

Multilingual Education

Zhichang Xu
Deyuan He
David Deterding *Editors*

Researching Chinese English: the State of the Art

 Springer

Contents

What We Know about Chinese English: Status, Issues and Trends.....	1
Zhichang Xu, David Deterding, and Deyuan He	
Part I Researching Chinese English Pronunciation	
The Pronunciation of English in Guangxi: Which Features Cause Misunderstandings?.....	17
David Deterding	
The Hong Kong English Syllable Structure	33
Lian-Hee WEE	
Part II Researching Chinese English Lexis, Grammar and Pragmatics	
Lexis-Grammar Interface in Chinese English: A Corpus Study of the Prototypical Ditransitive Verb GIVE	49
Haiyang Ai and Xiaoye You	
Researching Collocational Features: Towards China English as a Distinctive New Variety	61
Jianli Liang and David C.S. Li	
A Corpus-Based Study of Syntactic Patterns of Nominalizations Across Chinese and British Media English	77
Ying Liu, Alex Chengyu Fang, and Naixing Wei	
A Study on Modified-Modifying Sequence in the Compositions by Chinese Advanced Users of English	93
Wendong Jiang	
Pragmatics in Chinese Graduate Students' English Gratitude Emails.....	109
Wei Ren	

Part III Researching Perceptions, Attitudes and Reactions towards Chinese English	
Perceptions of Chinese English and Pedagogic Implications for Teaching English in China	127
Deyuan He	
An Investigation of Attitudes Towards English Accents – A Case Study of a University in China.....	141
Fan (Gabriel) Fang	
Chinese and Non-Chinese English Teachers’ Reactions to Chinese English in Academic Writing	157
Joel Heng Hartse	
The Prospect of Teaching English as an International Language in a Chinese Context: Student-Teachers’ Reactions	173
Roby Marlina	
The Nativization of English in China	189
Qing Ma and Zhichang Xu	
Part IV Researching Cultural Conceptualizations and Identities in Chinese English	
Cultural Conceptualisations in Chinese English: Implications for ELT in China.....	205
Zhichang Xu and Farzad Sharifian	
Through English as a Window: Defining ‘Being Chinese’ in the 21st Century.....	219
Tsz Yan Emily Fong	
Part V Chinese Scholarship on Chinese English	
Researching Chinese English: A Meta-analysis of Chinese Scholarship on Chinese English Research	235
Zhichang Xu	
Future Directions for Researching Chinese English.....	267
Andy Kirkpatrick	

Lexis-Grammar Interface in Chinese English: A Corpus Study of the Prototypical Ditransitive Verb GIVE

Haiyang Ai and Xiaoye You

Abstract This chapter investigates the lexis-grammar interface of Chinese English from a corpus linguistics perspective. Utilizing large-scale corpus data collected from an online discussion forum, we have focused on the prototypical ditransitive verb GIVE and examined its verb-complementation patterns, direct object slots collocates, the relationship between complementation patterns and collocates, and the relationship between collocates and verb tense. Using WordSmith Tools (Scott 2004, WordSmith tools (Version 4.0) [Computer software]. Oxford University Press, Oxford), we have randomly sampled and analyzed 500 uses of GIVE in the dataset. The results suggest that there exist certain associations between specific lexical items and grammatical constructions in Chinese English, an Expanding-Circle variety of English. The relationship between lexis and grammar, or lexico-grammar, as illustrated in the case study of GIVE, can be taken as a concrete instantiation of structural nativization in local varieties of English.

Keywords Lexicogrammar • Verb-complementation • Collocation • Corpus linguistics • Nativization • Chinese English

1 Introduction

Within the field of World Englishes, research on nativization of the English language into diverse local varieties has received an increasing amount of scholarly attention. An important area of study on these nativization processes is structural nativization, generally understood as “the emergence of locally characteristic

H. Ai (✉)
School of Education, University of Cincinnati,
2610 McMicken Circle, Cincinnati, OH 45221, USA
e-mail: haiyang.ai@uc.edu

X. You
Department of English, The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA 16802, USA
e-mail: xuy10@psu.edu

© Springer International Publishing AG 2017
Z. Xu et al. (eds.), *Researching Chinese English: the State of the Art*,
Multilingual Education 22, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-53110-6_4

49

linguistic patterns” (Schneider 2007, pp. 5–6). The lexis-grammar interface has been most extensively explored for evidence of structural nativization in Indian English. For example, Mukherjee (2009) studied present-day English in India by focusing on new locally emerging forms, including collocations, new prepositional verbs, new ditransitive verbs, and verb-complementation patterns. Schilk (2011) exploited ICE-India, ICE-GB, and the Times of India Corpus by focusing on collocation and verb-complementation profiles of three focal ditransitive verbs (i.e., *give*, *send* and *offer*). Similar studies on lexicogrammar in Indian English at the level of verb-complementation have been conducted by Mukherjee and Hoffmann (2006). Collectively, these studies highlight the centrality of the lexis-grammar interface in exploring structural nativization of new English varieties.

Despite the surge of studies on the lexis-grammar interface in Inner-Circle and Outer-Circle varieties of English, surprisingly little work has been done to understand the lexis-grammar interface in Expanding-Circle varieties. The emergence of Chinese English in the largest Expanding-Circle country has prompted investigations into this new variety in the field of World Englishes. This chapter investigates the lexis-grammar interface of Chinese English from a corpus linguistics perspective. Utilizing large-scale corpus data collected from an online discussion forum, this study focuses on the prototypical ditransitive verb GIVE and examines its verb-complementation patterns, direct object slots collocates, and its relationship with tense. The results suggest that there exist certain associations between specific lexical items and grammatical constructions in Chinese English, and these associations can be considered as concrete instantiations of the structural nativization of Chinese English.

2 Chinese English as a Local Variety

Broadly speaking, studies on Chinese English can be grouped into at least the following four major strands. The first strand focuses on historical and sociolinguistic descriptions of English in China (Bolton 2003; You 2010). For instance, Bolton (2003) surveyed a substantial body of historical, linguistic and sociolinguistic research on the description and analysis of English in Hong Kong SAR and the Chinese mainland, and he considered the varying status of English in the Chinese mainland over time and recent developments since 1997. The second strand focuses on linguistic features of Chinese English. Using a dataset combining interviews, newspaper articles, short stories, and questionnaires, for example, Xu (2010) examined lexical and syntactic features in Chinese English. At the lexical level, he documented the emerging lexis by identifying and classifying them into Chinese loanwords in English (e.g., *chow mein*, *fengshui*), nativized English words (e.g., *save face*, *migrant workers*), and common English words shared with other varieties. At the syntactic level, Xu considered such factors as regional preference, innovation (e.g., simplification, generalization, complexification), and language transfer in determining characteristic syntactic features in Chinese English. Applying this

method, Xu documented a wide array of syntactic structures unique in Chinese English, including adjacent default tense, null-subject utterances, co-occurrence of connective pairs, subject pronoun copying, and yes-no responses to tag questions. The third strand of research examined Chinese speakers' perceptions and attitudes towards the variety. For example, Chen and Hu (2006) reviewed the acceptability of Chinese English at home and abroad and found that while it is still not a fully accepted form of English, it has great potential to be considered as a local variety. The fourth strand of research examined Chinese English from the perspective of rhetorical strategies and multilingual creativity (e.g., Kirkpatrick and Xu 2002; You 2008, 2011). Adopting a context model using Aristotelian and Confucian rhetorical concepts, for instance, You (2008) studied how Chinese young people use English to foster a community and to realize their particular goals in an online space. Taken together, these studies have contributed to our understanding of Chinese English from diverse theoretical perspectives. However, they lack in-depth analyses of the lexis-grammar interface, which is the focus of the present chapter.

3 Corpus-Based Approaches to the Study of World Englishes

Within the field of World Englishes, linguistic corpora have become increasingly valuable resources in studying local varieties of English (Kachru 2008; Nelson 2008; Xiao 2009). Kachru (2008) acknowledged that corpus linguistics could be usefully applied in describing linguistic features in World Englishes. A major area of corpus-based study of World Englishes focuses on the lexis-grammar interface. In fact, much of the research on lexicogrammar has originated from and has been largely driven by corpus linguistics (Biber et al. 1998). It is important to note that the mutually interdependent nature of particular lexical items and emerging constructions does not lend itself well to intuition. Native speaker intuitions, according to Biber et al. (1998, p. 100), are “not reliable guides” for the perception of such patterns and for the prediction of how such co-selections occur.

While lexis and grammar remain frequent objects of study in World Englishes, studies have tended to focus either on lexis (e.g., De Klerk 2005) or on grammar (e.g., Bautista 2008). It is only recently that some studies have begun focusing on the link between lexis and grammar, particularly from the perspective of structural nativization. Mukherjee and Hoffmann (2006), for example, examined the frequency and distribution of ditransitive verbs and their complementation patterns in Indian English. Taking a structural nativization perspective, Schilk (2011) analyzed collocation and verb-complementation profiles of ditransitive verbs (i.e., *give*, *send*, and *offer*) in Indian English based on large-scale corpora. In addition, Mukherjee (2009) documented locally emergent forms—collocations, new prepositional verbs, new ditransitive verbs, and verb-complementation patterns—in Indian English using authentic corpus data. Also using corpus linguistics methodology, Bautista (2008) examined lexicogrammatical features in Philippine English, and reported that speakers show a tendency for (1) using singular nouns in *one of the* structures

(e.g., *one of the boy*); (2) omission of articles (e.g., \emptyset majority; such + \emptyset singular noun); (3) omission of indirect object for the verb *assure*; and (4) using the relative pronoun *wherein* as an all-purpose connector. Notwithstanding the different foci and perspectives, these studies suggest that the lexis-grammar interface—especially verb-complementation and collocation behaviours—can be productively explored for specific instantiations of structural nativization of local varieties of English.

Previous corpus-based studies on local varieties of English have largely relied on the ICE series of corpora (e.g., Bautista 2008; Mukherjee 2009; Mukherjee and Hoffmann 2006; Schilk 2011). Some studies have also incorporated corpora resources that were compiled from online newspaper articles (e.g., Mukherjee and Hoffmann 2006). Few studies, thus far, have examined English in the new media, including online discussion forums, social networking websites such as Facebook, and microblogging websites such as Twitter. These types of new media data, in our view, are qualitatively different from online newspaper articles because they are produced by numerous general users of English rather than a few journalists, which means that they are less likely to be shaped by editorial interference and that they represent a wider variety of communicative purposes and levels of formality. In the present chapter, we explore how data collected from an online discussion forum can be used in studying lexicogrammar in World Englishes.

4 The Case Study of Give

4.1 Data Collection and Coding

In this section, we focus on the prototypical ditransitive verb GIVE in order to illustrate what a corpus can provide in the study of the lexis-grammar interface of Chinese English. The data analyzed in this study were collected in November 2011 from an online discussion forum entitled *The 21st Century Community* (<http://bbs.i21st.cn/>). Focusing on English learning, the forum is offered by 21st Century Newspapers, a popular English learning newspaper group targeting students of all proficiency levels in China. The group has attracted a large number of high school and college students to its online space, mainly because of the popularity of its print newspapers. Participation in the discussion forum is on a voluntary basis with no access restriction; however, only registered members can post messages. At the time of data collection, this online community had 13 sub-forums for different participants (e.g., teachers, college students, and high school students) with varying interests (e.g., language pedagogy, language skills, test preparation, and opinions).

For the purpose of this chapter, the focus is on the *English Corner* sub-forum. As the most popular sub-forum in the entire online community, this virtual space is frequented by high school and college students, graduates, as well as white-collar workers. Some of the most popular topics discussed include issues related to English language learning, as well as other daily concerns of the forum participants (e.g.,

Table 1 The corpus description

Sub-forum name	English corner
Total number of threads	2354
Total number of running words (tokens)	7,157,364
Total number of different types of words (types)	144,625

work, learning, family issues, making friends). Given the nature of online discussion forums, noises (e.g., advertisements) were mixed with the threads. To ensure that the threads that were examined were highly relevant to forum participants, it was decided to focus on those with more than twenty follow-up posts. These threads were automatically downloaded using computer programs that the authors have developed. The corpus building procedure includes (1) determining the total number of webpages within the sub-forum; (2) retrieving and parsing each webpage (using python modules *urllib2* and *BeautifulSoup*); (3) extracting and saving the results of each thread as a plain text file; and (4) removing irrelevant elements (e.g., HTML tags, symbols, images, block quotes). In total, the corpus consists of 2354 threads, totalling over seven million words (See Table 1).

To conduct analyses of the collocation and verb-complementation profiles in Chinese English, we decided to focus on the prototypical ditransitive verb *give*. Using WordSmith Tool 4.0 (Scott 2004), 500 instances of the use of *give* in our online forum corpus were sampled. Each instance of a concordance line containing *give* was manually analyzed and coded according to the classification scheme of complementation patterns following the framework of Mukherjee and Hoffmann (2006). Instances of *give* being used as part of a phrasal verb (e.g., *give up*, *give in*, *give away*) were excluded, because their semantic meanings are different from that of the basic ditransitive meaning of *give* (see also Schilk 2011).

In what follows, we will focus on (1) GIVE's major verb-complementation patterns, (2) direct object collocates of GIVE, and (3) the relationship between GIVE's verb-complementation patterns and its direct object collocates, and (4) the relationship between GIVE's direct object collocates and verb tense. We will also compare the results with other varieties of Englishes when appropriate. Interested readers can consult Ai and You (2015) for other ditransitive verbs contained in the same corpus.

4.2 Verb-Complementation

A major area of study for verb-complementation patterns is the ditransitive construction (e.g., *give somebody something*) and its dative alternation (e.g., *give something to somebody*). The complementation patterns of a verb not only specify the

number of argument roles it invokes but also stipulate how its various constituents are related. Depending on the configuration of various constituents, structurally related patterns can be derived to account for such variations as inversion of object, passive voice, relative clauses, and so on. Thus, a productive area of study in verb-complementation is the differing preference among interlocutors between ditransitive verbs and their various complementation patterns. Typically, this line of research focuses on semantically related groups of words (e.g., *convey*, *submit*, *supply*) that describe a TRANSFER event in the transfer-caused-motion (TCM) construction (Goldberg 1995). In the present study, we focus on the verb-complementation patterns of the prototypical ditransitive verb *give* in our Chinese English corpus.

The distribution of complementation patterns of *give* is summarized in Table 2. (An example for each pattern is given in 1–7.) As can be seen, one of the most notable patterns is that the complementation patterns of GIVE as attested in our data are far from evenly distributed. The Type I pattern alone accounts for 71% of all 500 instances of the use of *give* that were coded and examined. Conversely, several other complementation patterns of *give* either occur sporadically (i.e., Type IIP, Type IIIP, and Type IIIPb) or do not occur (i.e., Type IP). These findings are in sharp contrast with those reported in Indian English and British English by Mukherjee and Hoffmann (2006), who studied the Indian and British components of the International Corpus of English (ICE). Specifically, the occurrences of the Type I pattern in our Chinese English corpus are nearly twice as frequent as those in British English, and more than three and half times as frequent as those in Indian English. By contrast, the uses of other patterns (i.e., Type IP, Type IIP, Type IIIP, Type IIIPb and Other) in Chinese English are considerably less frequent than those in British or Indian English.

Table 2 Complementation of GIVE in the Chinese English dataset, Indian English, and British English

Type	Pattern	Chinese English		Indian English		British English	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
I	(S) GIVE [O _i :NP] [O _d :NP]	355	71	407	22.6	404	38
IP	[S <O _i active] BE <i>given</i> [O _d :NP] (by-agent)	0	0	130	7.2	84	7.9
II	(S) GIVE [O _d :NP] [O _i :PP _{to}]	63	12.6	310	17.3	123	11.6
IIP	[S <O _d active] BE <i>given</i> [O _i :NP _{to}] (by-agent)	2	0.4	70	3.9	23	2.2
III	(S) GIVE Θ _i [O _d :NP]	47	9.4	528	29.4	247	23.2
IIIP	[S <O _d active] BE <i>given</i> Θ _i (by-agent)	1	0.2	123	6.8	38	3.6
IIIPb	[antecedent] _{co} (S < O _d) _{co} (BE) <i>given</i> Θ _i (by-agent)	4	0.8	49	2.7	28	2.6
Other		28	5.6	180	10.1	117	10.9
Sum		500	100	1797	100	1064	100

Note. O_i denotes indirect object, O_d denotes direct object, Θ _i denotes absence of indirect object, PP_{to} denotes *to* prepositional phrase

- (1) I (S) GIVE [O_i:NP] [O_d:NP]
Then my teacher gave me a forced smile. (t555496.txt)
- (2) II (S) GIVE [O_d:NP] [O_i:PP_{to}]
I want to give my hand to a man before 28. (t537523.txt)
- (3) IIP [S <O_d active] BE *given* [O_i:NP_{to}] (by-agent)
I am pleased that you like the chinese song which was given to you.
(t572844.txt)
- (4) III (S) GIVE Θ_i [O_d:NP]
Everyone who have a certain knowledge can give the answer instantly.
(t509689.txt)
- (5) IIIP [S <O_d active] BE *given* Θ_i (by-agent)
...if financial aid was given. (t568338.txt)
- (6) IIIPb [antecedent]_{co} (S < O_d)_{co} (BE) *given* Θ_i (by-agent)
Alice is my English name, which is given by one of my English teacher.
(t547114.txt)
- (7) Other
So give him as a present! (t539567.txt)

The preference for certain verb-complementation patterns can be interpreted from the angle of the interlocutors' perception of verb transitivity. It is generally recognized that the number of arguments is indicative of the degree of transitivity of the verb. Thus, the more arguments a verb can take, the greater its transitivity. With respect to the verb *give*, the Type I and Type II patterns, by definition, require the most arguments: the subject, the direct object and the indirect object. If we group together patterns with the most arguments, i.e., Type I, Type II and all their derivative patterns, the combined cluster would account for the vast majority (84%) of the instances of *give* analyzed in our corpus. This strong preference for the Type I and Type II patterns, together with their derivative forms, suggests that the verb *give* has been perceived by Chinese English speakers to be highly transitive. Such a preference, we argue, can be considered a distinctive feature of the structural nativization of Chinese English at the level of verb-complementation.

4.3 Direct Object Collocates

Next we examine collocates in the direct object position of the verb GIVE in our corpus data. As can be seen in Table 3, the collocation profiles of GIVE in the direct object slot in our Chinese English corpus differ markedly from those in British English and Indian English. The vast majority of the collocates with *give* in our top 15 list in Chinese English do not occur in the top 15 list of British English at all. Even the three overlapped instances (*chance*, *impression*, and *time*) differ in ranking in the two lists. For instance, the most frequent collocation in British English is *give time*, but it is only ranked 10th in our corpus. Our most frequent collocation, by

Table 3 Top 15 direct object collocates of *give* in the Chinese English dataset, Indian English, and British English

Chinese English	Log-likelihood	British English	Log-likelihood	Indian English	Log-likelihood
Advice	4727.15	Time	365.39	Importance	269.77
Suggestion	2497.43	Details	314.42	Example	260.06
Chance	2225.65	Example	303.92	Details	240.30
Hand	1378.34	Way	277.42	Address	214.66
Answer	1053.17	Opportunity	201.69	News	211.27
Money	1016.07	Rise	187.39	Information	209.16
Love	1006.23	Impression	171.46	Chance	195.56
Wishes	825.41	Information	164.78	Money	192.12
Impression	802.23	Indication	152.33	Answer	167.52
Time	738.40	Prescription	149.71	Idea	165.26
Gift	689.00	Chance	139.60	Amount	85.10
Try	679.90	Idea	104.58	Advice	80.92
Life	581.96	Ring	93.06	Explanation	80.92
Feeling	529.65	Support	81.36	Description	63.08
Hope	493.99	Sense	78.95	Meaning	58.30

Note. British and Indian English data are adapted from Schilk (2011), who did not exclude phrasal verbs (e.g., *give rise*, *give way*) in his analysis

contrast, is *give advice*. Similarly, 11 out of the top 15 direct object collocates of *give* identified in the corpus do not occur at all in Indian English. That is to say, in the top 15 list, the two local varieties of English share only four common collocates (i.e., *advice*, *chance*, *answer*, and *money*), all of which are ranked higher in the list for Chinese English than the list for Indian English.

4.4 Relationship Between Collocates and Verb-Complementation

After examining GIVE's verb-complementation patterns and its collocates in the direct object slot, the next topic we are interested in exploring is the relationship between these two. In other words, we are interested in finding which collocates tend to associate with which complementation patterns. Table 4 summarizes the frequent complementation patterns of the verb *give* in relation to its various direct objects in our Chinese English corpus data. Take the collocate *advice* as an example. Out of a total of 50 instances, 44 of them, or 88%, have occurred in the Type-I pattern; one instance, or 2%, occurred in the Type-II pattern; and five instances, or 10%, occurred in the Type-III pattern. See examples 8–10 for Type I, Type II, and Type III patterns of *give*'s collocate *advice*.

- (8) advice - Type I
Will you give me some advice about the first day lessons? (t542153.txt)

Table 4 Frequent complementation patterns of *give* in relation to direct object collocates in the Chinese English dataset

Collocates	Type I	Type Ider	Type II	Type IIder	Type III	Type IIIder	Other	N
Chance	100.0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	14
Time	100.0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	9
Idea	100.0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	7
Kiss	100.0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	7
Feeling	100.0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	6
Freedom	100.0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	5
Opportunity	100.0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	5
Advice	88.0%	0%	2.0%	0%	10.0%	0%	0%	50
Suggestion	89.7%	0%	3.4%	0%	6.9%	0%	0%	29
Address	81.8%	9.1%	9.1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	11
Money	80.0%	0%	20.0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	15
Correction	83.3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	16.7%	0%	6
Help	75.0%	0%	25.0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	8
Happiness	60.0%	0%	40.0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	5
Wishes	40.0%	0%	60.0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	5
Answer	53.8%	0%	0%	0%	46.2%	0%	0%	13
Comment	33.3%	0%	0%	0%	66.7%	0%	0%	6
Hand	37.5%	0%	25.0%	12.5%	25.0%	0%	0%	8
Website	42.9%	14.3%	14.3%	0%	14.3%	14.3%	0%	7

Note: Following Schilk's (2011) practice, structurally related patterns (e.g., relative clauses, fronted elements, passive voice, etc.) were collapsed as derivative patterns Type-Ider, Type-IIder, etc. That is, Type-Ider contains patterns derived from Type-I, including Type-IP, which is a passive form of Type-I. Also note that for the analysis of the collocate *address*, a distinction between *web-site address*, *email address*, or *IM address* (e.g., Skype, MSN or QQ) was not made, but rather generally treated as 'address'

- (9) advice - Type II
Maybe I have no rights to give some advices to you, just because I haveno girlfriend till now. (t502974.txt)
- (10) advice - Type III
Can you give some advice on how to eliminate the poverty?(t552431.txt)

As can be seen, collocates in the direct object slot of GIVE show differing preference for the complementation patterns. Some collocates always occur (i.e., 100% preference) in the Type-I complementation pattern (e.g., *chance*, *time*, *idea*, *kiss*, *feeling*, *freedom*, *opportunity*), and others show a strong preference (75–89% preference, e.g., *advice*, *suggestion*, *address*, *money*, *correction*, *help*) for the Type I pattern. Together, these two groups of collocates, both preferring the Type-I complementation pattern, account for the majority of the cases in the dataset, a pattern consistent with the discussion of the verb-complementation profile examined in the previous section. In Indian English, by contrast, the majority of direct object collo-

cates (i.e., *address, money, answer, details, information, explanation*) show a strong preference for the Type-III complementation pattern, not the Type I pattern (Schilk 2011, p. 88).

4.5 Relationship Between Collocates and Verb Tense

In the last section of the case study of GIVE, we focus on the association between direct object collocates and verb forms. Table 5 summarizes the top 10 direct object collocates and their relationship with different tenses of the verb *give*. As can be seen, among the several tenses of finite use of *give*, a vast majority of the top ten collocates show a predominant preference for the simple present over other tenses, with the exception of *money* and *chance*, which also tend to be used with the simple future tense (e.g., “I will give 9000 RMB to school”). Take the collocate *answer* as an example: it can be observed that *answer* occurs somewhat differently with different forms of *give*: i.e. *answer(s)* occurs with *gave*, *will give* only one time, but occurs nine times with the present tense *give*. Note that it also has two nonfinite uses (e.g., “I think I have to give an answer mainly in Chinese.”). In other words, the simple present form (i.e., *give*) accounts for a good portion (about 70%) of the cases that collocate with the noun *answer* in our dataset.

One potential explanation for this overwhelming preference for the simple present tense may be due to the influence of the topic in the online discussion forum. That is, the majority of the top collocates of GIVE are associated with providing some kind of assistance (i.e., *advice, suggestion, answer, help, hand*). This is perhaps not surprising, given that obtaining English language learning tips and resources is one of the reasons most users frequent the English Corner subforum. Another plausible reason is that the present tense is learned early and could be very familiar to the majority of Chinese English speakers. This preference for simple present tense can also be explained as a reflection of the everyday discourse nature of the online forum, where this tense is commonly used.

Table 5 Top ten direct object collocates of *give* and its relationship with verb tense in the Chinese English dataset

Collocate	Simple present	Simple past	Simple future	Nonfinite
Advice	40	0	3	7
Suggestion	26	1	1	1
Money	5	1	5	4
Chance	7	0	4	3
Answer	9	1	1	2
Address	8	2	1	0
Time	4	2	2	1
Help	5	1	1	1
Surprise	7	0	0	1
Hand	8	0	0	0

5 Conclusion

In this chapter, we examined the lexis-grammar interface in Chinese English from a corpus linguistics perspective. Using large-scale corpus data and focusing on the prototypical ditransitive verb GIVE, we have illustrated how corpus linguistics methodology can be fruitfully used to explore structural nativization in local varieties of Englishes. Specifically, we examined verb-complementation patterns of GIVE, and found that there is a strong preference for the Type I pattern (i.e., (S) GIVE [Oi:NP] [Od:NP]) among Chinese English speakers in this particular online community. This preference was discussed in terms of the perception of verb transitivity—i.e. GIVE was perceived to be highly transitive by Chinese English speakers in our corpus data. With respect to direct object collocates, we found that there is a strong preference among Chinese English speakers for the Type I complementation pattern as well as for the simple present verb tense. We compared these findings with those reported in Inner-Circle and Outer-Circle varieties (i.e., British English and Indian English), and concluded that these can be considered as distinctive characteristics of the Chinese variety of English. While some Chinese English scholars (Kirkpatrick and Xu 2002) have argued that an essential component of Chinese English is the presence of Chinese characteristics, which can be seen at the level of lexis, sentence structure, and discourse, this study shows that the presence of Chinese characteristics is also evident at the lexis-grammar interface.

While this study has focused on a single verb GIVE, it has uncovered intriguing aspects of association or co-selection between specific lexical items and grammatical constructions in Chinese English. Future studies can examine other aspects, including new prepositional verbs (e.g., *discuss about something*, *visit to somebody*, see Mukherjee 2009). In addition, future studies might benefit from including spoken data (e.g., Xu 2010), or use more balanced corpora (e.g., Mukherjee 2009), or explore the effects of register on lexicogrammar in the structural nativization of Chinese English.

One limitation of the present study, as pointed out by an anonymous reviewer and we concur, is that register variation (Biber 1988, 2006) may be a confounding factor when comparing our China English results and the findings from the British and Indian varieties of English. The data analyzed in this study were taken from an online discussion forum and tend to be colloquial and informal. It is entirely possible that the number of uses such as “give rise to” and “give indication” might increase in a more formal context. Thus, it will be beneficial for future studies to control for variations across spoken and written, or informal registers.

Acknowledgement Early versions of portions of the chapter were previously published in *World Englishes* (“The grammatical features of English in a Chinese Internet discussion forum.” *World Englishes*, 34(2), copyright © 2015 by Wiley, <http://www.wiley.com>, adapted with permission).

References

- Ai, H., & You, X. (2015). The grammatical features of English in a Chinese internet discussion forum. *World Englishes*, 34(2), 211–230.
- Bautista, M. L. S. (2008). Investigating the grammatical features of Philippine English. In K. Bolton & M. L. S. Bautista (Eds.), *Philippine English: Linguistic and literary perspectives* (pp. 201–218). Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
- Biber, D. (1988). *Variation across speech and writing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Biber, D. (2006). *University language: A corpus-based study of spoken and written registers*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Biber, D., Conrad, S., & Reppen, R. (1998). *Corpus linguistics: Investigating language structure and use*. Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Bolton, K. (2003). *Chinese Englishes: A sociolinguistic history*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Chen, M., & Hu, X. (2006). Towards the acceptability of China English at home and abroad. *English Today*, 22(4), 44–52.
- De Klerk, V. (2005). The use of *actually* in spoken Xhosa English: A corpus study. *World Englishes*, 24(3), 275–288.
- Goldberg, A. E. (1995). *Constructions: A construction grammar approach to argument structure*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Kachru, Y. (2008). Language variation and corpus linguistics. *World Englishes*, 27(1), 1–8.
- Kirkpatrick, A., & Xu, Z. (2002). Chinese pragmatic norms and ‘China English’. *World Englishes*, 21(2), 269–279.
- Mukherjee, J. (2009). The lexicogrammar of present-day Indian English: Corpus-based perspectives on structural nativization. In U. Römer & R. Schulze (Eds.), *Exploring the Lexis-Grammar Interface* (pp. 117–135). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Mukherjee, J., & Hoffmann, S. (2006). Describing verb-complementational profiles of New Englishes. *English World-Wide*, 27(2), 147–173.
- Nelson, G. (2008). World Englishes and corpora studies. In B. B. Kachru, Y. Kachru, & C. L. Nelson (Eds.), *The handbook of world Englishes* (pp. 733–750). Malden: Blackwell.
- Schilk, M. (2011). *Structural nativization in Indian English lexicogrammar*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Schneider, E. W. (2007). *Postcolonial English: Varieties around the world*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Scott, M. (2004). *WordSmith Tools (Version 4.0) [Computer software]*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Xiao, R. (2009). Multidimensional analysis and the study of world Englishes. *World Englishes*, 28(4), 421–450.
- Xu, Z. (2010). *Chinese English: Features and implications*. Hong Kong: Open University of Hong Kong Press.
- You, X. (2008). Rhetorical strategies, electronic media, and China English. *World Englishes*, 27(2), 233–249.
- You, X. (2010). *Writing in the devil’s tongue: A history of English composition in China*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.
- You, X. (2011). Chinese white-collar workers and multilingual creativity in the diaspora. *World Englishes*, 30(3), 409–427.