A CONTRASTIVE STUDY
OF
ENGLISH AND MANDARIN CHINESE

November 1974

DEFENSE LANGUAGE INSTITUTE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This study was prepared by the Contrastive Analysis Project, Department of Linguistics, University of Michigan, under Contract #F41609-69-C-0004 for the Defense Language Institute in 1969.

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PREFACE

It is a truism to state that we tend to appraise any human behavior, either consciouly or unconsciously, in terms of our own field of reference. This tendency is particularly true of language behavior; we always approach a second language in terms of our first language. Our ability to learn a second language then is constrained, to a greater or lesser extent, by our grounding in our own native language.

Perhaps an analogy to architecture will exemplify this interference more clearly. The acquisition of a first language in childhood is the foundation upon which our ability to speak our native language is built. Say that English is like a convention hall, for example, and Chinese like a skyscraper. These two buildings differ not only in their superstructure, but in their foundations as well. Learning a second language then is very much like trying to construct a new building with the wrong kind of foundation. Thus a Chinese student learning English as a second language is like someone trying to build a convention hall on the foundation of a skyscraper, and, conversely, an American trying to learn Chinese as a second language is like someone trying to build a skyscraper on the foundation of a convention hall. In both cases, the greatest source of difficulty is not that the superstructures differ, but that the foundations do.

It is the purpose of this manual, then, to introduce the English teacher to many of the ways in which Chinese and English differ fundamentally. It is hoped that the material presented here will assist the teacher in defining the problems that Chinese speakers are likely to have in learning English as a second language. Furthermore, by contrasting the difference in the patterns and structures of the two languages, it is hoped that the teacher will be able to present his material more lucidly and effectively to the Chinese student.

This manual abounds in remarks such as, "The Chinese language does not have..., Chinese students have great difficulty..., and, the Chinese speaker is liable to make errors like..." At no time are these remarks intended to be construed as critical of or condescending to the Chinese people or language. Anyone with linguistic training will know how difficult it is to compare the degree of "difficulty", "sophistication", or "logic" between any two languages. It is not because of these qualities, therefore, that English and Chinese differ, but because these languages are historically unrelated and geographically distant. A manual devoted to the teaching of Chinese to native English speakers, then, would contain many remarks on the mistakes and difficulties that English speakers would have. It is very important, therefore, that the teacher does not approach the problems which a Chinese student has in learning English in a critical or condescending manner, but rather with patience and understanding.

The reader should be aware that the Chinese language exists in many varieties. Recent scholarship divides contemporary spoken Chinese into eight major dialects, or more accurately, dialect groups, each of which can be further divided into sub-dialects, and even sub-subdialects. The basic grammatical structure of all these varieties of Chinese is virtually the same, and even in detail there is a very high degree of similarity among them. There is more divergence in vocabulary, especially that of non-literary, non-technical everyday speech. In phonology, also, basic structural characteristics are shared. The pattern of monosyllabic morphemes, each with a distinctive tone, limited distribution of phoneme types in the syllable, especially syllable-final consonants, and very little or no clustering of consonants, is maintained throughout all the dialects of Chinese. In phonological detail, however, there are marked differences among the major dialects. These differences are in fact so great that, together with differences in vocabulary, they produce mutual unintelligibility among the major dialect groupings.

By far the largest single dialect group, both in terms of number of speakers and geographical area in which it is spoken, is Northern Chinese, or Mandarin, which is spoken with relatively minor variations over all of China north of the Yangtze River and in the southwestern part of the country. Northern Chinese is the native tongue of an estimated 70 per cent of the population of China, and it is a variety of Northern Chinese--that of the capital city Peking--which forms the basis for the national standard language.

The non-Mandarin dialects of Chinese are spoken in the southeastern provinces, especially along the seacoast. The largest of these, in terms of numbers of speakers, is the Wu group, to which the speech of the great city of Shanghai belongs. Second is the Cantonese group, which includes the standard Cantonese of Canton City and the British colony of Hong Kong. Most of the shopkeepers in America's Chinatowns speak one or another subdialect of Cantonese. Wu is spoken by about 8.4 per cent of the population of China, and Cantonese by approximately five per cent. These seem like rather small figures, but in a population of 760 million (1966 estimate), it means that there are around 62 million speakers of Wu, which is more than the population of the United Kingdom, Italy, or France; and Cantonese, with around 38 million, has more speakers than the population of Spain. Another important dialect is Southern Min, which is spoken in the southern part of Fukien province and by approximately eighty per cent of Taiwan's population of thirteen million.

While 29 per cent of the population have as their mother tongue a non-Mandarin dialect (about one per cent speak non-Chinese languages), many of these--especially the younger generation--speak Mandarin as a second language. Since the advent of the government of the People's Republic of China in 1949, Mandarin has been vigorously promoted throughout mainland China as the official common medium of communication and as the language

of instruction in the school systems. And on Taiwan it has been promoted by the government of the Republic of China with such success that now virtually all the youth of the island speak Mandarin. In these efforts, the standard language taught in the school systems both on the mainland of China and in Taiwan is defined as being based on the dialect of Peking. It is this Standard Mandarin that we have taken as the object of our comparison with English in this handbook. It must be realized, however, that this standard is to some extent only an ideal. There is considerable variation in the degree to which this ideal is approached in practice. When a Chinese whose native tongue is a non-Mandarin dialect learns the standard language he will experience interference from his native dialect, with the result that he will speak Mandarin with the "accent" of his own dialect--Cantonese, Taiwanese, or whatever it may be. And persons who speak natively a variety of Mandarin other than Pekingese generally do not feel the need to adjust their speech to the precise standard.

In this handbook we could not possibly describe the many varieties of Chinese, or even the varieties of Mandarin, which might be spoken by students of English teachers who will use this book. We have therefore couched our description in terms of comparison of English with Standard Mandarin, the "ideal" form of the language which is taught in China and in Taiwan, as well as to foreign students of Chinese in other parts of the world. It is likely that only a small minority of Chinese students of English will speak precisely the form of Chinese described. The speech of most will vary from this norm, and for many the variation may be quite pronounced.

The situation is perhaps not so bad as it would seem, however. As has been mentioned above, the amount of variation among Chinese dialects is least in the area of grammatical structure, greater in vocabulary, and greatest in the details of phonology. This means that the kinds of problems Chinese students have in learning English grammar, insofar as these problems are the result of interference from Chinese, are likely to be very much the same regardless of the students' dialect backgrounds. (There will, of course, be great variation depending upon each student's previous study of English.) Differences in vocabulary among dialects are for the most part not of a sort that will result in any significant differences in the kinds of difficulties students will have with English vocabulary. It is in phonology that Chinese dialects vary most widely, and it is there that individual dialect backgrounds will show most clearly in difficulties various Chinese students have with English pronunciation. Even in phonology, however, since the dialectal differences are primarily differences of detail rather than differences in basic phonological pattern, it is only in the more minor problems of pronunciation that a student's specific dialect background will significantly affect his learning of English. For the major problems, the basic structural differences between Chinese (of any variety) and English will far outweigh the differences in detail from one Chinese dialect to another.

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CHAPTER 1: PHONOLOGY: THE SOUNDS OF ENGLISH AND CHINESE

1.1. Segmental Phonemes

1.1.0. Introduction

The phonemes of a language are the individual sounds which make up its words. The symbol for a phoneme is written between slant lines. For example, /b/, /s/ and /ɑ/ are phonemes of English. A phoneme is usually written with one symbol; however, it may be written with two symbols if this makes it easier for us to remember how it is pronounced. For instance, the first sound in church can be written /tʃ/ to remind us that it begins like the stop /t/ and ends like the fricative /ʃ/.

The symbols which we use to write phonemes are chosen from the symbols of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) with certain minor revisions. A detailed description of an actual language sound must include more features than those that are assumed for the basic phonemic symbol, and any phoneme in a given language may have a number of phonetic variants. A phonetic transcription, using additional symbols or diacritical marks to indicate these additional features, is written between square brackets. For example, the English phoneme /t/ (voiceless stop made with the tip of the tongue) has the following variants in different phonological environments: aspirated [t']* in word-initial position; unaspirated [t] following /s/, as in stop; flapped [t̬] as in butter or later; and unreleased [t˺] as in outcome.

A phoneme is defined for a particular language by its phonetic variants and their distribution in that language. This means that the "same" phoneme is always pronounced somewhat differently in two different languages. As indicated above, the "phoneme /t/" in English is sometimes aspirated and sometimes not. Chinese has a "phoneme /t/" which is never aspirated and contrasts with a "phoneme /t'/" which is always aspirated. English has both sounds but the difference between them is not phonemic. In Chinese they are distinct phonemes. In comparing two languages, one must deal with the similarities and differences on both the phonemic and the phonetic levels.

1.1.1. Chinese Consonants.

Chinese consonant phonemes are charted in Figure 1 on page two. Circled phonemes are not found in English. Some of these are similar enough to English phonemes so as to sound the same to the Chinese speaker and thus be substituted for the English phonemes, resulting in a 'foreign accent'. Those phonemes that are not circled are virtually the same for Chinese and English, at least in their dominant allophones, and are therefore sounds that the Chinese speaker has ready at hand for use in English.

Notice that all Chinese stops, affricates, and fricatives (except /r/) are voiceless. /r/ has a special status. It is normally pronounced with local friction only in very deliberate style of speech. It is always voiced, but in most other ways it

*In IPA either h or a reversed apostrophe ʻ can be used to indicate aspiration. We will use the plain typed apostrophe '.

Manner of Articulation \ Place of Articulation		Both Lips (bilabial)	Lower Lip and Upper Teeth (labiodental)	Tongue Tip and Teeth or Gum (apical)	Front of Tongue & Hard Palate (palatal)	Tongue Tip and Hard Palate (retroflex)	Back of Tonue & Soft Palate (velar)
Stops (all voiceless)	aspirated	p'		t'			k'
	unaspirated	(p)		(t)			(k)
Affricates (all voiceless)	aspirated			(ts')	(tś')	(tʃ')	
	unaspirated			(ts)	(tś)	(tʃ)	
Fricatives (all voiceless)			f	s	(ś)	(ʃ)	(x)
Nasals		m		n			ŋ
Lateral				l			
Continuants		(w)			(y)	(r)	

Figure 1. Consonant Phonemes of Mandarin Chinese. Circled phonemes are not shared with English.*

functions as a member of a set with /tʃ/, /tʃ'/, and /ʃ/. We therefore refer to it as a fricative in some of our discussion below. There are two sets of stops, but these two sets are distinguished only by the feature of aspiration. This is in contrast to the two sets of stops in English, which are distinguished primarily by voicing. The Chinese aspirated stops /p', t', k'/ are virtually the same as the aspirated variant of the voiceless set of stops in English, i.e., [p', t', k'] (cf. above, section 1.1.0.). Therefore these Chinese phonemes are not circled in our chart, even though the same symbols (with the diacritic for aspiration) will not be found in the English consonant chart. The Chinese unaspirated stops /p, t, k/ are very similar phonetically to the unaspirated variants of the corresponding English voiceless stops, but these are circled on the chart because phonetic [p, t, k] occur in English only in very restricted environments (cf. section 1.1.0.). All six affricates /ts', tś', tʃ', ts, tś, tʃ/ are circled because they are all different from any English phonemes. Chinese /ś/ and /ʃ/ both sound somewhat similar to English /ʃ/ but are still sufficiently different that their substitution for the English sound results in a noticeable accent. The same is true of /tś'/ and /tʃ'/ in their similarity to English /tʃ/.

Chinese /x/ and /r/ are somewhat similar to English /h/ and /r/ respectively, but the Chinese sounds may have local friction

* Note that we are using ś and ʃ (both as single symbols and in the affricate digraphs) in place of IPA ɕ and ʂ respectively, and the proper IPA symbol for our r is ʐ.

while the English phonemes are frictionless. English /r/ carries lip-rounding, whereas Chinese /r/ is rounded only when immediately preceding a rounded vowel or semivowel.

w and y on the chart represent the vowel glides [u̯] and [i̯] (cf. sec. 1.1.5.) but are included here in parentheses for convenience in comparison with the semivowels /w/ and /y/ which in English are analysed as consonants (cf. sec. 1.1.2.). (Also see Table 4, notes 2 and 3 for use of w and y in pīnyīn spelling for Chinese.)

1.1.2. English Consonants.

Manner of Articulation \ Place of Articulation		Both Lips (bilabial)	Lower Lip and Upper Teeth (labiodental)	Tip of Tongue and Teeth (interdental)	Tip of Tongue and Tooth Ridge (apicoalveolar)	Front of Tongue and Hard Palate (laminopalatal)	Back of Tongue and Soft Palate (dorsovelar)	Throat (glottal)
Stops	voiceless	p			t		k	
	voiced	(b)			(d)		(g)	
Affricates	voiceless					(tʃ)		
	voiced					(dʒ)		
Fricatives	voiceless		f	(θ)	s	(ʃ)		(h)
	voiced		(v)	(ð)	(z)	(ʒ)		
Nasals		m			n			
Lateral					l			
Semivowels		w			(r)	y		

Figure 2. Consonant phonemes of English. Circled phonemes are not shared with Chinese.*

A careful inspection of the patterning of circles in Figure 2 will reveal several categories of English consonants that are likely to be difficult for Chinese speakers. It was pointed out in the preceding section (1.1.1.) that all Chinese stops, affricates and fricatives are voiceless. There are no voiced phonemes of these types in Chinese. Note that of the thirteen phonemes circled in Figure 2, eight are voiced stops, affricates or fricatives: /b, d, g; dʒ; v, ð, z, ʒ/.

* Note that we use /y/ in our phonemic notation for IPA [j].

As was explained in section 1.1.1., English /p, t, k/ correspond more closely to Chinese /p', t', k'/ than to Chinese /p, t, k/. Therefore, the symbols p, t and k are circled on the Chinese chart but not on the English chart.

Chinese has two sets of sounds that are similar to English /tʃ / and /ʃ/ (cf. section 1.1.1.), but none that are quite the same. There is nothing in Chinese that is even similar to /θ/ or /ð/ with their 'interdental' or tip-of-tongue-flat-against-edge-of-teeth articulation.

Chinese /x/ has a phonetic variant [h] which matches English /h/, but the dominant form of the Chinese phoneme is [x], with velar friction, which is completely lacking in the English phoneme.

American English /r/ is rounded and without friction, while Chinese /r/ is unrounded in most of its distribution and usually carries local friction (cf. section 1.1.1.).

Although we have not circled /y/ on this chart, it does cause a great deal of difficulty for Chinese speakers in one particular environment, namely preceding a high front vowel ([i] or [I]). For example, Chinese speakers of English may have a great deal of difficulty distinguishing east /ist/ and yeast /yist/. (See section 1.1.3.6. below for further discussion of this problem.)

The following five sections are devoted to further discussion of special problems Chinese speakers have in learning English consonants.

1.1.3. Chinese and English Consonants Compared: Special Difficulties for the Chinese Student.

1.1.3.1. Voicing.

Chinese has no voiced stops, affricates, or fricatives. As can be seen from the charts in 1.1.1. and 1.1.2., both Chinese and English have two sets of stops and affricates. In English, one set is voiced and one set is voiceless. In Chinese, however, both sets are voiceless. The difference between the two Chinese sets is that one set is aspirated and one set is unaspirated. Since aspiration does occur as a supplemental feature in English, the Chinese speaker can associate his aspirated stops and affricates with English voiceless aspirated stops and affricates, and his unaspirated stops and affricates with English voiced unaspirated ones. This will allow him to distinguish between the two sets of stops and affricates but will make the pronunciation of the voiced set sound strange to native speakers. (See the following section for a discussion of problems with the aspirated sounds.)

The Chinese speaker will pronounce:

English	bill	as	[pIl]	instead of	[bIl]
	do	as	[tu]	instead of	[du]
	get	as	[kɛt]	instead of	[gɛt]

For /d/, in addition to voicing, there is also the differ-

ence in place of articulation. As will be seen from the charts, English /d/ is pronounced with the tip of the tongue against the gum ridge, while the nearest counterpart in Chinese, /t/, is articulated a bit further forward, with the tip of the tongue touching the back of the upper teeth as well as the most forward part of the gum ridge. This difference in articulatory position is very small, however, and relatively unimportant.

The Chinese speaker must first learn how to make voiced stops. After that, drills should be devised which contrast voiced and voiceless stops in otherwise identical words:

bill : pill
do : to
got : cot

The English voiced affricate /dʒ/ presents a similar problem. The Chinese student must learn to voice it; and in addition he must learn the correct articulatory position.

Chinese also lacks voiced fricatives. The Chinese speaker may pronounce English /v/, /z/, and /ʒ/ as their voiceless counterparts /f/, /s/ and /ʃ/, with some additional difficulty arising from the 'bunched tongue' articulation of /ʒ/ and /ʃ/. /ð/ is especially difficult because it requires voicing in addition to the completely strange articulatory position which it shares with /θ/.

In fricatives, of course, there is nothing corresponding to the aspirated-unaspirated distinction which reinforces the voiceless-voiced distinction of the stops and affricates. Students may pronounce pairs of words like the following exactly the same:

sip/zip	both pronounced	[sIp]
fishes/vicious		[fIʃəs]

It is therefore especially important that students be taught to voice the appropriate fricatives.

Students can often be helped to recognize voiced-voiceless distinctions by holding their hands over their ears or touching their throats as the pronounce alternately voiced and voiceless sounds. Once a student has learned how to voice a consonant, then the remaining task is to drill the proper pronunciation until it becomes habitual.

1.1.3.2. Aspiration.

Both Chinese and English have aspirated stops and affricates. However, Chinese aspirated sounds are nearly always strongly aspirated. English aspirated sounds are strongly aspirated only in word-initial position. Medially and finally they are only weakly aspirated; except that medial /t/ and /k/ are strongly aspirated before a stressed syllable (e.g., attempt). If the final sound is unreleased, it will of course not be aspirated at all. Voiceless stops are also unaspirated following /s/, as in stop, spell, skill, and are unreleased be-

fore other consonants, as in ripped [rip$^{\neg}$t], utmost [ət$^{\neg}$most]. The Chinese speaker will tend to pronounce the voiceless stops as strongly aspirated in all of these positions unless the difference is pointed out and drilled.

1.1.3.3. Positional Variants.

In general, English consonants are pronounced more strongly initially and less strongly medially and finally. Final consonants tend to be unreleased, especially at the end of a phrase. When Chinese speakers learn to make final consonants (cf. section 1.1.3.4.) they pronounce them distinctly and release them fully. It is very difficult for a Chinese speaker to hear weakly articulated stops, especially unreleased voiced stops.

1.1.3.4. Final Consonants.

Mandarin Chinese has no consonants except /n/ and /ŋ/ at the ends of syllables. Final consonants are thus difficult for the Chinese speaker to produce. Two types of mistakes are common:

1) The Chinese speaker may leave off the final consonant. For example, lab may be pronounced [læ].

2) He may add a vowel after the final consonant, making the word one syllable longer. If corrected on lab, he may change his [læ] to [læbə] or [lɑbu].

1.1.3.5. Consonant Clusters.

Consonant clusters are subject to the same two types of mistakes as are final consonants discussed in the preceding section. Since Chinese has no consonant clusters within a single syllable, and since even between syllables the only consonant sequences that can occur are of a final nasal, /n/ or /ŋ/, followed by an initial consonant, the Chinese speaker is accustomed to following each single consonant with a vowel in the same syllable. He will tend to insert a neutral vowel between any sequence of consonants he pronounces in English. In addition, he will tend to fail to pronounce some of the consonants in a cluster. Insertion of extra vowels is a result of the problem of transitions between consonants. English can be described as having three possible kinds of transitions between consonants within a word. The first is close transition. This is the transition between adjacent consonants, as in:

sport	[spɔrt]
back part	[bækpɑrt]

In close transition there is a consonantal closure maintained at all points during the sequence. Either one closure is used for both or the second closure is formed before the first one is released.

In open transition the first consonant is momentarily released before the second consonant is formed. A short vowel sound is thus heard between the consonants. Three kinds of open transition occur, a high front [^{I}], a high back [^{U}] and a mid [^{ə}]. (They are written above the line to indicate their short-

ness.) These open transitions are the unstressed versions of regular vowels which merge into more neutral varieties:

support	[s^{U}pɔrt]	or	[s^{ə}pɔrt]
believe	[b^{I}liv]	or	[b^{ə}liv]

A vowel transition is the transition between two consonants separated by a stressed vowel.

The Chinese speaker will usually substitute vowel transition for open transition (that is, he will pronounce unstressed vowels too distinctly). Similarly, he will substitute open transition for close transition (that is, insert short vowels between adjacent consonants). Both of these kinds of errors can be attacked through drills which contrast all three types of transition. An example might be:

supper	[sépr]	beaver	[bívr]
support	[s^{ə}pórt]	believe	[b^{I}lív]
sport	[spɔrt]	bleed	[blid]

Use of such triplets, in which the goal of close transition is approached through the intermediate stage of open transition should help the student to acquire the correct pronunciation of consonant clusters.

Consonants are most often dropped when they occur in final clusters. These clusters should be easier to learn if they are first introduced in a phrase in which the cluster is immediately followed by a vowel. This will allow the last consonant in the cluster to be pronounced as if it were the first consonant of the following word. For instance, the cluster /zd/ in used could first be presented in the phrase he used it, which would be pronounced [hi yuz dIt]. Once this has been mastered, the student can attempt phrases where a consonant follows, as in used book [yuzd bUk]. And from that stage, he can go on to pronounce the word used alone or at the end of an utterance.

1.1.3.6. A Checklist of Consonant Problems.

Here we present a checklist of English consonant phonemes. For each phoneme or set of phonemes listed we include brief comments or a reference to sections where relevant problems are discussed, or both.

In referring to subsections of 1.1.3. (i.e., those immediately above), we have used section headings rather than numbers, as the headings should be more immediately meaningful to the reader. These headings are:

Voicing	1.1.3.1.
Aspiration	1.1.3.2.
Positional Variants	1.1.3.3.
Final Consonants	1.1.3.4.
Consonant Clusters	1.1.3.5.

Table 1

A Checklist of Consonant Problems

/b/ and /p/
See Aspiration, Voicing, and Positional Variants.

/d/ and /t/
See Aspiration, Voicing, and Positional Variants.

English /t/ can become a flap [t̬] between vowels or before a syllabic consonant. Some Chinese speakers whose native dialect is not Mandarin may pronounce both /d/ and /l/ and perhaps /r/ as a flapped r [ɾ], similar to this flapped t

/g/ and /k/
See Aspiration, Voicing, and Positional Variants.

/dʒ/ and /tʃ/
See Voicing and Positional Variants.

/dʒ/ is very difficult for Chinese speakers, since it involves a sequence of two voiced sounds and since /ʒ/ is difficult by itself. It may be pronounced as unvoiced [ts].

/v/, /f/, and /w/
See Voicing and Positional Variants.

/v/ is diffiuclt because of its voicing. /f/ will often be substituted for /v/ because the two sounds have the same articulatory position, lower lip against the upper teeth. /w/ is also a common substitution because it is the closest voiced counterpart to /v/ among the sounds that the student has from Chinese. Speakers whose native dialect is Taiwanese may pronounce /f/ with both lips as [ɸ], and this may sound to the American ear like /h/ or /w/. Similarly, they may pronounce /v/ as [β], which we may hear as /b/.

/s/ and /z/
See Voicing and Positional Variants.

/s/ before /i/ may be pronounced like Chinese /ś/, which may sound like English /ʃ/. Thus sea might sound like she.

/z/ may be pronounced like Chinese voiceless [ts].

/ʃ/ and /ʒ/
See Voicing and Positional Variants.

/ʒ/ is a rather difficult sound for Chinese speakers. It may be pronounced as [ʃ] or [ts]. It may be helpful to suggest that /ʒ/ is pronounced something like Chinese initial /r/.

Table 1 (cont.)

/θ/ and /ð/

See Voicing and Positional Variants.

These sounds are very difficult for Chinese speakers, since there are no sounds in Chinese using this position of the tongue and teeth.

/θ/ may be pronounced as /s/, /ʃ/, /t/, or /ts/. /ð/ may receive those same pronunciations or their voiced counterparts /z/, /ʒ/, /d/, or /dz/. Sometimes a student who has learned that the 'careful' articulation for /θ/ and /ð/ is interdental will overarticulate, making his tongue protrude too far forward between his teeth.

/m/, /n/, and /ŋ/

Nasals usually cause no problems for speakers of Standard Mandarin except when used as syllabic consonants. (See section 1.2.3. for a discussion of syllablic consonants.)

Some Chinese dialects do not distinguish between /n/ and /ŋ/ in final position, and speakers of those dialects may therefor experience some diffculty with English word-final /-n/ and /-ŋ/.

/l/ and /r/

/l/ has two varieties in English, so-called 'light l' [l] in word-initial position, and back or 'dark l' [ɫ] in post-vocalic position or as a syllabic consonant. Many Chinese speakers will substitute a vowel (commonly a high back unrounded [ɯ]) for the syllabic /l/, as:

[batɯ] instead of [batɫ], for bottle

Some will make the same substitution also for the post-vocalic /l/, as:

[fIɯ] instead of [fIɫ], for fill;

others will use the light l [l] for both initial and post-vocalic position. Some Chinese may pronounce initial /l/, along with /d/ and /r/ as a flap [ɾ]. This may sound like English /d/ or the British flap r in 'veddy good'.

/y/

In Chinese there is no contrast between the high front vowel [i] and a high front semivowel [j]. Instead, the Chinese vowel phoneme /i/ may acquire a slight non-distinctive glide in front of it when it is at the beginning of a syllable (see