

## Summary of Chinese English

The status of English in China is one of foreign language. It is taught in elementary schools, high schools and at institutes of higher learning. Due to the size of the country and the number of dialects spoken, it is difficult to make generalizations on the features of Chinese speakers. What is described in the lectures have merely touched upon the surface of the diversity and complexity of the situation.

As far as phonological features are concerned, a few vowels and consonants often give rise to misunderstanding. The differences in the intonation patterns, analyzed by using the contour system devised by Dr. Yuen Ren Chao, can be seen more clearly.

The lexical items which often cause misunderstanding are more likely those whose connotations in Chinese speakers' eyes differ from those of native speakers.

Syntactic features are yet another source of misunderstanding. English is hypotactic whereas Chinese is paratactic; Chinese follows a topic-comment structure which is often confusing to native speakers who, very likely, expect to hear the conclusion first. The way Chinese speakers respond to disjunctive questions are often misleading if no further explanations are provided.

In lecture two turn-taking features of Chinese speakers are analyzed. The results of one study indicated that next-speaker-self-selects type is preferred over the other two and this may give rise to an awkward, embarrassing situation in which speakers find it difficult to initiate another turn. The relative long gaps between turns are also possible causes of confusion. It is worth pointing out that timing is also cultural specific and more research is needed to investigate the average duration of gaps between Chinese speakers. It is commonly felt that a few seconds of silence is awkward enough for Chinese speakers. Lack of gap fillers often cause disfluency and relative high occurrence of overlaps is also a source of confusion.

As to pragmatic failures, different responses to greetings and partings, compliments, requests etc. are the main causes of misunderstanding.