A Contrastive Analysis of Repetition Strategies Employed in Chinese EFL Writing and Chinese-English Translation

Liu Lida, Harbin Institute of Technology, China
Zhang Yanhong, Northeast Forestry University, China

Abstract: This paper examines repetition strategies commonly employed in Chinese EFL writing practice and C-E translation due to Chinese preferences for the repetitive form. The study focuses on repetitive problems relating to cohesion and coherence in terms of simple repetition, redundant modifiers, self-evident modifiers, and intensifiers. A case study is made to illustrate the strategies explored, with the data obtained from 60 subjects of advanced Chinese EFL non-English major PhD candidates. The strategies used both in Chinese EFL writing and in translation are addressed from the intercultural perspective, with differences being compared. The reasons for overuse and ineffective use of repetition presented in translation are explored in terms of phonological aesthetical concerns and linguistic, cognitive and cultural considerations. The results show that most Chinese EFL writers prefer the repetition strategy to achieve textual coherence. This study hopes to arouse the attention of EFL researchers to the EFL repetitive errors and help both the EFL learners and instructors to locate repetitive problems in EFL writing and C-E translation.

Keywords: Academic writing, Chinese – English translation, Chinese EFL writing, contrastive rhetoric, repetition strategies, textual coherence

1. Introduction

It is a difficult and complex task to understand a writer in terms of information delivery, as different groups of people follow different linguistic norms. Repetition, as a linguistic, rhetorical and sometimes textual feature of a discourse process, is central to how readers and writers understand each other in many situations. One of the strategies preferred by Chinese EFL writers is to use repetition for coherence. We found that most Chinese EFL learners tend to use redundant and empty words to repeat both the meaning and form on either sentence level or textual level. Specifically, they prefer the superfluous words, paratactic words, simple repetition, redundant modifiers, self-evident modifiers, and lexical intensifiers to achieve coherence. These phenomena exist in both Chinese intermediate and advanced EFL non-English major PhD candidates. Repetition is, therefore in a sense, a paramount issue to be addressed towards effective communication.

Many studies have been conducted in terms of artistic features or rhetorical strategies for emphasis, for power and for cohesion, being used as a salient feature of verbal art (Lian, 1993; Cai, 2001; Zhu, Zheng & Miao, 2001; Hoey, 2001). Hoey (2001) and Zhu, Zheng and Miao (2001) believe that a variety of repetitive forms should be used between sentences to achieve cohesion. Also, they suggest that cohesive ties alone might not produce coherent text, for textual coherence is relative and subjective, because judgment may vary from reader to reader (Husan 1984; Hoey, 2001). However, repetition as a means of cohesion used to achieve topic coherence, especially

used by EFL writers in non-literal EFL writing and C-E translation, have been given little attention. Wrong choice of repetition and ineffective use of repetition by repeating the same word or adding modifiers are problems found in the Chinese EFL writing and translation.

The purpose of the present study was to examine the strategies preferred by advanced Chinese EFL non-English major writers by locating sentence and textual repetition used both in meaning and form to achieve coherence. Based on the theory of grammatical repetition developed by Lian (1993) and of lexical repetition developed by Hoey (2001), we measured Chinese EFL grammatical repetition for sentence coherence and lexical repetition for both sentence and textual coherence. The grammatical scale focuses on meaning repetition with intensifiers and self-evident modifiers such as adverbs, adjectives, nouns, or verbs. The lexical scale used for measurement ranges from simple repetition with simple paraphrase to the complex repetition with complex paraphrase. Simple repetition refers to the occasion when a lexical item that has already occurred in a text is repeated with no big alternation, normally using the same lexical item, except for a very close grammatical paradigm shift from a single noun to the plural form. Complex repetition refers to the occasion when two lexical items share a lexical morpheme but are not identical in form, such as *discover* and *discovery*; *the new polymers* and *the resulting polymers*.

We examine repetition strategies in order to verify the hypotheses: (1) Certain repetitive patterns are preferred by intermediate and advanced Chinese EFL learners. (2) Repetition or redundancy of deviant L2 production and reproduction such as translation arises from a conflict of discourse principles between Chinese and English. (3) Misuse of repetition in Chinese EFL writing of non-literary discourse on sentence and paragraph level should somehow function as indication of incoherence. (4) Reasons for inappropriate use of English repetition strategies can be found in language, culture, phonology and cognition.

2. Methodology

2.1. Survey

In this study, the measurements of grammatical repetition and lexical repetition were made based on Lian's theory (1993) and Hoey's theory (2001), as described above. For the measurements, students' assessment of two given materials and one writing task were involved. The investigation was designed to elicit repetition preferences and L1 language and cultural influence on the target language production and reproduction.

The methodology of assessment with given materials was as follows. The instructors required 60 Chinese EFL PhD students of the 2008 fall program to make in-class assessment of 20 Chinglish phrases (Table 1) by an American writer (Pinkham, 2000) in the book titled *The Translator's Guide to Chinglish* and that of an online C-E translation provided by English Edition for the 17th CCP (Chinese Communist Party) Report by president Hu (Table 2). (To help students understand the materials, tentative Chinese equivalents for 20 phrases were provided and the Chinese original for the online translation passage was offered.) The concepts of Chinglish repetitive problems had not been discussed in class prior to their assessment. The assessments were collected at a designated time, being completed and returned with very few students failing to finish the work.

Table 1. Assessment 1: Grammatical Repetition Shown in Chinese EFL C-E Translation

No.	Chinglish Version of Redundancy	Tentative Chinese Equivalents
1	…basically guarantee that	根本保證
2	…protect effectively the legitimate rights	有效保護法律權力
3	…accomplish successfully	成功地完成
4	Strongly demand that	強烈要求
5	…living standards for the people	人民的生活水準
6	…road leading to affluence and prosperity	通向富裕和繁榮的道路.
7	…troubles and problems	困難和麻煩
8	…shortcomings and weakness	缺點和不足.
9	…ensure relation of the close cooperation	確保緊密的合作關係
10	…to interfere and undermine the market	干擾和破壞市場
11	…advance forecast	預報
12	…continue to grow and develop;	繼續成長和發展
13	…for strengthening and building our country	加強和建設我們的國家
14	…to accelerate the pace of economic reform	加快經濟改革的步伐
15	…a serious natural disaster	嚴重的自然災害
16	…financial revenue	財政預算
17	…active efforts	積極努力
18	…stable and sustained development	穩定和持續的發展
19	…economically developed countries	經濟發達的國家
20	further improving compulsory education	進一步促進義務教育

Table 2. Assessment 2: Lexical Repetition Shown in Translation of President's Speech Online

No.	Hu Jingtao's Originals	Translation Published Online
1	調整財政政策　貨幣政策、完善產業政策和土地政策	We adjusted financial and monetary *policy*, improved industrial *policy* and land *policy*
2	對農民實行良種補貼、農具購置補貼、農業生產資料中和補貼	We *subsidized* scheme for agriculture, instituting direct *subsidies* for grain producers, *subsidies* for crop varieties, *subsidies* for the purchase of agricultural production
3	實行國有資本經營制度.統一內外資本企業所得稅制度、建立國家的統一職務工資制度、規範津貼補貼制度	A budget *system* for managing state capital was introduced. *Systems* for domestic and overseas-funded enterprises were unified, and a unified state civil servant salary *system* based on …was set up, the *system* of subsidies was basically standardized. Further progress was made in pricing *system.*

| 4 | 各級政府自覺接受同級人民代表大會的監督，主動接受人民政協的監督，接受新聞媒體的監督 | Governments at all levels conscientiously ***accepted the oversight*** of the People's Congress, voluntarily ***accepted the*** democratic ***oversight*** by CPPCC committees, and ***accepted the oversight*** of the idea of media and all sectors of society |
| 5 | 推進社會主義經濟建設、政治建設、文化建設、社會建設、加快全面建設小康社會進程。 | Promote socialist economic, political, cultural and social **development**; and accelerate the process of building a moderately prosperous society in all aspects. |

In addition to the above two assessments, we analyzed one writing task. The writing task consisted of EFL abstracts written by 30 students of the 2007 spring program. To help locate lexical repetition strategies, the abstracts were analyzed with the lexical scales being shown in Table 3, based on Hoey's theory (2001).

Table 3. Writing Task: Lexical Repetition for Textual Coherence Shown in Chinese EFL Abstracts

Repetition Types	Illustrations
Simple repetition	Full repetition ; Simple paraphrase with synonyms
Complex repetition	Partial repetition of the form ; Antonymous phrases; Paraphrase by summary of the idea ; Paraphrase by permitting the inclusion ; Paraphrase by changing parts of speech

2.2. Subjects

The respondents consisted of two groups totaling 90 non-English major PhD candidates from different departments of Harbin Institute of Technology. The respondents were of different ages ranging from 24 to 41, with similar English proficiency. The reason why this university was chosen is that the university, as one of the top ten in China, shows a relatively high level in English teaching. The study built of different groups was designed to identify different strategies. To compare the lexical strategies, 30 English-language abstracts were collected from the famous international database CNKY that provides full-text academic papers and the nationalities of the authors of the English-language abstracts were deliberately chosen to be British or American.

3. Results

3.1. Results of Grammatical Repetition in Assessment 1

Table 4 shows the Chinese EFL PhD students' assessment on 20 Chinglish phrases with the self-evident repetition. The results show that most of Chinese EFL PhDs have no idea about the EFL repetitive errors in terms of redundant modifiers, self-evident modifiers, attributive modifiers, and adverbial intensifiers. What we found was that most of the respondents responded positively to the use of redundant modifiers or intensifiers even though they are self-evidently repeating the meaning, which can be seen from the data. A majority of the students showed acceptance to double nouns of similar strength (Shortcomings and weakness which can be found in item 8), over 60% to the double verbs of similar meaning (continue to grow and develop) for intensification, and up to 82% to adverbial intensifiers (strongly demand). The phenomenon of misuse of grammatical repetition illustrated in the 20 C-E phrase translations suggest that Chinese EFL learners did not realize the awkwardness of the repetition used in their writing and C-E translation and tend to turn easily to grammatical repetition for sentence coherence.

Table 4. Chinese EFL Writers Responses to Grammatical Repetition Shown in C-E Translation

No.	Chinglish Version of Redundancy	No.	Rate
1	basically guarantee	27	48%
2	protect effectively the legitimate rights	27	48%
3	strongly demand that	46	82%
4	take a series of measures	44	79%
5	living standards for the people	28	50%
6	road leading to affluence and prosperity	30	54%
7	control environmental pollution and protect the environment	31	55%
8	shortcomings and weakness	33	58%
9	ensure relation of the close cooperation	26	47%
10	to…interfere and undermine the market	31	55%
11	reform in economic field	26	47%
12	continue to grow and develop	32	57%
13	for strengthening and building our country	31	55%
14	accelerate the pace of economic reform	38	68%
15	A serious natural disaster	39	70%

16	A harvest in agriculture	37	67%
17	Active efforts	31	55%
18	Stable and sustained development	40	73%
19	Economically developed countries	33	58%
20	Further to improve compulsory education	39	70%

As shown in Table 5 below, different wordings are preferred by Chinese EFL writers and native English speakers, as presented by Joan Pinkham (2000) in *The Translator's Guide to Chinglish*. These repetitions are redundant because of the addition of attributive and adverbial modifiers to the self-evident word or phrases. Of 20 Chinglish phrases assessed by EFL Chinese writers in C-E translation, 18 of 20 phrases were rated acceptable with redundant modifiers; however, native English-speakers present the same meaning more briefly and explicitly without adding superfluous modifiers. This suggests that Chinese EFL writers are likely to turn with high frequency to grammatical repetition as writing strategies on the sentence level.

Table 5. Different Wordings by EFL Chinese and Native English Speakers for the Same Idea

No.	Repetition by Chinese EFL Writers	No Repetition in Native English-Speaker Usage
1	…basically guarantee	…guarantee that
2	…protect effectively the legitimate rights	…protect legitimate rights
3	…accomplish successfully	…accomplish
4	strongly demand that	…demand that
5	…living standards for the people	living standards
6	road leading to affluence and prosperity	road leading to prosperity
7	troubles and problems	problems
8	shortcomings and weakness	shortcomings
9	ensure relation of the close cooperation	ensure the close cooperation
10	to…interfere and undermine the market	to undermine the market
11	advance forecast	forecast
12	continue to grow and develop	continue to grow
13	for strengthening and building our country	for building our country
14	accelerate the pace of economic reform	to accelerate the reform

15	a serious natural disaster	natural disaster
16	financial revenue	revenue
17	active efforts	a great effort
18	stable and sustained development	stable development
19	economically developed countries	developed countries
20	further to improve compulsory education	further our compulsory education

3.2. Results of Lexical Repetition in Assessment 2

Table 6 shows Chinese EFL PhD's positive responses to the online translation of President Hu's report in terms of lexical repetition. As shown, a great amount of lexical repetition was found in the online translation of Hu's report. What is surprising is that sentences 1-4 with simple repetition were accepted by the respondents with a high percentage of positive response, ranging from 53%, 66%, 65%, to 79%. These findings indicate that a majority of respondents were not aware of the problems displayed in the online translation, even though they also gave a higher percentage to the last translation (sentence 5), which is free of repetition errors. Compared with the grammatical repetition for intensity in Assessment 1 (Table 1), the simple lexical repetition shown in sentences 1-4 is explicitly marked, but the respondents still felt comfortable with the repetition. This deserves our attention to find reasons for their subconscious acceptance of this phenomenon.

Table 6. Chinese EFL PhDs' Response to Lexical Repetition Shown in Translation Online

No.	Categories	Rate
1	We adjusted financial and monetary *policy* ，improved industrial *policy* and land *policy*	53%
2	We *subsidize* scheme for agriculture, instituting direct *subsidies* for grain producers, *subsidies* for crop varieties, *subsidies* for the purchase of agricultural production	66%
3	A budget *system* for managing state capital was introduced. *Systems* for domestic and overseas-funded enterprises were unified, and a unified state civil servant salary *system* based on …was set up, the *system* of subsidies was basically standardized. Further progress was made in pricing *system.*	65%
4	Governments at all levels conscientiously *accepted the oversight* of the People's Congress, voluntarily *accepted the* democratic *oversight* by CPPCC committees, and *accepted the oversight* of the idea of media and all sectors of society	79%
5	Promote socialist economic, political, cultural and social development**;** and accelerate the process of building a moderately prosperous society in all aspects.	85%…

3.3. Results of Writing Task

Table 7 reveals the different choices in lexical repetition by Chinese EFL writers (30 PhD students from the 2007 program) and native English speakers (based on abstracts from the database CNKY). We can see the full repetition scoring up to 100% in the Chinese group, which suggests that most Chinese EFL learners generally tend to prefer simple repetition. Consistently with this tendency, a great number of Chinese EFL PhDs, when writing abstracts, failed to choose the alternative strategies of partial repetition, summary of the idea, inclusive substitution, and changing the parts of speech. These findings suggest that EFL Chinese prefer the full repetition pattern more than any other repetitive forms either consciously or unconsciously, having little idea of other repetition strategies at the lexical level, which agrees to a great extent with the Chinese linguistic property of meaning orientation and fewer forms.

Table 7. Lexical Repetition Rate in Abstracts by Chinese EFL PhDs and Native English Speakers

English Speakers	Chinese Speakes	Repetition Types	Illustrations
229%	0%	Partial repetition	Aliphatic urethane polymers/ The new polymers/ The resulting polymers/these material (English natives)
8%	0%	Antonyms	Distant stability /instability (English natives)
18%	2%	Summary of the idea	The resulting polymers/ these material (English natives)
23%	0%	Changing parts of speech	Discover/discovery;...were measured/the measurement; were subtracted / the subtraction (English natives)
p71%	100%	Full Repetition	Plane-section assumption/ this plane-section assumption/the plane-section assumption/ the plane- section assumption (Chinese EFL)
32%	19%	Simple paraphrase	Technique /method (Chinese EFL)

3.4. Analysis of Results

The repetitions commonly employed for coherence in Chinese EFL writing and translation include using redundant modifiers, self-evident modifiers, intensifiers, and simple lexical repetition. What we find here from the repetition strategies is that Chinese EFL advanced writers are very likely to be limited in linguistic form, as shown in Table 8. Also, Chinese EFL writers may have their own repetition strategies or patterns for their written presentation on the lexical level, sentence level and textual level, which are presented in Table 9a, Table 9b and Table 9c.

Table 8. Commonly Found Limited English Forms for One Reference Used by Chinese EFLs

Chinese	Chinese EFL Preference	More Possibilities from English Speakers
問題	question or problem	problem, issue, question, care, concerns, trouble
能力	ability	ability, competence, capability, skill, proficiency
可能	may be	may be, can, might, possibly, probably, likely, liable, prone to
可能性	possibility	possibility, probability, liability, likeability, feasibility
可以	can	can, permit, allow for, be supposed to, be encouraged to
大	big, large	big, large, huge, enormous, bulky, magnificent, tons of
正確	correct, accurate	correct, exact, exactly, accurate, precise, right
高興	glad	glad, happy, delighted, on the top of the world, joy, pleasure
發現	find	find, locate, discover; identify, findings, result, trace
區別	different	different, difference, diverse, diversity, various, variable
舉例	for example	for example, illustration, illustrate, instance, the case
健康	healthy	health, in shape, strong, physically good, mentally sound
僅僅	only	only, merely, solely, just, completely
影響	influence	influence, affect, effect, damage, impact, force
表明	shows	show, illustrate, reveal, present, display, demonstrate, report
因為	because	contributive to, result from, due to, owing to, attribute to
結果	result, result in	result, result in, give rise to, trigger, generate, cause, prompt
太空梭	aircraft	aircraft, the craft, air shuttle, the shuttle, airship, the ship
議論	discuss, discussion	discuss, discussion, argument, argue that, discern, contend
一樣	same, the same as	same, the same as, identical, in the same way, similarly

Table 8 illustrates the commonly found limited forms used in Chinese EFL writing. From this we can see that the limited use of forms hinders the Chinese EFL writers' proficiency in language presentation. This lower proficiency is mostly found in Chinese EFL test papers, such as undergraduate-national tests CET-4 and CET-6, and can even be found in graduate progressive tests. The implications of this finding are that Chinese EFL instructors and researchers need to turn their attention to the issue of repetition as one source of errors and help the learners to be sensitive to language differences so as to raise their proficiency.

Table 9a. Four Major Grammatical Repetition Strategies Preferred by Chinese EFL Writers

Patterns	Empty Nouns	Empty Verbs	Empty Adjectives	Empty Adverbs
Examples	road leading to affluence and prosperity/ Ensure relation of the close cooperation/ Shortcoming and mistakes	continue to grow and develop / to…interfere and undermine the market/ for strengthening and building our country	a serious natural disaster/ Financial revenue/ Active efforts/ basically guarantee	economically developed countries/ strongly demand that/ protect effectively the legitimate rights

Table 9b. Simple Repetition Strategies for Sentence Coherence Used by Chinese EFL Writers

No.	Types	Illustration from Online Translation of Hu's Report
1	Same Nouns	*...subsidies for…, subsidies for…, subsidies for…* …salary *system,* pricing *system, a budget system* …monetary *policy,* industrial *policy* and *policy*
2	Same Verbal Phrases	*...accepted* the oversight; *...accepted* the democratic oversight; *...accepted* the oversight
3	Same or Similar Adverbial Phrases	*further improve* the living standard*...; further promote the* cooperation between two countries*…; further* accelerate the speed of…

Table 9c. Structural Repetition Strategies for Textual Coherence in a Single Body Paragraph

No.	Types	Illustration for a Single Body Paragraph
1	Models	It can…; it can…; it can…We can…; we can…, we can… It should…; it should…; it should...
2	Preposition	without it…; without it…; without it
3	Negation	A football is…, never boring…; A football star is…, never cooling…; A football game is …, never losing …
4	Nouns	Plane-section assumption…; this plane-section assumption…; the plane-section assumption…; the plane- section assumption…

Table 9a reports four major grammatical repetition strategies chosen by most Chinese EFL learners. In these four patterns or strategies, empty modifiers are found being used as intensifiers, like "economically developed countries", "strongly demanded", "affluence and property", "grow and develop" and "further improving...". All of these four redundant repetition strategies

preferred by Chinese EFL writers are likely to be the sources of errors in both EFL writing and C-E translation. Table 9b shows the simple lexical repetition strategies preferred by most Chinese EFL advanced learners for sentence coherence. Table 9c shows the structural strategies chosen by most of Chinese EFL advanced learners for textual coherence. As can be displayed, the same noun phrases, the same adjective + noun phrases, the same prepositional phrases, and the same negations are repeated, in exactly the same structural forms. These findings can verify the hypothesis that misuse of repetition in Chinese EFL writing of non-literary discourse on sentence and paragraph level should somehow function as indication of incoherence when we look at the grammatical repetition errors and the lexical repetition or structural repetition errors. These findings also confirm the hypothesis that certain repetitive patterns used for sentence coherence or advancing ideas are preferred by intermediate and advanced Chinese EFL learners when we look at the two assessments, although some repetitions seem to be done for power and emphasis. What is important is that these patterns preferred could help both Chinese EFL teachers and learners easily predict and locate the repetition errors with the patterns provided and therefore stay away from mistakes.

4. Discussion

4.1. Linguistic Factors

A student who comes in contact with a foreign language will find some features quite easy and others extremely difficult. Those elements that are similar to his native language will help facilitate language learning and production, and those that are different will affect the writer's production and reproduction. A teacher who has made a comparison of a foreign language with the native language will help the student know better what the real problems are and can provide a better solution for him. The theory of contrastive linguistics plots the outstanding differences among tongues -- in grammar, logic, and general analysis of experience (Lado, 1957, pp. 56-60; Whorf, 1956, pp. 145-147). With Lado's suggestion, we attempt to trace contrastively the possible impacts on language production in Chinese EFL writing and C-E translation.

One possible factor accounting for the differences is derived from language properties. In this regard, English is a language of conciseness (Follett, 1966, cited in Pinkham, 2000, p. 90); however, Chinese is a language of prose (Jia, 1997, pp. 234-235), which means Chinese people prefer to turn to redundancy both in form and meaning. We could find this difference for instance in the speech by Lincoln and its Chinese translation, "We shall build a government of the <u>people</u>, by the <u>people</u> and for the <u>people</u>（ Liu, 1981, pp. 51-52）" "我們要建立牽掛著人民利益的<u>政府</u>，受人民愛戴的<u>政府</u>，為人民服務的<u>政府</u>". In Chinese translation of this well-known example, "government" is repeated besides the repetition of "people": The word "政府"given redundantly is, however, tolerated here by most Chinese speakers. Also, the repetition of "政府" is not for the purpose of emphasis but for consideration of coherence and phonology, making it agreeable in meaning and in rhythm.

In fact, repetition is sparingly used in English, being limited to the political and legal purpose for power and for emphasis, rather than for the purposes of coherence. Wilson Follett (1966, cited in Pinkham, 2000, p. 90), suggests that the maxim against redundancy is that no

idea should be expressed twice in the same page or paragraph. Robert Graves and Alan Hodge (1979, cited in Pinkham, 2000, p. 90)) point out that unless for rhetorical emphasis, or necessary recapitalization, no ideas should be repeated in same passage. In view of this, English native speakers are not encouraged to use the same word or write a thing twice in a sentence.

Another linguistic phenomenon occurring in EFL writing and translation is that more EFL Chinese prefer grammatical intensifiers and modifiers, as shown in Table 4 and 5. For native English speakers, the meaning of modifiers grows fainter with each repetition and degenerates into background noise, and constant repletion of striking nouns and strong adverbs is allowed not more often than twice in a page, for there is a governing principle of English usage that rejects duplication. Pinkham (2000) suggests that when the writer or translator rereads his or her work with a critical eye, they should confidently edit repetitive redundancy out.

One more phenomenon is the limited use of synonyms and more use of repetition by Chinese EFL writers. As shown in Table 8, the word "problem" is repetitively used by Chinese EFL learners. They tend to transfer "問題" for "problem" in the production of L2, as there is a limited form for the same reference in the Chinese language, thus failing to use English synonyms like "issue", "matter", "concern", "problem", "subject", "question", and "trouble" instead. This occurs because Chinese is a context or field-dependent language, and there are fewer forms for one idea or concept, which is the key to the problems of repetition being prevalent in Chinese EFL production and reproduction. This supports the hypothesis that redundancy of L2 production and reproduction results from a conflict of discourse principles between Chinese and English, and findings shown in Table 8 are in agreement with the previous studies made by Chinese EFL researchers. According to Cai Jigang (2001, pp. 265-266), EFL Chinese writers tend to repeat a meaning and form because of two possible reasons: limited vocabulary and L1 influence. Cai suggests that frequency of repetition in the Chinese language is much higher than in the English language, as the latter substitutes with various lexical variants. One can understand the situation when he or she looks at a limited word form, phrase, or a repetitive sentence structure for body paragraph development presented CET-4 100-word mini essay and CET-6 120-word essay.

4.2. Phonological Factors

One important factor going hand in hand with the linguistic influences is the phonological effect. For most Chinese, repetition is a way to balance an idea or a sound, but at the same time a way to build rhyme and rhythm. For expressing "longevity", one would repeat the three phrases for one single idea, such as "福如東海 (**fu ru dong hai**), 壽比南山 (**shou bi nan shan**), 萬壽無疆 (**wan shou wu jiang**)." One phrase alone would appear to be abrupt, but the effect could be better achieved by having the rhyme "海 (**hai**)", "山 (**shan**)", "疆 (**jiang**)". With all three sounds put together with three phrases, the meaning of "longevity" is repeated and rhyme and rhythm are achieved, one's wish or will could be better delivered and the speaker would be regarded as eloquent as he should be.

Another repetition of a similar kind of sound effect is accomplished by giving exactly the same form, and our observations are such, 心胸坦坦蕩蕩 (to be bighearted); 清清白白地做人, *明明白白地做事* (be a man with a clean heart and to have good sense in doing things); 高

高興興地活著 (live happily); 打破條條框框 (break the rules); 點點滴滴 (the details). These repetitions can possibly be found in daily conversation and talk, being used both by ordinary people and intellectuals. To show one's wish of healthy living, we would normally say "健健康康 (**jian jian kang kang**)", "快快樂樂 (**kuai kuai le le**)", "平平安安 (**ping ping an an**)", "順順利利 (**shun shun li li**)", and "樂樂呵呵 (**le le he he**)", and all these repetitive phrases are seen and used as a normal way to say things on both formal occasions and non-formal occasions. One observes the phonological effect of repetition (快快樂樂 kuai kuai le le) as a natural way to present many things, which could indicate the speaker's clear and strong intention he or she tries to deliver to the hearer.

Our observation of this phonological trait can be shown in another Chinese repetition form: with the second part repeating the first one. Many examples are very possible, such as. 甜言蜜語 (**tian yan mi yu**), 深思熟慮 (**shen si shu lu**), 完美無缺 (**wan mei wu que**), 千言萬語 (**qian yan wan yu**), 四面八方 (**si mian ba fang**), 千姿百態 (**qian zi bai tai**). Those Chinese phrases respectively mean "sweet words", "deep thought", " being perfect", "beyond language", "in all directions", and "in different shapes". We found that this repetition is built for the purposes of rhythm and ornamentation, and both could be regarded as a good use of Chinese language, although they are considered as cliché in English. It has been noted that Chinese EFL learners have considerable deficits in creating an idiomatic English sentence, as Chinese native speakers prefer and tolerate this form. There are similar examples of repetition illustrated in the 20 Chinglish phrases used for assessment of the grammatical repetition (Table 1): "a road leading to **affluence and prosperity**" for "富裕和繁榮道路" , "**troubles and problems**" for "困難和麻煩", "**shortcomings and weakness**" for "缺點和不足", etc. To Chinese people, this repetition can help to achieve balance in sound and meaning.

Again, the structural repetition for textual coherence is another type which is frequently shown in a body paragraph of a CET-4 100 word essay like *"never…, never…, never…"*; " *We should…, we should…, we should*…," for paragraph development in Chinese EFL writing. What is worth noticing is that Chinese EFL speakers or writers tend to produce an English sentence in a Chinese way－to link the meaning and to balance a sound.

4.3. Cognitive Factors

For the cognitive explanation, Chinese EFL English teachers are sometimes responsible, for they tend to allow their learners to duplicate the form, meaning, sound and especially the structure of L1 when writing in L2, in that English is typologically similar in SVO (subject – verb – object) sentence structure. Essays published in written handbooks are littered with repetitive structures in CET-4 100 word mini essays. A good example is the one single body paragraph development with repetition structure of "never". "Football is popular, *never* boring. A football star is a hot subject, *never* cooling. A football game is an exciting scene, *never* losing its greatest attraction". This development indicates that the Chinese EFL student attempted to use repetition to develop the paragraph besides giving an emphasis, and that the writer chose to repeat structure for sound effect as well. Another interesting example is that the Chinese EFL elementary-level and some intermediate-level speakers tend to say "*Thanks, thanks*". In Chinese, the expression for thanks is "*謝謝*"，with the first character being repeated. Also,

"***day day*** up" can be the translation for "天天向上", "***horse horse and tiger tiger***" can also be heard for "*馬馬虎虎*"，and these repetitive characters shown above can be easily found in a Chinese dictionary, and are normally cited as a good example of Chinese. Admittedly, English speakers do sometimes repeat the expression "thanks" but in a quite different way and with different intentions. They may tend to separate these two by giving a pause or adding an exclamation.

One phenomenon could be explained by a famous Chinese expert in contrastive rhetoric. In his book, Cai (2001, pp. 282-283) illustrated the many simple repetitions used by the former President Jiang in his government report. In his book, Cai cited many examples of the simple-repetition strategy, with statistics for each: 積極（actively）22 times, 認真（seriously）12 times, 充分（fully）15 times. We found the same phenomenon in Hu's report and unfortunately in the online translation which uses the simple repetition as many as 17 times in five sentences to make the context clear and coherent. This could mean that Chinese people cognate that way in L1 learning. In a classroom survey of the topic "spaceship", only 9 out of 60 Chinese EFL PhDs from two classes could offer one synonym "spacecraft" as a subject noun to continue the topic. Almost no one could use other forms such as "the ship", "the craft, "the shuttle" or "the device" as the subject for topic development, and most of them chose to repeat the same form "spaceship" instead.

This result can be traced to problems that appear in Chinese EFL learning, especially in reading and writing. Many years of teaching experience suggest that in reading comprehension and writing, repetition as one of the most important linguistic conventions is not included in any English teaching materials concerning basic skills. Thus most second-year college students of EFL fail to comprehend the reading passage by locating its synonyms, like "the ship", "the craft", "the shuttle" or "the device" used to replace the original. This is the reason why Chinese EFL learners tend to transfer into English by using the simple repetition of "spacecraft" and "problem", the latter being frequently repeated as many as five times in a single body paragraph of three sentences of 49 words (Cai 2000, p. 270). What is alarming is that many Chinese intermediate EFLs and even the advanced EFL PhDs of non-English majors still could not relate the other synonyms as relevant and therefore seldom replaced "problem" with synonyms, or "can" by its synonyms "likely", "could", "might", "be able to", "be capable of", "will possibly do", "allowing for", "permitting", etc. That is why we got the result of so great a percentage of simple repetition and low percentage of complex repetition in our study, as Chinese EFL learners are seldom required to replace the subject with complex repetition and paraphrase to build the intended sentence and paragraph. However, these problems are regarded as poor writing in terms of form, meaning and structure by most English speakers. Experience and world knowledge tell us that different forms are encouraged in the production and empty forms are assumed to be a poor presentation of the language (Hinkel, 2001, pp. 91-95), and thus are rejected by English speakers.

Now, we realize that grammatical repetition for sentence coherence with modifiers and intensifiers and lexical strategies with simple repetition for sentence coherence or textual coherence are predominant strategies in Chinese EFL writing and translation. These repetitions are also responsible for some errors and are the sources for Chinglish. Thus, this EFL language with repetition deficiency could be widely found in Chinese EFL learners' work, and even

in some of Chinese EFL teachers' writings as well, as they have learnt their mother tongue that way and EFL that way, and teach their EFL students that way. That is the reason why most Chinese EFL instructors sometimes fail to locate the error of this redundancy and why learners fail to avoid those repetitions, as they regard them as pragmatically acceptable. What's worse is that Chinese EFL learners are even encouraged to repeat the same thing for sentence coherence, textual coherence and for paragraph development, since they are seldom taught about the English writing convention: being concise and being intolerant of the repetition or clichés (Pinkham, 2000, p. 116).

According to Cai (2001, pp. 280-282), the means of effecting economy in English writing can make speaking and writing less encumbered with repetition, unless for clarity, emphasis, or humorous effect. We can find fewer repetitions in English writing, as English writers learn as many forms as synonyms and ways to paraphrase or restate one idea. You can also find less lexical and grammatical repetition for paragraph development or intensification of meaning. Graves and Hodge (1979, p. 164) support the idea that the same word should not be used so often in the same sentence or a paragraph that it becomes tedious.

4.4. Cultural Factors

Chinese EFL learners' high-frequency preference for repetition strategies can stem from different ways of looking at language and the world. Conner (1997, pp. 4-7) pointed out that Chinese students tend to resort to rhetorical devices like structural repetition to reveal the intention of the writers. Famous Chinese writers like Lu Xun and Ye Shengtao, for example, also preferred using repetition for rhetorical use in a parallel way within the sentence level and textual level. As we know, the Chinese language is field-dependent; therefore, we could find fewer lexical items for one referent in a Chinese paragraph than in English. We could account for field-independent English with more forms for one referent and field-dependent Chinese with fewer forms for one referent in that Chinese language employs circular logic, but English has analytical logic. This requires English lexis to isolate the subject from the object, the human being from nature, the spiritual from the material, thinking from existence, soul from body, phenomenon from substance. This shows a difference between English and Chinese philosophical interpretation.

The repetitive strategies shown in Tables 9a, 9b, and 9c suggest that repetitions, for some Chinese EFL writers, are not just a way to balance the form and the idea linguistically, but also a way to show off good learning or rhetorical skills. Our research suggests that repetitions of forms and meaning are instrumental in various forms to achieve rhetorical effects and coherence, by which Chinese EFL writers or translators tend to keep the topic continuous and context clear. This cultural reason behind repetition strategies or patterns can explain the occurrence of Chinglish in writing and translation. Cultural reasons for inappropriate use of English repetition strategies to achieve coherence can probably be proved to be the remote cause, although other reasons can also be the traits affecting EFP production and reproduction.

One interesting finding is that some Chinese characters like 鑫(xin), 森(shen), 焱(yan), 淼 (miao), 垚(yao), 眾(zhong), 晶(jing) and 磊(lei) are the repetition of the basic concepts related to nature such as 金木火水土人日石(gold, timber, fire, water, earth, men, sun, stone). Why

do we have this repetition? Why does the repetition occur three times? Are these repetitions governed by one principle in Chinese culture? What is the logic in there? They appear to be cyclical in form, as these Chinese characters 金(jin), 木(mu), 火(huo), 水(shui), 土(tu), 人(ren), 日(ri) and 石(shi) are repeated three times (火into燚). According to Jia (1997, pp. 224-225), those characters repeated in exactly the same form by piling together to suggest a kind of logic—one generates into two, and then into three. In his book entitled *Intercultural Communication*, we find the answer to the three-piling-repetition－three means extraordinarily the great, the entire world. This recycled but profound greatness is how Chinese people see the world and why they prefer the repetition strategies.

Another interpretation for the cultural preference of the repetition employed in the language production can be indirectness, which seems to indicate that repetition of the words or ideas on both the sentence level and the paragraph level are sometimes the safe way to present the speaker's intention, avoiding confrontation with others and losing face before others, and this is our new interpretation of the custom of repeating things rather than proceeding to the new and specific ideas. Normally, Chinese writers and speakers tend to repeat the idea to develop the topic sentence or thesis statement in their school report, paper writing, essay writing, examination paper, and in their public speeches. Many Chinese can find numerous examples of this phenomenon, and so will the English speakers who visit and stay in China for some time.

4.5. Dealing with Repetitions in EFL Writing and Translation

Chinglish is different from English, in that the former allows the writers to write English in a very Chinese way, following the L1 linguistic and rhetorical conventions, L1 logical patterns, and L1 thought patterns. The governing principle of the Chinese language concerning repetition suggests that the phenomenon is acceptable to Chinese people, therefore exerting a very strong influence on Chinese EFL writing and translation practice, and on the wide use of repetitions in many discourses as a result. Admittedly, some repetition in forms of redundant twins such as " by leaps and bounds", "right and proper" are learnt at the very intermediate level of English learning, and we therefore assume that repetition in English is allowed and tolerable. In fact, these repetitive twins are few exceptions, only for certain contexts, and are for sound effect. Through a detailed study of English language, we would find a strong rejection of repetition. Follett (1966, p. 377) proposed a maxim against redundancy of repetition, which is the principle of English usage rejecting unnecessary duplication. To achieve that purpose, judgment is needed whether to keep or drive out the unnecessary duplications and make sure it is proper to keep the same form, modifiers, intensifiers, and redundant twins that are seemingly workable in the writing or translation. However, English is a language of form and analytical logic with more forms for references, and Chinese language is the opposite in terms of limited forms, with fewer specific derived forms and more general nouns and verbs. This may trigger many problems if Chinese EFL writers or translators transfer L1 into L2 by changing the Chinese character into the English version.

Because of differences in nature and linguistic properties, Chinese EFL writers and translators have been encouraged to add redundant words in both writing production and translation work. Confronted with a repetition of ideas in C-E translation, we need normally

ask ourselves if the repetition was given intentionally in the original, deliberately for emphasis, power, sound effect, or coherence. The answers to these questions will help determine the translator's appropriate use of repetition. Also, we need to re-examine the original to see if we misinterpret these elements, so that we can decide whether to keep or eliminate the repetitive parts. For translation, good advice from experts on the widely agreed-upon rule given by Strunk and White (1979, cited in Pinkham 2000, p. 143.) is that, "A sentence should contain no unnecessary word… for the same reason that a drawing should have no unnecessary lines and a machine no unnecessary parts." Most experts suggest that Chinese EFL writers or translators should be concise, and that they should let the apparent redundancy disappear when initial judgment suggests the redundancy serves no purpose and therefore should not be retained.

There might be many solutions to redundancy, which will help translators stop mistranslation of the target language if they address the problem from the intercultural perspective rather than from skill concerns. What they should do is to tighten a wordy sentence, substitute the referent with different synonyms or paraphrase, replace the referent with a summary noun or general noun or pronoun. We can find support from Hoey's systematic framework of lexical repetition patterns (2001, pp. 51-75.) Translators could drop redundant twins, learn to eliminate the unnecessary modifiers and intensifiers of adjective or adverbs, and finally eliminate unnecessary repetition mistakes. Specifically, Chinese EFL learners need to choose between "shortcomings and mistakes", "affluence and property", and "strengthen and improve", so as to stop redundant twins. They could replace the title "the international conference on intercultural communication studies" with the inclusive noun "the conference". Similarly, they could use "the new system" or "the current policy" to replace "the one-child policy for birth control" in order to continue the topic. Also, they can replace "the spacecraft", with the words "the craft", "the spaceship", "the ship". They can also drop or eliminate the intensifier "strongly" before "demand" to stay away from grammatical repetition. They can use complex repetition combined with paraphrase by using the general summary noun "*discovery*" (thus changing the parts of speech) to replace the sentence, "We *discovered* a new approach to the problems". They can learn to address a paragraph with one single idea fully developed rather than insert more with the structural repetition "Never…, never…, never..." With these revisions, the repetitive problems of using redundancy in form, meaning and structure can possibly be dealt with, and we believe that Chinese EFL writers can finally turn Chinglish into English if they stay away from unnecessary repetitions.

5. Conclusions

5.1. Summary of Results

This contrastive case study was to advance our understanding of repetitive strategies employed by Chinese EFL writers, exploring the reasons underlying the Chinese EFL repetitive patterns, and the differences between Chinese and English. The measurements of grammatical repetition and lexical repetition were made based on Lian's (1993) theory and Hoey's (2001) theory, with three major repetitive patterns in Chinese EFL being collected. The study indicated that repetition strategies are found to be widely employed in deviant Chinese EFL L2 production

and reproduction, which does arise from a conflict of two different cultures and languages on the sentence level and textual level. We concluded that inappropriate use of repetition strategies does get involved with cultural influence on the target language production and reproduction, and therefore tends to break down the effective communication in a cross-cultural context.

5.2. Pedagogical Implications

To facilitate cross-cultural communication and better information delivery, repetition for rhetorical effect is to be avoided so as to make EFL writings or C-E translation more idiomatic, coherent, and acceptable. Although there are times when we are allowed legitimately to state an idea twice for the purposes of power and emphasis, we should follow the English rules singled out by Fowler (1965), the writer of the book *King's English,* who claims that the word repeated should be either varied or left out, and that repetition is more or less abnormal, and should be rejected.

To improve cross-cultural communication, the issue of repetition should be given significant attention in the pedagogical concerns of many discourses like technical discourse, academic English, and scientific English. The study indicates that the problem of repetition reflected in Chinese EFL writing and C-E translation is a comprehensive issue with a great many concerns involved, and that redundancies arise from the conflict of different languages with different discourse principles and linguistic and cultural properties. Due to misunderstanding of the element of repetition in the two different languages and cultures, Chinese EFL learners tend to transfer L1 strategy to L2 practice, thus triggering miscommunication in the cross-cultural context. Thus, it is of critical necessity for pedagogical researchers to switch their attention to the issue of repetition, for it is important to help EFL students to be aware of the necessity of staying away from repetition errors. Students should be encouraged to learn about the differences existing between English and their own languages and learn to revise their mistakes so as to eliminate redundancy when rendering L1 into L2. Also, patience is needed for learning language differences and for revision practice from both instructors and their learners. We suggest that the Chinese EFL teachers and researchers, or even Asian EFL researchers in general, need to turn their attention to the problems stemming from ill use of repetition shown in writing and translation. They need to start to focus on problems in reading comprehension caused by their failure to spot language differences and their misunderstanding of language properties and repetition rules.

References

Cai, Jigang. (2001). *Contrastive rhetoric: Chinese and English.* Shanghai: Fudan University Publishing House.

Cobbet, William. (1976). *A grammar of the English language.* New edition, with introduction by Robert Burchfield. New York: Oxford University Press.

Connor, Ulla. (1997). *Contrastive rhetoric: Cross-cultural aspects of second language writing.*

Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press.

Follett, Wilson. (1966). *Modern American usage: A guide.* Edited and completed by Jacques Barzun. New York: Hill and Wang.

Fowler, Henry Watson. (1965). *Fowler's modern English usage*. (2nd edition). Edited by Ernest Gowers. Great Britain: Oxford University Press.

Graves, Robert & Hodge, Alan. (1979). *A reader over your shoulder. A handbook for writers of English prose*. (2nd edition). New York: Vantage Books Random House.

Hinkel, Eli. (2001). *Culture in second language teaching and learning*. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Publishing.

Hoey, Michael. (2001). *Patterns of lexis in text*. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Publishers.

Hu, Jintao. (2007). Seventeenth National CPC Congress in People's Great Hall. (Translation online, translator unknown) From Full Text of Hu Jintao's Report at 17th Party Congress. Retrieved from http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2007-10/24/content_6938749.htm

Husan, Ruqaiya. (1984). *Coherence and cohesive harmony*. In Flood James (Ed.) *Understanding reading comprehension*. Delaware: International Reading Association.

Jia, Yuxin. (1997). *Kua wenhuaj jiaoji xue* [*Intercultural communication*]. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Publishers.

Lado, Robert. (1957). *Linguistics across cultures*. Ann Arbor Michigan: University of Michigan Press.

Lian, Shuneng. (1993). *Contrastive studies of English and Chinese*. Beijing: Higher Education Publisher.

Liu, Runqing. (1981). *Great speeches.* Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press.

Pinkham, Joan. (2000). *Saying the same thing twice. The translators' guide to Chinglish.* Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press.

Strunk, William & White, Elwyn Brooks. (1979). *Elements of Style*. 3rd Ed. New York: Macmillan.

Whorf, Benjamin Lee. (1956). *Language, thought and reality.* Edited by John B. Carroll. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

Winter, Eugene O. (1979). Replacement as a fundamental function of the sentence in the context. *Forum Linguisticum 4*(2), 99-133.

Zhu, Yongsheng; Zheng, Lixin & Miao, Xingwei. (2001). *Reflection of systematic functional languages*. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Publishing House.

Author Note

Liu Lida is a MA supervisor and Professor of Foreign Languages at Harbin Institute of Technology where she is a member of a specialist group in graduate assessment . She is also a member of the China Association of IAICS and has published widely in the area of applied intercultural studies. Her publications include "Textual Cohesion and Coherence in Chinese

EFL Abstract Writing in Engineering Discourse" (ICS, 2010), "Coherent Strategies Preferred in Chinese EFL English for Technical Purposes" (Harbin Institute of Technology, 2008) and "Differences Reflected in the Reader's Responsibility and Writer's Responsibility" (ICS, 2007).

Zhang Yanhong is an Associate Professor of Foreign Language at Northeast Forestry University, where she is a member of the teaching and research group. Her research interests include EFL teaching and modern literature.