USAGE OF ENGLISH LEXICAL AND GRAMMATICAL FEATURES BY MALAYSIAN CHINESE

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ABSTRACT

From the early nineteenth century, the British colonists brought English to Malaysia (Asmah, 2012). When English arrived on Malaysian shores, it came into contact with many languages of the pluralistic society of Malaysia. It went through various changes, adopting and adapting features of these languages in order to serve the different social and communicative needs of the locals. Malaysian English, a nativised variety developed, as a result of this process. The influence of Chinese on Malaysian English, however is "underemphasised" (Tan, 2009, p. 452). Hence, the purpose of this research is to understand the usage of the lexical and grammatical features found in the English used by Malaysian Chinese. In doing so, this study attempts to fill the knowledge gap, i.e. to see the impact of "Chineseness" in Malaysian English. This study offers authentic data giving a better understanding of the non-native variety of English as used by the local Chinese. Data were collected from the messaging apps of 56 participants. Using a qualitative approach, the data were then analysed based on an adapted version of the categorisation of nativization features in the study of Platt, Weber and Ho (1984), Gupta (1992), Lowenberg (1984) and Tay (1993). The findings suggest that through language contact, the lexical and grammatical features used by the Malaysian Chinese bear the features of the participants' native language which is Chinese. Creative innovation, and code switching and code mixing are also found to be common features. This finding also proposes that the aspectual markers *already* or *liao, got* and *finish* in the Malaysian Chinese English are reflexes of Chinese aspectual markers 了 *le*, 有 *yǒu* and 完 *wán* respectively. These Chinese features have been integrated into English through substrate influences as well as processes like simplification, rule generalization, borrowing, lexical shifts and translation.

ABSTRAK

Di antara abad ke tujuhbelas and sembilanbelas, penjajah British membawa Bahasa Inggeris ke Malaysia (Asmah, 2012). Bahasa Inggeris kemudian melalui pelbagai perubahan sambil mengadaptasi ciri-ciri bahasa orang-orang Malaysia yang berbilang bangsa. Akibatnya, Bahasa Inggeris Malaysia muncul. Pengaruh Bahasa Cina ke atas Bahasa Inggeris Malaysia namun kurang dikaji (Tan, 2009). Oleh demikian, penyelidikan ini bertujuan mengkaji penggunaan ciri-ciri leksikal dan tatabahasa yang terdapat dalam Bahasa Inggeris yang digunakan oleh kaum Cina di Malaysia. Dengan ini, impak "Chineseness" yang terdapat dalam Bahasa Inggeris Malaysia akan dapat dilihat. Kajian ini dapat memberi pemahaman yang lebih terhadap Bahasa Inggeris yang digunakan oleh kaum Cina di Malaysia. Data telah diambil dari aplikasi pesanan 56 orang peserta. Dengan menggunakan kaedah kualitatif, data dianalisis dengan menggunakan kategori "nativization" yang telah diubahsuaikan dalam kajian Platt, Weber dan Ho (1984), Gupta (1992), Lowenberg (1984) dan Tay (1993). Hasil kajian mencadangkan bahawa melalui hubungan bahasa, impak "Chineseness" memang wujud dalam Bahasa Inggeris yang digunakan oleh kaum Cina di Malaysia. Kajian ini juga mendapati bahawa penanda aspek *already* atau *liao, got* dan *finish* dalam Bahasa Inggeris yang digunakan oleh kaum Cina adalah reflex daripada penanda aspek Cina 了 *le*, 有 *yǒu* dan 完 *wán* masing-masing. Ciri-ciri Cina ini telah diselit ke dalam Bahasa Inggeris melalui pengaruh bahasa ibunda dan juga melalui proses-proses *simplification*, *rule generalization*, *borrowing*, *lexical shifts* dan *translation*.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Asp   :   Aspect marker

Cl   :   Classifier

MCE :   Malaysian Chinese English

Part   :   Particle

Pl   :   Plural

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background of study

Between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, English was spread worldwide due to the Britain's colonial expansion. Crystal (1997) and Graddol (1997) claimed that towards the end of the nineteenth century, English has become the global language. They further maintain that in the twentieth century, the leading economic power of the United States has helped to ensure this global spread. Moreover, as computer usage spreads, specifically of the Internet, the use of English too goes global. This is because 80% of the information stored in the world's computer is in English (McCrum et al., as cited in Graddol, 1997).

Due to this widespread in the use of English globally, there is a considerable increase in the number of people learning and using English. Crystal (1997) pointed out that the number of non-native speakers of English was more than the native speakers of English. When English came in contact with other languages and used in new sociocultural contexts by the non-native speakers, Kachru observed that English was often nativised (1981). That is, when English migrated to foreign countries, where it was used in non-native contexts, it diversified and went through a process of adaptation to suit its new function in a new social and cultural setting. New forms and functions of English were systematically developed. Such nativisation of English brought forth varieties of English well known as "World Englishes" (Kachru, 1982) or "New Englishes" (Pride, 1982; Platt, Weber & Ho, 1984) or "Postcolonial Englishes" (Schneider, 2007).

The English language first arrived on Malaysian shores through the commercial interest of the British East India Company from the early nineteenth century. Huge number of Chinese and Indians were brought in to work as indentured labourers in the rapidly growing industry at that time - tin mines and rubber estates. Thus, a pluralistic

society emerged in Malaya with the Malays, Chinese and Indians as its main ethnic groups speaking Malay; Hokkien, Teochew, Cantonese, Hakka and Hainanese as the main Chinese languages; and Tamil, Malayalam, Telegu and Punjabi as the primary Indian languages (Platt & Weber, 1980). Such pluralistic society with so many languages and cultures has certainly influenced the English language used locally. Thus, resulting in the emergence of Malaysian English, English as used by Malaysians.

The Chinese in Malaysia represents the second largest ethnic group in Malaysia. Although they still remain as the second largest ethnic group, their population is actually decreasing. They recorded only 23.4% while the ethnic group which consists of Malay and other bumiputera (indigenous people, literally 'sons of the land') recorded the highest with 68.6%, Indians (7.0%) and others (1.0%) in 2016 (Current Population Estimates, Malaysia, 2014 – 2016). The Chinese, besides having different cultures, traditions and ways of thinking from other ethnic groups, also have a language with its own distinctive features on the levels of phonology, vocabulary, syntax and even the ways of organising their discourse.

When English came into contact with the Malaysian Chinese, it went through many different kinds of changes adapting and adopting not only the local Malaysian Chinese language but also its cultures and communicative needs as well. Many English words or phrases have been translated from Chinese words or phrases that express Chinese culture for example *pipa* 琵琶, a Chinese musical instrument and spring rolls *chūn juǎn* 春卷, a type of Chinese dish. Interestingly, none of these features of Chinese culture can be found in the English culture. As such, these words have gradually become loanwords. This process resulted in the emergence of a new non-native variety of English as used by the local Chinese, a sub-variant of English as used by Malaysians.

Malaysians view Malaysian English as an identity marker for them. Not only that, they consider this nativised variety as something that has united them in spite of

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them coming from various ethnic groups. They accommodate one another using appropriate linguistic features so that this language is mutually intelligible. Therefore, it is not surprising that most Malaysians can communicate using this local variety of English effectively and proudly.

1.2   Statement of problem

Malaysia is a multi-ethnic and multicultural country. It is mainly built up of Malays, the largest ethnic group, followed by Chinese, Indians, other indigenous group as well as other minority groups like the Eurasians. All of these ethnic groups not only have their own dialects and languages but also their very own cultures. When English comes into contact with the linguistically and culturally pluralistic society here, it adopts and adapts not only the features of the many local languages but also the cultures. Thus, Malaysian English, a variety of English used locally emerged.

Many researchers such as Tongue (1974), Platt and Weber (1980), Platt et al., (1984), Baskaran (1987, 1994, 2005), Pillai, Zuraidah and Knowles (2012), Azirah and Tan (2012), Tan (2013, 2016), Yamaguchi (2014), Yamaguchi and Pétursson (2016), and Yamaguchi and Deterding (2016) have done studies on Malaysian English generally. However, very few have researched on the Malaysian English as used by the local Chinese. The "Chineseness" or the contribution of Chinese in Malaysian English is seldom looked into as Tan (2009) argued, "the 'Chineseness' of Malaysian English has somewhat underemphasised" (p. 452). Hence, there is still a lot to be understood regarding the contribution or the influence of Chinese on Malaysian English.

1.3   Research purpose

The focus of this research is to understand the "Chineseness" in Malaysian English. Hence, the objective of this research is to understand the usage of the lexical and

grammatical features found in the English used by Malaysian Chinese. Since Chinese is an aspectual language, this study also aims to look into and determine the stage of the most common aspectual markers namely *already* or *liao, got* and *finish* in Malaysian Chinese English (henceforth, MCE), the English used by Malaysian Chinese.

When the Malaysian Chinese use English together with their local language in the same place at the same time, language contact situations emerge. During these language contact situations, all aspects of language structure can be transferred (Thomason, 2001). This current study seeks to look at the processes induced by these language contact situations that are used by the Malaysian Chinese to integrate the Chinese features into their English.

1.4 Research questions

This research attempts to answer these questions:

1. What are the lexical and grammatical features found in the English used by Malaysian Chinese?

2. At what stage are the aspectual markers *already* or *liao, got* and *finish* in the English used by Malaysian Chinese?

3. What are the contact-induced processes used to integrate the Chinese features into the English used by Malaysian Chinese?

1.5 Significance of study

This study offers authentic data that give a better understanding of the non-native variety of English as used by the local Chinese. Such understanding is crucial and indeed necessary, as this will increase our awareness of the usage of the lexical and grammatical features of this particular language.

Moreover, with Malay language as one of the ingredients that give colour to this variety of English, this study hopes to provide evidence to support the argument that this variety of English is something that is worth looking into.

Lastly, this study hopes to add on to the existing literature in this area.

1.6 Scope and limitations

This research employed a collective case study to investigate the various lexical and grammatical features in the non-native variety of English as spoken by the local Chinese. Data from WhatsApp and Messenger were collected from 56 Malaysian Chinese speakers of all walks of life who speak English. Since, these are messaging apps, the data are more conversation-like. As such, spelling and words written in short form are ignored. Apart from that, constraint of time may limit the collection of data. Hence, this may hinder a detailed description of this variety. Moreover, the small number of participants may not warrant any reliable conclusion.

1.7 Summary

This chapter began by providing some background knowledge of the study. It discussed the issue that needed to be investigated and the reasons for doing so. Research questions were raised and the significance of the study has also been highlighted. Finally, the scope and limitations of the research were mentioned.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   Introduction

This chapter, using the conceptualization of Kachru's (1985) Three Circles of English unfolds the remarkable spread of English around the globe. It further discusses how English has been and still continues to be nativized that leads to the development of the varieties of English. This chapter also highlights specifically the Malaysian English of Malaysian Chinese speakers.

2.2   Background

The use of English worldwide was spread remarkably due to the colonization of the British Empire between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries and also due to the economic influence of the United States in the twentieth century. It is still spreading today and is even considered as the international language of communication. With more non-native speakers than native speakers of English, it is not surprising that English 'will become open to the winds of linguistic change in totally unpredictable ways' (Crystal, 1997, p. 142). Thus, this has led to the development of varieties of English.

The varieties of worldwide English involve three categories of people: (i) native speakers from the United Kingdom, the USA, New Zealand, Canada and Australia who speak English as the first language (ENL), (ii) non-native speakers who speak English as a second language (ESL) from postcolonial countries such as India, Singapore, Ghana, etc. and (iii) non-native speakers who are from countries like Japan, China and Egypt who use English as a foreign language (EFL) (Jenkins, 2003; Kachru, 1982). Many scholars came up with various types of models describing the spread of English. One of them is Strevens (1992), who came up with the world map of English (see

Figure 2.1) which is the oldest model depicting the close relationships among the various varieties of Englishes.
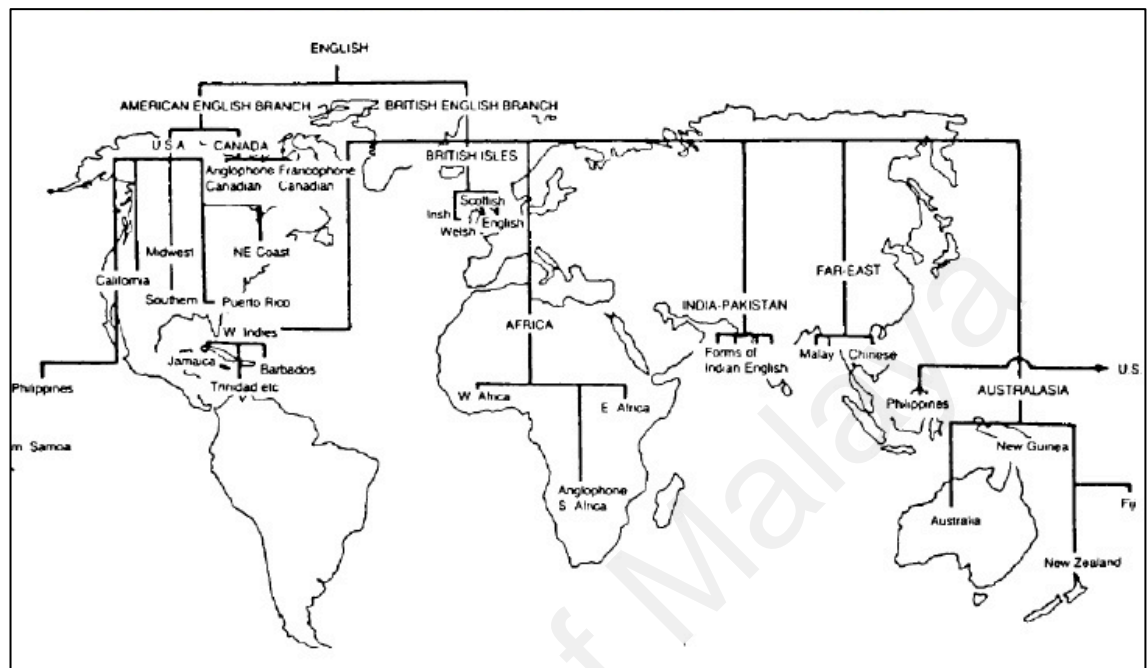
Figure 2.1: Strevens' world map of English (Strevens, 1992, p. 33)

In 1987, McArthur came up with a new model circle of World English (see Figure 2.2). This model is made up of the 'World Standard English' at its centre, the regional varieties which include the regional standard or emerging standard at the next layer and finally the localised varieties at the outmost layer (Jenkins, 2003; Meshtrie & Bhatt, 2008).
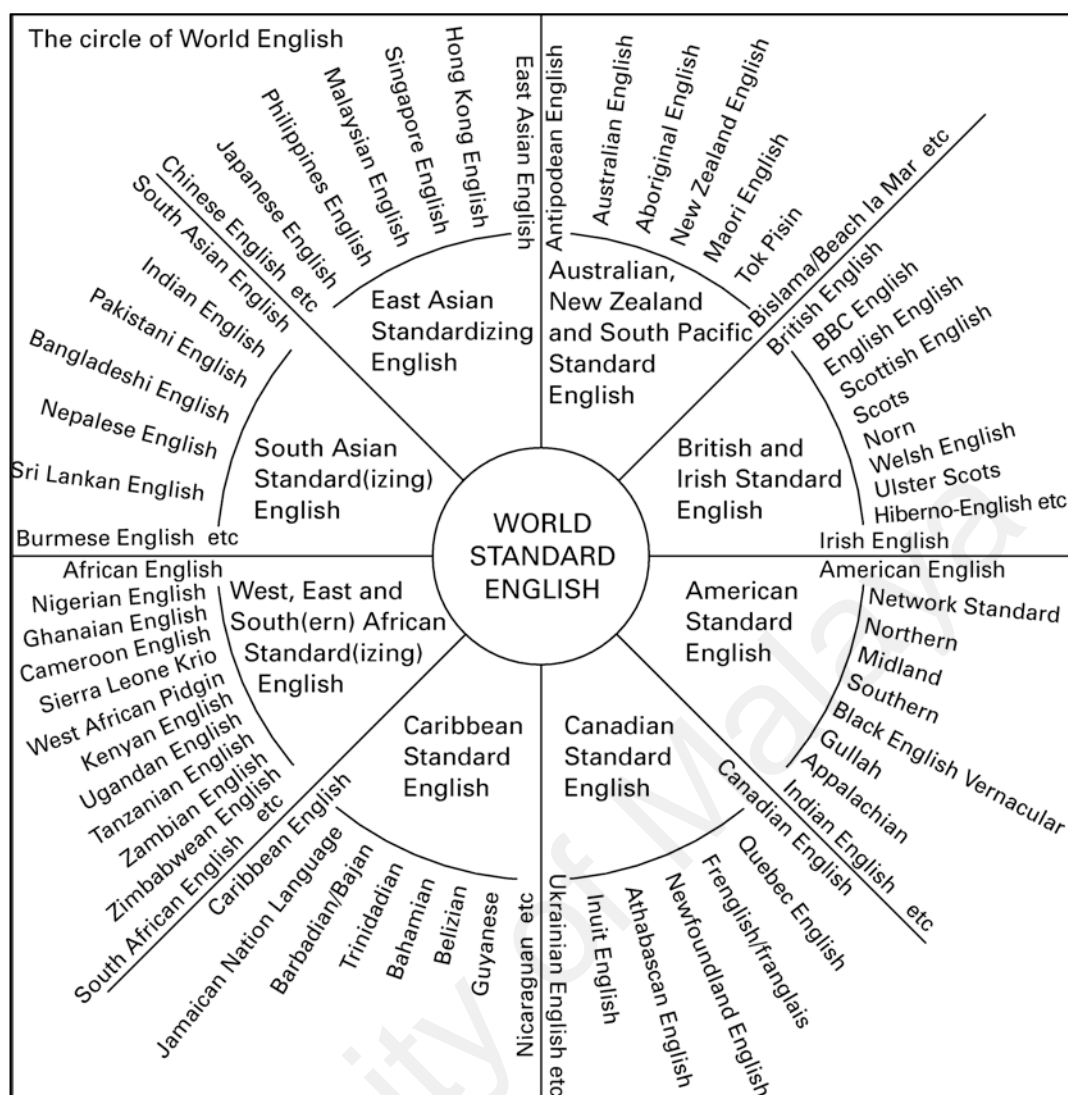
Figure 2.2: McArthur's circle of World English (McArthur, 1987, p. 97)

These varieties of English, claimed Schneider (2007), are mainly products of language contact. As such, a theory of language contact is used in this study as a framework. Thomason, in her comprehensive study on language contact claimed during language contact situations, "not just words that get borrowed: all aspects of language structure" can also be transferred from one language to another (2001, p. 11). She observed that as the contact intensity increases, the kinds of borrowed features as well as morphosyntactic transfer increases too. In other words, the more contact these languages have with each other, the more chances nativization can take place.

2.3   **Theoretical Framework**

This current study uses World Englishes and Asian Englishes as framework in attempting to have a better understanding of the Malaysian English of Malaysian Chinese speakers.

2.3.1   **World Englishes**

2.3.1.1 Kachru's Model of Three Circles

Kachru developed the **Three Circles Model** of World Englishes in 1988 (see Figure 2.3). Conceptualising Englishes in a more comprehensive and different manner, Kachru's model has been repeatedly mentioned in the literature; making it the most influential one in the world. Kachru explained the spread of English using the three concentric circles: the Inner Circle, the Outer Circle and the Expanding Circle. According to Meshire and Bhatt (2008), these circles were divided according to historical and political backgrounds.

The "Expanding Circle"

China	1,088,200,000
Egypt	50,273,000
Indonesia	175,904,000
Israel	4,512,000
Japan	122,620,000
Korea	42,593,000
Nepal	18,004,000
Saudi Arabia	12,972,000
Taiwan	19,813,000
USSR	285,796,000
Zimbabwe	8,878,000

The "Outer Circle"

Bangladesh	107,756,000
Ghana	13,754,000
India	810,806,000
Kenya	22,919,000
Malaysia	16,965,000
Nigeria	112,258,000
Pakistan	109,434,000
Philippines	58,723,000
Singapore	2,641,000
Sri Lanka	16,606,000
Tanzania	23,996,000
Zambia	7,384,000

The "Inner Circle"

USA	245,800,000
UK	57,006,000
Canada	25,880,000
Australia	16,470,000
New Zealand	3,366,000

Figure 2.3: Kachru's Three Circles model of World Englishes (Kachru, 1988, p. 5)

The Inner Circle refers to colonising countries which include the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. English, used as the native language here is said to be "norm-providing". On the other hand, the Outer Circle is occupied by former colonized countries such as India, Malaysia, Philippines

and Singapore. Here, English which was initially used as a foreign language is now used as a second language and it is considered as "norm-developing". The Expanding Circle comprises countries where English is learnt as a foreign language. The English used in countries here such as China, Japan and Taiwan is regarded as "norm-dependent".

Kachru (1990) claimed that the spread and the institutionalization have "naturally resulted in the pluricentricity of English" (p. 159). In other words, one English has become a variety of Englishes. Schneider (2007) observed that Kachru did not see the Inner Circle English which is the native English as superior. He pointed out that Kachru stressed on the Outer and Expanding Circle Englishes where "the most vigorous expansions and developments of the language can be observed" (p. 14). Indeed, Kachru did not believe that one variety is any better than the other.

In spite of being so influential, Kachru's model received many criticisms from many scholars. This model does not represent linguistic reality perfectly as the concentric circles may be oversimplified and vague as noticed even by Kachru (1985) himself. Grey areas exist between the Inner and Outer Circles as well as between the Outer and Expanding Circles (Kachru, 1985; Jenkins, 2003; Rajadurai, 2005). This is because languages go through life cycles, as pointed out by Kachru (1985) and therefore, they may be in a constant state of flux especially with today's rapid growth of English. As a matter of fact, countries in the Expanding Circle are increasing their use of English (Kirkpatrick, 2008). Hence, changes of the status of English in these countries have made it difficult to classify them into Kachru's three circles.

Moreover, according to Mesthrie and Bhatt (2008), Kachru's model did not describe the varieties among the different ethnic groups. In other words, Kachru failed to see that speakers from different ethnic groups use different varieties of English. For example, the multi-ethnic groups in Malaysia have their own basic distinctive features

when they use English. Hence, this study is proposed in an attempt to understand the existence of varieties within a variety of English, specifically the English used by Malaysian Chinese speakers.

Notwithstanding, Kachru's Concentric Circle model is indeed an invaluable contribution as it shows the variety of English, making a distinction between the native and non-native Englishes and recognizing the non-native Englishes as distinct varieties. His model helps us to appreciate the spread and development of English globally. At the same time it also brought us an awareness of the existence of the local varieties of English.

2.3.2   Asian Englishes

In recent decades, the English language has spread and developed across the globe, gaining the status as a lingua franca in Asia. Hence, it is not surprising that McArthur (2003) suggested that English is an Asian language. He claimed that English has been "thoroughly indigenized" and it is now the lingua franca of Asia (p. 22). Chinese English, Singapore English, Malaysian English and Hong Kong English are among examples of Asian Englishes, sharing numerous features of other varieties of English.

2.3.2.1 Xu's Categories of Chinese English Lexis

Xu (2010) categorized the English lexis used by Chinese in China into "Chinese loanwords" in English, nativised "Chinese English words" and common English words. Adopting Kachru's (1982) Three Circles model of World Englishes, he suggested that these Chinese English (henceforth, CE) lexis form the inner circle CE lexis, outer circle CE lexis and expanding circle CE lexis respectively.
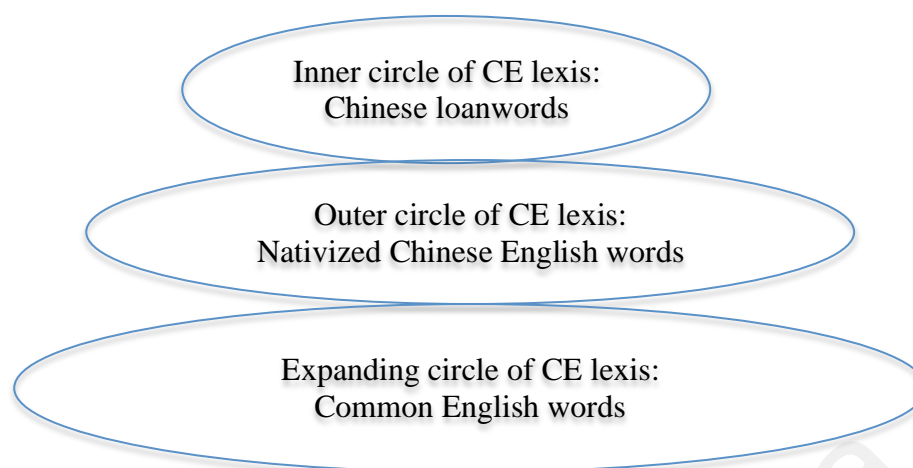
Figure 2.4: Xu's Categories of Chinese English lexis (Xu, 2010, p. 33)

The Chinese loanwords which form the inner circle of CE lexis are made up of loan translations of Chinese and transliterations. Loan translations of Chinese are actually English words translated from Chinese while translitions are words translated based on pronunciation. The loanwords can be separated into **standing loanwords** and **ad hoc loanwords**. Examples of standing loanwords through loan translations of Chinese include *back door* (*hòumén* 后门) and *Spring Festival* (*Chūnjié* 春节) while examples of standing loanwords through transliteration include *pīngpāng* 乒乓 (table tennis) and májiàng 麻将 (a traditional Chinese game). Meanwhile, according to Xu ad hoc loanwords are linked with the culture and history of Chinese and words in this category include *málàtàng* 麻辣烫 (a specific type of Sichuan-style hot and spicy food) and *gǔzhēng* 古筝 (a type of traditional Chinese musical instrument).

The outer circle of CE lexis is formed by the nativised Chinese English words that take on meaning shifts in the sociolinguistic contexts of China. An example of such word is *face.* Xu explained that the word *face* is always associated with self-image, honour, pride and at times even embarrassment. Hence, collocation such as *giving face* (gěi miànzi 给面子) is usually used. The expanding circle of CE lexis consists of common English words such as *people*, *man* and *name.*

Indeed, Xu has contributed greatly to the field. Using a rich variety of authentic data, he has provided a well-organized and thorough description of the English spoken and written by Chinese in China. He has meticulously looked into the different linguistic and sociolinguistic features that uniquely belong to Chinese English. Moreover, Xu's model also allows the world to learn about the Chinese cultures and values.

Cheng (1992) claimed that since Chinese around the globe have common language background, the varieties of English spoken by them are believed to share certain linguistic features. Hence, this study on Malaysian Chinese variety of English will also adopt Xu's model of Chinese English as one of its overarching frameworks.

2.3.2.2 Platt, Weber and Ho's New Englishes

In their book, *The New Englishes,* Platt, Weber and Ho (1984) have explored a number of issues related to Englishes of Asia. They argued that English has been localized or nativised by its users who have adopted linguistic features of other contact languages of the surroundings, resulting in a new variety of English. Such new variety or a New English is developed through an education system where English is a medium of instruction yet not spoken by most of the population. A New English according to the authors is used for a wide range of different functions within the community.

Significantly, Platt et al. offered a thorough description of the various linguistic features of the New Englishes in numerous parts of the world (1984). These linguistic features which include the accents, vocabulary, morphology, syntax and pragmatics are then put into many categories. However, only categories that have been adapted for this study will be discussed here. The categories are Repetition, Idioms, Grammatical shift, Loanwords, Plurality, Omission of words, Negation, Existence and location, Word order, Quantifiers, Possession, Agreement markings and Tense and aspect. The following is a discussion of the categories mentioned above including the many

examples which Platt et al. (1984) have cited.

Repetition

Repetition a common feature in many of the New Englishes, mostly in colloquial speech, is repeating the same words a few times. Very often, a feeling of intensity is created through repetition. Nouns, verbs, adjectives or adverbs are the words that may be repeated. For example:

     (1)   *mud-mud* (noun + noun) (Jamaican English)

     (2)   *to go crying, crying* (verb + verb*ing*) (Sri Lankan English)

     (3)   *hot, hot coffee* (adjective + adjective) (Indian English)

     (4)   *really, really beyond description* (adverb + adverb) (African English)

Idioms

Idioms with distinct meanings are usually difficult for non-native speakers. As such, many idioms are translated word for word from the background languages. For example:

     (5)   *to shake legs* " to be idle" (Singapore English and Malaysian English)

This idiom is translated from the Malay idiom *goyang kaki* (shake legs).

Grammatical shift

Grammatical shift means that a word has changed its grammatical class. For example changing a noun into a verb.

     (6)   *to friend* "to be friends with" (Singapore English, Malaysian English & Jamaican English)

Grammatical shift can also refer to a situation when a word has extended its use, often causing changes in meaning. For example preposition "under" can become a verb.

     (7)   *to under* "to let a person down shabbily and dishonestly, to cut his throat, metaphorically" (Sri Lankan English).

Loanwords

Loanwords are words borrowed from the local languages and dialects which are used and recognized by most of the speakers belonging to the same variety of English. For example:

(8)   *sate* / *satay* "spiced barbecued meat on sticks with a spicy sauce" (Malaysian)

(9)   *adobo* " a meat stew" (Phillipines)

(10)   *sinseh* " the medicine man" (Singapore)

Another type of loanword known as hybrids (Kachru, 1982) consists of two items where one of the items is a loan word and the other one is an English word. For example:

(11)   *janta* meals (*janta* "the people, the masses") (Indian English)

Plurality

In some languages such as Chinese (Mandarin), plurality is very often indicated from the context. For example:

(12)   *Yŏu qiānbĭ méi yŏu*

         have pencil   not   have

         'Do you have pencils?'

Apart from that, repeating the noun or having a number or a word showing quantity can also be used to indicate plurality. For example:

(13)   *bunga-bunga* – flowers (Malay)

(14)   *banyak bunga* – many flowers (Malay)

Omission of words

Linking verbs between the subject and the adjective or noun is not important in many background languages to the New Englishes. This is because the meaning is understandable from the word order. For example:

Chinese: (15)   我   很   好

                          wǒ   hěn   hǎo

                          I   very   well

                          'I am very well.'

Malay: (16)   *Rumahku   besar   sekali.*

                          House-I   big   very

                          'My house is very big.'

Apart from linking verbs, articles and auxiliary verbs are sometimes also omitted in the New Englishes. This is due to the influence of many of the background languages to these varieties of Englishes where the usage of these words is not essential.

Negation

Speakers of the New Englishes use a number of ways as negation. Some use *never* instead of *don't, didn't,* etc. in colloquial speech. For example:

(17)   *I **never** take your book*. (Singapore English)

There are also some who use *don't have* or *didn't have* and *no* as markers of negation as shown in the example below:

(18)   *We **don't** have come.*

(19)   *I **no** go.*

Don't have and *no* translated from 没有 *méi yǒu* and 不 *bù* respectively are used for negation in Chinese.

Existence and location

The existence of something is often shown through two expressions – *there is* and *has* as shown in the example below:

(20)   ***There is** a lot of room in this car.*

(21)   *This car **has** a lot of room* (in it).

However, in some of the New Englishes *got* is used to indicate the existence of a theme concerning the place it is located (Platt & Weber, 1980). For example:

(22)　　*Also **got** customer(s) come in.*

(23)　　*Here **got** a lot of people come and eat.*

Word order

The word order in the established Englishes is often fixed and complex. Nevertheless, this is not so in the New Englishes. For example:

(24)　　*An exciting two-hour display* (British English)

(25)　　*A two hour exciting display* (Ghanaian English)

There are situations where the influence of the background languages is clearly indicated. For example:

(26)　　*over two years* (British English)

(27)　　*around　　　two　years　plus* (Singapore / Malaysian English)

(28)　　chha-put-to　nng　ni　　goa (Hokkien)

　　　　almost　　　　two　years

　　　　'almost more than two years'

Quantifiers

Quantifiers are expressions telling us the number or the amount of something. In Standard English, quantifiers like *a few*, *a number*, *a couple* and *many* are used with countable nouns while *little*, *a great deal of* and *so much* are used with uncountable nouns. Unlike Standard English, such rule does not apply in the New Englishes. For example:

(29)　　*Don't eat **so much sweets**. Spoil your teeth!* (Singapore English)

(30)　　*We try to get **as much word** across as possible* (Malaysian English)

Possession

Different languages have different ways to indicate possession. The English marks its possession by adding 's to the noun. For example:

(31) *My **father's** car.*

The New Englishes have their own method to mark the possession. For example:

(32) *this man brother* (West Indian English)

(33) *children playground* (Malaysian English)

Agreement markings

Some languages mark the verbs in order to indicate whether the subject is singular or plural. In English, there is even a **marking of verbs in the present tense for third person singular**. For example:

(34) *He   still   **lives**   here.*

third person singular   singular verb

In a number of New Englishes however, the marking of verbs in the present tense for third person singular does not exist. For example:

(35) *She **drink** milk.* (Philippine English)

Additionally, these varieties of New Englishes do not mark verbs according to their subjects. In other words, subject-verb agreement does not exist in many New Englishes, especially in colloquial speech. For example:

(36) *Every microcosm **consist** of many cells.* (Indian English)

Tense and aspects

Languages have tense system to indicate whether an action has happened in the past or will happen in the future or if the action usually happens. For example:

(37) *I went to town last Thursday.* (past action)

(38) *I think I'll go to town tomorrow.* (future action)

(39) *I go to town every day.* (everyday action)

However, in many New Englishes, adverbs of time instead of verbs are used to mark for tense. For example:

      (40)   *Last time she come on Thursday.* (Singapore English)

Here, *last time* – an adverb of time is already used to specify that something happened in the past, hence the verb *come* is unmarked for past tense.

Specifying that something happened in the past and then using all the verbs unmarked for the past tense is also frequently found in many New Englishes. For example:

      (41)   *When I small that time, I stay with my auntie…*

When I was small that time here indicates a past event.

Aspect is an important grammatical category used to express time. It discusses how an action or event is seen with respect to time instead of to its actual location in time. According to Comrie (1976), aspect is divided into perfective and imperfective. Perfective indicates a completed action while imperfective indicates an ongoing situation.

In English, the perfective aspect can be used in the past, present or future tense. For example:

      (42)   *I had eaten.*

      (43)   *I have eaten.*

      (44)   *I will have eaten.*

The imperfective aspect, on the other hand is expressed through the continuous aspect and the habitual aspect which can also be used in the past, present and future tense. For example in the continuous aspect:

      (45)   *I was eating.*

      (46)   *I am eating.*

      (47)   *I will be eating.*

As for the habitual aspect, the aspect marker *used to* is used. For example:

(48)   *He used to dance*.

Chinese and Malay are aspect prominent language. As such, aspect markers are pervasive in these languages.

For example, the Malay word *sedang* (still, in the midst of) is used to show an ongoing action:

(49)   *Saya   sedang   makan*

I   in the midst of   eat

"I am/was eating"

As for a completed action, the Malay word *sudah* (completed, finished, already) is used. For example:

(50)   *Saya sudah   makan*

I   already   eat

"I have/had eaten"

There are a number of aspect markers in Chinese but the most important ones are 了 *le,* 过 *guo*, 着 *zhe* and 在 *zài* or 正在 *zhèngzài*. While 了 *le* and 过 *guo* are perfective markers, 着 *zhe* and 在 *zài* or 正在 *zhèngzài* are imperfective markers (Duff & Li, 2002). For example:

(51)   他 吃 了

        tā chī le

        He eat asp

        "He has eaten"

(52)   我 去 过 香 港

        wǒ qù   guo Xiāng gang

        I   go   asp   Hong Kong.

        "I have been to Hong Kong"

(53) 他 正 在 说 着 话

　　　tā zhèng zài shuō zhe huà

　　　He asp　　talk　asp

　　　"He is talking"

(54) 他 们 在 跳 舞

　　　tā men zài tiào wǔ

　　　He pl asp　dance

　　　"They are dancing"

The aspectual system in Singapore English has unique features due to the contact between English and Chinese languages (Luo, 2011). Like English and Chinese aspect markers, Singapore English too has perfective and imperfective markers. Among the perfective markers that have been described in the literature are *already* (Platt & Weber, 1980; Kwan-Terry, 1989; Bao, 1995, 2005; Fong, 2005), *ever* (Ho & Wong, 2001; Bao, 2005), *got* (Bao, 2005, 2014; Lee, Ping & Nomoto, 2009;) and *finish* (Kwan-Terry, 1989). These aspectual markers *already, ever, got* and *finish*, according to Bao (2005) are reflexes of Chinese aspectual markers 了 *le*, 过 *guo*, 有 *yǒu* and 完 *wán*. Therefore, he argued that the whole aspectual system of Singapore English is transferred from Chinese. Due to the influences of Chinese on the aspectual system of Singapore English, Bao pointed out that Chinese is indeed the main substrate language of Singapore English. The examples below are cited from Bao (2005).

(55) 　　　*I see the movie **already**.*

　　　　　'I saw the movie.'

(56) 　　　*I **ever** see the movie.*

　　　　　'I have seen the movie.'

(57)   *Mr Chen **got** believe Miss Lin.*

'Mr Chen believed in Miss Lin.'

(58)   *I wash **finish** hand (already), then I eat.*

'After I have finished washing my hands, I eat.'

However, he asserted that unlike perfective aspect which is very much influenced by Chinese perfective aspect, Singapore English imperfective aspect is 'unremarkable' (p. 249). This is because it is the same with the English progressive except with the optional use of the copula. For example:

(59)   *If they planning to come down, tell me.*

(60)   *I'm just typing some you know some work and things like that.* (Bao, 2005, p. 249)

Bao (2005, 2010) further argued that the contact-induced grammatical restructuring of these perfective aspectual markers, upon transferred from the substrate language needs to be stabilized. He claimed that the extent usage helps in this post-transfer stabilization.

Much has been written on Malaysian English, illustrating on different aspects of it. Nevertheless, little has been said about its aspectual system in spite of having its fair share of aspectual markers. As such, this study will examine specifically the most common aspectual markers namely *already* or *liao, got* and *finish* as used by the Malaysian Chinese and will attempt to determine the stage of this system, whether it is at the transfer or stabilization stage.

2.3.2.3 Gupta's particles

Particles are "small, uninflected words that are only loosely integrated into the sentence structure, if at all" (Fischer, as cited in Leimgruber, 2013, p.13). In 1992, Gupta analysed eleven particles in Colloquial Singapore English. According to her, particles are used to demonstrate the speaker's attitude from contradicting to asserting or to adding a sense of tentativeness to what the interlocutor has said earlier without changing

the meaning of the sentences. She has very clearly placed *ho, ha* and *ah* as tentative particles, *meh, ge, lei, na, la,* and *lo* as assertive particles and *ma* and *what* as contradictory particles. These articles may be small but they are used widely in varieties of English. They are used to express the attitude or mood of the speakers, to highlight how obvious a statement is or to identify the rapport between speakers.

In other words, particles give the language what Ler claimed as "its special flavor" (2006, p.149). Lastly but most importantly speakers may use them as their identifier for their ethnicity (Smakman, & Wagenaar, 2013).

2.3.2.4 Lowenberg's nativization in Singapore and Malaysia

In 1984 Lowenberg examined the processes, characteristics and implications of nativization on the varieties of English spoken in Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia. He pointed out that nativization originates mainly from the transfer of linguistic features from other languages. This transfer occurs at all levels – phonology, lexis, syntax and discourse.

Additionally, Lowenberg stressed that nativization also comes from creative innovation. As a result of this creative innovation, innovative hybrid constructions and also new collocations emerged. Such features of nativization are interesting and should be considered as linguistic deviations and not as deficiencies as argued by Lowenberg (1984).

2.4   The Nativization of English

When English spreads to other parts of the world, it interacts with the languages of the people and the society in which it is used. At the same time, it also goes through various changes, adapting and adopting the many features of the local languages that it comes into contact with. This whole process of interaction, adaptation and adoption to suit its new setting together with its unique culture is known as "nativization" (Kachru, 1981),

"indigenization" (Moag & Moag, 1977) or "hybridization" (Whinnom, 1971). There are many terms used to name this process, however, this study will use the term "nativization".

One aspect of nativization, according to Lowenberg (1984, p. iii) originates mainly from the transfer of linguistic features from other languages as well as from creative innovation. Besides, code switching and code mixing play an important role too in contributing to the nativization of the local languages since they are important aspects of the new Englishes as claimed by Kachru (1983b). Occurring at all linguistic levels, such nativization of English brings forth varieties of New Englishes with their own linguistic identity and culture. In other words, the English language has been made 'our own' through nativization as claimed by Schneider (2011, p. 4).

The non-native varieties of English that emerged due to nativization are either performance varieties in the expanding circle or institutionalized varieties in the outer circle. Kachru (1983a) explained that performance varieties are considered as a foreign language in countries like Japan, Iran and China. These varieties have an extremely limited functional range in specific contexts. The institutionalized varieties are those used as a second language in countries like Malaysia, Singapore and India. These varieties have an extended range of uses, registers and style in the social context of a country.

2.5   Malaysian English

The English used in Malaysia has noticeably proceeded into nativization (Schneider, 2007) As a result, a new variety of English known as Malaysian English has been developed. The fact that Malaysian English is used in varieties of contexts by multi-ethnic and multi-lingual Malaysians from different social backgrounds, sub-varieties of sociolects and ethnolects are inevitable as asserted by Nair-Venugopal (1997). Hence,

Gaudart (1997, p. 47) suggested that Malaysian English continuum "encompasses all the sub-varieties of Englishes used by Malaysians". Indeed, Asmah (1992) claimed that Malaysian English is a combination of the many features of the local languages as well as dialects making it very "mixed" as in "batik-like" or "mosaic-like".

2.5.1 The Emergence of Malaysian English

In Malaysia, the English language was first used for commercial communication (Wong, 1981). However, later it was incorporated for colonial administrative purposes and became the dominant language in Malaysia (Bhatal, 1990, as cited in Talif & Ting, 1994). When Malaysia, known as the Federation of Malaya back then got its independence in 1957, Malay language was made the official language. It was agreed that both Malay and English would be used for a ten-year period after which English would be used as a second language (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2003). When the National Education Policy was established in the 1970s, all the English-medium primary and secondary national-type schools were gradually changed into Malay-medium national schools.

The Chinese and Indians were present in Malaysia long before the colonials. They were brought into the country in the early nineteenth century to work as indentured labourers in the rapidly growing industry at that time - tin mines and rubber estates. The Chinese being the second largest ethnic group while the Indians being the third, plus many other minority groups have turned Malaysia into a country with diverse cultures. Hence, it is not surprising that cultural features from the mother tongue of these various ethnic groups have influenced the English language used locally. In other words, transfer from these local languages has resulted in the English used in Malaysia going through nativization and hence, developing as Malaysian English. Apart from that, it is claimed that learner strategies together with innovative strategies have also contributed in the developing of Malaysian English (Menon, 2003; Lowernberg, 1984).

This variety of English under the influences of the heterogeneous local populace as well as their creativity is undeniably very unique, very Malaysian.

2.5.2   Sub-varieties of Malaysian English

In Malaysia, the situation of the English language, specifically concerning its status and functions is in the process of adapting to its new environment (Platt & Weber, 1980). The changes in the medium of instruction in schools from English to Malay, the range and depth of the functions of the language, the extent one uses English in one's every day's life as well as the user's competency of the language have caused in the development of a few sub-varieties of Malaysian English (Kachru, 1990). Whether the language is used on the basis of formal or informal settings also contributes to this development. Thus, in short, these sub-varieties are actually the many different types of English spoken by Malaysians.

Platt and Weber divided these sub-varieties into two categories – Malaysian English Type 1(ME I henceforth) and Malaysian English Type 2 (ME II henceforth). ME I, according to Platt and Weber (1980) is spoken by Malaysian speakers who had English-medium education. These speakers are found to be using English often as their communication tool. On the other hand, those with Malay-medium education, who seldom use English in their everyday communication, speak ME II. It has been noted that ME II has obvious features of interference of Malay language. It may be true that Malaysian English is divided into two types as observed by Platt and Weber (1980), but they failed to recognize that Malaysians with Chinese-medium education too speak ME II and as such interference of Chinese exists too.

As a result of the interference from the mother tongue of the Malaysians, ME II is placed further away in the continuum of international intelligibility as compared to ME I (Talif & Ting, 1994).

Meanwhile, Platt et al. (1984) attempted to define these varieties by using a

formality continuum ranging from the basilects, mesolects to the acrolects. In other words, these varieties spoken by Malaysian English speakers vary from those with minimal English-medium education to those with higher levels of education. Richards (1983) explained that the acrolect represents the idealized rhetorical norm for the community and the mesolect is the idealized communicative norm. He, however noted that the basilect although hardly recognized as a norm may represent a real communicative style.

Baskaran (1987) supported Richard's notion that the Malaysian acrolect is the standardized variety of the language. Moreover, it is not only systematic and consistent in its grammar, it is also used for a wide range of functions such as in the government, legal system, education and mass media (Lowenberg 1986; Platt & Weber 1980). Therefore, Baskaran (1987) claimed that this variety is internationally intelligible. As for the Malaysian mesolect, she maintained that it is used by competent users in unofficial and informal situations (2005). Nevertheless, it is important to note that the mesolect plays an important role in the inter-racial communication. It is used to promote social interaction and a good rapport between speakers of Malaysian and the English listeners (Wong, 1982).

The Malaysian basilect, is permeated with extensive degree of variation in phonology, lexis and syntax. It is used by those with very little formal schooling or those who have limited exposure to English, hence, the reason for the large amount of borrowings found in this variety. Though it may be claimed as patois or substandard use of English by Baskaran (1987, 2005), this basilectal variety of Malaysian English undeniably is a vital vehicle of communication for its users.

The creative and innovative use of the language has undeniably resulted in the many distinguishing features found in the lectal varieties of English used by Malaysians (Ooi, 2001). Indeed, Ooi maintained that the mesolectal and basilectal varieties are the

evidence of the "evolving identities of Malaysians" in this present day world (p. 52).

2.5.3   Code switching and code mixing

Code switching and code mixing have been considered as a common phenomenon of language contact in a bilingual or multilingual society and this has undeniably been intriguing to sociolinguists. According to Muysken code switching and code mixing are the alternative uses of two or more languages and/or dialects by people who speak those particular languages and/or dialects (as cited in Qian, Tian, & Wang, 2009). Code switching involves changes from one language to another across sentences while code mixing involves changes in words, phrases and clauses within the same sentence (Myers-Scotton, 1993). Both the code switching and code mixing are important communicative strategies (Tay, 1993) and they play an important role as a form of identity among the speakers (Lowenberg, 1984; Kachru, 1990; Schneider, 2007). Besides these roles, code switching and code mixing sometimes are used when a speaker is momentarily unable to recall certain words in the target language but is able to do so in a different language.

Many lexical items which started off as code switches and code mixers have naturally over time become the local variety of English. Thus, code switching and code mixing play an important role in contributing to the nativization of the local languages. Indeed, code switching and code mixing are important aspects of the new Englishes as claimed by Kachru (1983b). Since Malaysia is a multilingual country, obviously many languages are found here concurrently. Malaysians generally use two or more of these languages in the same conversation. Hence, it is not surprising that code switching and code mixing are common features here. In other words, it may not be exaggerating to claim that code switching and code mixing have become part and parcel of Malaysian English.

2.6 Studies on Malaysian English

Le Page (1964), then a Professor of English at the University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur first used the term 'Malayan English' in print and Killingley was the one who did the pioneering study on Malayan English in 1965 (as cited in Foley, 1988). Attempted to describe the phonology, grammar and lexis of Malaysian English, Killingley observed that the constant coinage of words and expressions, and code-switching seemed to be the most conspicuous features of the Malaysian English lexis (as cited in Menon, 2003).

Unlike Killingley who has taken the descriptive view of Malayan English, Tongue (1974) described the variety of Malaysian English and Singaporean English with a prescriptive view. He argued that the standard form of this variety of English as "universally and immediately comprehensible to any native speakers of English" (p.12). However, he considered the sub-standard as "clearly unacceptable and must simply be called wrong" (p.12). Hence, he stressed these errors should be corrected so that it is comprehensible and respected internationally.

Platt and Weber (1980) did a very thorough study on the linguistic features of Malaysian English. Some of the features examined in their study are features connected with the verb such as past tense marking; the noun phrase such as plurality; specific syntactic structures and lexical items. As for their lexical variations, they are described based on two categories that are loanwords and English words that are used differently from Standard British English. Platt et al. (1984) also studied the linguistic features of some New Englishes which include Malaysian English. Among some of the linguistic features that they investigated are repetition, idioms, grammatical shifts, loanwords and plurality.

Baskaran (1987, 2005) undeniably has done the most convincing and comprehensive study on Malaysian English. She claimed that Malaysian English lexical items can be categorized into local language referents (use of local lexicon in Malaysian

English) and Standard English lexicalisation (English lexemes with Malaysian English usage). Local language referents refer to the borrowings of other Malaysian languages mainly Malay, Chinese (specifically Mandarin and the main dialects such as Cantonese and Hokkien) and Tamil that are used in the English language. Some of these words that are borrowed into Malaysian English have no equivalent in standard English. Hence, these words are used directly without any changes. Moreover, these words have some unique elements in them, hence translating them into English would cause them to loose those elements. Standard English lexicalisation refers to the usage of standard English words but with meanings different from the original meanings in the standard English.

More recently, Azirah and Tan (2012) discussed the phonological, grammatical and lexical features of Malaysian English. They observed that the socioeconomic and the educational background of the speakers, their ethnicity, their degree of formality and the register involved caused variations of these features to exist. Pillai, Zuraidah and Knowles (2012) studied the pronunciation of Malaysian English corresponding to the different ethnic groups and found no ethnic differences with acrolectal speakers. Tan (2013) suggested that the contact between English and other local languages in Malaysia has induced variation and wide-ranging changes in the Malaysian English linguistic system. She asserted that this prolonged and intense contact has shaped the way nouns are classified in Malaysian English (2016). Other studies include Yamaguchi (2014) who demonstrated that there is a consistent presence of the new dental stop [t] in spite of the persistent irregularity; Yamaguchi and Pétursson (2016) emphasized that since the new dental stop [t] is much easier to articulate, hence they are used instead of the dental fricatives [ð] or [θ].

In short, many studies have been done on Malaysian English. Nevertheless, not much of the available literature deals with Malaysian English that has the influence from Chinese, specifically Mandarin and the two main dialects in Malaysia which are

Cantonese and Hokkien. One interesting study done in this area is by Tan (2009). Tan explores how lexis is borrowed from Chinese language and incorporated into Malaysian English. She pointed out that "specific social and linguistic needs" (p.468) is the main reason users of Malaysian English incorporate Chinese features into Malaysian English. According to her, the lexical borrowing can be divided into three types. They are loanwords, compound blends and loan translations. An example of the loanwords is *koay teow* which represents the Hokkien pronunciation *guǒ tiáo* 果 条 "rice noodles" while *koay teow soup,* an example of the compound blends which is based on the Hokkien pronunciation *guǒ tiáo tāng* 果条汤 "rice noodles in broth". Each compound blend consists of one transliterated Chinese word (*koay teow*) and one equivalent English word (soup). As for the loan translations, English equivalents are used. For instance, *chicken rice* (*jī fàn* 鸡饭).

Kuang (2002) too did a very interesting one on the impact of Chinese on Malaysian English. She examined how words from the local Chinese dialects have been embedded into spoken English. The commonest of such words, she claims are the Chinese tags like *ma, hah, lo* and *ah.* These particles, if attached to an utterance have various pragmatic effects such as showing affirmation, emphasizing certain points, questioning or simply indicating solidarity; though they may not carry any particular meaning at all if they stand on their own (Kuang, 2002; David & Kuang, 2006).

Other studies on Malaysian English include dissertations submitted by post-graduate students of the University of Malaya. Among such studies are on its lexical and semantic features (Anthonysamy, 1997; Menon, 2003 and Su, 2006), pronunciation features (Wan Asylnn, 2005), issues related to attitudes (Malissa, 2007) and the use of Malaysian English in creative writing (Jaya Balan, 2012).

In this study, lexical and grammatical features used by the Malaysian Chinese speakers are categorised mainly under the framework of Platt et al. (1984) and other related studies such as Gupta (1992), Lowenberg (1984), Tay (1993) and Xu (2010).

2.7   Summary

In this chapter, how the amazing spread of English globally has created varieties of English in different sociocultural environments was discussed. Nativisation of English that leads to the development of the varieties of English, particularly the varieties of English used by Malaysians were looked into. Numerous studies on Malaysian English were also examined, highlighting specifically on the one done by Platt et al. (1984) as their study is one of the main frameworks being used in this study.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1   Introduction

This study attempts to understand the usage of the lexical and grammatical features found in the English used by Malaysian Chinese. It also aims to determine the stage of the aspectual markers, namely *already* or *liao*, *got,* and *finish* in Malaysian Chinese English. Finally, this study seeks to look at the contact-induced processes used by Malaysian Chinese to integrate the Chinese features into the English used by them.

The current study employs a qualitative research method so as to gain insight into the development of the local Chinese variety of English. Such an approach is deemed appropriate as the central phenomenon here, the development of this non-native variety of English requires exploration and understanding (Creswell, 2014, p. 40). Moreover, a qualitative method can be utilised to get complex details about the nature of variation and the nativization of English of the Malaysian Chinese (Strauss & Corbin, as cited in Cresswell, 2014, p. 59). It is also a case study as it examines a small group of Malaysian Chinese who speak English.

In this chapter, the sources of data, the details of the participants and the data collection procedures, the framework employed to analyse the data as well as how the data is analysed are described in detail.

3.2   Data Collection

3.2.1   Sources of Data

Two primary sources for this study were from the messaging apps, namely WhatsApp and Messenger. These sources were selected because the Malaysian Chinese use the style of English language that they are familiar with in these apps in their daily life. Thus, the data which occurs naturally and very conversation-like shows very closely

how the language is used by Malaysian Chinese who speak English. Moreover, the fact that the data is in written form allows us to see accurately what they are communicating.

3.2.2 Participants

A total of 56 Malaysian Chinese who speak English participated in this study. Intentionally selecting only Malaysian Chinese who speak English known as purposive sampling would enable us to learn the most and in more detail about the development of the local Chinese variety of English. In order to gain multiple perspectives in this phenomenon, the "maximal variation sampling" strategy was used (Creswell, 2014, p. 229), where participants with different characteristics were selected. With this strategy in mind, the researcher sampled participants of both genders who aged from 13 to 62, with various occupations and from different primary educational background too. The gender, age, occupation and primary educational background are important variables which can affect the usage of language. The older participants had English medium education both in their primary and secondary schools. While the younger ones received their primary education at Chinese or Malay medium schools and went on to Malay medium secondary schools. Thus, the usage of English between these two groups of participants is different. The nature of employment of the participants too affects the usage of the language. Participant who are lecturers, engineers or accountants use English more often than those who are hawkers, shopkeepers or odd job workers. Therefore, sampling participants with different characteristics is important as these characteristics can have different effect on the usage of English. The sampling strategies are shown in Figure 1.
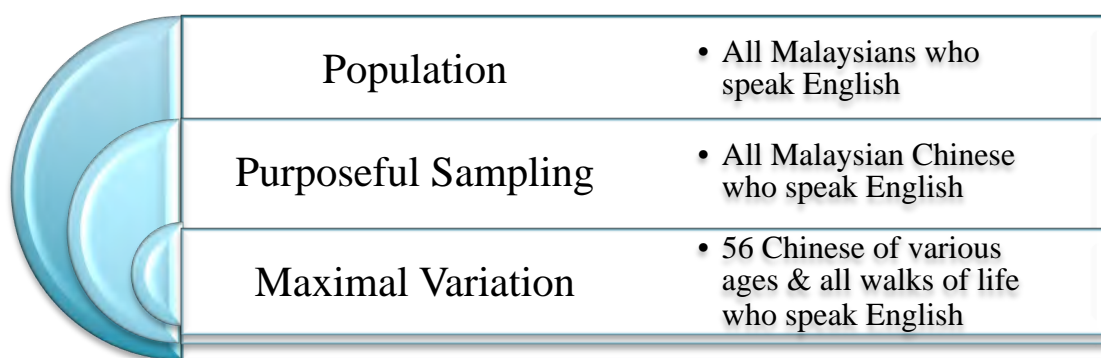
Figure 3.1: Sampling Strategies

Meanwhile, the details of the participants with regard to their age, gender, occupation and their primary education are tabulated in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1:   Gender, occupation, age and primary education of participants

Speaker	Gender	Occupation	Age	Primary education
S1	Female	Teacher	35	Chinese-medium school
S2	Female	Teacher	49	Malay-medium school
S3	Female	Teacher	39	Chinese-medium school
S4	Female	Lecturer	62	English-medium school
S5	Female	Engineer	37	Malay-medium school
S6	Male	Accountant	43	Chinese-medium school
S7	Female	Retiree	56	English-medium school
S8	Female	Manager	46	Malay-medium school
S9	Female	Teacher	43	Malay-medium school
S10	Female	Secretary	24	Chinese-medium school
S11	Female	Teacher	49	Malay-medium school
S12	Female	Hair stylist	53	Chinese-medium school
S13	Female	Teacher	46	Malay-medium school
S14	Male	Part time salesman	19	Chinese-medium school
S15	Female	Clerk	36	Chinese-medium school
S16	Female	Secretary	49	Malay-medium school
S17	Female	Housewife	36	Chinese-medium school
S18	Male	Shopkeeper	43	Chinese-medium school
S19	Male	Businessman	49	Chinese-medium school
S20	Male	College student	20	Chinese-medium school
S21	Male	College student	20	Chinese-medium school
S22	Male	College student	21	Chinese-medium school
S23	Male	College student	20	Chinese-medium school
S24	Male	College student	21	Chinese-medium school
S25	Male	College student	20	Chinese-medium school
S26	Female	Secondary school student	14	Chinese-medium school
S27	Female	Secondary school student	14	Chinese-medium school

Speaker	Gender	Occupation	Age	Primary education
S28	Female	Secondary school student	14	Chinese-medium school
S29	Female	Secondary school student	14	Chinese-medium school
S30	Male	Secondary school student	14	Chinese-medium school
S31	Female	Clerk	28	Chinese-medium school
S32	Female	College student	21	Chinese-medium school
S33	Male	College student	21	Chinese-medium school
S34	Male	College student	19	Chinese-medium school
S35	Male	College student	23	Chinese-medium school
S36	Male	Insurance agent	25	Chinese-medium school
S37	Male	Salesman	26	Chinese-medium school
S38	Male	Hawker	20	Chinese-medium school
S39	Male	Odd job worker	22	Chinese-medium school
S40	Female	Secondary school student	14	Chinese-medium school
S41	Female	Tailor	20	Chinese-medium school
S42	Male	Hair stylist	22	Chinese-medium school
S43	Male	Clerk	25	Chinese-medium school
S44	Male	College student	23	Chinese-medium school
S45	Female	Waitress	23	Chinese-medium school
S46	Female	Manager	35	Malay-medium school
S47	Female	Executive	39	Malay-medium school
S48	Female	Hawker	20	Chinese-medium school
S49	Female	Teacher	32	Chinese-medium school
S50	Female	Secondary school student	14	Chinese-medium school
S51	Male	Secondary school student	14	Chinese-medium school
S52	Male	Secondary school student	14	Chinese-medium school
S53	Male	Secondary school student	15	Chinese-medium school
S54	Female	Secondary school student	13	Chinese-medium school
S55	Male	Secondary school student	13	Chinese-medium school
S56	Female	Secondary school student	13	Chinese-medium school

3.2.3   Data collection procedures

Firstly, the purpose of the study was explained to the participants. Then, they were asked to take screenshots of messages from their messaging apps, namely WhatsApp and Messenger. The data was authentic as none was created artificially for the purpose of this study. After taking the screenshots, they were to send them over to the researcher's email. The whole data collection procedure took place from October 2015 to July 2016. Since the data involved the use of the participants' language, hence it is considered quite personal. Therefore, participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity in this study.

Next, all the data from the messaging apps that had been sent to the researcher's email was read through and explored thoroughly. Data that was deemed as lexical and grammatical features of the English used by Malaysian Chinese was extracted. Finally, the data was analysed using the framework as discussed below.

3.3 Analytical Framework

The data was analysed and classified based on an adapted version of the combination of categorization of nativization features in the study of Platt et al. (1984), Gupta (1992), Lowenberg (1984) and Tay (1993) as these categorization fit best with the data sets collected. The framework of categories used to discuss the lexical and grammatical features are shown in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2:   **Framework of categories used for the classification of the lexical and grammatical features in this study.**

	Researchers			
Categories	Platt, Weber & Ho (1984)	Gupta (1992)	Lowenberg (1984)	Tay (1993)
1. Repetition	/			
2. Idioms	/			
3. Grammatical shifts	/			
4. Loanwords	/			
5. Plurality	/			
6. Omission of words	/			
7. Negation	/			
8. Existence and location	/			
9. Word order	/			
10. Quantifiers	/			
11. Possession	/			
12. Agreement markings	/			
13. Tense and aspect	/			
14. Particles		/		
15. Creative collocations			/	
16. Code switching and code mixing				/

These categories were then divided into two groups. Some of the features found in this local Chinese variety of English are the consequences of transfers from their mother tongue. Therefore, those categories that bear features of the speakers' first

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language were categorised as transfer linguistic features, a term adapted from Xu's (2010) "transfer syntactic features" (p. 63).

On the other hand, there are some features which are the results of innovations. Thus, they were categorised as innovative linguistic features, a term adapted from Xu's (2010) "innovative syntactic features" (p. 62). The categories for analyzing the data are shown in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3:   Categories used for data analyzing.

Transfer linguistic features	Innovative linguistic features	
1. Repetition 2. Idioms 3. Grammatical shifts 4. Loanwords 5. Plurality 6. Omission of words 7. Negation 8. Existence and location 9. Word order 10. Quantifiers 11. Possession 12. Agreement markings 13. Tense and aspect 14. Particles	1. Creative collocations	Code switching and code mixing

3.4   Data Analysis

A corpus of 221 English words and expressions were collected over the duration of almost ten months, from October 2015 to July 2016. The data extracted was coded as E, for example extract one would be E1. Next, the data was analysed under the categories as shown in Table 3.3. Chinese in pinyin, in accordance with the Mandarin and Cantonese was also used to analyze the lexical and grammatical features that have been grouped under transfer linguistic features. The purpose is to show that the usage of these features is strongly influenced by Chinese, the speakers' mother tongue in these features.

Some of the data seemed to fit in more than one category hence they were analysed under more than one category. An example of such data was *yamcha* where it was analysed under the loanword category as well as under the code switching and code mixing category.

The data was then presented quantitatively in order to see the numerical pattern. Nevertheless, it must be stressed that this study is a descriptive and not a quantitative one. The researcher has meticulously described each and every one of the lexical and grammatical features found. As the number of these features is too large to be included in the body of the dissertation, it is therefore the descriptions of all the examples have been attached in the appendices.

3.5 Summary

In sum, this chapter explained the sources of data and the reasons for selecting them. The methods used to collect the data, the framework employed to analyse the data and the categorization as well as the reasons for choosing them were mentioned as well. This chapter also described the manner in which the data was analysed and the details of the all the participants were stated as well.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1   Introduction

This chapter analyses the data collected from the messaging apps namely WhatsApp and Messenger. The analysis involves a discussion of the lexical and grammatical features of the variety of English used by Malaysian Chinese. It also involves the attempts to exemplify the language usage of the Malaysian Chinese. The findings of the study will be discussed below according to the three research questions of the study.

4.2   Research Question 1

What are the lexical and grammatical features found in the English used by Malaysian Chinese?

In today's increasingly interconnected and globalized world, the importance of English is undeniable. Thus, Malaysian Chinese use various strategies such as overgeneralization, omission and substitution to adapt and adopt the language. This has resulted in the emergence of some interesting lexical and grammatical features in the English used by them. These features can be divided into two groups. One group is due to the influence from their mother tongue as well as influence from other local languages mainly from Malay. Another group is due to innovative processes. These features are important as they help to fulfill the Chinese speakers' sociolinguistic needs in this multilingual environment.

A number of such lexical and grammatical features deemed representative of the data corpus will be highlighted and discussed under the adapted version of the various categories used in the study of Platt et al. (1984), Gupta (1992), Lowenberg (1984) and Tay (1993).

4.2.1 Categories used in Platt, Weber and Ho's study (1984)

4.2.1.1 Repetition

(4.1)   *fast   fast   recover* (E2)

            快   快   康复

            kuài kuài   kāng fù

(4.2)   *many   many   cars* (E62)

            很多   很多   车

            hěn duō   **hěn duō**   chē

(4.3)   *All   big big ones* (E62)

            全   部   大 大 的

            quán bù   dà dà   de

(4.4)   *Fast fast   finish   then   we   go   lor* (E79)

            快   快   做完   然后   我们   去   Part

            kuài kuài   zuò wán   rán hòu   wǒ men   qù

(4.5)   *Don't go, don't   go   lah* (E83)

            不 要 去   不要   去   Part

            Bù yào qù   bù yào qù

The word *fast fast, many many, big big* and *don't go, don't go* is a direct translation of Mandarin *kuài kuài*, *hěn duō hěn duō*, *dà dà* and *bù yào qù bù yào qù* respectively. These words are repeated to show the speaking habit of the Malaysian Chinese when emphasizing or creating intensity in certain situations (Platt et al., 1984). Indeed, such practice known as key word repetition which involves the recycling of lexical items gives prominence to the words repeated (Kaur, 2012).

4.2.1.2   Idioms

(4.6)   *same   ship* (E6)

相 同   船

xiāng tóng   chuán

This is a translation of the Mandarin idiom,

同   一   条   船   上

tong   yī   tiáo   chuán shàng

same   one Cl   ship   on

with the meaning "be in the same unpleasant situation".

The Standard English for this idiom should be "be in the same boat".

(4.7)   *no   eye   see* (E63)

mou5   ngaan5   tai2

This is a literal translation of the Cantonese phrase "I don't want to see" meaning "I don't care".

(4.8)   *no   money   no   talk* (E65)

mou5   cin2   mou5 dak1   king1 (Cantonese)

A Cantonese translation meaning 'nothing can be done without money'.

(4.9)   *So **mo** face…* (E66)

"So embarrassing…"

Mo is a direct translation of "no" in Cantonese. Chinese English speakers like to associate *face* with self-image, pride, honour and embarrassment (Xu, 2010). Thus, *mo face* here shows embarrassment.

(4.10)   *… people mountain people sea!* (E73)

人   山   人   海

rén   shān   rén   hǎi

A Mandarin translation meaning "very crowded".

Idiomatic phrases are expressions that are fixed and unique. Due to the differences in geography, history, religion and customs, very naturally Chinese and English idiomatic expressions have very different cultural characteristics. As seen in the data, many idioms widely used by Chinese speakers of the Malaysian English are word for word translations from their mother tongue. They may be weird and ungrammatical but then they do indeed have the Chinese cultural characteristics.

4.2.1.3   Grammatical shift

(4.11) …*my   legs   is   very **pain*** (E12)

我 的 腿   很 痛

wǒ de   tuǐ   hěn tong

"…my legs are very **painful**"

The word *pain* has changed its grammatical class from a noun to an adjective.

(4.12)   *I   don't want **friend**   you   already*! (E77)

我   不 要   朋 友   你   已 经

wǒ bù   yào   péng you nǐ   yǐ jīng

"I don't want to be your **friend** already!"

(4.13)   ***Don't   friend, don't   friend***   *lah.* (E77)

不 要   朋友   不 要   朋友   Part

Bù yào   péng you bù yào péng you

"Don't want to be friends"

The word *friend* in the examples in (4.12) and (4.13) has changed its grammatical class from a noun to a verb. It is quite common to find the grammatical class of words being changed in the English of the Chinese speakers. Most probably these speakers want to extend the use of the English words as claim by Platt et al. (1984).

4.2.1.4 Loanwords

(4.14) *Then **yamcha** see us chou* (part) (E41)

"Then we meet up and have a drink"

Yamcha "drink tea" is a Chinese loanword based on Cantonese pronunciation *jam2 caa4.* This expression is commonly used to ask a person to go for a drink.

(4.15) *Aiyah* (part) *then I bring **kuih kapet*** (E49)

Kuih kapet is also a Chinese loanword. However, this is based on Malaysian Cantonese pronunciation. Also known as love letters, it is a type of traditional cookies eaten during Chinese New Year.

(4.16) *Please **tapau** lunch for me* (E71)

Tapau comes from Mandarin 打包 *dǎ bāo* which means to pack and take away, usually food.

(4.17) *I   go   see   the   **sinseh*** (E80)

"I went to see the ***sinseh***"

Sinseh is transliterated from Hokkien meaning a traditional Chinese physician.

(4.18) *Want to go for **dim sum** tomorrow*? (E82)

要 去　　点 心　明 天

yào qù　diǎn xin　míng tiān

"Do you want to go for ***dim sum*** tomorrow?"

Dim sum, a transliteration of the Cantonese (*dim2sam1*) is a style of Cantonese cuisine. The dishes, which are either steamed or deep-fried are prepared in small bite-sized portions and served in small steamer baskets or on small plates. They consist of various types of dumplings either with meat, vegetable or seafood fillings, buns, mini spring rolls, egg custard tart and many other delicious snacks.

Some of these loanwords exist because there are no equivalent in the existing English words. While others exist because it is more economical than using the English

words. The data has shown that many loanwords of this local Chinese variety of English are found to be transliterated from the local Cantonese and Hokkien. This is indeed what Ooi has claimed as "an important marker of identity" for the local Chinese (2001, p.136). Moreover, using the local Chinese transliteration has clearly shown the unique style of the local Chinese.

4.2.1.5   Plurality

(4.19)   *All   the   subject*... (E14)

全 部   学 科

quán bù   xué kē

"All the **subjects**…"

The plurality in (4.19) is marked by 全 部 *quán bù*.

(4.20)   *yalo...   many   version* (E45)

Part…   很 多   版 本

hěn duō   bǎn běn

"…. many **versions**"

(4.21)   *I   play games   for   five   hour   only* (E64)

我   玩 游 戏   五   小时   只有

wǒ   wán yóu xì   wǔ   xiǎoshí   zhǐyǒu

"I play games for five **hours** only"

The preceding determiner *many* 很多 *hěn duō* and number 五 *wǔ* is used to mark the plural in (4.20) and (4.21) respectively.

It is very obvious here that plurality is not shown using the inflectional morphology as in English. The reason is because Chinese language does not use inflections to indicate its grammatical functions (Jing, Tindal & Nisbet, 2006). Instead, it is argued that Chinese is very much contextual (Li, 1999). In fact, there are no separate singular and plural forms for nouns in Chinese language. Hence, adaptations

are applied where determiners or numerals are used in the context to show plurality instead of using the inflectional morphology.

4.2.1.6 Omission of words

(4.22) *Why   you   so   slow*? (E11)

为 什 么   你   这 么   慢

wèi shén me   nǐ   zhè me   màn

"Why **are** you so slow?"

(4.23) *I   tmr (tomorrow)   let   u (you)   see* (E37)

我   明天   让   你   看

wǒ   míng tiān   rang   nǐ   kàn

"I **will** let you see tomorrow"

(4.24) *This   school   better.* (E53)

这 个 学 校   更 好

zhè gè   xué xiào   gèng hǎo

"This school **is** better"

(4.25) *You play   every   day?* (E67)

你   玩   每一   天

nǐ   wán   měi yī   tiān

"**Do** you play every day?"

(4.26) *What   you   want   to eat?* (E71)

什 么   你   要   吃

shén me   nǐ   yāo   chī

"What **do** you want to eat?"

(4.27)   *I   go   find…* (E6)

我 去 找

wǒ qù zhǎo

"I went **to** find." * 'went' is used here because this is a past event based on the context.

(4.28)   *Feel like   wan(want)   go…* (E24)

感 觉   要   去

gǎn jué   yào   qù

"Feel like want **to** go"

(4.29)   *…I   no have   shuttlecock* (E75)

…我 没 有   毽 子

wǒ   méi yǒu   jiàn zi

"I don't have **a** shuttlecock"

(4.30)   *We   go buy one* (E75)

我 们 去 买 一 个

wǒ men qù mǎi y ī gè (cl)

"We go **and** buy one"

(4.31)   *Cannot   leh* (E79)

不 能 Part

bù néng

"I cannot"

The data collected show clear evidence that words are very often omitted in the English spoken by the Malaysian Chinese. The most common word omitted is the linking verb, called the copula. Examples of this omission, whether the copula functions as the main verb or as the auxiliary in standard formal English, are seen in (4.22), (4.23) and (4.24).

The 'dummy' auxiliary *do* has also often omitted from *wh*-questions as seen in (4.25) and (4.26). The omission of the copula and auxiliary verbs is common because they are not needed in Chinese.

Another word which is quite prominently missing is *to* because it is also not needed in Chinese. This is exemplified in (4.27) (找 zhǎo *to find*) and (4.28) (去 qù *to go*). Other omitted words are article (4.29), conjunction (4.30) and pronoun (4.31). Likewise, these words are omitted because they are not needed in Chinese.

In short, interference from Chinese is very much obvious in this category.

4.2.1.7   Negation

(4.32)   *…don't want to know   mah… **no** interesting* (E57)

　　　　　　不　　要　　知 道　　Part　不　有 趣

　　　　　　…bù　　yào　　zhī dào　　　　　bù　yǒu qù

　　　　　　"...don't want to know…it's **not** interesting…"

(4.33)   *I   **no**   come* (E59)

　　　　　　我　　没有　　　来

　　　　　　wǒ　　méi yǒu　　lái

　　　　　　"I **didn't** come."

(4.34)   *I   **didn't have**   do   my   homework* (E61)

　　　　　　我　没有　　　　做　　我 的　　　功 课

　　　　　　wǒ　méi yǒu　　zuò　wǒ de　　gong kè

　　　　　　('de' is a possessive particle in Chinese)

　　　　　　"I **didn't** do my homework"

In Chinese, 没 *méi* (or 没有 *méi yǒu*) and 不 *bù* are used for negation. When the Chinese 没有 *méi yǒu* is used with a noun, it is equivalent to the English *don't/doesn't/didn't have* which functions as 'not owning' or 'not possessing'.

For example:　　　我　　没 有　　　 钱

　　　　　　　　wǒ　　méi yǒu　　qián

　　　　　　　　"I　　don't have money"

Here, 没有 *méi yǒu* is equivalent to the English *don't/doesn't/didn't have* because it is used with a noun (*money*). However, if 没有 *méi yǒu* is used with a verb, then it functions merely as a negation. And this is not equivalent to the English *don't/doesn't/didn't have*. This is exemplify in (4.34) where 没有 *méi yǒu* is used with a verb (*do*).

　　　This concept is not realised by the Chinese speakers. Thus, very naturally they use *don't/doesn't/didn't have* in all situations, even in situations where they are meant for negation purposes. Similarly, there is also a tendency for them to use 不 *bù* for negation purposes since this is also another marker of negation. As a consequence, an awkward mixture in which ideas conceived in Chinese are ungrammatical expressed. This is shown very clearly in the findings.

4.2.1.8　　　　Existence and location

　　(4.35)　　　　*Tomorrow* **got** *meeting?* (E1)

　　　　　　　　明 天　　　　有　　　会 议

　　　　　　　　míng tiān　　　yǒu　　huì yì

　　　　　　　　"**Is there** a meeting tomorrow?"

　　(4.36)　　　　*Also* **got** *that* *taxi* *demo (demonstration)* (E36)

　　　　　　　　而且　　有　　那　的 士　　示 范

　　　　　　　　ér qiě　　yǒu　　nà　dī shì　shì fàn

　　　　　　　　"Also **there is** that taxi demonstration…"

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(4.37)   *Got big   badminton   court   at   there (*E76)

有 大   羽 毛 球   场   在   那 边

yǒu dà   yǔ máo qiú   chǎng   zài   nà bian

"**There is** a big badminton court over there"

In the above examples, *got* functions as an existential verb. It indicates the existence of a theme concerning the place it is located (Platt & Weber, 1980). The Chinese 有 *yǒu* indicates existence when the subject is a location, equivalent to the English "there is" or "there are" (Ross & Ma, 2006). In addition, they explained that 有 *yǒu* also indicates possession, equivalent to the English "got". As such, 有 *yǒu* can be interpreted as expressing either possession or existence but this depends on whether the subject is a possessor or a location.

Since both the functions of 有 *yǒu* as expression of possession and existence are closely related, it is therefore Chinese speakers very often get confused. Thus, this results in the inappropriate usage of "got" instead of the "there is" or "there are" among the Chinese speakers as shown in the examples above.

4.2.1.9   **Word order**

(4.38)   *Faster come!* (E12)

快   来

kuài   lái

"Come faster!"

(4.39)   *He   very   fast   come…* (E20)

他   很   快   来

tā   hěn   kuài   lái

"He came very fast…"

(4.40)   *He   buy   how much*? (E27)

他   买   多少

tā   mǎi   duō shao

"How much did he pay for it?"

(4.41)   *Then   we   next   week   go   lah* (E30)

那么   我们 下个   星期   去 Part

nà me   wǒ men   xià gè   xīng qī   qù

"Then we go next week"

(4.42)   *Want to talk what?* (E56)

要   说   什么

yào   shuō   shén me

"What do you want to talk about?"

(4.43)   *Why   you   don't have   come   yesterday?* (E80)

为什么   你   没有   来   昨天

wèi shén me   nǐ   méi yǒu   lái   zuó tiān

"Why didn't you come yesterday?"

According to Platt et al. (1984), the word order in the established Englishes is not only fixed but also complicated. However, the word order in the New Englishes is different. This is caused by the influence of the background languages such as the native languages. For example in (4.42) *Want to talk what?* 要说什么 *yào shuō shén me* is inappropriate as the question word *what* should be at the beginning of the question.

The examples above clearly reflect both the Mandarin structures as well as the way of Chinese thinking. Such interference from the mother tongue though has resulted peculiar and ungrammatical word order has certainly made this local non-native variety of English interesting and very unique.

4.2.1.10   Quantifiers

(4.44)   *But   too   **less**   ppl (people) leh* (E29)

但 是   太   少   人   Part

dàn shì   tài   shǎo   rén

"But too **few** people…"

(4.45)   *If   not   **much** of   people*,… (E50)

如果   不 是   很 多   人

rú guǒ   bù shì   hěn **duō**   rén

"If there are not **many** people…"

(4.46)   *I   got   **many**   homework* (E79)

我   有   许多   功 课

wǒ   yǒu   hěn duō   gong kè

"I have **a lot of** homework"

(4.47)   *You   got   **many**   money,   hor*? (E84)

你   有   很多   钱   Part

nǐ   yǒu   hěn duō   qián

"You have **a lot of** money?"

Another difference between English and Chinese regarding nouns is that English maintains a grammatical distinction between countable and non countable nouns while Chinese does not have a grammatical category of countability. Hence, this leads to confusion in the usage of quantifiers as seen in (4.44) *But too less people, leh* and (4.45) *If not much of people.* Without distinction between count and non count nouns, *less* and *much* which are quantifiers for uncountable nouns are wrongly used for *people,* a countable noun. Likewise, in (4.46) *I got many homework* and (4.47) *You got many money, hor?*, *many* a quantifier for countable noun is wrongly used for *homework* and *money,* both of which are uncountable nouns.

4.2.1.11   **Possession**

(4.48)   *Book 1   is   my   one* (E78)

书 1   是   我   的

shū   1   shì   wǒ   de(possessive particle)

"Book 1 is mine"

(4.49)   *Book   2   is   Jacklyn   one* (E78)

书   2   是   Jacklyn   的

shū   2   shì   Jacklyn   de(possessive particle)

"Book 2 is Jacklyn's"

Ross and Ma (2006) explained that Mandarin does not have any possessive pronouns. They further explain that the possessive pronoun is expressed by a pronoun follows by 的 *de*. Some of the Mandarin equivalent of English possessive pronouns are "my" - 我 的 *wǒ de,* "your" - 你 的 *nǐ de,* "his/hers" - 他的 *tā de,* "our" - 我们的 *wǒmen de* and "their" - 他们的 *tāmen de*. As such, *one* in (4.48) and (4.49) used to show possession is a direct translation of the Mandarin possessive particle 的 *de*.

4.2.1.12   **Agreement markings**

(4.50)   *…my   legs   **is**   very   pain* (E12)

我 的   腿   是   很   痛

wǒ de   tuǐ   shì   hěn   tong

"…my legs **are** very painful"

(4.51)   *Form One   students   **is**   better…* (E54)

中 一   学 生   是   更 好

zhōng yī   xué sheng   shì   gèng hǎo

"Form One students **are** better"

As for agreement markings, Li (2015) claimed that such requirement does not exist in Chinese. Understandably, the learning of subject verb agreement is a major challenge to Chinese speakers of English and hence causing error such as in (4.50) *…my legs is very pain* and in (4.51) *Form One students is better…*, both of which with plural subjects (*legs* and *students*) but with singular verb (*is*).

4.2.1.13 Tense and aspect

(4.52) *Last year   just   **repaint*** (E20)

去年   刚刚   重新 油漆

qùnián   gānggang   chóngxīn yóuqī

"Last year just **repainted**"

The adverbs of time *last year* 去年 *qù nián* is used instead of the verb "repainted" to mark for past tense.

(4.53) *Sorry   teacher   just now   **press**   wrong* (E52)

对不起   老师   刚才   按   错了

duì bu qǐ   lǎo shī   gāng cái   àn   cuò le

"Sorry teacher, just now **pressed** wrongly"

The verb *press* is not used to mark for tense as *just now* 刚才 *gāng cái* has already indicated a past event. Moreover, 了 *le* is a completed action marker.

Tense refers to the way events are perceived in relation to speech time while aspect is a grammatical feature that is used to describe the flow of the event itself. However, according to Liu (2015), Chinese does not have grammatical tense. Instead, the time of the event is indicated through adverbials, aspectual markers or inferred from the context. The data collected as shown in (4.52) and (4.53) is in line with what Liu has claimed.

(4.54)   *...she   hv (have) power...* (E6)

　　　　　　　 她　　 有　　　 权

　　　　　　　 tā　　 yǒu　 quán

(4.55)   ***I   know   she   don (don't)   want...*** (E8)

　　　　　　 我　 知 道　 她　 不　　　 想　 要

　　　　　　 wǒ　 zhī dào　 tā　 bù　　　 xiǎng yào

　　　　　　 'I know **she doesn't** want…'

(4.56)   *...my mom   **don't** give   me   play   computer (games)* (E68)

　　　　　 …我 妈妈　 不　　 给　 我 玩　 电脑 游 戏

　　　　　　 wǒ　 mā ma　 bù　 gěi　 wǒ　 wán　 diàn nǎo yóu xì

　　　　　 "…my mom **doesn't** allow me to play computer games"

Some languages like English mark their verbs showing the third person singular present tense. However, such rule does not exist in Chinese. Thus, this explains the errors shown in the examples (4.54) *she have*, (4.55) *she don't* and (4.56) *my mom don't* as the Chinese speakers tried to transfer knowledge from their native language without marking the verbs to show the third singular present tense.

(4.57)   *…already   miss   u(you)   **liao*** (E2)

　　　　　 已 经　　 想 念　　 你　　 了

　　　　　 yǐ jīng　　 xiǎng niàn　 nǐ　　 le

　　　　　 "…already missed you"

(4.58)   *I've   lost   almost   3-4   kg   **liao**!* (E3)

　　　　 我已经　 失去了　　 几乎　 3-4　 公斤　 了

　　　　 wǒ yǐ jīng　 shī qù le　 jī hū　 3 - 4　 gōng jīn　 le

　　　　 "I've lost almost 3-4 kg already!"

(4.59)   *I **sudah** habiskan* (E31)

          I   **have** finished off.

Chinese is an aspectual language that uses aspect markers. Therefore, it is also very common for Malaysian Chinese speakers to use aspect markers. Among the most frequently used ones are not only the Hokkien or Mandarin word *liao* but also the Malay word *sudah.* These aspect markers mark a completed action.

(4.60)   *U (You) repair   d (**already**)?* (E46)

          你   修理   已经

          nǐ   xiū lǐ   yǐ jīng

          "Have you repaired already?"

(4.61)   *I don't want friend you **already**!* (E77)

          我 不 要   朋友 你 已经

          wǒ bù yào péng you nǐ yǐ jīng

          "I don't want to be your friend already!"

(4.62)   *You finish   your   work   **already**?* (E83)

          你 完成   你的   工作   已经

          nǐ wán chéng nǐ de gong zuò   yǐ jīng

          "Have you finished your work already?"

Besides *sudah* and *liao,* another marker which is often used among Chinese speakers of Malaysian English to show a completed action or an event is the word *already* as shown in (4.60), (4.61) and (4.62).

(4.63)   *I do **finish** work   only sleep…mah* (E58)

          我 做 完 工 作 才 睡 part

          wǒ zuò wán gong zuò cái shuì

          "I finished my work then only I go to sleep"

57

(4.64)   *But   I   have   do   **finish*** (E59)

但是　　 我　 有　　 做　 完

dàn shì　 wǒ　 yǒu　 zuò　 wán

"But I have finished"

Another marker that is commonly used for a completed action is *finish,* a direct translation of Mandarin 完 *wán* as shown in (4.63) and (4.64).

(4.65)   ***Got***   *come*   *out…* (E4)

有　　　 来　　 出

yǒu　　 lái　　 chū

"Did you come out…"

(4.66)   *…gt (**got**)   buy   b4 (before)?* (E43)

　 有　　 买　 过　 吗　　　　　　 之 前

　 yǒu　　 mǎi　　 guo　 ma (question part)　 zhī qián

"Have you bought before?"

Due to the transference from their mother tongue, *got* has been widely used to mark three aspectual meanings: habitual, experiential and completive (Lee, Ping & Nomoto, 2009). *Got* in (4.65) translated from Mandarin 有 *yǒu* shows a recent event has been completed. Meanwhile, the existence of the Mandarin 过 *guo* in (4.66) conveys a past experience. Thus, *got* is used here as an experiential aspect marker.

(4.67)   *I   **now***   *dinner* (E39)

我　　 现在　　　 晚 餐

　 wǒ　　 xiàn zài　　 wǎn cān

"I am having dinner now"

Now 现在 *xiàn zài* is used here to show an ongoing action.

The data has clearly shown the usage of *liao, already, finish* and *got* as aspect markers that indicate completed action and *now* that indicates ongoing action. This reflected well what Ross and Ma (2006) have claimed in their book, *Modern Mandarin Chinese grammar: A practical guide* that Chinese has structures indicating the completion of an event instead of the past tense as in English.

Since the Chinese language favours the aspect system rather than the tense system, it is therefore not surprising to see the influence of the Chinese language in this aspect of the linguistic feature.

4.2.2   Categories used in Gupta's study (1992)

4.2.2.1   Particles

(a)   ***Loh/lo***

Loh/lo, an assertive particle (Gupta, 1992) is derived from Cantonese (Wee, 2004; Lim, 2007). These researchers claimed that this particle indicates obviousness and a sense of resignation, meaning accepting a situation because nothing can be done. For example,

> (4.68)   S2 and S3 were talking about a quarrel that has happened earlier (E7)
>
> S2 :   *U (You) did the right thing by scolding your KP* .
>
> S3 :   *Ya **lo**…*

In (4.68), S2 commented that S3 has done the right thing by scolding her KP (head of panel in a school). S3 answers *Ya loh,* indicating that she obviously agreed to S2 comments but with a sense of resignation.

> (4.69) Two friends were exchanging greetings (E13)
>
> S11 :   *Hi fren (friend)! Is that u (you)…Hi Yoke Ha?*
>
> S12 :   *Ya **loh**…how r (are) u (you)?*

In (4.69) S11 asked if S12 was Hi Yoke Ha, a friend she has lost contact with. S12 answered that she was obviously that friend.

(b)   *Lah/la*

Lah/la is one of the most commonly used particles among the speakers. It is claimed that it is originated from Bazaar Malay, Hokkien, Cantonese and Mandarin (Lim, 2007). Gupta (1992) classified *lah/la* as an assertive particle. It has many functions for example, expressing solidarity, emphasis, obviousness, persuasion or even hostility. On top of that, it also indicates the speaker's mood and appeals for accommodation.

> (4.70) Two friends, an engineer (S5) and an accountant (S6) were talking about
>
> the blunder that S5 has made (E9)
>
> S5 :   *What an embarrassing blunder I have made*.
>
> S6 :   *No **lah**…*.

In (4.70), S6 answered *no lah* indicating her mood and appealed to S5 to accommodate to her mood. *Lah* here also emphasizes that S6 did not agree that S5 had made an embarrassing blunder.

> (4.71) Two classmates were talking about going out (E30)
>
> S27:   *…we next week go **lah***.

S27 was trying to persuade her friend to go out next week.

(c)   *Leh/le*

Leh/le that falls into the maximally assertive group (Gupta, 1992) is most likely to be of Cantonese origin (Lim, 2007). Marks as a tentative request, *leh* works as a pragmatic softener (Gupta, 1992; Ler, 2005).

> (4.72) Asking a friend out for a drink (E25)
>
> S23:   *Tonight yc (yc is the abbreviation for yamca, meaning going*
>
> *for a drink)*
>
> S24:   *Bo **le** exam soon*. (I can't…having exam soon).

In (4.72), S23 was asking S24 to go for a drink. S24 answered *bo* meaning *no* in Hokkien and attached *le* to *no* to soften her complaint.

(4.73) S2: *Hi, remember d (the) CPT which v (we) took in 2012? Hv (Have) u (you) checked ur (your) result?* (E17)

S3: *Sigh...dun (don't) think I qualify **leh** as the circular is effective startg (starting) 5ᵗʰ June.*

In (4.73), two cousin sisters who were both English language teachers were talking if they had passed the CPT (Cambridge Placement Test). If they did, they would qualify for a special allowance. S3 used *leh* here to reduce her unhappiness as she might not qualify for the special allowance.

However, in (4.74) uncertainty with a sense of indifference is detected with the usage of *leh.*

(4.74) Two classmates were talking about going out (E28)

S27 : *Or we next week go?*

S26 : *I also dunno **leh.***

(d) **Mah/ma**

Mah /ma, one of the two contradictory particles in Gupta's scale (1992) is claimed to be of ascribed to Cantonese (Lim, 2007). It is used to indicate obviousness and also to serve as a justification (Gupta, 1992; Wong as cited in Ler, 2005; Lim, 2007).

(4.75) Telling a friend that he was not interested to know about his sister's good results (E57)

S50 : *I don't want to know **mah**...no interesting*

S15 : *She is very good.*

S50 : *Ya...I also very good **mah.***

Mah is used twice here and each time it indicates obviousness.

(4.76) Defending oneself of completing his homework (E58)

S53 : *Sleeping?*

S52 : *I do finish work only sleep **mah.***

In (4.76), **mah** serves to justify that he went to sleep only after finishing his work.

(e)   ***Hor/ho/horr***

Horr/ho/horr likely to be originated from Cantonese (Lim, 2007) is a tentative particle (Gupta, 1992). Horr/*ho/horr* is used to check whether something is correct or not. In other words, it is used to denote uncertainty as exemplified in (E26).

(4.77) *I still owe u (you) rm 10 **horr*** (E26)

(f)   ***Meh***

Meh is a question particle that falls into Gupta's assertive category. It is claimed to be a Cantonese particle (Lim, 2007); *meh* expresses surprise at a question asked (Gupta, 1992). Wee (as cited in Leimgruber, 2013) also asserted that *meh* also expresses scepticism. In (4.78), the speaker expressed surprise that the car park was so far away.

(4.78) S22:   *Got so far, **meh?*** (E72)

(g)   ***Cheh***

Cheh is a particle which originated from the Standard Malay. It shows anger and dissatisfaction as exemplified in (4.79) and (4.80).

(4.79) Two cousin sisters are talking about an online competition (E10)

S7: *Too good to be true.*

S8: *Ha! Ha! Not sure, tried to log in but kept on 'spinning' and then kept on saying 'step 3 is incomplete'…**cheh**!*

In (4.79), S8 was angry and felt dissatisfied because she felt cheated in the competition. In (4.80), S23 was angry and unhappy because S24 gave the same excuse as the week before for not going for a drink with him.

(4.80) S23:   *Tonight yc (yc is the abbreviation for yamca, meaning going for a drink) (E25)*

S24:   Bo le exam soon. (I can't…having exam soon).

S23:   *Whn (When) o?*

S24:   *Tues*

S23:   ***Cheh*** *same as last week jekk ma haha.*

(h)   ***Aiyah/aiya***

(4.81) S7 : ***Aiya*** *if responded I wd (would) hv (have) got my black sports merz...*
(E10)

(4.82) S47: ***Aiyah*** *then i (I) bring kuih kapet* (E49)

Aiya/aiyah is a Cantonese expression to exclaim frustration, annoyance, impatience, etc. In (4.81), S7 was frustrated she did not respond to the competition because if she had done so she would have gotten a black sports merz.

As in (4.82), the speaker was annoyed but finally she agreed to bring *kuih kapet,* a type of traditional cookies eaten during Chinese New Year.

(i)   ***One/wan***

One/was here is not the Standard English numerical one (1). Instead it is a very typical Malaysian particle which most probably originated from Mandarin 的 *de.* The following examples demonstrate how *one/wan* is used to express emphasis.

(4.83) *I   ok   **one***… (E21)

我   ok   的

wǒ   ok   de

"I am okay"

(4.84) *Japanese   album   very   confusing   **one*** (E44)

日 本   专 辑   非常   乱   的

Rì běn   zhuān jí   fēi cháng   luàn   de

"Japanese album is very confusing"

(4.85) *Cannot   like that   **wan**…* (E49)

不 能   这样   的

Bù néng   zhè yang   de

"You cannot be like that"

(j)   ***Jek/jekk***

Jek is a Cantonese particle meaning "only" *zek1*. It indicates a sense of indifference or expresses sarcasm.

(4.86) S20:   *I ok one, just need do slides only, out lo then* (E22)

S21:   *On **jek***

In (4.86), S20 agreed to go out but only after completing his power point slides. S21 replied *on jek*, confirming of the outing but with a sense of indifference.

(4.87) *Cheh same as last week **jekk** ma haha* (E25)

In (4.87), the subject sarcastically told his friend off because his friend gave the same excuse as the week before for not going for a drink with him.

(k)   ***De***

De originated from Mandarin 的 *de* is used for emphasis as exemplified in (4.88) and (4.89).

(4.88) S23:   *Cheh same as last week jekk ma haha* (E25)

S24:   *Lst (Last) week **de** exam ez (easy)*

When S23 sarcastically reminded S24 that S24 had already taken an exam last week and therefore it was nothing new, S24 emphasized that that particular exam was easy.

(4.89) *I agree but wont (won't) happen **de** la* (E34)

In (4.89), two students were suggesting that schools should do away with exams. *De* here emphasizes that doing away with exams will never happen.

(l)   ***Mou***

(4.90) *Possible they walk around sunway **mou**…* (E24)

Mou is the short form of *jau5 mou5* (have, not have). A Chinese loanword based on Cantonese pronunciation, this particle is normally used to ask yes-no questions.

In (4.90), the subject was wondering if the K-Pop singers would walk around Sunway Pyramid, a well known shopping centre in Kuala Lumpur.

Generally, particles *lo/loh, lah/la, leh/le mah/ma, horr* and *meh* seem to be used very frequently in this study. Additionally, creative particles *cheh, aiyah/aiya, one/wan, jekk/jek, de* and *mou* produced by the younger generation of Chinese speakers are also found. The examples above have exemplified their various usages and functions.

4.2.3   Categories used in Lowenberg's study (1984)

4.2.3.1   Creative collocations

The contact between the Malaysian Chinese and English has also resulted in the emergence of distinctive linguistic features. It is claimed that such linguistic features are innovatively created in order to preserve the Chinese culture and traditional practices as well as to fulfill the speakers' sociolinguistic needs (Tan, 2009).

The following analysis involves a discussion of these creative collocations together with their usage.

> (4.91) *Long time ago…got one asking u (you) to answer some questions if u*
>
>   *(you) wd (would) like a Merz. Ask u(you) to giv (give) the colour that u*
>
>   *(you) like **some more**!!!* (E10)

In (4.91), the subject was explaining what happened in an online competition. She told that she was first asked if she would like to own a Merz and then she was even asked the colour that she would like for the car! The subject used *some more* to mean "on top of that" which is very much different from the Standard British English "to increase". *Some more* functions as a transition word here connecting one idea to the next. In this example, it is connecting the idea of having a Merz to the colour of the car.

(4.92) Two English language teachers were talking if they qualified for the special allowance which is based on the result of the CPT (Cambridge Placement Test) (E17)

    S2: *Hi, remember d (the) CPT which v (we) took in 2012? Hv (Have) u (you) checked ur (your) result?*

    S3: *Sigh…dun (don't) think I qualify leh as the circular is effective startg (starting) 5th June.* ***Some more*** *got C2 (C2 is a grade). There goes my 5K (RM 5000).*

In (4.92), S3 was saying that she might not qualify for the special allowance since the circular was effective from 5th June onwards. She then further expressed her sadness of not getting the allowance even though she managed to get a good result (C2 is the highest grade in the CPT). *Some more* also functions as a transition word here reinforcing (Platt et al., 1984) or emphasizing the subject's unhappiness.

(4.93) Talking about the situation in Kuala Lumpur (E36)

    S7: ***Some more*** *certain areas are inundated by flash floods. Also got that taxi demo lagi! Do take care.*

In (4.93), *some more* is used to emphasize how bad the situation was at that particular time.

The meaning of *some more* here has been adjusted to new referential needs although the form is still the same. In other words, *some more* has gone through a semantic shift, illustrating the creativity of the local Chinese.

(4.94) *Why you always* ***blur blur****?* (E69)

The subject was scolding his friend for being *blur blur*. Although *blur blur* can be a verb or a noun, it is not exemplified as such here. Instead, it has been given a new life here by the Malaysian Chinese as an adjective. With the grammatical change from a

verb or a noun to an adjective, naturally the meaning also changes. Here, it simply means "no idea what is going on" or "confused".

> (4.95) S10: *Busy now. Please tapau (take-away) lunch for me* (E71)
>
> S19: *What you want to eat?*
>
> S10: *Please tapau **spare part** for me.*

Spare part means a new part to replace an old or broken part of a machine. However, this expression refers to a totally different meaning to Malaysian Chinese. It refers to the internal organs of an animal such as the intestines, tongue, heart, kidney and liver that are used for human's consumption. *Spare part* is indeed an ingenious lexical innovation reflecting the Chinese culture. The Chinese is very much food-oriented and hence, it is not surprising that they are able to turn unpalatable and inedible things like internal organs of animals into some delicacies. Apart from this amazing ability, the Chinese also have the ability to create numerous distinctive lexical features such as *spare part* here.

> (4.96) S54: *You always **say me**. I don't want friend you already!* (E77)
>
> S56: *Don't friend, don't friend lah.*

In (4.96), two classmates were quarrelling. S54 was saying that S56 was always talking bad about her and therefore, she did not want to be a friend to S56 anymore. S56 replied sarcastically that she was also not interested in maintaining the friendship with S54.

Having very little knowledge in English, S54 creatively used whatever limited vocabularies she had and came up with *say me* instead of "talk bad about me". This lexical innovation is a good example of Baskaran's basilectal variety (2005). Though ungrammatical, such basilect is certainly a crucial vehicle of communication for its users.

(4.97) Two friends were talking about a wedding dinner (E81)

        S2:   *How was the food at the wedding dinner*?

        S7:   *Good, especially the **Buddha Jumps Over The Wall**.*

In (4.97), two friends were talking about a wedding dinner. When S7 was asked about the food, she replied that *Buddha Jumps Over The Wall* was good. *Buddha Jumps Over The Wall* is actually a type of soup made of Chinese herbs, scallops, sea cucumber, shark fin, ginseng and many other ingredients. This expression obviously has nothing to do with its literal meaning. Although this is a direct translation from Mandarin 佛跳墙 (*fó tiào qiáng*), this is indeed a creative innovation related to food used by Chinese in the non-native variety of English that shows their unique culture and its significance. *Buddha Jumps Over The Wall* is actually found in menus of many Chinese restaurants.

4.2.4   Code-switching and code-mixing

Malaysia is a multicultural and multilingual country. Hence, code switching and code mixing occur very naturally among Malaysians. However, the Malaysian Chinese speakers surprisingly use more of Malay language instead Chinese language in their code switching and code mixing. This is mainly due to the fact that generally all Malaysians know Malay because it is the national language in Malaysia. The data collected clearly exemplify this notion.

(4.98)   *In   **Dewan**   **Persidangan*** (E5)

                In   **Hall**   **Conference**

                "In Conference Hall"

(4.99)   *Go straight to **Kementerian Pelajaran** in Putrajaya n(and)*

                complain (E7)

                Go straight to **Ministry of Education** in Putrajaya n(and)

                complain.

(4.100) *Do you have the **Surat edaran**?* (E15)

Do you have the **Circulars?**

(4.101) *Then **yamcha** see us chou* (part) (E41)

"Then we meet up and **have a drink**"

(4.102) *I at school saw one rim very **yeng** but no take **dao** (verb complement) picture* (E47)

"I saw one very **stylish** rim at school but couldn't take a picture of it"

(4.103) *Please **tapau** lunch for me* (E71)

"Please pack lunch for me"

4.2.5 Conclusion

English has become the global language today. Hence, being proficient in English is indeed essential as it will not only be an added potential for one's material and social gain but it will also help one to be more successful in today's multicultural societies (Kachru, 1990). This explains why when the Malaysian Chinese come into contact with the English, they try to acquire the English language by adapting and adopting, hence resulting in the emergence of the local Chinese variety of English.

Interestingly, due to the many differences between the Chinese and English language, many Chinese features inevitably are integrated into the English language. As a consequence, many lexical and grammatical features caused by the influence of the Chinese are found in the data and they are in agreement with what Platt et al. (1984), Gupta (1992), Lowenberg (1984) and Tay (1993) have identified in their research. The categories used to discuss these lexical and grammatical features as well as the frequency counts of the features used are shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1:   Distribution of the transfer linguistic features according to categories

Categories	Number of turns in which the occurrences exist
Repetition	5
Idioms	6
Grammatical shifts	3
Loanwords	5
Plurality	5
Omission of words	39
Negation	12
Existence & location	10
Word order	18
Quantifiers	4
Possession	2
Agreement markings	2
Tense & aspect	21
Particles	52
Total number of turns	184

Apart from transference from their first language, there is evidence of linguistic vitality and creativity emerging from the local Chinese that reflects their culture and traditional practices and also fulfills the speakers' sociolinguistic needs. The creative collocations together with the frequency counts of the features used are shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2:   Distribution of the innovative linguistic features according to categories.

Categories	Number of turns in which the occurrences exist
Creative collocations	7
Total number of turns	7

As for codeswitching and code mixing, there were 23 occurrences as shown in Table 4.3. Interestingly, only 4 Chinese lexical items were used in the code switching and code mixing. The 4 lexical items –*yamcha, yeng, dao,* and *tapau* which first started as code switches and code mixes have over time also become loanwords and then gradually develop as common and established features in the local Chinese variety of

English. In other words, code switching and code mixing certainly lead to nativization of English. However, it is important to note here that apart from using Chinese, the local Chinese also use Malay in their code switching and mixing. This variety differentiates from other Chinese Englishes, thus making the English used by Chinese Malaysian very unique.

Table 4.3:   Distribution of code switching and code mixing.

Categories	Number of turns in which the occurrences exist
Code switching and code mixing	23
Total number of turns	23

It is interesting to note that some of the features found in this study are similar to the ones in Xu's (2010) study on Chinese English. One of them is the loanword. For example *chow mein* (炒面 *chǎo miàn*) "fried noodles" is similar to *yamcha* (*jam2 caa4*) "drink tea". Both the words are loanwords through transliteration (translation based on pronunciation). Meanwhile, *terra cotta warriors and horses* 兵马俑 *bīngmǎyǒng* is similar to *Buddha Jumps Over The Wall* 佛跳墙 *fó tiào qiáng*. These two are loan translation (English words translated from Chinese). Another feature is the creative collocation. Although Xu put it as semantic shift, both of these features have the same concept. The original meaning of these words in English is changed for example *open* in *I will open the radio* (p. 43) the meaning has changed "to switch on". This is similar to *some more* where the meaning "to increase" has changed to "on top of that".

It is not surprising given the fact that Malaysia is situated so near to Singapore and sharing some cultural aspects, many of these features are also found in Singapore English. Among them are repetition (*Scrub until **clean clean***), idioms (*to shake legs*), grammatical shift (*to friend*), loanword (*sinseh*), plurality (*I got four **brother***), tense (*Last time she come on Thursday.*), aspect (*I eat full **already***), omission of words (*This*

room must clean before Chinese New Year), negation (*I **never** take your book.*), existence and location (*Here **got** a lot of people…*), word order (*ninety over cheques*), and quantifier (*Don't eat **so much sweets**.*) (Platt et al. 1984).

In other words, the varieties of English spoken by Chinese around the world seem to share some linguistic features. The reason as Cheng (1992) argued is because the Chinese have a common language background despite of coming from around the globe.

4.3   Research Question 2

At what stage are the aspectual markers *already* or *liao, go* and *finish* in the English used by Malaysian Chinese?

The constant language contact between English and Chinese has resulted in the emergence of the uniqueness of the aspectual system in the English used by Malaysian Chinese. Interestingly, this aspectual system tends to indicate overwhelming similarities to the aspectual system of Chinese, the main substrate language. The following discussion attempts to argue that these aspectual markers are indeed at the substratum transfer stage.

Like English and Chinese aspectual systems, the English used by Malaysian Chinese too has perfective and imperfective markers. However, *already* or *liao, got* and *finish* are among the most common perfective aspectual markers found. For example:

(4.104)   *She went to Penang   **already**.* (Baskaran, 1987, p.130)

她 去   槟 城   了

tā   qù   Bīngchéng   le

"She has gone to Penang"

(4.105)   *…come back home* **liao.** (E4)

回   家   了

huí   *jiā*   *le*

"…have come home"

In (4.104) *already* presents the event of going to Penang as completed. It is to be noted that Mandarin 了 *le* also corresponds to Hokkien *liao.* Therefore, in (4.105) *liao* also presents the event of coming home as completed. Here, it is very obvious that there is a tendency that *already* and *liao* are found at the end of a sentence just like the Chinese sentence 了 *le*. Hence, *already* and *liao* are a reflex of Chinese aspect marker 了 *le*.

Apart from being a reflex of 了 *le*, *already* is also a Chinese adverb 已 经 *yǐ jīng* which often occurs before a completed action to show that an action is already concluded (Ross & Ma, 2006). For example in (4.106), the action (passing away) is already concluded.

(4.106)   *My father* **already** *pass away.* (Platt et al. 1984, p. 71)

我 爸爸 已 经 去 世

wǒ bà ba yǐ jīng qù shì

"My father has passed away"

Got and *finish* are also common perfective aspect markers of English as used by Malaysian Chinese speakers.

(4.107)   *You* **got** *wash your hands?* (Hiramoto & Sato, 2012, p. 203)

你 有 洗 你的 手 吗

nǐ yǒu xǐ nǐ de shǒu ma (part)

"Did you wash your hands?"

(4.108)　　　*You eat **finish, go　　out　　　and　play**.* (Platt et al., 1984, p. 71)

你　吃　完　去　外面　　　玩

nǐ　chī　wán　qù　wài mian　　wán

"When you have finished eating, go and play outside"

(4.109)　　　*I　　do　　**finish**　work.* (E58)

我　做　完　工作

wǒ　zuò　wán　gong zuò

"I have finished my work…"

Got that appears before the verb in (4.107) stresses the completion of the event of washing hands. It has the same construction and emphatic meaning as the Chinese emphatic perfective marker 有 *yǒu*. Meanwhile, *finish* in (4.108) and (4.109) that appears after the verb stresses the completion of the events of eating and doing respectively. *Finish* is similar to the construction and to the use of Chinese emphatic perfective marker 完 *wán*.

This finding shows that the aspectual markers *already* or *liao, got* and *finish* in the English used by Malaysian Chinese are reflexes of Chinese aspectual markers 了 *le*, 有 *yǒu* and 完 *wán* respectively. Interestingly, this finding is in line with what Bao (2005) has claimed in his study on the aspectual system of Singapore English.

Earlier researcher, Kwan-Terry (1989, p. 33-48) made a similar finding. She too observed that the use and function of *already* in Singapore English indeed come from the Chinese adverb 已经 *yi jing* and aspectual marker 了 *le*. She explained that this is due to the result of the contact between English and the local Chinese languages. *Already* is used not only to express a completed process but also an indication of new situation. These uses are exemplified below:

(4.110)　　　*I eat the cake **already**.* (process completed) (p. 39)

(4.111)   *The tongue red **already**, you see*? (new situation) (p. 40)

Additionally, Kwan-Terry argued that the use of English word *finish* is also translated from the Cantonese marker *yun* (完 *wán* in Mandarin).

(4.112)   *When I drink **finish**, can I eat ice-cream*? (p 46)

In conclusion, these aspectual markers are indeed transferred from Chinese, the main substrate language. And these markers are still at the substratum transfer stage. They have not been stabilized yet.

4.4   Research Question 3

What are the contact-induced processes used to integrate the Chinese features into the English used by Malaysian Chinese?

English was first spread during the colonial era. This spread, argues Phillipson (1992) is a form of linguistic imperialism. He is certainly very wrong as back then English was a prerequisite for one to climb up the socioeconomic ladder (Asiah Abu Samah, 1994). Today, English is the universal language. As such, it is not surprising that the number of people using English worldwide has increased tremendously. These people adapt, adopt and creatively innovate the language to suit its new functions in the new context. This process known as nativization has given rise to varieties of English (Kachru, 1986).

Nativization originates mainly from the transfer of linguistic features from other languages (Lowenberg, 1984, p.iii). He claimed that this transfer occurs at all levels – phonology, lexis, syntax and discourse. Agreeing to this point, Yamaguchi (2016) explained that local features of pronunciation, grammar and lexis have been adopted and embedded in the local context. In her study on the pronunciation of TH in word initial position in Malaysian English, she has demonstrated that there is a consistent presence of the new dental stop [t] in spite of the persistent irregularity (2014). This has indeed affirmed the fact that transference from the local language does exist here. The

reason is because the TH sound does not exist in Malay and Chinese, the main local languages in Malaysia. Therefore, these users of English transfer their local features of pronunciation to the English pronunciation. This certainly supports that nativization is taking place here and that it arises from transference.

Nevertheless, Tan (2016) in her study which involves the pluralisation of non-count nouns argued that these nativised patterns are stemmed from the interaction between the simplification strategies and rule generalization and the contact with the local languages spoken namely Malay, Chinese and Tamil. This is parallel to Platt and Weber's (1980), and Kachru's (1982, 1992) study where they asserted that through such contact situations, the New Englishes assimilate the features of the languages they come into contact.

Nativised items, according to Wong and Thomas (1992) are "learners' attempt at creating meaning" (p.17). They observed that some of these nativised lexical items are borrowed from other languages because no English equivalent is found for certain words. For example *char kuah tiow* a Chinese dish of fried white flat noodles is not equivalent to the English word "noodles". Another method, lexical shift is when a known English word is replaced by a word from the local language so that the meaning is better expressed. For example *ulu,* a Malay word meaning primitive or underdeveloped will not be expressed clearly if an English word is used. Words are also translated into English from the local languages for example *coffee shop* translated from Hokkien *kopitiam* or Malay *kedai kopi.* Similarly, this translation method is used since these words are non- existent in English. Hence, nativization does not only arise from transference because it is non-exixtent in the target language but also from other contact-induced processes like simplification, rule generalization, borrowing, lexical shifts as well as translation when English comes into contact with the local languages.

This study demonstrates very clearly that due to language contact, these

processes are used to integrate the Chinese features into the English used by Malaysian Chinese. Examples of simplication are:

(4.113) *She talking about you.* (E69)

(4.114) *I sick, mah* (E80)

(4.113) and (4.114) have been simplified by omitting the copula.

Another example is the rule generalization. In standard English, the subject is followed by the verb in a sentence. Hence, Malaysian Chinese having generalized this rule tend to use the fixed subject-verb order in all sentences. This can be seen in

(4.115) *Why you so slow?* (E11)

(4.116) *What she talking about?* (E69)

(4.117) *What you want to eat?* (E71)

The fixed subject-verb order is retained with the auxiliary which is required by standard English often being deleted. However, this is wrong as in *wh*-questions, the subject-verb inversion is required.

Meanwhile, other processes frequently used are borrowing such as the word *yamcha* (E41), *kuih kapet* (E49), *tapau* (E71), *sinseh* (E80) and *dim sum* (E82); lexical shift as in the word *pain* (E71) and *friend* (E77); and translation like *no eye see* (E63), *people mountain people sea* (E73) and *Long time no see* (E74) (Please refer to Appendix B).

In short, when Chinese comes into contact with English, many Chinese features have been integrated into English through the substrate influences. Apart from that, contact situations shaped by sociolinguistic factors such as age, occupation and educational background that emerged also allow the integration of the Chinese features into English to take place.

4.5   Discussion of Findings

Overall, the data in this study demonstrates that the lexical and grammatical features found in the English used by Malaysian Chinese can be divided into two groups. One group is due to the influence from their mother tongue as well as influence from other local languages mainly from Malay. Another group is due to innovative processes.

It appears that these lexical and grammatical features are strongly due to their first language transference. Out of 214 features, transfer linguistic features account for 86.0% while innovative linguistic features only account for 3.3% of the total number of features identified. Meanwhile, code switches and code mixes not only with Chinese but also with Malay, constitute 10.7%. These features have over time become common and established features in the English used by Malaysian Chinese.

Table 4.4:   Distribution of the linguistic features of the variety of English spoken by the Malaysian Chinese.

Linguistic features	Number of turns in which the occurrences exist	Percentage
Transfer linguistic features	184	86.0
Innovative linguistic features	7	3.3
Code switching and code mixing	23	10.7
Total number of turns	214	100

Particles are used with the highest frequencies as compared to other categories of transfer linguistic features. This is followed by omission of words, tense and aspect, word order, negation, existence and location, idioms, repetition, loanwords, plurality, quantifiers, grammatical shifts, possession and agreement markings.

Table 4.5 shows the frequency counts together with the percentage of the features used.

Table 4.5:   Distribution of the transfer linguistic features showing the frequency and percentage of each category.

Categories	Number of turns in which the occurrences exist	Percentage
Particles	52	28.2
Omission of words	39	21.2
Tense & aspect	21	11.4
Word order	18	9.8
Negation	12	6.5
Existence & location	10	5.4
Idioms	6	3.3
Repetition	5	2.7
Loanwords	5	2.7
Plurality	5	2.7
Quantifiers	4	2.2
Grammatical shifts	3	1.7
Possession	2	1.1
Agreement markings	2	1.1
Total number of turns	184	100

Particles appear to form 28.2%, the highest frequencies of the total number of features identified. It is important to note that besides the particles found in Gupta's scale of assertiveness (*lo/loh, lah/la, leh/le mah/ma, horr* and *meh*), particles that are the products of creativity of the younger generation speakers are also found among the data collected. They are *cheh, aiyah/aiya, one/wan, jekk/jek, de* and *mou* as discussed in (4.2.2.1). These creative particles used to convey affective meaning are truly very 'Malaysian Chinese' as the emergence of them undeniably are due largely to the influence of the mother tongue.

Omission of words accounts for 21.2% becoming the second highest frequencies of the total number of features found. The most common words omitted are the copula

followed by the auxiliary verbs, the word *to*, article, conjunction and pronoun. The main reason for these words to be omitted is simply because they are not needed in Chinese.

Tense and aspect constitute 11.4% of the total number of features identified. Since Chinese does not have grammatical tense, the time of the event was indicated through adverbials, aspectual markers or inferred from the context. Aspect markers such as *sudah, liao* or *already, finish* and *got* were used very often by the participants. This study has demonstrated that these aspectual markers are indeed transferred from Chinese, the main substrate language. And these markers are still at the substratum transfer stage.

Word order occupies 9.8% of the total number of features. The word order reflects not only the Mandarin structures but also the Chinese way of thinking. Such interference from the mother tongue has certainly caused weird and ungrammatical word order to appear.

Negation consists of 6.5% of the total number of features. In Chinese, 没 *méi* (or 没有 *méi yǒu*) and 不 *bù* are used for negation. When 没有 *méi yǒu* is used with a noun, it is equivalent to the English *don't/doesn't/didn't have* which functions as 'not owning' or 'not possessing'. When 没有 *méi yǒu* is used with a verb, then it functions merely as a negation. This concept leads to confusion resulting in the wrong usage of *don't/doesn't/didn't have* in many situations. Additionally, *no* and *never* were also used for negation by the participants.

Existence and location form 5.4% of the total number of features. The Chinese 有 *yǒu* has two functions with one showing existence and the other showing possession. The English "got" also indicates possession thus making it equivalent to the Chinese 有 *yǒu*. Due to this, "got" was used inappropriately in many situations.

Idioms come in next, constituting 3.3%. Many peculiar and ungrammatical idioms were found. This is due to the differences in geography, history, religion and customs between the Chinese and English.

Repetition, loanwords and plurality constitute 2.7% each. Repetition reflects the speaking habit of the Malaysian Chinese. Meanwhile, loanwords appear to be an important linguistic feature of this sub-variant of Malaysian English as it functions as an identity marker for its speakers. As for plurality, it is shown through the determiners or numerals that were used in context instead of the usage of inflectional morphology 's'. The reason is the plural morphology does not exist in common nouns in Chinese.

Occupying 2.2% of the total number of features is quantifiers. They are used inappropriately because such requirement is non-existent in Chinese. Grammatical shift account 1.7% seems to be a common habit, most probably because this will help them to expand the use of English.

Possession and agreement marking consist of 1.1% each of the total number of features found. Like quantifiers, the main reason for the inappropriate usage of possession and agreement marking is also due to the fact that such requirement does not exist in Chinese.

Though innovative linguistic features only account for 3.7% of the total number of features identified, this has proven that Malaysian Chinese have and are still creating new meanings for new forms as well as for old forms. Many of these linguistic features deemed as mistakes are in fact creative nativisation contributing to the emergence of the Malaysian English used by the local Chinese. Besides, Malaysian youth today being multilingual naturally have the additional means of terminology creation (David, 1997) to code-mix and code switch. Both these code mixing and switching seem to appear very frequently in this study. These lexical and grammatical features contribute to the

nativization of the local Chinese variety of English; hence, becoming a major characteristic of the Malaysian Chinese users of English.

Lastly, as discussed earlier, the data shows that the lexical and grammatical features of the variety of English spoken by the Malaysian Chinese are strongly due to their first language transference. Generally, these Chinese features are incorporated into this non-native variety of English through contact-induced processes such as simplification, rule generalization, borrowing, lexical shifts as well as translation.

In short, the transfer of linguistic features from the local languages, creative innovation, and code switching and code mixing have contributed to the nativization of English into the context of the Malaysian Chinese. This study parallels Lowenberg's (1984) work.

4.6   Summary

In brief, this chapter looked deeply and analysed the data collected based on the three research questions of the study. A lengthy discussion of the findings on each of the lexical and grammatical features of the English used by Malaysian Chinese was also demonstrated.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter summarizes the research findings and puts forward the implications of the present study. Limitations alongside with suggestions for further research work are also included.

5.2 Summary of Findings

The focus of this research has been to understand the "Chineseness" or the contribution of Chinese in Malaysian English. Hence, the usage of the lexical and grammatical features found in the English used by Malaysian Chinese has been examined. Apart from that, the stage of the aspectual markers *already* or *liao, got* and *finish* in the English used by Malaysian English has also been determined. Last but not least, the contact-induced processes used by Malaysian Chinese to integrate the Chinese features into the English used by them have also been looked into.

This study demonstrates that the lexical and grammatical features found in the variety of English used by 56 Malaysian Chinese are repetition, idioms, grammatical shift, loanwords, plurality, omission of words, negation, existence and location, word order, quantifier, agreement markings, tense and aspect, and particles. These features which bear strong transference from their first language are generally incorporated into this non-native variety of English through processes such as simplification, rule generalization, borrowing, lexical shifts as well as translation. This finding has strengthened Liu's (2008) assertion that the Chinese language and the way of Chinese thinking are great influences in this variety of English. Additionally, this finding lends support to Tan's (2009) claim that Chinese is an important source of interesting lexical and grammatical features in Malaysian English. This can be seen especially from the

borrowed Chinese features used to preserve the traditional Chinese culture and practices.

Code switching and code mixing are also found to be common features used in the local Chinese variety of English. Interestingly, this study discovers that besides Chinese, Malay is also frequently used in this code switching and code mixing. This is because Malay is the national language of Malaysia and therefore every Malaysian knows this language. As such, code switching and code mixing with Malay is not surprising at all. As a result, the English used by Malaysian Chinese is very different from other Chinese Englishes.

It is also observed that apart from code switching and code mixing, there are also features in this variety that are used by the Malays. For example, in Malay, the plural is also shown using a number or another word in front of the noun (*banyak buku – many books*). Another example of the feature is the tense and aspect. Like Chinese, Malay also favours the aspect system rather than tense. For example, *sudah* "finished/already" is used to show a completed action as in *Saya sudah makan* "I have/had eaten".

Though the study found only a small number of features identified are due to creative innovation, such distinguishing features are indeed evidence of the "result of a creative and innovative use of language in a multilingual and multicultural context" (Ooi, 2001, p. 52). In fact, these features are certainly nativised items. For example, *spare parts* is very different from its original meaning and without the influence of the mother tongue. Other features are merely transferred from their first language, a process in the Second Language Acquisition. By a gradual process of trial and error, the users may succeed in acquiring the language. As such, these features that are transferred from the first language cannot be considered as nativised items. Nevertheless, undeniably some of these transfer linguistic features such as loanwords which appeared because

there are no English equivalent for these words have naturally over time become nativised items. In short, this has certainly pointed to the fact that nativization does originate from transfer as well as from creative innovation (Lowenberg, 1984).

This study has also pointed out that factors such as educational background, age and nature of employment play important roles in influencing the varieties of lexical and grammatical features found in the Malaysian Chinese variety of English. Participants who age 50 and above mostly have English medium education but not the younger ones. The main reason is because of the change in the language policy where English, which was initially used as the medium of instruction, has been changed. Hence, resulting in the younger generation having English as a second language and Malay as the medium of instruction. Many of this young generation received their primary education at Chinese or Malay-medium schools but went on to Malay-medium secondary schools. The pattern shows that this younger age group appears to use the lexical and grammatical features of the MCE very often. This could be due to the transference from their mother tongue.

The nature of employment of the participants too influences the usage of this variety of English. Those who work as a lecturer, engineer, accountant and manager appear to use less of the lexical and grammatical features of the MCE. This could be because they use the acrolect, the more standard dialect with moderately little nativization (Lowenberg, 1984).

Interestingly, many of the participants regardless of their educational background and nature of employment seem to use the particles very frequent. The reason is because this feature represents the identity of the Malaysians generally. Another feature, which also plays the role as a form of identity is code switching and code mixing. Additionally, this feature is a vital communicative strategy among the users.

It is noteworthy that both the Malaysian English and Malaysian Chinese variety of English have almost but not exactly the same characteristics. The characteristic that distinguishes between them as found in this study is the loanwords. The loanwords used in the Malaysian Chinese variety of English are borrowed from the local Chinese languages and dialects particularly Cantonese and Hokkien. At the same time, this Malaysian Chinese variety of English has some linguistic features of other Chinese Englishes as well. Having both the characteristics of Malaysian English and Chinese Englishes has certainly indicated that this Malaysian Chinese variety of English has a life and unique flavour of its very own. Despite being ungrammatical, this unique local variety of English does not affect intelligibility and communications specifically among Malaysians. Hence, it is definitely here to stay and no doubt will continue to flourish carrying with it an unmistakeable Malaysian Chinese identity.

Clearly, this study demonstrates that through language contact, all areas of language structure can be transferred from one language to another allowing nativisation to take place. The more contact these languages have with one another, the more transfers will take place. Indeed, this study parallels Thomason (2001) work in which she argued that as the contact intensity increases, so does the transfers.

In sum, nativisation may have some features of second language acquisition but then, it results more from communicative strategies like the processes which are induced due to language contact.

5.3   Implications

The main aim of this study was to have a better understanding of the non-native variety of English used by the Malaysian Chinese. The findings point to the fact that this variety emerges due to the transference of their mother tongue as well as creative

innovation. These findings have a few significant implications for the education policy makers and teachers.

Firstly, the findings reveal that in spite of being an important marker of identity for the Malaysian Chinese, this non-native variety of English as used by the Malaysian Chinese is an indication of poor proficiency in English. As such, some urgent and drastic steps must be taken in the language policies. Improving and fine-tuning the current education system will certainly help to arrest the continuous decline in the standard of English.

Secondly, another implication of this study is that it gives English language teachers a better understanding of this variety of English. Such understanding is crucial as they will now know and understand why the Chinese students write *people mountain people sea* in their essay! Hence, this understanding and knowledge will enable them to help the Chinese students to improve in the language.

5.4   Future studies

There are limitations in this study that suggest directions for future studies. Firstly, the number of participant in this research is too small to make a valid generalization. Apart from that, due to the constraint of time, the collection of data has been limited. These two limitations have certainly affected the findings particularly to Research Question 1 and 2 of this study. In other words, these limitations could have hindered a detailed description of this variety.

Therefore, a collection from a larger population together with a longer period of time is needed for further research. In addition, further studies should also include written data besides the conversation-like data taken from the messaging apps as done in this study. This will certainly help to refine and further elaborate the findings of this

study. Nevertheless, it is hoped that this study will pave the way for more future studies on the English used by Malaysian Chinese.

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