Untangle the Mangled English of Chinglish

Sangdae Lee

Indiana University
Language changes over time. Just as old and modern words are different, change is happening all the time. Now that world culture is rapidly shared, it can happen for granted. We need to find out what the Chinglish are. Chinglish is a combination of Chinese and English. This is called "Chinglish" that occurred in the process of translating Chinese characters without proper consideration. China's sudden economic development has led to a growing openness. As a result, the use of the Chinese-language is increasing as society changes suddenly. China is also the most populous country in the world. Not surprisingly, the largest countries in the word in terms of population are China and India, with both now having populations of well over a billion ("UN," 2017, p. 1). But Chinglish is not a popular language yet because it is only used by the Chinese people, and Chinglish and English are not the same thing.

It is very difficult for non-native English speakers to understand all the English spoken by English speakers. They feel limited in their understanding and English-speaking ability. So, it may be one of the reasons why Chinglish spread more rapidly in modern society where there are many international exchanges. For example, there is a sentence most people know. The sentence is “long time no see.” Many people know that this sentence came from Chinglish and that’s true. Interestingly, more and more Chinese expressions are now being admitted into the English language, such as “lose face” (du lian) and “long time no see” (hao jiu bu jian). Such direct Chinese-to-English word-for-word translations is colloquially known as Chinglish (Wei, 2018, p. 1). Also, recently the word “jiayou” was registered in the Oxford English Dictionary. This word, widely used in China, is meant to cheer up.

China is a big influence in the world. Chinglish has many interesting expressions, but that language has nothing to do with English grammar. It causes a lot of problems because English is used in government agencies, the workplace, public places, etc... There is an ironic situation where native English speakers cannot get the right information. The Chinese government is trying hard to fix this problem. That at least is what the Shanghai Commission for the Management of Language Use has been trying to accomplish during the past two years (Andrew, 2010, p. 1). In the new standard, the Chinese authorities should be on that the English interpretation of these public sectors should be in
accordance with correct grammar and accurate records, and that rare expressions or dictionary words should not be used. It also prescribed that excessive use of English phrases in the public sector should not be included in expressions that damage the image of China or other countries. The People's Network of Korea need to China has joined the global trend of globalization, multilingual signs using Chinese and English are being used in many parts of China's public sector. However, multilingual scholars in China worry that Chinglish is hindering the development of a multi-lingual society in China, and that some terms are misinterpreted and cause social conflict.

In today's world where many people travel abroad, language is a very important factor. China, which has the largest population in the world, faces many English-speaking people every day. But if English speakers don't understand it, it becomes a very meaningless language. It can also make you feel very uncomfortable. Especially in big events such as international competitions, it is even more important. For example, the Expo 2010 in Shanghai, drawing more than 70 million visitors over its six-month run, these and other uniquely Chinese maladaptation’s of the English language were supposed to have been largely excised (Andrew, 2010, p. 1). The Shanghai government used 600 volunteers who were fluent in English to fix words on public signs, road signs and food menus. The commission has fixed more than 10,000 public signs (farewell “Teliot” and “urine district”), rewritten English-language historical placards and helped hundreds of restaurants recast offerings (Andrew, 2010, p. 1). But English speakers still had to go through embarrassing situations because of the Chinglish. Many people laughed at that. This is a situation that can be greatly influenced internationally. There can also be human accidents caused by miscommunication of meaning.

Chinglish is a situation where many people are discussing criticism or approval. The reason most people criticize is that the purpose of language is to communicate, not to have fun. Zhao Huimin said, “The purpose of signage is to be useful, not to be amusing” (Andrew, 2010, p. 2). He was former Chinese deputy consul general to the United State. That sentence tells why pass judgment on Chinglish. Also, Victor H. Mair is a professor of Chinese at University of Pennsylvania and he said,
“computerized dictionary, Jinshan Ciba, had led to sexually oriented vulgarities identifying dried produce in Chinese supermarkets and the regrettable “fried enema” menu selection that should have been rendered as “fried sausage” (Andrew, 2010, p. 2).

So far, there's a lot of public criticism, but this is what most proponents think. When I look at the future, I think it is one of the great ways to exchange with an English-speaking country in China. In the future, there will be more international exchanges than now, and I think if there is an easier way to communicate, the pace of national development will be much faster. Some people also say that they are more expressive and elegant than traditional English. For example, Jeffrey Yao put on example about “While park signs in the West exhort people to “Keep Off the Grass,” Chinese versions tend to anthropomorphize nature as a way to gently engage the stomping masses. Hence, such admonishments as “The Little Grass Is Sleeping. Please Don’t Disturb It” or “Don’t Hurt Me. I Am Afraid of Pain” (Andrew, 2010, p. 3). He worked an English translator and teacher at the CII(Graduate Institute of Interpretation) and Translation at Shanghai.

Based on the overall content of opinion, it's too early for the Chinglish to be popular yet. And it's going to take a long generation. Language is to convey meaning from person to person. So, if you don't get the right message, it's just not meaningful. We don't predict the future. Over time, the Chinglish may become a popular language, but now the majority of the people in China need to solve the problem.
References

