LOAN WORDS VS. CODE-MIXING IN THE SHANGHAI DIALECT[1]

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Abstract

Code-mixing is a common linguistic phenomenon in bilingual societies. However, code-mixing is not a "patented product" of bilingual societies. When two languages come into contact, people may think that one of the two languages has more appropriate lexical items for something they want to express in a particular situation; then these lexical items will be mixed into another language for effective communication.

This paper reports on some observations about ideograph-based code-mixing in the Shanghai dialect. Expressions of this kind appeared in the late 19th century and the early 20th century. Some of them disappeared while some others survived and entered into the standard Chinese vocabulary. The paper gives a brief analysis of this special kind of code-mixing and treats it as a stepping stone to many loan words in the Chinese language.

1. Introduction

Winston Churchill once said, "China is a mystery wrapped in an enigma inside a mystery." What Churchill perhaps did not know is that China is also an enigma to the Chinese! What I do in this paper is to unravel the mystery surrounding "code-mixing" in China. In general, code-mixing refers to a speaker/writer's switches from one language or

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variety of language to another in communication. Used as a linguistic feature, code-mixing characterizes a society as bilingual, because it normally occurs in places where two languages are in contact with each other. However, such practice occurs in China now, particularly in the developed urban areas. With the quick progress of China's economy, the Chinese language has come into closer contact with the English-speaking world. One observable consequence is the appearance of Chinese-English code-mixing. If one takes a look at all kinds of print media, abundant evidence of code-mixing can be found.

Theoretically, code-mixing in China is noteworthy. This is because China is conventionally regarded as a monolingual society in which Mandarin Chinese, or Putonghua as officially termed now, is the national language which is dominant in all fields. The status of Mandarin Chinese ensures its extensive use in society and makes it impossible, or at least difficult, for foreign languages to be its rivals. Under such a circumstance, the issue of code-mixing in China is of significance, for it proves that it is not unexceptionally true that code-mixing is exclusive to bilingual societies. It is directly related to the question of whether code-mixing is likely to occur in a place other than bilingual and, if the answer is yes, then under what conditions code-mixing can appear in a monolingual society.

This paper will address the issues of code-mixing in China. But instead of discussing the present-day Chinese-English code-mixing that can be seen in print media everywhere in China, it will examine the use of ideograph-based code-mixing that appeared in the Shanghai dialect in the late 19th century and the early 20th century. The author wishes to emphasize that the appearance and existence of code-mixing in China take up a form that is quite different from the normal way of code-mixing in bilingual societies. To put it simply, foreign words, especially those from western languages, appear by means of Chinese ideographic characters. It seems hard to understand this type of code-mixing; but the exception proves the rule. With some data about code-mixing produced in this way, the paper will analyze its social contexts and influences on the Chinese language. A clear perception into such a phenomenon could help us further understand language contact and code-mixing.

Shanghai, one of the three municipalities under the direct administration of the central government of China, is a place where we can find signs of Chinese-English code-mixing. As is known to all, China is a typical monolingual country. Although there are 56 ethnic groups of people sharing the vast territorial area of 9,600,000 square kilometers, Chinese is extensively used throughout the land. Even though some ethnic minority groups have their own languages, Mandarin Chinese, or Putonghua as officially termed within China, is a strong language which is widely used and much preferred by people of the minority groups. Though Mandarin Chinese is the only one dominant language and a de facto official language, people of Shanghai generally speak the Shanghai dialect in daily life. In this way Shanghai keeps itself somewhat unique among all cities of China.

Historically, Shanghai was one of the five port cities which were forced to be open to foreigners for trading business in the late 19th century. As a result of the early encounters with foreign languages and cultures, the Shanghai dialect has undergone some changes: code-mixing crept into it and spread in its territory. However, owing to the huge difference between the western and Chinese writing systems, the concepts from the foreign language, with English in particular, do not come into Chinese in the form of western alphabetic letters. Instead, they appear by means of Chinese ideographic characters.

2. Ways of introducing foreign words

From the late Qing Dynasty (the 19th century), free publication of books and magazines as well as newspapers was allowed and became vogue in Shanghai. Along with the translation of western theories and literature and the influx of western businessmen for all kinds of trades, some foreign concepts and things that were new to Shanghai people came into society. Promptly reactive to the arrival of the exotic substances, people of Shanghai assimilated them and attempted to use them in communication for practical purposes.

Typologically there are three ways of introducing foreign words into the Shanghai dialect. The first is merely to borrow foreign concepts and use indigenous Chinese characters to express the concepts. Examples are *train* as 火車 ("fire vehicle"), *plane* as 飛機 ("flying machine"), *sweet month* as 蜜月 ("honey month"), *blackboard* as 黑板 ("black board"), *cell* as 細胞 ("tiny cell"). Many words that were formed up in this way have become formal Chinese words. The origin of quite some of them is now even beyond recognition.

The second way of introducing foreign concepts and words is to add the Chinese word 洋 to a noun that signifies the foreign thing or concept. The table below illustrates the case:

Table 1. Chinese Words With 洋 to Represent Foreign Things and Concepts

Words	Meaning
洋貨	foreign goods, imported goods
洋鈿	foreign money
洋車	rickshaw
洋布	Machine-woven cloth
洋琴	foreign musical instrument
洋傘	foreign umbrella, imported umbrella
洋油	imported oil, kerosene
洋灰	cement
洋人	foreigners (mainly westerners)
洋裝	Western-style clothes
洋刀	foreign knife (for peeling fruit)
洋蔥	onion
洋火	matches
洋房	foreign-style house, western-style house
洋台	balcony
洋綫	Machine-spun cotton yarn
洋綫團	The wooden core for holding threads
洋風爐	a cooking stove using kerosene as fuel
洋囡囝	Western-style doll used as a child's toy

洋娃娃	Western-style doll used as a child's toy
洋泡泡	rubber balloon

The third way of borrowing is worth attention, because it does not confirm to the conventional use of ideographic characters. The following are some examples:

Table 2. Chinese Words with Residues of Foreign Sounds

Words	Meaning
密斯脫 、密司脫	mister
那摩溫 (意思是 "第一")	number one
大拉斯 (意思是 "鈔票")	dollars
番斯 (意思是 "臉蛋")	face
大亨 (意思是 "有錢有勢的大人物")	hundred
派 (意思是 "傳球")	pass
厄鎧 (意思是 "再來一次")	again
哈夫 (意思是 "對半平分")	half
拉斯卡 (意思是 "尾/末班車")	last car
派司 (意思是 "通過" 或者 "准許証")	pass
羅曼蒂克 (意思是 "浪漫")	romantic
馬達 (意思是 "電動機" 或 "柴油發動機")	motor
閥、凡爾 (意思是 "管道或機器中控制流體的流量、壓力和流動方向的裝置")	valve
腊克 (意思是 "一種塗在金屬、木材或紙張上的發亮的清罩光漆")	lacquer
克羅米 (意思是 "噴塗在金屬物體表面的鉻")	chromium
泡力水 (意思是 "塗在物體表面的一種清罩光漆")	polish
馬賽克 (意思是 "一種小型的瓷磚")	mosaic
水門汀 (意思是 "水泥")	cement
水汀 (意思是 "水暖器")	steam
戲司 (意思是 "煤氣")	gas
派力司 (意思是 "宮殿")	palace
土司 (意思是 "一種切片烤麵包")	toast
布丁 (意思是 "一種餐後甜點")	pudding
三明治 (意思是 "一種用麵包夾著肉和奶酪等物的	sandwich

食品")	
白脫 (意思是"奶油")	butter
可可 (意思是"一種熱帶植物的種子研粉後做成的飲料")	cocoa
咖喱	curry
凡士林 (意思是"")	vaseline
司的克 (意思是"手杖")	stick
梵啞鈴 (意思是"小提琴")	violin
聖代 (意思是"一種冰淇淋")	sundae
麥克風 (意思是"話筒")	microphone
搞爾 (意思是"足球運動中的球門")	goal
脫去包 (意思是"乒乓球運動中的擦邊球")	touch ball
道勃爾 (意思是"翻一倍")	double
朴落 (意思是"電線插頭")	plug
司大脫 (意思是"日光燈的輝光器")	start
康白度 (意思是"為外國人做生意跑腿的中國人")	comprador
台頭 (意思是"信件或支票的收件人")	title
派對 (意思是"宴會或者舞會")	party
安琪兒 (意思是"天使")	angel
打 (意思是"以 12 件東西為基準的度量單位")	dozen
聽 (意思是"一個鐵皮罐子")	tin
捎 (意思是"籃球運動中的投籃動作")	shoot
司道普 (意思是"一種見人來抓立即站停,見人離開立即移位的兒童遊戲")	stop
拋脫 (意思是"管門人")	porter
仆歐 (意思是"服務生")	boy
阿木林 (意思是"反應不靈敏的人")	a moron
混腔勢 (意思是"找機會")	chance
吞頭勢 (意思是"傾向、由模樣而判斷趨勢")	tendency
陰丹士林布 (意思是"一種藍色染料染成的布匹")	indanthrene
沙發 (意思是"一種便於休息的軟墊座椅")	sofa
維他命 (意思是"維持人和動物生命的有機化合物")	vitamin

The three ways of introducing foreign concepts and expressions all brought to Chinese new words and expressions. Quite some of them have gained currency in modern

Chinese, thus becoming formal words in the language. Some have been used so frequently and commonly that people without much linguistic awareness can barely recognize their alien color and origin.

3. A primitive form of Chinese-English code-mixing

The first way Chinese introduces foreign words typically represents the nature of the Chinese ideographic writing system. As is known, the Chinese writing system consists of ideographical characters. Each ideograph has its primary meaning. For this reason, the foreign words that are introduced into Chinese in the first way can be well understood when people read the component Chinese characters. Words introduced in the second way may constitute no difficulty either, because the beginning component ideographic character 洋 unambiguously tells people the foreign origin of the thing it stands for. Different from the first two ways, the third one may lead people to confusion, unless readers/hearers have some background knowledge about the thing being talked about. The difficulty of understanding arises from the fact that one cannot simply comprehend the meanings from the component ideographs of the expressions.

But it is precisely the third way that has something to do with bilingualism. As a matter of fact, the ability of speaking English was very much desired and admired by people of Shanghai in the late 19th century. Being proud of themselves, those who were able to use some English often mixed some foreign words (largely from English, with some from Russia, French and German as well) in their utterances. People of this type either had studied overseas for some time or were working for some foreign companies or organizations which dispatched some staff to China for business and other missions. Under such circumstances, the bilingual competence of those people started to function in communication. Partly because of the lack of suitable Chinese equivalent expressions and partly because of the mindset of being pretentious to the public masses in society, they

mixed the relevant words from the foreign languages into their Chinese utterances. This is the consequence of language contact that took place within the minds of those people.

What is even more worth attention and emphasis is that the pronunciation of the foreign words was attempted to be marked by Chinese ideographic characters rather than by alphabetic characters as modern mixed-code is. In other words, the Chinese characters of Table 2 were selected to express the phonetic sounds of the original words rather than the meanings as those in Table 1. The combinations of the ideographic characters are loaded with the function of representing the sounds of foreign words as closely as they are in the original language. Because of this function, the characters lose their intrinsic function of expressing meaning. Exactly in this sense, they can be regarded as a primitive form of Chinese-English mixed-code.

Such Chinese-English mixed-code expressions are very different from the Chinese-English mixed-code of Hong Kong, a Chinese community where the same Chinese ideographic writing system has been used in communication. In Hong Kong, code-mixing can be clearly perceived in people's utterances, for English words that are expressed in alphabetic letters are embedded into the Chinese words. For instance, "有人 call 你"（Someone *called* you），"我好 firm 呢個 belief"（I *firmly believe* in this) (Li, 1998, p. 176). It is apparent that mixed-code users of Hong Kong tend to mix up original English words into the Chinese utterances. Therefore, it is beyond doubt that the Chinese-English mixed-code of Hong Kong is explicit in form and easy to be recognized. In fact, it is less arguable that code-mixing exists in Hong Kong and is widely used by local bilinguals (Gibbons, 1987; Low & Lu, 2006; Luke & Lau, 2008; Yau, 1997).

In contrast to the Chinese-English code-mixing of Hong Kong, the code-mixing in the Shanghai dialect, as is shown above, does not contain any original alphabetic English words. However, it should not go unnoticed that the phonetic forms of the Chinese characters in the aforementioned examples bear some acoustic resemblance to their English counterparts. Owing to the different sound systems and tones of Chinese and English, it would be impractical and unreasonable to expect the phonetic forms of the chosen Chinese characters to sound exactly the same as or intimately close to the corresponding original

words. It is evident that unlike other normal phrases and word groups which consist of a combination of Chinese characters, the Chinese characters used in the examples in Table 2 are combined unusually in such a way that they do not make any sense in terms of the meaning of the component ideographical characters. They represent nothing but the phonetic sounds of the corresponding foreign words.

Then, a question may arise, namely, why did the people of Shanghai not introduce the original alphabetic English words as people in other places usually do? This is by and large related to the educational level of the users in general. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, there were not a large number of Chinese-English bilinguals in Shanghai. Contrary to this, people who were able to use the two languages in communication were very limited in number. Had some English words been mixed into the Chinese utterances/sentences, then it would have been embarrassing and even difficult to many who had little or no knowledge about English. In response, they would refuse to accept Chinese-English mixed-code expressions in communication, which would then block the circulation and spread of the mixed-code expressions. In order to promote the use of foreign words and avoid other people's rejection, the bilinguals of Shanghai at that time had to purposefully select some ideographic Chinese characters to present the phonetic forms of the words of the original language, so that the words and the corresponding concepts could be introduced into Chinese and gradually accepted and used by more and more people. That can best explain why alphabetic letters cannot be found in the expressions listed in Table 2.

4. Code-mixing versus loan words

In the world literature, code-mixing involves using foreign words in a language. "The term code-mixing has sometimes been used to describe changes at the word level (e.g. when one word or a few words in a sentence change" (Baker, 2001: 101). Normally,

code-mixing is independent from word borrowing. A borrowing refers to "a word which has been taken from one language and used in another language" (Richards, Platt & Weber, 1985: 30). To illustrate, the French word *garage* is a loan word in English, because it was originated in French and was later introduced into English and has become a regular word in English for common use.

However, this does not apply to the expressions in the Shanghai dialect which are mentioned above. There are two reasons: firstly, the Chinese writing system is made up of ideographs. Each character has its own meaning. When a word consists of two or more such ideographic characters, the overall meaning can be understood from the meanings of each component ideograph in the combination. Nevertheless, the combinations of ideograms in Table 2 above do not make any sense in Chinese, if one interprets the meaning of each component ideograph on the individual basis. In other words, the overall meaning cannot be obtained from the components of the combinations. This is simply because the ideographs were selected into the combinations not for their denotative or connotative meanings, but for their phonetic representations. It is their acoustic similarity or closeness to the original words that brought them into such combinations. Secondly, representing new things or concepts, loan words normally enter into a hosting language as new members of its vocabulary and are welcomed by its users. However, unlike other loan words, these combinations, by and large, did not and could not go into wide circulation. Although there are some exceptions such as 馬達, the majority of them have failed to be accepted, eventually disappearing from people's daily use. A combination of ideograph characters will most likely confuse Chinese people, if it represents nothing but phonetic form of foreign words. This is determined by the nature of Chinese ideographs and is convincingly evidenced by a recent mass media reporting.[2]

Having said that, I feel that one thing is clear, namely, these expressions started to be used because their phonetic and acoustic similarity could satisfy the users' need to mention

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[2] A market management office of Beijing Municipal Government compiled an English phrasebook for vendors to facilitate their communication with foreigners. The book uses Chinese characters to mark the phonetic forms of some English expressions. The result of using them turned out to be very disappointing. See *Apple Daily*, November 20, 2008.

the foreign things and to include the corresponding foreign words in their Chinese utterances. In a sense, the combinations of the Chinese ideographs do not embody publicly acknowledged conventional Chinese words and phrases; instead they just represent the phonetic forms of the relevant foreign words. It is precisely in this way that these combinations of ideographs play the function of mixed-code. They are mixed into the utterances to make sense only with the help of other Chinese words and contexts.

This is also a totally unique approach to code-mixing. In other languages, code-mixing involves the use of words from a donor language. The foreign words normally retain their original forms and are mixed up with other native words in utterances. For example, Clyne (1972) illustrates a typical case of code-mixing from the speech of a German immigrant in Australia: *Das handelt von einem secondhand dealer and his son.* ("This is about a …"). It is evident that some German words are mixed up with English words in the sentence. The German words appear exactly the same as they are used in German. By contrast with Clyne's code-mixing example, we can easily see that the expressions in the Shanghai dialect do not keep the original alphabetic letters of the foreign words. This is obviously due to the different writing system of the Chinese language. An ideographic writing system does not allow alphabetic characters or characters of other writing systems because those written characters do not symbolize things in the same way as the ideographic characters. For this reason, foreign words cannot be easily mixed into Chinese utterances as they stand; they can only be expressed by some ideographs that have similar or close phonetic sounds.

In addition, there is another cause to use ideographs to introduce foreign words. As aforesaid briefly, back in the late 19th century and early 20th century, English started to come into China. But not many local Chinese people were linguistically literate in English. Only a handful of Chinese had gone overseas for education or had contact with western missionaries and businessmen; therefore they had the ability of reading English. With their knowledge about English or other foreign languages, they were very sensitive to foreign things that were lacking in China but useful to Chinese people in daily life. When they

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intended to introduce them into China, they needed to express them in both spoken and written forms. Perhaps owing to the shortage of appropriate equivalent expressions in Chinese, they could only call the things they wanted to introduce by their original names. But in writing, the visually different alphabetic characters of the words could hardly be used by other Chinese fellow countrymen. Even if the meanings of the words were made clear to them, it would still be impossible or inconceivably difficult at least, for those to read them aloud, who did not have the slightest knowledge about foreign languages. For this reason, those people who are literate in English had to select some Chinese ideographs to represent the foreign words introduced, so that it would be possible or even convenient for other people to read them aloud.

Under such circumstances, those expressions in Table 2 were created and brought to use in the Shanghai dialect. By no means can they be classified as loan words, because they do not make sense as other conventional Chinese words do when they are combined together. In essence, they are a kind of code-mixing, the primitive form of Chinese-English code-mixing. This kind of code-mixing came into existence with historical reasons, namely, the use of Chinese ideographs is simply for people without literacy of English to be able to utter the words aloud or write the words out when having verbal or written communication. Because the phonetic resemblance only exists in the Shanghai dialect, the expressions could not go far beyond the dialectal region of Shanghai. It is linguistically sensible that a foreign word can become an accepted loan word in a language only after it can be used by the majority of the people who speak the language. In contrast to this principle, those ideographic forms of code-mixing could only be circulated in a certain dialectal region and the scope of use was very limited. Therefore, they gradually disappeared when replacement or alternative forms of expression have been widely accepted by the majority of Chinese users.

In summary, before such expressions have become widely accepted, they are kind of mixed-code; after they are recognized and admitted into the standard vocabulary, they are loan words.

5. Ideograph-based code-mixing as source of loan words

Nothing in the world is absolute. In spite of disappearance of most ideographic code-mixing from the Shanghai dialect, it is interesting to note that some ideograph-based primitive mixed-code expressions in the Shanghai dialect as shown in Table 2 have successfully entered into the standard Chinese vocabulary and become regular loan words in usage and dictionary. For instance, such expressions as 大亨 (hundred), 布丁 (pudding), 三明治 (sandwich), 白脫 (butter), 可可 (cocoa), 咖喱 (curry), 台頭 (title) 沙發 (sofa), 維他命 (vitamin) are now regular words in standard Chinese and they have gained wide usage in everyday language communication. Once they are circulated in common use, they become loan words and are formal members of Chinese vocabulary. Regarding the transitional conditions of such words, convincing arguments can be raised to explain why these particular expressions could eventually transfer from originally ideograph-based code-mixing in a regional dialect to widely-accepted loan words. It is absolutely decided by nothing but convention. Maybe this is what the English proverb "the exception proves the rule."

By nature, language is purely a set of conventions. Decisions on the selection of new words are made by the masses of people in society rather than by people with privilege or expertise. However, in the case of mixed-code expressions of the Shanghai dialect which are under discussion, it cannot be over-emphasized that the acoustic similarity of these ideographs exists only when they are spoken in the Shanghai dialect. If these ideographs are read in other dialects or in Putonghua, one can barely feel the acoustic closeness. Therefore, it still remains a riddle whether the phonetic similarity between English and the Shanghai dialect contributed to the full adoption of these expressions.

Based on the few examples mentioned earlier, it can be seen that ideograph-based mixed-code expressions can serve as a stepping stone for loan words. Table 3 shows some words within which the first part represents the phonetic forms of the foreign words in the same way as those of Table 2; but the second part indicates the category those things

belong to, so that people can become aware of what thing the word signifies, even if they have no knowledge about the foreign words.

Table 3. Loan Words Containing Ideographs to Indicate Foreign Sounds

Words	Meaning
啤 + 酒	beer
卡 + 片	card
沙丁 + 魚	sardine
雪茄 + 煙	cigar
雪紡 + 綢 (意思是 "一種很薄的絲質衣料")	chiffon
卡賓 + 槍	carbine
米達 + 尺	meter
法蘭 + 絨	flannel
司必靈 + 鎖	spring lock
道林 + 紙 (亦作 "道令紙"。 一種用木材爲原料製成的比較高級的紙。最初是美國道林(Dowling)公司製造。	Dowling (An American paper manufacturer)
拍紙 + 簿	pads
高爾夫 + 球	golf
華爾茲 + 舞	waltz
茄克 + 衫	jacket
老虎 + 天窗 (意思是 "一種在屋頂上開設的窗口")	roof window
牛軋 + 糖	nougat
吉普 + 車	jeep
太妃 + 糖	toffee
酒 + 吧	bar

Among all the examples listed, the first part represents the phonetic form of the original word and the last ideograph(s) indicates what kind of thing the word signifies, except for the last example 酒 + 吧, where such an order of indication is reversed with the first ideograph indicating the nature of the thing and the second one representing the

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sounds of the original word.

One thing is apparently common between Tables 2 and 3, that is, the phonetic sounds of the original words are embodied in the same way by selected Chinese ideographs whose sounds in the Shanghai dialect are similar or close to those of the original. If these Chinese characters are read by speakers of other Chinese dialects, the similarity to the sound of the original will be either lost, or distorted, or severely reduced at least.

However, in comparison with the words of Table 2, words of Table 3 are more acceptable to people of other dialectal regions of China. In fact, unlike most words of Table 2, most words of Table 3 are still in use nowadays. This is because they have been widely recognized as loan words, which, categorically, constitute a part of the standard Chinese vocabulary. Therefore, it can be concluded that some loan words are produced in the standard Chinese through the primitive mixed-code expressions in the Shanghai dialect. Unlike those code-mixing forms that consist merely of ideographs which sound similar or close to foreign words, this kind of forms are easier to be understood and recognized. With the ending ideograph helping people understand the nature of the things signified, words of this type can gain wide circulation and are more hopeful to be eventually accepted as regular members of Chinese vocabulary. In this way, there is a reason to argue that code-mixing in the Shanghai dialect is a source of loan words of the Chinese language.

Having said that, I must point out that only a part of the ideograph-based expressions are likely to become formal loan words. Quite some of them have no chance of going through the process. Because they are based on a regional dialect, the similarity between them and the original foreign words cannot be easily felt and agreed on by the majority of Chinese who, though speaking the same language, have different indigenous sound systems. For example, the combination of 伊妹兒 was once used to refer to *e-mail*, which sounds almost exactly alike; 因特網 was once used to refer to the *Internet*, which both represents the sound and highlights the nature of the original. However, although the two new-born things enjoy high popularity among Chinese people, the names expressed by ideographs as above cannot go far and wide, and cannot be extensively accepted. Like many other

expressions in Table 2, they are eventually replaced by 電子郵件 and 互聯網. At present, there is hardly any solid data to explain why some expressions can be recognized and some others cannot. In principle, language is a set of conventional signs. Anything will tend to become a standard, once it is widely accepted and used in society.

6. A misconception to be corrected

Traditionally, words of this type are termed *borrowings* or *loan words* in the field of Chinese studies (Chan & Kwok, 1982; Cheung, 1986; Li, 2000; Luke & Lau, 2008). This is simply because the words involved all come from foreign sources. Although little doubt has been cast on such a method of classification, the definition of borrowing or loan words does not apply to the words under discussion. In the following, I will counter-argue the traditional practice and elaborate on why it is inappropriate to impose the label of loan words on expressions of this type in Chinese.

As is known, Chinese characters are ideographs. Each character is a written sign which represents a concept of a thing rather than the sounds of a word. Although the resemblance between a Chinese character and the thing it represents is now lost on the whole, making it almost impossible to establish association between a Chinese character and the thing of its reference, people with Chinese proficiency can still infer the meaning of a Chinese character at the sight of it. In other words, Chinese characters are still a system of signs that expresses meaning rather than sound.

However, the so-called mixed-code expressions under discussion do not have such a function. Take the word *butter* for example. The two Chinese characters 白脫 cannot express the meaning of *butter*. In other words, they simply represent the sounds of the English word *butter*. Instead, another two-character Chinese word 奶油 , which means respectively *milk* and *oil*, can help people associate the word with the thing it represents. From this example, it is evident that 白脫 is merely a phonetic form which denotes no more than the sounds of the word *butter*. The function of the characters is to help Chinese

people to articulate the English word. On no account do they express the meaning of the thing it represents. People cannot have access to the meaning by inferring from the meanings of each component character. Therefore, it would be inappropriate to group expressions of this type with other loan words like 葡萄 (grape), 玻璃 (glass), 石榴 (pomegranate), 佛 (Buddha), 菩薩 (Bodhisattva).

There is a conventional name for the Chinese words of Table 2: 音譯詞(phonemic loan words). Literally, it means this type of loans *translates* only the sounds but not the meaning of original words. Such a definition is indeed questionable. When any word should be borrowed from a donor language which uses alphabetic writing system into a host language which uses ideographic writing system, the priority should be given to the meaning of the target word. The selected ideographs of the host language should associate its users' perception with the meaning of the word, so that they can be aware of the nature of the thing that the word represents. Translation is an activity or a process of changing speech or writing from one language (the donor language) into another (the host language), "which reproduces the general meaning and intention of the original (Richards, Platt & Weber, 1985, p. 299). Such is the basic principle of translation. In general, only proper nouns like people's names, place names are translated into the host language by sounds. If other word classes of the original language are processed in this way, it is doubtful whether the users of the host language can understand the meaning; very likely, the meaning remains unclear; thus, the use of phonemic form of the original fails to serve the purpose of translation. That is why I contend that the expressions of Table 2 cannot be grouped into the category of the conventional phonemic loan words. According to Kessler and Treiman (2003), the representation of phonemic information can be identified as a means by which to facilitate recognition and comprehension of foreign words. But what they discussed applies to only languages which use alphabetic writing systems. When a French word is mixed into an English text, the phonemic form of the French word is still represented by alphabetic letters. Such a form may help English users recognize that the word is not a native English word. In addition, it does not constitute much difficulty for reading aloud.

With the help of the context and some other means, English people may comprehend the meaning of the word. However, by no means does the situation work in the same way to loan words in Chinese, if they are phonemically *translated* into Chinese ideographs. This is not only because ideographic writing is significantly different from alphabetical writing, but also because each ideograph represents meaning more than it represents sounds of the word. Therefore, if only sounds of a foreign word are *translated*, it can hardly give rise to users' phonemic awareness, nor can it lead them to comprehension of meaning. This can be evidenced by the most words of Table 2 which failed to gain popularity or come into standard Chinese. They either died out along with the lapse of time or remain dialectal expressions in Shanghai, though a small part of them have successfully spread as lexicons of Chinese vocabulary such as the English-roorted "幽默"（humour），"沙發"（sofa），"雷達"（radar）and German-rooted "納粹"（Nazi），"海洛因"（heroin）.

7. Conclusion

In normal cases of code-mixing, foreign words from a donor language are embedded into utterances and sentences of a host language. These foreign words are easy to recognize because they look and sound different from the native words of the host language. But such code-mixing could not occur in China in the late 19th and early 20th centuries owing to the fundamental differences between ideographic and alphabetic writing systems as well as a limited number of people who knew foreign languages. However, the two compelling reasons gave rise to some alternative way of mixing foreign words into Chinese words. In tandem with the increasing contact between China and some western countries, code-mixing eventually became necessary in language communication. Shanghai was the first place within China to see and experience this emerging linguistic need.

In order to make code-mixing easily accessible, ideographs which are acoustically similar to foreign words were used, thus making code-mixing in the Shanghai dialect very unique and interesting. Through conventional use in society, some of such code-mixing

forms ceased to live on, whereas some others survived successfully and became accepted regular members of Chinese vocabulary.

Like code-mixing elsewhere in the world, it is for certain that code-mixing in the Shanghai dialect is absolutely the result of language contact. It proves that when any two languages come into contact, code-mixing will appear sooner or later, no matter whether a monolingual or bilingual society is concerned. The ideograph-based code-mixing expressions, though primitive in form, paved the way for some loan words in the Chinese language and are succeeded by alphabetic code-mixing expressions which have emerged at a steady rate in current China, particularly the costal urban areas. As is known, English has found its way deep into China, which provides a solid basis for the advent of alphabetic code-mixing expressions.

To some extent, the discussion of this paper will go some way toward making China's code-mixing less of a mystery to the Chinese themselves. Winston Churchill would have been impressed.

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