Abs-68
Xiangqing Wei[1], Dongbo Wang[2], and Yundong Geng[3] (1 Bilingual Dictionary Research Center, Nanjing University; 2 Department of Information Management, Nanjing University)
Some Changes in Discourse Features of Modern Chinese (1949-2009): Corpus evidence of English-Chinese language contact
The evolution of modern Chinese (1919-) has long been marginalized if not neglected by many Chinese linguists. Two major factors may help explain the status quo. One is the common misconception in the academic circle that the history of modern Chinese is not long enough to be worth observing for any tangible signs of diachronic linguistic change. And the lack of available historical data from corpora is considered the other——a practical limitation. However, a recent release of the diachronic data from the People's Daily Corpus (1949-2009) may hold out some hope for future studies. In this modern Chinese corpus, all Chinese words are segmented and each segmented word is tagged with its part-of-speech. The abundant data will obviously support various related linguistic studies, in which the study of English-Chinese language contact heavily counts. As a matter of fact, in the 90-odd years of modern Chinese history, the later 60-year part from 1949-2009 is definitely most eventful, in which the Chinese language itself has also undergone a lot of linguistic modifications. And within the possible parameters for the linguistic changes in modern Chinese, influences of the indirect language contact between English and Chinese languages did play a major role, especially during the latest 30 years when China implements firmly the reform and open policy put forward by the government. On the basis of the literature relevant to the study of modern Chinese language and its history, three major periods of English-Chinese language contact have been distinguished. They are the period of loose connection between English and Chinese language (1949-1966), the period of little connection between English and Chinese language (1967-1978) and the period of close connection between English and Chinese language (1979-2009). This paper with hard evidence collected from this diachronic corpus depicts some changes in discourse features of modern Chinese, which hopefully will serve as a manifestation of English-Chinese indirect language contact. The investigation involves two major aspects concerning discourse analysis, namely the changes in discourse markers and the structural features. Several statistical methods of corpus-based research, including mutual information, likelihood ratio, and chi-square test, are used for the detailed concrete explorations of how the Chinese language has evolved from one historical period to another. The account of the explorations will be given comprehensively, with reference to discourse features of standard modern Chinese under the influence of indirect English-Chinese language contact in each different period. It is hoped that the present study will remedy the omission of corpus analysis of indirect English-Chinese language contact.