, one or two adjectives are allowed before the head noun they modify. Complex attributes to nominals are usually put after the head noun, often in separate clauses. The semantic relations would generally make the meaning relations clear.

(9) Ta mai le yi liang <u>hongse</u> de paoche, <u>1991 nian chuchang</u> de

    he buy PFV one CL red MM sports car 1991 year produce NOM

    He bought a red sports car, which was made in 1991.

<div align="center">(Chen, 1993: 519)</div>

In the subjects' speech, however, quite a number of long, clausal modifiers occur before the head nouns they modify. The tendency seems to be that whenever possible, what could be put into an attributive clause in English is crammed before the head noun it modifies in Chinese.

(10) Zhe jiu shi [yi ge peiyang bendi yuangong dadao -- 1

    this ADP be one CL train local staff members reach

    hen you fazhan qiantu de yixie yuangong, 2

    very have development potential MM some staff members

    zai hen duan de shijian nei, 3

    at very short MM time within

    jing Zhongguo de *Motorola* peiyang zhongji jingli, 4

    through China GEN Motorola train intermediate-level manager

    yizhiyu dao le changyuan de shijian, 5

    so that reach PFV long MM time

    wu nian dao shi nian de shijian, 6

    5 year to 10 year MM time

peiyang gaoji   jingli   de] zheyang yi ge xiangmu, ...   7

train   high-level   manager MM such   one CL   project

<div align="center">(Zhao)</div>

English translation: This is a programme which trains those local staff members who have good potential to become first intermediate-level managers through short-term training, and then in a long run, say 5 to 10 years, to become high-level managers.

Certain Chinese grammatical features, in this case the absence of post-noun attributive clauses as modifiers of head noun, seem resistant to change (cf. Wang, 1951). The structure of Chinese does not allow such kind of noun modifier, which is frequently found in European languages. But a grammatically bound modifier structure, such as the English attributive clause, has the attraction of being conveniently explicit in indicating meaning relationships. What has occurred seemed to be that this attraction was utilised by the bilingual subjects, and most likely by others, who increased the space legitimately occupied by one or two pre-noun adjective modifiers and filled it up with lengthy, phrasal/clausal modifiers, which would occur after the head noun in attributive clauses in English. Explicitness might be an underlying motivation, but in (10) the effort was obviously over-stretched, so that the utterance became rather difficult to process.

4.1.4 Increased use of the indefinite article-like device: "yi 'one' + CL"

The Chinese language does not have an article system, but has the numeral *yi* the English equivalent of which is *one*. English, moreover, has an indefinite article *a/an* which encodes singularity and indefiniteness. This similarity seemed to have made it easy for the subjects to use the indefinite article-like device: *yi* 'a/an' + classifier. The loose nature of spoken production seems to offer an opening for it, without affecting the grammaticality of the utterances involved.

(11)... gei   tamen yi ge   duli   caozuo   <u>yi ge</u> *project* de   jihui

.   .. give them   one CL independently   manage one CL project MM chance

      give them <u>a</u> chance to manage <u>a</u> project independently

<div align="center">(Sun)</div>

(12) zuo <u>yi</u> <u>ge</u> xiangmu jiu shi zheyang <u>yi</u>   <u>ge</u>   guocheng

    do one   CL project ADP be such   one CL   process

    do a project (It's) just such a process

    zhao   <u>yi</u> <u>ge</u> coach

    look for one CL coach

    look for a coach

<div align="center">(Li & Sun)</div>

As the norm has it, none of these *yi ge*s is necessary. When Wang discussed tendencies of Europeanised grammar about 60 years ago, he observed that *a/an* was a target for taking over, for at that time sentences such as (13) already occurred in writing.

(13) "Ta shi <u>yi</u> <u>ge</u> hao ren."   Instead of   "Ta shi hao   ren."

he be one CL good person   he be good person

He is a good man.   He is a good man.

(Wang, 1951: 331)

That the same device occurred in the bilingual subjects' speech was not surprising, given the loose structure of the spoken language as compared with writing and the frequent contact of the two languages.

4.2 Some features of the unbalanced bilinguals' speech

As can be seen, traces of the English language structure were found in the subjects' speech. Very often the frames of their utterances were Chinese, but within the frames, where convenient, bits of English structures came in, resulting in unconventional, though still grammatical utterances like (14) below.

(14) [Employing English structure: unconventional]

tamen mei   xingqi yao   xie   *weekly* *report*   gei women

they   every week   must   write weekly report   to   us

they must write a weekly report to us every week

(Sun)

Norm: gei women xie   *weekly report*

to   us   write   weekly report

At times, insertion of an English structure led to ungrammatical utterances such as (15) and (16) below.

(15) [Transfer of "classroom training": ungrammatical]

dagai yi   liang ge   yue   you   yi   ge xingqi de jiaoshi   de   peixun

about one two   CL month have one CL week MM classroom MM training

About every one or two months there is a week's classroom training.

(Zhao)

Norm: shang yi   ge xingqi   de   ke

take   one CL week   MM   lesson

(16) [Obvious English influence: ungrammatical]

Ni bixu   yao nenggou qu gen butong   wenhua lai   de   ren (...)

you must need able   go with different culture come MM people

qu dajiaodao.

to communicate

You must be able to communicate with people who come from different cultures.

(Sun)

Norm: wenhua beijing   butong   de   ren

culture background different MM people

or   Norm: lai   zi   butong wenhua beijing   de   ren

come from different cultural   background MM people

In (15), the subject used a literal, word-for-word translation of the English phase "classroom training" and the result was an awkward structure. In (16), *butong wenhua* 'different culture' became the actor/agent of *lai* 'come', an anomaly in both grammar and meaning.   This could be owing to a process in which the subject was trying to render the English attributive clause into a pre-head noun, clausal modifier, but failed to render it into an acceptable Chinese clause, most probably because of time constraint.

4.3 Some features of the balanced bilingual's speech

Unlike the unbalanced bilinguals' speech, the balanced bilingual's speech was smooth and fluent. It sounded grammatical in general and quite coherent in style. The rather extensive code-switching did not seem to affect the grammaticality. If anything, it added explicitness and expressiveness to the speech. (17) below is an excerpt from the balanced bilingual subject's speech. As we shall see, except for some features of the spoken language, such as looseness, idiosyncrasies, etc., Qian's speech is characterised by grammaticality and a rather high degree of intertranslatability. Intertranslatable, in the sense that in spite of the fact that Chinese and English are typologically very different languages, an English word-for-word translation of the Chinese script is highly readable and comprehensible. As far as the general structural frames of the utterances are concerned, they can apply to both Chinese and English, though we may identify bits of them being similar to one or the other (cf. McMahon, 1994).

(17)[The prompt: "What do you think is the greatest challenge?"]

Wo xiang bijiao yuanyi fenxi   zhege *programme* chenggong de   1

I   think   rather like   analyse this   programme succeed   MM

yaosu shi shenme. Name wo xiang zhelimian chenggong de   yaosu   2

factors be what   FL   I   think here   success   MM factors

diyi ge   jiu shi *top management* dui women you   hen da   de   *support*.

first CL ADP be top management to us   have very great MM support

Dier   ge chenggong de yaosu shi shuo zhege *programme* de *design* hen 3

second CL success   MM factor be say   this   programme MM design very

hao,   <u>ta</u> de   *design* <u>shi</u> <u>yi ge</u> *very systematic, very modern type of design*,

good it GEN design be one CL very systematic, very modern type of design

ta gen yiban   de   *traditional training concept* bu   yiyang.

it with ordinary MM traditional   training concept NG same (NG: negation)

Disan ge shi shuo wo you yi ge   feichang *dedicated team member*.   4

Third CL be say   I have one CL very   dedicated team member

Wo you yi ge hen hao de *team*.   5

I   have one CL   very good   MM team

Zui   da de *challenge* ye   shi cong zhexie chenggong de *factors* limian 6

most big MM challenge also be from these   success   MM factors within

chulai   de.   Birushuo,   diyi ge *challenge* jiu   shi   7

come out NOM   For example, first CL challenge ADP be

zenmeyan *continue to get the support from the top management*.

how   continue to get the support from the top management

Dangran   jiu shi qian   de   wenti le.   8

of course   ADP be money   MM question AP

Ruguo ni mei   you qian de hua,   ni   zhege *programme* jiu   9

if   you NG have money (filler), your this   programme ADP

mei fa   nong xiaqu.

NG   way   carry on

Besides, one may notice that in sentence 3 the unnecessary occurrence of the underlined *ta* 'it', *shi* 'be', and *yige* 'a/one' are all seen as from the influence of English grammar.

5. Discussion

Our analysis of the data led us to the following observations. First, with the most recent influx of influence of European languages, especially English, the spoken Chinese of Chinese-English bilinguals in China is affected, at least in settings where English is encouraged and when these bilinguals speak among themselves on subject matters which are likely to cause great activation of their English. There seems to be a tendency for the bilinguals to allow certain English grammatical devices to work their way into their spoken production. As a result, these bilinguals' speech can be observed to deviate from established Chinese grammatical norms. Not all the deviations are ungrammatical or unacceptable, though some sound unconventional, or even awkward. A few have found their way into the bilinguals' spoken Chinese. For example, the *shi* + *adjective* + *de* construction, and the placing of long phrasal or clausal modifiers before the head noun.

Second, if we compare the speech of the unbalanced bilinguals and that of the balanced bilingual, their differences are obvious. The unbalanced bilinguals' grammar, while in the main Chinese, allowed the transfer or modified transfer of quite a few English syntactic devices and constructions. The resulting grammar was at times acceptable, at times awkward and at times wrong by the Chinese norms, not unlike the errors produced by children. On the other hand, the balanced bilingual's grammar, which also allowed English syntactic devices and constructions, did not in general lead to ungrammaticality. At the discourse level, his speech achieved a high degree of intertranslatability.

In trying to illuminate what was found in the present study, we appeal to the psycholinguistic model of language processing proposed by Bates and MacWinney

(1982), the Competition Model. This model "takes as its starting point the Saussurean vision of the linguistic sign as a set of mappings between forms and functions" (MacWinney, 1992: 372). In this model, each lexical item or syntactic construction is seen as a form-to-function mapping. For example, preverbal positioning or post-verbal positioning is treated as forms, which are mapped onto functions such as agency, topicality, patiency, etc. In addition, there are also correlations within the overall set of functions and within the overall set of forms. For example, at the functional level, topics may be definite, given, etc., reflecting "certain real correlations between properties of the world in which we live" (op cit.). We thus have also function-function correlations and form-form correlations. All these mappings as correlations are imperfect and subject to category leakage. Applied to bilingualism, the fact that two language systems are at work at once is likely to lead to competition. Indeed, when a bilingual can fully separate his two languages, errors are likely kept at a minimum. However, the cost of this organisation of two full separate sets of processing relations is fairly high and the bilingual may attempt to resort to short-cuts (MacWhinney, 1987: 321-322), especially when the environment is regarded as conducive. One short-cut seems to be to allow for a transfer of strategies of one language, English in this case, to the other, Chinese, as (14) and (15) in the data indicated. Here, the condition seemed to be that although Chinese is the native language of all the subjects, the content and context of their speech production were such that they facilitated activation of the English system. Despite the fact they were supposed to speak in their mother tongue, the setting, the participants, and, most crucially, the content all signaled green light for the English system to filter in where convenient. We propose that this seems to be what occurred to our unbalanced bilingual subjects. The short-cut strategy opened up opportunities for the English system to interfere, competing to have a place in the overall Chinese system, at the cost of disrupting the Chinese grammatical frames here and there.

What seemed to have occurred to the balanced bilingual subject was seen as a merging of the two systems of Chinese and English, the product being a single processing system. For him, the two systems were complementary in the sense that they merged to produce the greatest effectiveness and in doing so their competition gave way to their mutual accommodation. The resulting utterances have features of each, but they were not exactly one or the other.

In terms of linguistic convergence, it seems that convergence is unlikely to occur overnight. We believe that our data lend themselves to the postulation that competition and mutual accommodation of the two systems involved underlie the process of linguistic convergence. While convergence essentially occurs at the syntactic level, it may well occur at other levels. The excerpt from the balanced bilingual subject quoted in (17) suggests that convergence occurred at the discourse level.

A question that remains to be addressed is: Given these identified instances of linguistic deviations from the norms in the performance of the bilingual subjects, are they linguistically motivated or are they contact-induced? Our earlier account in section 2 of the three influxes of influence of European languages on Chinese in the past 80 years or so has no doubt committed us to the contact-induced postulation. Moreover, in the course of the present study, we also examined randomly selected speech samples of a 400,000-word corpus of spoken Chinese by local Beijing monolingual adult speakers in

various walks of life and of various age groups (Language Teaching and Research Institute, Beijing Languages College, 1993) and found that the features identified to mark the speech of our bilingual subjects were essentially missing. This finding can mean two things: (1) Europeanisation of Chinese grammar in the spoken mode of the language is largely confined to Chinese-English bilinguals at present; (2) It is contact-induced.

On the other hand, a close examination of where changes have occurred and where they have not has led us to the belief that language-internal causes must also be at work (cf. Harris & Campbell, 1995; Myers-Scotton, 1994; Savic, 1995). For example, the increased use of pronouns in the subjects' speech might be closely related to the fact that in the deep structure of Chinese grammar, just like English, a pronoun has a place often in the subject or object position and that it is only in the surface representation in discourse that pronouns are subject to suppression. The structure of Chinese, it follows, lends itself to increased use of pronouns, i.e., if the influencing language gives them full surface representations. In this sense, the change may be said to be linguistically motivated. We might also operate on a more intuitive level and suggest that however strong the influence of English is Chinese will remain Chinese in its basic grammatical structure (cf. Wang, 1951). Already, we have seen from the data that it is most unlikely that Chinese would incorporate the attributive clause construction from English into its grammar. The basic structure of Chinese would seem resistant to such change.   Thirdly, some changes might be called for by "such features as the semantic opaqueness of certain language specific form" (Silva-Corralan, 1994: 92). For example, the Chinese numeral *yi* 'one' embraces singularity and can be used for indefiniteness. Even though Chinese does not have an article system, the bilingual subjects were shown to have developed a similar use, an article-like device, in discourse.

We would refrain from conclusive remarks, for the present study was very small in scale and exploratory in nature. Further explorations of a similar kind would benefit us if the scale could be expanded and quantitative measures introduced. In addition, the Competition Model as applied to bilingualism would no doubt deserve further, in-depth exploration.

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Note

语言趋同诱发机制探究

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摘要： 本研究采用过程研究思路考察语言接触可能诱发的语言趋同，旨在探究通过两种语言频繁接触而导致的语言趋同的机制。通过对母语为汉语的汉英双语使用者的汉语自然话语进行结构层面的分析，并对照北京地区汉语使用者的自然汉语话语，我们发现，被试的话语在四个方面偏离汉语标准，向英语靠近：代

词的使用增加，系动词"是"的使用增加，中心词前的定语加长，类似于英语中不定冠词的 "一 + 量词"的使用增加。在对平衡和不平衡双语使用者被试的话语特点进行分析的基础上，本文提出，就双语使用者而言，两种语言竞争和相互兼容很可能是语言趋同形成过程中的必要机制。

关键词：语言趋同；语言接触；双语

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