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# Researching Chinese English: the State of the Art

# **Multilingual Education**

## **Volume 22**

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# Researching Chinese English: the State of the Art



Springer

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# Preface

## **English in China and the Continuing Story of Chinese Englishes**

Arguably the most important issue in relation to the story of English in contemporary China is that of the remarkable statistics associated with the spread of English in China, in particular the frequent reports of the many millions of people avidly learning the language. Despite this, the reality is that the statistics we actually have about the numbers of ‘English-knowing’ people in China are guesstimates at best, although some guesstimates have been informed by hard information. For instance, the benchmark national language survey of 1999–2000 reported on by Wei and Su (2012) indicated that by the late 1990s around 400 million people had studied English up to junior high school level. Such information is now 16 years out of date, and today one can only speculate about how many more millions of learners of English there have been since then, and how many people in China now ‘know’ English, to some extent at least. As far as the contemporary sociolinguistics of China are concerned, it is also relevant and important to recognise that the past few decades have not only seen the spread of English-language learning on an unprecedented scale but also the simultaneous promotion of Putonghua (Mandarin) throughout the whole of China, where the major objective has been the ‘complete nationwide popularization for Putonghua’ and ‘removal of dialect barriers’ throughout the whole of the country (Wang and Yuan 2013: 27).

As far as English is concerned, however, the essential conundrum is not how many folk are studying or have studied the language but rather how many people in China actually use the language in their everyday lives. The domain of education is obviously of key importance in this context, as English is not only taught as a subject in all schools and universities but also has gained an established presence through English-language textbooks and even English-medium courses taught at many universities and some high schools. For many students, gaining a command of the language has also been of vital importance in order to study overseas, and in 2014, it was estimated that there were some 460,000 Chinese students studying

overseas, of whom many had opted for English-speaking institutions in the USA, the UK, and Australia (Bolton 2013; Bolton and Graddol 2012; Institute of International Education 2015).

In addition to the domain of education, English also has evident currency within the business community in China, in particular with those Chinese companies involved in international trade and finance, although until now very little empirical research on the use of English in this domain appears to have been done. Another domain where English has had a wide currency is that of tourism, and the numbers of international tourists have been increased substantially through such milestone events as the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing, the 2010 World Expo in Shanghai and the 2010 Asian Games in Guangzhou. Again, however, little research has been carried out on the role of English in this domain, with the exception of a number of studies that focused on the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games (Gao 2010). Finally, there is the domain of media, where, perhaps surprisingly, the use of English has grown remarkably, with a 24-hour English-language news channel, China Central Television Channel 9 (or CCTV 9), as well as the English-language *China Daily*, and a number of other English-language publications that are available on the Internet, including *Global Times*, *21st Century Weekly* and *Beijing This Month*, among many others. Whatever the utility of such publications in providing news to foreigners and tourists in China, these government-steered media also routinely promote official ideologies and policies to an international audience through English (Alvaro 2015).

At the level of linguistic analysis, there has been much discussion since the 1990s concerning the extent to which ‘China English’ or ‘Chinese English’ can be regarded as a variety in similar fashion to such Outer Circle varieties as Indian English, Malaysian English and Philippine English (Kirkpatrick and Xu 2002; Bolton 2003). This debate continues to the present and to a large extent turns on the issue of whether distinctive features at the levels of phonology (accent), lexis (vocabulary), morphology and syntax (grammar) and discourse are sufficient (and sufficiently regular or stable) to warrant the description of such forms of language in terms of a ‘variety’ (Xu 2010a, b). One essential problem is coming to grips with the indeterminacy of applying the notion of variety to what have traditionally been regarded as clusters of features associated with the use of English in an Expanding Circle context, that is, an EFL rather than ESL context. The question then raised here as in similarly indeterminate settings is how to classify and analyse distinctive features of linguistic use, as varietal features, or as instances of language learner varieties, Chinese-English interlanguage, language learner approximative systems and so on.

These are all interesting questions, and issues deserving greater attention and research, as evidenced by the interesting and illuminating contributions to the present volume, which, as explained in the introduction, wishes to ‘unpack’ the notion of ‘Chinese English’, and its relevance to the wider fields of Asian Englishes and world Englishes. The volume comprises key sections on Chinese-English phonology, vocabulary, grammar and discourse, cultural linguistics and research scholarship on the topic of Chinese Englishes. Once again, many of the contributions usefully and understandably focus on the use of English within various domains of

education, as it appears clear that it is here within the context of schools, colleges and universities that ‘communities’ of users (if that term truly fits) may be most visibly found (Bolton and Botha 2015; Botha 2014).

This volume also achieves another important aim in expanding our thinking about future areas of research in the study of English in China, including new areas of analysis in phonology, morphosyntax, cultural linguistics, rhetoric, attitudes and multilingual creativity. In addition, I would suggest there is also a real need for much more research on the sociolinguistics of English in China from both a macro- and micro-perspective. At the level of macro-description, we still lack detailed case studies of English in the business sector, in relation to international trade and commerce and in relation to the tourist industry. At the micro-level, we also lack detailed studies of the impact of English in the lives of the Chinese students who are now learning English to what are by any description rather high levels of language proficiency. In addition, there are not many fine-grained descriptions of the role of English in the language worlds of these young people (Bolton 2013), at a time when the Chinese nation continues to experience rapid economic, social and linguistic change. In this context, other new frontiers for research include the code-mixing and ‘translanguaging’ habits of increasing numbers of young people in China (Zhang 2012, 2015).

This is a fascinating and important area of study, and this volume provides new perspectives and opens new possibilities for future research and scholarship with particular reference to the role of English in China’s education system. The editors are to be greatly commended for bringing together an important selection of interesting articles into a volume that describes both the continuing story of the English language in China, as well as providing a benchmark study that will serve as an important point of reference for a number of years to come.

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# What We Know about Chinese English: Status, Issues and Trends

Zhichang Xu, David Deterding, and Deyuan He

**Abstract** Research on Chinese English (CE) synchronizes with studies on World Englishes. Since the late 1970s, Chinese scholars have been studying Chinese English and at the same time introducing World Englishes theories into China. Over the years, Chinese English research has been gaining momentum, particularly since the beginning of the twenty-first century. Previous research on World Englishes has discussed the status of individual varieties of English, particularly whether they constitute independent and stable linguistic systems that have their own features and norms of usage independent from those found in Inner Circle varieties (Kachru 1985). Research on Chinese English encompasses a wide range of issues, including whether it exists, how to name it, how to define it, what its linguistic features are, how people perceive it, and what people's attitudes are towards it. In this chapter, we report on the current status and major issues concerning research on Chinese English, based on a vigorous review of relevant research literature and the chapters within this volume. We also provide a background to this volume and an overview of all the chapters that it contains, and point out trends for researching Chinese English. The overall aim of this chapter, alongside all the chapters of this volume, is to showcase the current state of research on Chinese English.

**Keywords** Chinese English • Status • Issues • Trends • World Englishes

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## 1 Introduction

New paradigms, involving globalization, World Englishes, English as a Lingua Franca, and English as an International Language, all play a significant role in shaping our understanding of the global, dynamic and amorphous nature of English and the ways in which we conduct relevant research on varieties of English. While Chinese English research aligns itself closely with the World Englishes paradigm, it has also benefited from alternative perspectives, e.g. those proposed by Blommaert (2010), who suggests that named, independent languages do not exist, by Pennycook (2007) about transcultural shifts, by Jenkins (2015) about the limitations of territorial varieties, and by Sharifian (2015), who calls for World Englishes to be examined from the perspective of Cultural Linguistics in order for us to gain a better understanding of how English is used by communities of speakers around the world to express their cultural conceptualizations, including their worldviews.

Substantial research on Chinese English has been undertaken over the past three to four decades both in China and worldwide. However, issues regarding the nature of Chinese English still remain unresolved. A current review of one hundred research papers on Chinese English published in journals within the People's Republic of China between 1980 and 2013 (Xu, this volume) shows that Chinese scholars have been studying a wide range of issues, including:

- whether Chinese English exists
- how it should be named and defined
- whether it is different from Chinglish
- how people perceive it and to what extent it can be accepted as a standard
- what its features are
- how it functions in intra- and inter-cultural communication
- what implications it has for English language teaching (ELT) in China

The current volume aims to build on this foundation. In particular, we hope:

- to provide an updated review of current research
- to contribute to studies of World Englishes, informing English learners, teaching professionals, language and education policy makers, researchers, and World Englishes specialists both in China and around the world of the status, issues and trends of research into Chinese English
- to promote a sustainable dialogue among Chinese and international scholars who are interested in studying Chinese English

The chapters cover a full spectrum of research into Chinese English, including investigations into its features, attitudes towards it, and the cultural linguistics of Chinese English. All of the chapters represent original research, and the majority of them are empirical studies on certain aspects of Chinese English.

We hope that this volume successfully shifts the focus from researching how people in China learn and use standard varieties of English to a wider consideration of the newly emergent varieties of English that occur in China, and we believe that

it provides an impetus towards a new way of conceptualizing Chinese English, thereby refocusing research on phenomena regarding how English is actually used in China, and in Chinese diasporas and beyond.

## 2 “Conversations” about Chinese English

As we set out to review and edit the chapters for this volume, the three authors of this chapter (also the editors of this volume) have been engaged in conversations through email correspondence about Chinese English. Here we present three extracts from our ongoing ‘conversations’ to illustrate various issues pertinent to the current volume of researching Chinese English. Conversation 1 is concerned with the Chinese zodiac signs of the three editors.

### Conversation 1: Sat. 10, Jan. 2015<sup>1</sup>

- ZX: [...] I look forward to a collaborative and productive 2015 (the Year of Goat/Sheep/Ram) with both of you. I'm a hard working ‘horse’, what about you?
- PH: [...] We know ZX is a hard working ‘horse’, but I may not say I am a hard working ‘tiger’ since people seldom say it in this way. Speaking of ‘horse’ and ‘tiger’, I am very glad that we have David as our third editor, or our volume may get a ‘horse horse tiger tiger’ editor team. ^\_^
- DD: Does that make me a horse? Or a tiger? Or both? Or maybe just ma-ma hu-hu!
- PH: [...] I mean the team would be ‘ma ma hu hu’ without you. Since we have got you in our team, we will never be a ‘horse horse tiger tiger’ team, but a ‘horse tiger monkey’ team. You know monkey symbolizes a very clever animal in Chinese, so our team will be very clever and successful because of you.:)
- ZX: Wow ... impressed by our ‘Chinese English/Culture’ discussion here, about the Chinese zodiac! No wonder we’ve been working as a team. We’re a ‘family’! What a coincidence! My other half is a monkey, and my daughter is a tiger! [...] ‘A monkey on a horse back’ has a very auspicious meaning in Chinese: D!
- DD: [...] As the monkey in the team, I just hope I don’t cause too many problems!
- ZX: Hahaha, after a whole day’s hard work, I do enjoy your great sense of humor, and a big LOL... [...]
- PH: I cannot agree with you more. Humor plays a very important role in our life. [...] no worries, DD, you will not cause problems to us, instead, you will bring good luck, since monkey has the same pronunciation as *marquis* in Chinese.

In Conversation 1, it is worth noting that we were partly communicating in ‘Chinese English’, specifically by assuming certain shared cultural knowledge about Chinese, and this kind of conversation typifies the use of Chinese English. First, it can be noted that one of the participants is not Chinese; and this shows that Chinese English is not necessarily limited to people who are Chinese. Anyone with knowledge of the language or experience with Chinese culture can participate. It can also be observed that there is extensive reference to the Chinese zodiac in Conversation 1. When ZX says ‘I am a hard-working horse’, he feels there is no need to explain that he was

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<sup>1</sup> ZX = Zhichang Xu; PH = Paul Deyuan He; DD = David Deterding.

born in the Year of the Horse due to the shared knowledge among the three participants about Chinese culture.

Secondly, this conversation shows that the three participants encode additional Chinese meanings into otherwise common English words. Crucially, there is the use of *mǎ mǎ hǔ hǔ* (马马虎虎), which literally means ‘horse horse tiger tiger’ but is actually a common four-character Chinese idiom meaning ‘careless and sloppy’. Note that all three participants in the conversation assume this shared knowledge, and this type of code-mixing and reference to shared cultural understandings typifies many interactions in Chinese English.

One might also suggest that Conversation 1 seems to reflect the implicit adoption of Chinese politeness principles (cf. Gu 1990). For example, PH responded to ZX’s ‘hard working horse’ statement by saying that ‘I may not say I am a hard working tiger ...’, which indicates his use of the ‘self-denigration’ maxim to show politeness. Another example is when PH responded to DD’s statement ‘As the monkey in the team, I just hope I don’t cause too many problems’. PH replied ‘you will not cause problems to us, instead, you will bring good luck, since monkey has the same pronunciation as *marquis* in Chinese’. In addition to the cross-linguistic sharing of the fact that *hóu* (猴, monkey) is a homophone with *hóu* (侯, marquis), this example shows PH’s use of the ‘other elevation’ maxim. Finally, ZX’s statement ‘We’re a family’, which proposes that a *horse*, a *tiger* and a *monkey* can work harmoniously as a team, demonstrates his positive face and politeness strategies through expressions of mutual engagement and group solidarity.

Are the politeness strategies exhibited in this conversation unique to Chinese interactions? Or are they actually typical of interactions in Englishes around the world? It may be difficult to determine this with any degree of certainty, but we believe that this conversation is typical of the way in which people interact in Chinese English.

A second interaction that similarly encodes extensive shared knowledge and some code-switching is Conversation 2.

#### **Conversation 2: Mon. 16, Feb. 2015**

- ZX: May I take this opportunity to wish us all a Happy Chinese New Year of the... (hehehe, here comes the question: would it be the Goat, the Ram, or the Sheep?)... see how complicated Chinese English is! Some suggest that it should be the Chinese New Year of the *Yang*, or Young... but this does not seem to be aligned with the *Horse*, the *Dragon*, and the *Tiger* very well.
- DD: Congratulations and Get Rich (as you Chinese people say).
- PH: I also wanna wish you two *yang yang de yi* in the year of Yang. *Kung Hei Fat Choi*.
- DD: Happy Year of the Ovicaprid!

There are two salient translingual expressions in this conversation. The first of these involves *yáng yáng dé yì* (洋洋得意), which literally means ‘ocean ocean get satisfaction’, but is actually a four-character idiom in Chinese meaning ‘elated, in high spirits’. The pun here is that *yáng* (洋, ‘ocean’) is a homophone with *yáng* (羊, sheep/goat/ram, or ‘ovicaprid’), and this conversation took place at the beginning of the Year of the Goat. The second expression is the common greeting used by Chinese people at the beginning of the Chinese lunar New Year, *gōng xǐ fā cái* (恭喜发财),

or *kung hei fat choi* in Cantonese. It literally means ‘congratulations and get rich’, and DD uses the literal translation or loan translation into English to wish the two Chinese editors a happy New Year. This shows that Chinese English expressions can be shared in some contexts among all speakers of English, and such expressions are not necessarily used exclusively by Chinese speakers of English.

In addition, for Conversation 2, we might note the use of *ovicaprid*, a term that is not widely used but has been suggested by Mair (2015) as a suitable cover term for *ram*, *sheep* and *goat*. This illustrates the developmental nature of Chinese English, as interactants need to create new terms as well as establish newly contextualized meanings for existing words.

One more conversation between the editors that is pertinent to the issues of researching Chinese English is Conversation 3, in which two of the authors discuss the use of terms such as ‘Chinese English’ and ‘China English’.

### **Conversation 3: Mon.-Tue. 16–17, Feb. 2015**

- ZX: I've been reading your book “Dialects of English: Singapore English”. It was a brilliant one. The discussion on the variation between ‘educated Singapore English’ and ‘colloquial Singapore English (popularly known as ‘Singlish’)’ is of great relevance to the naming of Chinese English/China English and Chinglish. It's also interesting to know whether there's any discussion on the name of Singapore English (and whether it can also be named Singaporean English).
- DD: The distinction between ‘Singapore English’ and ‘Singaporean English’ is interesting. It appears that small places tend to use the bare name of the country, while larger countries use the derived adjective. So we find: Singapore English, Hong Kong English, Brunei English; but American English, German English, Malaysian English. On this basis, we might favour Chinese English over China English, because China is big. However, there is a competing trend to favour the bare name of a country. Increasingly, in football commentaries, I hear ‘the France team’ and ‘the Spain team’ rather than the expected ‘the French team’ and ‘the Spanish team’. So maybe ‘China English’ is following the modern trend.
- ZX: Yes, DD, what you said about the names of the varieties and the sports teams makes very good sense to me! [...] Regarding the names of Chinese English, I tend to take ‘Chinese English’ more or less as an umbrella term, while China English as its ‘academic’ name, and Chinglish its nickname ... I know a lot of people may not agree with me: ). Personally, I prefer Chinese English (as a name of a broad sense, as a continuum, or even a matrix). However, as I review lots and lots of academic papers on Chinese English, it seems that the majority of the researchers, who published their articles in the 1990s, and the first decade of the Century, take the term ‘China English’ as the most appropriate name, mostly because of the deep-rooted association between Chinese English and Chinglish, and that's why they avoided using ‘Chinese English’. However, younger researchers do not seem to have that historical baggage, and they don't even think that Chinglish has a very negative connotation, so they use the term Chinese English more commonly and ‘naturally’.
- DD: That's an interesting comparison between China English and Chinese English. Surprisingly, I don't hear anyone objecting to Malaysian English, suggesting it is similar to Manglish, or recommending that Malaysia English would be better. On the other hand, Brunei English seems well-established, and nobody seems to refer to Bruneian English. So I think that the big place vs. small place is the usual desideratum. For example, we would expect Canadian English but Bahamas English.

In Conversation 3 ZX and DD discuss a number of specific varieties of English, including Chinese English, Brunei English, Singapore English, and Malaysian English. This conversation reflects the fact that naming is variety-specific, as there is no universal consensus on what term should be used for a variety of English. Seargeant (2010, p. 98) suggests that in relation to World Englishes, ‘the exact nature of the act of naming will depend on the context in which it occurs’ and that naming a particular variety of English is ‘providing a term of reference for a concept, which is a key aspect of conceptualization’. Although the ‘big place vs. small place’ criterion may lead to ‘Chinese English’ being preferred, the sports teams’ example suggests ‘China English’ can be justified. Andy Kirkpatrick, in an email correspondence with ZX on 6–7 July 2015, has provided interesting examples regarding the Cambridge University Press series into Lesser Known Varieties of English, including Maltese English and Palauan English, where some ‘small’ varieties of English can also get adjectivized. While the issue of naming varieties of English is beyond the scope of this chapter, for further discussion on the naming of Chinese English see Xu’s chapter in this volume. Given its nature and complexity, both ‘Chinese English’ and ‘China English’ are used interchangeably in this volume depending on individual authors’ own preferences.

### 3 Fallacies about Chinese English

Chinese English currently finds itself in a liminal space of waiting and not knowing what the next step is. As shown in the cases of the uncertainty in the naming of the year (e.g. ram/goat/sheep/ovicaprid), and of the variety (e.g. Chinese English/China English/Chinglish), Chinese English is apparently between an exonormative mindset of conformity and an endonormative propensity for self-identification.

At this juncture, it is crucial to unpack what Chinese English is and what it is not by scrutinizing a number of fallacies that we now outline:

- that Chinese English is Chinglish or a hybrid of Chinese and English with English words in Chinese syntax
- that Chinese English is an interlanguage that is characterized by learners’ mistakes and errors
- that Chinese English is exclusively used in China by Chinese people
- that Chinese English is used only for international communication instead of intra-national communication
- that Chinese English is only reflected in pronunciation, lexis and discourse
- that Chinese English is a norm-dependent variety of English

Our email conversations discussed in the previous section testify that these are indeed fallacies. Chinese English is not Chinglish, but it may include code-mixing and loan translations, such as *horse horse tiger tiger*, when the contexts are appropriate. Furthermore, non-Chinese people may also use Chinese English expressions when they interact with Chinese or other speakers of English. Chinese English is not

an interlanguage, nor is it a pidgin, but it is developing its own norms of usage. In addition, Chinese English is not restricted to pronunciation, lexis and discourse in English, but it can also be reflected in Chinese cultural conceptualizations (Sharifian 2009, 2014; see also Xu and Sharifian's chapter in this volume) and pragmatic norms (Kirkpatrick and Xu 2002), such as the application of politeness principles and maxims of self-denigration and other-elevation as shown in 'Conversation 1' in the previous section. Finally, Chinese English is not only a norm-dependent variety, as is suggested by Kachru (2005, p. 14) when he places it in the Expanding Circle, but it can be regarded as a norm-developing variety of English, as is proposed by Jenkins (2015) and also by Seidlhofer (2011). The semantic broadening of the connotations of *horse*, *tiger* and *monkey* according to Chinese zodiac traditions illustrates the norm-developing nature of Chinese English, as these connotations are not restricted to Chinese people.

In addition to demystifying Chinese English through unpacking fallacies surrounding it, we also acknowledge that it is not yet an established variety of English, so it can currently still be regarded as a 'developing variety of English' (Xu 2006, 2008, 2010). It is 'developing' in the sense that features of Chinese English are yet to be systematically codified, and people's perceptions of it and their attitudes towards it are markedly divided (Chen and Hu 2006; He and Li 2009; Hu 2004, 2005; Kirkpatrick and Xu 2002; Yang and Zhang 2015). Chinese English is also a developing variety of English in the sense that it has not reached all the criteria put forward by researchers such as Butler (1997), including:

1. a recognizable pronunciation
2. a vocabulary that is specific to the variety
3. a history of the variety being part of a speech community
4. a literature written in that variety without apology
5. the existence of reference works.

Kirkpatrick (2007, p. 151) argues that 'Chinese English meets criteria 2, 3 and 4, but the first criterion may not be applicable to Chinese English, given the different dialect mother tongues of its speakers', and the observation that 'Chinese English already meets these criteria is quite remarkable given the relatively short time in which the Chinese have embraced the learning of English on a wider scale'. Therefore, Chinese English may still be placed in one of the early phases of the five-phase dynamic model proposed by Schneider (2007, 2014).

## 4 Researching Chinese English: Status, Issues and Trends

What is Chinese English and what is the value of researching Chinese English? These are fundamental questions to be asked at this stage of researching Chinese English and more broadly in research on World Englishes. Schneider (2014, p. 9) points out that 'while the twentieth-century expansion of English predominantly transformed Outer Circle countries, in recent years attention has increasingly been directed towards the Expanding Circle, where the demand for and the spread of

English have been growing dramatically'. In addition, one of the anonymous proposal reviewers for this volume points out tellingly that 'the "Chinese English" concept itself is very much a contended construct. The very existence of Chinese English or the very need to study Chinese English is disputable'. However, rather than seeing this as a weakness, the reviewer sees it as 'an opportunity for this team of researchers to produce the argument for its existence and significant research value'.

Indeed the authors of the chapters as well as the editors of this volume have seized this opportunity to describe the current status and explore many issues surrounding Chinese English. The wide range of research presented in the chapters of the current volume therefore allows us to reflect on the current status, issues and trends of Chinese English research and also to suggest some predictions about how it is likely to continue to develop in the near future.

In addition to a foreword and this introductory chapter, this volume contains five major parts: (1) researching Chinese English pronunciation; (2) researching Chinese English lexis, grammar and text; (3) researching perceptions, reactions and attitudes towards Chinese English; (4) researching Chinese English cultural conceptualizations and identities; and (5) researching Chinese scholarship on Chinese English.

The first part begins with a chapter entitled "[The Pronunciation of English in Guangxi: Which Features Cause Misunderstandings?](#)", which presents a study analyzing the salient features of pronunciation of speakers of English in Guangxi, China, with particular attention to those features giving rise to misunderstandings. The chapter shows that the speakers are able to express themselves reasonably clearly, and some of the most common non-standard features of their pronunciation rarely contribute to misunderstandings. It argues that 'there is no need for speakers in China to imitate native speakers in order to be understood'.

The chapter entitled "[The Hong Kong English Syllable Structure](#)" probes into Hong Kong English (HKE) syllable structure through a language game in which speakers of HKE participated in a form of ludling involving backwards syllable manipulation. The findings include: (i) HKE allows diphthongs as the nucleus of a syllable; (ii) the HKE coda prefers plosives or nasals; (iii) the HKE onset allows clusters but fricatives tend to be treated as syllabic; and (iv) HKE allows syllabic obstruent segments.

Part II consists of chapters on "[Lexis-Grammar Interface in Chinese English: A Corpus Study of a Prototypical Ditransitive Verb GIVE](#)", "[Researching Collocational Features: Towards China English as a Distinctive New Variety](#)", "[A Corpus-Based Study of Syntactic Patterns of Nominalizations Across Chinese and British Media English](#)", "[A Study on Modified-Modifying Sequence in the Compositions by Chinese Advanced Users of English](#)", and "[Pragmatics in Chinese Graduate Students' English Gratitude Emails](#)".

The chapter entitled "[Lexis-Grammar Interface in Chinese English: A Corpus Study of a Prototypical Ditransitive Verb GIVE](#)" investigates the lexis-grammar interface of Chinese English from a corpus linguistics perspective. The authors have analyzed 500 randomly-sampled uses of the prototypical ditransitive verb GIVE, which suggests that there exist certain associations between specific lexical items and grammatical constructions in Chinese English. The relationship between lexis

and grammar can be taken as a concrete instantiation of structural nativization in local varieties of English.

The chapter on “[Researching Collocational Features: Towards China English as a Distinctive New Variety](#)” demonstrates how evidence-based innovations are supported by statistically salient patterns of collocational features in Chinese English (CE). The authors argue that a comprehensive understanding and coverage of CE lexical features, and grammatical preferences to a lesser extent, cannot be obtained without attending to CE-specific collocational patterns. The chapter suggests that collocational patterns represent an important source of innovation in CE.

The chapter entitled “[A Corpus-Based Study of Syntactic Patterns of Nominalizations Across Chinese and British Media English](#)” reports on a corpus-based study of syntactic patterns of nominalizations across Chinese English and British English. It shows that Chinese and British Media English differ markedly in the syntactic patterns of nominalizations. The former has comparatively complex nominalizations and develops a reliance on compressed and phrasal types of modification while the latter tends to use simple nominalizations and develops a reliance on expanded and clausal types of modification.

The chapter on “[A Study on Modified-Modifying Sequence in the Compositions by Chinese Advanced Users of English](#)” focuses on syntactic structures in the writing of Chinese advanced learners and users of English. It examines the pattern of the positions of four subordinate clauses, *because-*, *although-*, *if-* and *when-*, which Chinese users of English tend to place in the initial position, though they can be in an initial, medial or final position. It further claims that such preference may be due to transfer from Chinese, and can be considered as an instantiation of syntactic nativization in Chinese English.

The chapter entitled “[Pragmatics in Chinese Graduate Students’ English Gratitude Emails](#)” examines pragmatic features of Chinese English by investigating and comparing gratitude emails written by Chinese English users across two different proficiency levels. Findings include that the more advanced group wrote significantly longer emails than the less advanced group; that there was no significant difference, however, in the frequency of both overall and individual pragmatic strategies; and that the two groups displayed similarities regarding email openings and closings.

Part III consists of chapters on “[Perceptions of Chinese English and Pedagogical Implications for Teaching English in China](#)”, “[An Investigation of Attitudes Towards English Accents – A Case Study of a University in China](#)”, “[Chinese and Non-Chinese English Teachers’ Reactions to Chinese English in Academic Writing](#)”, “[The Prospect of Teaching English as an International Language in a Chinese Context: Student-Teachers’ Reactions](#)”, and “[The Nativization of English in China](#)”.

The chapter entitled “[Perceptions of Chinese English and Pedagogical Implications for Teaching English in China](#)” explores college teachers’ and students’ perceptions of the ideal pedagogical model of college English in the Chinese mainland. The study reveals that the preferred teaching model is a native-speaker-based variety of English supplemented with salient, well-codified, and properly implemented features of Chinese English. It also argues that college English should be taught by both local non-native-speaking English teachers and native-speaking English teachers.

The chapter on “An Investigation of Attitudes Towards English Accents – A Case Study of a University in China” investigates Chinese university students’ attitudes towards their English accents and the extent to which their attitudes have been influenced by standard language ideology. It shows the significance of researching attitudes towards local accents in terms of pronunciation teaching for the development of a potential variety of English. The chapter calls for a shift in perspective on the teaching of pronunciation in English-language higher education.

The chapter entitled “Chinese and Non-Chinese English Teachers’ Reactions to Chinese English in Academic Writing” examines the reactions of Chinese and non-Chinese English language teachers to features of CE in texts written by Chinese university students. It shows that most loan words and loan translations are not widely rejected by the participants, and that some non-Chinese participants reject a possible semantic shift in the meaning of the word *outside* while Chinese participants appear to accept it. In addition, possible instances of adjacent default tense and null subject are widely rejected by participants.

The chapter on “The Prospect of Teaching English as an International Language in a Chinese Context: Student-Teachers’ Reactions” presents a case study exploring four Chinese student-teachers’ views on the importance and practicality of teaching English diversity, including Chinese English, in a Chinese context. The results suggest that Teaching English as an International Language (TEIL) in a Chinese context seems to have a good prospect of being accepted. Suggestions for English language teacher education in China are offered in light of the (potential) challenges in TEIL mentioned by the participants.

The chapter entitled “The Nativization of English in China” starts with a review of key literature on the history, current status and functional use of English in China. It then argues that English has been nativized in China and undergone several stages of development, and it will become a nativized variety in World Englishes. This chapter also discusses some key issues concerning the future development of Chinese English, such as the on-going codification of Chinese-specific features.

Part IV contains chapters on “Cultural Conceptualizations in Chinese English and Implications for ELT in China” and “Through English as a Window: Defining ‘Being Chinese’ in the 21st Century”.

The chapter entitled “Cultural Conceptualizations in Chinese English and Implications for ELT in China” is about cultural conceptualizations in Chinese English and the implications for English language teaching in China. It explores Chinese English with a Cultural Linguistics approach and it exemplifies cultural schemas, categories, conceptual metaphors and cultural blends using diversified empirical data on Chinese English. It concludes that Chinese English varies from other varieties of English both linguistically and culturally in terms of cultural conceptualizations that it embodies.

The chapter on “Through English as a Window: Defining ‘Being Chinese’ in the 21st Century” explores the idea of ‘being Chinese’ in China today through examining the impact of learning English on Chinese students. It shows that the idea is less constrained by previous ideologies about learning English and more defined within Chinese people’s own imagination of ‘being modern’ and ‘being global’. English does not seem to threaten the sense of ‘being Chinese’, but rather, it leads Chinese people to reflect on their Chinese identity and to explore other dimensions of their identity.

Part V contains chapters entitled “Researching Chinese English: A Meta-Analysis of Chinese Scholarship on Chinese English Research” and “New Directions for Researching Chinese English”.

The chapter on “Researching Chinese English: A Meta-Analysis of Chinese Scholarship on Chinese English Research” provides a state-of-the-art review of Chinese English research scholarship through a meta-analysis of 100 selected articles on Chinese English. The meta-analysis shows that Chinese English research falls into four distinct periods: the ‘enlightenment’ (1980–1997), the ‘great leap forward’ (1998–2001), the ‘renaissance’ (2002–2012), and the ‘open-door’ (2013 onwards) periods. Major research themes have been teased out and research findings within each of the themes have been reviewed.

The chapter entitled “New Directions for Researching Chinese English” is the concluding chapter. It points out possible future directions for research into Chinese English while referring to some of the chapters in this volume and other recent research in the field. The major issues covered in this chapter include the following: linguistic features; cultural conceptualisations; rhetoric; attitudes towards Chinese English; Chinese English and identity construction; multilingual creativity; and the overall extent of Chinese English use across China.

## 5 Road Map for (Researching) Chinese English

The future of Chinese English is so far still an uncharted territory in the same way that researchers in World Englishes are uncertain about the future of Englishes. Pennycook (2010, p. 673) proposes three scenarios for the future of Englishes: ‘one, many or no Englishes’, which refer to ‘the continuation of English, the plurality of Englishes or the demise of English’. The ‘one English’ scenario refers to a supranational model of English, or the ‘worldliness of English’; the ‘many Englishes’ scenario refers to English becoming mutually unintelligible local forms or varieties; and the ‘no Englishes’ scenario refers to English being replaced by other languages as world lingua francas. Pennycook (2010, p. 673) argues that the ‘answer’ is dependent on ‘mapping out the possibilities of real-world conditions: language use, demographics, economic change, globalization, and so forth’, and the ‘answer’ is also dependent on the ‘epistemological lenses through which we consider these questions’, or on ‘global economic and political changes and theoretical approaches to how we think about language’.

In terms of the future of Chinese English, the first author of the chapter had an interesting discussion among his 23 Chinese postgraduate Applied Linguistics students who were taking a course on World Englishes in May 2014 in Suzhou, China. One of the discussion topics was the future of Chinese English. The majority of the students were positive about Chinese English, and their ‘voices’ echo the future of Chinese English: ‘Chinese English will become a standard variety of Asian Englishes, and it will be an associate official language in China’; ‘there will be Chinese English dictionaries and Chinese English-based exams’; ‘there will be a more favorable attitude towards Chinese English’; and ‘in the future we can be

**Table 1** The future of Chinese English (CE)

Current	In 5 years' time	In 10 years' time	In 50 years' time
Exonormative stablization	Nativization	Endonormative stablization	Differentiation
A literature	More literature written in CE	Developing norms	Basilect: Chinese pidgin English
Words and phrases	More expressions of CE widely acknowledged	Codification: Dictionaries of CE	Mesolect: Chinglish
Recognizable pronunciation			Acrolect: CE
A history			

“native speakers” of Chinese English’. One of the students adopted Butler’s (1997) five criteria for an established variety of English, and Schneider’s (2003) five stages of nativization of English when predicting the future of Chinese English (see Table 1).

It can be noted from Table 1 that Chinese English has a history, recognizable pronunciation, words and phrases and an emerging literature (in English) and it is at the stage of exonormative stabilization. In 5 years’ time, there will be more books written in Chinese English, and more expressions of Chinese English will be widely recognized, reaching the stage of nativization. In 10 years’ time, there will be more Chinese English norm development, and in the meantime, there will be more codification work done, leading to reference works such as dictionaries of Chinese English. It will then be at the stage of endonormative stabilization. In 50 years’ time, there will be basilectal, mesolectal and acrolectal varieties of Chinese English, and it will be at a stage where there are varieties within a variety, or what Schneider terms ‘differentiation’.

The authors of this chapter believe that Chinese English is a developing variety of English. It will become more widely used in China and therefore nativized in different aspects of the Chinese society. In 50 years or even less than 50 years, Chinese English will be duly codified, and it will be differentiated within the variety itself. In addition, Chinese English will be widely acknowledged and used across the Chinese diasporas around the world. As far as researching Chinese English is concerned, apart from identifying and codifying linguistic features of Chinese English based on corpus data, more research will be conducted in the areas of awareness, attitudes, identities, functions, norms and practices, as well as cultural conceptualizations embedded in Chinese English.

## 6 Conclusion

In this chapter, we have provided an overview of Chinese English research, including major issues involved in researching it since the 1980s. Through the analysis of three ‘conversations’ among the authors, we have demystified what Chinese English is, what functions it serves, and how it is used in authentic contexts. We have also

pointed out six fallacies surrounding it. In terms of the status, issues and trends of Chinese English, we have summarized all the chapters included in this volume, so that readers may have a clear picture of the state of the art of Chinese English research.

To end the chapter, we quote something expressed by one of the proposal reviewers for this volume: 'I hope to see not just conceptualization, but also operationalization, and robust research methods that will guide future researchers on the topic of Chinese English'. This is precisely what this chapter and the entire volume are about: status, issues, trends, conceptualization, operationalization and forward-looking directions and predictions for researching Chinese English.

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**Part I**

**Researching Chinese English  
Pronunciation**

# The Pronunciation of English in Guangxi: Which Features Cause Misunderstandings?

David Deterding

**Abstract** This paper analyses the pronunciation of 24 students in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region in the south of China, based on a 3-min conversation with each of them, and it describes some of the features of their pronunciation. Many of these features of pronunciation are found with speakers of English throughout China, but some are particularly prevalent in places such as Guangxi in southern China. The features that are described include use of [w] in place of /v/, omission of final consonants, confusion between non-initial /l/ and /r/, omission of dark /l/, a lack of distinction between long and short vowels, and the stressing of pronouns, and the paper focuses particularly on those features that give rise to misunderstandings when the speakers are talking to someone who originates from the UK.

**Keywords** Chinese English • Guangxi English • Pronunciation • Misunderstandings • Intelligibility

## 1 Introduction

In the past few decades, there has been a massive increase in the learning of English in China (Hu and Adamson 2012, p. 12). Kirkpatrick (2007, p. 146) suggests that the total number of learners in China now probably outnumbers the population of the UK and USA combined, and Bolton and Graddol (2012, p. 3) agree, putting the number at about 400 million. Furthermore, though the domains of its use remain quite limited (Schneider 2014), it has been suggested that Chinese English may be increasingly seen as constituting an acceptable pedagogical model by many people in China (He and Li 2009).

Substantial research has been conducted on the grammar, lexis and discourse of English in China (e.g. Xu 2010), but less work has considered phonology. Deterding (2006) analyses the pronunciation of thirteen students from northern and central provinces, Schneider (2011) describes the pronunciation of six speakers from southern provinces such as Guangdong and Fujian, Ao and Low (2012) provide a

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brief overview of the pronunciation of ten speakers from Yunnan Province in the south-west of China, and Li and Sewell (2012) report on the pronunciation of six speakers from north China and six from the south. However, little other work on the pronunciation of the English spoken in China seems to have been published.

The current research describes the speech of university undergraduates in Nanning, the capital of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region in the south of China. It is the home of the Zhuang people, the largest ethnic minority in China. Although most of the 49 million people living in Guangxi are Han Chinese, about 33% of them are Zhuang (China Today 2014), and they speak a Tai language that is related to the language of Thailand. To the east of Guangxi is Guangdong Province, where Cantonese predominates. Many of the speakers in the current study are speakers of Cantonese, so it is possible that Cantonese has affected their pronunciation. To the west is Yunnan, though the ethnic make-up there is somewhat different, as only a few Zhuang people live there while there are more of other minority groups such as the Yi and Bai (Ao and Low 2012).

In this chapter, I will analyse the pronunciation of speakers of English in Guangxi, particularly considering those features of pronunciation that sometimes give rise to misunderstandings in conversations with someone from elsewhere.

## 2 Speakers and Data

In early 2011, I visited Guangxi University in Nanning, where I recorded 24 first-year English language majors, 20 women and four men. Details about the speakers are shown in Table 1. Female speakers are prefixed by ‘F’ and males by ‘M’. Most were aged 19 or 20 at the time of the recording, though F19 was 18 and F11 was 21.

**Table 1** Details of the speakers

Speaker	Age	English Start	Cantonese?	Other?	Speaker	Age	English Start	Cantonese?	Other?
F1	19	13	✓		F13	19	13	✓	
F2	20	10	✓	Linzhou	F14	20	9	✓	
F3	20	13	X	Guilin	F15	20	13	X	Zhuang
F4	20	13	✓	Cunhua	F16	20	13	X	Zhuang
F5	19	12	X	Guilin	F17	20	13	X	Guilin
F6	19	13	✓		F18	19	9	✓	Hunan
F7	20	10	✓	Zhuang	F19	18	9	X	Linzhou
F8	20	12	X	Zhuang	F20	20	9	X	Yulin
F9	19	10	X	Zhuang	M1	20	13	X	Guilin
F10	20	8	✓		M2	19	12	X	Zhuang
F11	21	13	✓	Zhuang	M3	19	9	X	Guilin
F12	20	11	X	Guilin	M4	20	13	X	Zhuang

The ‘English Start’ column shows the age they started learning English. Most had been learning English for between 6 and 10 years, though F14 and F20 had been learning it for 11 years and F10 for 12. Although nowadays most children in China start learning English in primary school, it was common until recently for many schools to be poorly resourced, so pupils often only started learning English in junior high school (Zhang 2012). Therefore the fact that some of these speakers started learning English at the age of 13 is probably typical of those currently at Guangxi University.

All can speak Putonghua ('Mandarin'), though some claimed they seldom use it in informal contexts. Ten stated they speak Cantonese, and all but five stated that they speak another variety of Chinese, eight listing Zhuang, six listing Guilin Dialect (a southern dialect of Mandarin), and a few others listing something else. Many of the students come from places other than Nanning. As expected, a range of styles of speaking English was found, so their speech does not represent a single variety of English. Instead, the data described here represents the kind of speech that is typically found among undergraduate students in Nanning.

They were recorded directly onto a computer in a recording studio at Guangxi University with a microphone placed just in front of them. They each read a short text, and then I interviewed each one for about 3 min. (I am a speaker of RP British English.) All the interviews started with a question asking them to talk about their family. This paper will focus on an analysis of the interview, describing some of the salient features of pronunciation, especially those features that seem to have contributed to misunderstandings occurring.

### 3 Analysis

It is rather difficult to identify misunderstandings. In the overwhelming majority of cases, when someone does not understand something, they keep quiet in the hope that things will naturally sort themselves out (Firth 1996); and if that does not work, they may change the topic (Deterding 2013: 152). In fact, in all the data, I can find only one totally clear instance where I misunderstood something: I heard *fruits* said by F7 as *flutes* (to be discussed as extract 22 below). In all other cases, the analysis makes assumptions about what words were not understood, sometimes based on what I subsequently could not easily transcribe. While in some cases it is uncertain if I really did misunderstand the words that I have identified, the fact that I later found it hard to transcribe some extracts of the speech indicates there is likely to be an issue with the pronunciation, though it is also probable that in some cases the problem lies with interpretability (the meaning behind the words) rather than identification of the words themselves (Smith 1992).

Kaur (2010) makes a valuable distinction between misunderstandings, in which the listener thinks they know what is said but gets it wrong, and non-understandings, in which the listener does not know what is said. However, this distinction can be hard to make in practice, so here I will just analyse all cases where I apparently failed to understand something.

Inevitably, many instances involve a range of factors, including pronunciation, lexis and grammar. For example, in line 2 of extract 1 from the conversation with M2, I was confused by the term *free person*, thinking it meant his sister was unemployed. (I am still uncertain what it meant, or indeed if I have transcribed it correctly; but I guess that it means that she is self-employed.)

- (1) 1 M2 my mother and m- (.) and father (.) are farmers (.) and my older sister
- 2 is a **free person** (3.6)
- 3 Int what does she do. she er d- doesn't work?
- 4 M2 no er (.) because (6.1) oh i'm sorry i don't know how to say it {M2:14}

In extracts such as this, ‘Int’ refers to the interviewer (me), ‘(.)’ indicates a short pause while the duration of longer pauses is shown in seconds, and ‘?’ shows rising intonation. The time in seconds of each extract from the start of the recording is shown in the tag at the end.

Extract 1 involves an unusual phrase, so the misunderstanding is probably not connected with pronunciation (unless I have actually identified the word wrongly). Further analysis in this paper just discusses those tokens where pronunciation did play some part in the misunderstanding, though in many cases it was just one factor.

## 4 Features of Pronunciation That Caused Misunderstandings

In this section, I will outline some of the features of pronunciation that contributed to misunderstandings, including the substitution or omission of sounds, the insertion of vowels, the lack of a distinction between long and short vowels, the stressing of pronouns, and the use of *she* instead of *he*. Most of the features of pronunciation described here are common elsewhere in China; but some of them are particularly prevalent in the English spoken by undergraduates in Guangxi University.

### 4.1 [w] in place of /v/

Standard Chinese has no voiced fricatives, apart from the sound at the start of a word such as 肉 *ròu* ('meat') which is sometimes described as a voiced retroflex fricative that might be represented as /z<sub>r</sub>/ (Duanmu 2007: 24). Although Chinese has voiceless fricatives such as /f/, there is no voiced counterpart, /v/. Cantonese similarly

has no voiced fricatives (Zee 1999). Although Standard Zhuang has a sound that might be shown as /v/, it is actually pronounced as the approximant [β], and there are no other voiced fricatives in Zhuang (Wikipedia 2014).

One of the most salient features of the pronunciation of English in Guangxi is the occurrence of [w] at the start of words such as *village*. For example: in extract 2, F1 has [w] at the start of both *very* and *value*; in extract 3, F8 has [w] at the start of *village*; in extract 4, F9 has [w] in both tokens of *movie*; and in extract 5, M2 has [w] in *divorced*. In fact, of the 24 speakers, 17 sometimes or always use [w] in place of /v/.

- (2) i think i can get some very value (.) things from the place {F1:108}
- (3) some are also in the village and (.) and others (.) they would come back {F8:159}
- (4) i like watch movie and (.) act- actually erm especially the wester- (.) western movie {F9:153}
- (5) and my father and my mother divorced (.) er when i was four {M2:7}

Although this occurrence of [w] in place of /v/ was briefly mentioned in Deterding (2006), it is not a particularly salient feature of pronunciation for speakers from north and central China. Schneider (2011) reports that it occurs just once in his data, Li and Sewell (2012) make no mention of it, and Ao and Low (2012) state that it does not occur in Yunnan. Its frequent occurrence in the current data may mark the English of Guangxi as distinct from other varieties of English in China.

However, [w] in place of /v/ rarely seems to cause misunderstandings, maybe because it is so common that it is easy for the listener to accommodate to it. There is just one misunderstanding that might be related to this substitution. In line 5 of extract 6, *david* has a medial [w], and when I tried to transcribe it, initially I wrote *they're ready*. (The ‘[’ in lines 1 and 2 indicates the start of overlapping speech.)

- (6) 1 F14 i always er i have no er grandparents (.) [parent
- 2 Int so it's [just the two of you living together (.) is it?
- 3 F14 yes?
- 4 Int okay?
- 5 F14 oh **david** [dewidə] (.) can i ask you a few questions? {F14:53}

There are two other factors that contribute to this token of misunderstanding: first, there is a short added vowel, with a duration of 35 msec, after *david*; and second, it is unexpected that a first-year undergraduate in China would address me by my first name, and this second factor may be key. I have asked people from China to listen to it, and they have insisted that it cannot be *david*, as it is not possible that a student would use my first name. Maybe F14 was actually saying something else, so this is not an instance of [w] in place of /v/.

## 4.2 Epenthetic Vowels

One of the most salient features of the pronunciation of speakers from northern and central China is the addition of a vowel after word-final consonants. In fact, Deterding (2006) reports that every one of his thirteen speakers regularly inserts a vowel after *and* in a phrase such as *and so* or after *wind* in the phrase *wind blew*. Li and Sewell (2012) confirm these findings, as eight of their twelve speakers include a vowel in *and scolded* and seven include one in *and saw*, while Schneider (2011) reports that three out of his six speakers regularly insert a final vowel after words such as *grade*, *but*, *child* and *wind* and one does it just occasionally, but the remaining two speakers do not exhibit this phenomenon.

While a similar epenthetic vowel sometimes occurs with the Guangxi speakers, it is much less common than reported for speakers from northern and central China in Deterding (2006). A few isolated instances can be found, such as in extract 7 where there is a vowel after *and* (duration of the added vowel: 78 msec), extract 8, where there is a vowel after *want* (37 msec), extract 9, where the inserted vowel after *college* is [ɪ] (45 msec), and extract 10, where the /t/ in *last* is omitted but there is quite a long added vowel (86 msec).

- (7) my father mother (.) and [ændə] my two brothers {F5:7}
- (8) my father (.) er (.) want [wʌntə] me go to (.) er u- er university {F6:152}
- (9) i want to be a college [kəlidʒɪ] teacher {F12:69}
- (10) last [la:ssə] semester (.) er when (.) i have time i (.) go to er (.) went to guilin {M3:75}

Does this epenthetic vowel at the end of words ever cause misunderstandings? In the previous section, the pronunciation of *david* with an added vowel was discussed in connection with extract 6, and in fact my original transcription as *they're ready* included a vowel after the 'd'. But this seems to be an isolated instance. Couper (2011) notes that insertion of a vowel after *fast* makes it sound like *faster*, but there is little evidence of such problems occurring in the Guangxi data. In fact, Jenkins (2000: 142) suggests that vowel epenthesis may actually serve to improve the intelligibility of English in an international setting.

## 4.3 Omission of Final Plosives

Chang (1987: 226) notes that speakers of English in China may produce *duck* either as [dʌkə] or as [dʌʔ], and Deterding (2006) reports the first pattern, insertion of a vowel after a final plosive, with six out of thirteen speakers inserting a vowel at the end of *agreed* in the phrase *agreed that* and five of them inserting a vowel in the middle of *at last*.

However, as discussed in the previous section, although an epenthetic vowel occasionally occurs after a final plosive in the Guangxi data, the more common pattern is the second one mentioned by Chang (1987), the omission of a word-final plosive (or its replacement with a glottal stop). For example, /k/ is omitted from *work* in extracts 11 and 12, there is no /t/ in either token of *about* in extract 13, and *not* in extract 14 sounds like *no* (so the vowel is also a little unexpected).

- (11) now he is (.) er work [w3:?] in the factory {F4:99}
- (12) when (.) i am in the college (.) i work [w3:] harder {M2:70}
- (13) mm (2.1) about [əbaʊ] (.) about [əbaʊ] one hundred and (.) seventeen kilometers {F16:110}
- (14) erm: not very [noʊweri] often because (.) he {F9:66}

This omission of word-final plosives can cause occasional misunderstandings. For example, in extract 15, F2 pronounces *take train* with no final /k/ in *take*, and it seems that I failed to understand it which is why I asked her about the mode of transport.

- (15) 1 F2 ... if have a seven day holiday i will go home
- 2 Int how far away is your home from nanning
- 3 F2 three (.) **take train** [taɪ treɪn] three (.) hours
- 4 Int three hours. by train? or by bus
- 5 F2 er by train by train
- 6 Int okay {F2:60}

One might also note that the vowel in *take* is unexpectedly different from that in *train*, so this may also have contributed to the problem; or perhaps F2 is actually trying to say *by train* but has [t] rather than /b/ at the start of *by*.

Another misunderstanding caused by the absence of a final plosive is in extract 16, in which both tokens of *tricks* have no /k/. In this case, even though it was initially heard as *trees* (at least when I was transcribing it), no misunderstanding is signaled and there is no breakdown in communication, partly because the overall meaning is clear, especially with the occurrence of *punch* and *joking*. Nevertheless, the word *tricks* is hard to understand. We should also note that the phrase *makes tricks with me* is somewhat unusual, so we might conclude that the problem is partly grammatical.

- (16) 1 F20 ... my young brother is (.) is very funny? 'cos he always makes
- 2 **tricks** [trɪs] with me (.) and (.) i always punch him (.) when he
- 3 make **tricks** [tri:s] on me (.) but (.) that's okay because we
- 4 are just joking around {F20:21}

Finally, let us consider extract 17, in which there is no final /t/ in *port* in line 1. Initially, I heard this as *Fangshango*, assuming it was the name of a place, and I only realised it is actually *Fangcheng Port* when I consulted the biodata sheet filled in by F7.

- (17) 1 F7 er and NOW my parents move to fangcheng **port** [poʊ]  
 2 for (.) business (.) they sell the **fruits** (.) so i go  
 3 with i i went THEM when i was six old {F7:49}

In extract 17, in addition to the misunderstanding of *port*, in line 2 *fruits* was misunderstood as *flutes*, because of confusion between /l/ and /r/. I will now consider that.

#### 4.4 /l/ and /r/

In Japan, there is a well-known tendency to confuse /l/ and /r/ (Riney et al. 2005), but this is much less common in China, especially when they constitute initial consonants at the start of a word. However, confusion between /l/ and /r/ does sometimes occur with consonant clusters, especially in southern China and also in Hong Kong English (Deterding et al. 2008), and this can give rise to misunderstandings. For example, Deterding (2013: 43) noted that *international club* said by a speaker from southern China was heard as *international crowd* by a listener from Brunei because of [r] instead of /l/ in *club*.

In the Guangxi data, confusion between /l/ and /r/ in consonant clusters and also sometimes when they are between two vowels in the middle of words occurs with just a few speakers. In extract 18, [r] occurs in place of /l/ in the middle of *college*, in extract 19, [l] occurs instead of /r/ in *from*, in extract 20, *family* has [r] instead of /l/, and in extract 21, both *fruit* and *from* have [l] instead of /r/. (In addition, in extract 21, the second token of *from* ends with a spurious [t].)

- (18) i learn harder (.) in the college [kɒrɪdʒ] life {M2:59}  
 (19) my town is (2.2) far from [flɒm] the (1.2) the province {M2:127}  
 (20) in my family [fæmri] (.) er my mother is the very nice one{F14:6}  
 (21) they can get fruit [flʊ:t] from [flɒm] every from [flɒmt] an anoth- from  
     [flɒm] other way {F7:97}

In most of these cases, no misunderstanding occurred. However, in the interview with F7 (extract 21), the pronunciation of *fruit* as *flute* did initially cause a misunderstanding. In fact, if we consider an earlier extract from this same conversation, in line 7 of extract 22 we can see that I actually asked her about flutes, and it was only later that I realised her parents must actually have been selling fruit. It is also possible that the superfluous plural ‘s’ on the end of *fruit* contributed to the problem, but this seems a minor issue, as use of the plural *fruits* is common in East and Southeast Asia (Deterding and Salbrina 2013: 52).

- (22) 1 F7 I can go back to the village  
 2 Int [mm]  
 3 F7 [er and NOW my parents move to fangcheng **port**

- 4 for (.) business (.) they sell the **fruits** [flu:ts] (.) so i go  
 5 with i i went THEM when i was six old i went to  
 6 fangcheng **port** for my school  
 7 Int okay? they sell flutes er [er so they  
 8 F7 [yeah  
 9 Int er is that a good business? {F7:49}

An instance in which the reverse substitution, [r] in place of /l/, seems to have caused a problem in the data is in extract 23. In this case, in addition, [m] occurs instead of /n/ at the end of *alone*.

- (23) 1 F14 ... my mother is the very nice one (.) erm she is hardworking? (.)  
 2 and (.) look after me very carefully (1.7) and he: raised it he:  
 3 bring brought up (.) bring me up (.) er **alone** [əroum] (.) [so  
 4 Int [okay (.) what does she work er she a housewife? or does  
 5 she go out to work?  
 6 F14 mm er sorry pardon?  
 7 Int does she is your er does your mother go out to work? or  
 8 does she work at home  
 9 F14 er she work (.) she work at home  
 10 Int she's a housewife. and your father does he go out to work?  
 11 F14 mm my father? (.) oh sorry i have no father {F14:7}

It seems probable that I failed to understand *alone* in line 3, possibly hearing it as *at home*, and this is why I subsequently asked about her father in line 10. (One other factor that may have contributed to the confusion is the use of *he* in line 2 to refer to her mother. This confusion between *he* and *she* will be discussed below.)

#### 4.5 Omission of Dark /l/

The previous section discussed /l/ in a cluster in the onset of a syllable and also between two vowels. In the coda of a syllable, either before another consonant such as in *film* or at the end of a word such as *fill*, /l/ in English is usually pronounced as a dark /l/ that can be represented as [ɫ], with the back of the tongue raised, producing a quality similar to [u] (Roach 2009: 48). In fact, in many varieties of English, including that of London, /l/ in the coda of a syllable is actually pronounced as a vowel (it is vocalised), so *field* can be pronounced as [fɪʊd] (Cruttenden 2014: 90). However, even with this L-vocalisation, the /l/ is rarely deleted.

L-vocalisation is common in the English spoken in China, and the complete omission of the /l/ is also found. Deterding (2006) notes *small* being pronounced as [smɔ:], and Ao and Low (2012) report that, when reading a passage, nine out of their ten speakers have no /l/ in *wolf* and four of them pronounce *full* as [fɔ:] while others pronounce it as [fu:].

The omission of dark /l/ in words such as *wolf* and *full* is also common in the Guangxi data. In extract 24, there is no /l/ (or /d/) at the end of *world*, in extract 25, there is no /l/ in *hold* or *sell*, and in 26 there is no /l/ at the end of *girl*.

- (24) if i have the ability? and i have enough money i will travel around the world [w3:] {F1:154}
- (25) they are working in a (.) shop they (.) they hold [houd] (.) and they sell [seə] (.) snacks to others {F2:10}
- (26) a translator was a very good job for er for a girl [g3:] {F13:183}

Does omission of /l/ cause misunderstandings? Deterding (2013: 53) discusses a token in which *wall* said by a speaker from Hong Kong was heard as *war* and another when the same speaker's *tile* was heard as *tire*. So does this occur in the Guangxi data?

In extract 27, I failed to understand *golden weeks*, maybe partly because of the omission of the /l/ in *golden* (though it did not disrupt the progress of the conversation too much, as I allowed M3 to keep on talking). However, the main problem here is that I was not familiar with the phrase *golden week* to refer to the periods around May 1 (Labour Day) and October 1 (National Day) which are prime times for travelling. So we can conclude that this is actually principally a lexical issue, not a problem with pronunciation.

- (27) 1 Int are there many tourists in guilin?
- 2 M3 er yes (.) er there are (.) when have some er er w- er (.) such as the er (.)
- 3 **golden** [goʊdnən] weeks (.) and there are many (.) tourist went or going
- 4 to guilin to enjoy the beautiful sceneries there
- 5 Int do you ever get to meet foreigners? in guilin? {M3:157}

There do not seem to be any further tokens where the omission of dark /l/ was an issue.

## 4.6 Vowel Length

Although Chinese has long vowels in open syllables such as 八 *bā* ('eight') and short vowels in closed syllables such as 半 *bàn* ('half'), the length of the vowel is predictable from the structure of the syllable and so it is not contrastive (Duanmu 2007: 41). As a result, many speakers of English in China fail to make a distinction between the long and short vowels of English, so pairs of words such as *bean* and *bin* are often not distinguished (Chang 1987: 225).

This merging of long and short vowels is common in the Guangxi data. In extract 28, the vowel in *leave* and both syllables of *fifteen* is almost identical, and acoustic

measurement indicates that the vowel in *leave* is actually less close than that in the first syllable of *fifteen*. Similarly, in extract 29, the vowel in *live* and *weeks* is the same, and acoustic measurement confirms there is little difference between them.

- (28) my brothers er leave [liv] school when they was (.) fifteen [fiftin] years old {F5:18}
- (29) i live [liv] on campus? (.) er in: (.) weeks [wiks] {F1:49}

Although this merging of long/short vowels is common in the Guangxi data, it does not seem to give rise to any misunderstandings. The only problem in my data that might be ascribed to vowel length is the failure to shorten a vowel before a final voiceless consonant, as is the norm in English (Roach 2009: 28). I had to listen to extract 30 many times before I managed to decipher *famous site*, and this may be partly because the vowel in *site* is not shortened before the final /t/ (so it sounds like *side*).

- (30) 1 F17 on vacation or holidays i go to guilin to visit a (.) **famous site**  
2 with my friends?  
3 Int okay?  
4 F17 mm  
5 Int so do you miss guilin when you're in nanning? {F17:110}

It is uncertain whether I misunderstood it at the time, but from the response in line 3, it looks like I was stalling for time, and then I changed the topic in line 5. Indeed, this kind of topic change is a common strategy for dealing with misunderstandings in interactions involving English as a Lingua Franca (Deterding 2013: 152).

Jenkins (2000: 145) has suggested that vowel length is important for maintaining intelligibility in international English, both in distinguishing long and short vowels and in signalling the voicing distinction at the end of a word. However, extract 30 is the only token I can find in the Guangxi data where vowel length might have contributed to a misunderstanding. Deterding (2013: 70) similarly concludes that vowel length is not important for maintaining intelligibility in English as a Lingua Franca interactions.

#### 4.7 Stressed Pronouns

In British or American English, pronouns are almost never stressed, unless they are contrastive. However, pronouns are sometimes given substantial prominence in the English spoken in China. Deterding (2006) reports that eleven out of thirteen speakers in that study place considerable emphasis on the final pronoun in the phrase *fold his cloak around him*. Li and Sewell (2012) confirm this pattern, as nine out of

twelve speakers stress the final pronoun in *looked out of the window and saw him*, while six of them stress the final *him* in *ran away with him*.

In the Guangxi data, in extract 31 both *he* and *him* receive substantial emphasis (shown by using upper case), in extract 32 the first person pronoun receives considerable emphasis, and in extract 33, all three tokens of the pronoun are stressed.

- (31) HE thought it's: (.) not so useful for HIM {F10:49}
- (32) I can go back to the village {F7:46}
- (33) because I have so much language er so much er (.) knowledge so I can (.) I can do the (.) mental work {F11:45}

Does this ever cause misunderstandings? I can find just one instance where a stressed pronoun made it hard for me to understand a phrase. I had to listen to extract 34 many times before I deciphered *my family*, and this may partly be because of the prominence on the possessive pronoun.

- (34) 1 Int so he doesn't want to be a farmer
- 2 F4 yes @ in fact i (.) **MY family** don't have too much er land

## 4.8 He/She

While Chinese differentiates between the gender of pronouns in writing (他 ‘he’, 她 ‘she’), these are both pronounced as *tā*, and speakers sometimes get confused when speaking English. Of course, this is more of a grammatical issue than a pronunciation one involving initial confusion between /h/ and /ʃ/. Nevertheless, it will be briefly discussed here, as it occasionally gives rise to misunderstandings.

In the 24 conversations, there are 49 tokens of *he* and *she* (with immediate repetitions of a pronoun being treated as single tokens), and they are shown in Table 2. Of these tokens, 31 involve *he* referring to a male, while three involve *she* referring to a male. Ten tokens involve *she* referring to a female (with three of these involving self-correction of *he* to *she*), while four tokens involve *he* referring to a female. We can conclude that about 15% of the tokens represent selection of an unexpected pronoun.

**Table 2** Instances of *he* and *she*

	He	She
Male	31	3
Female	4	10
?	1	

Now let us consider the final row of Table 2, where the gender of the referent is uncertain. The full context is shown in extract 35, and it can be seen that F3 refers to her roommate as *he*. (*Xiang-ge-li-ya* is Shangri-La, a place in Yunnan Province.)

- (35) 1 F3 erm i have a roommate. (0.9) **he** er **he's** live in xiang-ge-li-la  
 2 Int okay  
 3 F3 you know (.) i want (.) erm (1.3) i planning to go there (.) er maybe  
 4 in the summer (.) summer holiday  
 5 Int okay? and w- er if you could go abroad? to another country? where  
 6 would you like to go {F3:159}

It seems rather unlikely that, in a conservative country like China, F3 would have a male roommate, but I could not be sure, and that is why I changed the topic in lines 5 and 6, to ask about something entirely different.

## 5 Discussion

Ten misunderstandings involving pronunciation have been identified, and reasons for them occurring have been suggested, though in reality multiple reasons probably contribute to the problem in most cases. For example, in extract 6, it is unexpected for the student to address me by my first name, in extract 16, *make tricks for me* is an innovative lexical collocation, and in 27, I was not familiar with the term *golden weeks*. A brief summary of the ten tokens is provided in Table 3.

In reality, there are very few misunderstandings in these recordings. The students are able to express themselves reasonably clearly, and misunderstandings are the exception rather than the norm. We might also note that some of the most common non-standard features of their pronunciation, particularly use of [w] for /v/, rarely give rise to any problems, possibly because this substitution is so common that it is easy to get used to it. Another common feature of pronunciation in Guangxi is the

**Table 3** Summary of misunderstandings arising from pronunciation

Extract	Speaker	Words	Heard as	Pronunciation issue
6	F14	David	they're ready	/v/ → [w]
15	F2	take train	??	/k/ → Ø
16	F20	tricks	trees	/k/ → Ø
17	F7	Fangcheng Port	Fangshampo	/t/ → Ø
22	F7	fruits	flutes	/r/ → [l]
23	F14	alone	??	/l/ → [r]
27	M3	golden weeks	(golden) weeks	/l/ → Ø
30	F17	famous site	??	Vowel length
34	F4	MY family	??	Stressed pronoun
35	F3	he	(she)	she → he

avoidance of dental fricatives: [s] often occurs at the start of words like *think*, and [d] at the start of words like *then*. But, once again, this does not seem to interfere with intelligibility, which confirms the claims of Jenkins (2000) that dental fricatives are not important for English spoken in an international setting.

Another salient feature of the pronunciation of English in Guangxi, and indeed throughout China (Deterding 2006), is the widespread use of full vowels in function words such as *of*, *to*, *than*, *as* and *from*. This has not been discussed above because it rarely, if ever, gives rise to misunderstandings, and it might even be seen as serving to enhance the intelligibility of English in an international setting (Deterding 2010). This reminds us that there is no need for speakers in China to imitate native speakers in order to be understood, which is consistent with what many scholars (e.g. Kirkpatrick 2007) have argued for emergent World Englishes. Although some features of pronunciation undoubtedly interfere with intelligibility, particularly any confusion between /r/ and /l/ and the omission of word final consonants, not all features do (Jenkins 2000).

It is hard to draw firm conclusions based on the small number of tokens analysed here, but it would be valuable to collate a wider corpus of misunderstandings so that teachers in Guangxi and elsewhere know what they should focus on in order to ensure that their pupils are intelligible. We will then be able to reassure teachers and pupils that they can retain many aspects of their local pronunciation and still achieve a high level of intelligibility, which fits in with the claims of an emergent Chinese English that is distinctly Chinese but at the same time is easily understood and widely respected around the world (Xu 2010).

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# The Hong Kong English Syllable Structure

Lian-Hee WEE

**Abstract** Hong Kong English (HKE) is a contact variety between two languages that have very distinct syllable structure: Cantonese with a simple structure allowing only three segments and English where syllables can be quite large. Unraveling the structure of the HKE syllable is however quite difficult because evidence is scarce. We do not have a sufficiently large corpus of HKE poetry and rhyme, neither has HKE been known to have language games (ludling) that involve syllable manipulation. In particular, ludlings are the phonological equivalent of a cloud chamber where the syllables may be smashed and their components observed, and hence it is a good probe into HKE syllable structure. In this study, speakers are taught a form of ludling involving backwards manipulation by encoding polysyllabic Cantonese words in reverse order of the syllables, hence *Hong Kong* is encoded as *Kong Hong*. These speakers are then invited to encode English words (both mono- and polysyllabic). This study reports a number of interesting findings on the basis of the range of possible backwards manipulations: (i) HKE allows diphthongs as the nucleus of a syllable; (ii) the HKE coda prefers plosives or nasals; (iii) the HKE onset allows clusters but fricatives tend to be treated as syllabic; and (iv) HKE allows syllabic obstruent segments.

**Keywords** Syllable • Structure • Backwards manipulation • Play language • Hong Kong

## 1 Introduction

The last decade has seen many studies on the phonology of Hong Kong English (henceforth HKE): for phonetic inventory (e.g. Hung 2000); for prosody (e.g. Hung 2005; Wee and Cheung 2015); for tonal properties (e.g. Cheung 2009; Wee 2016); and for segmental phonology (e.g. Peng and Setter 2000). The HKE syllable structure remains somewhat under-researched, and one remains uncertain as to its structure, if any.

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This is an attempt to address part of the gap about the HKE syllable. The syllable is an abstract phonological entity, part of the mental grammar, thus internal organization of the segments that comprise the syllable can only be revealed through probes into how a speaker may manipulate a given string of segments. For example, given an audio stimulus like [mbira] (a musical instrument made with flattened nails affixed to a sound board and played with the thumb), a speaker would reproduce that as [bi.ra], [m.bi.ra], or [mbi.ra] depending on his/her mental grammar (formed from the language environment where he/she acquired his/her language). A “typical” English speaker might produce [bi.ra], a “typical” Chinese speaker [m.bi.ra] and a “typical” Shona (Zimbabwe) speaker [mbi.ra].

The investigation reported in this paper takes the form of probes into how HKE speakers manipulate strings of segments in mono- and polysyllabic words. The range of possible manipulations will inform us how segments are organized in the HKE speaker’s mental phonology. To this end, this paper employs a ludling (i.e. Play Language, from Latin *lud* “game”) that involves reversal of phonological units. Bagemihl (1995) shows the relationship between ludling and phonological theorizing.

The evidence found in this study shows that that the HKE syllable template allows a maximum of six segments, unlike that of Cantonese (which allows a maximum of three segments, no branching nucleus and allows high vowels in the coda). The Cantonese syllable is sometimes described as (Cw)V(X), where [w] is a glide and X is any segment. If so, the [w] glide’s restricted distribution (either occurring as a sole onset or following a velar plosive) would be puzzling. More tenable is Zee’s (1999) phonetic study, which indicates that the [w] glide is in fact labialization of the preceding velar plosive, a position recognized also by the Linguistics Society of Hong Kong (2002, p.19). The HKE syllable template is also unlike “standard” English (which allows a maximum of nine segments, Hammond 1999, Chapter 3). Of course, the term “standard” requires qualification, especially in considering Singh (2012) who argued how the term “native” fails to apply meaningfully to different varieties of English. However, “standard” can still be meaningfully considered in terms of what is prescribed through textbooks and the classroom. Contact between Cantonese and English presumably begot HKE.

The ensuing section sets the stage for HKE as Chinese English. Section 3 introduces the “backwards” language game. Section 4 unravels the HKE syllable through attested backwards manipulations. Section 5 discusses some implications of the study and offers a conclusion.

## 2 Hong Kong English as Chinese English

Hong Kong (population approximately 7.19 million, HKSAR Census, 2014), is predominantly Cantonese-speaking. Annexation to the British crown in the nineteenth century linked Hong Kong intimately to the English-speaking world. For a long time, Hong Kong was the Chinese representation to the world as China kept her

doors closed until as late as the 1970s (with the reform and open-door policies of Deng Xiaoping) and the modernization of Taiwan starting only in 1949. In fact, Bolton's (2003) title *Chinese Englishes* was a study of what is essentially Cantonese English, starting from Mundy's diary of his stay in Macau in the seventeenth century (*ibid.*, p.139), and then covering the southern coast of Yue-speaking, or Cantonese-speaking, China where Hong Kong plays a prominent role.

Today, the picture is much enriched with both the People's Republic becoming more globalized and with Taiwan having enjoyed decades of post WWII economic prosperity. There are also the participants in the Chinese diaspora that have taken new identities as Singaporeans and Malaysians (also to weaker extents Thai, Filipino, or various Chinatowns too). Chinese-affiliated Englishes would include Singapore English, Malaysian English, Hong Kong English, Taiwan English etc.

HKE is Chinese English through having Cantonese, a Chinese ethnic Han language/dialect, as one of its parent languages. Until the end of the twentieth century, Cantonese was arguably the lingua franca of most of the Chinatowns around the world (just watch the Hollywood movies that feature a Chinese language up to *Indiana Jones Temple of Doom*, 1984). Among other early language manuals, the preface of T'ong (1862) explains that the transliterations provided therein are to be read in Cantonese. Many of these transliterations have since entered the lexicon of modern Hong Kong Cantonese as loanwords (e.g. *plum* as [pou33.lʌm55], *store* as [si33.tɔ55], *money* as [mʌn55] via [mʌn55. nei21]), which attest to the intermingling between Cantonese and English in Hong Kong. Stronger evidence comes also from the various descriptions of HKE that reveal a heavy Cantonese influence. Hung (2000) provided a segmental inventory of HKE that was constrained by the Cantonese inventory; and Wee (2016) gave a comprehensive description of the tonal properties of HKE speech, which Wee and Liang (2016) demonstrated to have F0 values that relate to Cantonese.

Summarizing from the preceding paragraphs, the case for HKE as Chinese English is substantiated on three fronts: (i) demographics; (ii) history; and (iii) linguistic affinity. In contrast, other candidates such as Singapore English invariably include a much stronger presence of other local languages such as Malay, Peranakan, and even Indian languages from the Indian diaspora (Lim 2014 among others).

### 3 The Backwards Language Game

Any community is likely to have lots of interesting things they do with their language(s). Most commonly, one sees rhymes, verse, limericks and songs, but closer study would also reveal secret or play languages invented by users to encode their message. In the United States for example, children may use a play language called Pig Latin, which involves the transposition of any word-initial consonant cluster to the end followed by a suffix [ei]. Hence *pig* is [igpei], *Latin* [ætɪnlei] and *sleep* [i:pslei]. This provides evidence about the constituency of the consonant clusters (for why else would [sl] be transposed as a unit in *sleep*?). Similarly, Chao

(1931) reported on eight different *fanqie* languages used in different regions of China for clandestine communication, where essentially each syllable is split into two by inserting material between the onset consonant and the rhyme, so for instance [ma] would be encoded as [mai.ka]. *Fanqie* languages would also attest to the internal organization of the segments as epenthesized material are licensed only between the onset and the rhyme (or in traditional Chinese phonology parlance between the *shengmu* and *yunmu*).

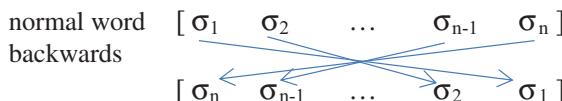
Coming back now to Hong Kong, HKE has been used for purposes of punning (as in (1)), though nothing as intricate as play languages have hitherto been observed.

- (1)
  - a. *Nikki Chow – The child woman* (a 2006 slogan for Nikki's song album and book release)
  - b. *My hot girlfriend in amazing, Shek Kip Mei awake all night long.* (pun on the MTR station among a few others by Scyler Yang, reported in <http://mashable.com/2015/01/13/hong-kong-metro-puns/#s3ewZzF9kkq3>)
  - c. *Holland Bank Cheque* (euphemism since at least the mid-1990s for f\*cking clumsy)

The pun in (1a) is on the last name Chow and the word *child*, both pronounced [tʃʰau] in HKE, an effect normally lost to non-HKE speakers. Similarly in (1c), *Holland* is punned with the Cantonese intensifier *ho* ‘very’ and the *lan*<sup>2</sup> ‘testicles’ while *bank cheque* puns with *ban*<sup>6</sup>*zyut*<sup>3</sup> ‘clumsy’. Phenomena such as punning and rhyming attest to HKE speakers’ ability to manipulate phonology in systematic ways that underlie their mental grammars.

In this study, ten HKE speakers (balanced for gender) are invited to learn a ludling that requires them to “reverse” their speech, thereby manipulating phonological strings. Participants are Cantonese-English bilinguals native to Hong Kong and have not spent extensive uninterrupted periods abroad. They are from middle-income families, have received or are undergoing undergraduate education and speak English proficiently. Their representativeness is further checked by having anonymized samples of their recordings judged for typicality by at least three other Hong Kongers. These participants are taught backwards manipulation using Cantonese materials so as not to affect their performance in HKE. The training is done by first providing the participants with polysyllabic Cantonese words with the encoded forms in reversed order of the syllables, as in (2).

(2) Backwards Cantonese



Normal	Backwards	gloss
[tsin̩.tin̩]	[tin̩.tsin̩]	dragonfly
[dik.si.nei]	[nei.si.dik]	Disney
[tsau.tau. fu]	[fu.tau. tsau]	stinky tofu

When the participants appear comfortable with reversing the order of the syllables, they are presented with monosyllabic Cantonese words and then asked to suggest the backwards form. At no point do we attempt to correct the participants for their attempts, thus whatever they produce as their version of backwards we simply nod in agreement. This is important because we want to find out what kinds of manipulations are most natural to the participants. Though taken aback at first, participants appear to be able to produce some encoded form or another, producing [kit] out of [tik] “enemy” and [am] out of [ma] “mother”. Most participants become quite excited at this stage. Participants are then shown a few English words in print and asked to encode those as well so that they can transfer their encoding methods to HKE. To avoid priming the participants, English stimuli are never read to them.

The trained participants are then invited to make recordings of a list of English words, all presented visually. Recordings are done using a prompt question, first in normal articulation and then in backwards form. If the target word begins with a plosive, the prompt is “What was it?”, to which the participants will respond “It was X.” Otherwise, the prompt question is “What do you say?” to which they respond, “I say Y” (where X and Y are the target words). Each word is recorded three times for normal and three times for backwards, with the repetitions done over separate sessions. Normal utterances allow the experimenter to ascertain the HKE pronunciation of the word by each speaker, and the backwards forms allow observation of the kinds of manipulation most natural to the participants. Having the repetitions in separate sessions allows the checking for consistency in the manipulation strategies that might qualify for backwards. The wordlist for collection of backwards language consists of about 500 items that have consonant clusters word-initially, medially and finally as well as those that have various combinations of vowel sequences.

As may be expected, such an experiment will produce quite a handful of variation in the data. Variations come from a variety of sources:

I. Same word, different pronunciations

The same word may have been pronounced differently by different HKE users, yielding different backwards forms. For example, words like *ants* may be [ɛnts] or [ɛns] in HKE.

II. Different backwards forms due to different operations

Given a monosyllabic sequence, the backwards form could have been formed by (i) linearly reversing all the segments, (ii) flipping the order of the onset and coda; or (iii) pre-posing only the coda. Similarly, given a disyllabic or polysyllabic sequence, the backwards form could have been formed by (i) linearly reversing the order of the syllables, (ii) reversing the order of the feet, so that *absolutely becomes lutely-abso* rather than *ly-lute-so-ab*; or (iii) by merely preposing the final syllable. These are all possible operations, even if some are not strictly backwards.

### III. Performance errors

Subjects are likely to have performance errors due either to anxiety or to other factors. Such performance errors can never be totally discounted or eradicated.

The variations in the data do not invalidate the study, rather they reveal the extent to which manipulations are possible. However, care must always be taken not to jump to conclusions. For example, if *cat* [ket] were to yield [tɛk], one cannot conclude if there is a reversal of the linear order of the segments or if the onset and coda have switched places, but if *stick* [stik] yields [kist], the preservation of the consonant sequence [st] would allow us to conclude that the onset and coda changed positions.

## 4 Deriving the HKE Syllable Template

In normal articulation, it is difficult to ascertain the properties of HKE's (or any other language's) syllables for two reasons. Firstly, it is not always easy to decide how word-medial consonants are to be treated. For example, is the syllable break in *disclaim* before [s], before [k], before [l], or after [skl]? Similarly with *filming* pronounced [fimɪŋ] in HKE, [m] could be a single segment shared by two syllables and/or geminate. Secondly, a monosyllabic word in RP may not be monosyllabic in HKE. For example, *isle* is often perceived and articulated as disyllabic by HKE speakers.

These issues can only be teased apart by evidence internal to the linguistic patterns of the users. Such evidence can come from phonological alternation (such as allophonic distribution), cleverly designed perceptual experiments, or production manipulations (pause insertions, ludling such as backwards language). This paper, however shall not address the inventory of HKE phonemes and their allophones, focusing strictly on the issue of syllable structure. The interested reader is instead referred to Hung (2000) for an excellent treatment on the phonological inventory.

## 4.1 Vowel Nuclei

We begin the exploration with the vowels that may form the nuclei of the HKE syllable. Note that an intra-syllabic vowel sequence, say [ei], is not *a priori* a diphthong. In Cantonese, [i] is the coda, since no consonant can follow [i] or [u] inside a syllable when either are preceded by another vowel. (All di-vocalic sequences in Cantonese end with [i] or [u].) Evidence that the HKE syllable does tolerate a diphthong nucleus can however be found in backwards articulations, as seen in (3).

(3) Vowel sequences in HKE

	<u>Word</u>	<u>Normal articulation</u>	<u>Backwards form</u>
i.	town [au]	[taun]	[naut], [ãūt]
ii.	ounce [au]	[auns]	[saun], [s.aun]
iii.	fly [ai]	[flai]	[laif], [aif]
iv.	like [ai]	[laik]	[kai], [kail], [k.lai]
v.	gave [ei]	[geif]	[f.gei], [feik]
vi.	range [ei]	[reindʒ]	[dʒu.rein], [ʃein]
vii.	boat [ou]	[bout]	[toub], [t.bou]
viii.	owns [ou]	[ouns]	[soun], [s.oun]
ix.	coin [oi]	[koin]	[noik], [öik], [oij.k]
x.	Troy[oi]	[troi]	[oits], [oi.tr], [roit]
xi.	help [eu]	[heup]	[peuh], [p.heu]
xii.	new [iu]	[niu]	[iun], [wiun], [win], [wni]
xiii.	milk [iu]	[miuk]	[kiuム], [k.miu]

The examples in (3) provide all possible vowel sequences in HKE that are potentially diphthongs. In HKE, V-schwa is always parsed as two syllables, hence sequences involving schwa may be omitted presently. Notice that vowel sequences like [ai], [ei], [ou], [oi] and even [iu] are preserved in the backwards forms even when the framing consonants are metathesized. For example, *boat* [bout] yields [toub] or [t.bou], where [t] and [b] may swap places or [t] may be fronted, but always leaving [ou] intact rather than producing \*[utbo] or \*[tuob]. Noteworthy among the list of diphthongs is [iu]. This diphthong is presumably not found in R.P. varieties, as words like *new* are transcribed [nju:], suggesting [j] as part of the syllable onset.

For the comparativists, HKE is unlike Cantonese in allowing diphthong syllable nuclei and unlike RP in having [iu] as a diphthong. For the HKE phonologist, an interim conclusion is that the HKE syllable allows two vocalic segments in the nuclei, and they are [au, ai, ei, ou, oi, iu].

## 4.2 Coda

For the HKE syllable coda, one can look at postvocalic consonants and see what happens with backwards manipulation. (Pre-vocalic consonant sequences are not helpful because only one segment is allowed in the HKE coda. Thus, prevocalic strings that might otherwise have been back-ended undergo deletion or resyllabification.) For example, backwards *ox* [əks] produces [sək], [si.ək], [skə], [sə], never \*[ksə]. One account for the absence of \*[ksə] is to claim that the [s] in *ox* [əks] never formed the coda constituent in the first place, and [s] might have been some kind of syllabic obstruent or might have been extrasyllabic, thus only [s] is fronted in the backwards manipulation. This is not unlike Berber where even a fricative can serve as syllabic nucleus if it is a sonority peak, as reported in Dell and Elmedlaoui (1985). Ong's (2007, Chapter 3) study of Malaysian Cantonese also adds to the possibility that HKE could too allow syllabic obstruents. (Recall (2) that in the backwards manipulation, polysyllabic strings have the order of the syllables reversed.) An alternative account would be that [ks] is disallowed in the HKE onset, which is precisely what \*[ksə] involves. In fact, both accounts could be simultaneously true, making it all the more challenging to unveil the true nature of HKE codas. For now, consider the data in (4).

(4) Coda consonants

	<u>Word</u>	<u>Normal articulation</u>	<u>Backwards form</u>
i.	ant	[ɛnt]	[tɛn]
ii.	close	[klous]	[s.klou], [souk]
iii.	fed	[fɛd]	[dɛf], [ɛt.f]
iv.	fuse	[fiʊs]	[s.fiʊ], [siuf]
v.	ink	[ɪŋk]	[kiŋ], [kin]
vi.	kept	[kept]	[t.kɛp], [tɛk]
vii.	larks	[la:ks]	[s.la:k], [s.kə.la:], [kəs.la:]
viii.	leap	[lɪp]	[pli], [piu],
ix.	look	[luk]	[ku:], [klu]
x.	lump	[lʌmp]	[plʌm]
xi.	mute	[miut]	[tium], [t.miu]
xii.	puff	[paf]	[fap], [f.pa]
xiii.	thin	[θin]	[niθ], [inθ]

The data in (4) allow a number of inferences. Firstly, codas generally do not allow more than one segment. For example, backwards (4vi) *kept* [kept], pre-poses [t] leaving [kɛp] as a syllable, breaking [pt] string that might have looked like the coda to *kept*. This fronted [t] is sometimes accompanied by epenthesis so that it could form a syllable, or else it forms a rather unusual syllabic consonant (more in Sect. 4.5). Alternatively, if [p] were deleted, then [k] and [t] metathesize, also demonstrating that [t] and [k] are acceptable codas, but not the cluster [pt]. Similarly, in

(4v) *ink*, the [ŋk] sequence is broken when backwards, as are also (4i, vii, x). Here, the test is to see if consonant clusters are broken/breakable.

Secondly, plosives and nasals are good coda segments. The case for plosives can be seen with (4iii, vi, vii, viii, xi, xi, xii). In (4viii) *leap* for example, we know that the [p] must have been in the coda because it swapped places with the initial [l] to produce [piu], where the final [u] is the result of [l] vocalization (see Wee 2009 for L-vocalization in HKE). Similarly with (4xi) *mute* [miut], the backwards form [tium] show that both [m] and [t] are good in the HKE coda position. By the same reasoning, (4v, xiii) make the case for nasal codas.

Thirdly, fricatives are dispreferred as HKE codas, though marginally allowed. This can be seen by the inconsistency in how [f], [θ] and [s] behave. Take (4iv) *fuse* [fius] for example. The acceptability of [siuf] as the backwards form suggest that both [s] and [f] are viable codas, yet the option [s.fiu] seems to indicate that [s] was not part of the coda of [fius] in the first place, as if it were a different syllable.

With respect to the HKE coda, one can make the interim conclusion that only one segment is licensed in the coda, preferably a plosive or a nasal, collectively describable as [–continuant]. In comparison with Cantonese, HKE is similar with respect to having singleton codas (unlike RP), but differs in tolerating fricatives (which Cantonese strictly forbids).

### 4.3 Onset

For the HKE syllable onset, one can likewise look for consonant sequences attested on either side of the vowel nuclei and observe their patterning under backwards manipulation. In fact, many of the data that helped us with understanding the HKE coda also illustrate the kinds of onsets allowed in HKE. Going through the data in (3) and (4), it should be evident that the HKE onset allows plosives [p, t, k, b, d, g], nasals [m, n]<sup>1</sup> and fricatives [s, f, θ, h]<sup>2</sup> affricate [tʃ] (cf. (3vi)) and liquids [r, l] as onsets. All these segments have attested instances in backwards manipulation as either serving the onset of a syllable or as being exchanged with what is the coda in normal articulation, e.g. (3iii, v) and (4iv, xi) among others.

To be added to the list of singleton HKE onsets are the glides [j, w] and also di-segmental sequences, inferable from the data in (5).

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<sup>1</sup> Notably missing [n], accountable by firstly, HKE words from British or American sources have no such instances other than heterosyllabic ones like *finger*, *hangar* and *singing*; secondly most HK Cantonese speakers today no longer have the velar nasal as an onset, thus ruling out also any HKE words of Cantonese origin.

<sup>2</sup> In normal articulation, [h] is not attested as a coda. However, in “backwards” manipulation *help* [heup] → [peuh], we see that HKE speakers allow [h] in the coda after swapping places with [p].

## (5) Onset consonants

	Word	Normal articulation	Backwards form
i.	yet	[jet]	[tei], [t.je]
ii.	cow	[kau]	[wauk], [auk]
iii.	implore	[implɔ̄]	[plɔ̄.im], [pɔ̄.im]
iv.	Britain	[britən]	[tən.bri]
v.	improve	[impruf̩]	[pru.vim], [puf.im], [f.pru.im]
vi.	drape	[dreip̩]	[p.drei], [p.drei], [reip.t], [pei.dr], [pid.rei]
vii.	tradition	[trədɪʃən]	[ʃən.di.trə]
viii.	grape	[greip̩]	[p.grei], [preig̩]
ix.	crown	[kraun̩]	[nauk], [n.krau], [raun.k]
x.	clear	[kliə̄]	[ə.kli]
xi.	freshness	[frɛʃnəs̩]	[nəs.freʃ], [nəʃ.frɛ], [s.nəʃ.frɛ]
xii.	small	[sməū]	[məu.s], [məus]
xiii.	snatch	[snæt̩]	[tʃ.sne], [nɛtʃ.s], [tʃ.ne.s]
xiv.	stain	[stein̩]	[tein.s], [ein.st]
xv.	stupid	[stiupid̩]	[pid.stiū]
xvi.	sphere	[sfɪə̄]	[fiəs], [əs.fi], [ə.fi.s]
xvii.	spare	[speə̄]	[ə.spe], [əs.pe], [pɛ.ə.s], [ə.pɛ.s]
xviii.	skate	[skeit̩]	[keit.s], [t.keis]
xix.	skating	[skeitiŋ̩]	[tiŋ.skei], [tiŋ.kei.s]
xx.	spring	[sprin̩]	[priŋ.s], [riŋ.sp]
xxi.	splendid	[splendit̩]	[dis.plən̩], [dit.splən̩], [dit.plən.s]

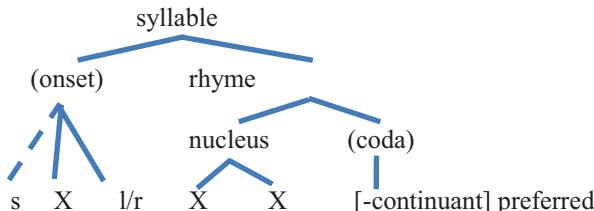
(5i, ii) are rather straightforward in showing that glides [j, w] are possible onsets in HKE. Ignoring for the moment the rather unusual-looking obstruent syllabic consonants (see Sect. 4.5), we set our sights on whether the backwards manipulation would split or preserve the consonant sequences found in the normal articulations. The data in (5iii-xv) show that di-consonantal strings are marginally acceptable as HKE onsets. For example, in (5iii), we see the [pl̩] sequence from *implore* [implɔ̄] preserved as [plɔ̄.im], though in the [pɔ̄.im] rendition, [l] is deleted, leaving only [p].

The longest possible string of consonants potentially possible as HKE onsets are tri-consonantal, and such strings always begin with [s]. One can see in (5xx, xxi) that the trend is to displace the initial [s] with the exception of [dit.splən̩] as one of the attested backwards forms for *splendid*. In all the data generated from the experiment, evidence for tri-consonantal onsets is scarce, with most speakers preferring to displace the [s].

#### 4.4 The HKE Syllable Template

Putting the preceding discussions together, backwards manipulation allows us to infer the HKE syllable template, as in (6).

- (6) The HKE syllable template



In (6), the syllable is shown to have an obligatory nucleus that allows for branching, optional onset and optional coda. The onset has a tenuous association with [s]. The validity of (6) will of course require further testing and can only be accepted when there is converging evidence (such as suggested in Sect. 5).

From Sect. 4.1, we know that the nucleus allows for diphthongs (and thus also monophthongs). From Sect. 4.2, we can discern that the coda normally accepts only one segment, preferably a plosive or a nasal (i.e. [‐continuant]) though sometimes fricatives have appeared as codas as well. Section 4.3 demonstrated that onsets allow more consonantal strings, but they are preferably di-segmental. Apparently, the HKE coda and the onset are not very stable because they show preferences rather than strict requirements. This is hardly surprising given that there is an entire culture supported by American movies and R.P.-guided education in Hong Kong, nudging each generation of Hong Kong young people towards a non-local kind of English.

#### 4.5 Syllabic Consonants

Before evaluating the validity of (6), there is one other aspect of the HKE syllable that the backwards manipulation has highlighted: the syllabic consonant. As seen in (3v) *gave* [geiv] → [f.gei], (3ix) *coin* [koin] → [oiŋ.k], (4iv) *fuse* [fius] → [s.fiu], (4vi) *kept* [kept] → [t.kɛp], (5viii) *grape* [greip] → [p.grei], (5xiii) *snatch* [snɛtʃ] → [tʃ.s.ne], (5xx) *spring* [sprɪŋ] → [rɪŋ.sp], among many others, almost anything can serve as a syllabic consonant in HKE, even in careful/deliberate speech as when undertaking backwards manipulation. This is a rather unusual state of affairs given that neither Cantonese nor typical varieties of English license obstruents as syllabic in careful/deliberate speech.

Going back to the recordings of the backwards manipulation, there are a few things to note. Firstly, the transcriptions were done independently by three research assistants, so the “syllabicity” was perceived by more than one independent researcher. Secondly, there is no lack of instances where a slight pause separates the alleged syllabic obstruent from its surroundings. Thirdly, many of these “syllabic” obstruents appear to be accompanied by a voiceless vowel (like whispering). Finally, these alleged syllabic obstruents tend to have a distinctly longer duration, especially the fricatives. Even if one does not admit that there are syllabic obstruents in HKE, there can be no debate that, under backwards manipulation, these obstruents behave rather as if they were syllabic.

From the data in (3–5), one can at least observe that “syllabic” obstruents surface only when (A) there are consonantal strings in the base (non-backwards) form, (B) backwards forms might produce consonant sequences within a syllable coda, and (C) fricatives might appear in coda positions. The case of (C) is most strikingly seen with examples like *elves* [eufs] which yields [s.f.eu] as the backwards form. Here the diphthong sequence is preserved, and [f] and [s] are treated as if each were a syllable of its own, so that [eu.f.s] produces a mirror image [s.f.eu]. Interestingly, conditions (A), (B) and (C) converge on the syllable template in (6). In other words, where the words involve violations to (6), HKE phonology resolves that by producing “syllabic” consonants, which could then fit into the template. While syllable nuclei tend to be vowels, there is really no need for such a restriction as long as one requires that nuclei peak in sonority, standard fare in syllable theory. One is reminded of the enigmatic extra-consonants reported in Setter and Deterding (2003), which might perhaps find partial explanation here, the idea being that the extra consonants are added for prosodic weight to obstruent syllabic items.

## 5 Implications and Conclusion

The template in (6) is founded only on backwards manipulation, but provides evidence into the internal structure of the HKE syllable. It stands upon the shoulders of precedent research on HKE consonant cluster “simplification” by deletion (Peng and Setter 2000), substitution (Chan 2006) or epenthesis (Silverman 1992) and on the existence of diphthongs (Deterding et al. 2008).

Validating (6) would require a number of other tests. With respect to the syllabicity of the consonants, phonetic experiments can be done to measure their length in comparison with other segments. Pause-insertions by speakers offer another window, as would syllable-counting games. Each of these will require a separate paper, though my informal investigations with HKE speakers using pause-insertions and syllable counting games have converged on the possibility of syllabic obstruents.

For nuclei structure, assonance and poetry might offer insights. The prediction in (6) is that identical vowel sequences will assonate in HKE, but not in Cantonese where [i] and [u] are in the coda. Thus [eit], [eip] and [ei] but not [en] will assonate in HKE, but in Cantonese [en] and [ei] will assonate. This will require perception

tests. Similar strategies apply for rhyming to check the coda constituents; and for alliteration to check for the onset. For example, (6) predicts that for speakers who do not accept [s] as part of a complex onset, then *sleep* alliterates with *lake*. One can try teaching HKE speakers ludlings that involve transposition (e.g. Pig Latin) or substitution (e.g. F-language) or division (e.g. Chinese *fanqie*). At this stage, none of these are easy options, but (6) now offers a testable model of the HKE syllable that is founded on some evidence internal to HKE.

The fluidity in association of [s] with the onset and in allowing continuant codas invites contemplation. One possibility is that the fluidity stems from combining the grammars of 10 different participants of the experiment. That can be discounted because fluidity was observed in the individual responses as well. Another is the influence of Cantonese as participants are bilingual speakers. However, that is only at best a partial explanation since Cantonese does not allow syllabic obstruents or consonant clusters in the first place. One final possibility is that HKE is presently very unstable and is still engaged largely in exonormative alignment, so it is not quite yet an endonormative variety.

To conclude, this chapter has presented a “novel” method of probing into the HKE syllable structure by prompting speakers to manipulate HKE words in reverse. The finding is that while a template can be established (weakly ternary branching onset, branching nucleus, and singleton coda, as in (6)), it also suggests that HKE phonology is at the exonormative stage (Schneider 2007, Chapter 3) and is likely to remain a rather unstable system for the time being.

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**Part II**

**Researching Chinese English Lexis,  
Grammar and Pragmatics**

# **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

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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., Ø majority; such + Ø 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 <sub>i</sub> :NP] [O <sub>d</sub> :NP]	355	71	407	22.6	404	38
IP	[S <O <sub>i</sub> active] BE <i>given</i> [O <sub>d</sub> :NP] (by-agent)	0	0	130	7.2	84	7.9
II	(S) GIVE [O <sub>d</sub> :NP] [O <sub>i</sub> :PP <sub>to</sub> ]	63	12.6	310	17.3	123	11.6
IIP	[S <O <sub>d</sub> active] BE <i>given</i> [O <sub>i</sub> :NP <sub>to</sub> ] (by-agent)	2	0.4	70	3.9	23	2.2
III	(S) GIVE Θi [O <sub>d</sub> :NP]	47	9.4	528	29.4	247	23.2
IIIP	[S <O <sub>d</sub> active] BE <i>given</i> Θi (by-agent)	1	0.2	123	6.8	38	3.6
IIIPb	[antecedent] <sub>co</sub> (S < O <sub>d</sub> ) <sub>co</sub> (BE) <i>given</i> Θi (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<sub>i</sub> denotes indirect object, O<sub>d</sub> denotes direct object, Θi denotes absence of indirect object, PP<sub>to</sub> denotes *to* prepositional phrase

- (1) I (S) GIVE [O<sub>i</sub>:NP] [O<sub>d</sub>:NP]  
Then my teacher gave me a forced smile. (t555496.txt)
- (2) II (S) GIVE [O<sub>d</sub>:NP] [O<sub>i</sub>:PP<sub>to</sub>]  
I want to give my hand to a man before 28. (t537523.txt)
- (3) IIIP [S <O<sub>d</sub> active] BE *given* [O<sub>i</sub>:NP<sub>to</sub>] (by-agent)  
I am pleased that you like the chinese song which was given to you.  
(t572844.txt)
- (4) III (S) GIVE Θ<sub>i</sub> [O<sub>d</sub>:NP]  
Everyone who have a certain knowledge can give the answer instantly.  
(t509689.txt)
- (5) IIIP [S <O<sub>d</sub> active] BE *given* Θ<sub>i</sub> (by-agent)  
...if financial aid was given. (t568338.txt)
- (6) IIIPb [antecedent]<sub>co</sub> (S < O<sub>d</sub>)<sub>co</sub> (BE) *given* Θ<sub>i</sub> (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 IIider	Type III	Type IIIider	Other	N
Chance	<b>100.0%</b>	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	14
Time	<b>100.0%</b>	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	9
Idea	<b>100.0%</b>	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	7
Kiss	<b>100.0%</b>	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	7
Feeling	<b>100.0%</b>	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	6
Freedom	<b>100.0%</b>	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	5
Opportunity	<b>100.0%</b>	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	5
Advice	<b>88.0%</b>	0%	2.0%	0%	10.0%	0%	0%	50
Suggestion	<b>89.7%</b>	0%	3.4%	0%	6.9%	0%	0%	29
Address	<b>81.8%</b>	9.1%	9.1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	11
Money	<b>80.0%</b>	0%	20.0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	15
Correction	<b>83.3%</b>	0%	0%	0%	0%	16.7%	0%	6
Help	<b>75.0%</b>	0%	25.0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	8
Happiness	<b>60.0%</b>	0%	40.0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	5
Wishes	40.0%	0%	<b>60.0%</b>	0%	0%	0%	0%	5
Answer	<b>53.8%</b>	0%	0%	0%	<b>46.2%</b>	0%	0%	13
Comment	33.3%	0%	0%	0%	<b>66.7%</b>	0%	0%	6
Hand	37.5%	0%	25.0%	12.5%	25.0%	0%	0%	8
Website	<b>42.9%</b>	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 *website 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 [O<sub>i</sub>:NP] [O<sub>d</sub>: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.

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# Researching Collocational Features: Towards China English as a Distinctive New Variety

Jianli Liang and David C.S. Li

**Abstract** This chapter shows that, in addition to isolated lexical items, collocational patterns represent an important source of innovation in China English (also known as ‘Chinese English’, ‘CE’ hereafter). Drawing on contrastive data analysis in two corpora – the Chinese English Corpus (CEC) and the British National Corpus (BNC) – we will demonstrate how evidence-based innovations are supported by statistically salient patterns of collocational features in CE. With the help of advances in information and communication technologies (ICT) which enable us to obtain a large amount of statistical information quickly and to identify and prioritize any corpus-derived collocational patterns that we wish to scrutinize closely, such a process that used to be too cumbersome to handle manually is no longer difficult. Going beyond a descriptive account of the use of CE features that are embedded in collocations, this study argues that a comprehensive understanding and coverage of CE lexical features, and grammatical preferences to a lesser extent, cannot be obtained without attending to CE-specific collocational patterns, which constitute important types of lexical and grammatical innovations. To the extent that the selection and codification of CE lexico-grammatical features are premised on systematic and reliable identification of collocational patterns, corpus-based methods play an important role in the future of research on CE towards its legitimization and recognition as a new variety of English.

**Keywords** China English • World Englishes • Collocational features • Corpus linguistics

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## 1 Introduction

In the early 1980s, Braj Kachru (1982) made a cogent and ground-breaking argument that, following its global spread for over 200 years from the colonial to the postcolonial era, English should no longer be seen as monolithic, let alone being regarded as the exclusive property of the speakers of traditional English-L1 countries. Some 40 years down the road, researchers from diverse first-language backgrounds in different parts of the world, working under the paradigm of World Englishes ('WE' hereafter), have taken big strides and greatly extended Kachru's original insights (e.g., Bolton 2004; Bolton and Kachru 2006; Jenkins 2009; Kirkpatrick 2007; McArthur 2002; Melchers and Shaw 2003). In an increasingly globalized world where 'native speakers' in traditional English-L1 countries are outnumbered by users of English as an additional language (EAL) or 'non-native speakers' of English, it is neither reasonable nor realistic to expect bi-/multilingual EAL speakers to adhere to the norms and standards of English that befit a 'native' variety such as American or British English. To make local meanings in English without compromising their indigenous ethno-cultural identities (Kirkpatrick 2007), EAL speakers engaged in ELF (English as a lingua franca) communication have no choice but to invoke or follow local lexical innovations by embedding them in their English output (D. Li 2011; Yang 2005). Such a need is especially clear when the topic of the conversation or text is of local relevance (Bamgbose 1998, p. 13; Jenkins 2006, p. 161). Lexical innovations reflecting and representing local meanings of socio-cultural import thus constitute significant evidence of and a compelling argument for a new variety of English, be it full-blown or in the making (Xu 2006, pp. 283–285).

The phenomenal rise of China as a major player in the realms of world politics and the global economy after steadfastly adhering to the 'open door policy' since the early 1980s makes it self-evident that more and more Chinese people are connected to the rest of the world than ever, physically or via the Internet. All signs indicate that this momentum will be sustained in the near future. As an emerging variety of English with the largest number of speakers in the world, CE has attracted the attention and interest of many scholars who identify with the premises and goals of WE as a research paradigm, both in Mainland China and beyond (e.g., Bolton 2003; Gao 2008; Kirkpatrick 2007; Lo Bianco et al. 2009; Xu 2010; Yu 2009). Many predicted that research on CE will likely have a significant role to play as it will have much to contribute to the theoretical underpinnings of and further development in WE research.

## 2 CE Lexis: Previous Research

Research in CE to date has yielded valuable and significant insights on mainland Chinese tertiary students' awareness of CE as an emerging variety (e.g., Kirkpatrick and Xu 2002) and made a strong case for CE as a new variety of English (see, e.g.,

Hu 2004; Lo Bianco et al. 2009; Xu 2010). Previous research typically points to isolated lexical words as evidence, focusing on words encoding and reflecting local culture and/or social practice. Two areas of investigation are discernible in the CE literature. The first investigates lexical borrowing of Chinese into English. For instance, Cannon (1987) classifies English words borrowed from Chinese into 19 semantic areas. *Soybean*, *tofu*, *oolong* and *wonton* are among many examples cited. Similar studies are Cannon (1988), Yang (2009), Xiong (2007) and so on. The other kind of research goes one step further by examining CE lexical items whose connotation deviates from that in ‘native’ varieties. For example, Cheng (1992, p. 171) points out that the CE word *propaganda* has social values attached to it which make it sound neutral or even positive in the Chinese context, referring to ‘news that is disseminated in a widespread way’ in mainland Chinese newspapers and official documents. This observation is also attested in literary writing. For example, in *Death of a Red Heroine* (2000), a novel written by the CE writer Qiu Xiaolong, *propaganda* (p. 55) and *regime* (p. 361) were clearly used with a positive connotation, unlike their counterparts in ‘native’ varieties such as British or American English.

Two key issues arise when we evaluate the literature of studies on CE lexis to date: the depth and choice of research method. In view of the important implications of CE research in the domain of language education, plus a pressing need for exploring how CE research may inform the English language curriculum development in mainland China, many scholars point to the urgency of greater, concerted efforts to codify CE features systematically (e.g., Bolton 2003; Bolton and Graddol 2012; He and Li 2009; Kirkpatrick 2007; Xu 2010). Codification being an indispensable step toward gaining wider recognition, both internally and externally, its significance can hardly be underestimated, and yet progress to date has been slow and appears to be uncoordinated. One possible reason, among others, is that CE features to date either rely on examples based on the researchers’ intuition, or are derived from data sets extracted from literary works in English written by Chinese authors. For example, Cannon (1988) and Yang (2009) identified CE lexis by comparing leading desk dictionaries, the results of which (i.e. whether a word is CE or not) are based on the lexicographers’ intuition. There is no basis for checking to what extent the words listed are actually used by CE or other users. Xu’s (2010) approach is clearly superior, in that CE lexical items were generated systematically from authentic data (newspapers and literary works in English, in addition to interview data with university students). One important highlight of Xu’s research is that he analyses the language of Ha Jin, a novelist of Mainland Chinese origin who has written extensively in English. Because of the society Ha Jin grew up in and the education he received, he may be studied as one prominent example of a CE user. The evidence of the CE presented there is thus very much a focused case study. But as the body of data is relatively small, Xu (2010) suggests that more research needs to be carried out on more and wider data sources.

In sum, methodologically speaking, research on CE to date tends to have been qualitative-oriented, making it difficult to progress to the important and logical next step: codification. After all, for a CE-specific lexical item or lexico-grammatical

feature to be reliably incorporated into a CE-informed national ELT curriculum, we need solid evidence that such an item or feature is actually used by a significant percentage of members of the CE community at large. As the basis for selection, intuition-based methods are practically unreliable and potentially objectionable, so how do we gain access to real-life CE texts used for authentic communication purposes? In the past, processing massive amounts of language data manually (e.g., exhaustive classification and cataloguing through cut and paste) was simply not a feasible option. From the 1990s onwards, that problem has largely been obviated by significant breakthroughs in computer science research as well as giant leaps in ICT technologies in the last two decades. Indeed, once a keyword search is defined, linguistic patterns in terms of collocations and frequencies can be generated instantly with the help of powerful software. Such patterns are typically just a few clicks away. Regarding the question ‘How is English actually used by educated CE users?’, technologically and methodologically we have the know-how today to fill the knowledge gap involving the identification of CE-specific lexis and lexico-grammatical features, one that can be filled by large-scale, data-driven and corpus-based research techniques.

Our goal in this chapter is therefore twofold in essence: (a) to demonstrate why identifying CE-specific collocational patterns and lexical features is crucial towards legitimizing CE as a new variety of English; and (b) to make a case for corpus-based research methods as the preferred tool or platform given their tremendous potential in discovering widely shared collocational patterns and lexico-grammatical features among CE users.

### 3 CE Collocations

#### 3.1 *Collocation*

The idea that we know the meaning of a word best, not by examining it in isolation, but by observing other words with which it co-occurs is usually ascribed to Firth in his well-known maxim “You shall know a word by the company it keeps” (Firth 1968, p. 179), which emphasizes the importance of collocation studies in the description of language use. Discovering the extent of word associations and how words are used in terms of their collocational patterns has been an important area of study in corpus linguistics since the 1960s, the investigation of which has always been in the core interest of the field of applied linguistics since then.

It should be made clear that some other scholars use different terms to refer to more or less the same collocational patterns. Some examples of these are ‘lexicalized sentence stems’ (Pawley and Syder 1983), ‘chunk’ (Sinclair 1991; Schmitt 2010), ‘lexical phrase’ (Nattinger and De Carrico 1992), ‘lexical bundle’ (Biber et al. 1999), ‘cluster’ (Scott 2007), ‘formulaic sequence/expression’ (Wray 2000), ‘phraseology’ (Stubbs 2002), and ‘multi-word units’ (Greaves and Warren 2010).

In this chapter, all these terms are treated as synonymous, although the word ‘collocation’ will be used throughout, and it is defined as:

a group of words which occur repeatedly in a language. These patterns of co-occurrence can be grammatical in that they result primarily from syntactic dependencies or they can be lexical in that, although syntactic relationships are involved, the patterns result from the fact that in a given linguistic environment certain lexical items will co-occur. (Carter 2012, p. 62)

### **3.2 CE Collocation: Blood Moon or Red Moon?**

Collocation, as reflected in the co-occurrence of word choice, is an important part of vocabulary research. For instance, Halliday (1966, p. 149) observes that, whereas *powerful* and *dark* may be construed as synonyms of *strong* and *black*, respectively, the former normally do not collocate with *tea* or *coffee* (viz.: *strong tea*, \**powerful tea*; *black coffee*, \**dark coffee*), even though semantically the less idiomatic-sounding coupling has very similar meaning as that of the preferred coupling. Examples featuring the co-occurrence of words like *strong* and *tea*, *black* and *coffee* are generally referred to as ‘collocations’. This classic example shows that many apparent synonyms, such as *strong* and *powerful*, may have characteristically different collocations, and so the co-occurrence relationship of a given word with other words (i.e., collocations) is an important part of its meaning and usage. Replacing the usual collocation with a synonym (e.g., substituting the adjective *powerful* for *strong [tea]*, or *dark* for *black [coffee]*) is grammatically possible but hardly ever done. *Powerful tea* and *dark coffee* are therefore unusual collocations (compare: *dark-roasted coffee*, and ‘*The Powerful Tea for Athletes and All!*’, the latter being an advert for a tea product (MatéBros 2015).

In earlier studies of the use of English in China, the unusual collocation of a given word (e.g., *new innovation*, *family relatives*, Pinkham 2000, p. 26) not found or shared in standard, ‘native’ varieties of English was used as justification to label that collocation as non-standard, an error in need of correction. This raises the question, whether users of a new variety of English can evolve their own preferred collocations. Consider the following examples:

1. People are expected to enjoy the *Red Moon* or the total lunar eclipse on October 8, 2014 in Shanghai if the weather is fine. (Source: *Shanghai Daily*, 6-10-2014)
2. The last time the city saw the *Red Moon* was 3 years ago. (Source: *China Daily*, 7-10-2014)
3. A total lunar eclipse has been visible across much of the Americas and Asia, resulting in a dramatic “*Blood Moon*”. (Source: *BBC website*, 10-10-2014)
4. *Blood Moon* appears after lunar eclipse. (Source: *BBC website*, 10-10-2014)

Examples 1–4 were extracted from news reports in China and UK. Both reports are concerned with the same story, an unusual astronomical phenomenon: a special reddish color of the moon triggered by a total lunar eclipse. Interestingly, whereas in China the word *red* was used to pre-modify *moon*, in British English (BrE) in

reference to its color the word and imagery *blood* was used instead. In linguistic studies, examples such as these constitute substantial evidence of locally preferred collocations. In contradistinction to *blood moon* in BrE, *red moon* may be regarded as the preferred collocation in CE. In accordance with a widely accepted premise in WE research, that lexical variants (e.g., *hutong* vs. *street*) should be viewed as difference rather than deficit (Hu 2004), there is room for arguing that the collocation *red moon* as found in the Chinese context reflects CE users' collocational preference rather than being non-standard merely because it deviates from the preferred collocation in a traditional 'native speaker' variety.

Recognition of lexical variants may also be found in creative works. For example, in a popular film produced by the American company DreamWorks Studios in 2008, *Kung Fu Panda*, in the original (English) sound track the term of address *master* and its translation equivalent in Mandarin *shifu* (Pinyin: *shīfū*) are both used. Their meaning is basically identical; both are used by learners of Kung Fu to address their teacher. The actual, interchangeable use of these two words, in free variation by all the characters in the film targeting audiences worldwide, suggests that lexical variants and alternations involving Chinese-specific words today are quite acceptable.

In sum, collocational variants of CE should be investigated while researching lexical variants. If *master* and *shifu* are used interchangeably, there is no reason why *red moon* cannot be recognized and accepted as a legitimate 'collocational variant' of *blood moon* (see Liang 2015, p. 306; cf. "phraseological variation", Greaves and Warren 2010, p. 218), even though the latter is preferred in BrE (also attested in AmE such as the *New York Times*).

### **3.3 Corpus-Based Research into CE Collocation**

To identify overt collocational features like *red moon* in CE and *blood moon* in BrE and AmE systematically, the manual search-and-tag method is clearly inefficient, unproductive and error-prone, partly because observations of linguistic patterns are generally accidental and unrepeatable. Fortunately, advances in digital computation technologies in the last two decades have made it possible to conduct large-scale searches for target words or chunks in multi-million-word corpora and databases in a fraction of a second (Liang 2015, p. 281). As Sinclair (1991, p. 100) pointed out, "the language looks rather different when you look at a lot of it at once"; we should therefore employ corpus-based tools and methods to identify CE collocational features. In other words, corpus-based research methods seem to be one proper tool towards the systematic discovery of covert and hitherto unknown CE collocations. At the operational level, there are two important characteristics that are not found in manual search-based studies and observations, 'co-occurrence' and 'high frequency', which may be defined as follows:

**Co-occurrence** A particular mode or pattern in which words occur together. Embedded meaning is created by virtue of multiple occurrences of these patterns, representing an important part of the meanings of these words. The semantic profile

of one word is established by the co-occurrence with other words. Within corpus linguistics, for a co-occurrence relationship to be called a collocation, the number of times of recurrence varies from twice (Sinclair 1991) to three times (Clear 1993, p. 277).

**High Frequency** The number of co-occurrences must be sufficiently high to qualify them as ‘fixed’ expressions. The cut-off point for ‘high’ or ‘low’ frequency varies, depending not only on the size of the corpus and the purpose of research, but also on individual researchers’ personal preference to some extent.

Any analysis of typical choices of co-occurrence of words depends on frequency analysis. The very mention of a choice being ‘typical’ or ‘rare’ implies that, under given circumstances, it happens more or less often than other choices. Obviously then, in order to identify CE collocational patterns, we need to compare whether those patterns occur in at least one reference corpus. As Leech (2002) argues, a reference corpus is important in any empirical investigation, because it serves as a benchmark and yardstick, and provides more comprehensive information about the linguistic features of the language under investigation.

### 3.3.1 Data

Using the 37-million China English Corpus (CEC) (37 million words, W. Z. Li 2010) as the target data with the British National Corpus (BNC\_web, written part: 90 million words) serving as the reference corpus, we made a comparison of high-frequency collocations. Below we will illustrate a number of unique collocations which appear to be only used by CE but not BrE users, which we will characterize as ‘innovative collocations’. By using the word ‘innovative’, the peculiarity of these collocations is emphasized. One very important premise is that the absence of any tokens in one or more traditional ‘native speaker’ varieties does not constitute evidence of the type (word or phrase) in question being unacceptable or problematic, let alone erroneous.

### 3.3.2 Result: The Case of *all-round*

Frequency information of the commonly encountered word *all-round* is easily obtained, and its collocations may be checked instantly where necessary, using the freeware corpus analysis toolkit AntConc 3.2.4 (Anthony 2011). Table 1 shows the number of tokens of *all-round* in CEC and BNC, including the average number of tokens per million words:

As the ratio shows, the word *all-round* is used more often (approximately 5 times) in CE. Extending the search to the R1 collocations of *all-round*, it was found that three collocates constitute 45% (244/543) of all the R1 patterns of *all-round* in CEC (Table 2).

**Table 1** Frequency information of the word *all-round*

	CEC	BNC
Occurrence (tokens)	543	251
Tokens/per million words	14.68	2.86

**Table 2** Top 3 collocations of *all-round* in CEC

	Occurrence (actual tokens)
all-round way(s)	183
all-round development(s)	49
all-round cooperation(s)	12
Sum =	244

\*Span = R1: the AntConc search sets the span as the first word to the right

These three high-frequency usage patterns are clearly distinct. Of particular interest is the first collocation, *all-round way(s)*, which is found across all the genres in CEC, suggesting that it is widely accepted in different fields and everyday lives rather than being specific to a restricted number of topics. Of the 183 tokens of the R1, two-word collocation *all-round way(s)*, 178 occur in the longer pattern *in an all-round way*. A subsequent search in the BNC corpus did not yield any occurrence of this collocation. On the basis of this finding, we propose that the collocational pattern *in an all-round way* is one example of a distinct CE collocation. Below are five CEC text segments in which this collocational pattern is embedded:

5. In the meantime, in order to promote regional sustainable development, construction of some 100 ecological demonstration areas, mainly at the county level, has been started *in an all-round way*. (domain: applied social science)
6. Science, technology, education and other social undertakings developed *in an all-round way*. (domain: world affairs)
7. The quality of the teaching staff should be improved *in an all-round way*. (domain: social science)
8. We will fully implement the Party's education policy by strengthening moral education and promoting competence-oriented education to ensure that students develop *in an all-round way*. (domain: education)
9. The only choice is to accelerate opening, using international resources *in an all-round way* and exploring the international market. (domain: economics)

*All-round*, unlike some other words specific to the social realities in China (e.g., *hukou system*, which is usually translated as ‘household registration system’), by no means denotes a Chinese-specific reality. Thus, the sheer number of tokens of *in an all-round way* – 178 tokens in CEC but none in BNC – is strongly suggestive of CE users’ collective preference for this collocational pattern, as evidenced by its relatively high frequency.

**Table 3** Collocations of *all-round* in BNC and CEC (in decreasing order of frequency)

BNC	CEC
1. all-round SPORTSMAN	<b>1. all-round WAY</b>
2. all-round PERFORMANCE	<b>2. all-round DEVELOPMENT</b>
3. all-round VISION	<b>3. all-round COOPERATION</b>
4. all-round PLAYER	<b>4. all-round PROGRESS</b>
5. all-round EXCELLENCE	<b>5. all-round MANNER</b>
6. all-round TEAM	<b>6. all-round IMPROVEMENT</b>
7. all-round STRENGTH	<b>7. all-round PARTNERSHIP</b>
<b>8. all-round DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>8. all-round CONSIDERATION</b>

\*Span = R1

\*The underlining used to indicate it occurs in both corpora

It should be noted that the hyphenated compound adjective *all-round* is used in BrE too, but its collocations are rather different. Following the same procedure for investigating frequency, we further compared the collocational patterns involving *all-round*. The top eight collocations in CEC and BNC are listed in Table 3.

Six of the eight CEC collocations (no. 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, as bolded) are unique in CE and not found in the entire BNC (no. 6 *all-round IMPROVEMENT* is used in BNC, but in a less frequent way). One example of each of these distinct collocations is presented below.

10. Then he expressed his wishes to launch *all-round cooperation* with Tongji University. (domain: education)
11. We need to improve the people's lives, increase social harmony and promote *all-round progress* in socialist economic, political, cultural, social and ecological development. (domain: politics)
12. Let us work diligently and carry forward in an *all-round manner* the cause of reform and opening up and the socialist modernization drive into the new century. (domain: politics)
13. China and Belgium decided on Monday to upgrade their relations to an *all-round partnership* of friendship and cooperation. (domain: world affairs)
14. The environmental effects shall be evaluated in an objective, open and impartial manner, with an *all-round consideration* given to the possible effects on the various environmental factors and on the ecological system, which is composed of the factors, after a plan is implemented or a project is constructed, providing a scientific basis for decision-making. (domain: environmental protection)

To the extent that the examples 10–14 are grammatically and semantically well formed, it would be groundless to label these high-frequency phrases as problematic or dismiss them as 'bad English' or errors, just because they are not used by speakers/writers of traditional 'native speaker' varieties. Quite the contrary, collocations such as *in an all-round way* are perfectly well-formed and should be accepted as part of CE collocations.

Our main argument here is that when a word or collocational pattern is uncommon among speakers/writers of one or more traditional ‘native speaker’ varieties of English, it would be premature to dismiss it as an error solely on account of its non-existence or apparent deviation from those varieties. Rather, such cases should be examined in their own right, and corpus-based information such as its frequency and range among users of a local/localized variety provides compelling evidence of its perceived well-formedness in that variety.

Two collocations are used by both BNC and CEC in Table 3, i.e., *all-round development(s)* and *all-round improvement(s)*, which may be regarded as evidence of their acceptability among BrE users. On closer scrutiny, however, we found that the same collocation is used rather differently in CEC and BNC. Three examples of the collocation *all-round development(s)* in each corpus are presented below for comparison and contrast:

Text segments containing *all-round development(s)* in CEC (3 out of 49):

15. The government has carried out the strategy of seeking *all-round development* to turn the city into an important iron and steel, energy and vanadium-titanium industrial center, as well as a high-quality sub-tropical agricultural and sideline production base. (domain: society)
16. The two sides will exchange views on bilateral relations as well as on issues of mutual interest in the regional and global arena with the aim of promoting comprehensive, *all-round development* of relations. (domain: political issue)
17. We should continue to increase investment in agriculture, promote *all-round development* of agriculture and the rural economy and work to increase farmers' incomes. (domain: agriculture)

Text segments containing *all-round development(s)* in BNC (3 out of 6):

18. The work of Norman Shneidman has been of some value in highlighting the way in which sport in Soviet society is ‘directed towards the *all-round development* of the human individual’. (domain: leisure)
19. Teachers cannot expect to foster a child's *all-round development* if the child's roots are ignored. (domain: education)
20. ‘We are looking at the *all-round development* of the child, not just narrow academic achievement,’ added Ms Robinson. (domain: social science)

Notice that although the same collocation is used, it is used with regard to different entities. Whereas in BNC, *all-round development(s)* is used in reference to people, in CEC, *all-round development(s)* is typically used to modify things or abstract entities (e.g., economy, agriculture, society). In terms of its semantic scope and range, therefore, there is some evidence that whereas BrE users tend to use *all-round development(s)* to refer to people, CEC users tend to use it to refer to abstract entities.

In addition to speedy access to statistical information such as frequency and collocation, another methodological edge of corpus-based research is the quick revelation of any embedded linguistic feature(s) of a given collocation, as illustrated in the *Key Word in Context* (KWIC) window (Fig. 1).

improving the students' ability in an all-round way. Teacher plays a very important role to promote public adjudication in an all-round way, and strengthen the supervision of a system of open administration in an all-round way. In recent years, the work of the armed forces, the PLA has adopted in an all-round way a mode of procurement of military measures for our country to advance in an all-round way the administration by law in the new Constitution was amended again in an all-round way, and the amendments were adopted at the meeting of the coaches and athletes in an all-round way. Strengthen the organization and maintenance of regional ethnic autonomy in an all-round way. From then on, the Tibetan people will specialize English field, but in an all-round way, because apart from specialized English characteristics into the 21st century in an all-round way. Booming High-Tech Development Zone: creating a well-off society in China in an all-round way. Our great motherland already stands: station and employment competence in an all-round way. Service steering. Complete the entire country's social construction in an all-round way in order to clear the path for sustainable development, film and television developed in an all-round way and continued to bring out fine works; social undertakings developed in an all-round way. Technological innovation and transformation: Asian countries is developing in an all-round way. President Hu's visits to India and effects of sustainable development in an all-round way, and accord with the goal and scientific viewpoint of development in an all-round way, establishing a harmonious socialist society to high-speed development in an all-round way in opening-up, cooperation and comprehensive forward women's development in an all-round way. The Beijing Declaration and the Plan: technological innovation drive in an all-round way. Gigantic efforts will be made to do his year to develop the economy in an all-round way. A large number of the current NPC: science, technology and education in an all-round way; exert efforts to transform the way national quality-oriented education in an all-round way. The current system of school enrollment: held to promote related efforts in an all-round way. Basic Living Standards Guaranteed:

**Fig. 1** KWIC of *in an all-round way* in CEC

As one can observe or infer from the concordances in Fig. 1, some of the KWIC-induced insights include: (a) the domains or specific topics in which the target node word occurs (e.g., sports & health, politics, economics, leisure), (b) the lexemes and their derivatives which frequently co-occur to the left and right of the node word (e.g., *develop(ed/ing/ment)*), and (c) possible linguistic ‘partners’ with which it contracts a collocational relationship, which are easily displayed alphabetically from a to z (realized by setting the “span” and “sort” function in the AntConc toolkit).

## 4 Discussion

We hope to have made a convincing case why *in an all-round way* should be recognized as a legitimate CE collocation, and that there should be no more doubt about whether it should be edited out or modified to conform to the usage pattern of a traditional ‘native speaker’ variety like BrE. Research on CE lexical features should focus not only on the exotic or uncommon words, but also on everyday vocabulary and the collocational patterns that go beyond the confines of a single word. CE-specific words such as *hutong*, *hukou*, *wonton* are certainly important, but there should be research on usage patterns involving ordinary, high-frequency words as well. As shown in CE users’ use of *all-round* above, this compound adjective is by no means specific to CE vocabulary (e.g., it also exists in BrE). How is it actually used by CE as opposed to BrE users, and in what collocations is it embedded in CE contexts? Are there lexical features and collocational patterns that are specific to

CE, regardless of whether the words in question are common or uncommon? Without corpus-based research techniques, it may not be obvious how these questions could be satisfactorily addressed. This is why, to answer these questions, collocational patterns must be included in further research on CE.

There are at least two advantages for conducting corpus-based research into CE collocational features, namely retrievability and quantification. Retrievability refers to the possibility of getting the same results from corpus data, together with the repeatable procedures that would minimize the undue interference of personal factors (e.g., the researchers being anxious or exhausted). Being electronically retrievable is one natural advantage of corpus linguistics. Texts stored in designed format (raw or annotated) are ready-made for searching and sorting. This characteristic allows researchers to nominate search items or generate hypotheses without having any specific search items in mind. For example, the search item *all-round* was originally not self-nominated by us. As a collocation, its distinctive nature in CE emerged only after its statistical salience (i.e., high frequency) was confirmed through repeated searches, especially in comparison with British English. It was after further investigation that the CE patterns of *all-round*, i.e., innovative collocations such as *in an all-round way*, *all-round progress* were identified. Compared with intuition-based evidence that tends to be subjective and impressionistic, corpus-based procedures are more promising in that they yield results that are far more objective and robust.

Objective corpus-based research methods are not mutually exclusive with subjective observations grounded in intuition. The two are complementary and must be so in order that as broad a range of research questions as possible can be addressed by linguists. It is only with the help of large-scale, well-conceived corpus-based research that otherwise obscure or non-transparent linguistic patterns such as high-frequency collocations have a good chance of seeing the light. Advances in ICT have obviated the cumbersome task of manual tallying, and replaced it with user-friendly and efficient research techniques. Corpus-based research has the unrivaled capacity to process huge amounts of language data, to re-run any data-processing procedures at will, and to yield more objective results. With good potential to combine the advantages of quantitative and qualitative data analysis, corpus-based research methods may well be a promising and productive way to explore the nuts and bolts of CE, including, for example, variation among CE users depending on their L1 ('dialect') backgrounds, professional orientations, academic disciplines, and the like. All in all, towards winning wider recognition of CE-specific lexicogrammatical features and patterns, we believe corpus-driven research will prove to be an indispensable tool.

## 5 Conclusion

Since the new millennium, the enhancement of China's national economic strengths worldwide has gradually improved her soft power globally, allowing China a greater say in the international community. English is now no longer a symbol of privilege or prestige for its users; rather, it has become a tool for identity-creation in spoken discourse as well as various written, e-communication platforms (e.g., using CE as ELF when interacting with people from other language backgrounds), fostering the hope of achieving recognition and respect for the nation. In this global context, comprehensive research into the distinctive features of CE has been contributing to a better understanding of CE users as they are engaged in communication in English, both intra- and internationally. With smart phones and other electronic gadgets becoming more and more popular and accessible, people involved in such communication need to recognize clearly that the cultural and identity-related factors in international communication are as important as language itself, if not more so. CE collocational features make up one such factor that deserves to be recognized.

An important aim of this chapter is to argue for the centrality of collocational patterns in the analysis of lexical and pragma-linguistic features in CE, with a view to extending the depth of such analyses, refining the description of such features, and providing a clearer research plan toward the systematic discovery and codification of lexico-grammatical features in CE. A corpus-based approach towards better understanding what China English consists of is essential, and the lingua-cultural character of CE as a semiotic, meaning-making system at the disposal of its users can be gained by a detailed and empirically-grounded analysis of its distinctive linguistic features. From discovering statistically salient collocational patterns to their eventual inclusion in the nation's English language teaching (ELT) curriculum, it is our belief that corpus-based methodologies are destined to play a crucial, instrumental role in advancing the national research agenda and further development of CE as a member of the family of World Englishes.

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# A Corpus-Based Study of Syntactic Patterns of Nominalizations Across Chinese and British Media English

Ying Liu, Alex Chengyu Fang, and Naixing Wei

**Abstract** In the context of world Englishes, China English has received much scholarly attention over the past three decades. Studies of China English so far have been confined mainly to theoretical issues such as its definition, differentiation, and historical development. Although the linguistic features of China English have been explored in various studies, corpus-based studies of China English are few and far between. This paper reports on a corpus-based study of the syntactic patterns of nominalizations across China English and British English in two comparable Media English corpora, namely, the Chinese Media English Corpus and the British Media English Corpus. It has been found that Chinese and British Media English differ markedly in the syntactic patterns of nominalizations. Results indicate that there are many more complex nominalizations in Chinese Media English but simple nominalizations are more common in British Media English. Furthermore, Chinese Media English has more uses of premodified nominalizations and phrasal postmodified nominalizations, developing a reliance on compressed and phrasal types of modification, whilst British Media English tends to use more postmodified nominalizations and develops a reliance on expanded and clausal types of modification.

**Keywords** Nominalization • Syntactic patterns • Stylistic implication • Chinese Media English • British Media English

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## 1 Introduction

With increasing numbers of people learning and using English all over the world, there is a growing recognition of the existing of different varieties of English, as reflected in the plural uses of terms such as “world Englishes” and “new Englishes”. Among the new English varieties, China English is “largely representative of the expanding circle nations because of the huge number of English learners and users in China” (Xu 2008, p. 4). It has been estimated that the number of English users and learners in China is around 330 million (Bolton 2008, p. 6) and this number has been continuously increasing as time goes by (Deterding 2006; Crystal 2008; He and Li 2009).

Within this context, research on China English has received much scholarly attention both at home and abroad. To date, many previous studies of China English are largely theoretical explorations in nature. Although the linguistic features of China English have been investigated in various studies (e.g. Cheng 1982; Wang 1991; Li 1993; Xie 1995; Xu 2006; He and Li 2009), corpus-based studies of China English are few and far between. The few reported corpus-based studies are almost exclusively concerned with investigating the lexical features of China English (Yu 2006; Li 2007; Gao 2008), with grammatical and syntactic features largely under-explored with the notable exceptions of Xu (2008, 2010).

To bridge this obvious gap, the present study sets out to probe into one syntactic feature – nominalization – in two comparable corpora, namely, the *Chinese Media English Corpus* and the *British Media English Corpus* (Fang et al. 2012). One reason why we chose nominalization is that nominalization is found to be frequently used in China English and there are approximately 1.3 to 1.4 nominalizations per sentence in the newspaper data (Xu 2008, 2010). The second reason is that previous studies have revealed its function to distinguish a nominal and compressed style from a colloquial one across spoken and written language (e.g. Chafe 1982), registers and genres (e.g. Biber 1986; Biber et al. 1998; 1999), and also different English varieties (Leech et al. 2009). Such discriminatory power in language use is due to the fact that nominalization presents information through phrasal structures rather than the use of verbs, and thus information is expressed through a single clause that is construed from what might otherwise have been several clauses which incorporate verbs. Therefore, nominalization is seen as “one kind of syntactic device that English has available for achieving compression” (Greenbaum 1988, p. 9) and “one common device written language uses for expanding the size and complexity of idea units” (Chafe 1985, p. 108). Considering this stylistic significance, it is hypothesized that nominalization might also reveal certain features of China English when compared with other English varieties.

Therefore, in the present study, we will focus on the intervarietal differences in the use of nominalizations between China English and British English, with an emphasis on whether or not the two English varieties demonstrate any significant differences regarding this particular type of syntactic construction. The research questions that we intend to address are the following: (1) Are there any significant

differences in the syntactic patterns of nominalizations across Chinese and British Media English? (2) In what ways, if any, does Chinese Media English differ from British Media English in terms of the syntactic patterns of nominalizations? It is hoped that this research will help deepen our understanding of the two English varieties in question.

This chapter is organized as follows. We will review previous corpus-based studies of China English in Sect. 2. Section 3 will describe the definition and classification of nominalization in this study. In Sect. 4, we will describe our methodology, including the corpora used and the steps to extract nominalizations. Section 5 will present the results, followed by a discussion in Sect. 6. Section 7 concludes the chapter by summarizing this research and discussing prospects for future work.

## 2 Previous Studies of China English

China English has attracted much scholarly attention in recent years and there are many theoretical discussions on issues like the definition of China English, its historical development, and English teaching in China. However, unlike institutionalized English varieties such as Indian English, the status of China English as a legitimate English variety has not been unanimously acknowledged. This being so, scholars have been particularly interested in the issues of the definition and differentiation of China English over the past three decades (e.g. Ge 1980; Cheng 1982; Wang 1991; Li 1993; Xie 1995; Jia and Xiang 1997; Xu 2006; He and Li 2009). But till now, they have not yet reached an agreement on the naming of the English spoken and written in Mainland China and a number of terms such as “China English”, “Sinicized English”, and “Chinese English” have been used by different scholars.

In spite of the disputes, scholars generally agreed that China English takes Standardized English as its core and has special characteristics found in phonology, lexis, syntax, and discourse. But much remains to be done to offer a satisfactory account of what those Chinese characteristics are. Although certain linguistic features of China English have been mentioned during the theoretical discussions, they are often illustrated by a small amount of data. It is desirable and essential that the definition and differentiation of China English is based on systematic and empirical observations of its linguistic features.

The lack of corpora is certainly one of the constraining factors for corpus-based studies of China English. We are aware of two major sets of corpora, which have been compiled for the study of China English: one is *China English News Article Corpus* (Li 2007) and the other is the *Chinese Media English Corpus* (Fang et al. 2012). Several studies have been conducted on the basis of them. Yu (2006) compared the frequency and collocational patterns of two words (i.e. *foreign* and *foreigner*) in the *China English News Article Corpus* and the newspaper section of *British National Corpus*. It has been shown that both words occurred more frequently and had a wider collocational range in Chinese newspaper English, which reflected the Chinese way of thinking and their open attitude to international

exchanges in particular. Li (2007) investigated the word clusters in the *China English News Article Corpus* and the *British English News Article Corpus*. It has indicated that Chinese newspaper English tended to use longer word clusters which were fixed in structure and specific in meaning and strongly nativized both linguistically and socially. Gao (2008) provided a book-length study of eight verbs of creation and transformation (e.g. *create, develop*) occurring in a revised version of the *China English News Article Corpus* which only included domestic news articles written by Chinese reporters. Her study showed that Chinese newspaper English differed from British newspaper English in the meaning, collocations, and grammatical patterns of these verbs. In addition, Xu's (2010) study was the first book-length empirical investigation of the lexical, syntactic, discoursal, and pragmatic features of Chinese English based on a self-compiled corpus of interview data, newspaper data, and short story data. A few characteristics were found to be prominent in Chinese English, such as frequent use of nominalizations, multiple-coordinate constructions, and modifying-modified sequencing.

With the exception of Xu (2010), a common feature of previous corpus-based studies of China English is that they all focused on lexical features, which are the most obvious evidence for the nativization of English used in China, leaving the grammatical and syntactic features largely ignored. To some extent, this oversight of grammatical and syntactic features is due to the widespread view that compared to phonological and lexical differences, “there is little to say about grammatical differences simply because they are negligible” (Rohdenburg and Schlüter 2009, p. 2). In addition, in practical terms, another possible reason is that many corpora do not have the annotations that would have facilitated the search for grammatical and syntactic patterns. Yet, there is an urgent need to conduct some in-depth study of the linguistic features of China English, especially those features which are not easily noticeable but might be essential in the understanding of China English. Therefore, the present study has overcome the methodological difficulties that have hampered the study of syntactic features and attempts to examine the syntactic patterns of nominalizations in China English and British English.

### 3 Scope of the Present Study

#### 3.1 Defining Nominalization

In this study, nominalization refers to “a noun phrase such as *the quarrel over pay* which has a systematic correspondence with a clause structure and the noun head of such a phrase is normally related morphologically to a verb (i.e. a deverbal noun)” (Quirk et al. 1985, p. 1288). To be more specific, deverbal nouns refer to “nouns that are produced by combining suffixes (including a zero suffix) with verb bases” (Quirk et al. 1985, p. 1550). For example, *refusal* in *his refusal to help* and *quarrel* in *the quarrel over pay* are two deverbal nouns derived through suffixation and zero

derivation respectively. In addition, Quirk et al. (1985, p. 1289) stated that “the relation between a nominalization and a corresponding clause can be more or less explicit, according to how far the nominalization specifies, through modifiers and determinatives, the nominal or adverbial elements of a corresponding clause”. For example, sentence [1] can have the following nominalizations from [1a] to [1g]:

- [1] *The reviewers criticized his play in a hostile manner.*
- [1a] *the reviewers' hostile criticizing of his play*
- [1b] *the reviewers' hostile criticism of his play*
- [1c] *the reviewers' criticism of his play*
- [1d] *the reviewers' criticism*
- [1e] *their criticism*
- [1f] *the criticism*
- [1g] *criticism* (Quirk et al. 1985, p. 1289)

According to Quirk et al. (1985, p. 1289), the above noun phrases are “ordered from the most explicit [1a] to the extreme of inexplicitness [1g] but each of them could occupy the function of a nominalization”. We therefore will consider the correspondence between a nominalization and a clause structure as on a continuum, being explicit or implicit, and all the above nominalizations from [1a] to [1 g] will be included in this study.

### 3.2 *Classifying Nominalization*

In accordance with the above definition, our classification of nominalization will be based on the classification of noun phrases. In grammar books (e.g. Quirk et al. 1985; Greenbaum 1996; Biber et al. 1999), a noun phrase can be subdivided into four constituents: determiner, premodifier, noun head, and postmodifier. Based on Quirk et al.’s (1985, pp. 1238–1345) framework, we subclassified nominalizations in terms of the four constituency parts, but we made a few modifications to Quirk et al.’s classification in consideration of the actual occurrences of nominalizations in the two Media English corpora. In broad terms, there are six structure types of nominalizations as follows (round brackets denote optional constituents):

- (1) Bare noun [*Bare N*]  
*development; cooperation*
- (2) Determiner + noun head [*Det + N*]  
*the transformation; its appraisal*
- (3) (Determiner) + premodifier + noun head [*(Det) + PreM + N*]  
*wealth accumulation; an irresponsible and groundless accusation*
- (4) (Determiner) + noun head + postmodifier [*(Det) + N + PoM*]  
*the demand for entertainment; the enjoyment we get from the music*
- (5) (Determiner) + premodifier + noun head + postmodifier  
[(*Det*) + *PreM* + *N* + *PoM*]  
*a fair and equitable solution acceptable to both; the wisest decision the director had taken*

(6) Appositive nominalization [*Appo*]

*the builder, Shanghai Zhongxin Construction Co.; four observers: Mongolia, India, Pakistan and Iran*

As for the above classification, some clarifications are necessary. Except the noun head, the other three constituents can be further broken down. The determiner might include predeterminer, central determiner, postdeterminer, and also the modifier of these determiners (if any). For example, nominalizations such as *almost all performance*, *Wu's determination*, and *nine agreements* will all be grouped into nominalizations with the structure of *Det + N*. Both the premodifiers and postmodifiers can be realized by various syntactic categories and further classified into subtypes. More details will be provided in Sect. 5. For *Appo*, the two noun phrases are in apposition and usually separated by a comma, a colon, or a dash.

Except for *Appo*, there is a cline in terms of the nominalization complexity, with *Bare N* at one extreme, and *(Det) + PreM + N + PoM* at the other. In the literature, the usual practice is to make a distinction between simple and complex noun phrases. In Quirk et al. (1985) and Biber et al. (1999), simple noun phrases are defined as noun phrases without modification (e.g. *John, the man*) and complex nominalizations are noun phrases with modification, those having either premodification or postmodification or a combination of both. Following Quirk et al. (1985) and Biber et al. (1999), we refer to *Bare N* and *Det + N*, which have no modifiers, as “simple nominalizations” and *(Det) + PreM + N*, *(Det) + N + PoM*, and *(Det) + PreM + N + PoM* as “complex nominalizations” in the following discussions.

## 4 Methodology

### 4.1 Corpora

As previously mentioned in Sect. 2, there are only two sets of corpora which have been compiled for the study of China English – *China English News Article Corpus* and *Chinese Media English Corpus*. Since *China English News Article Corpus* is not publically available, the data for our study were drawn from the *Chinese Media English Corpus* (Henceforth CMEC) and its comparable British counterpart – the *British Media English Corpus* (Henceforth BMEC).

CMEC and BMEC, with about one million words each, are of the same design and structure and consist of about 2000 texts sampled from three types of media, namely, newspaper, magazine, and the Internet. The texts of various topics are sampled from specially allotted separate sections in the three media. The five categories in CMEC and BMEC are: arts and culture, business, editorial, news report, and social life. Although the overall size of CMEC and BMEC is only about one million words, the major advantage of the two corpora is that they are comparable in design

**Table 1** Summary statistics of CMEC

	Magazine		Newspaper		Internet		Total	
Category	Texts	Tokens	Texts	Tokens	Texts	Tokens	Texts	Tokens
Arts & culture	107	67,659	163	71,774	181	61,031	451	200,464
Business	111	67,404	134	67,846	189	64,860	434	200,110
Editorial	137	66,690	130	70,424	104	63,342	371	200,456
News report	101	65,431	156	70,434	200	67,584	457	203,449
Social life	112	65,572	219	70,718	182	62,854	513	199,144
Total	568	332,756	802	351,196	856	319,671	2226	1,003,623

**Table 2** Summary statistics of BMEC

	Magazine		Newspaper		Internet		Total	
Category	Texts	Tokens	Texts	Tokens	Texts	Tokens	Texts	Tokens
Arts & culture	110	67,241	110	67,545	210	70,567	430	205,353
Business	110	67,430	110	67,756	146	57,976	366	193,162
Editorial	101	64,487	110	67,467	103	64,956	314	196,910
News report	114	68,499	110	67,736	150	62,599	374	198,834
Social life	110	67,356	110	64,937	175	63,760	395	196,053
Total	545	335,013	550	335,441	784	319,858	1879	990,312

which allows for direct comparison between the two. The summary statistics of the two corpora are shown in Table 1 and Table 2.

## 4.2 Nominalization Extraction

Methodologically, the extraction of nominalizations is operationalized in two steps: (1) to generate a list of deverbal nouns that function as the noun head of nominalizations, and (2) to extract all noun phrases headed by these deverbal nouns.

For the first step, a wordlist of deverbal nouns was extracted from CELEX (Baayen, Piepenbrock and Gulikers 1995) and NOMLEX-PLUS (Meyers 2007) on the basis of the annotated morphology information in these two large lexical databases. It needs to be noted that deverbal nouns with the suffix *ing* in NOMLEX-PLUS were excluded because they are treated as nouns in terms of their usage in a specific corpus but their noun status is subject to change elsewhere. In total, our wordlist consists of 5538 deverbal noun lemmas which account for 36.52% of all common-noun tokens in CMEC and 39.01% of all common-noun tokens in BMEC. We admit that our deverbal noun list is not a complete one. In fact, it is hard to find a complete list. However, considering its coverage in the two Media English

corpora, nominalizations extracted by using this list could be regarded as sufficient for our research purpose.

For the second step, CMEC and BMEC were first parsed by the Stanford Parser (Version 3.2.0; Klein and Manning 2003) to facilitate the identification of noun phrases. The parsing accuracy of the Stanford Parser in terms of F1 score is reported to have reached 90.4% (Socher et al. 2013). Then, we extracted all nominalizations headed by the deverbal nouns in our list using Tregex (version 3.2.0; Levy and Andrew 2006). Tregex is a tree query tool which can identify patterns in specific syntactic relations such as dominance, precedence, and headship.

Since CMEC and BMEC were automatically parsed, it is unavoidable that some parsing errors occur. It is unrealistic to examine all nominalizations one by one and correct the errors. Thus, we first classified the extracted nominalizations into the six structure types described in Sect. 3.2 before examining the randomly selected samples from each type to identify the frequently-occurring parsing errors and then manually corrected nominalizations with the identified errors. After all these steps, 66,850 nominalizations from CMEC and 65,104 nominalizations from BMEC were retrieved for further data analysis.

## 5 Results

In this section, we compare the syntactic patterns of nominalizations across CMEC and BMEC using Log Likelihood (*LL*) tests. To ensure a level of statistical significance, we follow Potts and Baker (2012) and only consider differences with *LL* values higher than 10.83 (99.9th percentile; 0.1% level;  $p < 0.001$ ). This is due to the reason that in dealing with corpora of a relatively small size, the next-down critical values of 3.84 (95th percentile; 5% level;  $p < 0.05$ ) or 6.63 (99th percentile; 1% level;  $p < 0.01$ ) might be too broad but the next-up critical value of 15.13 (99.99th percentile; 0.01% level;  $p < 0.0001$ ) might be unduly restrictive on results. Results and findings will be presented in Sects. 5.1 and 5.2.

### 5.1 Overall Frequencies of Syntactic Patterns of Nominalizations Across CME and BME

Table 3 presents the *LL* results of the overall frequencies of the six structure types of nominalizations across CME and BME.

As shown in Table 3, complex nominalizations, including *(Det) + PreM + N*, *(Det) + N + PoM*, and *(Det) + PreM + N + PoM*, have a distinctly high proportion of 70.5% in CMEC, which are approximately 2.5 times more common than simple

**Table 3** *LL* test of nominalization structures across CME and BME

Type	CME #	CME %	BME #	BME %	LL	Sig.
(Det) + PreM + N	24,035	35.95	19,407	29.81	434.12	0.000*
(Det) + N + PoM	12,784	19.12	13,739	21.10	48.33	0.000*
Det + N	10,891	16.29	13,222	20.31	257.89	0.000*
(Det) + PreM + N + PoM	10,313	15.43	8915	13.69	83.92	0.000*
Bare N	8241	12.33	9136	14.03	58.84	0.000*
Appo	586	0.88	685	1.05	9.10	0.003
Total	66,850	100.00	65,104	100.00	5.67	0.017

Note: “+” indicates a higher frequency in CME relative to BME; “−” indicates a lower frequency in CME relative to BME. “\*” indicates a statistically significant difference (99.9th percentile; 0.1% level;  $p < 0.001$ )

nominalizations (28.62%). In contrast, in BMEC, complex nominalizations account for only 64.61% of the total, and the remaining 34.34% are simple nominalizations. These figures indicate that CME has a higher level of the complexity of nominalization structures than BME.

A closer observation reveals that CME and BME differ markedly in their preference for certain structure patterns. Although *(Det) + PreM + N* is the most frequent structure in both varieties, it takes up 35.95% in the CME data but only 29.81% in the BME data. There are about 6.14% more uses of *(Det) + PreM + N* in CME than BME and this difference is statistically significant ( $LL = 434.12$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). This suggests that CME has a preference for premodified nominalizations compared to its British counterpart. The second most frequent nominalization type – *(Det) + N + PoM* – has a higher proportion in BME (21.10%) than in the case of CME (19.12%) and this difference is also statistically significant ( $LL = 48.33$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). It can be seen that BME tends to rely more on postmodified nominalizations. With regard to the most complex nominalization structure – *(Det) + PreM + N + PoM*, CME uses 1.74% more nominalizations with this structure (15.43%) than BME (13.69%) and the difference is also statistically significant ( $LL = 83.92$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

As for the two kinds of simple nominalizations, it can be seen from Table 3 that there are significantly more uses of both *Det + N* nominalizations and the *Bare N* nominalizations in BME than CME ( $p < 0.001$ ). This confirms the argument that nominalizations in CME are often of more complex syntactic structure whilst the syntactic patterns of nominalizations in BME are less complex. Lastly, *Appo* nominalizations are the least frequent type, accounting for only 0.88% of all nominalizations in CMEC and 1.05% of all nominalizations in BMEC, but this difference in the two varieties is not statistically significant.

**Table 4** LL test of (*Det*) + *PreM* + *N* across CME and BME

Types of PreM	CME #	CME %	BME #	BME %	LL	Sig.
1-word	17,203	71.57	14,413	74.27	210.69	0.000*
2-word	5461	22.72	4166	21.47	157.87	0.000*
3-word	1173	4.88	727	3.75	99.81	0.000*
4-word	159	0.66	85	0.44	21.82	0.000*
5-word	31	0.13	15	0.08	5.47	0.019
6-word	8	0.03	1	0.01	6.10	0.013
Total	24,035	100.00	19,407	100.00	434.12	0.000*

Note: “+” indicates a higher frequency in CME relative to BME; “\*” indicates a statistically significant difference (99.9th percentile; 0.1% level;  $p < 0.001$ )

## 5.2 Comparisons of Subtypes of Nominalizations Across CME and BME

In the preceding section, we have observed that there are significantly more uses of nominalizations in the structures of (*Det*) + *PreM* + *N* and (*Det*) + *PreM* + *N* + *PoM*, but fewer uses of those in the structures of (*Det*) + *N* + *PoM*, *Det* + *N*, and *Bare N* in CME than BME. This section examines in more detail the subtypes of the three kinds of complex nominalization structures.

### 5.2.1 (*Det*) + *PreM* + *N*

In terms of length, premodifiers in the structure of (*Det*) + *PreM* + *N* are subdivided into six subtypes such as one-word premodification (e.g. *the major attraction*), two-word premodification (e.g. *domestic united combat*), and three-word premodification (e.g. *sustainable, balanced global growth*). Table 4 presents the comparison of subtypes of premodified nominalizations across CME and BME.

It is clear from Table 4 that there are more uses of all the subtypes of (*Det*) + *PreM* + *N* in CME than in BME. The LL test indicates that except for the rarely-occurring five-word and six-word premodifications, a significantly higher frequency of the (*Det*) + *PreM* + *N* nominalizations for CME can be consistently seen in all the other four subtypes. With regard to the most common one-word premodified nominalizations, although they have a significantly higher frequency in CME, they account for 74.27% of all nominalizations with the structure of (*Det*) + *PreM* + *N* in BME but the proportion is only 71.57% in CME. It can be seen that BME has a larger proportion of this short nominalization. In contrast, for all the other longer premodified nominalizations, in addition to a higher frequency in CME, there is also a higher proportion of instances in CME than in BME. This indicates that CME is characterized by heavy uses of complex and lengthy premodified nominalizations. Biber et al. (1999, p. 597) stated that “premodifiers are condensed structures...they use fewer words than postmodifiers to convey roughly the same information and

**Table 5** *LL* test of (*Det*) + *N* + *PoM* across CME and BME

Types of PoM	CME #	CME %	BME #	BME %	LL	Sig.	
PP	10,714	83.81	10,831	78.83	3.16	0.076	—
ADJP	37	0.29	37	0.27	0.00	0.954	—
NP	11	0.09	14	0.10	0.40	0.526	—
ADVP	3	0.02	8	0.06	2.43	0.119	—
Finite CL	669	5.23	1158	8.43	139.10	0.000*	—
Participle CL	678	5.30	797	5.80	11.27	0.001*	—
Infinitive CL	509	3.98	683	4.97	27.87	0.000*	—
Multiple PoM	163	1.28	211	1.54	6.84	0.009	—
Total	12,784	100.00	13,739	100.00	48.33	0.000*	—

Note: “—” indicates a lower frequency in CME relative to BME. “\*” indicates a statistically significant difference (99.9th percentile; 0.1% level;  $p < 0.001$ )

most adjectival and participial premodifiers can be rephrased as a longer, postmodifying relative clause”. According to this view, our data imply that writers of CME articles may have characteristically developed a more compressed style than their BME counterparts.

### 5.2.2 (*Det*) + *N* + *PoM*

A postmodifier of a noun phrase can be realized either by a phrase or a clause. (*Det*) + *N* + *PoM* can be subclassified into eight subtypes as shown in Table 5, for example, (*Det*) + *N* + *PP* (e.g. *the appeal of traditional folk art*), (*Det*) + *N* + *ADJP* (e.g. *growth incompatible with China's status as the fourth largest economy in the world*), and (*Det*) + *N* + *Finite CL* (e.g. *an arrangement that symbolizes imperial supremacy*). Table 5 presents the *LL* test results of (*Det*) + *N* + *PoM* across CME and BME. The phrasal postmodifiers are presented first, followed by clausal postmodifiers and multiple postmodifiers in the table.

As Table 5 shows, the frequencies of almost all the subtypes of postmodified nominalizations in BME are higher than those of CME. Furthermore, it can also be seen that the phrasal postmodifications (i.e. PP, ADJP, NP, and ADVP) account for 84.21% of all the uses of the (*Det*) + *N* + *PoM* structure in CME whilst the clausal postmodifications (i.e. Finite CL, Participle CL, and Infinitive CL) only take up 14.52% of the (*Det*) + *N* + *PoM* data in CME. In contrast, the proportions for phrasal and clausal postmodification in BME are 79.26% and 20.74% respectively. These differences in frequency suggest that CME has a preference for phrasal postmodifications whilst BME tends to use more clausal postmodifications. The *LL* test results for the four phrasal postmodifiers are not statistically significant. However, there are significantly more uses of postmodified finite clauses ( $LL = 139.10, p < 0.001$ ), participle clauses ( $LL = 11.27, p < 0.001$ ), and infinitive clauses ( $LL = 27.87, p < 0.001$ ) in BME than in CME. Therefore, we have good reasons to believe that BME writers have developed a reliance on postmodification, especially clausal postmodification. This is in

**Table 6** LL test of (*Det*) + *PreM* + *N* + *PoM* across CME and BME

Types of PoM	CME #	CME %	BME #	BME %	LL	Sig.
PP	8164	79.16	6694	75.09	126.71	0.000*
ADJP	40	0.39	32	0.36	0.79	0.375
ADVP	27	0.26	20	0.22	0.96	0.328
NP	25	0.24	18	0.20	1.05	0.305
Finite CL	954	9.25	1026	11.51	3.67	0.055
Participle CL	810	7.85	724	8.12	3.74	0.053
Infinitive CL	152	1.47	210	2.36	10.12	0.001
Multiple PoM	141	1.37	191	2.14	8.24	0.004
Total	10,313	100.00	8915	100.00	83.92	0.000*

Note: “+” indicates a higher frequency in CME relative to BME; “−” indicates a lower frequency in CME relative to BME. “\*\*\*” indicates a statistically significant difference (99.9th percentile; 0.1% level;  $p < 0.001$ )

clear contrast with the case in CME, whose writers may have had a preference for premodification. According to Jucker, postmodifiers tend to be “more explicit than premodifiers because they indicate explicitly the kind of relationship that holds between the noun head and the modifiers, either by means of prepositions or by means of entire finite or infinite clauses” (Jucker 1992, p. 109). This being so, it can be argued that BME texts tend to adopt a more explicit writing style, whereas CME texts tend to use a more compressed style.

### 5.2.3 (*Det*) + *PreM* + *N* + *PoM*

(*Det*) + *PreM* + *N* + *PoM* is the most complex structure type among the six types of nominalizations. For practical reasons, (*Det*) + *PreM* + *N* + *PoM* is also subdivided into eight subtypes in terms of the structure of postmodifiers, such as (*Det*) + *PreM* + *N* + *PP* (e.g. *high achievements in the artistic realm*), (*Det*) + *PreM* + *N* + *Finite CL* (e.g. *the wisest decision the director had taken*), and (*Det*) + *PreM* + *N* + *Participle CL* (e.g. *a press release issued by the German Red Cross*). Table 6 presents the LL test results of (*Det*) + *PreM* + *N* + *PoM* across CME and BME.

As can be observed from Table 6, all the four types of phrasal postmodification in CME take a higher proportion of the total instances than their counterparts in BME, but all the three kinds of clausal postmodification in BME take a higher proportion of the total than their counterparts in CME. This finding agrees in general terms with what we have found for the structure of (*Det*) + *N* + *PoM*. The LL test results show that only the difference in (*Det*) + *PreM* + *N* + *PP* is statistically significant ( $LL = 126.71, p < 0.001$ ) across CME and BME. This indicates that, in the uses of the most complex nominalization structure, CME writers tend to use more prepositional phrases as the postmodifier. We have already shown that CME relies more heavily on phrasal modification by using far more premodification. At this point, we can see that this observation of heavy reliance on phrasal modification is

also true for the case of phrasal postmodification. Furthermore, according to Jucker, although prepositional phrase is one kind of postmodifiers, it is “still less explicit as there is no verb indicating the argument structure of the modifier in comparison to finite clauses or participle clauses” (Jucker 1992, p. 68). In this regard, our findings may imply that even in the uses of nominalizations with the most complex structure, CME texts tend to demonstrate a more compressed style.

## 6 Discussion

In this section, we shall present an interpretation of the findings. The differences in the use of syntactic patterns of nominalization in the two corpora may be attributable to a complex set of factors. Our discussion in this section is only tentative and exploratory in nature. Before we go on to explain the differences we have identified, we first briefly summarize the main findings that emerged from previous sections.

Our data provide a clear indication that there are significant differences in the syntactic patterns of nominalizations across CME and BME. CME is characterized by a denser use of complex nominalizations, whilst BME has considerably lower frequencies of complex nominalizations but more uses of simple nominalizations. In addition, it has been found that CME relies more heavily on premodification whereas BME has a tendency towards postmodification. There are also considerable differences in the subtypes of nominalization structures. Among premodifiers, there are significantly more uses of almost all the six subtypes of (*Det*) + *PreM* + *N* (except for the five-word and six-word premodification) in CME than in BME. As regards the most complex structure of (*Det*) + *PreM* + *N* + *PoM*, CME tends to use significantly more prepositional phrases as the postmodifier. For (*Det*) + *N* + *PoM*, BME has a preference for clausal postmodification.

Based on these findings, it seems true that there is a correlation between the syntactic complexity of nominalizations and different English varieties. The distribution of different nominalization structures suggests a differing style in Media English writing in the two English varieties. Biber and Clark (2002, p. 63) ranked nominal modifiers along a cline of compression as follows:

COMPRESSED – EXPRESSION	premodifiers	< phrasal postmodifiers	< nonfinite clauses	< relative clauses	– EXPANDED EXPRESSION
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Based on our findings, it is plausible to argue that CME, as an emerging variety of English, is located towards the compressed end of this continuum, as evidenced by its more uses of premodifiers and phrasal postmodifiers. In contrast, BME is comparatively more expanded, as manifested in its more uses of postmodifiers, especially clausal postmodifiers.

One possible underlying factor for this contrast might be the influence from the characteristics of the Chinese language. It is generally accepted that Chinese is a paratactic language while English is a hypotactic language. Chinese often employs

various types of juxtaposition in terms of syntactic and stylistic features. In the case of the uses of nominal modifiers, no matter how complex the modifiers are, they tend to occur before the noun head in Chinese (e.g. Huang 1998; Cheng and Sybesma 2014). Thus, concerning the expansion of noun-phrase heads, Chinese tends to use left-branching structures with premodification. Chinese English users, influenced by patterns in their mother tongue, tend to take premodification as the primary means and postmodification as the secondary means to expand noun phrase heads in their English writing. In contrast, English has many more other choices including right-branching structures by way of postmodification, which can be seen from BME writers' reliance on postmodification, especially clausal postmodification, in our data.

Another factor might be concerned with the process of colloquialization. The findings of several studies (e.g. Hundt and Mair 1999; Biber 2003; Leech et al. 2009) have shown that British English has been undergoing a process of colloquialization, which is characterized as a stylistic shift that has brought many grammatical changes in the language. As Biber (2003, p. 170) argued, this development is part of a much broader long-term drift in the evolution of English writing styles and “over the past few decades, these changes towards more oral styles in newspaper language have accelerated”. Leech et al.'s (2009, p. 239) diachronic study has also confirmed that “informalization and colloquialization have been well documented in the language of the media”. This tendency towards more informal style has also manifested itself in the more uses of explicit and expanded nominal modifiers in BME, as shown in this study.

## 7 Conclusion

This chapter has presented a corpus-based study of the syntactic patterns of nominalizations across CME and BME. It has shown that CME and BME differ significantly in their preferred nominalization structures. Such differences have stylistic significance for the two language varieties. In general, Chinese Media English is found to be more compressed in style than BME. Our study has also indicated that differences in syntactic features, although not immediately discernable by intuition, are also worth investigating for uncovering the syntactic and stylistic features of China English and these can only be identified by systematically analyzing large amounts of natural data.

However, it is important to note that many of the differences unveiled in this study are exploratory in nature, which only indicates a general trend of the uses of nominalizations in CME and BME. The fact that we are comparing a large quantity of data in the two corpora makes it impossible – for practical reasons – to achieve a higher level of delicacy in the analysis of usage patterns of individual nominalizations. Therefore, future studies in this field could conduct finer-grained analyses of individual nominalizations in CME and BME. We have listed the structure types

which vary most across these two language varieties. These initial quantitative findings can be framed as the point of departure for more detailed future endeavors.

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# A Study on Modified-Modifying Sequence in the Compositions by Chinese Advanced Users of English

Wendong Jiang

**Abstract** China now has the largest number of users of English in the world and this will probably lead to a distinctive Chinese variety of English. The features of China English were investigated in terms of lexis, pragmatics and syntactic structures and the data under investigation involved spoken discourse, media and literature, while few studies have brought advanced Chinese users' English writing samples into focus in the perspective of World Englishes. This chapter investigates the syntactic features in terms of the patterns of the positions of subordinate clauses of China English, based on the data collected in 188 writing compositions written by advanced Chinese users of English. The four subordinators under investigation are *because*, *although*, *if* and *when*. Results show that Chinese users of English tend to place *although*-, *because*-, *if*- and *when*-subordinate clauses in the initial position, though they can be placed in an initial, medial or final position. I therefore argue that this preference by advanced Chinese users of English may be due to the transfer of Chinese and can be considered as instantiations of syntactic nativization in China English.

**Keywords** China English • Syntactic structure • Advanced users of English in China • Subordinate clause • Modified-modifying sequence

## 1 Introduction

Back to 1964, Halliday et al. (1964: 293) pointed out that “English is no longer the possession of the British, or even the British and the Americans, but an international language which increasing numbers of people adopt for at least some of their purposes, without thereby denying ... the value of their own languages”. During the past decades, English has travelled to many parts of the world and has been used to serve various purposes. China, as one of the countries in the expanding circle, has

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been frequently cited as a major English-learning society, and the current popularity of English (in China) is unprecedented (Bolton and Graddol 2012).

In this chapter, I explore the modified-modifying sequence pattern of China English, based on the data collected in 188 Chinese graduates' English compositions. I chose four subordinators for finite clauses into consideration. They are *although, because, if* and *when*, which initiate finite adverbial clauses.

My research questions include (1) What characterizes the pattern of the sequence of finite adverbial clauses in Chinese advanced users' English compositions? (2) What are likely to be the reasons for the pattern? (3) What are the implications for teaching English as an international language in China? The current chapter may fill in a research gap at the level of China English syntax, help the understanding of China English as a variety of English in terms of writing, and provide some implications for the teaching of writing in English under the framework of World Englishes in China. The findings of this chapter reflect recognizably syntactic nativization in China English.

## 2 Literature Review

### 2.1 *The Terminology of CE*

There has always been a question about the terminology in the study of China English, whether it should be called China English or Chinese English. Chinese English used to bear a pejorative sense, for the awkward word-for-word translations from Chinese into English. When some translators recognize that certain Chinese words, phrases or other expressions which bear a distinctive feature and which are culturally unique in China, such as *fengshui*, *Taoism*, *Confucian*, etc. can hardly find their equivalents in English, they therefore justify the existence of a new variety of English and name it "China English" or "Chinese English". Ge (1980) first coined the term "China English" and justified its use by arguing that the use of China English expressions are inevitable for Chinese speakers when they communicate in English, because these expressions are nonexistent in either British or American English. Other terms such as "Sinicized English", "Chinish" and "PRC English" are also suggested by scholars to distinguish them from "Chinese English", though "Chinese English" is alternatively used among some research.

### 2.2 *The Definition of CE and Its Acceptability*

The definition of CE has undergone constant revisions among Chinese scholars. Based on Ge's definition (Ge 1980), Wang (1991:3) further defines "China English" as "the English used by the Chinese people in China, based on standard English and

bearing Chinese characteristics". After rethinking about the conception of the so-called "standard" English, Li (1993:19) defines China English as:

the English which takes Normative English as a core, and expresses things that are uniquely Chinese. Its lexis, sentence structure and discourse have Chinese characteristics without interference from the mother tongue (Chinese), and it is involved in communications in English by means of transliterations, loan translations and semantic shift.

Regardless of the debate about the terminology issue, and apart from the fact that the term "Chinese English" still occasionally causes raised eyebrows, there seems to be a general acceptance of "China English" and it has been increasingly regarded as a variety of English in the domain of Asian and World Englishes (Wang, 1991; Kirkpatrick and Xu 2002; Xu 2010a, b, 2013). The past three and a half decades have seen rigorous research on CE, as a member of World Englishes, by researchers both in China and overseas. Systematic research into CE involves the investigation into the features in lexis (Xu 2010a, b; Chen 2004, 2014; Jiang 2014; Yang 2014), discourse and pragmatics (Kirkpatrick and Xu 2002); research is also done from the perspectives of culture (Xu 2013, 2014; He and Liu 2008), nativization of CE translation (Mao 2004), corpus linguistics (Xiao and Huang 2006), pedagogical issues (Wen 2012), whereas grammar and syntactic features of CE are rarely addressed. Among the studies mentioned above, a large number are qualitative-based, and few studies adopt the quantitative method. Among the few quantitative studies, the data under investigation involves spoken discourse, media and literature (Xu 2010a) while few studies are found to take Chinese advanced users of English as subjects under investigation.

## 2.3 Syntax

Syntax is defined by Radford (1997:1) as being concerned with "the ways in which words can be combined together to form phrases and sentences". "It is a subcategory of the grammar of natural languages: a system of rules which describe how all well-formed sentences of a language can be derived from basic elements" (Bussmann 2000: 473). It is an integral part of grammar according to Quirk et al. (1985). Since there are numerous dimensions of variation in language, an important question to ask is what range of syntactic variation we find in the grammars of different languages or language varieties (Radford et al. 1999: 338). According to Xu (2010a: 61) "syntactic features of different varieties of English differ, and they also change within a variety over time and they evolve in a variety through identifiably frequent uses of particular syntactic units and principles in comparison with those in other varieties". Mufwene (2001:1–2) defines a "linguistic feature" as "being the 'identifiable' sets of principles" in language systems for the purpose of language transmission from one group of speakers to another. These units and principles are "selected and applied differently from one language to another, despite many similarities," and they are "identifiable in various interfacing modules: e.g. the phonological

system, the morphological system, and syntax". Based on Mufwene's point of view, I assume CE by Chinese advanced users may have its own distinctive features at syntactic level. This chapter investigates whether the modifying-modified sequence of the Chinese language is transferred in Chinese EFL learner's compositions and therefore achieves the nativization of CE, and becomes one of the features of CE.

## 2.4 Research of Syntax in CE

Xu (2010a: 97) discovers that there is "a tendency that written CE prefers initial subordinate clause position" based on 20 newspaper articles from *China Daily*. Xu (2010a:98) then argues that "it can be predicted that speakers of CE would prefer to place the *although/though\_*, *if\_*, and *when\_* subordinate clauses in the 'I' (standing for 'initial') position, functioning as modifying clauses, whereas the main clauses, placed in the 'F' (standing for 'final') position, function as the modified clauses".

In terms of temporal adverbial clauses, Tan (2006) claims that there is a pattern for Chinese users of English to place the temporal adverbial clauses in the initial position in their compositions and native language transfer is an important factor in the preference of the positions of the adverbial clauses. Research on the same issue is also conducted by Chen (2004), who attempts to find out the differences in the distribution of time clauses between Chinese and English. Chen's findings include (1) among 50 Chinese sentences containing adverbial clauses of time, 49 of them place the modifying clause at the beginning of sentence and only one places the subordinate clause at the end of the sentence (which he explained as "under the influence of westernization of Chinese"); (2) among 50 sentences in English 15 sentences have the subordinate clauses at the initial position and 35 at the final position.

With regard to causal adverbial clause, Zhang (2005) claims that in Chinese 93% of the causal adverbial clause is placed at the initial position while in English 94% is placed at the final position. Cai (2005:109) bases her findings on the Brown corpus and concludes that "Chinese learners place the *because-* clause before the main clause more often than native speakers do".

Zhang and Ma (2013) investigated the position of *when-* clause in the original version of *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens and its Chinese translation. They find that among the 338 clauses initiated by *when* in the original version, 151 sentences, which account for 44.7% of all the *when-* clauses place the modifying clause (*when-* clause) at the initial position while 187 (55.3%) in the final position. In the Chinese version, however, most *when-* clauses are placed at the initial position.

Yin (2010) compared the syntactic features of CE and those of standard English based on a comparison between the newspaper articles in *China Daily*, and those in the *Times*. The result of the comparison shows that "the average frequency of subordinate clauses which precede the main clauses in CE is 2.5% higher than those in standard English".

## 2.5 Research Gap

It seems that the studies mentioned above have reached a certain agreement on the positioning pattern of Chinese and English, in terms of temporal and causal clauses; few studies are found with regard to the conditional and concessive clauses. This chapter attempts to find out the sequencing pattern of Chinese advanced learners of English with their compositions as research data, in terms of concessive adverbial clauses initiated by *although/though*, causal adverbial clauses initiated by *because*, conditional adverbial clauses by *if*, and temporal clauses introduced by *when*.

## 3 Methodology

In my investigation of the positions of subordinate clauses in Chinese advanced users' compositions, I take four subordinators for finite clauses into consideration. They are *although*, *because*, *if*, and *when*. The reasons for the choice of these four subordinators are that, firstly they are "formal indicators of subordination" (Quirk et al. 1985: 997); secondly, they generally "indicate a clear semantic relationship between the subordinate and main clauses, i.e., concession, reason, condition, and time" (Xu 2010a: 94) and thirdly they are "frequently used subordinators among Chinese users" (Xu 2010a: 94).

A quantitative research method is chosen in collecting and analyzing data in order to explore the patterns of the positions of modifying-modified infinite adverbial clauses in Chinese users' English writing. The data comes from 188 compositions written by Chinese graduates in a university in Beijing. They are aged 20–25 and their native language is Chinese. They have been learning English for over 10 years and therefore can be regarded as advanced users of English. The composition is one of the required writing assignments in the spring semester in 2014. They were asked to write a composition of about 200 words on the given topics.

The 188 compositions collected were put into one Word document. A number of "concordance" searches were conducted throughout the collected 188 compositions with Wordsmith Tools 5.0, with the search words *although*, *because*, *if*, and *when*.

## 4 Data Analysis and Discussion

### 4.1 Data Collected and Example Sentences

Based on the search done as introduced in Sect. 3, 275 sentences were identified, which contained one of the four search-words. Below are the tables of the data that the discussion is primarily based on. I identified 'subordinate clause' with SC in the Tables 1 and 2.

**Table 1** The number and percentage of the positions of the four subordinators

Search word	Number of SC	Initial		Medial		Final	
		Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)
Although	77	49	63.6	0	0	28	36.4
Because	50	8	16	0	0	42	84
If	67	43	64.2	0	0	24	35.8
When	81	46	56.8	0	0	35	43.2
Subtotal	275	146	50.2	0	0	129	49.8

**Table 2** The number and percentage of the positions of *although*, *if* and *when*

Search word	Number of SC	Initial		Medial		Final	
		Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)
Although	77	49	63.6	0	0	28	36.4
If	67	43	64.2	0	0	24	35.8
When	81	46	56.8	0	0	35	43.2
Subtotal	225	138	61.3	0	0	87	38.7

Some example sentences containing *although* (named A...), *because* (named B...), *if* (named I...) and *when* (named W...) are listed below, with errors uncorrected. Discussion and analysis of these sentences will be given in the next section of this chapter.

- A1. *Although it is a case-by-case, we must pay attention to this undesirable social phenomena.*
- A2. *Although this contribution is based on individual education, it is not just simple to improve personal ability.*
- A3. *Although many evidences show that it might be a mistake and cruelty giving high pressure to the kids when they are very young, I think it is true for elementary school students to have English courses.*

Sentences containing *because*:

- B1. *Tell us what things we can do and what things we can not do because it is very important to our country.*
- B2. *No doubt, we should grasp at opportunities of education, because we have so many things to learn.*
- B3. *Because everyone has his interest, the education is impossible to satisfy everyone's require.*

Sentences containing *if*:

- I1. *If some people have different ideas on one problem, they can discuss it with each other even debate on it.*

- I2. *Especially in the intense competition of modern society, if you have accepted good education, you will have more chances to get a job than others.*
- I3. *If you make the most use of knowledge you have studied before in your job, you can get much money and your boss will appreciate you and you can gain much respect and reputations.*

Sentences containing *when*:

W1. *Generally, we can improve our social skills when we are abroad alone.*

W2. *When they start to work, they will have a higher position*

W3. *When I was a child, I had the closest relationship with my family.*

## **4.2 The Discussion of the Sentences with Subordinators of Although, If, and When**

Kirkpatrick (1996:107) argues that “...the modifying-modified sequence, which is expressed by the subordinate clauses to main clause sequence in complex sentences, is also an important information sequencing principle in MSC (modern standard Chinese).” I will, therefore, investigate the sequence in subordinate clauses in order to find out the modifying-modified sequence in Chinese advanced users’ English compositions.

According to Quirk et al. (1985:1037) “subordinate clauses may be positioned initially, medially or at the end of their superordinate clauses”. Examples of the three arrangements include: *When you are ready, we'll go to my parents' place* (INITIAL); *We'll go, when you're ready, to my parents' place* (MEDIAL); *We'll go to my parents' place when you're ready* (END).

Similarly, Biber et al. (1999:194) point out that “As with adverbials in general, they are optional and have some freedom of positioning; both initial and final placements are common”. The medial placement of adverbial clauses is not mentioned here, which might be due to the small number of such cases. The subordinate clauses under investigation in this chapter are adverbial clauses, which generally function as circumstance adverbials.

By investigating the 188 compositions written by Chinese advanced users of English, I found that the initial-positioned subordinate clauses account for 50.2% of the total while the final-positioned ones account for 49.8%. It seems there is only a slight difference (50.2/49.8) between the number of the intial-positioned subordinate clauses and that of the finial-positioned ones, which can hardly provide strong evidence to show Chinese advanced users’ preference in modifying-modified sequence. If we exclude the data of clauses introduced by *because*, however, we can see a different picture: 61.3% of the subordinate clauses are in the initial position while 38.7% are in the final position. To put it in another way, most of the modifying clauses initiated by *although*, *if* and *when* are placed at the initial position, and none was found to be in the medial position. The lower percentage of the initial positioned

clauses introduced by *because* has something to do with the usage of *yinwei* (*because*) in modern standard Chinese (MSC thereafter). I'll explain this after I finish the discussion of the subordinate clauses introduced by *although*, *if* and *when*.

To account for Chinese users' preference in placing the subordinate clauses in the initial position, I have looked into how Chinese speakers normally place the subordinate clauses initiated by the Chinese equivalents of *although*, *if* and *when*.

"In MSC, the modifying clause usually precedes the modified clause" (Wang and Zhang 1996: 415). There are very few cases in which the modified clause is placed at the initial position while the modifying clause at the final position. Scollon et al. (2000: 30) mention that "Chinese is iconic, and thus presents a case where word order corresponds to thought flow "in a genuinely natural way". Chinese word order is, therefore, natural rather than salient, where "Because John went walking in the freezing rain he caught cold" is in natural order but "John caught cold because he went walking in the freezing rain" is in salient order.

Adverbials, which function as the modifying parts in complex sentences, are usually placed at the beginning of the sentence in Chinese, and very few are put at the final position (Chen 1991:155). For example, in the Chinese sentence "suiran zhe pian wenzhang hen duan, dan hen you yisi" (Although this article is short, it is interesting), the modifying clause ("suiran zhe pian wenzhang hen duan") is placed at the initial position while the modified clause ("dan hen you yisi") is placed at the final position.

Syntactic features of different varieties of English evolve from different motivations. Xu (2010a: 61) believes one of the motivations is "some of them (syntactic features) result from transfer from other languages". Xu (2010a: 63) further notes that "transfer syntactic features exist in non-native varieties of English because the speakers of these varieties have native languages". Based on the arguments above, it can be predicted that when CE speakers process complex sentences involving subordinate and main clauses, it is likely that they transfer Chinese sequencing into English, thus they will place the subordinate clauses before the main clause. This view is also reflected by Kirkpatrick (2004: 6–9) when he mentions that "certain features associated with MSC syntax influence the writing style of Chinese learners".

Take the subordinate clauses initiated by *when* as an example. Clauses initiated by *when* are used to indicate time. Chen (2004) and Fang (2009) investigate the different features of temporal adverbial clauses between Chinese users and native speakers and find that Chinese users of English tend to place the temporal clauses before the main clause, which shows Chinese users' preference in modifying-modified sequence. According to Fang (2009: 57) "(in Chinese) most of the subordinate clauses of time are positioned before the main clause". For example, in the example sentence W3, *When I was a child, I had the closest relationship with my family*. The subordinate sentence (*When I was a child*) is placed in the initial position while the main clause (*I had the closest relationship with my family*) is placed in the final position. Fang (2009) points out the preference in the sequencing order can be explained by the transfer of Chinese users' native language, the sequence of words and clauses in Chinese sentences follow the thought flow of the speakers in a

genuinely natural way. In the way of thinking of Chinese, the time when the event happens comes first and the event comes next; therefore, in MSC, the subordinate clauses usually start with the modifying clause and end with the modified clause. This SC (subordinate clause) to MC (main clause) sequencing in CE coincides with the “natural” and “iconic” order of Chinese, instead of the “salient” order of English (Kirkpatrick 1996: 105). For instance, Chinese will say “ta lai de shihou, yu xiade henda” which means “When he arrived, it was raining hard”, “wo zai pucimaosi de shihou, women tongguo youjianlianxi” which in English is “When I stayed in Portsmouth, we kept in touch with each other by e-mail”. In the above two sentences, the temporal clauses (“When he arrived” “When I stayed in Portsmouth”) are placed before the main clauses. When Chinese users of English process adverbial clauses of time, they will intuitively follow the Chinese order in sequencing and they will place the modifying clause at the initial position and the modified at the final position. The transfer of the Chinese language makes the modifying-modified sequence a feature of CE among Chinese users of English, which serves as instantiations of syntactic nativization in CE.

This nativization in China English can also be seen with subordinated sentences introduced by *although* and *if*, which can be found in the example sentences below.

- A1. *Although this contribution is based on individual education, it is not just simple to improve personal ability.*
- I3. *If you make the most use of knowledge you have studied before in your job, you can get much money and your boss will appreciate you and you can gain much respect and reputations.*

### ***4.3 The Discussion of the Sentences with Subordinators of Because***

After the discussion of subordinate clauses introduced by *although*, *if* and *when*, I investigate the subordinate clauses introduced by *because*. It can be noticed from Table 1 that 84% of the subordinate sentences initiated by *because* place the subordinate clauses at the final position, which is different from those introduced by subordinators *although*, *if* and *when*. According to Li and Thompson (1981: 633–655), in many sentences containing two linked clauses, “each of the two constituent clauses contains a linking element, the first clause having a forward-linking element and the second one a backward-linking element”. Chinese has two sets of linking elements to show the reason-result relationship, “yinwei (*because*), suoyi (*so*)” and “zhisuoyi” (*so*), *shiyinwei* (*because*). As a result, the position of the *because*- clause can either be in the initial or the final position in MSC. For example, both “ta shentibuhao, suoyi meiyoushuxizheci huiyi” (He was suffering from poor health, so he didn’t attend the conference”) and “ta zhisuoyi meiyoushuxizheci huiyi, shi yinweijiankang yuanyin” (He didn’t attend the conference because he was suffering from poor health”) are correct in Chinese. To put it in another way, in MSC the position

of modifying-modified clause in the case of the adverbial clause of reason “is flexible as it allows a marked main clause-subordinate clause sequence for a number of pragmatic purposes” (Kirkpatrick 1996: 106). The choice of these two sets of linking elements is determined by the pragmatic purpose the sentence wishes to convey. As a result, the subordinate clause is not necessarily identified with the modifying clause in the case of the *because*- clause. If the *because*- clause carries the focus of the sentence, it is more likely to be the modified clause instead of the modifying clause, even though it is the subordinate clause. Chinese users of English, accordingly, will place the *because*- clause in the final position if it carries the focus of the sentence, thus having the modified-modifying sequence. For instance, in example sentence B1 (*Tell us what things we can do and what things we can not do because it is very important to our country*), the focus of the sentence is the result (“*Tell us what things we can do and what things we can not do*”), so it is placed at the initial position while the reason (*because it is very important to our country*) is placed at the final position. This is also the case with example sentence B2 (*No doubt, we should grasp at opportunities of education, because we have so many things to learn*). Example sentence B3 (*Because everyone has his interest, the education is impossible to satisfy everyone’s require*), however, follows a different sequence, with the reason preceding the result, because the focus of the sentence is the reason instead of the result. The discussion above, therefore, explains the slight difference in the percentage between the initial position and the final position of adverbial clauses introduced by *because* and the other three subordinators. Both the initial position of the *because*-clause and the final position of the *because*-clause are due to the transfer effect of Chinese users’ native language, and thus make it a sign of nativization of English used in Chinese context.

#### **4.4 The Discussion of the Modifying-Modified Sequencing in Terms of Information Processing**

In the discussion of preference of the initial-position and the final-position of the subordinate clauses, it should be noticed that a number of interesting factors, such as the factors of cohesion and information processing, the role of the adverbial in framing subsequent discourse, as well as the structural considerations, affect the choice between these two positions (Biber et al. 1999). In terms of information processing, “many finite adverbial clauses in initial position contain given information, referred to in the preceding discourse, while the main clause presents new information”. In order to find out whether there is some obvious feature of CE in this respect, I have also counted the number of sentences that put the given information in the initial position as well as those that are put in the final position, which is shown in Table 3.

It can be found that a majority of the sentences containing one of the four subordinators follow the order of given information preceding new information. The rea-

**Table 3** The number and percentage of the sequencing of given information (GI) and new information (NI)

Search word	Number of SC	GI-NI		NI-GI	
		Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)
Although	77	59	76.6	18	23.4
Because	50	40	80	10	20
If	67	55	82	12	18
When	81	61	75.3	20	24.7
Total	275	215	78.2	60	21.8

son may be due to the similarity between English and Chinese in the arrangement of information in adverbial clauses. In the case of English, the new or most important idea or message in a piece of information as well as the more ‘weighty’ part of a sentence should be placed towards the end of a sentence (Leech and Svartvik 1994). For example:

*It is necessary that you finish the work by Friday.*

*The story is told of the experience in Tibet.*

With regard to Chinese, “most adverbial sentences in MSC usually follow the order of “modifying-modified” principle” (Jin 1998), which means that the focus of the sentence is usually in the final position. For example,

*yaobushi wo liu ta, ta keneng you zoule (if I did not ask her to stay, she would leave again);*

*jinguan ta zai guowai daile henduo nian, tade yingyu bing bushi henhao (although he has been living abroad for many years, his English is not very good).*

It should be recognized, however, that “both end-focus and end-weight are useful guiding principles, not invariable rules” Leech and Svartvik (1994:201). The sequencing of the modifying/modified clauses also serves important cohesive functions. Some of the sentences in the data collected fail to take this into account. For instance:

I4 *As we know, English has assumed greater significance in China since we entered the World Trade Organization (WTO). This historic event has increased our economic and trade cooperation with a great number of foreign companies. If we are able to speak English fluently, we will have greater opportunities to do business with these companies.*

We can see that this sentence follows the end-weight order by putting “we will have greater opportunities to do business with these companies” at the end of the sentence. In terms of information processing, it will be more coherent to put this part at the initial position, since “these companies” refer to the “foreign companies” mentioned in the previous sentence.

## 5 Research Findings

From the discussion and the analysis in the previous section, the research findings can be obtained in the following aspects.

First, in the collected 188 Chinese users' compositions, with the four subordinate words *although*, *because*, *if*, and *when* as the search words, the modifying clauses are found in both the initial position and the final position. The initial-positioned clauses make up 50.2% and the final-positioned clauses make up 49.8%. None of the sentences under investigation was found in the medial position, which presents a difference compared with the case in English described by Quirk et al. (1985). The result, however, is in agreement with Biber et al. (1999: 830), who claimed that "adverbial clauses can be placed in two main positions relative to the main clause with which they are associated – initial and final (i.e. before or after the main clause)... A small number of adverbial clauses occur in medial positions". This is probably a feature of CE in terms of position of the modifying-modified sentence.

Second, in examining the modifying clauses introduced by the four subordinators *although*, *because*, *if*, and *when*, it can be found that a majority (78.2%) of the sentences follow the order of given information preceding the new information. The findings in this investigation, therefore, show no obvious feature of CE in terms of the information to achieve the communicative purpose.

Third, in terms of the positioning of the modified-modifying clauses, as evidenced by the data analysis in the previous section, most of the sentences initiated by *although*, *if* and *when* under investigation in the 188 compositions place the modifying clause at the initial position. To be more specific, 63.6% of the *although*-clauses, 64.2% of the *if*-clause and 56.8% of the *when*- clause had the modifying part at the initial position. However, the picture is quite different for the clauses initiated by *because*. Only 16% were found to be in the initial position while 84% were in the final position. This is caused by the flexibility of the position of modifying-modified clause in MSC to achieve the pragmatic purpose of the sentence. These findings strongly resonate with Xu's (2010a) findings in his research based on the newspaper (*China Daily*) texts data. Chinese EFL learner's preference in this pattern can be explained by the transfer of their mother tongue – MSC, in which the modifying clauses are usually placed at the beginning of the sentence.

## 6 Implications and Conclusion

Users of English, particularly advanced users of English, play an important role in the development of new varieties of English. Research on CE is limited compared with other Asian varieties of English such as Indian English and Singapore English. CE has been associated with Chinglish, and it has attracted much negative attention. Some educators take China English as broken English used by Chinese without any consistent patterns distinct from other varieties of English instead of a nativized

variety of English in the Chinese context. The discussion in the previous sections may serve as evidence of nativization of English in the Chinese context at the syntactic level. The transfer of the users' native language results in the emergence of CE. In the case of modifying-modified sequence in clauses produced by Chinese advanced users of English in this research, the transfer of Chinese is reflected in the users' way of ordering the subordinate clause and the main clause. Chinese way of thinking follows the natural way by placing the modifying clause in front of the modified clause. As a result, Chinese users of English follow this way when they process complex sentences in English. To put it in another way, CE, as a hybridized variety, is heavily influenced by Chinese syntax and figurative language.

To conclude, this chapter has investigated the modifying-modified sequence in compositions written by Chinese advanced users of English. It shows distinctive features of CE in terms of syntax. This can be evidence for the nativization of English in the Chinese context. China English in this light is not a poor attempt at the English language, but rather a more positive example of language creativity and aspects of identity, which results from a constant contact between two languages and cultures. With the increasing number of English learners in China, CE will certainly develop its own features, including syntactic features, and the nativization of English in Chinese context will be further deepened. The study of CE has been in progress in China for several decades and much research has been done in the perspectives of phonology, lexis, and pragmatics, but the features of CE at the syntactic level are still few and far between. Xu (2010a: 67) points out "it is worth looking at those syntactic features of Chinese learners' English and considering to what extent some of these features could develop into those of CE". I hope the analysis and arguments presented in this chapter may generate interest among scholars to explore more about the syntactic features of CE, and it will be more valuable if research can be done in a large discourse rather than the sentential level as done in this chapter. I also hope the arguments in this chapter can make a convincing case for the changes and adjustments that need to be made in order to teach English more efficiently in the paradigm of world Englishes.

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# Pragmatics in Chinese Graduate Students' English Gratitude Emails

Wei Ren

**Abstract** This paper aims to codify pragmatic features of China English in email discourse by investigating gratitude emails produced by competent Chinese English users across two different proficiency levels. A total of 78 Chinese graduate students of non-English majors took part in this study, and they were divided into two groups according to their English exams. The participants were required to write a thank-you email to a professor in a hypothetical situation. Findings include that the more advanced group wrote significantly longer emails to express their gratitude to a professor than did the less advanced group. However, no significant difference was found in terms of the frequency of overall pragmatic strategies and that of individual pragmatic strategies. The two groups of participants displayed the same tendency with respect to the types of greetings in emails to professors, although more deviant usages were found in the less advanced group's emails. Both groups showed a strong preference for ending their emails to a professor with rather formal use. The implications of the present study are discussed with respect to varieties in local Englishes in the Expanding Circle countries, and the legitimacy of L1 pragmatics and culture in local Englishes in the Expanding Circle.

**Keywords** China English • Gratitude email • Pragmatic strategies • Opening and closing • L1 culture legitimacy

## 1 Introduction

The discipline World Englishes (WE) has developed into a thriving field of applied linguistics over the last three decades or so, as evidenced in a large number of books, papers and some dedicated journals such as *World Englishes*, *English World-Wide*, and *English Today*. However, much of the descriptive work in WE has been concerned to identify and to highlight the distinctive features of individual local English varieties with respect to phonology, lexis and grammar (Bolton 2012), with pragmatic and discourse features relatively less researched. On the other hand, the

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majority of WE research has focused on the description of the status and functions of English within the Outer Circle countries (Kachru 1992). Although many studies have investigated Englishes within the Expanding Circle communities, there are still debates over whether such local varieties exist. Among the Expanding Circle countries, China has an estimated number of 400 million English learners. Regardless of whether China English exists as a local variety, it is believed to have developed into a stage which deserves pertinent analysis (Xu 2010). As Kirkpatrick (2007) states, codification of a local variety, although it may not be sufficient, is paramount for the acceptance of such a variety. Thus to contribute to the existing WE literature, the present study aims to provide more empirical data relating to pragmatic features in English of Chinese users.

An unavoidable difficulty to codify a local variety in the Expanding Circle countries such as China is the diverse proficiency levels of English among its users. Studies in second language (L2) acquisition have evidenced that even among competent L2 users, their linguistic and/or pragmatic performances differ considerably. Based on findings from projects in Philippine and Singapore, Tupas (2010) states that the issue of which norm should be considered legitimate exists in Englishes in the Outer Circle countries. He points out that there may be a range of varieties within a local English, for example, colloquial Singapore English vs. standard Singapore English, but “legitimate Englishes remain those which are labeled ‘educated’” (Tupas 2010, p. 574). It is thus illuminating to explore the extent to which variation exists among competent English users across different proficiency levels in the Expanding Circle countries. As such, the present study investigates gratitude emails produced by two groups of competent English users in China with different proficiency levels.

Expressing gratitude has crucial social value in interpersonal interaction. When performed appropriately, gratitude can enhance rapport whereas failure to express it can have negative social consequences (Eisenstein and Bodman 1986). The focus of this chapter is on how gratitude is constructed in English by Chinese students within the medium of email. Section 2 will briefly review China English and the issue of native-speaker norms in L2 pragmatics research, followed by research on email communication and on the speech act of gratitude. Section 3 introduces the methodology, including participants, instruments and data analysis. Findings and discussions are presented in Sects. 4 and 5. Section 6 concludes this chapter.

## 2 Literature Review

### 2.1 *China English and Issues About the Native-Speaker Norm*

China is a country in the Expanding Circle (Kachru 1992), where English is taught as a foreign language. It is still debatable whether China English already exists as a legitimate local variety. Based on data including interviews with competent English

users in China, newspaper articles and literary works, Xu (2010) identifies a selection of lexical, syntactic, discourse and pragmatic features of Chinese English. He maintains that Chinese English will become a powerful variety of WE, characterized by a number of linguistic and cultural norms derived from Chinese. Likewise, Graddol (2006) also predicts the importance of China, together with India, in determining the future of English as a global language.

As aforementioned, much of WE research has focused on features in phonology, lexis and grammar (Bolton 2012). Pragmatic and discourse features are relatively less represented in the descriptive work in WE. Apart from phonological and syntactic features, pragmatic strategies and cultural schemas encoded are worthy of investigation as well (Sharifian 2010). To contribute to codifying China English, the present study will explore pragmatic strategies employed in Chinese students' English gratitude emails.

The majority of L2 pragmatics studies have to date compared learners' responses with those of native speakers, which are considered to be the baseline (Ren 2013). This native norm model in L2 pragmatics has been criticized by many scholars and challenged by empirical findings (see Ren 2013 for more discussion). As Chang and Haugh (2011) note, in intercultural communication, participants should be treated on an equal footing rather than native-speaker norms prioritized as a yardstick for evaluating L2 users' behaviour. The bilingual is not the sum of two monolinguals. "It would be naive to expect a speaker to become a culturally and emotionally totally different person when speaking a second language" (Sharifian 2010, p. 455). Adopting the perspective of WE, the present study does not evaluate the Chinese student's pragmatic performance in gratitude emails against any native-speaker models.

## 2.2 *Research on Email Communication*

As a hybrid form of discourse, email shares features with both spoken and written language (Herring 2001). On the one hand email discourse contains some of the attributes of face-to-face interaction such as an informal style (Félix-Brasdefer 2012). On the other hand, email per se is "text-based" (Dürscheid and Frehner 2013, p. 47). There may be oral features in emails but "these features are situated on the conceptual level and not on the medial one" (Dürscheid and Frehner 2013, p. 47). Email is a "one-way" transmission (Herring 2001, p. 615): it is transmitted in its entirety as a single unit, which may convey what would have been communicated through multiple turns in face-to-face communication. In addition, email is an asynchronous medium, which can be edited or deleted without the knowledge of the intended recipient (Ren 2016).

Email has become an accepted and a popular means of communication between university students and staff. Many researchers have examined students' emails. These studies, mostly focusing on requests, primarily compare pragmatic performance of non-native speakers of English (NNSs) with that of native speakers (NSs) (e.g. Biesenbach-Lucas 2007; Félix-Brasdefer 2012). Biesenbach-Lucas (2007)

compared American and international students' email requests to staff. She found that both groups employed a similar range of request strategies. However, the NSs produced a higher frequency of syntactic modifiers (e.g. past tense, embedding [e.g. *I would appreciate it if you could*]) than the NNSs did in request for appointment and feedback. Although the NNSs produced more lexical modifiers (*please*, *downtoners* [e.g. *possibly*]) than the NSs did in request for feedback and extension, the NNSs tended to use a limited range of lexical modifiers. For example, the NSs employed understaters (e.g. *just*) and consultative devices (e.g. *do you think*) in request for feedback, which did not occur in the repertoire of NNSs. Likewise, examining internal modification in natural academic email requests to staff by L1 English and L2 Spanish, American university students, Félix-Brasdefer (2012) showed that L2 users employed lexical and syntactic modifiers less frequently than did NSs.

Email styles are subject to culture (Chen 2015). Hofstede (2001) ranks countries according to Power Distance (PD) values based on national average scores of questionnaire responses concerning attitudes to inequality of power. He defines PD as "the extent to which the less powerful members of institutional and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally" (Hofstede 2001, p. 98). A high PD score in a society would lead to an expectation that differences in power will be visible in behavior. Bjørge (2007) found that when writing emails to faculty, students from countries with high PD scores (Hofstede 2001) such as China were more likely to use formal openings and closings whereas students from low power distance countries such as Britain tended to use less formal alternatives. Similar findings were also documented by Chen (2015) and Biesenbach-Lucas (2009), which observed that students with Chinese or other Asian backgrounds tended to use 'Dear + title + last name' in their emails to faculty whereas American students tended to use 'Title + last name' followed by 'Hi + title + last name'. In addition, in quite a few situations L2 users may consciously diverge from NSs to maintain their L1 socio-cultural identity. Therefore, the legitimacy of the use of L1 pragmatic norms and cultural values should be acknowledged (Li 1998) in email intercultural interaction.

### **2.3 Research on the Speech Act of Gratitude**

The speech act of gratitude is employed to express a speaker's/writer's acknowledgement and positive evaluation towards some state of affairs or some individuals. It is a commissive act whose felicity conditions are as follows (Searle 1969, p. 67):

Propositional content rule: past act A done by H (hearer)

Preparatory rule: A benefits S (speaker) and S believes A benefits S

Sincerity rule: S feels grateful or appreciative for A

Essential rule: counts as an expression of gratitude or appreciation

Although gratitude can also be used to indicate acts not performed yet (Aijmer 1996), it is beyond the scope of the present study.

The gratitude can be boosted and expanded, as in *thank you very much for the coffee*. It has to be noted that although ‘expressing gratitude’ and ‘thanking’ or *thanks* are often used interchangeably, ‘thanking’ or *thanks* have wider functions than ‘expressing gratitude’ (see Aijmer 1996 for more discussion). For instance, ‘thanking’ can function as a pre-closing to a conversation. These two distinctive functions of ‘thanking’ will be distinguished in the present study.

Eisenstein and Bodman (1986, 1993) investigated variation in expressing gratitude among native and non-native speakers of English with data collected by observing naturally occurring interactions, discourse completion tasks (DCT) and role-plays. Findings included that even advanced learners had considerable difficulty to express gratitude adequately. On the one hand, they lacked the linguistic resources on lexical and syntactic levels to express their gratitude; on the other hand, there were also incongruities between native and nonnative speakers’ judgment regarding the necessity and appropriateness to express gratitude (Eisenstein and Bodman 1986). The authors suggested that thanking was realized differently cross-culturally, and “values may focus differentially on the various components that constitute expression of gratitude” (Eisenstein and Bodman 1993, p. 74).

Cheng (2005) examined the gratitude made by Chinese English speakers who varied in the length of residence in the US: Group 1 (1–4 months), Group 2 (over a year) and Group 3 (4 or more years), using the DCT. All the learner groups performed similarly, in that they employed simpler thanks and fewer instances of elaborated thanking than the English NSs did. The three learners groups and the NS group produced similar number of words in their gratitude. However, significant differences were found in the employment of strategies between the Group 1 learners and the English NSs, and between the Group 2 learners and the English NSs, but not between the Group 3 learners and the English NSs.

Relying on data from the Hong Kong component of the International Corpus of English, Wong (2010) explored the use of expressions of gratitude containing the stem *thank* in spoken discourse. The results showed that Hong Kong speakers of English usually used brief gratitude expressions such as *thanks* and *thank you*, which were frequently employed as closing signals. Repetitive gratitude formulas and expressions of appreciation were exceedingly rare. She hypothesized that Chinese people might be too reserved to express their gratitude openly and explicitly, reflecting cross-cultural differences between Chinese and western cultures in expressing gratitude (Eisenstein and Bodman 1993).

The above review shows that although expressing gratitude is of great importance to interpersonal communication, little research has been carried out to investigate gratitude in email discourse. With respect to the length of gratitude, previous literature has different findings: Cheng (2005) did not find significant differences between Chinese users of English and American native speakers whereas Wong (2010) found Hong Kong speakers of English usually used brief gratitude expressions. In addition, some researchers have observed cross-cultural differences between Chinese users of English and English native speakers with respect to email openings and closings (Bjørge 2007; Chen 2015). However, the studies have treated Chinese users of English as a homogeneous group. As previously noted, it would

provide more insights into China English, or WE research in general, by exploring the extent to which variation exists among competent Chinese users of English across different proficiency levels. This study thus aims to depict how gratitude to a professor is produced within email by two groups of Chinese competent English users with different proficiency levels. To be specific, the present study addresses the following research questions:

1. To what extent does the length of gratitude emails differ between the two groups of Chinese students?
2. To what extent does the use of pragmatic strategies differ in the gratitude emails of the two groups of Chinese students?
3. To what extent do the two groups of Chinese students differ in the opening and closing of their gratitude emails?

### 3 Methodology

#### 3.1 Participants

The participants in the present study were 78 Chinese graduate students of non-English majors at a university in China. English was a compulsory course for their first-year study in a 3-year masters program. The participants had just completed their first-year study at the time of data collection. According to their marks in the final English exam, the participants were divided into two groups: a higher proficiency group (39 students) and a lower proficiency group (39 students), with a significant difference in the exam marks between the two groups.

#### 3.2 Instruments

The instrument in the present study was a written discourse completion task (WDCT), which required the participant to write a thank-you email to a professor in a hypothetical situation. Each participant was given 30 min.

The researcher was fully aware of the disadvantages of WDCT, mainly consisting of the extent to which the WDCT data represented what participants would actually say in spontaneous conversations. Nevertheless, when it comes to elicited emails, the divergence between the WDCT data and the authentic data might be small because both involve planning and editing during the writing process (Chen 2015).

The following illustrates the WDCT situation.

*Write a thank-you email according to the information given below. It should accord with the format, including salutation, expression of thanks, the possible benefits brought by his help, and complimentary close. You don't need to write the address of the writer and the recipient.*

*You want to further your studies with a Ph.D. at Harvard University. During the application process, Professor John Smith, from Harvard, has given you a lot of effective and constructive suggestions, which helped you get the offer from Harvard. Write an email to express your thanks.*

### 3.3 Data Analysis

The students' emails were analyzed in two ways. On the one hand, the message part of the emails (length, pragmatic strategies) was examined. On the other hand, other moves of emails, i.e., opening and closing, were investigated as well.

The existence of a well thought out, well-defined classification system for speech acts enables researchers to produce comparable analyses and results that are expressed in terms of the same categories. The study therefore adopted Aijmer's (1996) and Cheng's (2005) taxonomies wherever the description of their categories was able to accommodate the present data set. The present study distinguished between 'thankning as a head act' and 'thankning as a pre-closing'. In addition, strategies such as 'expecting future meeting' and 'promising hard work' are added. A couple of sentences, for which the student's intention was unclear, were coded as 'other'. The following examples illustrate the types of strategies employed by the students in the present study (Data presented in this paper remain as they are in the original emails. That is, I did not correct any misspelling or change any linguistic features.).

- (a) Thanking-head act: *Thank you for your kindness and instruction.*
- (b) Thanking-pre-closing: *Thanks again!*
- (c) Appreciation: *I really appreciate your favor.*
- (d) Expressing gratitude: *I'm very grateful for your previous help.*
- (e) Stressing gratitude: *I must thank you again when we meet.*
- (f) Positive feeling: *Without your help, I couldn't get the offer.*
- (g) Repayment: *I will take some Chinese tradition food to you.*
- (h) Expecting future meeting: *I look forward to meeting you.*
- (i) Promising hard work: *I will do my best and won't let you down.*
- (j) Other: *I hope get more help from you in the future.*

## 4 Results

### 4.1 Length of Email Messages

This section analyzes the length of the participant's email message. That is, openings and closings are excluded. Table 1 summarizes the descriptive statistics of the length of the email message between the two groups.

**Table 1** Number of words of email messages across the higher and the lower groups

Group	No. of students	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Higher	39	68	163	101.2	21.2
Lower	39	32	119	69.8	19.1

According to Table 1, on average the higher group's email message was approximately 101 words, whereas that of the lower group contained approximately 70 words. The result indicated that the higher group wrote longer emails to express their gratitude to a professor than did the lower group, and the difference reached a significant level ( $t=6.828$ ,  $df=76$ ,  $p<.001$ ).

## 4.2 *Gratitude Strategies in Emails*

The two groups' employment of gratitude strategies is displayed in Table 2.

As shown in Table 2, the two groups displayed a similar profile regarding gratitude strategies employed, corroborating the finding in Cheng (2005), in which students with different length of residence in the L2 community did not vary significantly with respect to the use of gratitude strategies. Both the higher and the lower groups utilized some strategies very frequently ('thanking as a head act', 'positive feelings'), some moderately frequently ('expecting future meeting', 'appreciation') and others infrequently ('repayment'). In terms of the frequency of overall gratitude strategies, the higher group employed more strategies than did the lower group (159 vs. 142), but the difference was not significant. Furthermore, no significant difference was observed in terms of the frequency of individual strategies either.

It is worth noting that although 'repayment' was considered as an important part in expressing gratitude in American English (Eisenstein and Bodman 1986), it only occurred twice each in the two groups' emails, as illustrated in the following examples.

- (1) I hope you could come to China some day, then I have opportunity to reply your thanks. (Higher group)
- (2) I will hold a party for your coming to China next week. (Higher group)
- (3) I know you will travel to China this summer. I can be a guide for you. (Lower group)
- (4) I will take some Chinese tradition food to you. (Lower group)

Cheng (2005, pp. 47–48) divides 'repayment' into three subcategories: (a) by offering or promising service, money, food or goods (e.g. *How can I help you?*), (b) by indicating indebtedness (e.g. *I owe you one.*), and (c) by promising self-restraint or self-improvement (e.g. *I will hand in my paper on time next time.*). As indicated in the above examples, all the four instances of 'repayment' are offering or promising service or food (the first subcategory in Cheng's analysis).

**Table 2** Overall distributions of gratitude strategies between the higher group and the lower group apologies

Strategy	Higher		Lower	
	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Thanking-head act	34	21.38	33	23.24
Thanking-pre-closing	25	15.72	26	18.31
Appreciation	12	8.18	8	6.34
Expressing gratitude	5	3.14	3	2.11
Stressing gratitude	9	5.66	3	2.11
Positive feeling	39	24.53	39	27.46
Repayment	2	1.26	2	1.41
Expecting future meeting	19	11.95	18	12.68
Promising hard work	6	3.77	5	3.52
Other	7	4.40	4	2.82
<i>Total</i>	<i>159</i>	<i>100.00</i>	<i>142</i>	<i>100.00</i>

In contrast, although 'promising hard work' has not been documented in previous literature, it was employed more times than 'repayment' by the two groups in the current study. The strategy 'promising hard work', although not frequently either, was employed six times by the higher group and five times by the lower group. The following examples illustrate the strategy 'promising hard work' used by the two groups.

- (5) I will do my best at Harvard and will not let you down. (Higher group)
- (6) I would certainly treasure this great opportunity and make progress in this field on my way of further education. (Higher group)
- (7) I promise that I will study hard. I will not let you down. Trust me! (Lower group)
- (8) I'll try my best in Harvard to be an excellent Ph.D. I will make you feel proud of me. (Lower group)

In addition, almost half of the participants in each group expressed their expectancy to meet or talk with the professor:

- (9) I will get my master degree in June 2014. And then I will enter the Harvard University in fall, 2014. I am looking forward to meeting you at Harvard University. (Higher group)
- (10) I am very excited right now and want to go to Harvard and thank you face to face. (Higher group)
- (11) I'm looking forward to seeing you at Harvard University. (Lower group)
- (12) I will visit you when I arrive at Harvard. (Lower group)

In the gratitude emails collected, the higher group often expressed longer positive feelings and/or deployed more implicit thanking strategies than the lower group

did, which resulted in the difference in the length of email messages between the two groups. Nevertheless, the gratitude emails of the two groups shared similar semantic formulas. Consider Examples (13) and (14).

- (13) (Higher group)
- |                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| [Self-identification]      | <i>I am Frank, the student from GUCAS who you offered me great help to apply Ph.D. of Harvard University.</i>   |
| [Thanking-head act]        | <i>Now I am writing an email to you to extend my thanks as I received offer from Harvard University yesterday finally. Thanks for your effective and constructive suggestions and valuable information.</i> |
| [Positive feeling]         | <i>Without your help, I couldn't get the offer so smoothly. Without your support, I couldn't have such opportunity to study at Harvard University.</i>  |
| [Expressing gratitude]     | <i>I am grateful for your kindest help</i>  |
| [Promising hard work]      | <i>and I will treasure the opportunity of studying at Harvard. And I hope I will study hard and make great achievements in the future.</i>  |
| [Expecting future meeting] | <i>Finally, I hope I can have a talk with you in the USA face to face.</i>  |
| [Thanking pre-closing]     | <i>Thank you again for your help.</i>   |
- (14) (Lower group)
- |                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| [Thanking-head act]    | <i>Thank you very much for your helping during the application process.</i>   |
| [Positive feeling]     | <i>My grades is so high that the school is willing to accept to give me the offer. following your effective and constructive suggestions. Thus, it is very fluent and satisfying in the progress.</i> |
| [Thanking pre-closing] | <i>Again thank you so much for your suggestions and help.</i>   |

Example (13) is the only email containing a self-identification in the data collected. In the present study generally the gratitude emails exhibited the following semantic formulas: [thankng as a head act], [positive feeling], ([appreciation],) ([expressing gratitude],) ([stressing gratitude],) ([promising hard work],) ([expecting future meeting],) and [thankng as pre-closing]. The majority of the participants began their emails with thanking explicitly as a head act and ended with thanking explicitly as pre-closing. All the emails consisted of the strategy ‘positive feeling’. The employment of implicit thanking strategies such as ‘appreciation’ or ‘expressing gratitude’ was optional. The order of the supporting moves varied.

In addition, although some strategies were produced more frequently by the higher group than did the lower group, the preferred linguistic realizations of those strategies were quite similar. For example, the higher group employed ‘stressing gratitude’ more frequently than did the lower group (9 vs. 3), however, the students

produced similar content regarding the strategy. The following examples illustrate the two groups' employment of 'stressing gratitude'.

- (15) Your hospitality means so much to me that I just can't thank you enough.  
(Higher group)
- (16) Any words could not express my gratitude. (Lower group)

### ***4.3 Opening and Closing***

All the emails in the present study contained greetings, in line with previous findings in the literature (Biesenbach-Lucas 2009; Chen 2015). An array of greeting types was observed in the two groups' emails, particularly in the lower group's, as presented in Table 3.

Table 3 indicates the strong tendency for the Chinese graduate students to employ 'Dear + Academic title + full name' in their email greetings to a professor, followed by 'Dear + Academic title + last name'. Only one student in the higher group employed 'Academic title + last name'. This type of greeting was found the most preferred choice by American English speakers addressing a professor in Biesenbach-Lucas (2009). A few students used 'Dear + Academic title', which might be considered inappropriate in the gratitude emails because the use of 'Dear Professor' implied writing to a general group, rather than a particular professor (Chen 2015). Other deviant greeting realizations were only found in the lower group's emails. For instance, they omitted the academic title, or replaced it with a general title 'Mr.'. Furthermore, some variants, e.g., 'Dear + (academic) title + first name', could be ascribed to inadequate pragmatic knowledge in English (Bjørge 2007).

**Table 3** Greetings produced by the higher and the lower groups

Types	Higher		Lower	
	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Dear + Academic title + last name	9	23.08	7	17.95
Dear + Academic title + full name	24	61.54	19	48.72
Dear + Academic title	3	7.69	4	10.26
Academic title + last name	1	2.56	–	–
Dear + Academic title + first name	2	5.13	1	2.56
Dear + Mr. + last name	–	–	3	7.69
Dear + Mr. + first name	–	–	1	2.56
Dear + full name	–	–	2	5.13
Dear + first name	–	–	1	2.56
Dear + last name	–	–	1	2.56
<i>Total</i>	39	100.00	39	100.00

**Table 4** Closings produced by the higher and the lower groups

Types	Higher		Lower	
	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yours sincerely/sincerely (yours)	30	76.92	37	94.87
(Best) Regards	2	5.13	1	2.56
Best wishes	7	17.95	1	2.56
<i>Total</i>	<i>39</i>	<i>100.00</i>	<i>39</i>	<i>100.00</i>

The last component of emails is *Closing*. Table 4 displays the two groups' closings in the present study.

As shown in Table 4, the Chinese graduates preferred to use 'Yours sincerely/Sincerely (yours)' to end their emails to professors, mirroring Chen's (2015) observation that Taiwan students tended to structure their email closings by *Sincerely* or *Regards*. In the present study, the high group employed 'Best wishes' more frequently than did the low group (7 vs. 1). It is possible that the high group's better English competence gave them more confidence to use less formal closings. Further studies are needed to explore this issue.

## 5 Discussion

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the extent to which two groups of Chinese graduate students differ in their gratitude emails to a professor. The first research question explored the length of email messages between the two groups. The findings indicated that the higher group wrote significantly longer emails to express their gratitude to a professor than did the lower group. It seems obvious that the higher group's English was better, so they wrote longer emails. However, comparing apologies in emails between two groups of Chinese university students, Liu and Ren (2016) found that the lower group's apology emails were significantly longer than those of the higher group. As aforementioned (Sect. 2.3), the gratitude is a commissive act (Searle 1969), which is employed to express a speaker's/writer's acknowledgement and positive evaluation towards some state of affairs or some individuals. In contrast, apologies fall into the group of expressives, which are employed as a compensatory action or remedial work for an offence committed by Speaker/Writer that has affected Hearer/Recipient (Liu and Ren 2016). It is possible that different natures of gratitude and apology led to the discrepancies between Liu and Ren (2016) and the present study regarding the email length between two groups of Chinese students across different English proficiency levels.

The second research question demonstrated that no significant difference was found in terms of the frequency of overall pragmatic strategies or that of individual strategies. The participants infrequently employed the strategy 'repayment' and when they employed the strategy, they only realized it by offering/promising service

or Chinese food. However, ‘repayment’ was considered as an important part of expressing gratitude in American English (Eisenstein and Bodman 1986). Eisenstein and Bodman (1986) argued that when stating an intention to reciprocate and/or repay was omitted, native speakers of English would feel the gratitude were incomplete or lacking in the appropriate level. Cheng (2005) also documented that in her study native speakers of English used more repayment strategies than all three groups of Chinese English learners. In the present study, a few participants in both groups utilized the strategy ‘promising hard work’. Little research, to my knowledge, has documented the employment of ‘promising hard work’ in studies of gratitude. The strategy ‘promising hard work’ in expressing gratitude may appear irrelevant to speakers in western countries, but it embodies Chinese culture. In Chinese culture, students traditionally consider their teachers as a senior in-group member, reflected by the Chinese idiom “Once a teacher, always a father”. Students must study hard to strive for great achievement, to win honor for their teachers. In contrast, students’ poor performance and mediocre ability would be treated as a humiliation to a teacher. Therefore ‘promising hard work’ could be seen as a particular manner of stating ‘repayment’ in Chinese English gratitude.

The third research question examined openings and closings in the gratitude email. A strong tendency was observed for the two groups of Chinese students to employ ‘Dear + Academic title + full name’ and ‘Dear + Academic title + last name’ in their email greetings to a professor. Preference for these two types of constructions, as Chen (2015) hypothesized, could be interpreted as the students’ heavy reliance on the business letter template (Biesenbach-Lucas 2009) and obedience to the Chinese Address Maxim, i.e. “address your interlocutor with an appropriate address term” (Gu 1990, p. 248), for respectfulness in status-unequal communication. The two groups displayed a similar profile regarding email closings. Both groups showed a strong preference for ending their emails to a professor with a rather formal use of ‘Yours sincerely/Sincerely (yours)’. Investigating stylistic variations in email communication in English as a lingua franca by students from various nationalities, Bjørge (2007) concludes that there appears to be a general connection between high Power Distance (Hofstede 2001) and a preference for using a formal/conventional complimentary close in students’ emails to faculty. China occupies a high position in the ranking of Power Distance (Hofstede 2001). Therefore, the Chinese graduates may feel obliged to use a formal closing in their gratitude emails to a professor.

To summarize, findings of this study evidence both similarities and differences in gratitude emails produced by the two groups of Chinese graduate students with different English proficiency levels. The present study does not attempt to and cannot generalize the findings to represent pragmatic features of China English. But it may shed great light on research on local English varieties in the Expanding Circle. One implication from the present study is that there may be more than one homogenous English variety in an Expanding Circle country. Tupas (2010) notes that there may be a range of varieties within a local English in the Outer Circle countries. The present study reveals that variation may exist between Englishes produced by different

groups of users across proficiency levels. We cannot simply conclude that Chinese English gratitude email is brief based only on the lower group data.

Furthermore, the present study shows that pragmatic features of a local English variety in an Expanding Circle country like China, should be considered as legitimate choices (Li 1998). For instance, the employment of ‘promising hard work’ as a type of ‘repayment’ to express gratitude, as well as the formal opening and closing in emails to professors, reflect Chinese students’ L1 culture. Previous research also suggests that there are culture-specific features of language that influence the ways in which people express gratitude (Coulmas 1981). As exemplified in the present study, Chinese students use English to fulfill their communicative purposes and to express their own identities. L1 identities play an integral role in their intercultural interaction. It is therefore illegitimate to expect L2 users to totally abandon their L1 identities in intercultural communication (Chang and Haugh 2011; Sharifian 2010). Researchers should recognize and respect local English varieties among L2 users, rather than force them to follow any Inner Circle varieties.

## 6 Conclusion

The present study contributes to the field of WE by investigating pragmatics in Chinese graduate students’ English gratitude emails across two different proficiency levels. In terms of pragmatic strategies and types of openings and closings in emails, the study evidenced more similarities than differences between the two groups. Certain pragmatic strategies and types of greetings and closings reflect the Chinese students’ L1 culture convention. More studies are encouraged to investigate linguistic and pragmatic features in China English. Only with ongoing codification can China English become a recognized and an accepted variety of English (Xu 2010).

On the other hand, the study also found that even among competent Chinese English users, the more advanced group produced significantly longer emails to express their gratitude than did their less advanced counterparts. This finding indicates that there may be more than one homogenous English variety in an Expanding Circle country. The present study thus calls for future studies including various groups in codifying local English varieties in China and in other Expanding Circle countries.

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**Part III**

**Researching Perceptions, Attitudes and  
Reactions towards Chinese English**

# Perceptions of Chinese English and Pedagogic Implications for Teaching English in China

Deyuan He

**Abstract** The global language, English, has now become World Englishes. In this context, there seems to be an urgent need to study Chinese English since China is now the country with the largest English learning and using population. The present chapter is such an attempt. It draws comprehensive data from 984 college students and their teachers at four universities in different parts of China. With two cross-validated research methods (matched-guise technique and focused interview), the study investigates college teachers' and students' perceptions of the ideal pedagogic model of college English in the Chinese mainland – Chinese English as opposed to the native-speaker-based norms. The findings suggest that the preferred teaching model of college English in China's classrooms is a native-speaker-based variety of English (e.g. American English or British English) supplemented with salient, well-codified, and properly implemented features of Chinese English. The chapter also argues that, where possible, college English classes in China should be taught by both local non-native-speaking English teachers (LETs) and native-speaking English teachers (NETs), since students can benefit from the strengths of both types of teachers. In addition, the findings maintain that LETs should be given opportunities for training in English-speaking countries in order to enhance their own English proficiency levels and that only qualified NETs should be recruited to teach college English in China.

**Keywords** Chinese English • Pedagogic model • Teacher preference • Teachers' perspective • Students' perspective

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## 1 Introduction

In an era when English has become the uncontested global lingua franca, the issue of native-speaker-based (henceforth NS-based) norms has been keenly debated at least in the arena of English language teaching. However, Chinese English in such debates has been given lesser attention, and the voices of English learners and teachers in China have not been adequately researched. This chapter serves as such an attempt to explore the perceptions of Chinese English that Chinese college teachers and students hold by focusing on the question of whether the NS-based norms should be kept in China's English classrooms and the question of which type(s) of teachers are preferred in teaching college English in China: local English teachers (LETs), native-speaking English teachers (NETs), or the combination of both.

## 2 Literature Review

The English language has for some time been learnt worldwide, and is now spoken in nearly every country of the globe. Jenkins (2015) reported that there were about 329 million people speaking it as their first language and perhaps 430 million as their second language, and countless people were learning and using English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Crystal (2008) estimated that the world's English-using population had reached two billion. The rapid rate of innovations in information technology has hastened the need to use English. As a result, it is generally believed that the global dominance of English will go on in the next fifty years (Kachru and Smith 2009).

The spread of English all over the world has attracted many scholars' and researchers' attention, and they published models to describe such spread, such as Strevens' world map of English in 1980, McArthur's circle of World English in 1987, Görلarch's circle model in 1990, Kachru's three-circle model of World Englishes in 1985, and Modiano's centripetal circles of international English in 1999 (which was subsequently modified in the same year). Among them, Kachru's is undoubtedly the most influential one (Jenkins 2015).

In Kachru's (1985) model, World Englishes are divided into three concentric circles: the Inner Circle (countries where English is the first language of a majority of the population, for example, the US, the UK, Australia, and New Zealand), the Outer Circle (where English has the status of an official second language, for instance, India and Singapore), and the Expanding Circle (where English has the status of a foreign language, for example, China and Egypt). The three circles represent the diverse cultural contexts when English traveled from Britain to other English-as-Native-Language countries (the Inner Circle), then to the English-as-Second-Language countries (the Outer Circle), and then to the EFL countries (the Expanding Circle).

In spite of its great influence, Kachru's model is not without its weaknesses. Jenkins (2015) listed some major problems with this model. For example, it perceives varieties of English in a geographical and genetic manner. Cogo and Dewey (2012) contended that the model is unable to capture the dynamic nature of the use of English. It is necessary to look at Schneider's (2014) Dynamic model, which describes the evolution of English in various postcolonial societies around the world. According to Schneider, the first phase is foundation during which English is first introduced into a new territory. The second phase is exonormative stabilization, in which the linguistic norm is mainly NS-based, but lexical loans and early phonological and syntactic transfer are increasingly found. The third phase is nativization, the central phase when linguistic and cultural transformations occur. The fourth phase is endonormative stabilization, which is marked by pride and celebration of linguistic and cultural self-dependence. The final phase is differentiation, when the variety has reached its external stability, internal differentiation is meant to take place. In line with Schneider's (2014) description, Brunei English, Hong Kong English, and Malaysian English are described as being in the third phase. Singaporean English is assumed to be in the fourth phase, and it may be progressing towards the final phase.

All these indicate that English is playing an increasingly significant role in every part of the world and in various sectors of society. However, the non-native speakers (NNS) of English do not passively accept the so-called 'Standard English' since 'what some people call Standard may not be Standard to others' (McArthur 1994, p. 12). In addition, it is neither desirable nor possible for NNSs to use English like a native speaker (NS) of English; instead, they actively 'produce' English through various means. In other words, the rapid globalization of English will result in the nativization of English, which in turn leads to an increase in the varieties of English. In the context of the development of new varieties of English, Li (1998, p. 39) argues that 'there is no reason to see systematic deviations from Anglo-American norms at the pragmatic and discourse levels as errors'. It is hence fairly natural for English to be sociolinguistically labeled as 'Indian English', 'Pakistani English', 'Zambian English', 'Singaporean English', and so on.

English has acquired great importance in China since the nation's adoption of the open-door policy, and it has become more and more important in the new century because of the impetus of a few international events (e.g. China's entry to the WTO in 2001, the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing, the 2010 World Expo in Shanghai, and the 2014 APEC Summit in Beijing). By now, English is not only being learnt and used by more and more Chinese people but also showing more and more Chinese characteristics, which has become a focus of attention for many scholars and researchers in Chinese English.

Among the studies concerning Chinese English, some were focused on its naming, existence, and acceptance (e.g. He and Li 2009; Jiang 2002), some were on linguistic features of Chinese English, which include phonology (e.g. Deterding 2006, also see Chapter "[The Pronunciation of English in Guangxi: Which Features Cause Misunderstandings?](#)" by Deterding in this volume), lexis (e.g. Xu 2010),

syntax (e.g. Jiang 2002; Xu 2010), and discourse-pragmatics (e.g. Jiang 2002; Xu 2010). Among them, Xu's (2010) research monograph entitled *Chinese English: Features and Implications* deserves special attention as it is the first systematic study and description of Chinese English, which includes three parts: framework for Chinese English, linguistic features of Chinese English, and implications of Chinese English as a model.

The distinctive linguistic features of Chinese English have commonly been illustrated at four levels. Firstly, at phonological level, the following features, among others, are noticeable: replacement of /θ/ with [s] and /ð/ with [d], insertion of final [ə], avoidance of weak forms for function words (e.g. Deterding 2006; Schneider 2011). Secondly, the lexical features of Chinese English are the most obvious, which mainly refer to English vocabulary that are native to China or have meanings special to China. These words and phrases are formed in two ways: transliterations and loan translations, such as *Putonghua*, *fengshui*, *work unit*, *the Spring Festival* (Xu 2010). Thirdly, the features at syntactic level include: null subject/object utterances (e.g. Question: How did you feel about that movie? Answer: Ø didn't like Ø a bit.); co-occurrence of connective pairs (e.g. *Although* it's not as big as Beijing, *but I like it.*) (Xu 2008, 2010); idioms made up of four words (e.g. One country, two systems); parallel structures (e.g. A fall into the pit, a gain in your wit); and topicalization of adjuncts, that is, putting adjuncts at the beginning of a sentence (e.g. 'This morning I bought a book' instead of 'I bought a book this morning') (He and Li 2009). Lastly, in terms of discourse and pragmatics, it has been argued that texts in western culture are often structured in a deductive manner while those in Chinese English are generally structured inductively (He and Li 2009).

For a long time, the standard varieties of British and American English have been accepted and promoted as the only internationally acceptable pedagogic models for English language teaching. In recent years, however, this has been challenged by World Englishes scholars (e.g. Kirkpatrick 2007). Within this framework, the question of which variety of English (i.e. native vs. non-native model) should be selected as the pedagogic model in Outer and Expanding circle countries then arises. This question has been a subject of debate for more than two decades (e.g. He and Zhang 2010; Kachru 1992).

In China, British English had been adopted as the only pedagogic model since 1949 till the middle of 1970s. With the improvement of Sino-American relationship in the late 1970s, a good many American English textbooks and audio materials were imported into China together with the arrival of American experts and teachers. American English then became popular and was also used as a pedagogic model, which results in today's co-existence of both British and American English as pedagogic models in China. Although there is a general agreement on the role of English as a global lingua franca in China, pedagogic decisions on what to be taught and what to be achieved in teaching English as a global lingua franca have not been transparent and explicitly stated (Wen 2012).

### 3 Research Questions

Against the above-reviewed background of English being the global language and NNSs of English outnumbering NSs of English by a wide margin, it is of great significance to investigate people's perceptions of Chinese English, since China is believed to have the largest English learning and using population in the world (Crystal 2008; He 2013); and these learners mostly speak Chinese English with cross-linguistic influences from their mother tongue, i.e. Chinese (He and Miller 2011). Therefore, the major research questions this chapter endeavors to address are: (1) What are people's perceptions of Chinese English as a pedagogic model or part of the pedagogic model? (2) Should college English be taught by LETs or by NETs or by both of these two types of teachers in China? Why? The hypothesis behind Question 2 is that the participants' choice of college English being taught by LETs indicates their positive perceptions of Chinese English while their choice of NETs indicates positive perceptions of NS-based English.

### 4 Methodology

#### 4.1 Participants

A total of 1030 participants (820 students and 210 teachers) took part in the research, and 984 valid matched-guise technique (MGT) questionnaires were collected (795 students and 189 teachers). Although some of the participants spoke Chinese dialects as their first language, all of them reported that they spoke Putonghua as their everyday language. In order to ensure that the participants represent their respective groups, varying factors (e.g. age, gender distribution, disciplines and school years of students; and academic qualifications and ranks of teachers) were taken into consideration when selecting the participants (see also He and Miller 2011).

All the 795 student participants in the research were Chinese, aged from 17 to 25 ( $M = 20.6$ ). Among them, 51.7% (411) were male and 48.3% (384) female. The choice of the participants was limited to non-English majors considering that non-English majors constitute the majority of potential English speaking and using population in China. The students came from four discipline areas: Arts (196), Law (194), Business (174), and Engineering (231). In terms of the year of study, 344 (43.3%) were Year-1 students, 251 (31.6%) Year-2, 77 (9.7%) Year-3, and 123 (15.5%) Year-4.

Of the 189 teacher participants, 77 (40.7%) were male and 112 (59.3%) female. Their ages ranged from 22 to 65 ( $M = 34.4$ ), and they had between 5 months to 42 years of English teaching experience ( $M = 10.6$ ). With regard to the highest academic qualification attained, three (1.6%) of them obtained doctorate degrees, 150 (79.4%) master's degrees, and 36 (19%) bachelor's degrees. Their academic ranking also varied considerably, with two (1.1%) being professors, 69 (36.5%) associate

professors, 73 (38.6%) lecturers, and 45 (23.8%) teaching assistants. The majority of the teachers, 113 (59.8%) taught non-English majors only, while 76 (40.2%) taught both English majors and non-English majors.

## 4.2 Methods

Two studies with different instruments were combined in accordance with the general observation that interpretations which are built upon cross-validation are likely to be stronger than those which rely on the framework of a single method.

In Study 1, the MGT was performed to investigate if the participants perceived any differences between qualities of accents when listening to English. In the MGT, the respondents listened to one voice reading a paragraph out loud using two different accents: one in a typical Chinese English accent, and the other in a near-native accent. The person who read the paragraph had learnt and taught Chinese English for more than 20 years in China, so he can speak Chinese English naturally. His near-native version was judged by five out of seven professors (four NETs and three LETs) as sounding sufficiently native-like. The former reading was 30-second long while the latter was 25. The following is the paragraph used in the MGT:

Please call Stella. Ask her to bring these things with her from the store: six spoons of fresh snow peas, five thick slabs of blue cheese, and maybe a snack for her brother Bob. We also need a small plastic snake and a big toy frog for the kids. She can scoop these things into three red bags, and we will go meet her Wednesday at the train station.

However, the participants were not informed that it was the same person reading the texts. The MGT procedure is built on the assumption that speech style can trigger social categorizations that lead to group-related traits. The responses elicited are thus considered stereotyped reactions towards different languages (or different dialects/varieties of a language) and their related groups, rather than towards the voices. The MGT is frequently used to identify participants' perceptions of different languages/varieties based on their judgments of different accents (the accents of Chinese English vs. near-native English in the present case). It should be pointed out, however, that Chinese English is also characterized by its lexis, syntax, discourse-pragmatics, and cultural conceptualizations. Therefore, what needs to be clarified is that the MGT employed in the current study was meant to take the perspective of accent, rather than the perspective of any other characteristic mentioned here, to explore people's perceptions of Chinese English vis-à-vis those of near-native English.

For quality assurance, the near-native accent was played to seven English teaching professors (four native-speaking English teachers and three English teachers born in Hong Kong), of whom five were convinced that the accent sounded sufficiently native-like, with the other two commenting on the high proficiency of the accent. A pilot study with 30 participants (24 students and six teachers) also showed that they were able to distinguish between the two accents.

While collecting data with the MGT, the participants were instructed to give their ratings of ‘the two speakers’ on a response sheet with regard to the following 16 traits: Friendly, Intelligent, Educated, Arrogant, Competent, Industrious, Sincere, Aggressive, Approachable, Considerate, Trustworthy, Wealthy, Trendy, Patient, Powerful, and Confident. The rating was based on a 5-point Likert scale about the degree to which the voice matches with the given trait: 1 = not at all, 2 = not so well, 3 = I do not know, 4 = well, and 5 = very well. MANOVA was conducted to compare the perceptions of the two accents as held by the above-mentioned participants.

In Study 2, 10% (i.e. 103 informants) of the MGT participants ( $N = 1030$ ) were interviewed either individually (18 of 21 teachers) or in small groups (82 student participants and three teachers; group size ranged from 3 to 9). To ensure that all interviewees would voice their opinions, they were interviewed in Putonghua (the specific interview questions are presented in Sect. 5.2). The interview data were transcribed into Chinese before being translated into English. Both the transcriptions and translations were proofread and checked independently by the author and a separate rater (a Chinese PhD student majoring in English Education). In the process, stylistic inconsistencies were minimized and discrepancies thoroughly discussed and resolved by agreement.

## 5 Results and Findings

### 5.1 Study 1 – Matched-Guise Technique

The findings of the MGT were displayed in Table 1. It can be seen from the table that MANOVA revealed significant differences between Chinese English and near-native English in the means on 15 out of the 16 traits. Near-native English was given significantly higher ratings than Chinese English on nearly all the positive traits except one (i.e. patient) which showed no significant difference. It is interesting to see that the greatest differences between the two accents lie in the traits ‘confident’, ‘competent’, and ‘powerful’. It may seem surprising that the speakers of Chinese English were reported to be more ‘arrogant’ and ‘aggressive’ than those of near-native English in this study, seeing it was Chinese speakers doing the rating. Nevertheless, this might be somewhat natural since the respondents had formed more positive attitudes towards near-native English, they might consequently rate these two negative traits higher for Chinese English than for near-native English. Such results indicate that the participants are far more in favor of near-native English than of Chinese English.

However, in spite of their preference for near-native English, it should also be noted that the MGT participants are far from being negative towards Chinese English since their means on all of the fourteen positive traits of Chinese English are above 2 and close to the median 3, and the mean on the trait ‘patient’ (3.13) is even higher than the median and that of near-native English (3.04). One possible reason for the relatively higher mean on the trait ‘patient’ may be due to the five-second

**Table 1** Means and differences of Chinese English and near-native English

Traits		Means		Means Difference
		Chinese English	near-native English	
Positive	16. Confident	2.79	<b>3.64</b>	-.85**
	5. Competent	2.80	<b>3.39</b>	-.59**
	15. Powerful	2.75	<b>3.34</b>	-.59**
	13. Trendy	2.72	<b>3.20</b>	-.48**
	9. Approachable	2.78	<b>3.16</b>	-.38**
	1. Friendly	2.94	<b>3.31</b>	-.37**
	2. Intelligent	2.83	<b>3.17</b>	-.34**
	3. Educated	2.88	<b>3.18</b>	-.30**
	12. Wealthy	2.77	<b>3.06</b>	-.29**
	11. Trustworthy	2.92	<b>3.11</b>	-.19*
	7. Sincere	2.99	<b>3.15</b>	-.16*
	6. Industrious	2.93	<b>3.08</b>	-.15*
	10. Considerate	2.85	<b>3.00</b>	-.15*
	14. Patient	<b>3.13</b>	3.04	.09
Negative	4. Arrogant	<b>3.01</b>	2.61	.40**
	8. Aggressive	<b>3.04</b>	2.66	.38**

Note: \*\* p< .01, \* p< .05

longer time taken to read the paragraph in the Chinese English accent than in the near-native English one. These results suggest that the participants' attitudes towards Chinese English are not so negative. This is compatible with the interview findings that select features of Chinese English may be accepted as part of the teaching model in China and that college English should be taught by both NETs and LETs as reported in Sect. 5.2.

## 5.2 Study 2 – Focused Interview

The findings of this qualitative method are generally consistent with those of the MGT. Specifically, 62 (about 60.2%) of the informants ( $N = 103$ ) did not report the present NS-based pedagogic model as a reason for their (or their students') less-than-satisfactory learning effectiveness (see Question 1 in the interview excerpts below). Therefore, it is natural that 81 (78.6%) out of the 103 interviewees would insist on adopting NS-based English as the pedagogic model for college English in China (see Questions 2 and 3). It is worth noting that about 21.4% (22) of the interviewees still argued that it was unnecessary for them (or their students) to adopt NS-based English as the target of their (or their students') English learning as long as they can communicate successfully in English with others (see Questions 2 and 3). As a result, the interview found that the desirable pedagogic model of English

for students in China should be NS-based English supplemented with the well-codified and promoted features of Chinese English (see Question 4).

*Interview Question 1: Is pedagogic model a reason for your (students') low learning effectiveness? Why or why not?*

Example 1: No, because we do not require that our students must arrive at the level of native-speaker-based English. Chinese English is also acceptable if they fail to attain native-speaker-based English.

Example 2: No. I think one's English will become better sooner or later so long as one works hard at it. If we have worked hard but our English is still not so good, we will only work harder.

*Interview Question 2: Is it necessary and practical if we go on adopting native-speaker-based English as the model for teaching college English in China? Why or why not?*

Example 3: Yes, because we need a standard, and Chinese English is not a well-established and promoted variety of English and it needs to be fully codified.

Example 4: Yes, native-speaker-based English can guarantee efficient communication and avoid misunderstanding resulting from different varieties of English. This is just like Putonghua, the more standard, the better.

Example 5: No, If only we can communicate in English, we do not need to make our English so standard. For example, I know some Indians, their English is not standard, but they can communicate effectively.

*Interview Question 3: If you can choose the pedagogic model for teaching college English in China, which one(s) would you choose: Chinese English or native-speaker-based English? Why?*

Example 6: I will choose native-speaker-based English since we are used to it and it can ensure better and wider communication.

Example 7: My intuition tells me it will be native-speaker-based English although we might not be able to attain it. It should be acceptable if students cannot arrive at this target, as long as they can communicate in English.

Example 8: I will choose Chinese English. Firstly, it is impossible for us to speak English like a native speaker. In addition, it is also unnecessary for us to speak English like native speakers since we will use English to communicate mainly with non-native speakers not native speakers.

*Interview Question 4: What would be a more desirable model of English for students in China in your opinion?*

Example 9: I think it might be a better choice if we can combine native-speaker-based English and Chinese English together. That is, we will consider native-speaker-based English as the target of our teaching, but we can also accept students' Chinese way of English speaking, since it is really hard for them to speak English totally free from the influences of their mother tongue, Chinese. One of the merits of this model lies in the fact that students will be more self-confident and relaxed when speaking English if they know it is ok for them to speak in a Chinese manner.

As for the preference of teachers for college English (see Question 5), about 60% (49) of the students ( $N = 82$ ) and all of the teachers ( $N = 21$ ) in the interviews were in favor of a combination of both LETs and NETs for the teaching of college English. The reasons behind their choice are that students can benefit from the strengths of both types of teachers. During the interviews, many interviewees pointed out that students' English level is an important factor that determines their preference of teachers. NETs might be a better choice if the students have a solid English foundation, particularly in terms of spoken-English; otherwise LETs or a combination of the two would be preferred. Besides, these interviewees argued that NETs should know how to teach EFL and have a strong sense of responsibility towards Chinese students (a common trait that most LETs already possess). Another reason for the teacher interviewees' general agreement with the combined teaching by both LETs and NETs rather than purely by NETs, as remarked by two of the teachers, might be their worry about Chinese teachers' jobs and status being threatened by NETs. Below are some typical comments on the preference of the combination of the two types of teachers:

*Interview Question 5: Should College English be taught by local English teachers or by native-speaking English teachers or by both of these two types of teachers in China? Why?*

Example 10: Together if possible. Chinese teachers know more about Chinese students and the testing system in China. Native-speaking English teachers know the language better and their pronunciation is much better too. If students can communicate with native-speaking English teachers, they will be more confident and interested in English learning.

Example 11: Both. In this way, the two groups of teachers can learn the strong points from each other to offset each others' weaknesses. Different teachers can be assigned to students according to different teaching tasks (e.g. listening and speaking, reading and writing, translation, and so on) and students' different levels and needs.

About 30% (24) of the student interviewees ( $N = 82$ ) preferred to be taught exclusively by NETs. The reasons underlying their preference include mainly the following six (with a supporting rate of 54% or above): (1) they know their native language and culture well; (2) they can teach good oral English; (3) they can help create a conducive communicative environment and atmosphere for students; (4) they are generally more active in class than Chinese teachers; (5) they are often more open-minded than their Chinese peers; and (6) they are usually adept at arousing students' interest in English learning. In the meantime, they were also a little disappointed at their LETs' not so native-like English, especially their pronunciation. Once again, they insisted that NETs should have certain knowledge of teaching EFL, and preferably that they know some Chinese. The following are two typical remarks of this point:

Example 12: I will choose native-speaking English teachers, since they can provide us with a better English learning environment. It will be better if they can speak Chinese. For example, we can employ English teachers from Singapore, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, as they can speak both English and Chinese well.

Example 13: I prefer native-speaking English teachers, so we can have a better environment and atmosphere for English learning, and more chance to speak English.

Only approximately 10% (8) of the students ( $N = 82$ ) preferred to be taught completely by local English teachers. According to them, the advantages of LETs include the following six (with a supporting rate of 52% or above): (1) they are more familiar with Chinese way of teaching and learning, especially the Chinese testing system; (2) they have the experience of learning EFL; (3) they are good at teaching reading, writing, and translation skills; (4) they know Chinese students better (e.g. their learning difficulties); (5) they can explain some complicated language points and grammar in Chinese to students if necessary; and (6) they can function as a bridge between Chinese students and NETs if the cooperation between them (i.e. Chinese students and NETs) encounters difficulties or even breaks down. Moreover, they worried that they might not be able to follow the NETs' teaching due to their poor English and thus would have difficulties preparing for College English Test Band-4 and Band-6. One representative remark is cited below:

Example 14: Chinese teachers, as my English is a little poor, I would find it hard to follow the lessons if I were taught completely by native-speaking English teachers. Besides, many native-speaking English teachers do not have prior experience in teaching English as a foreign language and are not responsible enough. In contrast, local teachers have the experience in both learning and teaching English as a foreign language, and they know what we expect and how to help us best.

## 6 Discussion and Conclusions

When Kachru and Smith retitled the journal *World Language English* as *World Englishes* in 1985, their explanation was that the latter embodies 'a new idea, a new credo', for which the plural 'Englishes' was significant:

'Englishes' symbolizes the functional and formal variation in the language, and its international acculturation, for example, in West Africa, in Southern Africa, in East Africa, in South Asia, in Southeast Asia, in the West Indies, in the Philippines, and in the traditional English-using countries: the USA, the UK, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand. The language now belongs to those who use it as their first language, and to those who use it as an additional language, whether in its standard form or in its localized forms. (Kachru and Smith 1985, p. 210)

What has been reported in the present research resembles what Kachru and Smith pointed out more than 30 years ago in the way that English learners and users in China may be now facing the need to use English as ‘an additional language’ in its localized form. In spite of the fact that Chinese represents one of the most important language traditions and cultures in today’s world in terms of the number of speakers, there is an enormous number of English learners and users in China and, as Li Yang said, they hope to ‘make the voice of China widely heard all over the world’ through English (Bolton 2003, p. 257).

In their article on a curriculum blueprint for teaching English as an international language, Matsuda and Friedrich (2011) propose three options for pedagogic model(s): an international variety of English, the speakers’ own variety of English, and an established variety of English (not limited to British English and American English), with advantages and disadvantages associated with each of them. They believe at present the third approach, with one of the established varieties as the dominant model supplemented with other varieties, ‘perhaps better reflects the reality of Englishes and is at the same time implementable in various contexts’ (Matsuda and Friedrich 2011, p. 336). What is found and discussed in the present study resonates with their third model, in which the primary determiner for the pedagogic model is the goal of the course and the needs of the students. Indeed, what has been increasingly emphasized in English teaching worldwide is the accommodation of the real needs of learners, rather than rigid adherence to NS-based models (Deterding and Salbrina 2013).

As English is learnt and used more widely in China in the broader context of English becoming the World Englishes, the calls for the recognition and promotion of Chinese English are repeatedly heard and supported by increasingly more scholars and researchers (e.g. He and Li 2009; Kirkpatrick and Xu 2002; Wen 2012; Xu 2010). The majority of the participants in the present research also demonstrated positive attitudes towards Chinese English as an emerging variety of English. The students’ comparatively preferable views about Chinese English to some extent reflect the necessity of the recognition and promotion of Chinese English, which is in resonance with Kirkpatrick’s (2007) observation that well-trained local Chinese teachers of English are more intelligible to learners who speak the same mother tongue compared with native English-speaking teachers.

However, it should also be noted that standard varieties of English are still used as almost the only source of learning materials in China except for the pioneering efforts concerning cultural contents in a limited number of textbooks. This is primarily because ‘there is no clear and feasible answer to what could be used as a model’ for English learners in China if standard varieties of English are not (Wen 2012, p. 85). To be consistent with the value socio- and applied linguists place on World Englishes and learners’ needs for global communication, appropriate curricular goals and pedagogic models need to be developed. Similarly, the present study reports that teachers and students in China could accept Chinese English although they were in more favor of NS-based English. This is especially the case for the students who found it almost impossible to achieve near-native English, and

they thought Chinese English was also acceptable as long as they could communicate successfully in it with other non-native or native English speakers.

There is therefore an urgent need for more concerted efforts in research on the salient linguistic features of Chinese English, with a view to exploring the likelihood of incorporating them into the college English curriculum in mainland China. These efforts are of great significance, especially when considering the prospect of Chinese English soon having more speakers than in the UK and USA combined; when that happens, Chinese English may exert considerable influence on the further development of the English language. ‘At that time, native speakers may even become irrelevant [...] and Chinese English will truly be in the forefront of the development of the language’ (Deterding 2006, p. 195). When such an era comes, it will be ‘the dawning of the age of expanding circle Englishes in general and of Chinese English in particular. Chinese English is likely to become a “future power”, and a major expanding circle English in the years to come’ (Xu 2010, p. 205).

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# An Investigation of Attitudes Towards English Accents – A Case Study of a University in China

Fan (Gabriel) Fang

**Abstract** The English language has spread and is now used around the world as an international lingua franca (ELF), and has claimed legitimacy in traditional outer circle contexts through the study of World Englishes (WE), while it has also gained an unprecedented status in expanding circle regions such as in East Asia and Europe. China is a case in point, with English having gained considerable popularity over the last three decades in particular. Recognising the function of English and by conducting a case study at a university in south China, this research draws upon Chinese university students' attitudes towards their English accents in the ELF framework. Two main research questions will be explored in this chapter: (1) What are the attitudes of Chinese university students towards their own English accents? (2) To what extent are these attitudes informed by standard language ideology? By adopting both questionnaire and interview methods as research instruments, this study also investigates students' own perspectives on the acceptability of China English, and, further, calls for a shift in perspective on the teaching of pronunciation in English-language higher education.

**Keywords** Accent • Attitude • World Englishes • English as a Lingua Franca • ELT

## 1 Introduction

The fact that English has spread as an international language has generated concern and debate in terms of how people perceive this phenomenon as well as how the language should be taught against such an international backdrop. Today, English has split into quite a number of varieties with distinctive features, which is reflected in the research and development of World Englishes (WE) (Kachru 1992; Kirkpatrick

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2007). The term “New Englishes” has been used to refer to these “nativised” or “indigenised” varieties (Platt et al. 1984). It has been argued that these varieties of English are used as a way of exhibiting people’s social identities (Kachru 1992).

More significantly, the use of English is no longer limited to its native speakers. Instead, English is now widely used among non-native speakers as a lingua franca for communication (ELF) (Jenkins 2007; Seidlhofer 2011). It is argued that English is no longer the sole property of the native speakers but should belong to all those people who use the language (Widdowson 1994). Under such circumstances, language users may not always conform to the traditional native norms. The paradigms of WE and ELF have both challenged the traditional English language teaching (ELT) philosophies and approaches. As this research investigates how Chinese university students perceive their own English accents, as well as the extent to which these attitudes are informed by standard language ideology, it is worth noting the linguistic background of the spread of English in China.

## 2 The Spread of English in China

The English language first arrived in China in the 17th century and developed as a form of Chinese Pidgin English for the use of traders as a contact language between English and Chinese in Macao and Guangzhou, and later Shanghai (Bolton 2003). According to the WE paradigm, China stands in the expanding circle. However, the English language has gained remarkable status in the Chinese context today. As it has become a key international language, the importance of English has emerged in many people’s lives since they need to pass English examinations and for other purposes such as employment. The mastery of English is also regarded as a springboard for greater opportunities, for example, to pursue further study and obtain better jobs abroad.

The popularity of English in China has led people to argue that English is a Chinese language (Jiang 2003). However, compared with the linguistic landscape and the popularity of English learning in China, the variety of English in China tends to be neglected. From a WE perspective, it has been argued that China English (CE) is a developing variety of English, with features of phonology and morphosyntax being codified (Bolton 2003; Xu 2010). In the ELF framework, the English used in China is viewed as more fluid with certain features from people’s first languages (L1s) being recognised.

## 3 China English

The main focus of this section is not to draw upon the debate concerning China English or “Chinglish”, but to discuss the issue in terms of how the current status quo of English in China should be applied based on the framework of WE or ELF.

It has been argued that CE has already developed certain unique features and that “the development of a China English with Chinese characteristics may be an inevitable result” (Kirkpatrick and Xu 2002, p. 278). Based on Kachru’s (1992) three phases for a variety of English, CE has been argued to be located at phase two – development of variety *within* a variety. At least, in the university context, some people have recognised the concept of CE (cf. Fang and Yuan 2011; Hu 2005; Xu 2010). Based on empirical research findings, Kirkpatrick and Xu (2002, p. 270) have also argued that “as China moves towards international self-assurance, hundreds of millions of China English speakers will inevitably create a Chinese variety of English that will be socially accepted as the norm within China”. In a similar vein, Hu (2004) claims that CE should stand alongside other varieties of English in the family of WE. Hu (2004) argues that the sheer number of users of English in China will create a new contact variety within the Chinese context.

However, it should also be recognised that CE needs to be further codified in order to develop as a variety of English in the family of WE. It is only a matter of time before CE will move into the third phase, namely, *recognition* within the Chinese community by Chinese people (Kachru 1992). It should be noted that English is still a developing variety or “performance variety” in the Chinese context (Kachru 1992; Xu 2010), which may not often be used *intranationally* within the community but “tends to be used for *international* communication purposes” (He and Li 2009, p. 71, emphasis added). Therefore, in this sense, CE is not only used within China but in a wide range of international communication. The ELF framework may also explain this situation in terms of how English is used across borders among speakers of different L1s.

It must be acknowledged that CE is not positively recognised by all Chinese people, with opposing voices arguing that the existence of CE may interfere with the Chinese language and culture, as well as intercultural communication between China and abroad (Niu and Wolff 2003). Against the backdrop of globalisation, it can be seen that there are both ideological and practical issues as to whether CE can be recognised as a variety of English. In this chapter, I will take the perspective that CE functions as a variety of English (from a WE perspective) when used among Chinese people although, when English use is not limited to Chinese people within or outside China, it does not fall into the category of a variety of English but is rather dynamic and fluid, with certain features of the L1s of the interlocutors. In these contexts, the English that people use is more fluid, though it can be traceable from their L1s, depending on who they are talking to (from an ELF perspective).

## 4 Attitudes Towards China English Accents

### 4.1 Definition of Accent

The concept of language attitude has been linked with language ideologies and also functions as “a pivotal concept in sociolinguistics” (Garrett et al. 2003, p. 2). Language attitude is researched to investigate competing understandings and people’s preferences towards a certain language or linguistic features, of which accent is one aspect. More significantly, it has been argued that “language attitudes research provides a backdrop for explaining linguistic variation and change” (Garrett 2010, p. 15), and that the notion of accent is often the most salient aspect of foreign language use and language attitudes (Jenkins 2007).

The notion of accent may include two distinctive elements that people can recognise from one variety of a language to another: *prosodic* and *segmental* features (Lippi-Green 2012). Moyer (2013, p. 10, emphasis in original) defines accent from a broader perspective as referring “not only to the articulation of individual sounds, or *segments*, but to *suprasegmental* features as well”. Although, to some sense at least, accent as a linguistic concept is salient, the term “accent” can still be so subtle as to have “no technical or specific meaning” (Lippi-Green 2012, p. 44) because everyone has certain accents for their L1s and other languages they learn. Thus, if we look at realistic language use, the notion of accent becomes a term that is hard to define. For example, Lippi-Green (2012, p. 45, emphasis in original) seems to avoid defining the term, by pointing out that:

Linguists have struggled to find an accurate definition of the word accent, and for the most part, given it up as a bad job. Generally accent can only be understood and defined if there is something to compare it with.

Therefore, linguists find that the notion of accent is difficult to define and that the concept of non-accent is a myth. In settings where people do not speak English as their L1, “accent is used to refer to the breakthrough of native language phonology into the target language” (Lippi-Green 2012, p. 46). However, this may not always be the case when applied in the WE framework where certain phonological features are still being codified and widely accepted or the ELF framework where language and communication is more flexible and fluid while intelligibility is the focus.

### 4.2 Attitudes Towards China English Accents

Research on attitudes, especially in relation to accents, is one of the key aspects of language teaching and learning (Lippi-Green 2012; Moyer 2013). In the Chinese context, however, few studies have been conducted within the WE framework, and even fewer within the ELF framework. This has created an obstacle in terms of how English, in particular accent and pronunciation teaching, should be addressed in a

WE or ELF paradigm, due to the entrenched native-oriented ideology in the ELT field.

Previous research in the Chinese context has shown a strong preference for native English accents, especially British and American accents, on the part of both teachers and students (He and Li 2009; Hu 2005; Kunschak and Fang 2008). Such studies have highlighted that the participants still prefer native English accents, as they feel that English is a language belonging to those who speak it as a native language.

Although it might be regarded as natural that people would prefer native English accents, studies in the Chinese context also show a love-hate relationship between attitudes of teachers and students towards the local CE accents (Bian 2009; Hu 2005; Jenkins 2007). For instance, Bian's (2009) research presents a complex picture in terms of how students perceive their own English accents. Bian (2009) reports that some participants would feel embarrassed for not having a standard native English accent, while others have learnt to tolerate "non-standard" English accents and started to challenge the native English accents and regarded their own English accents as part of their identities. Therefore, Bian (2009, p. 73) argues that "students' pronunciation could be an educational resource to enhance their sense of control over this global language". In a similar vein, Jenkins (2007) investigates teachers' attitudes towards various English accents in the ELF framework. Although according to Jenkins (2007), the CE accent is in general evaluated poorly by the Chinese participants in terms of its correctness, acceptability and pleasantness, in contrast, some participants evaluated their own English accents in a positive way. Based on her findings, Jenkins (2007) has argued that, to some extent, the CE accent shows a solidarity among the Chinese respondents, as well as their resistance to native English accents.

## 5 Methodology

The current research investigates Chinese university students' attitudes towards their own English accents and explores the extent to which their attitudes have been influenced by the entrenched standard or native-oriented language ideology (see also Fang 2016). Given the research aims, two research questions have been investigated in this study: (1) What are the attitudes of Chinese university students towards their English accents? (2) To what extent are these attitudes informed by standard language ideology?

This research adopted a mixed-methods instrument by using both a questionnaire (see Appendix for the questionnaire) and face-to-face interviews to answer the two research questions. Students who were studying English at an intermediate to higher-intermediate college English level were chosen to complete the questionnaire. As participants, a large number of students were from the home province located in Southeast China, while the university also recruits students from other provinces, which adds to the diversity of regional Chinese accents. The participants were from different majors, studying college English as a compulsory course. At the

end of the questionnaire, the students were also asked to provide their contact information if they would be interested in participating in further interviews. The researcher collected 309 valid questionnaire samples, while 6 students were selected for further interviews in order to generate in-depth data. Regarding the language used in collecting data, the questionnaire is designed to be bilingual in order to help respondents better understand it. They were told to use either Chinese or English to complete the questionnaire. The student interviews were conducted in Chinese Mandarin, and each interview lasted about 20–30 minutes.

In terms of data analysis, the descriptive statistics method (Dörnyei 2007) was adopted to analyse the quantitative questionnaire data, while qualitative content analysis was used for analysis of the interview data. By seeing the interview as an instrument that provides in-depth data with which to explore how the participants spoke, it is hoped to explore some latent and subtle attitudes towards accents expressed by the participants.

## 6 Findings

### 6.1 *Questionnaire Findings*

This section reports the findings of the questionnaire in terms of how respondents consider their own English accents. The original questionnaire has two parts. Due to the space limit, this chapter only reports the first part of the questionnaire findings (see Appendix). In Q1, the respondents were asked to use some adjectives to describe their own English accents. In Q2, they were asked the perceptions of their own accents in terms of their degree of satisfaction, while Q3 focused on what kind of English accent(s) they aspired to develop.

Not surprisingly, when looking at the responses to the first question, the majority of the students did not feel satisfied with their own English accents. The responses included: “Chinese style”, “inaccurate”, “not fluent”, “not standard”, “poor”, “unclear”, “unintelligible”, and “unnatural”. From another perspective, it can also be seen that some students (around 12%) might actually be quite neutral towards their own English accents, as they indicated their English accents to be: “normal”, “not bad”, “can be understood”, and “so-so”. On the other side of the continuum, only an approximate 6.8% of the participants considered their own English accents positively, and they described their accents as “accurate”, “comfortable”, “fluent”, “clear”, and even “standard”.

This leads to the next question in terms of the degree of satisfaction that students had with their own English accents. It can be noted that more than 70% of the respondents did not feel satisfied with their own English accents, as they did not have native-like pronunciation. The student respondents perceived that they should improve their pronunciation to be more native-like in order to make others understand their meaning (see Table 1).

**Table 1** Respondents' self-perception of English accents and their aspirated accents

Evaluation	Response Count (%)	Accents to Aspire to	Response Count (%)
Not Satisfied at all	34 (11.0%)	Sound like a native speaker of English (NSE)	245 (79.3%)
Not Very Satisfied	186 (60.2%)	Keep my own English accent	33 (10.7%)
Uncertain	36 (11.6%)	I do not care about my English pronunciation	3 (0.9%)
Satisfied	49 (15.9%)	Others, please specify	28 (9.1%)
Very Satisfied	4 (1.3%)		

However, a few respondents had a different perspective in terms of their own English accents. For example, one respondent answered: "I'm Chinese. I can't speak as a native but I don't feel ashamed of that". Similarly, another respondent also perceived a positive attitude towards her English accent, in that:

Although my parents did not speak English to me when I was small, I always listened to English songs and learnt through this process. My pronunciation was then becoming more accurate, though I do not sound like a native speaker of English.

However, these kinds of comments were few, as shown in Table 1, so it can be seen that most of the respondents still aimed at sounding native-like: few respondents would hope to keep their own English accents, although the student respondents did consider the importance of intelligibility for communication purpose. 28 of the respondents provided their own comments towards the accents they would like to aspire to in the 'others, please specify' blank. The majority of the comments focused on intelligibility, from which the purpose of communication was much highlighted. Some respondents hoped that they could have an accent with their own style. Some typical comments include:

- To aim that others can understand me, while I can also understand the accents of other people. It is normal to have China accent of English, as a Chinese, as long as it does not impede communication.
- To focus on the basic elements of pronunciation, and speak with an accent that can be understood. It is not really necessary to sound the same as a native speaker of English.
- I want to create my own style which can make people understood well and feel comfortable (originally in English).

The students were given the option of providing additional comments at the end of the questionnaire. This enables the researcher to understand the respondents' attitudes towards accents from a broader perspective. Although, in general, students can hardly abandon the privilege of and preference for standard English or native English accents, some differing opinions were heard as they mentioned the importance of communication strategies and the priority of communication when using English. For example,

- Every nation has its mother tongue. It is normal that people have accents when learning other foreign languages. Although I feel that it is good to speak like a native speaker, but does it matter if you have some accent. Language is used for communication and it is ok as long as people can understand it.
- When I had English class before, I found that there is not a certain standard of English accent. I feel this is even true when I started my internship into the society. As a language, English is used to enable communication. As long as you can express yourself, while at the same time other people can understand you, the function of English is fully played. Therefore, from my personal point of view, English accents do not have a strong impact on interpersonal communication.
- Language is a tool for communication. [...] Teachers were in favour of American English accents, which were emphasised by the textbooks. This narrowed the scope of students' exposure to the diversity of English, [...].
- Personally, I believe that we should take the notion of "common ground" to treat a variety of English accents. [...]. Therefore, it is reasonable that English is mostly used for communication, without abandoning any accent. Perhaps an international standard can be set up for certain occupations or occasions (such as teachers, international conferences, etc).

## 6.2 Interview Findings

The interviews for this research included a discussion about CE accents in general, and the participants' own English accents in more detail (see Table 2 for a list of transcription conventions). They were also asked if they would be happy to be regarded as Chinese when speaking in English and their responses if they were mistakenly regarded as an NSE.

**Table 2** Transcription Conventions for Interviews

@@@	Laughter
:	Lengthening (Length indicated by number of colons)
(.)	Brief pause in speech
.	Completion of a sentence
(1)	Longer pauses are timed to the nearest second with the number of second in parentheses
=	Latching
<low voice>text<low voice>; <rising tone>text<rising tone>	Modes of speaking
S1, S2, etc.	Student interviewees
T1, T2, etc.	Teacher interviewees
I	Interviewer
(...)	Gaps in transcript due to sensitivity or not relevance of material

Generally, the student participants exhibited a more negative attitude towards CE accents. Students also seemed to distinguish between Northern and Southern CE accents. For example, S3 and S4 both believed that the Northern CE accents were difficult to understand. S1, as a student from the North, did not feel happy with his own English accent either, as he stated that he felt uncomfortable when listening to his own English. S2, S3, and S6 believed that people speak with a Chinese accent not because they deliberately want to keep it but because they are not able to change their accents.

When asked whether she hoped to let her interlocutors know that she is a Chinese when speaking English, S5 answered:

**Excerpt 1:**

1. I: do you want to let other people know that you are a Chinese when speaking English
2. S5: hope err:::
3. I: from your accent
4. S5: (4) erm I I might hope that my interlocutor knows me that I am a foreigner speaking
5. English but not a Chinese speaking English
6. I: erm why=
7. S5: =because if he [the interlocutor] can listen that I am a Chinese speaking English it
8. means that I I do not (1) achieve my pronunciation (1) it means that I do not
9. pronounce well

From this interview excerpt, it can be seen that S5 had several pauses, reflecting that she was not sure about her own English accent. It seemed that she struggled with her response when negotiating her own identity – a Chinese student who speaks English. She would feel happy to be recognised as a foreigner but not as Chinese because a CE accent is not good enough, according to her comments. It seemed that S5 drew a line between CE accents and other foreign English accents.

However, S1 expressed a contradictory perspective when talking about his own English accent and negotiating his own identity:

**Excerpt 2:**

1. I: do you think that your accent belongs to your own as part of yourself
2. S1: <low voice> err I don't think so <low voice> my accent is quite bad. I feel that I
3. should (2) try hard to improve <low voice> my accent so <low voice> if my accent
4. keeps like this <low voice> I would think that my English learning is (1) a failure
5. <low voice>
6. I: erm so if you feel that someone speaks English with a Chinese accent what do you

7. think and how would you evaluate that person
8. S1: we are friends (...) because @ we are all from China we should feel a kind of
9. friendliness @@
10. I: kind of friendliness right
11. S1: yes @
12. I: erm erm so if someone speaks English with a Chinese accent do you think that
13. the way of speaking is part of his own
14. S1: <low voice> person <low voice> er:: yes (...) of course because at least we know
15. that he is Chinese

S1 seemed not to care if people regarded him as Chinese from his English accent, although he also expressed his willingness to be (mis-)recognised as an NSE. He expressed uncertainty when evaluating his own English accent. From the above excerpt, S1 expressed himself in a contradictory way. On the one hand, he lowered his voice as he did not feel satisfied with his own English accent. On the other hand, he mentioned “we are friends” when asked about other people’s CE accents. The response of friendliness and laughter indicated that he was aware of the concept of “identity” when using the language, although he might still feel the need to improve his own CE accent.

The researcher also asked another question about participants’ responses if they were mistakenly regarded as an NSE. Basically, people regarded this as a compliment and would be happy to accept it. For instance, some participants commented: “I feel surprised but wonderful” (S3), “it means I am making progress @” (S5), and “I sometimes feel quite (.) quite happy” (S6). Although the participants’ might have some pauses and laughter, many still believed that, as language learners, sounding more native-like is one of the ultimate goals of language learning.

From a different perspective, some participants were less excited as they did not want to lose their identities. For example, S4 answered: “I would first thank the person but would think that the person cannot distinguish my accent from an accent of an NSE”. S2 stated that he would be straightforward and tell the person about his national identity. In a similar vein, S3 also mentioned that “Chinese people instead of NSE could be my model of English learning”. Therefore, to some extent, some participants might be ambivalent when evaluating their own CE accents (cf. Jenkins 2007).

## 7 Discussion

To conclude the findings from the questionnaire, it can be seen that quite a number of respondents did not feel happy with their CE accents and would strive to sound as native-like as possible. The influence of the respondents’ own local dialects or

Chinese accents from their L1s on their English was considered a negative aspect. It can be seen that students used more negative than positive adjectives when evaluating their own CE accents. This reflects the fact that CE accents have not been considered part of the identity of the student respondents.

From another perspective, the notion of “communication efficiency” that language is a tool for the purpose of communication was also emphasised by quite a number of respondents, apart from the entrenchment of the native English accents. In general, from the questionnaire findings, it can be noted that CE accents were intuitively viewed negatively, so more time will be needed for CE to be recognised within the Chinese community and for its phonological features to be codified in the future.

From the interview findings, it is not difficult to see that some students were struggling with their own CE accents and their identities when using the language. This creates uncertainty for them in evaluating their own CE accents. The evaluation of students’ own CE accents and the findings from students’ being mistakenly regarded as an NSE have demonstrated that quite a number of the participants still largely regard themselves as language learners when responding to language proficiency “compliments”. It can be seen that the participants still perceive themselves as learners of English and do not consider themselves legitimate WE or ELF users of English. The tension between a localised English accent as part of their identity and a desire to be able to sound native-like in order to be (perceived as) intelligible to interlocutors still exists. The findings here also echo Kirkpatrick and Xu’s (2002) research in which students feel that “it was unlikely that there would be a Chinese variety of English and that they did not want to sound Chinese when they spoke in English” (2002, p. 277). Further research on this topic can include more samples with participants from a wider geographic area in China. If possible, more participants with various English learning and speaking experiences should also be recruited for more perspectives on the variety of CE.

In addition, the findings reflect that the participants still possess certain traditional views towards English accents, without (consciously) drawing upon the WE or ELF paradigm in pronunciation teaching at this stage. The research findings do not show a significant difference compared to Jenkins’s (2007) study, although the students themselves display some resistance. Moreover, the power relationship and the lack of teaching materials are other key aspects to explain the dominance of the traditional native-oriented ideology in language classrooms. Indeed, the findings imply that pronunciation teaching in China does not really consider the importance of how English is being used in different contexts but still regards the traditional native standard as the benchmark. Although Fang and Yuan (2011, p. 107) have argued the importance of “the incorporation of various English varieties in the course syllabus [...] to enhance social and cultural language awareness, promoting understanding and tolerance, and boosting communicative competence”, this proposal seems to move forward quite slowly.

## 8 Implications and Concluding Remarks

The tentative findings of this research have demonstrated the significance of researching attitudes towards local accents in terms of pronunciation teaching for the development of a potential variety of English in the WE paradigm. The phonological features of CE can be further envisaged and codified. However, people's attitudes towards their own accents suggest that this will require more time to achieve.

This also leads to the reform of the ELT field. From a traditional perspective, English in China is regarded as a foreign language and the teaching standard should be native-oriented. Local varieties of English in China are not given enough attention in a language classroom. It is thus natural that students would not regard their CE accents as part of their identities. At the levels of phonology, lexis and syntax, varieties of English in the expanding circle are more norm-dependent, while the notion of ELF focuses on the fluidity and flexibility of English during the process of communication, thereby breaking the barrier of "standard".

In terms of language teaching, the importance of accent exposure in an international setting should be reinforced, as it is viable to design courses related to varieties of English in order to raise students' awareness of how English is used across the world. In this way, students will learn to envision their own English accents when they receive enough exposure to both native and non-native English accents. As for ELT, particularly pronunciation teaching, it is hoped to raise the awareness of both language teachers and learners of English as an international language and incorporate learners' needs for language learning into the curriculum. For example, Deterding (2010) has proposed ELF-based pronunciation teaching in China, which focuses on specific features of CE accents and some features of CE that may create misunderstandings. This aspect should be emphasised in pronunciation teaching, and students can also be told to analyse typical features of CE, as well as some features that might impede communication. The traditional method of pronunciation drilling in order to eliminate learners' local accents and achieve native-like pronunciation can no longer address the various purposes of English learning and the actual practice whereby English functions as an international language. Therefore, it is crucial to reinforce exposure to various accents in order to foster the communication strategy of language learners, which is far more important than imitating any particular native English accents for the purpose of international communication.

In sum, as a case study, this research is based on a certain university context in China, while further research can be focused on a wider scenario, for example, different regions within China. Further research can also focus on Chinese students who have a certain level of experience abroad with exposure to English accents, and see how they perceive their own English accents. It is hoped that further research will address the issue of English as an international language and if possible, to explore how to incorporate local varieties of English into the classroom to better mirror the global and local status of the function of English.

## Appendix: The Questionnaire

### QUESTIONNAIRE

#### 1. Demographic background data (个人背景资料)

Please fill in the following information about yourself. All personal responses will remain anonymous and will be included for research purposes only.

(请在下方填写你的个人信息。请注意：所有的回答都以匿名形式保存并且仅会以研究目的使用)。

1) Age (年龄):  18 to 22  23 to 30  31 to 40

2) Gender (性别):  Male  Female

3) College (学院):

- College of Liberal Arts (文学院)  School of Art and Design (艺术学院)
- Business School (商学院)  College of Engineering (工学院)
- School of Journalism and Communication (新闻与传播学院)
- Law School (法学院)  College of Science (理学院)

4) Age when starting to learn English (开始学习英语的时间):

- kindergarten (幼儿园)  primary (小学)  secondary (中学)  university (大学)

5) Experience abroad (please skip the question if you do not have experience abroad):

(国外的经历，如果没有请跳过)。

- travel (旅游)  study (学习)  work (工作)  conference (会议)
- others, please specify (其他原因, 请注明): \_\_\_\_\_

Where (地点): \_\_\_\_\_

Length (时长):  less than a month (少于一个月)  1 to 6 months (一到六个月)

6 months to a year (六个月到一年)  more than a year (多于一年)

6) Your native language/dialect? (你的母语或方言) \_\_\_\_\_

7) Other languages/dialects? (其他语言或方言) \_\_\_\_\_

#### 2. Questionnaire: Part One (问卷调查: 第一部分)

Please answer **all** the following questions about English accents according to your own understanding and beliefs. There is no right or wrong answer. Additional comments are welcome. You can answer in either English or Chinese. (请根据你自己的了解和想法回答以下所有关于英语口音的问题。答案没有对错之分。如果可以, 请解释你填写的答案或提供你的看法。你可以用英语或者中文作答)。

1) Please use some adjectives to describe your own English accent. (请用几个形容词描述你自己的英语口音。)

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2) How do you feel about your own English accent? (你对你自己的英语口音作何评价?)

Not satisfied at all (十分不满意)  Not very satisfied (不是很满意)

Uncertain (无法确定)  Satisfied (满意)  Very satisfied (很满意)

Any reasons why (请解释): \_\_\_\_\_

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3) What kind of English accent would you like to aspire to? (你期望达到什么样的英语口音?)

Sound like a native speaker of English. (像英语为本族语的人一样的口音。)

Keep my own English accent. (保持我自己的英语口音。)

I do not care about my English pronunciation. (我不在乎我的英语发音。)

Others, please specify (其他, 请注明): \_\_\_\_\_

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## 2. Questionnaire: Part Two (问卷调查: 第二部分)

Listed below are some statements about accent and language learning. Please indicate by placing a “√” on how you agree or disagree each statement.

(以下是关于口音与英语学习的一些叙述。请按照你是否同意这些叙述, 在每个叙述后面用打“√”的方式进行选择。)

Strongly Disagree |      | Strongly Agree  
(完全不同意) (完全同意)

2.1) I feel happy when I find my English accent is more like native speakers.

|     |

(当我觉得我的英语口音越来越像以英语为本族语的人的时候, 我感到开心。)

2.2) When someone cannot understand me when I speak English, I begin to doubt my English accent. |     |

(当我讲英语而他人没办法理解我的时候, 我便开始怀疑我的英语口音)

2.3) I feel satisfied with my English accent as well as my Chinese accent.

|    |

(我对我的中文口音和英语口音一样都感到满意。)

2.4) I feel that my English accent is better than my Chinese accent.

|    |

(我觉得我的英语口音比我的中文口音要更好。)

2.5) I do not feel satisfied with my English accent and would strive to sound like a native speaker of English. |    |

(我对我自己的英语口音感到不满意, 我努力尝试着像以英语为本族语的人一样去讲英语。)

2.6) I feel satisfied with my own English accent but would still like to strive to sound like a native speaker of English. [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

(我对我自己的英语口音感到满意，但我还是希望可以像以英语为本族语的人一样去讲英语。)

2.7) I feel satisfied with my own English accent and would like to keep it. [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

(我对我自己的英语口音感到满意并希望保持它。)

2.8) I feel happy if someone mistakenly regards that I have a native speaker accent of English. [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

(如果有人误以为我有像以英语为本族语的人一样的口音，我会觉得很开心。)

2.9) When I speak English, I am happy to be identified as a Chinese speaker. [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

(当我讲英语的时候，我很开心能被听出我是讲中文的人。)

2.10) After learning English, I find myself more sensitive to different accents of people I communicate with. [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

(在学习英语之后，我觉得自己在和他人交流时对不同人的口音更加敏感。)

**Any further comments/suggestions?**

(其他的意见与建议？)

*Please share your comments and thoughts you would like to make about your own accents of English, or other English accents from inside or outside classroom, when communicating with your teachers/colleagues/friends. You can make any comments based on different English accents or on your own English accent. Feel free to write anything you like – I am sure the comments you provided will be valuable in my research.*

(请分享你对自己的英语口音的看法，或者当你在课内与课外，与你的老师/同事/朋友交谈时接触到的不同英语口音的意见与想法。你可以基于不同的英语口音或者对你自己的英语口音提出任何的看法。请尽管表达任何你想表达的看法，相信你的看法或建议对我的研究会有很大的帮助。)

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**\* THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION \***

(感谢你的配合)

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# **Chinese and Non-Chinese English Teachers' Reactions to Chinese English in Academic Writing**

**Joel Heng Hartse**

**Abstract** There has been a relative lack of research on China English (CE) in academic writing. This study fills that gap by examining Chinese ( $n = 30$ ) and non-Chinese ( $n = 16$ ) English language teachers' reactions to features of China English in texts written by Chinese university students. Participants were given an acceptability judgment task of seven argumentative essays and asked to identify any instance of unacceptable language usage, limited to the ten usages they deemed the most unacceptable. In follow-up interviews, volunteer participants were asked to explain their reasons for rejecting the usages and discuss their opinions about language use in academic writing in general. These results were then compared with the features of CE which have been claimed in the literature on the subject in order to determine how participants reacted to features of CE in academic writing. The study found that most loan words and loan translations were not widely rejected, but that some participants saw them as markedly Chinese. It also found that some non-Chinese participants rejected a possible semantic shift in the meaning of the word 'outside,' while Chinese participants appeared to accept it. Possible instances of adjacent default tense and null subject were widely rejected by participants. Overall, the study appears to have been a useful method for investigating reactions to 'real-world' use of CE, studies about which have been lacking.

**Keywords** Chinese English • Academic writing • Acceptability judgments • Language attitudes • World Englishes

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## 1 Introduction

Since the beginning of research on Chinese English (CE), there has been relatively little interest in investigating its use in academic writing contexts. This is potentially because most academic writing in China is done by students whose language use is viewed from a developmental or language acquisition perspective. For example, Pang (2006), in his proposal to assemble a corpus of CE, specifically stated that academic writing by university students should not be included because it is the language of learners, and Ma (2012), while acknowledging that CE exists on a continuum with less preferred interlanguage uses of English, seems to equate CE in academic writing with ‘deterioration’ and a ‘lower standard in education’ (p. 356).

It has become clear, however, that one of the major defining characteristics of the sociolinguistic profile of English in China is its widespread use in education (Gil and Adamson 2011). Xu (2010) showed how collecting data from advanced university students was likely to lead to useful insights into the nature of CE. In Xu’s study, however, the data collected from Chinese university students was only spoken English, and there have yet to be studies of CE focusing on university academic writing.

This chapter focuses on this domain as an important area for CE research, looking specifically at readers’ reactions to (potential) features of CE that occur in university students’ writing. It uses an acceptability judgment task (AJT) and follow-up interviews to examine both Chinese and non-Chinese English language teachers’ reactions to possible CE features as determined by previous literature on CE. The data presented here is part of a larger study on the participants’ judgments of acceptability that deals with CE, English as a lingua franca, and other usages which do not fall into any pre-determined categories of language variation or error (see Heng Hartse 2015).

Investigations of CE using AJTs have been undertaken in previous studies, including Chen and Hu (2006) and Wang (2013), but those have tended to use decontextualized, stereotyped versions of “Chinglish” rather than authentic, attested usage of (potential) CE in context. By using whole student texts rather than single sentences, this study aims to get a better sense of how participants react to written CE usage when they encounter it in its natural habitat, as it were. The selection of these features as unacceptable (or not) has implications for the development and the status of CE as a variety, and for the acceptance of CE usage in academic writing.

This chapter begins with a brief review of literature on previous studies of the features of CE and attitudes toward the concept of CE. It then describes the methods used in this study and the results of the AJT and follow-up interviews; the majority of the chapter is an in-depth look at each usage that was identified as potential CE. Finally, in the conclusion I make some observations about which usages were rejected and which were ignored in an attempt to make some generalizations about CE in the context of this study.

## 2 Review of Literature

There have been a number of empirical studies of the features of CE as well as studies about attitudes toward CE as a variety, but as yet there have been very few studies which combine the two – that is, acceptability studies which examine participants' attitudes toward specific examples of (potential) CE usage. The studies tend to involve scholars' analysis of texts on the one hand or surveys of general attitudes toward CE as a concept on the other. Studies involving textual analysis of CE features have included Cheng's (1992) study of syntax in *Beijing Review* magazine articles, Gao's (2001) study of CE vocabulary in Chinese English media, and Yang's (2005) analysis of lexical innovation in *China Daily* articles. More general studies of CE from cultural, literary, and rhetorical perspectives have included Zhang (2002), Fang (2008), and You (2008). Xu's (2010) study went into detail about lexical and syntactic features of CE found in spoken data as well as newspapers and fiction.

Relevant features of CE described by these studies were used as a basis for investigating the features of CE in the present study. There are roughly four categories of lexical features of CE mentioned in previous literature: semantic shifts in which the meanings of words change due to recontextualization in the Chinese cultural setting; translations of Chinese idioms, proverbs, or slogans; loanwords; and loan translations. A number of CE studies mention these features, sometimes with different emphases which overlap. Table 1 describes those scholars' categorizations of those features.

In terms of grammatical or syntactic features, I rely on Xu's (2010) detailed list of features of CE based on both spoken and written data. Tables 2 and 3 show those features. (Note that for Table 3, the final two features were found in short story dialogue, while the others were found in news writing.)

In terms of attitude studies, a number of surveys of teachers, students, and others regarding their opinions of Chinese English have been carried out. Kirkpatrick and Xu (2002), Hu (2004, 2005), He and Li (2009) and He and Zhang (2010) all surveyed Chinese university students and/or teachers about issues involving the acceptability of CE as a variety, and/or which varieties of English they prefer (e.g., standard English, American/British English, or others). The results of these studies suggest a move from a relative lack of support for CE (e.g., Hu 2004;

**Table 1** Proposed lexical features of Chinese English

Feature	Example(s)	Author(s)
Semantic shift	Propaganda (positive connotation); “open” to mean “turn on”	Cheng (1992); Gao (2001); Xu (2010)
Idioms and slogans	Long time no see; good good study day day up	Cheng (1992); Fang (2008)
Loanwords/borrowings	baozi, mantou, kung fu, ginseng	Cheng (1992); Xu (2010); Yang (2005); Yang (2009)
Loan translations	Special economic zone, red envelope, paper tiger	Gao (2001); Xu (2010); Yang (2009)

**Table 2** Proposed grammatical/syntactic features of CE by Xu (2010) based on spoken data

Feature	Example
Adjacent default tense	Yesterday I write a letter.
Null subject/object utterances	Sometimes just play basketball.
Co-occurrence of connective pairs	Because I X, so I Y.
Subject pronoun copying	My mother she likes to do that.
Yes-no response	“You don’t like sports?” “Yeah.” [Meaning “I don’t.”]
Topic-comment	Cigars, the president never smokes them.
Unmarked OSV	Both languages I can’t speak well.
Inversion in subordinate finite wh-clauses	I don’t know what should I learn.

**Table 3** Proposed grammatical/syntactic features of CE by Xu (2010) based on written data

Feature	Example
Nominalization	Many types of nominalized noun phrases (see pp. 224–228)
Multiple-coordinate construction (done with “Chinese pragmatic motivations” and tending to “come in threes” (p. 91))	“The ministry will maintain the principle of supporting overseas studies, encouraging the return of overseas Chinese students, and lifting restrictions on their coming and going” (p. 91)
Modifying-modified sequence (preference for forward-linking, subordinate clauses first)	“If she goes home, she cannot bear the sorrow of coming back to work” (p. 96)
Use of imperatives (as opposed to questions) to express commands or requests	“Go buy a carp. Stew it tomorrow afternoon and take it to my office” (p. 101)
Tag variation	Wide variety of tag questions used

Kirkpatrick and Xu 2002) to a more ambivalent opinion and trend toward accepting CE (e.g., He and Li 2009; Hu 2005).

Two studies have taken a more direct approach in asking participants about their opinions of stereotypical CE-like sentences (Chen and Hu 2006; Wang 2013). While these studies suggest a relative acceptance of many of these sentences, the lack of context does not necessarily reveal how participants would react to CE if they encountered it in actual texts. This study, then, aims to fill that gap.

### 3 Methods

The participants ( $n = 46$ ) for the present study were 30 Chinese and 16 non-Chinese English language teachers with varying degrees of experience. They were drawn from five different research sites; a major university in China of the type formerly known as national key universities (NKU), a small independent college in China (SIC), a technical college in China (ATC), a joint-venture sino-foreign university in

**Table 4** Profiles of the Chinese participants (n = 30)

ID	Interview	Sex	Age	Years teaching	Highest degree	Highest degree field
SIC1		M	30	5	MA	Translation
SIC2	Y	F	30	8	BA	English
SIC3		F	36	11	BA	English
SIC4	Y	M	30	5	MA	Translation
SIC5	Y	M	30	3	MA	English
SIC6	Y	M	35	10	MA	English
SIC7	Y	F	32	9	MA	NP
SIC8		F	28	2	MA	NP
NKU1		F	33	10	MA	Applied linguistics
NKU2		F	47	26	MA	Applied linguistics
NKU3		F	39	15	MA	Education
NKU4		F	45	22	MA	Applied linguistics
NKU5		M	37	15	MA	Applied linguistics
NKU6		F	39	13	MA	English
NKU7		F	50	27	BA	English
NKU8		F	45	27	MA	Applied linguistics
NKU9	Y	F	38	12	PhD	Education
NKU10		F	38	14	MA	Applied linguistics
NKU12	Y	F	38	17	MA	Applied linguistics
ATC1	Y	F	30	9	MA	English & Applied linguistics
ATC2	Y	F	45	23	PhD	NP
ATC3	Y	M	30	7	MA	NP
ATC4	Y	F	31	8	MA	Applied linguistics
ATC5	Y	F	38	16	MA	Applied linguistics
ATC6		F	31	9	MA	Applied linguistics
ATC7		F	32	9	MA	NP
ATC8		F	31	9	MA	Applied linguistics
ATC9		F	35	15	MA	NP
ATC10		M	35	10	MA	NP
ATC11		F	32	6	MA	Foreign languages

Note: NP = not provided

China (JVU), and finally a group of Canadian ESL teachers (CDN). Participants were recruited via snowball sampling, either through contact with department heads or other teachers in the department (for the Chinese universities) or through colleagues in a local professional association (for the Canadian teachers). Details about the participants are in Tables 4 and 5.

There were two phases to the study: the first was an AJT consisting of seven argumentative essays written by Chinese university students, taken from a published corpus of written and spoken English by Chinese students (the *Written English Corpus of Chinese Learners* by Wen et al. 2008). Participants were asked to read the essays, then comment on any features of the texts which they deemed unacceptable

**Table 5** Profiles of the Non-Chinese participants (n = 16)

ID	Interview	Sex	Age	Years teaching	Highest degree	Highest degree field	Country
JVU1		F	58	7	BA	TESOL	Scotland
JVU2		F	42	20	MA	TESOL	Fiji
JVU3	Y	M	54	15	MA	TESOL	Ire/UK
JVU4	Y	M	34	12	MA	English language & education	UK
JVU5	Y	M	39	16	MA	TESOL	USA
JVU6	Y	M	54	20	MA	Applied linguistics	UK
JVU7		F	41	18	MA	English literature	India
CDN1	Y	F	23	1	MA	TESOL	Canada
CDN2	Y	F	46	17	MA	TESOL	Canada
CDN3		F	58	4	BA	General studies	Canada
CDN4		F	55	24	MA	TEFL	USA
CDN5	Y	M	41	5	MA	TESOL	Canada
CDN6		F	49	23	BA	Linguistics/Spanish	Canada
CDN7		F	NP	NP	NP	NP	Canada
CDN8		M	34	10	MA	Education	Canada
CDN9	Y	F	60	32	PhD	English	USA

Note: NP = not provided

for any reason. It is important to note for the purposes of this chapter that features deemed unacceptable are *not* considered CE or potential CE; rather, I separately determined where there were CE-like usages in the texts and then checked whether or not participants marked these features as unacceptable, as described below. This chapter, focusing on CE, only deals part of the data from the larger study in Heng Hartse (2015). Crucially, they were not limited to grammatical reasons, but could mark usages for reasons of style, register, rhetorical appropriateness, or any other reason. They were asked to limit their responses to only ten per essay and encouraged to focus on those usages they deemed the most unacceptable, though some participants marked more than ten per essay and some fewer.

The second phase involved a follow-up interview with participants (n = 20) who volunteered to discuss their responses further. The interviews allowed for discussion of their reasons for selecting the language uses they deemed unacceptable and their opinions about language use in the context of academic writing. Participants were not initially told that the texts were written by Chinese students, though many assumed that they were, and this came up frequently in the interviews.

The research question under investigation for this part of the study involved identifying existing features of CE to look for in the AJT texts and examining participants' reactions to them. After extensive reading in the CE literature, I identified a list of features that have been proposed (shown above in Tables 1 and 2), read through the seven AJT texts, and identified usages which evinced those features. I then looked at the AJT and interview data to look at participants' reactions to those usages. The results of this process and analysis of participants' responses are below.

## 4 Results

After undertaking the process described in the previous paragraph, I identified 12 instances of potential CE features in the seven essays. Here I discuss the specific (potential) CE usages, using AJT and interview data to analyze participants' reasons for rejecting the usages, and, when applicable, attempting to discern why certain usages appeared to be more or less acceptable to some participants than others.

CE usages relating to lexical items were widely uncommented on, while potential grammatical features of CE were more often rejected. Overall, there were relatively few CE usages that were widely rejected – only two of the 12 CE were rejected by 20% or more of participants. Table 6 shows the types of CE features that occurred in the AJT texts.

### 4.1 Chinese Loanwords and Loan Translations

The most frequent feature of CE that turns up in the texts used in this study is Chinese loanwords or loan translations of various types, which occur six times in the essays. The words that occurred in the AJT texts were *harmonious society* (used twice), *socialist market economy*, *yuan* (used twice), and *Gulou*.

#### 4.1.1 Harmonious Society (Loan Translation)

'Harmonious society' is a concept most recently advanced in Chinese political discourse by former PRC president Hu Jintao, though it recalls much older Confucian ideals. It seems to be a common usage, appearing frequently in Chinese political and media discourse in English. One of the Chinese interviewees, ATC2, explained that this word is favored by Chinese speakers "because harmonious is very familiar to Chinese people," who "prefer to use the word harmonious to refer to something very nice." It occurred twice in one of the essays in the AJT and was rarely rejected non-Chinese participants, as shown in Table 7.

Although few non-Chinese participants objected to 'harmonious society' in the AJT, several of the interviews ended up including in-depth discussions of the phrase. CDN5 wrote in his comment that 'harmonious' sounded 'awkward' and 'poetic, not

**Table 6** CE features occurring in the essays

Feature	Number of usages
Loanwords or loan translations	6
Semantic shift	4
Null subject	1
Adjacent default tense	1
Total	12

**Table 7** ‘Harmonious society’

Usage (relevant section in bold text)	Chinese (%)	Non-Chinese (%)	Total (%)
Regardless of his position and opinion, everybody, especially the officials who are in power, should understand clearly that the infrastructure, such as roads, transportation, communication, energy and housing, is the most essential framework of the development of a <b>harmonious society</b> .	0	2 (13)	2 (4)
Only in this way can a <b>harmonious society</b> be established.	0	1 (6)	1 (2)

expository,’ and he suggested ‘functional society’ instead. In the interview, he stated that he found ‘harmonious society’ to be ‘perfectly comprehensible,’ but that it immediately marked the writer as Chinese to him. JVU4, who was working in China, agreed that he could understand the meaning of ‘harmonious society,’ but described it as a ‘shortcut’ that writers might use to earn marks in other contexts with Chinese teachers, though at his English-medium, western-style university, it would not be acceptable:

JVU4: I know perfectly well what they mean by harmonious society but I want them to think about what they are writing about, actually are they using that as a shortcut because that's something they – “OK, if we put this in, I'm going to get a good mark,” whereas actually in this context, they are probably not, because the lecturer will turn and say, “well, what do you mean by that?” It's actually easy, it needs to be more detailed, you need to say what it is.

One other non-Chinese teacher, CDN1, made a distinction similar to that made by CDN5:

CDN1: “I think it's OK for the teacher to make it clear, like, ‘OK, if we're in Canada we wouldn't say this, but I realize that talking about harmonious societies in China is important.’ We don't talk about that so much.”

Like CDN5, CDN1 did not see ‘harmonious society’ as a phrase or a concept that had relevance to the context where she uses and teaches English, which is Canada. However, in her hypothetical scenario, she expressed that a teacher could or should understand that different contexts call for different concepts and therefore different English phrases which not all speakers may be immediately familiar with.

#### 4.1.2 Socialist Market Economy (Loan Translation)

While only one Chinese and one non-Chinese participant marked ‘socialist market economy’ as unacceptable, their responses about their reasons are illuminating. Like ‘harmonious society,’ ‘socialist market economy’ is one of many political terms specific to the modern Chinese context which frequent appear in Chinese university students’ English writing. This is because, according to You (2010), throughout their education they are “steeped in mainstream discourse” and become

**Table 8** ‘Socialist market economy’

Usage (relevant section in bold text)	Chinese (%)	Non-Chinese (%)	Total (%)
China is in the process of reforming itself, establishing and improving a <b>socialist market economy</b> which is the reason why competition is becoming fierce.	1 (3)	1 (6)	2 (4)

“fluent in and sympathetic to the party’s positions on various political issues” (p. 156). This usage is shown in Table 8.

For JVU4, ‘socialist market economy’ was similar to ‘harmonious society,’ in that it was a term that he felt was unclear when used without explanation. During our interview, he characterized it as a ‘shortcut’ that was not acceptable in serious academic writing:

JVU4: There’s another one, the socialist market economy, there’s another one that comes up a lot....The concept itself is neither here nor there. I personally don’t think, I think what they do is they use it as a shortcut to actually kind of really explaining things. Now, they’ve probably – and it’s not whether that thing is correct or not, it’s just that the purpose is to get them to think about it and say well this is why it’s correct or this why it’s not, or this is how it works and this is how, it really isn’t.

It was not the Chinese political or cultural meaning he objected to, but the writer’s use of the phrase without ‘explaining’ it; he emphasized that he wanted his students to “think about it” and explain “how it works.”

On the other hand, the Chinese teacher who marked ‘socialist market economy’ (ATC2) was more concerned about the accuracy of the translation from Chinese to English. At first, ATC2 could not remember why she had written “socialist is not a correct word in meaning here” on her AJT when I asked her about it in the interview. We discussed the meaning of ‘socialist market economy,’ which she said was a direct word-for-word translation of the Chinese phrase *shehuizhuyi shichang jingji*. ATC2 asked me whether I was familiar with this term in Chinese or in English, and I replied that I did not know the Chinese and was not familiar with the phrase in English, but it did not strike me as ungrammatical. I raised the issue that it might be confusing to non-Chinese readers who would probably see ‘socialist’ and ‘market economy’ as belonging to two different types of economic systems. Eventually, ATC2 said that she remembered what her original complaint had been:

ATC2: Oh, oh, I remember, I remember – it should not be socialist, it should be socialism.

JHH: Well, I think social – what about socialism?

ATC2: Socialist means person.

JHH: Oh, I see, but – no, it can also be – socialist can be a person or an adjective.

ATC2: Oh, OK. I remember my, my, my – this correction is, I think it should be socialism not socialist.

Here, I seem to regard ATC2’s correction as ungrammatical; in the fourth turn, I offer a fairly direct correction (“no”). We seem to have had different concerns about the phrase: I, like JVU4, found the concept of a ‘socialist market economy’ potentially vague or confusing because I was not familiar with economics or Chinese political

**Table 9** “*Yuan* and *Gulou*”

Usage (relevant section in bold text)	Chinese (%)	Non-Chinese (%)	Total (%)
In Nanjing, the apartment near <b>Gulou</b> campus will cost 1300 <b>yuan</b> per month.	0	0	0
In Nanjing, the apartment near <b>Gulou</b> campus will cost 1300 yuan per month.	0	0	0
The average income of a common family in Nanjing is about 1500 <b>yuan</b> , and there are also many poor students who cannot even afford the fees for study.	0	0	0

discourse, where ATC2 was concerned that I might not be able to understand it due to an inexact translation of the Chinese words. The difference between JVU4 and ATC2’s concerns about ‘socialist market economy’ seem to reflect more of an interest in exposition and explanation of meaning (JVU4) as opposed to an interest in linguistic accuracy and correct translation (ATC2). In both cases, however, each participant recognized the phrase as having a uniquely Chinese meaning in this context.

#### 4.1.3 Yuan (2x) (Standing Loanword/Borrowing) and Gulou (Ad Hoc Loanword/Borrowing)

Neither *yuan* nor *Gulou* was mentioned by any of the participants in the AJT. It is likely that *yuan* (the unit of Chinese currency) has become familiar to many English speakers due to China’s economic prominence and the frequent use of the word in news reports, but *Gulou* (literally, “drum tower”) is likely to be a new word to those unfamiliar with Mandarin Chinese. These usages are shown in Table 9.

The acceptance of *yuan* seems feasible for reasons explained above, but *Gulou* does represent a somewhat unusual case in terms of whether it is indeed a ‘loanword.’ In one of the final interviews, I brought this up with a Canadian participant (CDN9), asking her why she thought no one had objected to *Gulou*; she replied, “Well, because the context makes it clear that they are talking about some university.” In this case *Gulou* seems to be accepted by both Chinese and non-Chinese readers as simply a place name that does not need an English translation. In English discourse in China, names of districts, landmarks, and other geographical features are often treated as borrowings (e.g., *Pudong* district in Shanghai, *Wudaokou* in Beijing), although some of them are also translated (e.g., Worker’s Stadium in Shanghai).

#### 4.2 Semantic Shift

Another prominent possible feature of CE that has been discussed in the literature is semantic shift. In this study, two possible usages evincing semantic shift in CE occurred in the AJT texts; the use of the word ‘open’ to mean ‘turned on’ (as an

**Table 10** Semantic shift

Usage (relevant section in bold text)	Chinese (%)	Non-Chinese (%)	Total (%)
However, once the schedule is recorded on, and your <b>alarm clock is open</b> , then you will be reminded on time.	6 (20)	0	6 (13)
Due to the bad living conditions on campus, there are more and more students who prefer <b>living outside</b> by renting an apartment	0	4 (25)	4 (9)
Nowadays, more and more college students rent apartments and <b>live outside campus.*</b>	0	1 (6)	1 (2)
But if <b>living outside</b> , they may less frequently walk in the campus and as a result, they will possibly miss some important information that may change their whole life, such as that of company introduction and interviews.	0	1 (6)	1 (2)

\*Note: This sentence occurred in the writing prompt itself.

electronic device or a light), and the use of the phrase ‘living outside’ to mean ‘living off-campus,’ which occurred three times in one of the essays. These usages are shown in Table 10.

#### 4.2.1 Alarm Clock Is Open

The case of ‘open’ being used to express the meaning of turning on an electric or electronic device is mentioned by Xu (2010) as an example of CE lexis which has probably undergone a semantic change; he uses the sentence “I will open the radio” (p. 43) as a typical example of “semantic shift or change of words based on the Chinese social and linguistic context” (p. 42). Because this is an attested feature of CE, we might expect to see fewer objections from the Chinese, who would be familiar with it, than the non-Chinese, who might not, but in fact we find the opposite: no non-Chinese participants selected it as unacceptable, while six Chinese participants did. Their comments are shown in Table 11.

Five of the commenters recommend some form of ‘turn on’ or ‘set’ as alternatives, with one calling this use “typical Chinese.” Familiarity may breed contempt, then, just as Hughes and Lascaratou (1982) showed that teachers tend to reject usages they think their students should ‘know better’ than to use.

#### 4.2.2 Living Outside

Another potential case of CE semantic shift is the phrase ‘to live outside,’ meaning to live not within but beyond the boundaries of a location (in this case, a college campus). This use of ‘outside’ is more or less a translation of the Chinese *waidi*, often used to mean living away from home or one’s hometown. This potentially CE-like use of ‘outside’ occurred three times in one of the AJT essays, including

**Table 11** Participant comments on “alarm clock is open”

Participant	Comment
ATC8	Word choice
NKU1	‘On’ not ‘open’
NKU2	‘Turned on’
SIC1	On, typical Chinese
SIC2	We only ‘set’ the alarm clock
SIC8	The expression is inappropriate, since the alarm clock should be ‘set’.

**Table 12** Comments on ‘outside’ across three usages

Participant	Comment
CDN2	Needs the word campus or off campus
CDN3	‘Living outside’ means in the great outdoors...the student should add the noun – campus.
CDN5	Use ‘off of campus’, or outside of campus. Outside sounds like in the outdoors.
CDN6	‘Living off campus’; outside means outdoors. Used again.
JVU5	off campus
JVU6	This sounds like they are sleeping on the streets!

once in the writing prompt, and notably, it was not commented on by any Chinese participants. Across the three sentences, six different non-Chinese participants commented on ‘outside,’ and comments are shown in Table 12.

These comments, like “Outside sounds like in the outdoors” (CDN5), or “this sounds like they are sleeping on the streets” (JVU6), suggest that the non-Chinese participants commenting here feel strongly that ‘off campus’ is the appropriate phrase to use in this context, in part because ‘living outside’ has another meaning that might confuse readers.

While no Chinese participants objected to any usage of ‘outside’ in this essay, there were two other usages in the final sentence in Table 12 marked as unacceptable by some in the Chinese group, which may be relevant to understanding their perceptions of the usage of ‘outside.’ Six Chinese participants marked the phrase “less frequently walk in the campus,” and seven simply marked the word ‘in’ from the phrase ‘in the campus.’ As one Chinese participant (SIC2) wrote: “This is Chinglish. You can say: they may spend less time on campus.” The occasional marking of ‘in campus’ but tacit acceptance of ‘outside campus’ suggests a potential shift taking place in Chinese participants’ acceptability of the CE usage of ‘outside.’ The Chinese group appears to be comfortable with the use of ‘outside’ to mean ‘off campus’ (or at least they do not make rejecting it a priority) but some clearly objected to ‘in’ to meaning ‘on campus.’ It is notable that ‘in’ was interpreted as ‘Chinglish,’ while ‘outside’ was not. Thus, the two possible instances of semantic shift here seem to have had opposite reactions from the Chinese participants, with ‘in campus’ being unacceptable to some, but ‘outside’ at least potentially accepted by many.

**Table 13** Null subject

Usage (relevant section in bold text)	Chinese (%)	Non-Chinese (%)	Total (%)
We use computers to send e-mails, and we get much information on the internet <b>that can not get from other ways.</b>	20 (67)	6 (38)	26 (56)

### 4.3 Null Subject

Xu (2010) mentions “null subject or object pronouns in the positions where they can be expected” (p. 72) – that is, the omission of subject or object pronouns – as one of the features of CE primarily found in his spoken English data. These (like some other features of CE), he argues, are unlikely to be found in many written sources, like books and newspapers, because they are likely to be edited out before publication. However, looking at English writing that was not intended for publication, as in the essays used in the AJT, we can see that the null subject feature can potentially occur in writing. Table 13 shows that a potential ‘null subject’ usage was widely rejected.

This usage was rejected by over two thirds of Chinese participants and over one third of non-Chinese. However, while seven comments associated with this out of the 26 total rejections mentioned the problem of the null subject (like “it needs a subject” (ATC7) or “a subject ‘we’ needed” (NKU7)), most other comments suggested changing the verb from ‘get’ to ‘be gotten.’ Whether participants objected to the verb form or the lack of subject, however, it is clear that this usage is a clause that lacks a subject and that it is widely rejected. This, along with Xu’s assertion that null subject is probably a feature of spoken CE, suggests that null subject clauses are likely to be rejected by readers in written texts and perhaps should not be considered a feature of written CE.

### 4.4 Adjacent Default Tense

Adjacent default tense (ADT) is another feature discussed by Xu (2010) from his spoken interview data. This involves marking verb tense simply by context so that the verb itself is used in its base (i.e., ‘default’) form. The AJT texts included one example of ADT, shown in Table 14.

This is a very clear example of ADT, since the verb ('think') occurs immediately after the temporal context of the sentence has been established ('in the past'). Most of the AJT comments were straightforward, confident assertions that if the action took place 'in the past,' then a past tense verb is preferable. The wide rejection of this feature is unsurprising, as Xu (2010) noted its absence from 'well-edited' written data (p. 70).

**Table 14** Adjacent default tense

Usage (relevant section in bold text)	Chinese (%)	Non-Chinese (%)	Total (%)
On the one hand, <b>in the past, we think</b> that we are the masters of the earth, so we polluted the environment discretionarily and took advantage of the resources improperly.	14 (47)	9 (56)	23 (50)

## 5 Discussion and Conclusion

According to Xu (2010), “it is difficult to draw a demarcation line...between ‘nativised Chinese English words’ ... and words that are simply mistakenly used” (p. 44). One of the traditional goals of undertaking an AJT is to distinguish whether participants view certain language use as legitimate or illegitimate; in this study, for example, if many participants marked a usage as unacceptable, this may be evidence that they do not consider it legitimate, but if very few mark it, they may accept it, or at least find it less unacceptable than the usages they marked. While there were certain patterns in which participants (that is, Chinese or non-Chinese) tended to mark some of the usages as unacceptable, it seems that it is not necessarily possible to predict which ‘features’ of CE tend to be rejected, even though certain usages do seem to attract more rejection from one or the other group.

Overall, there were few usages in the AJT essays which evinced potential features of CE. Of those which did, Chinese loanwords were rarely marked, though they were acknowledged as noticeably Chinese by a few participants. A clause with a possible null subject was widely rejected, as was an instance of adjacent default tense, which is not surprising, since they have been assumed to be features of spoken CE and/or likely to be edited out if they occur in writing intended for publication. In terms of semantic shift, ‘the alarm clock is open’ was marked by a sizable minority of Chinese participants (but no non-Chinese) and another possible instance of semantic shift was discovered, with some non-Chinese participants marking ‘living outside’ meaning ‘living off-campus,’ while no Chinese participant marked this usage. These findings suggest that while CE-like meanings for lexical items are likely to be seen as unproblematic, grammatical features of CE are probably less likely to be.

In some ways, the findings discussed above conform to previous research on the acceptability of non-standard English usage. In the case of CE, there has been emphasis on the success of Chinese loanwords (e.g. Yang 2005), and in this study those words seem to have been incorporated into the text with little difficulty for readers. Grammatical innovations tend to be less widely accepted (see McKay 2008), and this appears to be the case for the CE-like grammatical feature in this study. The cases of semantic shift (like ‘open’ and ‘outside’) are more complex; while they were not widely marked, they are also not clear-cut examples of semantic shift but may require further research to confirm their status as CE lexical items.

This small study is only one example of further studies that could be carried out involving CE and other varieties of English. While the methods used in this study were capable of generating rich data, future studies could combine the AJT approach with a corpus study or larger-scale attitude studies about CE as a variety. Academic writing is an important and under-researched domain for studies of CE, and there is much more work to be done.

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# The Prospect of Teaching English as an International Language in a Chinese Context: Student-Teachers' Reactions

Roby Marlina

**Abstract** As a result of the worldwide expansion of the English language, English is no longer a homogeneous concept but rather, a heterogeneous language with pluralised/pluralising grammars, vocabulary, accents, and pragmatic discourse conventions. The emergence of different world Englishes and the forces of globalisation have prompted scholars to urge language educators to revise their teaching practices and the principles behind these practices based on a paradigm that promotes multi-dialectal democracy, i.e. English as an International Language (EIL). In China specifically, the emergence of Chinese variety of English or Chinese English has challenged the principles and practices of teaching English that are based on the so-called 'native-speaker' model. Not only is this model claimed to be insufficient or irrelevant but also disempowering. Thus, the teaching of English in China seems to have shifted from TEFL to TEIL.

However, the extent to which a particular advocated paradigm can be translated into practice lies in the hands of prospective key protagonists in operationalising this paradigm. The voices of these protagonists are still not audible enough in the current literature. Therefore, this chapter reports on a case study of four Chinese student-teachers from a TEIL course at a university in Suzhou (China). It specifically explores these student-teachers' views on the importance and practicality of teaching English language diversity (including Chinese English) in a Chinese context. Results from classroom observations, interviews, and students' writings suggest that the teaching of EIL in a Chinese context seems to have a good prospect of success. The participants are also aware of the challenges they are likely to encounter and/or have encountered in their attempt to teach EIL. In light of this, modest suggestions for English language teacher-education in China are offered.

**Keywords** English as an international language • World Englishes • ELT • Chinese English • China

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## 1 Background

The global spread of English as well as the significant role of English in various international cultural and economic arenas have bestowed upon English the status of an international language. Consequently, the view of English as a homogeneous language of the ‘West’ has become anachronistic. The teaching and learning of English that is ESL/EFL-centric has been criticised for its promotion of native-speakerism and thus inadequacy in preparing students for contemporary communicative exchanges in English.

One major factor that has significantly contributed to the internationalisation of the status of English is the changing demographic background of its users. It has been widely argued that today’s users of English are predominantly bi-/multilingual users of English from, what Kachru (1986) termed, Outer Circle Countries such as Singapore and India where English is used as an institutionalised language in conjunction with other official languages, and from Expanding Circle countries such as South Korea and China where English is often learned and taught as a foreign language. Statistically, Graddol (1999) envisaged that “the number of people using English as their second/additional language will grow from 235 million to around 462 million during the next 50 years” (p.62). Today, there are approximately 1 billion competent users of English (Jenkins 2015) who acquire English within their bi- and multilingual repertoires, use English and other languages in multilingual contexts, and use English to communicate predominantly with other bi-/multilingual users of English (Graddol 2006).

The global expansion of English and the increase in the numbers of bi-/multilingual speakers of English in the world have also led to the emergence of different varieties of English (Graddol 2006; Kachru 1986). When English enters a particular society, members of that society naturally and actively localise and appropriate the English language to suit the local tastebuds (Marlina 2010) and to project their own cultural and linguistic identities. The newly-emerged varieties of English have been clearly documented in the journals of World Englishes and English Today as well as in the Handbook of World Englishes (Kachru et al. 2006; Kirkpatrick 2010). Although, as observed by Ike (2014), attention has been paid predominantly to the newly-emerged varieties of English from Outer Circle countries, Kachru’s view of Expanding Circle varieties of English as a premature form of Outer Circle varieties of English has been contested. Apart from Shim’s (1999) study on Korean English as well as Ike’s (2014) study on Japanese English, Kachru’s view has also been contested since 1980s by the following Chinese and non-Chinese scholars (Cheng 1992; Kirkpatrick and Xu 2002; Zhang 2002; Jiang 2003; Bolton 2003; Hu 2004; Cui 2006; Deterding 2006; Xu 2006, 2010a, b) who have comprehensively documented the phonological, lexical, syntactic, discourse, and pragmatic features of Chinese English (see Xu 2010a and 2010b for the details of these features). What needs to be emphasised is that the emergence of these different world Englishes has challenged the view of English as a unitary concept, and thus defined English as a plurilithic language. Bi/multilingual speakers of English from, for example China,

may not necessarily use English to communicate the norms, worldviews, and socio-cultural realities of the so-called ‘Western’ English speaking countries. Rather, they naturally draw on their own rich linguistic and cultural resources to express their perceptions of reality. Therefore, English, with its pluralised forms, is a vehicle for users of English to express diverse cultural conceptualisations and identities.

The above outcomes of English being an international language have led to an urgent call for the need to revise teaching practices and the principles behind those practices based on a paradigm that promotes the pluricentricity of English, its user, and its culture, i.e. English as an International Language (EIL). Advocated by EIL scholars (McKay 2002; Matsuda 2012), English language educators should aim to instil in their students (1) knowledge and awareness of different varieties of English; (2) a genuine recognition of the legitimacy of different varieties of English; and (3) the ability to negotiate across different Englishes and cultures.

In China, specifically, there have been calls for the need to teach English based on the EIL paradigm. Some Chinese scholars (e.g. Li 2007; Wen 2012; Xu 2002, 2013) have observed that the ELT paradigm in China seems to have gradually shifted from EFL-centric to EIL-centric. Having observed the emergence of a variety of Chinese English and the potential of a so-called ‘native-speaker’ based pedagogic model in disempowering Chinese teachers and learners, both Xu (2002) and Li (2007) have urged Chinese ELT practices to: (1) ensure that the English taught in Chinese classrooms reflects the actual use of English in Chinese societies; (2) raise awareness of WE; (3) promote linguistic ownership; (4) incorporate Chinese cultural norms and values into language teaching; (5) value students’ L1; (6) employ more multilingual English teachers from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds whom students can look up to as role models. Recently, some of these changes are no longer a rhetoric, but a reality. For example, the development of cultural awareness and cross-cultural abilities is one of the teaching objectives or principles stated in the nation-wide Chinese MOE (Ministry of Education) approved English language curriculum documents (Wen 2012). Despite this, Wen (2012) has observed that the so-called ‘native’ variety of English is still used as the main source of learning materials due to a lack of resources for teaching Chinese English. However, based on his analysis of a set of English textbooks used in the Chinese nationwide secondary schools, Xu (2013) has revealed that these textbooks have incorporated texts about various cultures in the world, used English that reflects Chinese cultural conceptualisation, and included texts about English language change and variation.

However, the extent to which a particular advocated paradigm can be translated into practice lies in the hands of prospective key protagonists in operationalising this paradigm. The voices of these protagonists, i.e. English teachers in China, are still not audible enough in the current literature. Li (2009) suggests that it is high time that research studies on EIL should include their views on a range of delicate and contentious issues discussed in the field. Therefore, to explore the prospect of teaching English with an EIL perspective in a Chinese context, this chapter reports on the views of Chinese student-teachers of English on how important and practical it is to teach English in China with an EIL perspective.

## 2 Methodology

Since qualitative researchers often use multiple instruments to present their research from different angles (Rossman and Rallis 2012), I collected my data through a combination of various research instruments: artefacts collections, interviews, and classroom observations whilst teaching. I conducted a 1-hour semi-structured interview in English with four Chinese student-teachers of English who were enrolled in a postgraduate degree in Applied Linguistics. The interviews were audio-recorded, and consisted of questions that I had prepared in advance, and that I developed while observing/listening to their responses during classroom discussions. To further confirm their views and ensure trustworthiness, I also collected and analysed any writings (ungraded) they had done. The theme of the interviews, the discussion questions, and the writing were predominantly based on Xu (2002) and Li's (2007) proposal of changes in Chinese ELT perceptions and practices.

There are two limitations to this study that need to be acknowledged. Firstly, the results cannot be generalised beyond the immediate context of this research as it is conducted in a one particular faculty, one particular program, one particular university in China, and with a small number of students. The views shared by the participants are not necessarily representative of those from the same lingua-cultural backgrounds, university, faculty, and even program. Secondly, although the interviews were conducted after the end of the course, I was still their lecturer. The participants might be reluctant to reveal their honest opinions about the importance and practicality of TEIL. Since I am aware that my role as both a lecturer and a researcher could not be wished away as being of no consequence, I made it clear to the participants that I was interested in listening to their stories or voices about the context in which they and I operated, as well as in constructing a detailed understanding of the issue through their stories. In the process of collecting and interpreting the data, I was also critical and reflective of my roles; and the tensions they might create. However, the core ingredient of doing research is “an ability to be reflective on the subjective research process; and to be open, authentic, honest, deeply interested in the experience of one’s research participants, and committed to adequately representing their experiences” (Dwyer and Buckle 2009, p.59).

## 2.1 *Contextual Information*

<b>Setting</b>	
Location	Jiang University (pseudonym) in Suzhou, China
Program	Master of Applied Linguistics
Course title	Issues in Teaching English as an International Language
Course duration	3 weeks
Course description	Through an examination of prescribed texts, the course offers an analysis of the socio-cultural, ideological, and linguistic issues that arise from the teaching of English for international and intercultural communication.  Students will be introduced to a range of views and positions regarding the nature of EIL including how it should be taught and evaluated (refer to Appendix 1 for a list of topics covered in this course).
<b>Participants</b>	
Name (pseudonyms)	Li, Ping, Xia, and Jian from different cities in Jiangsu province.
Age and gender	Ranging from 23–26 years old; all females.
Previous educational background	Bachelor degree in English language and English language Education in China.
Teaching experience	Private-tutoring English to Chinese primary and secondary students for 2 years.
Future career	English and Chinese teachers.

## 3 Results: Students' Views on Teaching English Language Diversity

Results from classroom observations, interviews, and students' writings have revealed the participants' beliefs in the relevance, importance, and practicality of teaching the diversity of English (including Chinese English) to English language learners in China. In addition to advocating the relevance and importance of teaching English language variation, the participants have also attempted to conduct their own English lessons from an EIL perspective.

### 3.1 Relevance of World Englishes: “This Is What We Chinese People Use”

During a classroom discussion activity on the variety of English that is suitable for, and relevant to the Chinese context in Lesson 2 (see Appendix 1), none of the participants mentioned only American or British English. In fact, I noticed that Li, Xia, and Ping were listing different varieties of English (see Fig. 1 below) they claimed to be relevant and important to the local context. Interestingly, they also mentioned the suitable levels of study in which those varieties of English could be introduced, which has not yet been discussed in previous studies.

Advocating a polymodel approach to English language teaching, they believed that both Chinese English and either British or American English should be taught across all levels of study. Other Englishes could be introduced and taught to either Chinese university (English-majored) students or advanced learners of English. Fascinated by this list, I followed it up in the interview sessions with the participants. Ping claimed that exposing students to different Englishes “*is important but needs to be done carefully because beginners feel confused if they are exposed to so many different Englishes*”. Agreeing with Ping, Jian questioned the availability of “*teaching resources in China for beginners to learn about all world Englishes*”.

Therefore, Li, concurred by Ping and Jian, strongly believed that Chinese students should “*have ample knowledge of the two basic varieties of English first, [which are] Chinese English and British or American English*” prior to learning about other Englishes. When they noticed how surprised I was to hear about their label of those Englishes as ‘the basic’, Xia explained that these were the commonly encountered, taught, and used varieties of English in the Chinese society:

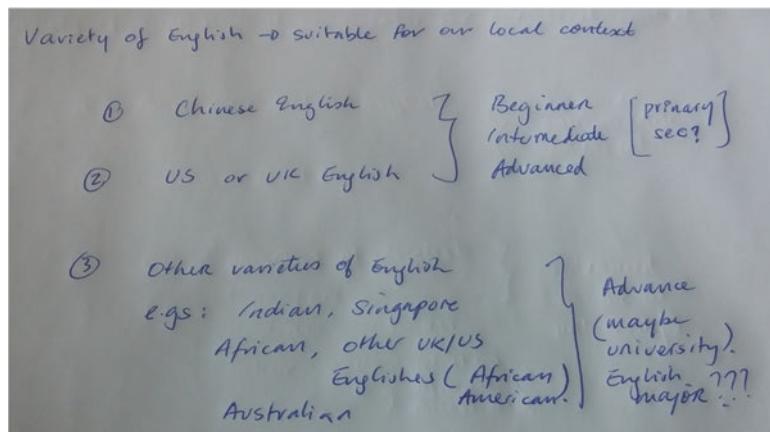


Fig. 1 Students' list of varieties of English relevant to the Chinese context

*UK/US English is already established for a long time. Language materials are written in either of this English. English movies and music are in US English. Some news are reported in this English. Whereas for Chinese English, this is what we Chinese people use. It's natural. Even when we study in British English, but we use Chinese English consciously or unconsciously, like the sounds, words, or communicative strategies. You see, most of us don't speak like the Americans or British even though we have studied UK or US English for a long time. Shop signs are written in English but from Chinese perspective, culture. So, that's why we believe that these are the basic varieties for people to master.*

The justification for Chinese English, i.e. its prevalent use, also explains why Chinese English was listed first when discussing the suitable and relevant variety of English for the Chinese context.

### ***3.2 Importance of Learning About Englishes: “Sticking to One English Is Dangerous”***

Further conversations with the participants have revealed their views on the significance of exposing Chinese English language learners to different varieties of English, supporting Xu (2002) and Li's (2007) call for change in Chinese ELT practices. All participants agreed on the importance of instilling in the students awareness and knowledge of different varieties of English for the following reasons.

Firstly, Li, Ping, and Xia unanimously believed that exposing students to different world Englishes in the world would allow them to learn how to communicate across cultures, and most importantly, to establish and enhance intercultural relationships:

*There are many different ways of greeting in English. I bet if an Australian greets a Chinese in the Chinese way in English, or a Chinese greets a Sri Lankan in the Sri Lankan way in English, it will boost our relationship or at least enlighten the atmosphere (Li).*

*Communicating with people from different culture is not easy because the way they speak is different from us because of different cultural norms of politeness. Especially in business, knowing about Englishes used by our business partners can help us build guanxi or relationship (Ping).*

*My English teachers told me that it is wrong to use cumulative negation like: ‘he ain’t never done nothing’. But actually, it is ok especially when talking to African Americans because it shows our respect for their English, and our willingness to relate to them (Xia).*

Secondly, both Xia and Jian's comments indicate their awareness of potential prejudice or discriminatory practices that may occur if only a single variety of English is taught. Thus, exposing Chinese English language learners to different varieties of English was claimed to be helpful in prompting learners to learn to be more open-minded and more critical towards linguistic discriminatory practices:

*sticking to one English is dangerous because students can learn to become judgemental, laughing at an accent that is not American. Language teachers need to know that the attitude of sticking to ‘standard’ English can manipulate people to see other varieties as wrong (Xia).*

*if we understand Englishes, linguistic prejudice can be maximally circumvented because students learn to be open to different sounds, words, grammars. You know how people are bullied or made fun of when they speak differently from you. So, with knowledge of Englishes, you can deal with that discrimination (Jian).*

Thirdly, advocating a dynamic perspective of linguistic diversity, both Ping and Jian further claimed that knowing about world Englishes would help raise Chinese students' awareness of the dynamic nature of English, and thus, develop a critical view towards a mono-model approach to learning and teaching English.

*If you know about world Englishes, you can see that these different use of English is normal, and not to be confused with mistakes. So, as language learners, we have to be dynamic in our way of learning English not just learning statically or one-sided (Ping).*

*We should not forget that language evolves and changes as it moves from one mouth to another, that's why Chinese use English differently from Singaporean or New Zealander. Also, students can't just stick to learning one English, which my teachers often call Standard English because even this English will change. So, updating ourselves is important when learning English (Jian).*

Lastly, in line with the aim of teaching EIL, all participants unanimously agreed and reported that awareness and knowledge of different world Englishes, in particular, Chinese English, would allow Chinese English language learners to learn how to (1) communicate Chinese cultural values, norms, beliefs, and identities with pride in English; (2) teach other users of English about China and Chinese cultures; (3) preserve Chinese identities; and most importantly (4) take ownership of the language they use:

*as Chinese, we need to learn how to talk in English in order to enlighten the world of the beauty of Chinese cultures in English. Also, knowing how to use Chinese English gives us a way to learn to develop and preserve our cultural Chinese identities plus individual identity. People need to see us as Chinese even when we speak English, not as English or Western people (Li).*

*Chinese English is a reality. Students in China should learn Chinese English so that they can talk to or maybe teach foreigners about Chinese culture. Foreigners also need to know that we don't speak like them, and it's natural for us to be different. Chinese English teachers must teach this to their students (Xia).*

*we are Chinese, and speak English. It is impossible for us to separate our Chinese culture from our language. The Chinese cultural norms that I grow up with are like the steering wheel. They tell me how I should speak. I prefer to say 'be careful, walk slowly' rather than 'see you later'. I personally feel that be careful walk slowly, coming from Mandarin, 小心慢走, is genuine, warm, and shows that you care. See you later is to me, a bit cold (laughter), and you're not sure if you will see him/her later. Chinese students should know about this, and be proud of it (Ping).*

*We speak Chinese culture in English. You can see many Chinese words in English like Fengshui, Kung-fu, Yin Yang, and even an expression like 'long time no see'. So, when we use English, we communicate something that is Chinese-oriented in English. I know it may sound 'weird' to Australians or Americans' ears. But that is not necessarily wrong. It is Chinese culture that you're listening to. A new song that you have never heard of. So, don't be sorry about it when Chinese see foreigners don't understand, we need to explain to them our new songs so that they learn something about you as Chinese (Jian).*

### 3.3 Practicality of Teaching Englishes: “Look Around! Materials Are Out There!”

When Li and Ping raised their ideas on the importance of teaching Chinese English and incorporating Chinese cultural values in teaching English in Lesson 5 (see Appendix 1), I noticed some of their classmates looked disapprovingly. One of them raised her hand, and said: *“I’m sorry, I think that your ideas are way too idealistic and impractical”*. Another student agreed and commented: *“Do you have teaching materials that teach Chinese English?”* Since there was not enough time to discuss this further with students, I asked everyone in the class to email me their responses to these two students’ comment and question. My analyses of the emails (see the emails below) from the participants have shown their disagreement with their classmates’ views because they already attempted to apply an EIL approach to teaching English when tutoring their students. Specifically, they used a wide range of learning resources to expose their students to Chinese English (Ping, Li, and Xia) and other varieties of English (Jian).

#### Email 1: Ping

On 01/04/2014 at 11:12 pm, [REDACTED] wrote:

I disagree with what [REDACTED] said about being impractical. I actually applied it when I tutored my English students. I use signs that I can see on the street, shops in English in my everyday life in China. And for that, I teach them to see how Chinese people communicate their message in English. The strategies that we use to instruct people to follow rules, for example. Like instead that saying: “Keep off the grass”, the sign says, “Think before you step on the grass, it’s still growing”. See, this is not idealistic. As teachers, we are the ones who bring changes to teaching materials? How to do it? Look around!

#### Email 2: Li

On 01/04/2014 at 11:43 pm, [REDACTED] wrote:

I’m surprised with the comment about teaching Chinese English being idealistic. Look at the textbooks that we use in primary and secondary English. A lot of them have readings about the history of China in English, folk stories, legends and famous people in Chinese history. I have been teaching these to my students. I don’t know why our classmates say that it is idealistic. Have they never read this in their own secondary school textbooks?

**Email 3: Xia**

On 02/04/2014 at 08:43 am, [REDACTED] wrote:

About the thing we discussed about whether it is realistic. I think it is realistic because I have applied the theory of English as an international language to my own private English lessons. I used many articles from newspapers like China Daily and People's Daily to teach my students who are already quite advanced. When newspapers publish something about China economy, politics, society and culture. May the grammar can be similar to British grammar, but some of the words and discourse strategies reflect the Chinese writer's conventions.

**Email 4: Jian**

On 01/04/2014 at 10:23 pm, [REDACTED] wrote:

Roby, to teach Chinese English, is it idealistic? No, I don't think so. Look at our country newspaper in English for example People's Daily or Jiangsu English newspaper, Xinhua Daily. I use this and sometimes tudou too to show my advance students video about the use of English in China and different varieties of English. We do lots of exercises with it. So, materials are out there, right?

From the above emails, it can be seen that the participants have used the resources from “*everyday life*” (Ping) to teach English and at the same time teach students see how Chinese cultures or cultural norms are reflected in the variety of English used by Chinese users/writers of English. For example, shop signs, notice signs, or road signs in English that Ping encountered in her daily life were used in the private English tuition to teach Chinese pragmatic strategies and discourse conventions. Li used reading passages on Chinese history, legends, and key historical figures from Chinese primary and secondary English textbooks. Newspaper articles on Chinese culture, economy, and politics from English-medium newspapers in China, such as *China Daily*, *Xinhua Daily*, and *People's Daily* were used by Xia and Jian to teach their advanced students. Jian also used tudou (a Chinese version of ‘Youtube’) as a way to expose her students to different varieties of English, including Chinese English. Thus, since resources for Chinese English language learners to learn about Chinese English and other varieties of English are available, the teaching of English language variation seems to be practical and far from being idealistic.

However, further conversations with the participants on the issue of practicality especially after Lesson 8 (see Appendix 1) have shown their awareness of and concerns about the challenges they are likely to face from “*teachers or leaders who believe in the superiority of native speakers English*” (Xia) and who hold a deficit or deviant perspective of Chinese English:

*I know that it is gonna be a long and difficult journey. I did talk to my friends, and they thought I was absurd. They said only native speakers English is the correct one (Ping).*

*When I talked to my other university teachers about teaching Chinese English, they ask me to change profession (laughter). They ask me not to teach incorrect English. And these teachers are sociolinguists who are supposed to be less native-speaker oriented (Xia).*

*My ex-school principal was laughing at me when I told him about teaching Chinese English. She asked me if I was serious about teaching students a street language [sigh]. She said English was invented by England, not China. Teach England English (Jian).*

*My students' parents were shocked in a negative way or maybe appalled when I showed them that our English textbooks have texts about Chinese history and folk legends. They told me that English textbooks should teach American history, not Chinese (Li).*

In light of these experiences, both Xia and Jian called for a major change not only in “*language policy, textbooks, and testing methods*” (Xia), but also in the attitudes of the constructors and co-constructors of education in China. As Jian wrote in her email after the interview:

On 03/04/2014 at 17:37 pm, [REDACTED] wrote:

Dear Roby,

I think if we want to make changes, we shouldn't just change the textbooks or materials. I think there are more important people who are also responsible for change. The educational policy makers, teachers, students, examining boards, students' parents have all vital role to play in this fascinating linguistic and language education drama. I hope that these people can work together to create a better language education program in the future. It's very sad sometimes to see only teachers working hard, but not change is seen in the society. So, those people should also realize that they too hold a very special position in this language education drama.

Most importantly, Ping emphasised again that “*teachers and teacher-educators are the ones who are responsible for the change because the students they teach are future educational policy makers, teachers, examining boards, and parents*”. Therefore, the participants called for more additional calls for changes to the Chinese ELT perceptions and practices, which is discussed in the next section.

## 4 Discussion and Implications

The changing sociolinguistic landscape of English in the world, and the emergence of a Chinese variety of English have led to a call for the need to revise Chinese ELT perceptions and practices based on a dynamic and pluricentric perspective of English. Xu (2002), Li (2007), and Wen (2012) have offered a number of ways to shift Chinese ELT from teaching ESL/EFL to EIL. However, the implementation of these scholars' proposal lies in the hand of prospective teachers whose views on the importance and practicality of doing so need to be explored. Thus, the results from this study suggest that the teaching of English language diversity in a Chinese context seems to have a relatively good prospect of success for the following reasons.

Firstly, supporting Xu (2002) and Li's (2007) proposal, knowledge of different varieties of English is viewed as relevant to the Chinese context. Unlike Wen's (2012) observation of Chinese teachers' preference for teaching the so-called 'native speaker' variety, Chinese English – in addition to either British or American English – is argued to be another 'basic' variety of English that is relevant to the Chinese context. In practice, Wen (2012) proposes that beginners should first learn those so-called 'native' varieties of English. At higher levels, students can learn other varieties of English and most importantly how to communicate their cultures in English. However, the participants emphasised that Chinese English as well as American or British English are varieties that should be equally taught in the Chinese ELT language curriculum for students at all levels of study. American or British English is one that is commonly taught. For Chinese English, it is, as Xia strongly asserted, "*a reality*" or an actual variety of English naturally spoken/written by users of English in the Chinese society.

Secondly, not only have the participants shown support for Xu (2002) and Li's (2007) call to expose Chinese English language learners' awareness of different varieties of English, but they have also provided rationales for translating this proposal into practice. Both awareness and knowledge of world Englishes are viewed as helpful in equipping Chinese English language learners with important knowledge, attitudes, and skills that are crucial for effective operation in today's communicative settings that are international and intercultural in nature. In addition to being knowledgeable about different varieties of English, exposing students to world Englishes is also viewed as helpful for developing learners' awareness of the dynamic nature of English. With this knowledge and awareness, echoing what I have argued elsewhere (Marlina 2014), learners are likely to learn to be more open-minded, less linguistically prejudiced, more critical towards any practices that legitimise other Englishes and glorify an Anglocentric view of English, and most importantly, more confident to take ownership of their own use of language. In terms of skills, knowledge and awareness of world Englishes are also viewed as playing a contributory role in instilling in students the ability to communicate with users of English from diverse lingua-cultural backgrounds, build intercultural relationships, and communicate Chinese cultural norms, beliefs, and identities in English.

Thirdly, the prospect of teaching EIL in the Chinese context seems to be better when the participants challenged the idea of teaching EIL as idealistic by providing concrete examples of how they operationalised an EIL paradigm in their private English lessons. Disconfirming Wen's (2012) observation of an absence of materials for teaching Chinese English, one participant justified her use of Chinese secondary English textbooks to teach Chinese English as they contain reading passages about Chinese history, legends, and historical figures. Apart from textbooks, there are other resources from '*everyday life*' that are used to maximise their own students' exposure to Chinese English and other varieties of English. A contemporary online resource i.e. tudou has been used to expose students to different world Englishes. The participants' own collections of authentic 'public' texts such as English-medium newspapers written by Chinese journalists and public signs written in English have also been used to teach students Chinese pragmatic strategies in English or in general, how Chinese users of English use English. Thus, there is an abundance of resources that teachers can use to engage Chinese English language learners in the process of learning about different varieties of English and Chinese English.

Despite this, as revealed in this study, there are potential challenges or criticisms that the paradigm of teaching EIL is likely to encounter from other constructors and co-constructors of education such as parents, teachers and students who still advocate the ideology of native-speakerism and a deficit perspective of Chinese English or other varieties of English. Thus, more changes to the current Chinese ELT perceptions and practices are needed. The following are suggestions that the study would like to modestly offer to add to Xu (2002) and Li's (2007) calls for changes:

- *Theory and practice of teaching Chinese English*

In order to teach EIL, teachers need to gain in-depth knowledge of, and a legitimate recognition for the variety of English they themselves naturally use before learning about other varieties of English. As Ping asserted, "*if you don't have knowledge of the variety of English you naturally speak and don't value it, then you won't value others and their varieties of English*". Thus, the participants suggested that the English language teacher-education program in China should establish and offer a course that focuses on the theoretical and practical aspects of teaching Chinese English. The curriculum of this course may cover and discuss topics such as the sociolinguistic landscape of English in China, linguistic features of Chinese English, theory of language acquisition based on the Chinese context, materials development for teaching Chinese English, classroom strategies for teaching Chinese English, and techniques for assessing competence in Chinese English. This course, as the student-teachers speculated, will help prospective Chinese teachers of English boost their confidence in taking ownership of their own use of English, as well as in developing their own pedagogical strategies to engage their students in achieving the same level of confidence.

- *Different requirements for hiring English teachers*

Based on the student-teachers' voices, there needs to be a change in the requirement for hiring English language teachers in China. They suggested that the linguistic and cultural factors should no longer be made relevant when hiring English language teachers. For example, Xu (2002) argues that multilingual teachers of English should be hired to teach English in China rather than the so-called monolingual native English speaking teachers from the Inner-Circle countries. However, in order to be competent in teaching EIL, employers may need to consider or, as suggested by the student-teachers, assess the teachers' discipline backgrounds, attitudes towards linguistic and cultural diversity, and ontology of English. A multilingual competent teacher of English may not necessarily embrace linguistic and cultural differences, or a monolingual native English speaking teacher may not necessarily reject linguistic and cultural differences. As Sewell (2013) argues, "being bilingual or multilingual does not necessarily confer intercultural competence" (p.5). Thus, one's ability to teach EIL does not necessarily lie in which language one is a predominant speaker of, or how many languages one can speak.

- *Involving parents in language education*

This last suggestion is provided by two of the student-participants who were condescendingly criticised by her students' parents as a result of using English language teaching materials that contain Chinese culture. As parents are also one of the main stakeholders in their children's language education, English language teacher-educators or teachers may need to work with parents and enlighten them of the purpose of English language learning in today's contemporary world. English language teaching is not just about learning or teaching a language. Rather, it is a field in which both teachers and learners' nationalities, cultures, languages, race, and identities are often involved, and interact (Holliday 2005). This is crucial because, as student-teachers shared from their experiences, parents often believe the goal of English language learning is to teach students to approximate as closely as possible American/British English, rather than to learn to be interculturally competent users of English who take pride in their Chinese-ness. It is hoped that there will be further studies that explore all of the above issues in the Chinese context.

## **Appendix 1: A List of Topics Covered in the Course on Issues in Teaching English as an International Language**

Lesson	Topic
1	Introduction and language variation/change
2	The reality of English: English as an international language/world Englishes
3	Cultural conceptualisations and the notion of competence
4	Learning models

Lesson	Topic
5	Teaching EIL: Curriculum and Pedagogy
6	Testing EIL and questioning standard English
7	The politics of teaching EIL
8	Native-Speakerism
9	The future of English and its implications

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# The Nativization of English in China

Qing Ma and Zhichang Xu

**Abstract** By examining the history and the current status of using English in China, this chapter argues that English has undergone several stages of development and is on its way to becoming a dynamic nativized variety of English. In addition, this chapter discusses issues crucial to the continuous development of Chinese English in the future, notably, the on-going codification of Chinese-specific features, the distinction between linguistic innovations and errors, and the importance of incorporating a nativized model in the current ELT curriculum in China.

**Keywords** Chinese English • Functional use of English • Codification • ELT • Nativization

## 1 Introduction

As witnessed in the past few hundred years, English has been widely disseminated in different regions of the world. The variety of English used by Chinese speakers has been the subject of some debate in recent decades, among both local and international scholars (e.g., Kirkpatrick and Xu 2002; Bolton 2003; Deterding 2006; Kirkpatrick 2007; He and Li 2009; Xu 2010). Central to such debates are how to name and define this variety, and whether it has been nativized as with other English varieties used in the USA, Canada, Australia, India, Singapore, Nigeria and the Philippines. By reviewing key literature and by examining the current status and functional use of English in China, this chapter sheds light on these issues. In addition, a few key questions concerning the future development of Chinese English are discussed, including the codification of Chinese English and the implications for English teaching in China.

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## 2 The Development of Chinese English

The English used in China has gone through several stages; the earliest variety is Chinese Pidgin English (CPE), which emerged as a result of communication between Western traders and local Chinese merchants or servants (Bolton 2003). As with many other pidgins, it diverged considerably from English at the phonological, lexical and grammatical levels, e.g. “my hab looksee he” means “I saw him” (Dennys 1878, cited in Bolton and Kachru 2007, p. 186). Throughout the twentieth century, English played different roles and went through several distinct periods, influenced by the various political upheavals that China underwent (Adamson 2004). The term ‘Chinglish’ was frequently employed to refer to the English learned and used by Chinese speakers after the re-establishment of the importance of English in the nation-wide educational curriculum in the late 1970s when China started its ‘open-door’ policy. The name, ‘Chinglish’, however, suggests that it is a sub-standard mix of the two languages, Chinese and English, and is associated with a range of negative connotations. Some Chinese scholars assert that this variety should be regarded as an interlanguage, a learner variety marked by a heavy Chinese influence, reflecting the developmental stages of foreign language learning by Chinese learners of English.

Observing the English used in China during the 1970s and 1980s, Cheng (1992) claimed that English in China reflected the socio-political situation and that “there appears to be a kind of English peculiar to the Chinese culture” (p. 163). The new concept of an emerging variety of English in China became popular in the 1990s when local scholars made efforts to affirm the existence of the variety and define what it was. Other scholars (e.g., Bolton 2003; Kirkpatrick 2007; Xu 2010) use the term ‘Chinese English’. Following them, the term Chinese English (CE) will be used in this chapter to refer to this Chinese variety of English.

What is the nature of Chinese English, i.e., is Chinese English inevitably characterized by Chinese L1 influence? Most Chinese English produced by Chinese speakers, even among advanced users, shows varying degrees of L1 transfer. Kachru (1990), in defending Indian English as an institutionalised variety, indicated that certain features at different levels in Indian English are the result of L1 transfer and were traditionally considered deviant or erroneous forms. However, these deviant forms persisted and were eventually established in Indian English. In a similar vein, the influence of Chinese can be identified in many Singaporean English utterances, mostly in colloquial form. From a developmental point of view, Schneider (2010) points out that transfer from the mother tongue is a necessary and integral feature when an exonormative variety of English is being nativized as an endonormative variety. As a corollary, any nativized new variety of English would contain some forms that deviate from the donor Englishes (British or American). Chinese English, to some extent, follows Schneider’s dynamic model, and shows signs of linguistic and cultural transfer from Chinese.

In addition to the linguistic influence that the mother tongue exerts on the imported English, the culture of the new land also has an impact. This refers to the

‘cultural conceptualizations’ expounded by Sharifian (2006) in which analytical tools such as L1 cultural schemas, categories and metaphors can shape how English is acquired and developed. In a similar vein, Yu (2007) has demonstrated convincingly that the word *heart* is conceptualized as an organ that governs both the thoughts and feelings in Chinese culture, in contrast with the heart-mind dichotomy favored in Western culture. It therefore follows that it is natural for Chinese users of English to incorporate their L1-related cultural conceptualizations in using English.

Following such arguments, Chinese English can then be defined as a variety that has emerged as a result of language and cultural contact between ‘native’ varieties of English and Chinese language and culture. It thus manifests Chinese-specific linguistic features and cultural conceptualizations to varying degrees. In addition, the variety does not have a fixed set of attributes, but works on a continuum, ranging from a high form (acrolectal) approximate to standardized varieties to the low form (basilectal) which may be close to what is generally regarded as ‘Chinglish’.

### 3 The Functional Use of English in China

One crucial factor in deciding the status of a given variety is to look at the use of the variety in the country (Kachru 1992a). Four important functional uses – *instrumental*, *regulative*, *interpersonal* and *imaginative/innovative* – for nativized new English varieties were established by Kachru. These are examined in the Chinese context, in descending order of range and depth.

#### 3.1 Interpersonal Communication

The latest statistics reveal that there are more than 800,000 foreign migrants in China, and statistics also show that in 2011, the number of returned overseas students exceeded those who studied abroad for the first time – by 50 percent (Tan 2015). Given this multilingual and multi-ethnic background, English is likely to become the common language used among the foreign residents and between them and their Chinese counterparts. Owing to the unprecedented craze for English (see Gil and Adamson 2011; Feng 2012), learning and using English have become essential for students who seek further education, and for professionals seeking promotion. A Chinese phenomenon, the ‘English corner’, coming into existence in universities or colleges in the late 1970s, is a weekly student or teacher-led informal activity for English learners to gather together and practice their spoken English. In addition, the society has witnessed new forms of organizations for practicing and using English. English salons or English parties mostly arise to appeal the needs of young urban professionals who have received good English education in China or abroad.

In addition, the Internet provides opportunities for Chinese students and professionals to use online chatting or English postings for learning as well as exchanging views on a wide range of domestic and international issues, their postings sometimes attracting replies from foreigners outside of China (see You 2011). There is also an increasing number of online blogs and fan fiction sites where English is used by individual Chinese. English corners, online chatting and postings, blogs and fan fiction sites indicate a clear sign of the use of English in inter-ethnic communication within China that accommodates about 56 ethnic groups.

### 3.2 *Instrumental Functions*

The instrumental function of English in China is most visibly seen in the use of English as a medium of instruction in the educational system. For instance, fifty courses were offered bilingually in Fudan University in Shanghai; In Tianjin, the Tianjin University requires each college to offer bilingual courses for each major (Pan 2007). From the 1990s, the government and its local departments of education in many parts of China started to promote bilingual education in two important ways: (1) experimenting with bilingual education and (2) introducing English instruction in primary school or even kindergarten (see Hu 2007). The Chinese National Educational Commission collaborated with the Canadian International Developmental Agency and other institutions initiated the first immersion education program modelled on the Canadian Immersion program in a northern city, Xi'an, in 1997 (see Qiang et al. 2011). Feng and Wang (2007) reported another type of bilingual education program – integrated English – popular in the south of China. In English classrooms, students were provided with theme-based content teaching that covers various subjects including language, mathematics, geography, history, music, art and science. Early bilingual education mainly involved large cities in economically developed areas; it is now being extended to medium or small-sized cities and from the eastern coasts to central or western areas.

Due to the concerted efforts made by the government, bilingual education has also played an important role in the on-going higher educational reform. In 2007, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Finance made joint efforts to promote bilingual education to encourage exploration of effective teaching methods and emphasize improving university students' ability to use English and employ it in research. In addition, the Chinese government put forward a document entitled *The Guideline for National Educational Reform and Development for the Period 2010–2012*, in which internationalization of education was set as one of the key goals for the future decade. Further in 2016, the Ministry of Education issued a document about the guideline for deepening the educational reform among the universities that are affiliated with the ministries and commissions of the central government. It set several objectives, one of which is for higher education to make a global impact. What lies at the core of these initiatives is to internationalize teaching syllabi and curricula and bilingual education may function as a bridge. Internationalization of

education also entails global exchange – inbound and outbound - of Chinese and foreign teaching staff and students; this is clearly premised on a sound bilingual education system. Thus bilingual education has double significance for China: to learn about the world and make the world understand China better.

### 3.3 *Imaginative/Innovative Use of English*

The imaginative and innovative function of English refers to the creative use of English in literary compositions. During the 1920s and 1930s, a number of returned Chinese intellectuals from English-speaking countries gathered in Shanghai; their English works were influential in China and reached a certain international audience. Two humanists, Lin Yutang and Wu Ching-hsiung, became well known to English speakers. Their English works were diverse, including articles, books, translations, poems, and novels. Reading one of Lin's classic publications, *The Importance of Living*, one can sense the creativity of using the English language to discuss Chinese customs and philosophy. In the 1940s, one legendary Chinese woman novelist, Eileen Chang (the author of *Lust, Caution*), started to publish English essays and novels in Shanghai. Her English writing revealed a distinctive style as can be seen from the following sentence in her article *From Chinese life and fashion*: 'If even memory has a smell, it is the scent of camphor, sweet and cozy like remembered happiness, sweet and forlorn like forgotten sorrow'. The creative metaphorical use of the English shows the overt influence from the mother tongue. More recent bilingual writers who have produced creative writing about China include Ha Jin, Anchee Min, and Annie Wang (Bolton 2003). An article entitled 'Made in China, read worldwide' published in *The Daily Telegraph* in 2007 gave world recognition to the creative English writing by Chinese bilingual writers such as Jung Chang (*Wild swans*), Xiaolu Guo (*A concise Chinese-English dictionary for lovers*), Ma Jian (*Red dust*) and Liu Hong (*Wives of the east wind*).

Apart from such bilingual creativity found in renowned Chinese writers' literary works, it is also evident in ordinary Chinese bilinguals' daily life in which English is used in the classroom, workplace and, more prominently, in online chatting or blogs. For example, Gil and Adamson (2011) describe how English was used creatively by Chinese students in the classroom. By studying Chinese urban professionals' online English postings, You (2011) has identified a number of creative features in their English writing: skilful use of metaphors, 'front-loading of adverbial phrases' (e.g. *When walking along the neat street against the cool Autumn wind, I felt good*), and converting word classes (e.g. using the adjective *polite* when meaning the noun *politeness*) (pp. 414–416).

### 3.4 *Regulative Functional Uses*

The regulative function of English means that it is used to regulate conduct, i.e. in administration or law. It may be true that the regulative function of English is far behind the other three functions, but noticeable changes have been taking place recently. For example, the Shanghai government issued its first English official report at the closing ceremony of the 12th People's Congress in 2004; this set an example that was soon followed by other major cities such as Beijing, Shenzhen, and Ningbo. Another clear sign that English is playing an important role is the construction of English versions for many government websites. An English website for the central government was established in 2005.

Official statistics show that within a 3-year period, from 2007 to 2010, Chinese law courts at various levels had dealt with 40,000 cases involving foreigners and the figure was constantly growing. As early as 2008, the Olympic Court in Beijing adopted simultaneous interpretation in English and other foreign languages to cater for the needs of foreign visitors; most of its staff (police and judges) could communicate in English fluently. An increasing number of Chinese universities or colleges specializing in law have currently been holding international debating competitions in English, which is an indication that English may become an institutional language alongside Chinese to be used in the legal system in China.

## 4 The Current Status of Chinese English

More and more researchers agree that Chinese English has been emerging out of the sociolinguistic context of China (see also Xu Zhichang's meta-analysis chapter on Chinese scholarships in this volume). However, Chinese researchers are reserved regarding whether Chinese English should become a legitimate variety of English, many considering that it should be generally considered as a 'performance variety' rather than an 'institutionalized variety' (He and Li 2009). International researchers (e.g. Kirkpatrick and Xu 2002; Bolton 2003; Kirkpatrick 2007) frequently cite the five criteria set out by Butler (1997) to determine whether a new variety is legitimate, namely, (i) a distinctive pronunciation handed down from one generation to another, (ii) a unique lexicon, (iii) a history of using the variety, (iv) a literature written in that variety and (v) reference tools (p. 106).

Although it is difficult to classify pronunciation features of Chinese English given the diversity of Chinese dialectal phonologies, Deterding (2006; and the corresponding chapter in this volume) has studied Chinese English speakers from various regions and captured certain salient features, suggesting that "some of these features may become established as a part of a unique variety of English that is emerging in China" (p. 175). Kirkpatrick (2007) believes that Chinese English meets criteria 2, 3 and 4. There are many English words of Chinese origin, such as *pinyin*, *pipa*, *open-door policy*, and *Peking opera*. English has been formally taught

and used in China since the late nineteenth century. Regarding criterion 4, many Chinese bilinguals have produced classic and creative English writing in the past and are doing so today. In terms of reference works, although Chinese English dictionaries in the sense of Chinese English as an emerging variety of English have not been systematically compiled, vigorous attempts have been made to compile lists of Chinese English words and expressions, e.g., *A Handbook of Latest Chinese Idioms* (2002). In addition, the latest edition of *The Chinese-English Dictionary* (a bilingual dictionary) (Wu 2010) has added approximately 15,000 new lexical entries such as *eight Does and eight don'ts*, *mortgage slave*, *wedding slave*, *campus dwellers and job-hugging clan*, which reflect the changes and development of the Chinese society. Hence, Kirkpatrick (2007) comments that “These arguments, together with the sheer numbers of speakers of Chinese English (more than 300 million), strongly suggest that Chinese English is soon likely to become the most commonly spoken variety of English in Asia” (p. 151).

Kachru (1992a) has made a distinction between performance and institutionalized ‘non-native’ varieties of English. The former refers to the English used with a limited range of functions in many Expanding Circle countries, while the latter is usually treated as an L2 and commonly used for intra-ethnic communication within the country. From a developmental point of view, any performance variety has the potential to become an institutionalized variety. Kachru (1992a) argues that “An institutionalized variety always starts as a performance variety, with various characteristics slowly giving it a different status” (p. 55). He also held that there was a phased development in which a variety goes from *non-recognition, extensive bilingualism* (L1 vs. English), *accepting the non-native norm to the recognition of the new variety*. Kachru regarded the extended bilingualism and functional use of English as the key precursor of an institutionalized variety. Given the current status of English in China, it would seem that the view of claiming Chinese English to be simply a performance variety is no longer tenable. English is assuming a role second to Chinese, and it plays an increasingly important role in various functional uses. We suggest that it should now be more appropriate to situate Chinese English at the transforming stage of nativization expounded by Schneider (2010).

## 5 The Codification of Chinese English

In world Englishes, research on varieties in Kachru’s three concentric circles model has a different agenda. The Inner Circle varieties are primarily about variation and change in the sense that Inner Circle varieties are heterogeneous among themselves, and that there is also variation within a variety, i.e. varieties within a variety. The Outer-Circle varieties have been largely researched regarding the stages or phases they have been going through so that they can be legitimized as ‘new varieties of English’. As far as the Expanding Circle varieties of English are concerned, the current research mainly focuses on the naming and defining of such ‘varieties’ and the extent to which these varieties exist.

Asian Englishes are mostly Outer and Expanding Circle Englishes. The legitimacy of these Englishes does not only depend on the number of proficient users of these varieties, but also on their codification. According to Jenkins (2009), “without codification, the Outer and Expanding Circle Englishes will continue to lack prestige not only in the eyes of speakers of ‘accepted’ (i.e. Inner Circle) standard varieties, but also among their own speakers” (p. 91). The importance of codifying Asian Englishes is self-evident, but the codification has always been a slow, ongoing and challenging process. Jenkins (2009) points out the challenges for the Asian Englishes codifiers, e.g., they have to “establish a novel set of criteria as the basis on which they make their selection”, and they have to resolve the “conflict between centripetal forces pulling them inwards towards local needs and centrifugal forces pushing them outwards towards international intelligibility and acceptability” (p. 94). What makes the codification task even more challenging is that almost all Asian-English speakers are bilingual or multilingual and they make extensive use of code-switching or mixing.

One of the first systematic attempts to codify the linguistic features of Chinese English was made by Xu (see Xu 2008, 2010). His codification was based on a variety of Chinese English data, including interview transcripts, newspaper articles, and short stories in Chinese English. At the lexical level, Chinese English words comprise three distinct categories, including Chinese loanwords in English, e.g. *dimsum*, *fengshui*, *the Cultural Revolution*, nativized English words in Chinese context, e.g. *family planning*, *individualism*, *labor camp* and *migrant workers*, and common English words that exist in most varieties of English. Xu has adopted Kachru’s analogy of the three concentric circles and referred to the three distinct categories as the ‘inner circle CE lexis’, the ‘outer circle CE lexis’, and the ‘expanding circle CE lexis’. According to Xu (2010) inner circle CE lexis refers to Chinese loanwords in English, which come primarily from two sources: Cantonese and Putonghua, e.g., *bok choy*, *dimsum*, *kwai-lo*, *guanxi*, and *Great Leap Forward*. Outer circle CE lexis consists of nativized English words, whose original meanings in English have shifted to a greater or lesser extent in Chinese contexts, e.g., the word *individualism* can mean ‘selfishness’ and ‘personalism’ but it can also mean ‘sense of independence and competition’ depending on the Chinese contexts and historical periods in which this word is used. This ‘inner circle’ and ‘outer circle’ Chinese English lexis reflects Chinese culture and displays linguistic creativity, while the ‘expanding circle’ Chinese English lexis refers to those English words that are shared by all varieties of English.

At the syntactic level, Chinese English shares certain features with other emerging varieties of English. Xu (2008) has identified different features from the spoken Chinese English data (i.e. interview transcripts) and written Chinese English data (i.e. newspaper articles and short stories) (p. 29). The analysis of the spoken data shows that Chinese English has features largely due to the transfer of certain syntactic properties from Chinese to English. The syntactic features of spoken Chinese English include:

adjacent default tense (ADT),  
null-subject/object utterances (NS/O),  
co-occurrence of connective pairs (CCP),  
subject pronoun copying (SPC),  
Yes-No response (Y/NR),  
topic comment structure (TC), and  
inversion in subordinate finite wh-clauses (ISC).

The syntactic features of written Chinese English include nominalization, coordination of clause constituents, modifying-modified sequencing' (for details of these syntactic features, see Xu 2008).

At the level of discourse and pragmatics, Chinese English has even richer features than those at the levels of lexis and syntax. This is because discourse and pragmatics deal with various culture-related concepts, e.g., cohesion, coherence, schema, politeness, face, hierarchy, social distance and closeness, speech acts, and implicatures. Discourse and pragmatic features entail the transfer of deeper Chinese cultural values and beliefs. Xu (2010) has explored many aspects of discourse and pragmatic features of Chinese English, including the Chinese ancestral hometown discourse and the inductive versus deductive discourse (pp. 126–168). For example, Chinese speakers of English regard their ancestral hometown as “the root, the identity, and the final destination and resting place of its people, and a place in which people take great pride” (Xu 2010, p. 133). The ancestral hometown discourse in Chinese English reflects Chinese schemas of hometown for which such topics as the location, size, special food, and dialects of a particular hometown are regarded as the most common or normal. Xu (2010) has also identified such socio-cultural discourses as the salience of *political status* and *political life*, *law* and *social order*, *power* and *hierarchy*, *guanxi network* and *backdoor practice*, *work unit* and *welfare*, and *face*, *name* and *honour*. For example, the concept of *work unit* generally refers to an urban industrial state-owned enterprise or institution where people were salaried on a monthly basis from the 1950s onwards. People who had a work unit at that time had *iron rice bowls* or jobs for life with cradle-to-grave welfare arrangements. As far as pragmatic features are concerned, Xu's (2010) interview data shows how Chinese child-parent relationships affect the interviewees in their personal choices and decisions, and how certain speech acts are implemented in Chinese English, including making or responding to compliments, e.g., Chinese English speakers do not only possess two competing sets of norms for responding to compliments, they have also developed a pragmatic avoidance strategy for unsettling situations. Examples from Xu's research data show the varying responses to compliments, including rejecting compliments, accepting compliments, and adopting an avoidance strategy.

Xu's newspaper articles data and short stories data show how notions of implied writers and readers of newspaper articles affect the discourse patterns and how social hierarchy is communicated through different discourse patterns (see Xu 2010, pp. 139–145). In addition, pragmatic features are also revealed in culturally unique expressions, such as

- swear words**, e.g., *egg of a tortoise* (a Chinese swear word, meaning son of a bitch) and *an arrogant son of a rabbit* (meaning someone whom people look down upon);
- metaphors**, e.g., *a flowered pillowcase* in Chinese English means someone who is good-looking but without much brain or wisdom, and a *wolf* can mean someone who is very hungry or greedy;
- proverbs**, e.g., *When a scholar runs into soldiers, the more he argues, the muddier his point becomes*, and *although the sparrow is small, it has a complete set of organs*;
- address terms**, e.g., *comrade, teacher, aunt, and uncle*.

These discourse and pragmatic features reflect Chinese norms and cultural values.

## 6 Implications of Chinese English for ELT in China

Issues about pedagogical models for ELT in the Expanding Circles are complex, because the choice of an educational model for English language teaching is not always based on pure linguistic considerations but also on “political and ideological grounds” (Kirkpatrick 2006, p. 71). Kirkpatrick has discussed three models, including a native-speaker model, a nativised model, and a lingua franca model. The native-speaker model has remained the most sought-after model (see also Deyuan He’s chapter in this volume), because native-speaker varieties are codified, and they have historical authority. However, the native-speaker model may disadvantage learners and teachers in the Outer and Expanding Circle countries in that “the insistence on a native-speaker norm diminishes local teachers of English and undermines their self-confidence and self-respect” (Kirkpatrick 2006, p. 75). In comparison with the native-speaker model, a nativized model also has certain strengths, for example, it “provides learners and teachers alike with a relevant and appropriate model”, and it empowers teachers in a variety of ways. However, one of the disadvantages of the nativized model is that in the Expanding Circle countries, a nativized model is often “constantly and negatively evaluated against the externally imposed standard” (Kirkpatrick 2006, p. 79). Instead, Kirkpatrick argues that the ELF model enables the ELT classroom to become “one of communication rather than the acquisition of some idealized norm” and that the ELF model helps learners to be able to “learn about, compare and discuss each other’s cultures” (Kirkpatrick 2006, p. 79).

Traditional views on ELT have been challenged by Kachru (1992b) in terms of his “six fallacies about the users and uses of English” (pp. 357–358). Based on the six fallacies, Xu (2002) has proposed six changes in the context of ELT in China (pp. 234–237). These changes include (1) English should be regarded as being equally closely associated with the cultures of all speakers of English; (2) learners should learn to incorporate their L1 norms and values for both local and international

communication; (3) the mother tongue of learners' should be viewed as a resource not as a source of interference; (4) learners should raise their awareness of and exposure to different varieties of English; (5) English classrooms and the society should be well-connected; and (6) ELT professionals, including monolingual English and bilingual or multilingual teachers, should be aware of the paradigm shifts from ENL/ESL/EFL to English as an International Language (EIL), World Englishes (WE) and English as a Lingua Franca (ELF).

Over the years, particularly during the first decade of the twenty-first century, these changes have been taking place in China and other Expanding Circle nations worldwide. It is time for the ELT industry in China to revisit the models. Students, teachers and the general public have been increasingly aware of the existence of different varieties of English, including Chinese English. They are also aware that English does not necessarily have to be exclusively associated with British and American cultures. Therefore, it is not only feasible but also desirable to introduce what Kachru (1992a) termed a "polymodel" (p. 66). This model embraces both native speaker varieties as well as nativized varieties of English. It is close to the ELF model in that it emphasizes communication across cultures among all L1, L2 and other speakers of English. In the polymodel, Chinese English plays a significant part in the Chinese context, not only because it is the most relevant variety the learners and teachers are exposed to, but also because of the implications Xu (2010) has explored based on his empirical research on Chinese English (pp. 178–188). He suggests that the incorporation of Chinese English into this polymodel may help address the local needs of Chinese students and teachers; contextualize the teachers' and students' experiences in their English learning and using process; maximize their mother tongue experiences as bilingual users of English; and raise the students' and teachers' awareness that English can be utilized to reflect their own national and ethnic identities. In addition, the incorporation of Chinese English also has implications globally for ELT in all of the Kachruvian circles in the sense that English learners and teachers outside China are likely to communicate with increasing numbers of Chinese English users.

## 7 Conclusion

English was imported into China more than 300 years ago, and history has witnessed the initially slow but now swift process of an emerging variety, i.e. Chinese English. The nativization of English in China gives the language a new look while genetically it still retains similar features to its source and other varieties. The many commonly shared features enable users of Chinese English to communicate well with other speakers of English while the new features distinguish it from other varieties.

The vast number of English learners and users and the increasingly important role of English in China alongside the progressive codification of Chinese English suggest that it will soon become a dynamic nativized variety of world Englishes.

Crucial to reaching the final stage is the ongoing codification process. Equally important is the government's recognition of the advantages of incorporating the nativized variety into the ELT curriculum in China. Only by so doing can Chinese English continue to thrive as well as be utilized as a powerful tool for Chinese speakers of English to communicate effectively among themselves and with other speakers of English throughout the world.

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**Part IV**

**Researching Cultural Conceptualizations  
and Identities in Chinese English**

# Cultural Conceptualisations in Chinese English: Implications for ELT in China

Zhichang Xu and Farzad Sharifian

**Abstract** What makes a variety of English distinct from others lies not only in its phonology, lexis, syntax, discourse, and pragmatics, but also in the distinctive ways that its speakers encode their *cultural conceptualisations*. There has been considerable research on different varieties of English at both linguistic and cultural levels. In particular, over the last three to four decades, researchers have investigated features of Chinese English, perceptions of and attitudes towards Chinese English, as well as implications of Chinese English for English language teaching and intercultural communication involving Chinese speakers of English. However, a review of the literature reveals little research on cultural conceptualisations in Chinese English. ‘Cultural conceptualisations’ encompass cultural schemas, cultural categories, and cultural conceptual metaphors. In this chapter, we adopt a Cultural Linguistics approach to researching Chinese English, using cultural conceptualisations as a framework to analyse empirical data, including interviews, newspaper articles, textbooks, literary works by Chinese English authors, and online media articles in English about China. Towards the end of the chapter, we also explore implications of researching cultural conceptualisations in Chinese English for English language teaching (ELT) in China.

**Keywords** Chinese English • Cultural Linguistics • Cultural schema • Cultural category • Cultural conceptual metaphor • ELT in China

## 1 Introduction

Since the late 1970s, Chinese scholars have been researching Chinese English in a way that differs from the traditional approaches of error analysis and contrastive analysis that take British English and American English exclusively as the norm. Apart from distinguishing between Chinglish and China English (Ge 1980; Wang 1991), Chinese scholars have been examining the features of Chinese English. A wide range of research on Chinese English has been undertaken, with topics ranging

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from the question of whether Chinese English even exists through to the implications Chinese English may have for English language teaching in China. Despite occasional papers on discourse and pragmatics, the majority of the research on Chinese English continues to focus on linguistic and attitudinal features. Systematic research on Chinese English from a Cultural Linguistics perspective remains scant (Sharifian 2011, 2013a).

Cultural Linguistics explores the relationship between language and cultural conceptualisations, and has been increasingly adopted as an approach to examining World Englishes and Asian Englishes (Sharifian 2011, 2015; Xu 2014). In the Asian context, Honna (2014, p. 61) argues that “English is the language to express our own culture, not to imitate others.” Xu (2014, p. 173) suggests that “Asian speakers of English should not only acquire linguistic competence and communicative competence associated with Asian Englishes, but also understand cultural conceptualisations and develop metacultural competence for intercultural communication.”

In this chapter, we investigate cultural conceptualisations in Chinese English by analysing interview transcripts, newspaper articles, textbooks, literary works, and online media articles. We explore the following questions: (1) What are the major cultural conceptualisations embedded in the Chinese English data? (2) What are the implications of researching cultural conceptualisations in Chinese English for ELT in China?

## 2 Background

Over the years, Chinese English has been defined in various ways. Wang (1991, p. 4) defines what he termed ‘China English’ as “the English used by the Chinese people in China, based on standard English with Chinese characteristics”. Having reviewed the previous research on Chinese English, Xu (2006, p. 287, 2010b, p. 1) has discussed various names for this emerging variety of English, including ‘Sinicized English’, ‘Chinese-Coloured English’, ‘Chinese Style English’, and ‘China English’, but prefers the term ‘Chinese English’, which he defines as “a developing variety of English, which is subject to ongoing codification and normalization processes [...]. It is characterized by the transfer of Chinese linguistic and cultural norms at varying levels of language, and it is used primarily by Chinese for intra- and international communication.” This definition acknowledges the status of Chinese English as a member of the World Englishes.

Chinese English is distinct from other varieties of English in terms of phonology, lexis, syntax, discourse, and pragmatics (Kirkpatrick and Xu 2002; Deterding 2006; Xu 2010a), but also the way in which its speakers conceptualise Chinese cultures. Proshina (2014, p. 6) argues that “it is the cultural underpinnings that create the greatest challenge for intervarietal communicators’ interpretability”. These ‘cultural underpinnings’ are what we refer to as cultural conceptualisations in this chapter.

Cultural Linguistics employs analytical tools including ‘cultural schema’, ‘cultural category’, and ‘cultural conceptual metaphor’ to explore features of language

on a cultural basis. Sharifian refers to these notions collectively as ‘cultural conceptualisations’.

Cultural conceptualisations are defined as conceptual structures such as schemas, categories, and conceptual metaphors, which not only exist at the individual level of cognition but also develop at a higher level of cultural cognition, where they are constantly negotiated and renegotiated through generations of speakers within a cultural group, across time and space (Sharifian 2013a, p. 1592)

Cultural schemas emerge from interactions between the minds that constitute the cultural group. They include *event*, *role*, *image*, *proposition*, and *emotion* schemas (Sharifian 2011, p. 6). *Event* schemas are “abstracted from our experience of certain events”; *role* schemas include “knowledge about social roles which denote sets of behaviors that are expected of people in particular social positions”; *image* schemas refer to “intermediate abstractions between mental images and abstract propositions that are readily imagined, perhaps as iconic images, and clearly related to physical or social experiences”; *proposition* schemas are “abstractions which act as models of thought and behavior” and “specify concepts and the relations which hold among them”; and *emotion* schemas help “define, explain and understand emotions primarily by reference to the events and situations in which they occur” (Sharifian 2011, pp. 8–11; Xu 2014, p. 174).

Cultural *categories* are grounded in cultural cognition. Rosch (1975, p. 193) defines *categories* as “logical, clearly bounded entities, whose membership is defined by an item’s possession of a simple set of criterial features, in which all instances possessing the criterial attributes have a full and equal degree of membership”. Cultural categories are “rooted in people’s cultural experiences, and they mirror the structure of attributes perceived in the world” (Xu 2014, p. 176). According to Rosch (1978, p. 30), “categories tend to become defined in terms of prototypes or prototypical instances that contain the attributes most representative of items inside and least representative of items outside the category.”

Cultural conceptual *metaphors* are defined as “cognitive structures that allow us to understand one conceptual domain in terms of another” (Sharifian 2013a, p. 1591). Xu (2014, p. 177) argues that “cultural *metaphors* shape the way we think and act in intra- and intercultural communication”. One example of a cultural conceptual *metaphor* is the Chinese ‘heart’ (*xin*) as the central faculty of cognition and the physiological centre of the human being. The Chinese ‘heart’ (*xin*) is metaphorically seen as an organ that governs both the body and the brain (Yu 2009; Sharifian 2014a, b).

Cultural conceptualisations are closely related to bilingual creativity in World Englishes studies. Kachru (1985, pp. 20–24) argues that bilingual creativity can be applied to both an ‘individual bilingual’ and a ‘bilingual speech community’. Bolton (2010, p. 465) relates bilingual creativity to the Chinese Hong Kong context, pointing out that the dominant Chinese language there is “replete with word-play, punning, an enviable stock of swearwords, and an irreverent take on authority, rhetorical tendencies that even spill over to English on occasion”. This ‘spill over to English’ phenomenon reflects Chinese cultural conceptualisations and is common among speakers of Chinese English.

Sharifian (2013b, pp. 7–8) argues that the practical importance of understanding cultural conceptualisations in a particular variety of English is grounded in the fact that users of English can develop *metacultural competence*, a term he uses to refer to “a competence that enables interlocutors to communicate and negotiate their cultural conceptualisations during the process of intercultural communication”. Such competence involves conceptual variation awareness, and the use of conceptual explication strategies and conceptual negotiation strategies. Sharifian (2013b, pp. 8–9) maintains that, when developing metacultural competence, “the cultural backgrounds of learners become assets and resources enabling them to reflect on their cultural conceptualisations, while allowing them to learn the necessary skills to explicate and negotiate them with speakers from other cultural backgrounds.”

Bolton (2012, p. 30) argues that the linguistic landscapes of individuals today “are not simply defined through physical space, but also through electronic space, global travel, media awareness and usage, popular culture, as well as the virtual space of the Internet”. In this chapter, we suggest that apart from describing ‘linguistic landscapes’, we should also explore linguistic mindscapes, where individual speakers express their cultural conceptualisations through their own linguistic repertoire. This chapter explores Chinese cultural conceptualisations in Chinese English and implications for researching Chinese cultural conceptualisations for ELT in China.

### 3 Methodology

Given the nature of cultural conceptualisations, we adopt a qualitative approach in collecting and analysing data, which comprises an open-ended corpus including interviews, newspaper articles, textbooks, literary works, and online media articles. The corpus is ‘open-ended’ in the sense that new items can be added to it on an ongoing basis. For example, the articles on the English version of the Chinese government website are updated on a daily basis, and any existing articles on the website can be regarded as part of the corpus and used for data analysis.

For this chapter, the interview data consist of three interviews involving three informants. The informants are all Chinese with either Putonghua or Chinese dialects as their mother tongue and English as their second language. They vary in terms of age, occupation, and length of stay in English-speaking countries. The interviews were conducted largely in Chinese, and the informants were asked to recall their stories in English.

The newspaper articles were selected from the *China Daily* website and the print copy of *China Daily Asia Weekly*. Four articles, all containing Chinese-ness in terms of linguistic expressions and cultural conceptualisations, were selected.

The textbooks were *New Senior English for China: Student’s Book* Volumes 1 to 5. Each Volume has five units, subdivided into sections on functional items, grammatical structures, reading, and writing, and a workbook centring on specific topics.

Literary works by Chinese authors written in English include *Moment in Peking* by Lin Yutang. This novel is set in China between 1900 and 1938 and uses a number of historical events, including the Boxer Uprising, the 1911 Republication Revolution, the Warlord Era, the rise of nationalism and communism, and the start of the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937–1945), as the backdrop. The second work is *Waiting*, by Chinese American migrant Ha Jin. This novel, based on a true Chinese story, is set between 1963 and 1983 at a time of transition: the Chinese Cultural Revolution was taking place between 1966 and 1976. The third work is *The Unwalled City* by Xu Xi, a Hong Kong-based writer and academic. The novel follows Hong Kong people's stories in the years immediately before the 'return' of Hong Kong to China in 1997.

Online media articles were selected from two websites, including the English version of the Chinese government website, and an Australia-based 'China Story' website. The first represents the official 'voice' of the Chinese government, while the second contains voices from Western academia. For this chapter, two yearbooks from the 'China Story' website, which contain various chapters on current Chinese social and political discourse, were selected. For details of the data, please see the Appendix.

Since this chapter is based on an open-ended corpus of Chinese English, all the data sources are readily available and constitute an ongoing and sustainable 'virtual' corpus for researching Chinese English. The nature of this virtual corpus means that the examples for the data analysis can be highly selective, and occasionally anecdotal. However, it offers the advantage that interested readers and researchers can easily access the data, and even add their own interview data to become part of the corpus.

## 4 Cultural Conceptualisations in Chinese English

In this section, we explore cultural conceptualisations in Chinese English. In particular, we identify and select examples from the data and apply the cultural conceptualisations framework, namely, cultural schema, cultural category, and cultural conceptual metaphor, to analyse the selected examples. Chinese cultural conceptualisations are substantiated by Chinese cultural schemas, categories, and conceptual metaphors. However, Chinese cultural conceptualisations may not be exclusive to Chinese culture, as they can also result from the glocalisation process of English in China and emerge as cultural blends (Xu 2013). We elaborate on cultural schemas, categories, metaphors, and blends in Chinese English with examples in the following subsections.

## 4.1 Cultural Schemas

Cultural schemas include *event* schemas, *role* schemas, *image* schemas, *emotion* schemas, and *proposition* schemas. Examples identified from the data are as follows:

### 4.1.1 Event Schema

Example 1, from Xu Xi's *The Unwalled City: A Novel from Hong Kong*, is a conversation between a mother and her daughter about attending a wedding.

#### Example 1

"You haven't forgotten, have you? You do have something to wear tonight, right? Don't embarrass me by turning up in anything shabby otherwise your aunt will never stop gossiping about us."

Her cousin's wedding dinner! She'd forgotten entirely about it. She'd have to find a sub for the gig tonight, but that wouldn't be too hard on a Monday. "Of course I remembered."

"Your father has taken care of the *laisee* from our family. It's very generous. In fact, I told him he was giving her too much money [...]" (X. Xu 2001, pp. 10–11)

Example 1 shows an event schema of a 'wedding'. Apart from wearing formal clothes, a *laisee* – a red envelope with money for the bride and groom – is expected. In addition, if children are not well dressed for the event, their parents may feel embarrassed, or become the subject of gossip. A Chinese 'wedding' event schema, as reflected in Example 1, embodies a number of implicit Chinese cultural notions such as FACE, POLITENESS, and GUANXI (i.e., interpersonal relationship).

### 4.1.2 Role Schema

In Example 2, from the interview data, the participant talks about her 'multiple roles' as a new Chinese migrant in Australia.

#### Example 2

Researcher: You also fulfil the family role, like....

I-2: Yeah, like a mother, a wife.

R: And you go shopping and cooking and cleaning?

I-2: Yeah, especially a home cleaner.

What is culturally interesting in Example 2 is the middle-aged female participant's response regarding her 'family role', that is, "Yeah, like a mother, a wife." A Chinese family is usually perceived as having vertical relationships among its members. For example, a married woman with a child usually sees herself primarily as a 'mother' rather than a 'wife', whereas in certain other cultures a married woman may perceive herself first as a 'wife' and only secondarily as a 'mother'. This may

also be indirectly reflected in the fact that Chinese married women keep their maiden surnames while women in certain other cultures adopt their husbands' surnames. This Chinese role schema of a 'mother' is partly associated with Chinese FAMILY HIERARCHY.

#### 4.1.3 Image Schema

Example 3 below is taken from 'China Story Yearbook 2012' (p. ii). Each chapter in the yearbook is introduced by a pictorial motif. Examples of the images/pictures include the head of a dragon in the Introduction (inspired by dragon boat at the Yih Yuan Summer Palace in Beijing), the leaf of a gingko tree in Chapter 2 (an implicit reference to the mass planting of gingkoes during Bo Xilai's tenure as Party Secretary of Chongqing), and mahjong tiles in Chapter 4 (indicating uncertain numbers and uncertain outcomes of the Chinese reform). Such images have Chinese-specific connotations.

##### Example 3

A son born in a Dragon Year can be a blessing. 'May the son become a dragon' (a success) is an ancient benediction: this birth year is associated with enterprise, intelligence and daring. Yet China's political leaders know all too well that Dragon Years are also fraught with hidden dangers: ambition can easily be frustrated and the best laid plans can go awry. (China Story Yearbook 2012, p. ii)

In the interview data, a participant elaborates on the image of a Chinese 'dragon': "apparently a dragon is a fabrication, however, when we talk about it, we don't feel that it is a fabrication. Everyone knows consciously it's something that's not real, but they take it as real, maybe more real than other things." The image not only appears to be real, but may also be symbolic of GREAT POWER and glory, or GREAT AMBITION associated with hidden dangers.

#### 4.1.4 Emotion Schema

In Example 4, from the interview data, the informant mentions her experience of living in Australia as an exchange student. Visiting an Italian friend, she felt that her friend's English vocabulary was rich and vivid. As a result, she felt "sad" about herself.

##### Example 4

I just came here, and met a person. I think he is originally from Italy, and he's lived here for a long time. I went to visit him a couple of times, and talked. He uses a lot of words that I don't know. Each time, I just have to check the dictionary. And he uses very beautiful words. I have never heard of them before. [...] **I just feel so ... a little kind of sad**, because I've never learned English this way.

This informant feels “sad” about herself as a learner and user of English when she encounters more proficient speakers of English. This emotion schema of SADNESS is rooted in her lack of exposure to other speakers of English, which makes her feel insecure, inferior, and insufficient. A Chinese SADNESS schema can be elaborated as: X experiences SADNESS when he/she senses a gap or lack when he/she compares himself/herself to others because of a lack of exposure, awareness, and sufficient knowledge. This Chinese cultural SADNESS schema indexes INFERIORITY, SELF-PITY, and HELPLESSNESS.

#### 4.1.5 Proposition Schema

Example 5 reveals the proposition schema of being a ‘good man’ in Chinese culture, as perceived in the 1930s and 1940s in Beijing. This example is taken from the novel *Moment in Peking*, in which the novelist Lin depicts the drivers of the mule carts of a wealthy family named Yao, commenting on a young and pretty woman.

##### **Example 5**

He greeted the drivers and, noticing the jar, reminded Lota to keep it daily filled with tea as usual during his absence.

‘You’re a good man,’ chorused the drivers.

He went in, and soon appeared a beautiful young woman. She had small feet and exquisite jet-black hair done in a loose coiffure, and wore an old broad-sleeved pink jacket, trimmed around the collar and the sleeve ends with a three-inch broad, very pale green satin. She talked freely with the drivers and showed none of the shyness usual among higher-class Chinese young women. She asked if all the mules had been fed, and disappeared again.

‘What luck your master has!’ exclaimed one young driver. ‘**A good man always is rewarded with good luck.** Such a young and pretty concubine!’

‘Rot your tongue!’ said Lota. ‘Our master has no concubines. That young woman is his adopted daughter and a widow.’

The young driver slapped his own face in fun, and the others laughed.

In Example 5, a ‘good man’ is depicted through his words and behaviour, and how others talk about him. The proposition schema is **A GOOD MAN ALWAYS IS REWARDED WITH GOOD LUCK**. This may have two interpretations in this context. One is that it is because Master Yao is a ‘good man’, he is rewarded with a young and pretty woman. The other is that because the pretty woman is a widow adopted by Yao as his daughter rather than his concubine, he is perceived as a ‘good man’. The ‘good man’ proposition schema is also closely connected to *ping’an*, an expression for peace, calm, and safety in Chinese. This can be evidenced in the Chinese saying *Haoren yi sheng ping’an* (“God bless a good man with peace and safety for his/her entire life”).

## 4.2 *Cultural Categories*

Cultural categories are rooted in people's cultural experiences. They are clearly bounded entities whose membership is defined by certain criterial attributes.

Example 6 reveals the Chinese cultural category of 'festival'.

### Example 6

'Festivals of the Dead: Some festivals are held to honour the dead or to satisfy the ancestors, who might return either to help or to do harm. ... Festivals can also be held to honour people. The Dragon Boat Festival in China honours the famous ancient poet, Qu Yuan ... The most energetic and important festivals are the ones that look forward to the end of winter and to the coming of spring. At the Spring Festival in China, people eat dumplings, fish and meat and may give children lucky money in red paper. There are dragon dances and carnivals, and families celebrate the Lunar New Year together.' (Textbook data)

People generally understand festivals as joyous and celebratory occasions. However, Chinese people also conceptualise commemorative 'days' or 'events' as festivals. Example 6 shows that a particular day (the fifth day of the fifth Chinese lunar month) is conceptualised as a 'festival', namely, the Dragon Boat Festival, commemorating the ancient Chinese poet Qu Yuan. This indicates that Chinese people conceptualise days and events of Chinese significance within the cultural category of 'festival'.

## 4.3 *Cultural Conceptual Metaphors*

Cultural conceptual metaphors are cognitive structures that map onto two or more conceptual domains and enable people to understand certain culturally determined experiences. The mapping may either imply a mere figurative use of the language or reflect culture-specific worldviews (Sharifian 2009; Sharifian 2014a).

Example 7, taken from Ha Jin's novel *Waiting*, presents the cultural metaphor of 'a pair of mandarin ducks' to describe an affectionate couple.

### Example 7

Unfortunately his wife had died 2 years ago; people used to call them 'a pair of mandarin ducks,' meaning an affectionate couple. True, the two of them had spent some peaceful, loving years together and had never fought or quarreled.

The 'mandarin ducks' metaphor is a cultural-specific conceptualisation. Chinese people believe that mandarin ducks form lifelong couples, and the ducks therefore symbolise fidelity and conjugal affection in Chinese culture.

#### 4.4 Cultural Blends

In addition to cultural schemas, categories, and conceptual metaphors, the data collected for this chapter also reveals a considerable number of cultural blends. We define cultural blends in terms of language and culture. Language blends refer to code-switching and code-mixing when people communicate in English with speakers of other languages; cultural blends refer to a mix of two or more cultures as a result of increasing transcultural connections and instantaneous exchange of cultural messages (Xu 2013, p. 6). In one of the texts in the Textbook data, the topic of *Festivals around the world* is introduced. The text categorises these festivals into ‘Festivals of the Dead’, e.g., the Japanese Obon and the Mexican Day of the Dead; ‘Festivals to Honour People’, e.g., the Chinese Dragon Boat Festival, the American Columbus Day, and the Indian national festival to honour Mohandas Gandhi; and ‘Harvest Festivals’, e.g., the Western Harvest and Thanksgiving festivals, the European traditions of celebrating harvests, and the Chinese and Japanese moon-associated mid-autumn festivals. Another text in the textbook data can be regarded as an exemplar of cultural blends, in which a “sad love story” is depicted, about a Chinese girl who missed her date on a Valentine’s Day evening, leaving the boy disappointed. The text blends this modern day Valentine story with a classical Chinese love story about two traditional Chinese lovers who were separated by the Milky Way (conceptualised as a heavenly river) and could only meet each other once a year by crossing the ‘river’ on a bridge of magpie wings.

### 5 Discussion and Implications for ELT in China

The identification and exemplification of cultural conceptualisations in Sect. 4 serves to confirm that Chinese English does differ from other varieties not only linguistically, but also culturally in terms of cultural conceptualisations. Cultural conceptualisations are dynamic, varying both diachronically, over time, and synchronically, over space. For example, the ‘good man’ proposition schema as elaborated in Sect. 4.1.5 has undergone changes and modifications to the point where modern-day Chinese would not consider the adoption of a widow as a daughter rather than a concubine as an example of a ‘good man’ for legal and moral reasons. A modern Chinese ‘good man’ is commonly regarded as one that is a role model, of great conscience and morality, good deeds, and simple thoughts.

In addition, geographical variations in terms of cultural schemas, categories, and conceptual metaphors are apparent. For example, the conceptual metaphor of ‘mandarin ducks’, which originally symbolised fidelity between a married couple, may have varied in meanings across Chinese diasporas. In Cantonese-speaking Hong Kong, the metaphor may also mean an ‘odd couple’ or an ‘unlikely pair’ because the male and female plumages of mandarin ducks look different. The Cantonese equivalent of ‘mandarin ducks’ in Hong Kong, i.e., *yuen-yeung*, is also commonly used

in *cha chaan tengs* (cafés) to refer to a drink containing a mixture of coffee and tea with milk. This ‘coff-tea’ apparently belongs to a different cultural conceptual category.

Another discussion that can arise from the data selection is that although Chinese English is primarily used by Chinese first language speakers, it is by no means produced and consumed by them exclusively. It can be utilised and shared by non-Chinese first language speakers as well. Indeed, the Asia Weekly of China Daily journalists and the majority of the contributors to the China Story website are sinologists or specialists on China issues whose first languages are not necessarily Chinese. Such discussion may help demystify a common misconception that Chinese English is confined to China and used only by Chinese speakers of English.

The above discussion and the exploration in Sect. 4 of cultural conceptualisations in Chinese English have significant implications for English language teaching in China.

Rather than purely teaching the English language *per se*, focusing on linguistic features such as phonetics, phonology, vocabulary, and grammar, teachers should focus their awareness on the cultural elements embedded in the teaching and learning materials and encourage their students to do the same. In particular, they should be able to identify and tease out cultural conceptualisations in the form of schemas, categories, metaphors, and blends, and foreground them so as to integrate cultural teaching and learning into the ELT classroom.

Both teachers and students should also be made aware that cultural conceptualisations evolve, develop, and vary over time and across regions within the Chinese cultural context. In addition, teachers and students should be encouraged to use local varieties of English alongside other varieties of English, to develop their competence in not only distinguishing the linguistic variations among different ‘Englishes’, but also decoding and unpacking the cultural conceptualisations that underpin linguistic expressions. Since local varieties of English are deemed to be appropriate carriers of local cultural conceptualisations, the local variety of English, i.e. Chinese English, should be recognised and utilised in the Chinese ELT context to (re)negotiate and (co)construct students’ relations and Chinese identities during English language learning and use.

Apart from linguistic and communicative competence, Chinese learners of English should also develop their metacultural competence in the ELT classroom, that is, by improving their awareness of cultural conceptual variations, their ability to explain their cultural conceptualisations, and their skills in negotiating cultural meaning and authenticity. For example, they may learn to become aware that their understanding of the Chinese image schema of a dragon and its associated meanings is fundamentally different from those of people from other cultures. They may learn how to explain what a Chinese Dragon Boat Festival is, and how it is different from festivals honouring people in other cultures. They may also learn how to negotiate with people from other cultures on notions and schemas such as face, emotion, value, ideology, and worldview.

## 6 Conclusion

This chapter explores cultural conceptualisations in Chinese English and their implications for English language teaching in China. We have exemplified cultural schemas, categories, conceptual metaphors, and cultural blends using examples from an open-ended corpus of Chinese English, and have concluded that Chinese English varies from other varieties of English both linguistically and culturally in terms of the cultural conceptualisations that it embodies. Cultural conceptualisations are dynamic, evolving and developing over time and across regions. Researching cultural conceptualisations in Chinese English will help teachers of English language to expand and improve the understanding they impart upon their students. Three main suggestions are proposed: (1) Cultural conceptualisations should be explicitly taught in the ELT classroom; (2) Chinese teachers and learners of English are encouraged to use their local variety of English to express their cultural schemas, categories, conceptual metaphors, and cultural blends; and (3) Learners of English should develop metacultural competence to improve their awareness of cultural variations and their ability to explain and negotiate their cultural meaning and authenticity. We suggest that future directions in this line of research on Chinese English should include unpacking more deep-rooted Chinese cultural underpinnings that learners and users of Chinese English have subconsciously encoded, and bringing relevant research findings into actual practice in the ELT classroom in China.

## Appendix

Type	Quantity	Details	Code
Interviews	3	Informant 1: female, in her early 50s; born in Hubei province, China; translator.	I-1
		Informant 2: female, around 20 years old; born in Heilongjiang province, China; an exchange student in a university in Australia.	I-2
		Informant 3: male, in his late thirties; born in Shanghai, China; a visiting scholar/professor in a university in Australia.	I-3
Newspaper articles	3	1: State gifts give new look at China, by Zhao Shengnan, 01/09/2014, China Daily	N-1
		2: In Chinese marriages family still comes first, by wpywood, 04/09/2014, China Daily	N-2
		3: Cover Story: All in the family, 15–21/08/2014, by Krishna Kumar VR, in New Delhi, for China Daily Asia Weekly	N-3
Textbooks	5	New Senior English for China, Student's Book 1–5, 2007, Liu Daoyi, Gong Yafu, Zheng Wangquan, Dodie Brooks, Rick Sjoquist, and Sandra L. Richley (Eds.) People's Education Press	T-1 T-2 T-3 T-4 T-5
		1: Moment in Peking, by L. Y. T. (Lin Yutang), 1999, Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press.	W-1
		2: Waiting, by Ha Jin 2000, Vintage.	W-2
		3: The Unwalled City: a Novel of Hong Kong, by Xu Xi, 2001, Chameleon Press.	W-3
		1: English version of the Chinese government website ( <a href="http://english.gov.cn/">http://english.gov.cn/</a> ). 2: An Australia based 'China Story' website ( <a href="http://www.thechinastory.org/">http://www.thechinastory.org/</a> ) containing Yearbooks of the 'China Story' (e.g., Yearbook 2012: Red Rising, Red Eclipse, and Yearbook 2013: Civilizing China).	M-1 M-2

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# Through English as a Window: Defining ‘Being Chinese’ in the 21st Century

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**Abstract** China’s international relations have been an influential factor determining Chinese self-perceptions and how ‘foreigners’ and one of their languages, English, are perceived in the country. Between the eighteenth and twentieth centuries, China’s defeats in wars and humiliations by foreign countries (mainly from the West) made English a language of ‘barbarians’, ‘military aggressors’ and ‘anti-Communists’. There is, and has always been, the distinction between ‘Chinese’ and ‘the world’ which is reflected in the principle of ‘Chinese learning for essence (*ti*), Western learning for utility (*yong*)’. The entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001 and the Beijing Olympics in 2008 have signified the most active participation of China in the global community. As a global language, English is promoted as the principal language of trade partners, scientists and tourists, an essential tool for modernisation and a vehicle to ensure China’s voices are heard. Despite the eagerness to integrate into the global community, globalisation has opened up China to the world and, in learning English, Chinese people are more exposed to western cultural values and beliefs. This has presented challenges to their sense of Chinese identity. This chapter explores the idea of ‘being Chinese’ through the status of English in today’s China. It shows that the idea is less constrained by previous ideologies about learning English and more defined within Chinese people’s own imagination of ‘being modern’ and ‘being global’. English does not seem to threaten the sense of ‘being Chinese’, but rather, it is another dimension of Chinese identity.

**Keywords** Chinese identity • Global English • *ti-yong* • Multiple identities • Being Chinese

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## 1 Introduction

Throughout Chinese history, contacts with foreign countries have played a significant role in China's transformation into its current 'being'. These contacts have been determining the status of English and what Chinese identity means in China.

During the past 200 years it is perceived that there were two periods of intensive confrontation and self-isolation in terms of China's relations with the West. One was the period during and after the Opium War (and during the Boxer Rebellion in 1900). The defeats in the Opium War and the unequal treaty signed as a result of the defeats were significant foreign humiliations that destroyed the ideal self-image of the 'middle kingdom' and set the tone for China's 'unfriendly' relations with the world. The other period was the first 30 years of the Communist government before the 'reform and opening up' in the late 1970s when the differences in political ideologies between China and the West created a long period of self-isolation in China. During these two periods, English was regarded as a language of "military aggressors" and "capitalists" (Adamson 2002, p. 231).

Since the "reform and opening up" commenced in the late 1970s and intensified in the late 1980s, China has been opening up to the world, and modernisation has become the national development direction which is seen as a means to re-negotiate for China a place in the world. The entry into the World Trade Organization in 2001, and the 2008 Beijing Olympics which was described as a China's "coming-out party" (Cull 2008, p. 122) that celebrated the country's reengagement with the world, signify the most active participation of China in the global community. With the changing international relations with the world, the status and perceptions of English by Chinese people have also changed. English is the principal language of trade partners, scientists and tourists, an essential tool for modernisation and a vehicle to ensure China's membership in the global community.

Despite the changes in the roles of English, 'Chinese learning for essence (*ti*), Western learning for utility (*yong*)' has always remained the guiding principle of English education in China. It prescribes the roles of English as purely a tool separate from Chinese as a cultural essence and identity marker. However, globalisation not only has opened up China to economic and technological exchange and advancement, but learning English has also made Chinese people more exposed to western cultural values and beliefs, which can potentially confront their sense of identity. This chapter explores the impacts of learning English on Chinese students, with the aim of revealing what it means to 'be Chinese' in China today.

## 2 History of the Status of English and 'Being Chinese'

As China perceived itself as a self-sufficient 'middle kingdom' and saw foreigners as barbarians who spoke barbaric languages, there was neither a desire nor even the concept to modernise and align with the outside world before the nineteenth

century. Contacts with foreigners were therefore very minimal and confined only to trade interactions.

After the defeat in the First Opium War in 1842, China started to realise the technological advancement of the West as well as its own backwardness in technology and military. The intention to modernise through industrial and technological development thus started to emerge and English became an important language to access this knowledge. In 1862, the first foreign language school called *Tongwenguan* was built with English being one of the languages taught. The signing of unequal treaties after the Opium War with Great Britain forced China to open up and the demands to deal with foreigners in business and trade increased. The defeats in wars and humiliations by western powers in the late nineteenth century severely destroyed the self-image of Chinese.

During the Republican era in the early twentieth century, China was inclined to align with western powers to strengthen its international position and to move towards a ‘parallel’ and ‘equal’ co-existence with the West. Under this circumstance, English in general enjoyed a high status as a language for military and diplomatic relations as well as for science and technology (Adamson 2002). It took on the role of helping China find its place and identity in the world alongside the West. After the Chinese civil war ended in 1949, the United States support of Taiwan rendered English unpopular when a tide of anti-U.S. sentiment swept the country and it “became somehow unpatriotic to study the language of (the) enemies” (Tang 1983, p. 41). At that time, as Sino-Soviet relations grew closer, Russian became the main foreign language until the overthrow of Stalin in the 1950s (Adamson 2002) when English gradually resumed its high status as a tool for modernisation.

The Cultural Revolution in the mid-1960s witnessed the collapse of the status of English again because of its associations with capitalism. The prevailing perception was that learning English was useless and that to be a good Chinese meant to be a communist. Political identity was seemingly the most important during that time.

The visit of US President Richard Nixon in 1972 was considered a turning point in the international relations of China with the West. English was again perceived as essential for international diplomacy and re-introduced as a school subject. Zhou Enlai’s ‘four modernisations’ was first set forth in 1963 and enacted by Deng Xiaoping in 1978. These goals, which stressed the development in agriculture, industry, national defence, and science and technology, were instrumental in further reviving the importance of English in acquiring modern knowledge from the West. The most prominent policies during the 1980s were the two College English syllabuses issued in 1985 and 1986. In the 1990s, an English syllabus for the new secondary school curriculum was also introduced which set out the official role of foreign languages as an “important tool for making contact with other countries and [...] promoting the development of the national and world economy, science and culture” (Adamson 2002, p. 240).

In China English was introduced to the majority of students in the seventh grade until 2001 when a guideline named *Vigorously Promoting the Teaching of English in Primary Schools* (translation by Hu 2007) was released, mandating that students in both urban and rural schools start to learn English as a compulsory subject in the

third grade. The purpose was clearly stated by one of the officials of the Ministry of Education in China: "...the fact that English has become an important tool in international interactions as a result of globalization makes the knowledge of English a basic requirement that citizens of the twenty-first century should fulfil" (Hu 2007, p. 361). As internationalisation has further accelerated, efforts have been made to introduce composite majors at tertiary level, that is, train people with English skills plus knowledge in specific fields (Gao 2009).

In 2001, the guidelines for English-as-the-medium in undergraduate teaching were also issued. They stipulate that 5% to 10% of the tertiary courses for undergraduate students be conducted in English or another foreign language within three years (Feng 2009). This is the first official endorsement of this strong form of bilingual education in the Chinese history of English education. In the absence of a central government policy to dictate bilingual education, support for English and Chinese bilingual schooling has still been very strong among the public. There is a growing presence of bilingual nurseries, schools and universities, and a large number of "experimental bilingual schools" using English as the medium of instruction for most school subjects including science, mathematics, music and art (Feng 2005, p. 537). Early immersion programs and classes for 0–3 years old have also become a trend. English is seen as a prerequisite for studying abroad, job prospects and promotion. Parents want their children to be successful so they are very keen for their children to start learning English at an early age, even from kindergarten.

Globalisation has created the need for re-conceptualisation of 'English' in many countries including China. On conceptualising the global spread of English, scholars have illustrated how English is localised and appropriated to reflect local identities and culture of speakers from a micro perspective such as language use in the language classroom, postcolonial communities and popular subculture (e.g. Canagarajah 2006). In Malaysia, for instance, English as a coloniser's language has shifted from being a tool of the colonisers to assert power to being a tool used creatively in traditional literary work which can be taken as a way of 'writing back' and 'talking back' by the colonised (Pennycook 1994, p. 295). The English language is appropriated according to the needs and values of the colonised who are able to reposition themselves in different subject positions in the dominant discourses of English. According to Pennycook (2007, p. 115), "what may look like an imported set of global concerns may in fact be either a local take on more global themes or a local reconstruction of both the global and local". This, a view significant for the re-conceptualisation of English in the world, means that English as a global language is reconstructed to reflect local themes and perform refashioned new identities that are already common in the local context.

While it was once deemed unpatriotic to learn the language of the enemy, English learning is now appropriated and refashioned as a patriotic act in China which facilitates modernisation and the country's integration into the global community. As my earlier study (Fong 2009) shows, people are encouraged to learn English along with other practical skills in China. It has become a modern tool for interacting with the world in general rather than with 'native-English speakers'.

### 3 ‘Being Chinese’ Today

After the many years of ambivalence about English education, China ultimately cannot resist the growing importance of English. Learning English is even perceived by many as more important than mother-tongue learning, western festivals are more valued, and western movies and ideas are also popular (Liu and Li 2004; Zhang 2007). From the above discussion, it can be seen that the importance and popularity of English in today’s China has already influenced Chinese society and education, which constitute what is called the ‘Chinese essence’.

As Kramsch (2009, p. 60) demonstrates, “the foreign language is first and foremost experienced physically, linguistically, emotionally, artistically”. The relationship of learners with a language therefore often has a subjective value which transforms the language and their desires, memories and projections associated with it. Given this nature of language, learning a new language is seen as able to broaden learners’ imagination, and for language learners, different languages means different realities and imagined subjectivities with which they can identify and create.

In learning English, Chinese students may also experience the language subjectively which might transform their feelings as well as their perceptions of the self. This presents challenges to the ‘Chinese essence’ as prescribed by the guiding principle of China’s English education. Through an analysis of interviews with Chinese students of English, this chapter explores the impacts of English learning on the students’ sense of identity.

### 4 The Present Study

While existing studies have tended to focus on the views towards English of university students, those of high school students are underrepresented. The interview subjects in this study include high school and university students.

Twenty five university students from three different universities in Beijing were interviewed. Aged between 18 and 25, they ranged between undergraduate year three and postgraduate year three. While 14 were English majors, 11 were non-English majors. Among the non-English majors, two were Commerce majors; six Journalism majors; one a Computing major; one an Engineering major and one a Science major. All students reported that they had passed either College English Test – Band 4 or Band 6.

Twenty students aged between 12 and 13 from one high school were interviewed. They came from three different Grade Eight classes in a famous high school in Beijing and were all considered top students by their teachers. As they themselves reported, they were all enrolled in extra English tuition classes outside of school.

Interviews were conducted during a two-month fieldwork in Beijing in 2009 as part of a larger research project. Respondents were asked a list of 11 questions centred around the roles and impacts of English. These questions are listed below:

Question number	Question
Q1	'Do you think it is essential to learn English?'
Q2	'Why or why not?'
Q3	'What is the role of English for yourself as a Chinese?'
Q4	'What is the role of English for the country?'
Q5	'Do you like learning English? and why?'
Q6	'Do you think all Chinese people should learn English? and why?'
Q7	'Do you think there are any impacts of English on the country? if so, what impacts or changes?'
Q8	'Which one is more important, mother tongue or English? and why?'
Q9	'Do you think English learning has affected the mother tongue? if so, in what ways?'
Q10	'Does English learning affect traditional Chinese culture? if so, in what ways?'
Q11	'In order to learn English well, do you think it is essential to learn the culture associated with the language? and why?'

For the purpose of this chapter, a number of focal high school and university students are chosen to illustrate the discourses about Chinese identity in relation to English, and responses to Q2, Q3 and Q7 are the focus of analysis.

#### **4.1 Approach to Data Analysis: Critical Discourse Analysis**

The interview data of the study are analysed within the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework. From the CDA perspectives, a discourse is not simply an utterance or a text, but an institutional structure that regulates social practices and guides the meanings of utterances and texts. CDA also focuses on the ever-changing nature of discourse about a particular subject in different socio-cultural and political contexts. When the context changes, new discourse arises to represent new conceptions within that particular context (Fairclough 1992). CDA therefore sets out to reveal the multiple discourses and meanings as well as the ideological assumptions hidden in the discourses in the wider socio-cultural and political context.

In his work on sexuality, Foucault (1978) illustrates how discourses (in the sense of language use) produce subject positions, and the multiplicity of discourse about a subject in a society. In different domains, speakers use different discourses to speak about an idea. The rise of these diverse discourses is attributed to the “strategic necessities” (Foucault 1980, p. 206) of having to identify one’s position in relation to the subject under a particular economic and political atmosphere. To determine one’s subject position within a discourse, one has to locate oneself in the position

which is governed by discourse within the social context (Foucault 1980, p. 132). Because of this identification of subject positions, a person is able to achieve his/her sense of identity within the discourse.

Construction of subject positions and the restricted sets of legitimate subject positions in discourses are important for CDA analysis. In Foucault’s (1978) view, the multiple roles and identities of a person are constructed by multiple discourses which place the person into different subject positions. The studies on global English that were mentioned previously have shown that through appropriation, non-English speaking communities add a new voice to the discourses about English as a colonial language, resulting in the different discourses about English as well as multiple identities of the communities. This chapter investigates the appropriation of western discourses about English by Chinese people through which they create their own voices and affirm their self-identity. By looking at the multiple discourses about English of Chinese students, their subject positions as Chinese in relation to English can be revealed.

Operating on the same underlying principles of CDA, scholars have developed different focuses in their own approaches. Wodak (2001)’s discourse-historical approach is particularly appropriate to the study of English in China. She (p.76) maintains that:

...because history teaches that specific actions have specific consequences, one should perform or omit a specific action in a specific situation comparable with the historical example referred to.

According to Wodak (2001), the use of language is ideologically motivated and can be constrained by power and the language’s associated structural effects on knowledge and beliefs, social relationships and social identities. In investigating historical and political topics, the discourse-historical approach attempts to integrate available knowledge about the historical information and background of the social and political contexts within which the texts are produced and interpreted.

As informed by the history of English in China, it is essential to consider topics such as China’s international relations, the fluctuating status of English in Chinese history and China’s direction of modernisation in exploring what it means to ‘be Chinese’ today, as each of these represents different realities that contribute to the formation of the Chinese discourses of English and Chinese identity in today’s China. The discourse-historical approach permits an analysis of the relations and interactions between the wider historical and socio-cultural contexts and discourses about English.

## 5 Results and Discussion

The interviews with students have revealed two dimensions of Chinese identity: ‘global Chinese’ and ‘English-speaking Chinese’.

## 5.1 ‘Global’ Chinese in ‘One World’

According to the students, English has highlighted Chinese identity in relation to the outside world and led to the rise of a global Chinese identity. This can be seen from the discourse about English and Chinese identity of Ben, who is a Grade 8 high school student. When asked about the roles of English learning (Q2 and Q3), he gave the following response where emphasis is added for illustration:

### **Excerpt (1):**

*When a country is strong and its power is strengthened and recognised by the world, its language will spread. It's like in a company, you won't work hard to understand what your colleagues are saying, but when your boss tells you something, [you] will try your utmost to complete the job your boss gives you. When a big country speaks to you, you possibly need to learn from them and understand their development. So you need to learn English. I think if China can become as strong as the U.S., Chinese will also become the world's important language. So at the present time, no matter it's a social demand or trend, learning English is relatively important. (Q2)*

### **Excerpt (2):**

*I think it plays the role of, as a language, a tool for human communication. It provides convenience to mutually communicate, mutually learn. So I think English now for me is a tool. At the same time, because English proficiency is required in many respects, English is also a personal standard for myself.(Q3)*

Ben’s responses provide a few interesting insights into how Chinese identity is understood in relation to the world. As the response to Q2 indicates, Ben was of the view that English was an important world language for Chinese because the U.S. was strong. This idea about language and power was presumably informed by the Chinese discourse about English and western powers discussed previously. In response to Q3 in Excerpt (2), Ben mentioned that English was a tool for mutual communication and learning.

Excerpt (1) and Excerpt (2) together show that while there is the idea that English is a means for Chinese to learn from foreign countries, there is also the idea that English is essential in facilitating mutual understanding and communication between China and the world. The need for English is clearly considered from both a ‘Chinese’ as well as global perspective.

William is a first-year journalism postgraduate student in his early twenties. Excerpt (3) below is his response to Q2:

### **Excerpt (3):**

*Because first of all, for me, learning English isn't just for the sake of complying with the society or the wider environment. I think my life is in a sense invaded by English in so many respects that there'd be so much inconvenience if I don't actually learn the language. For example, I wouldn't be able to watch movies, browse the Internet, or even just play all those computer games. If I don't learn English, this all cannot be done. Considering how China's developing these days, it's definitely helpful to master a language, whether you're on a tour or studying or living abroad. After all, it's an open world. Foreigners are stepping in and so are we walking out. So there needs to be a channel for us to understand one another.(Q2)*

The principle of ‘Chinese learning for essence (*ti*), Western learning for utility (*yong*)’ prescribes the distinction between Chinese as cultural essence and English as a tool. However, as shown in William’s response, the boundary between the ‘local’ (i.e. Chinese) and ‘global’/‘international’ life appears to have become less clear-cut, as the use of English is so widespread that almost all aspects of life involve it. The mention of using English for travelling and studying abroad also reflects the role of English in the fluidity of the ‘local’ and ‘global’ (Pennycook 2007, 2010) which blurs the distinction between Chinese and the world. English seems to have become a part of the ‘local life’ of Chinese that provides convenience as well as ‘global life’ which involves interactions between China and the world.

Excerpt 4 is another postgraduate journalism student’s response to Q7 about the impacts of learning English in China. My commentary is included in parentheses.

#### **Excerpt (4):**

*It might be that the way of thinking is no longer so stubborn, and the way we see problems have changed a lot as we use the western point of view to see China (Chinese and western perspectives). You’ll be more attentive to each individual country as well as the world after you’ve learnt English. For example, when we learn journalism, we point out the positives as well as the negatives of other foreign countries to see how foreigners see us (Chinese and western perspectives). And now Chinese have also started travelling, and other business trends, as well as in many other respects...now you won’t, we are no longer too surprised when we see a foreigner in the streets as if we see a monster. It’s all commonplace now, they are like us as people (Chinese and global perspective)—this would be a better way to see it. So it’s one world, one dream, and everyone’s on the same planet (global perspective). This sense of community is something that I’m particularly fond of.(Q7)*

As marked in the response above, the global-Chinese perspectives and identities seem to exist side-by-side. In illustrating how English had broadened the horizons of the Chinese people (referred to as ‘we’ by the student), this student, like Ben, aligned his perspective as a Chinese and as a part of the ‘planet’. English no longer seems to be an identity and group marker differentiating between China and the world. Rather, it has become a community language of the ‘one world’.

As further demonstrated in the following response to Q7 of a university student, the ‘equal’ relation with the world is interpreted through the discourses about history and national development which points to the co-existence of Chinese and global identities:

#### **Excerpt (5):**

*Of course, in the many years of reform and opening up, because we learn English, I think our people can be more open. They are more willing to learn other things. I think this is very important for us...And also because I think more people learning English, for China, can bring China more the rights to speak. In fact, not only English but also other foreign languages...(Q7)*

As reflected in Excerpt (5), China’s self-isolation in the past (as opposed to ‘more open’ since reform and opening up) was mapped by the student onto Chinese people’s English learning experience today and in the future. The discourses about national development and history not only are drawn upon to make sense of the

roles of English for the Chinese people as a whole, but they are also revisited by the student to make sense of their Chinese identity with ‘more the rights to speak’ in the global community today.

From some students’ perspectives, China and the world not only will become more equal, but China will possibly become even more powerful. In learning English, the sense of ‘being Chinese’ is still guiding their perceptions and this Chinese identity co-exists with the global identity.

## **5.2 ‘English-Speaking Chinese’ in ‘Multiple Worlds’**

As Chinese people today have closer contact with English, their imaginations about the world as well as their country differ from the past. Students today are not just learning English but also experiencing English as a different way of being. Even though the co-existence of “Chinese” and “global citizen” identities can be found among the students as demonstrated previously, the students also claim an identity associated with English.

Alex is a postgraduate journalism student in his early twenties. He stated that he had scored 106 in TOFEL which he did to apply for a postgraduate program in the U.S. In Excerpt (6), he offered some interesting insights into the impacts of English in China:

### **Excerpt (6):**

*I think there should be some changes. For example, in terms of journalism, not everyone now only trusts Chinese media. Many people, they discover why foreign media and our media give hugely different and opposing reports on the same issue. This is the way of seeing many other things. In the past we thought that China was very powerful, but after you learn English, you would discover that China is actually very backward. There used to be a thinking that all the countries in the world were very hostile towards China, but after you understand more, it turns out that it’s not that hostile. There are many other countries which are not as evil as we describe. I think this is for me the greatest change to thinking. (Q7)*

As the response shows, English seems to offer Alex more than just a communication tool. It had changed his way of knowing and thinking by exposing him to views and values ('powerful' China and 'hostile' West) which contradicted his original beliefs and thoughts. Although his English knowledge seems to challenge how he perceived China ('backward') in relation to the world, Alex was making the above comments from the perspective of a Chinese. His uses of 'our media' and 'we' as opposed to 'foreign media' and 'other countries' (as highlighted above) actually have the same referents as 'China' and 'all the countries in the world' in the previous sentence. This demonstrates that his sense of 'being Chinese' was still prominent although English had presented to him another 'world' of thinking.

When asked about the role of English for himself as a Chinese (Q3), William provided the following response:

**Excerpt (7):**

*Personally—this may not be so for other Chinese people—I like the chemistry that you get between two contacting cultures. I think these interactions are very interesting, and that's why English for me is very charming. I'm very happy when learning the language, because I can sense the logic behind English when I do so. Not only are their values very interesting, but I'm also having a feeling that all this will somehow be useful in the future. Learning English is more of my personal preference.*(Q3)

As reflected in his responses, English, for William, is ‘very charming’ and the values associated with the language are ‘very interesting’. In learning English he developed a sense of happiness as he came to understand more about the values behind the language. According to Kramsch (2009), in language learning, learners can be conscious of the outside world as well as of their own experience of the outside world. William did not just learn English as a language but also attended to the experience of learning the language and the feelings he encountered. This, as Kramsch (2009) puts it, could subject William to create a ‘self’ image associated with English.

As William’s responses to Q2 (Excerpt 3) and Q3 (Excerpt 7) indicate, although he was developing a ‘self’ associated with English, the global Chinese identity was also significant. While the distinction between ‘foreigners’ and ‘we’ was made as seen in Excerpt (3), the boundary between them, from William’s perspectives, was becoming less obvious. He has developed his sense of ‘being Chinese’ and his sense of being a part of the ‘one world’, while also showing signs of developing a ‘self’ in the ‘English world’ with his own feelings and imaginations.

## 6 Concluding Remarks: ‘Being Chinese’ in the Global World

History has played a role in defining ‘being Chinese’ in relation to the world and to the status of English. From the perspectives of the students in the study, English is a sub-discourse about globalisation whereby the language is reinterpreted as something ‘new’ and ‘neutral’ essential for integrating into the global community. Their sense of ‘being Chinese’ is influenced by the perceptions and imaginations of China being a part of the global community today.

While retaining their sense of Chinese identity, the students demonstrably also have developed an internationalist perspective and a ‘global mindset’ by which they understand themselves as well as the world. As Begley and Boyd (2003, p. 25) define it, global mindset refers to:

the ability to develop and interpret criteria for business performance that are not dependent on the assumptions of a single country, culture or context and to implement those criteria appropriately in different countries, cultures and contexts.

This global mindset, to put it differently, interprets any local events within the ‘world’ context, seeing them as having an impact or relation to the outside world. It allows the students to focus on world/global issues and contexts within which

English is used as a universal skill. The students' awareness of the 'global-ness' of English has transcended their local concerns and ideologies about 'self' and 'English'.

In China today, English is a means to perform the modern, bilingual and global identity. Just as Pennycook (2010) examines, practice involving English now seems to be an everyday social activity integrated with other social practices that constitute the meanings of "modern Chinese life". English is necessary for access to information and entertainment and provides a place where people can engage with the global world. The language in this case does not seem to threaten the sense of 'being Chinese', but rather, as the study has demonstrated, it leads Chinese people to reflect on their Chinese identity and provides a space for exploring other dimensions of their identity. The development of Chinese English will potentially reveal a mix of 'Chinese' and 'English' selves of Chinese people. This will be an interesting topic for further research.

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**Part V**

**Chinese Scholarship on Chinese English**

# Researching Chinese English: A Meta-analysis of Chinese Scholarship on Chinese English Research

Zhichang Xu

**Abstract** Research on Chinese English started in late 1970s when Chinese scholars were trying to make a distinction between what they named as ‘China English’ and Chinglish. Since then, there has been an increasing body of research on Chinese English. Thanks to the databases of Chinese journal articles, abundant bibliographical materials have become available to researchers. However, since the majority of Chinese scholars publish their research in Chinese academic journals, scholarship on Chinese English has long been a ‘blind spot’ for researchers outside China. For this chapter, I have accessed the China Knowledge Resource Integrated Database, known as China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI), and retrieved, identified and selected 100 research articles on Chinese English, published between 1980 and 2013. I have conducted a meta-analysis on all the selected articles. I report the major themes that have emerged from the selected articles; I also review the research findings within each of the major themes. The main purpose of this chapter is to provide a state-of-the-art review of the Chinese English research in China in order for researchers to have an ongoing dialogue in relation to researching Chinese English as a developing variety of World Englishes.

**Keywords** Chinese English • China English • Chinglish • Meta-analysis • State-of-the-art review

## 1 Introduction

Research on Chinese English started in the late 1970s in the Chinese mainland when researchers were trying to make a distinction between what they named as ‘China English’ and Chinglish. Some researchers, e.g. Han Ling (2007) and He Daqian (2009) also suggest that research on Chinese English started in the middle of 1960s when sociolinguistics was introduced into China. In the early 1980s, Ge Chuangu

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(1980b, p. 2) provided examples of ‘China English’ such as *Four Books, May Fourth Movement, and Four Modernizations* while one of Ge Chuangui’s students, Wang Rongpei (1991), defined ‘China English’ as ‘the English used by the Chinese people in China, being based on standard English and having Chinese characteristics’. Since then, there has been an increasing body of research on Chinese English in and outside China. In this chapter, I use authors’ full names with surnames followed by given names, which is how Chinese names are commonly spelt out.

This chapter focuses on the research published in Chinese mainland academic journals, including higher-ranking research journals and lesser known higher institution-based journals. I have accessed the China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI), and retrieved, identified and selected 100 research articles on Chinese English published between 1980 and 2013. The main selection criteria include relevant keywords and citation rate. The keywords include 中国英语 (Chinese English and/or China English), 中国式英语 (Chinglish), and 中国英语变体 (Chinese variety of English), and the citation rate is 5 and/or above.

This chapter is a meta-analysis of previous research on Chinese English. Meta-analysis, in this context, means a piece of research through which previously published studies on Chinese English as a variety of English are compiled and their themes are teased out and re-analyzed in order to identify specific trends that may not be evident by reading individual published studies.

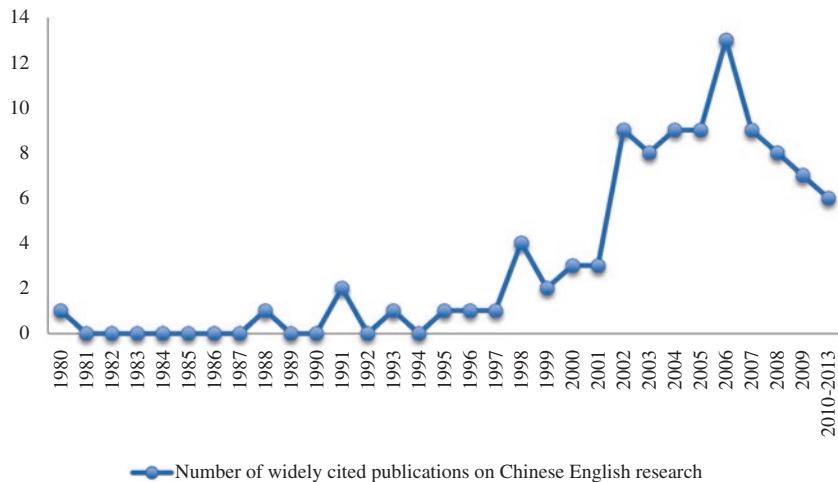
Given the abundance of published studies available, the current meta-analysis is highly selective, and is restricted in the following ways: Firstly, it is limited to journal articles that have been published in Chinese journals within the Chinese mainland between 1980 and 2013. Secondly, it is broadly limited to those topic areas most relevant to the research of Chinese English as a variety of English, thus omitting published works on Chinese English learners’ error analysis and second language acquisition where Chinese English is treated as an interlanguage. Thirdly, the journal articles have been retrieved exclusively from the CNKI, which has become one of the most inclusive and widely used Web resources for Chinese researchers.

The following table lists all the in-text references of the 100 research articles that have been selected for the current meta-analysis in this chapter.

Table 1 and Fig. 1 show that there are patterns and distinct periods of researching Chinese English. 1980–1997; 1998–2001; 2002–2012; and from 2013 onwards. These periods are primarily marked by the number of relevant research publications, and those key publications that are widely cited, among which Ge Chuangui (1980b), Wang Rongpei (1991), Jiang Yajun and Du Ruiqing (2003), Jia Guanjie (2013) are frequently cited. The relatively smaller number of publications as listed in Fig. 1 between 2010 and 2013 is not because there was a significant drop in this period as it appears to be, but mainly because newly published research articles do not commonly have a high citation rate due to the time factor. As far as the four periods are concerned, the first period (1980–1997) can be termed as the ‘Enlightenment’ period, in which Ge Chuangui’s (1980b) article shed great light on people’s awareness of ‘China English’, and Wang Rongpei’s (1991) article and his definition of ‘China English’ set a milestone and sparked the debate on what China English was. The second period (1998–2001) can be termed as the ‘Great Leap

**Table 1** References of the 100 research articles for the meta-analysis

Year	Major publications
1980	Ge Chuangui (1980b)
1988	Huang Jinqi (1988)
1991	Huang Jinqi (1991) and Wang Rongpei (1991)
1993	Li Wenzhong (1993)
1995	Zhang Peicheng (1995)
1996	Liao Zhong (1996)
1997	Jia Guanjie and Xiang Mingyou (1997)
1998	Du Zhengming (1998), Du Zhengming and Wu Shinian (1998), Lin Qiuyun (1998), Mao Huafen and Mao Donghui (1998)
1999	Chen Wencun (1999) and Zhang Rongjian (1999)
2000	Guan Qun and Meng Wanjin (2000), Wang Xiangping (2000) and Zhuang Yichuan (2000)
2001	Du Ruiqing and Jiang Yajun (2001), Jiang Xiaohong (2001) and Li Boli (2001)
2002	Jin Huikang (2002), Liang Ying and Zhong Guoshi (2002), Lin Tianwen (2002), Pan Zhangxian (2002), Qiu Lizhong and Ning Quanxin (2002), Wu Jing (2002), Yang Narang and Yan Hong (2002), Zhang Wenxia (2002) and Zhou Shibao (2002)
2003	Hao Jihuan (2003), Hu Xiaoqiong (2003), Jiang Yajun and Du Ruiqing (2003), Jin Huikang (2003), Ma Qingling and Ji Jianfen (2003), Meng Zhen and Yu Zhengting (2003), Zhang Xinyuan (2003) and Zhou Nan (2003)
2004	Liu Xiangqing and Yan Xiaohua (2004), Mao Donghui (2004), Tan Yumei (2004), Tu Chuan-e (2004), Wang Chaoxing (2004a), Wang Dongbo (2004b), Zhang Quan and Chen Chuanli (2004), Zhang Yi (2004) and Zhu Yue (2004)
2005	Li Baili (2005a), Li Shaohua (2005b), Li Xuehong (2005c), Li Xuehong (2005d), Liu Xiangqing (2005), Wan Pengjie (2005), Xu Xiaoqing (2005), Zhang Guojun (2005a) and Zhang Quan (2005b)
2006	Cao Ning (2006), Gao Chao (2006), Li Difei (2006a), Li Jianfu (2006b), Li Wenzhong (2006c), Liu Dong (2006a), Liu Juan (2006b), Sun Taiqun (2006), Tu Xiuqing (2006), Wei Yun (2006), Xiao Puqing and Huang Fengzhi (2006), Zheng Jing (2006) and Zou Qiong (2006)
2007	Chen Yiping (2007), Fu Ning (2007), Han Ling (2007), Ji Hongliang (2007), Li Haijun (2007a), Li Ran (2007b), Wang Biying (2007a), Wang Yun (2007b) and Xia Xinrong (2007)
2008	He Chunyan and Liu Jingxia (2008), Hu Xiaoli (2008), Qiu Lizhong (2008), Si Xianzhu and Li Li (2008), Xu Jun and Huo Yuehong (2008), Ye Weiguo (2008), Zeng Tao (2008), Zhao Zhongzhan and Li Shali (2008)
2009	Chen Xiaoyan (2009), He Daqian (2009), Liang Dan (2009), Liu Guobing (2009), Sun Taiqun and Huang Yuanzhen (2009), Wang Jianguo (2009), Xie Fang (2009), Yan Hong and Yin Pi'an (2009)
2010	Sun Haiyan and Lu Jing (2010), Wu Yingjie and Zhao Yiquan (2010)
2011	Hu Xiaoli (2011), Yu Xi and Wen Qiufang (2011)
2013	Feng Xiaoling (2013) and Jia Guanjie (2013)



**Fig. 1** Number of widely cited publications on Chinese English research (by year)

'Forward' period, in which there was a marked increase in the number of research publications on 'China English', with a heated debate on what China English was, and how to define it. There were also meta-analysis articles towards the end of the period, e.g. Du Ruiqing and Jiang Yajun (2001). The third period can be termed as the 'Renaissance' period, in which Chinese scholars engaged in a wide range of research topics on Chinese English. There were also 'cultural' movements where researchers proposed to incorporate Chinese culture teaching into the ELT curriculum in China. There was also a continuing momentum on researching Chinese English, not simply generated among scholars and researchers, but among frontline teachers, and the 'second generation' of earlier researchers of Chinese English. The fourth period can be termed as the 'Open Door' period, in which greater awareness of not just Chinese English, but also World Englishes has been raised. Different approaches, e.g. ecplinguistics, corpus linguistics, cultural linguistics, and philosophical approach, to researching Chinese English have been suggested, and World Englishes theories have been systematically brought into China, and applied and critiqued by Chinese scholars. The 'Open Door' period symbolizes Chinese English being a member of the World Englishes, and it also re-visits (in the form of meta-analysis) Chinese English in the past, and connects Chinese scholars with international researchers on Chinese English and World Englishes, and it also points to the future directions for researching Chinese English.

## 2 Major Themes and Findings on Researching Chinese English

This section summarizes the major themes based on the meta-analysis of the 100 research articles listed in the previous section, and it also meta-analyses the major findings under each theme. Ma and Xu (see corresponding chapter in this volume) argue that World Englishes research on varieties in Kachru's three concentric circles has different themes and agendas. The Inner Circle varieties are primarily about variation and change; the Outer-Circle varieties have largely focused on the stages they have gone through so that they can be legitimized as 'new varieties of English'. In contrast, the Expanding Circle varieties focus on the extent to which these varieties exist and the naming and defining of such 'varieties'. The current meta-analysis reveals that apart from research on the existence, naming and defining of Chinese English, a wide range of other themes have emerged among Chinese scholarship between 1980 and 2013.

### 2.1 Whether Chinese English Exists

Chinese scholars vary in their views about whether Chinese English exists. Some argue that it exists (cf. Wang Rongpei 1991; Li Wenzhong 1993; Jiang Yajun and Du Ruiqing 2003), while others argue that political and social conditions for the emergence of Chinese English do not exist in China (cf. Zhang Peicheng 1995; Chen Wencun 1999; Qiu Lizhong and Ning Quanxin 2002).

Wang Rongpei (1991) was one of the first Chinese scholars to assert that Chinese English (termed then as 'China English') exists. Wang's journal paper was precisely titled *Zhongguo Yingyu shi keguan cunzai* (China English is an objective existence). Li Wenzhong (1993, p. 24) followed up on Wang (1991) by arguing that 'the existence of China English is a reality, not an assumption'. However, not all scholars agree with them. For example, Zhang Peicheng (1995, pp. 18–19) raised a counter argument that 'Chinese English is not yet a national variety of English', although he does not deny the possibility that Chinese English may gradually and partially be used in China for intranational communication, thus becoming a Chinese variety of English.

The argument that Chinese English exists has met further opposition. For example, Chen Wencun (1999, p. 70) argued that 'China English as a variety does not exist', and 'it is not necessary to have China English for intranational communication'. Zhang Rongjian (1999, p. 96) argued further that 'English is used for international communication in China, and there do not exist political and social conditions for English to be institutionalized'. Similar opposition also came from Qiu Lizhong and Ning Quanxin (2002, p. 23). They argued that it is 'impractical and unnecessary to nativize English in China' because 'it is likely to affect and interfere with the popularization of Standard English' and that 'the existence of China English will contribute

to the prevalence of Pidgin English and ossification of interlanguage'. This line of argument was further followed up by Zhu Yue (2004, p. 130), suggesting that 'China English has not formulated a stable and sustainable "China English" system yet'.

In contrast, the Wang Rongpei's (1991) and Li Wenzhong's (1993) argument that China English exists has many supporters. In responding to Qiu Lizhong and Ning Quanxin (2002), Jiang Yajun and Du Ruiqing (2003, p. 27) sought to 'elaborate on the Chinese-ness of China English with respect to the aspects of discourse, phonology and lexicon', and they took the discussion to a next level arguing that 'China English is an Asian language'. Ma Qinglin and Ji Jianfen (2003, p. 160) argued that 'China English and Chinglish co-exist [...] Chinglish results from assimilation, while China English is a result of accommodation'. Wang Dongbo (2004b, p. 94) regarded Chinese English as a 'new', 'sustainable' and 'developing' variety of English, containing not only 'norms' from standard English but also 'nutrients' from Chinese politics, economy, society, culture and the Chinese language. Mao Donghui (2004, p. 23) argued that 'China English inevitably exists in the translation of special terms in current affairs', and Wan Pengjie (2005, p. 44) reiterated that Chinese English is not an assumption, and that 'it exists, and it is worth studying'. In addition, Li Shaohua (2005b, p. 61) stated explicitly that 'the English that most Chinese use is by no means American English or British English as they have expected. It cannot be American English, nor can it be British English. It is localized China English'. Sun Taiqun (2006, p. 84) also made it clear that 'China English is the integration of English and Chinese culture in the course of internationalization', and that 'the existence of China English is an objective fact'. Since 2006, whether Chinese English exists has become less of an issue. Chinese scholars tend to agree that it exists, but how to name it and define it is yet to be resolved.

## 2.2 *Naming the Variety*

The act of naming is to provide 'a term of reference for a concept, which is a key aspect of conceptualisation' (Sargeant 2010, p. 98). The name for Chinese English is worth investigating because there have been various names proposed for the emerging Chinese variety of English. Notably, 'China English' (proposed by Ge Chuanggui 1980b, and followed up by Wang Rongpei 1991) has been dominantly adopted in the Chinese English research literature to refer to a Chinese variety of English, which is fundamentally different from Chinglish (i.e., a hybrid of English words in Chinese syntax). There has also been a recent tendency to revert back to the term of 'Chinese English', without direct association with Chinglish, as it was before.

Starting from Ge Chuanggui's (1980b) pioneering paper on the distinction between 'Chinglish' and what he termed 'China English', the naming of Chinese English has been a topic for Chinese English research. Wang Rongpei (1991) followed Ge Chuanggui (1980b) to name the Chinese variety of English as 'China English'. Their papers have had such an impact that many subsequent researchers use 'China English' to refer to the Chinese variety of English without much critique or questioning. The current meta-analysis shows that among the 100 research arti-

cles, 60 of them referred to the Chinese variety of English as ‘China English’; 13 as ‘Chinglish’; 11 as ‘Chinese English’; 8 as 中国英语 (in Chinese, an equivalent of ‘China English’); 2 as 中式英语 (in Chinese, an equivalent of ‘Chinese style English’). Other lesser known names were also proposed, including ‘Chinish’, ‘China’s English’, ‘Sinicized English’, ‘Chinese-style English’, ‘Chinese coloured English’ and ‘Chinese varieties of English (CVE)’.

The reason behind the term ‘China English’ is primarily because the term ‘Chinese English’ has a long history of association with ‘Chinglish’, which has been commonly perceived negatively with derogatory or pejorative connotations. To avoid the association, Ge Chuangui (1980b) and Wang Rongpei (1991) proposed a ‘new’ term ‘China English’ in order to make the distinction between the emerging variety of English and Chinglish more explicit.

Although the term China English has gained general acceptance in the field of Chinese English research, other terms have also been proposed. For example, Huang Jinqi (1988, p. 47) proposes the notion of ‘han hua yingyu’ (Chinese-Coloured English), and defines it as ‘correct English with Chinese colours’, reflecting ‘Chinese ideology and civilization’. He also suggests that ‘we should rectify Chinese English because it is different from Chinglish, and it is Chinese-Coloured English’. Jin Huikang (2003, p. 67) proposes ‘Chinish’ to express a brand new variety of Chinese English. For a more detailed discussion on the various names including ‘Chinese-style English’, ‘Sinicized English’, ‘Chinese pidgin English’, and ‘Rectified Chinese English’, please see Xu (2010, pp. 16–21).

A number of scholars have challenged the use of the term ‘China English’, for example, Zhang Peicheng (1995, pp. 19–20) argues that ‘it is unnecessary to avoid using Chinese English and Chinglish simply because of the negative connotations [...] we should name the Chinese variety of English as Chinese English, abbreviated as Chinglish according to international sociolinguistic conventions’. Du Zhengming (1998, p. 8) argues that we should go beyond the confusion of naming, be it Chinese English, Chinglish or Chinese variety of English, and that Chinese English, unlike Chinglish, is a ‘formally learned language’, and it is by no means a new entity from a historical perspective.

A number of researchers hold a positive view towards the term China English, but they also suggest that ‘Chinese English’ can be more appropriate in the long run. For example, Huang Jinqi (1991, p. 88) suggests that ‘we should be affirmative about China English, and we give it a straightforward name: Chinese English’. Li Wenzhong (1993, p. 19) reminds other researchers that ‘it can be named China English, however, the pattern of *noun + English* usually refers to non-established varieties, and normative English varieties all follow the pattern of *adjective + English* in their names, e.g., British English, American English, and Australian English’.

Although the term China English has dominated the literature on Chinese English research in the past three and a half decades, there has been an increasing awareness and a change of attitude towards Chinese variety of English, and people start disassociating Chinese English with Chinglish. The current literature (see the introduction of this volume) points to the direction that Chinese English should be used as a term to refer to the Chinese variety of English on a par with other members of World Englishes.

## 2.3 Defining Chinese English

Defining Chinese English has remained an issue ever since Ge Chuangui (1980b) raised the concept of ‘China English’. One of the first definitions was proposed by Wang Rongpei (1991, p. 1), who defined it as ‘the English used by the Chinese people in China, being based on standard English and having Chinese characteristics’.

Over the years, the majority of the definitions of Chinese English have collectively addressed the following questions: (1) is it ‘correct’ English? (2) does it contain Chinese characteristics? (3) is it based on standard English, normative English, English as a lingua franca or English as an international language? (4) does it have Chinese mother tongue interference or influence? (5) is it limited to lexis, syntax and discourse? (6) who uses Chinese English? (7) is it a variety of English, a Pidgin or an interlanguage? (8) is it simply a linguistic entity or a cultural enterprise or phenomenon as well? (9) is it a performance variety of English or an institutionalized variety of English? (10) is it different from Chinglish and/or Pidgin English? (11) what are the different types of Chinese English? (12) what are the broad sense and the narrow sense of Chinese English?

One of the defining features proposed by Huang Jinqi (1991, p. 88) is that ‘it is correct English’. This feature is reiterated by Liu Jun (2006b, p. 110) arguing that ‘its grammar is basically correct’. Another feature proposed by Huang Jinqi (1991, p. 88) is that it contains Chinese characteristics, or in Huang’s own terms, ‘it is full of Chinese colors, and it is English enriched by Chinese thought patterns and civilization’.

Regarding what English that Chinese English is based on, or what the core of Chinese English is, Li Wenzhong (1993, p. 19) proposes that it is based on ‘normative English’; Zhang Yi (2004, p. 74) argues that China English is an extension of the ever-evolving ‘standard English’; Liang Ying and Zhong Guoshi (2002, pp. 121–122) define China English as ‘a performance variety based on international lingua franca English’; and Jin Huikang (2003, p. 70) argues that ‘China English is part of international English, not a sort of interlanguage roughly made up by Chinese beginners of English’.

Li Wenzhong (1993, p. 10) proposes that ‘Chinese English is not interfered or influenced by the speakers’ mother tongue’; Lin Tianwen (2002, pp. 52–53) holds a similar view that Chinese English is not ‘interfered’ by Chinese language and culture. However, this proposal has subsequently been challenged by many scholars, arguing that Chinese English is an interference variety of English. For example, Zhang Peicheng (1995) argues that Chinese English is an English variety ‘interfered’ by the Chinese language and culture, and it is not yet institutionalized and therefore not a national variety of English. Liang Ying and Zhong Guoshi (2002, pp. 121–122) also agree that Chinese English ‘is an English with Chinese interference’.

Li Wenzhong (1993, p. 10) also proposes that ‘Chinese English is about lexis, syntax and discourse that are characterized by Chinese’. Similar views are reflected

in other scholars' definitions of Chinese English, for example, Lin Qiuyun (1998, p. 17) assumes that Chinese English refers to 'words with Chinese characteristics, e.g. *paper tiger*, *iron rice bowl*, and *spiritual civilization*'. Yang Narang and Yan Hong (2002, p. 88) have explored 'features of Chinese English shown in the pronunciation, words, sentence and context'.

Yan Hong and Yin Pi'an (2009, p. 54) suggest that Chinese English is 'characterized at the level of pronunciation, vocabulary, syntax and discourse'. Gao Chao (2006, p. 59) proposes that Chinese English 'manifests at different levels including phonology, lexis, sentence and discourse, with lexis being the more salient level'. Wang Jianguo (2009, p. 14) even argues that Chinese English 'exists only at lexical level but not at syntactic or textual level'. In fact, Chinese English appears at all levels of a language, as shown in a corresponding chapter by Xu and Sharifian in this volume, and it is also reflected at the levels of pragmatics, cognition and cultural linguistics.

Regarding who uses Chinese English, Wang Rongpei (1991) suggests that Chinese English is used by Chinese people in China, while Jia Guanjie and Xiang Mingyou (1997) and Jia Guanjie (2013) suggest that Chinese English is used by people whose mother tongue is Chinese. Xu (2010, p. 1) argues that Chinese English is 'used primarily by Chinese for intra- and international communication', thus not excluding non-Chinese first language speakers, and it does not necessarily have to be used exclusively in China.

The question of whether Chinese English is a variety of English, a Pidgin or an interlanguage has engendered considerable discussion in the various definitions. Ye Weiguo (2008, p. 113) defines China English as a variety of 'Standard English' in the Chinese context; Ji Hongliang (2007), Wang Biying (2007a), He Daqian (2009), Wu Yingjie and Zhao Yiquan (2010) and many other Chinese scholars also propose that Chinese English is a variety of English. Xie Fang (2009, p. 103) points out that 'China English is an English variety with Chinese characteristics; it is nativised in China, and it contributes to the development of English'. Yan Hong and Yin Pi'an (2009, p. 54) use a slightly different term, and they propose that 'China's English is a standard variant of English and has Chinese characteristics, influenced by Chinese thinking way and Chinese social culture'. Xu (2010, p. 1) acknowledges Chinese English as a 'developing variety of English, which is subject to ongoing codification and normalization processes'. The current literature on Chinese English shows that Chinese scholars are aware that Chinese English and/or China English is not an interlanguage, whereas Chinglish is closely related to Chinese learners' English or interlanguage.

Du Zhengming (1998, p. 11) also points out that Chinese English is not only 'a linguistic entity but also a cultural enterprise'. Such a view is shared by Zhang Quan and Chen Chuanli (2004, pp. 52–53), who argue that Chinese English 'is not only a language phenomenon, but also a culture phenomenon'.

Referencing Kachru's (1982) distinction between performance and institutionalized varieties of English, a number of Chinese scholars, for example, Gao Chao

(2006, p. 59), argue that Chinese English ‘is a normative and rational performance variety of English’; Liang Ying and Zhong Guoshi (2002, pp. 121–122) define Chinese English as ‘a performance variety based on international lingua franca English’; and Liu Xiangqing and Yan Xiaohua (2004, p. 94) refer to Chinese English as ‘a performance variety and result of nativization of the English language’. Few scholars have explored the possibility of Chinese English as an institutionalized variety of English. However, Ma and Xu (see corresponding chapter in this volume) have discussed the nativization of English in relation to the extent to which Chinese English is institutionalized in China.

The majority of the current literature makes a distinction between the Chinese variety of English and Chinglish. Further distinctions have also been made between Chinglish and interlanguage and Chinese Pidgin English. For example, Jin Huikang (2003, p. 66) lists the differences between Chinglish and Chinese English:

- (1) Chinglish is idiosyncratic while Chinese English is collectively Chinese; (2) Chinglish is less stable while Chinese English is theoretically and syntactically more stable; (3) Chinglish features typical negative transfer from Chinese while Chinese English is conscious, purposeful and normative ‘borrowing’ from Chinese; (4) Chinglish is interlanguage while Chinese English features positive and normative transfers from Chinese language and culture.

Regarding the different types of Chinese English that co-exist, Lin Tianwen (2002, pp. 52–53) has summarized them as follows:

- (1) Chinese English that is no different from native speaker varieties of English; (2) Chinese English that is grammatical, but not conforming to native speaker varieties of English; (3) Chinese English that is not grammatical, but conforming to and being accepted by native speakers of English; and (4) Chinese English that is not conforming to ‘normative English’ but clear and comprehensible to native speakers of English, or easily and readily comprehensible upon explanation.

In addition, a number of scholars have pointed out that Chinese English should be understood in both its broad and narrow senses. For example, Jin Huikang (2002, p. 72) suggests that ‘in a very broad sense, all the English that involves Chinese cultures and Chinese characteristics and that can be commonly comprehended and accepted by users of other international Englishes can be called China English’. Gao Chao (2006, p. 59) argues that ‘in a broad sense, Chinese English is the English used by Chinese in China, comprising a common core of English, and nativized Chinese features of English; in a narrow sense, Chinese English is the English that has typical Chinese characteristics and it is used to express Chinese society and culture’. Li Difei (2006a, p. 84) points out that ‘China English, in its broad sense, refers to a variety of international English, and it emerges when international English is used to describe Chinese civilization and Chinese society. In its narrow sense, it refers to the extended portion of English when it is used to describe and translate Chinese society and language’.

## 2.4 *Distinguishing between Chinese English and Chinglish*

The field of Chinese English research started with the attempt of Chinese scholars to make a distinction between Chinese English and Chinglish. Ge Chuangui (1980b) raised the concept of ‘China English’ in the early 1980s in order to distinguish between Chinese English and Chinglish. Ge Chuangui (1980a, pp. 24–25) also points out that whether certain expressions are ‘China English’ or Chinglish should be analyzed on a case-by-case basis.

Li Wenzhong (1993, p. 80) makes an explicit distinction between China English and Chinglish:

China English, mainly used as an international language in China, with Chinese borrowings, nativized lexicology as well as unique syntax and discourse structure as its major features, contributes much to the international communication. In contrast, Chinglish refers to the Sinicized English usually found in pronunciation, lexicology and syntax, due to the linguistic transfer or ‘the arbitrary translation’ by the Chinese English learners, thus being regarded as an unaccepted form of English. [...]

Du Zhengming (1998, p. 9) makes a distinction between ‘interlanguage of learner’s English’ and Chinese English by pointing out that the former refers to features of individuals’ use of English, while the latter refers to collective features of Chinese users of English. The former comprises unconscious or undesirable transfer of Chinese elements or thought patterns, with as much negative transfer as positive transfer; while the latter is consciously adopted to meet the special requirements or purposes of the Chinese, with the minimum amount of negative transfer and the maximum of positive transfer.

Jin Huikang (2003, p. 66) has summarized the differences between Chinglish and China English as follows:

- (1) Chinglish is idiosyncratic while China English is collectively Chinese;
- (2) Chinglish is less stable while China English is theoretically and syntactically more stable;
- (3) Chinglish features typical negative transfer from Chinese; while China English is conscious, purposeful and normative ‘borrowing’ from Chinese;
- (4) Chinglish is interlanguage while China English features positive and normative transfers from Chinese language and culture.

Similarly, Cao Ning (2006) has discussed the relationship between China English and Chinglish, pointing out that China English and Chinglish share similarities in terms of their emergence and development, and they are both products of the interaction between Chinese and English due to their different thought patterns, language structures and cultural elements. The distinctions between the two mainly lie in:

- (1) Chinglish is more individual oriented, while China English has a collective orientation;
- (2) Chinglish is less stable, and it’s in a constant process of self-rectification, while China English is relatively stable in both theory and grammar, and it has been increasingly accepted as a means for China’s opening up to the outside world and for international communication;
- (3) Chinglish implies passive and negative interference from Chinese due to low proficiency of the Chinese learners of English, while China English users ‘borrow’

Chinese expressions consciously, purposefully, and through formal means, to describe Chinese civilization and to express Chinese views on world affairs; (4) Chinglish is used mainly by Chinese learners of English, and it is a relatively random, subjective, and ‘creative’ non-normative interlanguage; while China English users are primarily those who use English professionally for English media in China; and those who report China news in overseas media; those Chinese who engage in creative writing in English; teaching and research professionals in higher institutions and Chinese-English translators and interpreters. They maximize the positive transfer from Chinese and Chinese culture in their use of English, and minimize negative transfer.

Xia Xinrong (2007, p. 102) has clearly made a distinction between Chinese English and Chinglish:

Chinese English, as performance variety, is a neutral medium used mainly for international communication and communication between Chinese and non-Chinese people, while Chinglish, a linguistic term used in English teaching, is a system of inter-language between the native and the target languages used by English learners of the Chinese when they haven’t mastered standard English. Chinglish embodies the inevitable mental disposition and linguistic phenomenon of language learning process.

Ma Wenli (2009b, p. 465) argues that ‘China English takes the Standard English as the core, and it has Chinese characteristics; while Chinglish follows Chinese patterns and conventions, and it hinders communication’.

Not all scholars agree that Chinese English and Chinglish are entirely different. For example, Zhang Peicheng (1995, p. 20) thinks that ‘Chinese English and Chinglish are two representations of a single entity’. Hao Jihuan (2003, p. 48) argues that ‘neither Chinese English nor Chinglish can avoid mother tongue interference, because the pragmatic principles are deep rooted in the users of English’. Zhang Yi (2004) argues that under appropriate conditions, there can be a transition from Chinglish to China English, for example, in Chinese context, address terms such as Teacher Zhang, Teacher Li, and Teacher Peter Smith may not be considered as Chinglish, but China English.

## 2.5 *The ‘China English’ Debate*

The ‘China English’ debate started when Ge Chuangui (1980b) raised the concept of ‘China English’ and Wang Rongpei (1991) defined it. Supporters of ‘China English’, for example, Li Wenzhong (1993), Jia Guanjie and Xiang Mingyou (1997), and Du Ruiqing and Jiang Yajun (2001), further developed the definitions of China English and argue that it exists and it facilitates international communication. However, opponents, for example, Chen Wencun (1999), Qiu Lizhong and Ning Quanxin (2002) and Qiu Lizhong (2008) argue that the conditions for China English to develop into a variety of English do not exist, and China English may hinder Chinese learners from learning standard English. In particular, Chen Wencun (1999, p. 70) argues that ‘(1) China English as a variety does not exist. English in China is either for international communication or for domestic learning purposes, and it is

not used for intra-national communication; (2) it is not necessary to have China English for intra-national communication; (3) Chinglish widely exists, but it is not a variety, and it comprises errors made by Chinese learners of English'. In addition, Qiu Lizhong (2008, pp. 134–135) contends explicitly that 'it is not mature enough for us to consider whether China English is a variety of English [...] It should be the right direction of Chinese foreign language education to follow the official standards of British English or American English which are commonly accepted around the world'.

The 'China English' debate centers around the naming, the definitions of China English, and whether China English is a variety of English (Tu Xiuqing, 2006, pp. 82–83). 'The debate on the existence of China English took place at the time when the Quirk-Kachru debate on the standard(s) of English started' (Liu Guobing, 2009, p. 6). Two of the central issues surrounding the debate include '(1) the status of China English, whether it is an institutionalized variety for both intra- and international communication, or a performance variety for international communication; (2) how to look at issues associated with Chinese 'interference' in China English' (Li Shaohua 2005b, pp. 61–62). Zhu Yue (2004, p. 129) points out that the 'China English' debate is 'largely due to the different selection criteria for China English data collection. Some collect spoken China English data, and some collect written data; such data may be collected from beginners, intermediate learners and advanced learners of English; some data are collected from Chinese official media, while others are from learners' homework assignments; some data are even fabricated for the sake of "debate", e.g. *I yesterday buy two pen*'.

The debate on 'China English' became less heated when the research reached its third period of 'Renaissance', where researchers moved forward in exploring features of Chinese English, awareness of and attitudes towards Chinese English, and the implications of Chinese English research for the ELT in China.

## 2.6 Awareness of and Attitudes towards Chinese English

Research on awareness and attitude has always been a topic in World Englishes studies. The literature up to 2003 shows that there has not been much awareness of World Englishes and Chinese English among Chinese learners and users of English. Hu Xiaoqiong (2003, p. 94) has conducted a large scale survey on the awareness of World Englishes and China English and concluded that 'the answers from the 1261 university students show that the majority of them know very little about World Englishes and China English'. However, the increasing quantity and quality of Chinese English research literature, particularly during the 'Renaissance' period, indicate a rising awareness of Chinese English in academia.

Regarding various attitudes towards Chinese English, Pan Xiangxian (2002, pp. 25–26) has summarized three 'attitudes' towards Chinese English, including optimistic and affirmative, cautious or contradictory, and doubtful or negative attitudes. Liu Guobing (2009, pp. 6–7) has also summarized three 'attitudes' to Chinese

English and listed relevant publications to support his summary: “(1) negative: e.g. Chen Wencun (1999), Qiu Lizhong & Ning Quanxin (2002); (2) neutral: e.g. Sun Li (1989), Zhang Peicheng (1995), Pan Zhangxian (2002), Xie Zhijun (1995), Lin Qiuyun (1998); (3) positive: e.g. Huang Jinqi (1988), Jia Delin (1990), Wang Rongpei (1991), Li Wenzhong (1993), Jia Guanjie & Xiang Mingyou (1997), Du Zhengming (1998), Lin Qiuyun (1998), Jiang Yajun and Du Ruiqing (2003), Jin Huikang (2004), and Gao Chao (2006)”.

Du Zhengming (1998, p. 9) argues that ‘mixing Chinese learners’ language (i.e., interlanguage) with Chinese English has given rise to self-contradictory attitudes between confirming and rejecting Chinese English’. He points out that ‘theoretical research on Chinese English has substantially abandoned the actual objective needs of developments of Chinese English in the society’, and he suggests that we should treat Chinese English as ‘a cultural phenomenon with an attitude of tolerance and open-mindedness’ (Du Zhengming, 1998, p. 13).

This proposal of a tolerant and open-minded attitude has been supported by a number of Chinese scholars not without reservations, for example, Pan Zhangxian (2002, p. 26) suggests that ‘we should adopt open, tolerant and active attitudes towards China English research while in the meantime we should also be cautious. China English should aim at achieving mutual communication, and mutual recognition between interlocutors’.

Zhang Quan and Chen Chuanli (2004, p. 53) further reiterate the importance of affirmative attitudes by arguing that ‘what is most worth drawing our attention about China English is that we should adopt active and affirmative attitudes towards China English, confirm its irreplaceable exchange value in communication, and explore its theoretical implications and scope of use, so that it serves the purpose of intercultural communication’.

On a positive note, towards the end of the ‘Renaissance’ period of Chinese English research, Hu Xiaoli (2008, p. 28) points out that ‘there is an increasing tendency among Chinese scholars to hold positive attitudes towards China English because they are supported by the sociolinguistic theories’.

## **2.7 Acceptability of Chinese English**

Acceptability of Chinese English is less of an issue in Chinese English research. Researchers point out that acceptability of Chinese English depends on the type of communication (international or intranational), the interlocutors, and some argue that it is not a matter of acceptability but the efficiency in conveying Chinese cultures, and the self-confidence of the users of Chinese English.

A number of Chinese researchers have looked into the issue of ‘acceptability’ of Chinese English. Zhang Peicheng (1995, p. 72) argues that ‘whether a Chinese English word, phrase, sentence, or discourse is considered acceptable by the interlocutor depends on whether the language is being used internationally or intranationally’. Du Zhengming (1998, p. 12) argues from a sociolinguistics perspective

that ‘the so-called Chinese “interference” precisely reflects Chinese linguistic and thought patterns and it is an integral part of Chinese culture. Therefore, it does not have much to do with whether Chinese English can be accepted or acknowledged or not’.

Zhang Quan and Chen Chuanli (2004, p. 53) argue that ‘as a medium of Chinese culture, it is natural that China English is influenced by Chinese, and its Chinese features have been increasingly recognized and accepted by native speakers of English’. Li Shaohua (2005b, p. 63) argues that ‘whether China English can be accepted should rely on Chinese users of English, not others’. Li (2005a, p. 63) further points out that ‘in terms of “standards”, what China English currently lacks, in comparison with other varieties of English, is self-confidence, not standards’.

## 2.8 Functions and Significance of Chinese English

The majority of Chinese scholars view Chinese English positively and a number of them have explicitly discussed the necessity, functions and significance of Chinese English, for example, Han Ling (2007, p. 30) points out that ‘when traditional English becomes insufficient for the world to know China, and it does not guarantee successful communication between China and the World, China English has become an obvious option’.

Hu Xiaoli (2011, p. 103) elaborates on the functions of what she would call ‘Chinese varieties of English (CVE)’:

Chinese people choose CVE as a communicative strategy to help language users realize their various communicative purposes, including referring to the things unique to China, expressing emotion, constructing identity, revealing a relationship and highlighting an ideology, which reveals that choosing and using this variety is an important communicating strategy and of theoretical meaning.

As early as 1990s, Jia Guanjie and Xiang Mingyou (1997, p. 12) pointed out that ‘the existence of China English has contributed to the English language itself in terms of enriching its lexis and increasing the scope of its influence’.

Similar views have also been expressed by Ma Wenli (2009a, p. 143), who points out that ‘Chinese English will continue to exist with great vitality, and it will also vitalize the English language, enrich its vocabulary, and sentences’. Ma Wenli (2009a, p. 156) also points out that ‘the existence of Chinese English in media is justified in terms of pragmatics and international communication: it is the most effective way to transmit Chinese culture; it accords with the law of language development [...] and there is a great ideological significance in Chinese English and its popularity is of strategic importance’.

Chen Xiaoyan (2009, pp. 166–167) acknowledges the significance of localizing English for teaching Chinese English, arguing that ‘it will help learners understand the nature of language learning, enhance their national, linguistic and cultural identification, and be clear about the purpose of using English’.

## 2.9 Features of Chinese English

Analysis of the features of Chinese English has undertaken a slow but steady process, partly because the issues of naming, defining and whether Chinese English is a variety of English have not entirely been resolved, and partly because features analysis involves relevant corpus studies. There have also been issues with what data can be collected to construct Chinese English corpus.

Du Zhengming (1998, p. 14) points out the importance of features analysis of Chinese English by suggesting that ‘we should enhance the investigation and analysis of Chinese English, summarizing its features so that we strengthen international communication, and promote Chinese cultures’. Du Zhengming (1998, p. 11) uses examples to show that Chinese English features may not conform to the norms of English but they do not necessarily imply ungrammaticality, e.g. *Yesterday Mary bought a book.* vs. *Mary bought a book yesterday. I think she will not come.* vs. *I don’t think she will come. To learn English is not easy.* vs. *It’s not easy to learn English.* Zhang Rongjian (1999, pp. 95–96) also uses examples to show lexical features of Chinese English, i.e. ‘vocabulary that is closely associated with Chinese environment, things and conceptualizations, e.g. *open-door policy, market-oriented economy, socialism with Chinese characteristics*’.

Zhang Wenxia (2002) has conducted a small scale empirical study on how China English rhetorical patterns are perceived and assessed by raters, including Native Speakers of English and Chinese Speakers of English, and she suggests that student writers should be aware of different rhetorical patterns, and make informed choices based on different writing assessment contexts.

Wang Dongbo’s (2004b, p. 96) research on the phonological features of Chinese English focuses on segmental and suprasegmental features. He discovers that although Chinese speakers of English may mix a few sounds that do not exist in Chinese speech, ‘they should not be considered as errors or mistakes as long as they do not impede communication’. He argues that ‘it is the suprasegmental features, including intonation and stress, that reflect more on the phonological features of Chinese English’. In addition, Zhang Yi (2004, p. 95) has investigated the use of sentence ending particles in Chinese English, for example, *Long time no see la; You are a student ba? It’s ok la; I’ve told you three times le ye.*

Sun Taiqun (2006, pp. 85–87) has exemplified the lexical features of Chinese English by illustrating different ways of incorporating Chinese loan words and expressions into English, for example, transliteration, e.g. words of food and drinks: *tea, chow mein, wonton*; words of Chinese history and culture: *Confucius, Yamen, cheongsam, Yin, Yang*; words of Chinese brand names: *Hisense, Haier*; and loan translations *Taoism, Buddhism, the Four Books and the Five Classics; to draw a snake and add feet to it, and one arrow, two hawks*. These also include tourist sites such as *The Great Wall, the Summer Palace, the Forbidden City, Tian An Men Square*. At the level of syntax, Sun (2006) points out the distinction between paratactic and hypotactic structures, and at the level of discourse, circular and linear thought patterns.

Based on a survey of the features analysis of Chinese English research, Liu Xiangqing (2005, p. 73) summarizes that ‘Chinese English research is fruitful at the levels of phonology and lexis, but not so much in syntax and discourse’. This research gap in features analysis of Chinese English has been addressed by Xu Zhichang (2010), who has conducted the ‘first full-length study and description of Chinese English’ (cited from the Foreword by Andy Kirkpatrick). (See Xu Zhichang 2010, for a detailed analysis of Chinese English).

## ***2.10 Applications of Chinese English***

Limited as it were, the current literature has also explored the various applications of Chinese English in and surrounding the Chinese society. These include the use of English in the Media, in Chinese-English translations, for intercultural communication, and for constructing Chinese identity.

The use of English in the media in China research has rarely been carried out from the perspective of Chinese English. Among the 100 research articles, Ma Wenli’s (2009b) has summarized that by 2009 there had been Xinhua News Agency (releasing news also in English), two English television channels, one English radio, ten English newspapers (daily and weekly), ten English magazines and nine English website portals for disseminating Chinese news to the outside world.

There has been considerable literature on Chinese-English translation studies, but Chinese English research and Chinese-English translation studies rarely cross roads. One of the reasons is that there has been an issue regarding whether English translations of Chinese texts belong to Chinese English. Among the few studies, Si Xianzhu and Li Li (2008, p. 49) argue that “translation is supposed to cater for the author and the reader. Hence ‘faithfulness’ and ‘expressiveness’ are inherent of the translation criteria. For this reason ‘alienation’ and ‘domestication’, together with ‘literal translation’ and ‘liberal translation’ are the corresponding strategies that are adopted. Moreover, in foreign language learning and use, it is inevitable that some characteristics of the first language will be transferred into the second language (foreign language). Those factors combined account for what is called ‘China English’ in CE translation.”

Zhang Xinyuan (2003, pp. 44–45) points out that ‘in the field of Chinese English translation, the distinction between China English and Chinglish has been a debatable issue’. Zhang Quan and Chen Chuanli (2004, p. 55) suggest that in Chinese-English translation, ‘alienation should be adopted as the principal strategy for translating Chinese culture-loaded words but it should not be abused’. Li Xuehong’s (2005c, p. 79) shows that ‘for Chinese students, Chinglish is one of the major problems which affect the quality of their Chinese-English translation’. Li Haijun (2007a) reviews the English translations of the Beijing 2008 Olympics mascots, from ‘Friendlies’ to ‘Fuwa’, and he argues that China English research has a bright future, and China English will play a significant role in intercultural communication. More recently, Feng Xiaoling (2013, p. 129) argues for the rationality of the

existence of Chinese English in the translation of neologisms which carry the characteristics of Chinese English. He provides examples, e.g. *fengshui* instead of ‘the location of a house or tomb, supposed to have an influence on the fortune of a family’, and *fu er dai* (the second generation children of the super-rich) instead of *silver-spoon kids*.

The relationship between Chinese English and intercultural communication is an under-researched area. Zhou Nan (2005, p. 66) points out that ‘while previously people emphasized the learning of the western culture so much that many cultural peculiarities of China have been ignored’ and that ‘we Chinese should express the things that are unique to China in the so-called China English’.

The relationship between Chinese English and Chinese cultural identity is also an under-researched area. He Chunyan and Liu Jingxia (2008, p. 86) argue that ‘with the globalization and nativization of English, English has multiple cultural identities. The appearance of Chinese English predicates that Chinese which is emerging into the international culture and modern society has the cultural identity in international communication. Chinese cultural identity hidden behind Chinese English shows the inevitability of Chinese English’.

The applications of Chinese English in other areas, for example, bilingual education, medium of instruction at schools, business and trade, literary studies, and law, are yet to be explored, based on the current analysis of the literature on Chinese English.

## **2.11 Implications of Chinese English for ELT**

One of the most explored areas of Chinese English research is implications of Chinese English for ELT in China. Since the majority of Chinese English researchers are based in universities, their research interests are mainly about whether Chinese English should be explicitly incorporated into the ELT curriculum.

Jia Guanjie and Xiang Mingyou (1997, p. 12) set an agenda for Chinese English to enter the English classroom in China: ‘first the existence of China English should be fully acknowledged; secondly features of China English should be discovered and analyzed systematically, and thirdly, decisions have to be made about ‘what features are inevitable (without forcing Chinese learners to eliminate them), what features are actually helpful for enhancing the exchange of Chinese cultures (so that students may learn/acquire them), and what features must be overcome (suggesting learners to eliminate them)’. Zhang Quan (2005b, p. 95) also calls for a systematic linguistic description of the norms of Chinese English. He argues that ‘it is necessary to attach importance to the standardization of the English language, especially in English teaching in China, when China English is being widely accepted’.

The current literature has collectively explored implications of Chinese English for ELT in China. These include:

1. Chinese English should be brought into the ELT classroom in China. Du Zhengming (1998, p. 11) points out that ‘it is not “normal” for Chinese learners to recite Shakespeare’s sonnets such as *Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day* while not knowing how to express *one country two systems*’. Wang Dongbo (2004b, p. 96) has also addressed this by pointing out that ‘one of the difficulties that Chinese learners of English encounter is that they are not capable of describing and talking about things of Chinese characteristics’. Wei Yun (2006, p. 31) points out that one of the problems of current ELT in China is the phenomenon of ‘new dumb English’, or ‘Chinese culture aphasia’, that is ‘the inability of Chinese users of English to express Chinese culture in intercultural communication’. Meng Zhen and Yu Zhengting (2003, pp. 10–11) have explicitly suggested that ‘introducing Chinese English to Chinese learners of English will help them boost their confidence’. Hu Xiaoqiong (2003, pp. 92–94) has also suggested that we should ‘research China English and bring China English into Chinese ELT classrooms; integrate China English into English teaching material and ELT curriculum; and expose students to World Englishes and enable them to take the communicative responsibility. Li Shaohua (2005b, p. 63) argues that ‘ELT in China has been “time-consuming but inefficient” (“费时低效”) precisely because there has not been a breakthrough in bringing China English into the Chinese classroom’. Liu Xiangqing (2005, pp. 74–75) elaborates on the impact of bringing Chinese English into the ELT classroom, for example ‘(1) it changes our attitudes towards culture and cultural teaching; (2) it enables us to recognize the influence of Chinese thought patterns and Chinese culture on language and culture teaching; and (3) it changes our attitudes towards “standard English” and enriches and improves the content of cultural teaching’. Zeng Tao (2008, pp. 69–70) also points out that ‘(1) China English is an important variety for training the intercultural communication competence of Chinese university students; (2) China English helps Chinese students guarantee and strengthen their viewpoints, their cultural awareness, their cultural characteristics and their cultural identity and sense of belonging’. In addition, Li Jianfu (2006b, p. 110) points out that ‘the purpose of recognizing and using China English is to express things that are characteristically Chinese, i.e., the Chineseness, so that other speakers of English can comprehend and communicate with Chinese English speakers’.
2. Chinese English should be incorporated into the model(s) for ELT in China. Du Zhengming (1998, p. 12) argues that ‘no matter which native variety of English is adopted as the model, it is difficult to express precisely Chinese particularities in many Chinese socio-cultural domains; and no matter how important people perceive mastering standard English, the majority of Chinese learners cannot achieve near-nativeness in their English’. However, Zeng Tao (2008, pp. 69–70) argues that China English is at its initial developmental stage, and it does not have a mature theoretical framework. It is not an independent language and it has not been fully nativised in China, therefore Chinese ELT should still be based on ‘standard English’, not China English.

3. Chinese culture teaching alongside Chinese English teaching is important in the ELT classroom. Du Zhengming (1998, p. 14) suggests that ‘teaching materials should include Chinese English cultures (including English literary works written by Chinese, English translations of Chinese works, and literary works written by native speakers about China), and comparative Chinese and English cultures’. Wang Xiangping (2000, p. 134) emphasizes that ‘in English studies, we must pay special attention to the comparison between the English and Chinese cultures and thought, and the difference between the English and Chinese expressions’. Meng Zhen and Yu Zhengting (2003, pp. 10–11) suggest that ‘English textbooks should contain Chinese culture so that learners learn how to express Chinese culture in English’. Li Difei (2006a, p. 82) points out that ‘British and American culture components dominate ELT cultural teaching while Chinese culture has been greatly negligible; failures in cross-cultural communication of the Chinese learners of English are not predominately caused by insufficient knowledge of British and American cultures, but the learners’ inabilities to express Chinese culture in the target language (i.e., English)’. Li Difei (2006a, p. 86) argues that ‘ELT materials should include Chinese culture and China English. China English functions as medium for Chinese culture teaching’. Wei Yun (2006, p. 31) argues that ‘the existence of Chinese English as a national variety of English has enriched the cultural teaching content in Chinese ELT, and it has pointed to a new direction for Chinese ELT cultural teaching, i.e. Chinese ELT should not only include target cultures, but also Chinese culture’. Wang Yun (2007b, p. 61) proposes that ‘in order to improve Chinese learners’ ability to express Chinese culture in English, ELT in China should incorporate Chinese culture teaching with China English as a carrier/medium’. Ye Weiguo (2008, pp. 112–113) argues that ‘Chinese ELT materials should include Chinese native cultural content, e.g. how to express what the Chinese students have for their breakfast, *xifan*, *mantou*, *doujiang*, *youtiao* (porridge/congee, steamed buns, soybean milk, and fried dough sticks). The textbooks should not only be about London and New York, but also Beijing and Shanghai’.
4. Foreign English teachers from various countries should be employed for ELT in China. Hu Xiaoqiong (2003, pp. 92–94) suggests that ‘we should not only invite foreign teachers from the Inner Circle countries, but also teachers from the Outer and Expanding Circles including India, Singapore, Korea, Nepal, Russia and Saudi Arabia’.
5. There are also pedagogical implications. Li Shaohua (2005b, p. 63) points out that Chinese English teachers have been too restricted to textbooks, without connecting their teaching with the social realities and expressing in English their immediate environments’. Tu Xiuqing (2006, p. 86) argues that ELT in China promotes ‘hypercorrect English’, and that the over-sensitivity of Chinese scholars to China English has precisely prevented the development of China English. In terms of teaching writing, Liu Xiangqing and Yan Xiaohua (2004, p. 94) argue that ‘acceptance and study of the discourse features of China English is instructive and helpful to the teaching of English writing’, and that ‘the model of thought and the culture of the Han nationality and the writing requirements of

the Chinese language should be reflected in the English written by Chinese, with a result of the formation of discourse features of China English'. Sun Taiqun and Huang Yuanzhen (2009, pp. 134–136) summarize the major problems of ELT in China, including 'overemphasizing the teaching of "standard or standardized" English; and neglecting the teaching of Chinese cultures'. They argue that 'English learning will not be authentic language learning unless English teaching has been localized'. They propose that measures to localize ELT in China include '(1) setting appropriate and attainable goals based on Chinese situations; (2) promoting Chinese English, and rationalizing "standard English"; (3) nurturing the sense of bilingual English and Chinese, and improving the competence for intercultural communication (in terms of sensitivity, tolerance and flexibility towards cultural differences and variations)'. Chen Xiaoyan (2009, p. 163) argues that 'in English teaching in China, it is of great significance for the students to understand the nature of language learning, enhance their sense of identity to mother tongue and have a clear understanding of the purpose of using languages'.

More recently, Wu Yingjie and Zhao Yiquan (2010, p. 167) have also explored the implications of Chinese English for ELT in China. These conclude that (1) teaching materials should include cultures of the three circles (including local Chinese cultures); (2) teachers and students should be informed of the development of World Englishes, and English is not owned by 'standard English' speakers, but by World Englishes users; (3) both what to say (comprehensibility) and who the speakers are (identity) are important in international communication'.

## 2.12 *Reviews of Chinese English Research*

The current literature also contains reviews of Chinese English research. One of the earliest reviews was by Du Ruiqing and Jiang Yajun (2001), suggesting that since 1980s, research on Chinese English has moved beyond error analysis and contrastive analysis, however, the latter has laid a good foundation for Chinese English research. Du Ruiqing and Jiang Yajun (2001) have briefly reviewed research of Chinese English at the levels of phonology, lexis (e.g., *Dumpling*, *Ravioli*, or *jiaozi*) and discourse (e.g., the use of big and formal words) and they call for further research on different levels of Chinese English.

Qiu Lizhong and Ning Quanxin (2002, p. 25) predict that it would take 50 years (i.e., 2052) for Chinese English to proclaim itself to be an independent variety of English. Zhu Yue (2004) has also reviewed Chinese English research and summarized the criteria for Chinese English to become an institutionalized variety or a national variety of English. These include (1) relatively stable phonological, syntactic and lexical systems; (2) widely accepted norms, rules and criteria associated with the variety; (3) a considerable number of users with English as the medium for daily communication; (4) the variety must enter the family domain; (5) a consider-

able number of mother tongue users of the variety; (6) a considerable volume of literary works written in the variety; (7) the variety should have official status, or be one of the government's working languages.

Informed by the theory of World Englishes, Gao Chao (2006) has explored globalization and nativization, standardization of English, and ownership of English, as well as the definitions of China English.

Han Ling (2007, pp. 31–32) has conducted a comprehensive meta-analysis of Chinese English research, and she summarizes six sub-areas of Chinese English research: (1) China English and English varieties; (2) China English and cross-cultural communication; (3) China English and Chinese-English Translation; (4) China English and linguistic conceptual variation; (5) China English and Negative Transfer (Mother tongue interference) from Chinese; (6) China English and ELT. Other less prominent areas include phonological studies, writing studies and corpus studies.

Xu Jun and Huo Yuehong (2008, p. 47) focus on the definitions of China English and they conclude that 'China English is (1) used by Chinese; (2) based on normative English; and (3) adopted to express uniquely Chinese things and promote the spread of Chinese culture. The nature of China English is to express Chinese culture in English'.

Hu Xiaoli (2008, p. 29) focuses on the major areas of Chinese English research. These include (1) the nature of Chinese English, e.g., defining, contextualizing Chinese English; how China English is related to Chinglish and interlanguage; why it exists and what it is, and where its norms come from; (2) the linguistic features of Chinese English, including phonological, lexical, syntactic, discourse and stylistic features in terms of forms of expression and Chinese culture; (3) the function of Chinese English, including Chinese English for intra-national and international communication, and Chinese English as means of getting external information, circulating internal information, serving its social function, being a carrier for Chinese culture, filling the gaps between Chinese and Western cultures, and serving its pragmatic function; (4) the status of Chinese English, including whether it is a performance variety or an institutionalized variety, its status among other varieties of English, its acceptability and comprehensibility, and its identification with learners and users.

Zhao Zhongzhan and Li Shali's (2008) focus on future directions for researching China English. In terms of methods, they suggest that researching China English should adopt a descriptive approach, not a prescriptive approach; and in terms of directions, they suggest that the focus should be placed on the discourse level, not just on the surface level of lexis.

Chen Xiaoyan (2009, p. 163) has reviewed China English research up to 2009, pointing out that it was Sun Li's paper on 'Research on English varieties and English in China' published in 1989 that started the research on China English. Chen Xiaoyan (2009, pp. 165–166) summarizes China English research into: '(1) whether China English exists and the distinction between China English and Chinese English/Chinglish; (2) the nature of China English, whether it is a variety of English, or an interference variety of English; (3) research on the different levels of China

English, including phonological, lexical, syntactic and discourse, and the features of China English; and (4) the awareness and attitudes of Chinese students towards China English'.

In addition, Chinese scholars also reference World Englishes theories in probing issues of Chinese English. For example, Zhang Peicheng (1995) acknowledges Kachru's three circles of English, but he argues that since English is primarily used in China for international instead of intranational communication, Chinese English cannot be regarded as a national variety of English. Du Ruiqing and Jiang Yajun (2001, p. 37) have reviewed the Quirk-Kachru debate with regards to single versus multiple standards of English. Two years later, Jiang Yajun and Du Ruiqing (2003) reviewed the special issues of the World Englishes Journal, including Hong Kong English: Autonomy and Creativity (2000), and English in China: Interdisciplinary Perspectives (2002), and Kingsley Bolton's Chinese Englishes: A Sociolinguistic History, and they have elaborated on the Chineseness of Chinese English in discourse, phonology and lexicon. They argue that 'issues of China English should not be restricted to discussions in the Ivory Tower, but real life issues people would confront in the near future' (Jiang Yajun and Du Ruiqing, 2003, p. 34).

Xu Xiaoqing (2005, p. 113) refers to the development of World Englishes, in particular, the two contrasting attitudes towards English development represented by Quirk's view on standard English and Kachru's view on English varieties, pointing out that 'it is not the right time for nativizing English in China, because such a variety as China English has not yet been established systematically'. Chen Xiaoyan (2009, pp. 163–165) has reviewed the 'localization' of English and its relevant issues, taking reference to Kachru's three concentric circles, Phillipson's core English-speaking countries versus periphery-English countries, Jenkins' International English and Lingua Franca Core, and the Quirk-Kachru debate surrounding 'Standard English' and 'World Englishes'.

With the fourth research period from 2013 onwards being the 'Open Door' stage, Chinese scholars have become more open-minded with Chinese English. In addition, international collaborative research projects conducted by both Chinese scholars in and outside China as well as international scholars are on the rise. Chinese scholars have started re-visiting previous research and looking forward to future research both in China and elsewhere in search of advanced theories to map Chinese English onto the World Englishes atlas.

## ***2.13 Stages of Researching Chinese English***

Chinese English research has continued for three and a half decades, and it has gone through a number of stages. Chinese scholars have slightly different views on the division of stages. Li Wenzhong (2006c, pp. 132–133) proposes that the Chinese English research stages include: '(1) rejection and complete denial, mixing China English with Chinese English and Chinese Pidgin English; (2) defining and categorization, from early 1990s, (a). China English exists; (b). China English is a variety

of English; (c). China English research has theoretical and practical significance for ELT in China; (3) quantitative and case studies on China English'.

Using data mining technology, Han Ling (2007, pp. 29–30) has provided a statistical analysis of research publications on China English up to 2006. She has summarized China English research into three periods: '(1) initial research (1965–1991): no definitive descriptions of China English yet; a number of different terms (e.g., China English, Chinese-Coloured English, Sinicized English, Chinglish) used to describe the phenomenon; (2) vigorous debate (1992–2001): during 1992 and 1997, the debate centres around the definitions of China English; during 1998 and 2001, people do not avoid the existence of China English; the debate centres around the influence and impact of China English; (3) recognition of China English (2002–2006). Research articles during this period (248) are five times more than the sum of the previous periods'.

Similarly, He Daqian (2009, p. 111) has also summarized Chinese English research into three periods: '(1) 1965–1991: it started from the middle of 1960s because it was at that time that sociolinguistics was introduced into China; the notion of Chinese English had not been specified; research focused on the deviations of Chinglish from traditional English; (2) 1992–2001: research was restricted to a number of researchers; preliminary research on China English phonology, lexis and discourse; (3) 2002-present: substantial progress in Chinese English research. Areas of research include: Chinese English as a variety of English; Chinese English and intercultural communication; translation approaches; cognitive research; mother tongue transfer; and ELT research'.

## **2.14 Methods for Researching Chinese English**

The current literature also contains articles focusing on methods for researching Chinese English. Pan Zhangxian (2002, p. 25) proposes that Chinese English research should encompass sociolinguistics, cross-cultural communication, pragmatics, stylistics, and translation studies. 'There should be two dimensions in researching China English: diachronically, looking into the historical development of China English and the evolution of its features; and synchronically, making informed comparative studies between China English and other varieties of English'.

Pan Zhangxian (2002, p. 26) agrees with Xie Zhijun (1995) and Du Zhengming (1998) by quoting them 'researching China English should not start from defining it, but from addressing its associated issues'. A number of Chinese scholars have explored the issues and challenges of researching Chinese English. For example, Pan Zhangxian (2002, p. 26) summarizes the reasons for the unsatisfactory research on China English, including 'limited corpus of China English; and the unclear criteria for measuring China English'. Hu Xiaoli (2008, p. 29) lists some of the main issues with researching Chinese English, including (1) concepts lack common grounds, and relevant theories are weak; (2) research methods are not clear, e.g.

should Chinese English research be prescriptive or descriptive? What are the criteria for Chinese English? How to address the imbalance between vast macro descriptions and limited micro analyses and in-depth case studies? (3) insufficient empirical studies; (4) imbalance in research areas.

In addition, Hu Xiaoli (2008, pp. 29–30) has also summarized a number of challenges that Chinese English research is faced with, including (1) theoretical exploration and construction; (2) strengthening China English research and building China English corpus; (3) cross-disciplinary research and application of China English, including linguistics, pragmatics, stylistics, translation studies, cognitive linguistics, corpus linguistics, computational linguistics; (4) cross-cultural studies of China English (including the Chinese mainland, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Macao) adopting diachronic and synchronic approaches; (5) attitudinal studies on China English; (6) strengthening the introduction of World Englishes studies abroad into China. Wang Jianguo (2009, p. 14) points out that one of the main issues with researching Chinese English is that the ‘current approach is top-down not bottom-up, that is, it is not based on objective corpus to verify whether China English exists’.

A number of specific approaches to researching Chinese English have been adopted by Chinese scholars. These include large-scale survey studies, corpus studies, ecolinguistics, and philosophical approach. For example, Hu Xiaoqiong (2003) conducted a questionnaire survey among 1261 university students including 490 English majors and 771 non English majors, with 1251 valid responses to survey questions, such as whether the participants have heard of World Englishes, and China English, what English they like, what standard English is, and from what countries they hope teachers come from to teach them English. Xiao Puqin and Huang Fengzhi (2006, p. 81) have emphasized the importance and significance of a corpus approach to researching Chinese English, and they argue that building a Chinese English corpus will benefit research on (1) language frequency statistics; (2) dictionary compilations; (3) lexical collocations; (4) language teaching; and (5) natural language processing. They have proposed a map for building the China English corpus, which includes (1) China English newspapers and magazines; (2) China English academic journals and literature; (3) literary works written in English by Chinese. Sun Haiyan and Lu Jing (2010, p. 221) have also explored the functions of China English corpus, stating that the corpus ‘(1) helps solve problems in translating words of Chinese characteristics into English; (2) provides a large quantity of materials for textbook compilations; (3) helps analyze features of China English at different linguistic levels, and explore the reasons behind the formation of China English’.

Liu Guobing (2009, p. 7) investigates Chinese English from the perspective of ‘ecolinguistics’ or ‘ecology of language’, comparing relevant concepts, e.g. biological community and language community; bio-mutualism and language contact; survival the fittest and language variation, maintenance and death and Kachru’s three circles; bio-diversity and language diversity. Liu Guobing (2009, p. 6) has attempted to ‘put the research of English varieties especially the research of China English

into a new research framework and to find some similarities between the developmental environment of China English and the environment of biological species'. A lesser developed and adopted approach is the philosophical approach to researching Chinese English. Citing German philosopher, Humboldt, in arguing that 'language variation does not lie in pronunciation, but in the variation of worldviews', Fu Ning (2007) has explored the 'inevitability', and 'rationality' of the existence of China English, and he defines Chinese English as 'English expressions that are influenced by Chinese thinking, and that deviate from the colloquial native English expressions but conform to the grammar of native English varieties'.

More recently, Yu Xi and Wen Qiufang (2011, p. 35) point out that one of the directions for researching Chinese English is to construct a framework for analyzing it. They propose such a framework for describing and analyzing the nativized features of English. 'The framework covers three dimensions: areas of manifestation (involving linguistic features at different levels); the extent of variation from native speaker use; and effects of communication (i.e. intelligibility and acceptability) in the international context.'

### 3 Conclusion

This chapter is a meta-analysis of previous research by Chinese scholars on Chinese English. A total of 100 articles from Chinese journals on researching Chinese English have been identified and analyzed. The meta-analysis shows that Chinese English research falls into four distinct periods, namely the 'enlightenment' (1980–1997), the 'great leap forward' (1998–2001), the 'renaissance' (2002–2012), and the 'open-door' (2013 onwards) periods. Major research themes have been teased out and reviewed. These include: whether Chinese English exists; naming Chinese English; defining Chinese English; distinguishing between Chinese English and Chinglish; the 'China English' debate; awareness of and attitudes towards Chinese English; acceptability of Chinese English; functions and significance of Chinese English; features of Chinese English; applications of Chinese English; implications of Chinese English for ELT in China; reviews of Chinese English research; stages of researching Chinese English, and methods for researching Chinese English.

It is hoped that this meta-analysis review of Chinese English serves as a platform for ongoing academic dialogues. It may also serve as a bridge to bring Chinese and international researchers together, and to connect the first generation of Chinese English researchers, who published relevant articles in the 'enlightenment' and the early 'great leap forward' periods, to the current and future generations of researchers who have experienced the 'renaissance' and the 'open-door' periods with a keen interest in developing Chinese English into a full-fledged member of the World Englishes family.

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# **Future Directions for Researching Chinese English**

**Andy Kirkpatrick**

**Abstract** In this final chapter I consider possible future directions for research into Chinese English, making occasional reference to the earlier chapters in this book and other recent research into the field. As readers of this volume will know, Chinese English represents a diverse field and this concluding chapter therefore considers future directions for further research under a number of subheadings, namely: linguistic features; cultural conceptualisations; rhetoric, including the role of CE in higher education; attitudes towards CE; CE and identity construction; multilingual creativity; and, finally, the overall extent of CE use across China.

**Keywords** Linguistic features of Chinese English • Cultural conceptualisations • Rhetoric, higher education • Attitudes towards CE • CE and identity construction • Multilingual creativity • English language teaching

## **1 Introduction**

As the chapters in this volume illustrate, current research into Chinese English encapsulates a wide range of fields, including the study of its linguistic features, stakeholders' attitudes towards Chinese English and multilingual creativity. In this chapter I shall briefly review some of this research while, at the same time, suggesting where future research into Chinese English is needed. I shall start with considering research into the linguistic features of Chinese English.

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## 2 Linguistic Features

### 2.1 Phonology

A major issue which needs to be considered in any study into the phonological features of Chinese English is the extent to which the L1 of its speakers and/or the region of China in which they live influence their pronunciation of CE. While the successful promotion of *Putonghua* as the national language means that an increasing number of Chinese, especially among the younger generation, are now L1 speakers of *Putonghua*, wide regional variation in the pronunciation of *Putonghua* exists. Influence from other Chinese languages such as *Yue*, *Wu* or *Minnanhua* is also evident. For this reason it is impossible to study the phonology of Chinese English as the study of a single variety. Hence, Deterding (this volume) chooses to study the pronunciation of students from the same province, Guangxi. This seems to be the way forward. We need a series of regional studies following the method adopted by Deterding which identifies characteristic phonological features of speakers' CE. It will then be possible to identify shared phonological features and those that are regionally distinctive. We would expect there to be a number of shared features. Deterding and Kirkpatrick (2006) discovered a number of shared phonological features of English when used as a lingua franca by multilinguals from the countries of ASEAN, including, for example, a tendency to favour syllable timing rather than the stress-timing of most 'native' speakers of English. Indeed, Deterding (2006) has already identified a number of phonological features shared by speakers of Chinese English who came from different parts of China. In his research he has also noted that distinctive features rarely cause misunderstanding but calls for the collection of a wide corpus of misunderstandings in order that the causes of these become the focus of the English language curriculum, in much the same way as proposed by Jenkins and the lingua franca core, which lists specific phonological features likely to cause problems of intelligibility (Jenkins 2007). As Deterding (this volume) notes, 'we will then be able to reassure teachers and pupils that they can retain many aspects of their local pronunciation and still attain a high level of intelligibility'.

Certainly more research into the intelligibility of Chinese English is needed. A related question is to whom does Chinese English need to be intelligible? It may not necessarily be native speakers of English. For example, Nanning in Guangxi Province hosts the annual China-ASEAN expo which is attended by thousands of visitors from the countries of ASEAN who, for the most part, communicate with each other and their Chinese hosts through English (Ji Ke 2016). Guangxi University trains its English majors to act as translators and interpreters for this Expo and has recently started to experiment with using teaching materials featuring ASEAN speakers of English as opposed to the traditional native speaker-based materials so that their students can become familiar with the Englishes used by these multilinguals from ASEAN. At the same time, the students' English needs to be intelligible to these visitors from ASEAN (Ji Ke 2016). The recently released Asian Corpus of English (ACE) includes a subset of data of Chinese speakers using English with

Asian multilinguals and this should provide valuable data for those wishing to research the intelligibility of Chinese English and English when used as a lingua franca by Asian multilinguals.

## 2.2 *Morphosyntax*

Xu's chapter (this volume) summarises Chinese language research into Chinese English and includes a number of studies into the syntactic features of Chinese English. As many of the researchers themselves point out, the lack of a proper corpus of Chinese English has hindered such research (Pan 2002). As Liang and Li (this volume) note, 'research on CE tends to be piecemeal and unsystematic, making it difficult to proceed to the important and logical next step, codification'. In this context, it is therefore crucial that the mere occurrence of a morpho-syntactic feature is not classified as being a characteristic feature of the variety. In a recent study into the marking or non-marking of tense forms by speakers of English who were first language speakers of Malay, the researchers' hypothesis was that, as Malay did not mark for tense, then the English of Malay speakers would not always mark for tense. The hypothesis was not supported (Kirkpatrick and Subhan 2014). Using data from the Asian Corpus of English (ACE) they found that these speakers actually marked for tense the majority of the time. In formal settings they very rarely did not mark for tense and, even in colloquial settings, they marked for tense more frequently than not. Thus, while it would have been true to say that the non-marking of tense can be seen in the English of these Malay speakers, it would have been untrue to say that this non-marking was a characteristic feature of their English. On the contrary, marking of tense is a characteristic feature of their variety of English. The use of a corpus therefore allows researchers to be able to draw firmer conclusions than are possible from simply noting the occurrence of non-standard features in the speech of a few individuals (Hall et al. 2013, Van Rooy 2013).

Fortunately suitable corpora now exist and Liang and Li (this volume) used the China English Corpus (CEC) comprising some 40 million words and which was compiled at the Beijing Foreign Studies University by Li Wenzhong. They also used the British National Corpus as a reference corpus. We can thus be confident that their findings are reliable. For example, their study shows that the collocation of 'all round' with 'way' to give 'an all round way' is indeed a distinctive feature of the lexis of Chinese English.

Ai and You (this volume) also used a corpus in their investigation of the use of the verb GIVE. As the authors note in their conclusion, '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 English'. Comparative corpora (The Chinese Media English Corpus and the British Media English corpus) were also used by Liu, Fang and Wei (this volume) in their study of nominalizations. Their findings provided further evidence for the conclusions drawn by Xu (2010) that nominalizations are a

characteristic feature of Chinese English. The lesson to be drawn from the chapters in this volume for future research into the linguistic features of Chinese English is the crucial importance of using a relevant corpus.

### 3 Cultural Conceptualizations and Underpinnings

In the previous section, the role of the substrate, the speaker's first language, was questioned in the study of the use of marking of tense by first language speakers of Malay in that they marked for tense when speaking English even though Malay does not mark for tense. I am not suggesting that the substrate bears no influence – it clearly does in many cases. But its influence can also be seen at levels above morphosyntax, such as at the levels of discourse. For example, in the same study referred to above (Kirkpatrick and Subhan 2014), the authors found that the Malay speakers did transfer discourse markers from Malay into their English as exemplified below.

S1: then he said erm if the if I was younger lah and then I would think about leaving school lah I say why give it to your mother or father to take care lah I might have done that lah cos my parents then he said then he said no lah the most important time for a child is four years mah and I want to bond with my child. (Kirkpatrick and Subhan 2014, p. 396)

In this short example we can see that the speaker transfers the use of Malay discourse particles to English, with five instances of 'lah' and one of 'mah'.

Cultural values and norms can also be transferred from the first language, or culture, to English. For example, it has been established that speakers of Chinese can transfer their preferred way of making requests when they speak English (Kirkpatrick and Xu 2010). This means that, when making requests in English, Chinese speakers may prefer to place the reasons for their request before making the request itself. This is in contrast to the normal, unmarked way in which native speakers of English will make a request, which is to make the request early on and then give reasons for it. Both patterns are available for speakers in both languages, but the normal unmarked 'English' sequence of request followed by reasons is the marked sequence in Chinese and the normal unmarked 'Chinese' sequence of reasons followed by request is marked in English. This can give rise to cross-cultural misunderstandings as the native speakers of each language will interpret the pattern used as though it was the one used in their first language. Hence Chinese speakers may classify English speakers as being direct and rude if they make a request outright before providing the reasons for it. At the same time, English speakers may classify Chinese speakers as circuitous and unable to get to the point if they preface their request with a series of reasons justifying it. The motivation for these different sequence patterns is likely to be found in respective cultural values. In Chinese culture, it is important to give and respect face. One way of doing this when making a request is to give reasons justifying it first so that the listener can indicate whether the request will be granted before it is made. If it can't be granted, the listener can indicate this, thus saving the requestor's face as s/he does not have to make a request that will be refused. If the request can be granted, the listener can grant the request

before it is actually made, thus giving her/himself face. In Anglo culture, however, time is of the essence as indicated in sayings such as ‘time is money’, ‘don’t waste my time’ and so forth. Placing the request first clearly is less time-consuming; it is also far more face-threatening, however, as the request can be turned down.

This potential transfer of cultural norms and values is an important area for future research in Chinese English. For example, in their chapter (this volume) Xu and Sharifian use the notion of cultural conceptualizations to analyse Chinese English and identify a wedding event schema in a novel written in English by the Hong Kong Chinese author Xu Xi. By analysing the conversation between a mother and her daughter on attending an upcoming wedding, Xu and Sharifian illustrate how this wedding event schema embodies the key Chinese cultural conceptualisation of FACE, POLITENESS and GUANXI (interpersonal relationship). In an earlier study using a corpus of conversational CE, Xu (2010) identified the cultural conceptualisation of Ancestral Hometown Discourse, whereby Chinese people, on meeting for the first time would typically ask each other about their hometown in terms of its size, location, special food, dialects spoken and so forth. The finding from this type of research is important because it allows speakers from outside Chinese cultural settings to be able to adopt Chinese schemata when engaging with speakers of CE and also respond appropriately to Chinese conceptualisations and schemata when engaging in CE. For example, adopting the ancestral hometown discourse schema by raising questions about a CE speaker’s hometown on first meeting will be considered polite and appropriate by the CE speaker.

## 4 Rhetoric

In his discussion of how markers respond to features of CE in academic writing, Heng Hartse (this volume) calls for more research in this area, noting that academic writing is an important and under-researched domain for studies of CE. Such research is, I believe, particularly needed into the ways that Chinese knowledge is translated into English and represented in English. This is of urgency at the moment as English becomes ever more dominant as the language of science and scientific publications. In an earlier study (Kirkpatrick 2009), I raised the following three questions related to the dissemination of ‘local’ knowledge through English.

1. Does the insistence on the dissemination through English restrict the spread of local knowledge or does it allow for the greater spread of local knowledge?
2. Can local knowledge be transmitted through processes other than those associated with traditional academic practices?
3. Does the dissemination of local knowledge through English fundamentally alter the essence of the local knowledge? (2009, p. 258).

In looking at these questions through an investigation of how concepts from Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) were disseminated and expressed in English – it is today possible to take courses in TCM through the medium of English in many

universities both inside and outside China – I argued that the essential ambiguity of TCM had been replaced by a more rational and empirical approach to the subject. This has led to a tension between supporters of truly traditional TCM and a more modern approach to TCM. This has been described by Scheid (2001, p. 27) as a tension between ‘plasticity, diversity, adaptability and stochastic reasoning’ on the one hand and the need for a unified and homogenous knowledge on the other. This raises the question of whether indigenous knowledge has to be reframed and revised ‘to fit Anglo rhetorical patterns on the one hand and empirical-scientific knowledge paradigms on the other’ (Kirkpatrick 2009, p. 258). Comparable concerns have been raised by Sri Lankan scholars, pointing out that Sri Lankans traditionally value metaphysical and religious knowledge but that these are being undermined by an insistence on a ‘western’ paradigm (see Fernando 1996, Canagarajah 2005).

A simple example of the problems associated with translating key concepts which form the base of indigenous knowledge is offered by the complexities and difficulties of translating into English the Chinese concept *qi*. As Scheid (2002, p. 48) notes:

In early Chinese writings about nature *qi* simultaneously refers to that which ‘makes things happen in stuff’ and ‘stuff in which things happen’. According to Pockert, *qi* is both an ‘energetic configuration’ and a ‘configuration of energy’, while Unschuld translates the terms as ‘(finest matter) influences’, emanations’, or ‘vapours’.

The inherent complexity of *qi* is further explained by Hsu (1999, p. 81):

The all-pervasive *qi* that permeated macrocosm and microcosm(s) had, in Chinese medical doctrine, innumerable facets. Although unifying, the concept of *qi* lent itself to the expression of great diversity.

Hsu goes on to point out that the key difference between Chinese and Western science is that terms in Western science are constructed in such a way as to be unambiguous, while Chinese terms are ‘therapeutically useful precisely because of their vagueness and polysemy’ (1999, p. 223, Kirkpatrick 2009, p. 261).

The extent to which Chinese English is able to overcome these problems of translation is of key importance. For example, does CE simply stick with the term *qi* and expect others to become familiar with its multi-varied meanings? Or does it try to encapsulate the many meanings of *qi* in CE formulations? We need further and extensive research in the area of the translation of ‘Chinese’ knowledge into English and CE, of course, will be the conduit.

In the related context of academic publishing, for several years now, several scholars have called for a new ‘culture of communication’ (Ammon 2000, p. 14) and for ‘a sober reflection on Anglophone gatekeeping practices’ (Swales 1997, p. 380). Belcher has questioned whether editors of academic journals should not accept new standards of text conventions and different varieties of English (2007).

Not only can CE offer a way forward for these developments in academic publishing, at the same time, it can be part of an answer to Kandiah’s impassioned plea to ‘effect a significant reversal in the directionality of the flow of ideas, and to fight for a ‘truly equal and participatory academic community made up of scholars from across the world’ (2001, pp. 107–108).

## 5 Attitudes

He (this volume, He and Li 2009) is a leading figure into stakeholders' attitudes towards CE. It is important in this type of research that a wide range of respondents from different walks of life are surveyed. We know, for example that female English majors who are now English language teachers are more likely to take a cautious view towards CE than their students, who may be engineering majors (Kirkpatrick and Xu 2002). This is not surprising. English majors will have invested much time and effort into becoming highly proficient users of English and, given the prevailing ideology that a native speaker model is, by definition, the best model (He, this volume), will judge their proficiency by how closely they feel they themselves approximate a native speaker model. Their students, the majority of whom, as was noted above, will be engineering, technology or science majors, are more likely to view English as a tool to help them become more proficient scientists or engineers. Such people are more likely to have a more tolerant view of CE. Thus a potential tension between English language teachers and their students can develop with the teacher insisting on a native speaker model, while the students are happier with a CE model. Thus, attitudinal research must ensure that it includes people from different walks of life and for whom English may play different roles. Parents are likely to prefer a native speaker model for their children. Business people, on the other hand, who use English in the course of their work, may be happier to have a level of proficiency in English that allows them to operate successfully in their interactions and negotiations. They understand that using CE and communicating successfully is more important than striving for a native speaker variety of English.

Attitudinal research raises the issue of standards. The very nature of the Chinese language and its ideographic script means that standards and adherence to the norm have traditionally been of utmost importance to Chinese. Every Chinese child spends countless hours practising the writing of Chinese characters. This is time necessarily spent, as it has been estimated that learners of ideographic scripts such as Chinese take two or three years longer to reach comparable levels of literacy than learners of alphabetic scripts, such as English (Taylor and Taylor 1995). Mistakes in writing are unacceptable. A wrong stroke can alter the meaning of a character or render it meaningless. Accuracy is key. As a consequence, Chinese pay great attention to the standard. But this is not to say that the standard remains constant and is not open to change. A major change in the writing system came in the early years of the twentieth century when the literary script, *wen yan*, was replaced by the vernacular *baihua*. In a move which would have been unthinkable just a decade or so before, the vernacular *baihua* formed the basis of a radically new form of standard written Chinese. With regard to spoken Chinese the variety of Mandarin spoken in the North of the country became the standard version of *Putonghua*, or common language. The drive to make *Putonghua* the national language has been remarkably successful so that the majority of Chinese people now report being able to speak and understand *Putonghua*, with an increasing number listing it as their first language. However, as noted above in the section on phonology, the *Putonghua* of Chinese

speakers is marked by regional variation. One can tell from which part of the country a speaker comes from from the speaker's pronunciation patterns of *Putonghua*. Surprisingly, this regional variation in the pronunciation of *Putonghua* is accepted by *Putonghua* speakers as being quite natural and normal. A possible avenue for research into attitudes to CE is therefore to compare attitudes towards different varieties of English and to different varieties of *Putonghua*. Research could explore questions such as, if Chinese speakers show tolerance of different varieties of *Putonghua* and consider such variation normal, are these attitudes transferred to their views of varieties of English, particularly CE? If not, why not? The findings from such comparative research on attitudes to varieties of *Putonghua* and English would be of great interest.

## 6 Identity and Multilingual Creativity

For any new variety of English, it is essential for that variety to be shaped and adapted so that it reflects and encodes the cultural phenomena important for its speakers and also represents their identity. In their chapter (this volume) Ma and Xu recall Kachru's argument that any variety needs to fulfil four functions, namely: instrumental; interpersonal; regulative; and imaginative/innovative. Ma and Xu then illustrate how each of these four functions are currently realised by CE. They indicate that the interpersonal use of CE is increasing with the number of Chinese who are returning to China after several years spent overseas. This interpersonal use of CE is also noted by You (this volume) in his discussion of what he refers to as the 'domestic diaspora', that is to say the phenomenon of the social and geographical mobility of Chinese within China itself means that millions of educated Chinese white-collar workers now live away from their original homes. You investigates questions such as 'How does English mediate the daily lives of CE speakers?' and 'How do they negotiate competing values and construct their identities through English?' As You points out, 'We can study how Chinese mediates white-collar workers' social relations and their articulation of diasporic consciousness as a mode of cultural production'. This is clearly an area where future research into CE has a major role. The increase in the interpersonal use of CE can also be seen in the education system, particularly among institutions of higher education, a point to which I return later in the chapter.

Multilingual creativity and innovation can also be seen. Li Wei (2014) analyses this innovative use of English through a 'translanguaging lens' which proposes 'that bilinguals have one linguistic repertoire from which they select features strategically to communicate effectively' (Garcia and Li Wei 2014, p. 22). This allows CE speakers to creatively 'play' with English and also allows them to use English as a conduit for rebellion and a critical voice. Examples include the creatively critical English neologisms in CE such as 'freedamn, harmany, democrazy, gunvernment, goverruption and departyment' (Li Wei 2014 n.p.).

Multilingual creativity is also seen in a ‘mixed code variety of Chinese English’ which is becoming increasingly popular, especially among users of social media. Indeed Zhang Wei even cites one on-line group who insists that every sentence posted on the site ‘should be mixed with English’ (2012, p. 42).

CE can give its users a sense of freedom or release. The author, Zhang Lijia, notes that writing in English frees her from ‘any inhibition I might have if I write in Chinese’ (2015a, p. 279). At the same time, she deliberately aims to give her English a Chinese flavour. As an example she paraphrases the Chinese expression (literally ‘angry hair shoots a hat’) to write ‘If I had not been wearing a hat, the force of my rage would have shot it into the air’ (2015a, p. 280). This use of Chinese expressions in CE can be seen in the work of several writers, perhaps most notably and successfully in the work of Ha Jin (Ha Jin 2010, Xu 2010).

It is important to note, however, that this use of multilingual creativity is not confined to CE users seeking to find a critical voice. This use can be seen in government-run micro blogs which seem to be violating the rules laid down by the government’s General Administration of Press and Publication (GAPP) which state that foreign words or acronyms must not be used in Chinese publications. Using data from the weather reports of *Shanghai Release*, a popular Chinese government blog hosted on *Sina Weibo*, Zhang Wei (2015b) provides a host of examples of code-mixing and multilingual creativity. These include the days of the week, each of which is given a name which plays on the English term. Thus ‘Monday’ becomes ‘*mangday*’, where ‘*mang*’ is the Chinese word for busy. Zhang Wei concludes that this official ‘trendy mixing’ is becoming government policy and illustrates ‘the growing multilingual creativity of the Chinese internet population’ (2015b, p. 245).

That this multilingual creativity is now being seen among government websites, despite the official pronouncements forbidding it, suggests a marked change in attitude towards English in general and CE in particular. It is well known that China has long enjoyed an ambivalent and shifting relationship with English. At times in its history it has been seen as an essential tool for modernization and access to technology. At others, it has been seen as the language of the imperialist enemy. This ambivalent and ambiguous attitude towards English was expressed by Zhang Zhidong at the beginning of the twentieth century in the well-known phrase ‘*zhongxue wei ti, xixue wei yong*’, which translates as ‘studying from China for the essence, studying from the West for practical knowledge’. At the time, Zhang Zhidong was developing the curriculum for the newly established Imperial Peking University, and was attempting to integrate holistic Confucian knowledge with western disciplinary specialisations (Kirkpatrick and Xu 2010, p. 145).

The original expression is now commonly reduced to the two-word phrase ‘*ti-yong*’. Given the recent developments in CE and its increasing use across different functions, future research into the extent in which English is taking on more of the *ti* or essence role would be of great interest and importance. In other words, in addition to its use as an instrumental tool to access ‘Western’ knowledge, to what extent is CE now becoming an integral part of the identity of Chinese bilinguals? This is a question raised by Fong in her chapter *on Being Chinese* (this volume) and she suggests that there is evidence that CE is beginning to gain some *ti*. This is a key area for future research into CE.

## 7 The Extent of CE Use

The chapters in this volume all point to an increasing use of CE across China, but there is little research into where exactly English is being used. In other words, who is using CE, with whom and for what purposes? The most complete survey to date is probably the Survey of the Language Situation Across China, the results of which were published in 2006, but the data for which was collected some years earlier between 1999 and 2001. In their summary of this study, Wei and Su (2015) focus on reported English use of 7 major cities: Beijing; Shanghai; Tianjin; Guangzhou; Chongqing; Dalian; and Shenzhen. They posed three research questions (2015, p. 178 ff.), namely:

What were the averages of the nation and the selected cities with regards to the use of English, English reading proficiency and spoken proficiency?

Was there a statistically significant difference between the national average and the city average in each of the three areas addressed in RQ 1?

To what extent did the respondents nationwide and those in the selected cities support foreign language medium of instruction in local primary and secondary schools?

While it is not possible to report all the results here, some key findings to the research questions were:

With regard the use of English, on a scale between 1 (seldom), 2 (sometimes) and 3 (often), the national average was 1.265. Tianjin had the highest average at 1.874 and Chongqing the lowest at 1.355

With regard reading proficiency, on a scale between 1 (able to recognize a few words), 2 (able to understand simple sentences) and 3 (able to understand simple reading passages), the national average was 1.9821. Again, Tianjin had the highest average at 3.063 and Chongqing the lowest at 1.082 (lower than the national average).

With regard spoken proficiency, on a scale between 1 (able to utter a few words), 2 (able to say some greetings) and 3 (able to conduct daily conversations), the national average was 1.9263, with Tianjin again the highest at 2.547 and Chongqing the lowest at 1.956.

Finally, with regard attitudes towards the use of foreign language medium of instruction, only 5.8% of the nation supported this, but the percentages in the cities was much higher, with Dalian recording the highest approval percentage of 30.1%. Curiously, given the averages reported above, Tianjin registered the second lowest approval rating of the cities at 7.6%, with only Chongqing with a lower approval rating of 5.6%. Shanghai ‘scored’ 21.6%.

It must be stressed that these findings come from data collected nearly two decades earlier, between 1999 and 2001. So, as the authors of this study themselves note, ‘Future research needs to collect more comprehensive data so as to achieve a better understanding of how Chinese people use English in their daily lives’ (2015, p. 184). This is indeed a critical area for future research into CE.

One domain where researchers have recently investigated Chinese people’s use of English is on university campuses. Bolton and Botha (2015) investigated the use

of English at Sun Yatsen University (SYSU) in Guangzhou. SYSU is officially a *Putonghua* medium university, but there are a number of joint degree programmes with overseas universities where students can go to take part of their degrees and some English medium of instruction (EMI) is informally used in classes on campus, depending on the subject. The authors sought the answers to four interrelated research questions, all of which could be adopted for further research on CE use in Chinese universities. The research questions investigated the use of English in formal education, sought to describe the extra-curricular use of English, sought to elicit attitudes to EMI and investigated the interpersonal use of English.

The authors found that the amount of English used on campus is closely related to respective academic units. Generally speaking, students met little English in classes with the exception of postgraduate students studying business and medicine. The authors also found that only 37% of the students reported using English for social purposes, usually for online socialising and then only reported the use of single words. The authors concluded that the major role of English was instrumental rather than for identity building, but they also noted that the students viewed English as important in terms of ‘internationalism’ and that they viewed English as being the language of virtual mobility beyond ‘the great firewall of China’ (2015, p. 207). At the same time, *Putonghua* was seen as the core language of education while regional dialects were seen as ‘increasingly irrelevant as the heritage languages of parents and grandparents’ (p. 207). The authors conclude with a call for ‘more empirical field-based research on the current impact of English’, and ‘a more detailed, finer-grained body of sociolinguistic research in this area’ (2015, p. 208).

## 8 Summary and Conclusion

In this chapter I have reviewed a number of studies into various aspects of CE and indicated a number of areas for future research into CE. In terms of research into the linguistic features of CE, I have argued the importance that such research be based on relevant corpora in order to ensure that the findings are accurate and not based on intuition or samples of possibly unrepresentative data. Fortunately, as many of the chapters in this volume demonstrate, several new corpora are now available, and this should make the task of codifying distinctive features of CE easier and more dependable. I offer a word of caution about over-emphasising the importance of codification, however. Codification is, by definition, an exclusive activity and we would not want innovation and multilingual creativity curtailed in the name of codification. On the contrary, one of the delights associated with the study of developing varieties of English is to see the creative and dynamic ways in which the new variety is being reshaped and adapted to suit the needs of its speakers.

Future research into CE also needs to further investigate the ways the cultural conceptualisations of its speakers are being reflected in CE. This is of particular importance for, as Xu and Sharifian note (this volume), ‘it is the cultural underpinnings that create the greatest challenge for intervarietal communication’.

Further research into the perceived status of and attitudes towards CE is also required, taking care to ensure that those surveyed in such research represent a representative cross section of the population and users of CE. This needs to ensure that a representative cross section of users is surveyed also underlines the importance of future research into the uses of English across China. We need more research into who is using CE with whom, when and why. One domain where a start has been made is in the university and it should be possible to build on this work to investigate the use of CE and the linguistic ecology as a whole in Chinese universities. Other domains where further research is needed, many of which are represented in this volume, are the use of CE among the domestic diaspora, the use of CE in professional organisations, in literature and the arts and in computer-mediated communication, not only by the creative and critical user of CE but also its use in government-run microblogs. This combination of the study of the linguistic and cultural features of CE along with further sociolinguistic research into the functions and roles of CE will help us give a greater perspective on the development of CE as a whole. Ma and Xu (this volume) suggest that CE has reached the third stage of Schneider's dynamic model (see Schneider 2010), that is the stage of nativization. The research into the features of CE, much of which is represented in this volume, would suggest that this is indeed the case. However, we need further research to investigate the breadth and depth of CE use across China. A survey using data collected between 1999 and 2001 suggested that CE is relatively seldom used, even in the largest metropolitan areas. I suspect that a current survey would find a far greater use of CE across a greater number of domains, but we need research into this vital issue before we can be sure. Perhaps the most important question for CE researchers to investigate in the future is the extent to which CE is, in addition to fulfilling an instrumental function of practical use or *yong*, is also providing CE speakers with some *ti* or essence as an integral part of their developing identity as multilinguals.

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