
RESEARCH ARTICLE

Socio-Pragmatic and Discursive Constructions of Chinese English: A Critical Review of Cultural Identity, Hierarchical Structures, and Pragmatic Practices

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ABSTRACT

Lexical and grammatical localization has been more well documented in the research literature on Chinese English than the pragmatic and discursive research that has been carried out through the variety. What this critical narrative review aims to do is to address the topic of ChE from the complementary lenses of World Englishes and intercultural pragmatics. It brings together scholarship on five related fields: hierarchy, face, relational communication, collectivism, and new ideological and creative applications in media, diplomacy, literature, and gender language. In these settings, ChE does not just reflect transfer from Chinese; it is also a repertoire that speakers and institutions use to negotiate authority, affiliation, cultural identity, and audience alignment in regard to each other. The main critical point of the review is the identification and questioning of the overgeneralization of ChE features. Too frequently evidence from a specific genre, institution, or historical period is used as evidence of the stable features of Chinese culture or ChE as a whole. These extrapolations can risk essentializing Chinese communication and overlook regional, generational, mediumistic, audience and communicative purpose variation. A more defensible account now regards socio-pragmatic nativization as context-sensitive, contested, and empirical-qualifiable. In the context of English language education, it promotes contrastive pragmatic awareness, audience-sensitive adaptation, and critical examination of the ideological implications of discourse, instead of the blank teaching of native speaker norms or fixed local norms.

KEYWORDS

Chinese English; World Englishes; intercultural pragmatics; socio-pragmatic nativization; discourse; cultural identity.

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1. Introduction

English has become a global language and has reconfigured the relationship between language, identity and cultural authority. In the field of World Englishes, English is recognized as a resource, ever being reclaimed and redefined by their users (Kachru, 1992; Kirkpatrick, 2007). Localization is more than simply an unfamiliar form. It encompasses the ways in which speakers modify English in relation to local histories, institutions, relationships and systems of meaning.

The term Chinese English (ChE) is used here as an umbrella term for English forms and practices that develop recognizable Chinese sociocultural meanings. Though it is still theoretically significant, ChE has an Expanding Circle as its status and also plays a role in education, scholarship, business, diplomacy, media, and creative writing (Bolton, 2002; He, 2020; Xu, 2010). The variety of usage in the following cases makes ChE a special case to consider the appropriation of a global language, where no presumptions about the norm of every recurrent local feature may be made because it is stable or already widely accepted.

The lexical, grammatical and phraseological level of description are the ones that have been described most for ChE (Albrecht, 2021). These works have laid the foundation for the study of English as a means to enact deference, protect face, build relationships, evoke collective identities and place China for domestic and international audiences, but they alone cannot be seen as an explanation for the way in which English is used. These functions are socio-pragmatic, discursive, and are interpreted based on the speaker, audience, genre, institutional context and purpose.

By paying attention to these dimensions, ChE can be understood as a place of cultural and relational negotiation and not simply as a tracing of transfer from Chinese. The studies on pragmatic norms or cultural conceptualizations illustrate the influence of hierarchy, face, *guanxi*, relational harmony and group affiliation on English-mediated interaction (Kirkpatrick & Xu, 2002; Xu & Sharifian, 2017). However, these patterns need to be critically qualified at the same time. These traits are not universal to all Chinese speakers, but are tendencies enacted across different generations, institutions, genres and audiences.

For this reason, this article is an alternative critical narrative review and not a systematic review. It takes a multi-faceted approach to literature, traversing the lines of World Englishes and intercultural pragmatics, and frames the discussion in terms of hierarchy, face negotiation, relationship orientedness, collectivist tendencies, and developing ideologies and creative applications of ChE. Its role is interpretive and synthetic: it is a way to evaluate the extent to which these strands together can be interpreted as socio-pragmatic nativization, and to uncover limits of the generalities about ChE.

2. Chinese English and Socio-Pragmatic Nativization

In World Englishes, nativization refers to the process of making English more suitable to the communicative needs and sociocultural contexts of a community. The idea challenges the idea that deviations from the British or American standard imply a failure of acquisition. Although the use and distribution, as well as the stability and acceptance of the innovations are still uneven, they have been recognized in the Chinese context, resulting in innovations in form and usage that have been visible in the long interaction between English and the local resources (Bolton, 2002; He, 2020; Xu, 2010).

Socio-pragmatic nativization further adds to this account the meaning of interaction. It is about the roles that English plays in enacting locally meaningful actions, maintaining social distance, exhibiting respect, navigating disagreements, and developing culturally recognizable identities. Previous studies of pragmatic norms in China indicated that some expectations of relational hierarchy and culturally specific ways of being polite may remain in English-mediated communication in China (Kirkpatrick & Xu, 2002). The study of cultural conceptualisations also shows how local meaning can be carried over into English, and how it cannot be literalized (Xu & Sharifian, 2017).

This perspective changes the focus from whether or not a form has to conform to an external standard to what social work it does in context. The organization of power and solidarity in an intelligible Chinese relational setting can be effected by an indirect request, an extended address term, a proverb or an appeal to collective obligation. The same option can take on different meanings in other translation and interpretation contexts. The chances of intercultural misalignment and audience design go hand in hand with pragmatic nativization.

Intercultural pragmatics is an important corrective to the view that sees the national culture as one communicative style. Interactions co-construct meaning around it, and speakers call upon overlapping local, professional, generational, and global repertoire. Deference or relational maintenance can be culturally available without making every encounter. ChE practices can then be best understood as resources that are negotiated and that depend on roles in the practice, medium, genre, and communicative stakes.

Another distinction has to be made between a discourse composed in English in China and a feature of ChE as a variety. There are distinct institutions and production processes that create different types of official news, diplomatic speech, interpreted political discourse, literary dialogue, and everyday interactions. Evidence from one domain can help to explain the meanings of English in the local context, but cannot be used to conclude that a pragmatic norm exists for the entire community. The analytic separation of form, function, genre, and institutional authorship reinforces arguments on nativization.

The use of these qualifications, in turn, allows for the literature to be analyzed for both continuity and change. Hierarchy, face, *guanxi*, collectivism, and symbolic identity are issues that are shared and coexist with newer ideational and creative uses from public to cultural domains. The thematic synthesis that follows follows these reoccurring constructions as practices, not as set traits of Chinese speakers or of ChE, and as such are treated as processes rather than products.

3. Socio-Pragmatic and Discursive Constructions of Chinese English

The following subsections examine the pragmatic dimensions of ChE. These aspects include how Chinese cultural values such as hierarchy, face, *guanxi*, and collectivism are encoded in discourse, as well as how new ideological and creative uses of ChE have emerged in recent research.

3.1 Power, Hierarchy, and Discursive Authority

The significant pragmatic characteristic of Chinese English discourse is its strong integration of power relations and social hierarchy (Xu, 2010; Xu, 2020). In the institutional settings described by Li (2016), power is not merely symbolic; it is materialized through access to housing, career advancement, welfare benefits, and other resources. Such privileges in the discourse of the ChE tend to be status markers and are linguistically supported in routine communication.

The relations under this hierarchical system are usually governed by a sequence that gives precedence to superiors having more discursive power and limits subordinates from showing respect (Xu, 2010; Xu, 2020). Subordinates use politeness strategies, indirectness, or honorifics as a sign of respect and face-saving, whereas their superiors can use direct, unmitigated requests or command forms due to their authority. To illustrate, the pragmatic sequencing of call-answer-facework-topic (Scollon and Scollon, 2001), in subordinate-to-superior communication, is a perfect example of how hierarchy determines the discourse format.

In ChE, *face (mianzi)* and hierarchy are interconnected, particularly in such a way that disrespect to hierarchical expectations is directly connected to loss of face (Xu, 2020). It is not just the functional terms like *Comrade*, *Teacher*, *Mayor*, or the terms that signify kinship like *Uncle*, *Aunt*, etc., but rather the linguistic hints that maintain the social distance and the relative status (Chen, 2010). Similarly, euphemisms, implicit expressions, or metaphors can have a multifaceted meaning regarding the social rank or role. Even the apparently trivial actions, including accepting or declining tea in a formal setting, have pragmatic consequences of confirming or disaffirming social orientation.

Therefore, ChE pragmatics demonstrate that the Chinese sociocultural focus on order, power, and relationship standpoint can be found within the discourse. This translates into a discourse style in which respect towards hierarchy and face preservation are given a high priority, and communication strategies are not only influenced by the linguistic competence, but also by an intense sensitivity to social structures. This interrelation between power and hierarchy is important to understand to unlock the pragmatic aspects of ChE.

3.2 Face, Guanxi, and Relational Negotiation

The other characteristic feature of Chinese English discourse is that it is based on interpersonal relationships and social networks, especially by the cultural concept of *face (mianzi)*, and *guanxi* (Xu, 2020). These ideas are entrenched in Chinese culture and can be found in ChE in communication techniques based on the value of harmony, reciprocity, and sustaining relational balance.

Guanxi is a set of interpersonal relations where people can exchange resources, opportunities, and privileges by means of mutual commitments. The linguistic realization of *guanxi* in ChE speech tends to be indirect in requests, forms of gratitude, or culturally charged speech acts. They can be accompanied by backdoor activities like giving gifts, trading favors, or the use of euphemistic words to present a request (Barbalet, 2017). As an example, proposing cigarettes or minor favors is not bribery; it is only a way of helping to warm up the relationship, establishing a way of reciprocating it. The pragmatic schema *guanxi* discourse generally takes place through a staged process: phatic talk, goodwill expression, request proper and polite sign-off, showing how interpersonal strategies are patterned in culturally predictable ways in ChE.

Inseparably connected with *guanxi* is the concept of face, which is an important controller of communication. Face in ChE is presented in terms of address, honorific, and deference or avoidance strategies. For example, responding to compliments is prone to competing pragmatic rules: some interlocutors respond with self-denial as per traditional Chinese modesty rules, and some adopt more Western-influenced acceptance or gratitude. Equally, when in conflict or disagreement, speakers can use indirect or ambiguous words to censor possible face-threatening behavior, thus preserving interpersonal harmony.

Collective honor also helps to increase the significance of face in ChE pragmatics. The harm to face may not just be limited to the individual but also to family, work unit, or social group, and as such, communication strategies that focus on solidarity and reduce the confrontational aspect are favored (Leech, 2007). This is one of the reasons why the pragmatic characteristics of ChE tend to be avoidance, ambiguity, and indirectness: they preserve individual and group dignity, as well as maintain the stability of relationships in the long term.

Combined, the joining of *face* and *guanxi* can describe the operation of the discourse of ChE as not a direct importation of English pragmatic norms but rather as a culturally hybrid order. The practical encoding of relational strategies, whether backdoor practices, avoidance, or honorific language, highlights how Chinese cultural values apply to communication in English to create a unique pattern of discourses, which are discernible as characteristics of ChE.

3.3 Institutional Authority, the Work Unit, and Social Order

The other conspicuous discourse and pragmatic aspect of Chinese English has to do with the institutionalization of law, the *danwei* (work unit), and preservation of social order (Xu, 2020). These aspects are deeply incorporated into the Chinese society and are reflected in ChE discourse in terms of authority, discipline, and organizational control narratives.

The *work unit* (*danwei*) served historically not merely as an employer: it was the main institution of urban existence, offering cradle-to-grave welfare, such as long-term employment, housing assignment, health services, educational possibilities to the children of the employees, and even free food and transportation (Dittmer & Lü, 1996; Hussain, 2000). This paternalistic role is a common feature of ChE discourse, and in this case, the work unit is approached as a kind of extended family or a parent, the government of which does not just concern itself with professional issues, but also cares about the personal welfare of its employees (Xu, 2010). The *work unit* was able to discipline people, oversee their files (*dang'an*), and even interfere in such issues as marriage, divorce, or migration, which emphasizes its vast control over the public and personal life (Bray, 2005).

In ChE, the legal order of the discourse is often subordinated to social relations, cadre, or the discretion of organizational managers. Instead of utilizing a formal and unbiased judicial system, one may seek the favor of cadres, party secretaries, or directors of the Security Section (*baoweichu*) or Political Department (*zhengzhibu*) of the *work unit*. These institutional powers act as managers of discipline and social order and tend to mediate conflicts, provide leniency, or decide on punitive measures. Consequently, the notion of justice in ChE discourse is more connected to the stratified negotiation, personal relationships, and face issues than with the universal legal principles (Xu, 2010; Xu, 2020).

This, at the pragmatic level, generates patterns of discourse where law tends to be backgrounded, and organizational authority and social relations become dominant. Collective welfare, unit loyalty, or exhortations to the good nature of leaders are often appealed to in requests, petitions, and negotiations. This suggests that law does not dictate it; instead, social order is maintained by the application of authority in a flexible manner, backdoor politics, and the discretionary power of people in the institutional hierarchy.

Combined, these characteristics indicate the inscription of Chinese conceptualizations of law and order into ChE: the concept of discipline is established within the *danwei* (*work unit*) network, the idea of hierarchy prevails over the idea of legal impartiality, and the system of the organization takes the place of the judiciary as the enforcer of social stability. The crossing of law, the unit of work, and the social order, therefore, in ChE discourse constitutes a unique cultural paradigm of the perception of authority and justice, contrary to the influence of Western legalist cultures and the emphasis on cultural interculturalism of ChE pragmatics.

3.4 Cultural Identity and Symbolic Resources

Another peculiar discourse and pragmatic characteristic of Chinese English is the encoding of cultural identity and symbolism. The use of quotations, metaphorical terms, proverbs, address terms, and others often helps speakers of the English language to incorporate cultural values into their English speech, which is presented much beyond the literal sense of the wording. These symbolic expressions serve as vehicles for carrying the Chinese cultural norms, which influence the positioning of the speakers as well as the interpretation of meaning in communication.

One of them is the appeal to the quotes of Chairman Mao, classical idioms, or proverbs. These sources are not just rhetorical figures; they are also indicators of group identity and power. An example of a Mao quote does not only say something that is a personal opinion; it, in addition, puts the speaker in line with a larger ideological tradition, indicating respect to hierarchy, education, and values of the nation (Lu & Simons, 2006). Equally, proverbs and idioms, including "When a scholar meets soldiers, reason fails." or "A hen coops up a peacock.", serve as culturally common truths that are not likely to be challenged. Their application in the ChE discourse gives them a pragmatic legitimacy, enhances group cohesion, and asserts power by collective wisdom.

The use of both curse words and animal metaphors also stands out as another characteristic. Terms like "egg of a tortoise", "son of a rabbit", or "foreign dogs" are related to how the Chinese cultural norms are encoded in ChE pragmatics. Such insults use animal metaphors and generational precedence, where swearing at someone using their lineage or calling them the son of an

animal is a major insult to face (Xu, 2010). These metaphors have strong cultural implications of honor and rank of family and moral status, unlike insults used in English, which are neutral or mild, presenting them as a glimpse into the sociocultural background of ChE discourse.

Identity and group membership are also expressed through address terms. The terms like “Comrade”, “Teacher”, “Uncle”, or “Aunt” are not just neutral terms; they reflect relationship values based on collectivism, social role, and respect. In the socialist world, “Comrade” used to be used in the general sense of equality in the group, and kinship words such as “Uncle” and “Aunt” project the family metaphors to social relations, supporting solidarity and hierarchy. Even minor changes, in which one is called “Miss” instead of “Comrade”, can have pragmatic consequences, meaning the inclusion or exclusion in a given community.

Lastly, name, honor, and reputation are the most important terms in the discourse of ChE. To lose face in front of other people, be it by having their name broadcast in the press as doing something bad or being humiliated before co-workers, is sometimes seen as more harmful than the loss of money or the law. In this regard, cultural identity in ChE pragmatics is dominated by honors as opposed to material or legal consequences. Suing a person who committed slander, e.g., can be viewed as an alien or inappropriate action to take on the situation, as in the Chinese system, reputation is to be rescued through social or institutional means, but not monetary compensation.

To conclude, the ChE discourse is a pragmatics of culture in which symbolism, identity, and honor are major. Not merely linguistic features, quotations, idioms, curses, and address terms are symbolic acts that encode the values of hierarchy, collectivism, and pride in cultural heritage. They show that ChE is a medium of cultural identity construction as well as communication, which distinguishes it from other Englishes in the paradigm of World Englishes.

3.5 Emerging Ideological and Creative Uses of Chinese English

While the preceding sections address recurrent pragmatic features often associated with interpersonal and institutional interaction, a growing body of scholarship examines ChE in less conventional domains, including media, diplomacy, literature, and gender discourse, where the variety is deployed for ideological positioning and creative self-representation. This scholarship broadens the account of socio-pragmatic nativization by showing how language, politics, culture, and identity intersect across public and creative domains.

3.5.1 Media Discourse and Ideological Positioning

Recent research highlights the ideological position of ChE in media discourse, especially during a crisis or a world crisis. Lei (2025) examines the coverage of COVID-19 in Chinese English-language media in order to show that ChE was deployed in a particularly strategic manner to create several images of China: as a victim of the negative accusation, as a strong, confident fighter, and as a cooperative partner in the world. A combination of war metaphors, statistical plausibility, and allusions to white papers of the government contributed to legitimizing the authority of the state and encouraging the unity of people through ChE. On the same note, Yu et al. (2023) observe the same trend in the analysis of the Xinhua coverage of the pandemic and how ChE strengthened the narrative that the Party wanted, but also how ChE failed to reach the international audiences, especially in the West.

Wang (2018) also proves the versatility of ChE in the manner of formulating socio-political problems. In the analysis of how China Daily covered the air pollution, he demonstrates how ChE has turned into a less neutral coverage and more ideologically charged one, where the government is represented as taking action and decisive in the face of the challenges the environment is facing. The move towards scientific objectivity to a more emotive and politically oriented presentation highlights the ability of ChE to move in accordance with the ideological requirements.

These studies portray how ChE as an instrument of ideological positioning that does not only strengthens domestic legitimacy, but also constructs the image of China in the world through media discourse. The competence of ChE as a tool of persuasion is, however, limited by cultural and political disparities, especially in international audience communication.

3.5.2 Diplomatic and Political Discourse

ChE has been enlisted in the world of diplomacy and politics to bargain power and stamp authority in the international arena. Lu and Zhou (2024) examine the diplomatic speeches of Wang Yi and reveal the way ChE was employed to demonstrate the collaborative but commanding attitude of China to the United States. Inclusive pronouns such as “we” and markers of modality were used to highlight the position of China as a leader in the world as well as a protector of its sovereignty. This approach makes ChE consistent with both Chinese traditional values and Western standards of diplomacy, which produces a hybrid discourse that appeals to the various audiences.

Likewise, Gu (2018) focuses on the role of interpreters in projecting the political image of China, emphasizing the use of subtle grammatical features like the transition to the present tense with the presentation of a perfect tense that contributes to the formation of the country of unceasing success. This observation highlights the power of language mediators in composing the diplomatic discourse via ChE.

The application of ChE to the China-India border conflict, as discussed by Chen and Liu (2024), is another example of the use of ChE as a cultural signifier and how such a framing of political occurrences through a civilian lens of empathy in Chinese news coverage is contrasted with a more militaristic approach to news coverage in India. The examples indicate how ChE can influence the formation of the discourse of diplomacy in China, making it a peaceful, caring participant in international politics.

3.5.3 Culturally Creative Expression

Outside of the institutional discourse, ChE has become a strong form of cultural self-representation as well as creative expression. Research by Yu and Ma (2022) also shows that ChE allows expressing the Chinese cultural identity in the literature, especially in such works as *Enigma of China* by Qiu Xiaolong. ChE is an instrument of articulating the notion of Chineseness and at the same time communicating with the world literature through hybrid lexical expressions and syntactic innovations. The negotiations of local authenticity and global intelligibility by these linguistic strategies enable the expansion of the expressive possibilities of the English language.

Paiz et al. (2018) also take this imaginative initiative into the field of sexuality and discuss *The Bridegroom* by Ha Jin. They state that ChE offers an avenue where queer Chinese identities are articulated, and it questions the Western constructs of sexuality and mirrors local sociocultural logic. This paper shows that ChE is a device that can be used to reconfigure global English to reflect the non-Western experience of queerness.

Nevertheless, the role of ChE in cultural identity is not a smooth one. Chen (2021) examines the reproduction of Western linguistic hierarchies by ChE in the tourism discourse, where native English is a prestigious language, and the localized versions of ChE are pushed to the periphery. This represents exactly what she calls self-Orientalism, in which Chinese writers, in their efforts to interact with global English, subconsciously absorb Western norms and other their own culture. According to such studies, ChE is an ambivalent tool of culture, which can empower and restrict local expression at the same time.

3.5.4 Gender and Sexuality

The next significant aspect of the new research area is the way ChE bargains gender and sexuality, providing a discursive location to voice marginal identities. This is reflected in the works by Paiz et al. (2018), who examine the issue of queer representations in ChE and find that *the Bridegroom* reforms homosexuality in the Chinese cultural framework, including the family hierarchy and Confucianism. This strategy questions Western notions of sexuality as something morally wrong and makes ChE one of the cultural channels through which local conceptions of gender and sexuality can be expressed.

Wang and Ma (2020) discuss the role of ChE in the Chinese coverage of the LGBT issue in the country by demonstrating how ChE was applied to fit the state narratives into the global discourses of human rights, yet avoiding open criticisms of the domestic policies. This is indicative of a more general movement of managed liberalism, by which ChE serves to give an impression of inclusiveness to foreign viewers and retains political conformism domestically.

Yu et al. (2023) also explore the role of ChE in gender discourse, especially regarding the so-called *niangpao* (effeminate men) phenomenon. They demonstrate in their work the role of ChE in synthesizing masculinity debates, resolving the conflict between state-based rhetoric about gender conformity and new counter-discourse about fluidity and diversity. It brings out the changing nature of ChE in negotiating gender norms both on the global and the local levels.

In summary, recent studies on Chinese English highlight the ambiguous position of the language as a source of linguistic and ideological means in a spectrum of spheres. ChE is reflected in the media, diplomacy, cultural identity, and gender discourse as a means of expressing the values of China, asserting its role in the world, and negotiating its cultural identity. Nonetheless, the success of ChE as a persuasion instrument is not uniform, and sometimes, such success is limited by cultural and political forces, as research shows. Although ChE reinforces domestic legitimacy and gives rise to national pride, its effect internationally might be restrained by the competing ideological systems. Therefore, ChE remains a subject of transformation as a sign of Chinese cultural strength and a territory of conflict between global standards and local values.

4. Pedagogical Implications

The literature examined here challenges the dichotomy of native speaker correctness versus unconditional acceptance of local practice in English education. Instead of this more productive goal is the ability to understand how choice of language indicates power, distance, affiliation and identity, and to adapt these choices to a specific audience and purpose: this is adaptive pragmatic competence. This orientation is in line with World Englishes pedagogy which acknowledges plural norms and still holds on to communicative effectiveness and its practical-intelligibility as a paramount concern (Kirkpatrick, 2007).

This competence can be developed in the classroom by contrasting requests and refusals, compliments and disagreement, forms of address, relationship-building talk. Instead of telling students that one realization is right and the other is wrong, teachers can ask the question of who is more powerful, what kind of relation is it, what are the concerns of the faces, and how the other realization might be received. Students can then be asked to redraft the same message to a supervisor, to a peer, to a client, and to an international reader unfamiliar with their specific background.

Teaching materials should also include English that is relevant to the local context as well as English in other intercultural contexts. Learners can be made aware that the pragmatic meaning is shared across the wording, sequencing, the stance, and the shared background knowledge in workplace interaction, public communication, media, and literature by using parallel examples. Cultural expressions do not need to be eliminated, but students should be able to explain when an alternative expression or paraphrase, or even an explanation of the expression, that would be equally culturally meaningful to a reader with a different cultural background would be more accessible.

Critical discourse ability is also developed through institutional examples and media examples. Students can analyze the ways in which pronouns, modals, metaphor, quotation and selective evaluation create authority or solidarity. They should also inquire about the voice of the English being represented, the interests of the text, and ask whether a pattern is one of a genre or an institution, or not part of ChE per se. This excludes the possibility of presenting ideology as an objective cultural form.

Teacher education is a key component of this transformation. Teachers must have a working vocabulary for pragmatic variation and space to differentiate language error, intentional local expression and unsuccessful communication in the context. Assessment could also follow the same distinction by focusing on intelligibility, relational appropriateness, audience awareness and strategic flexibility rather than on comparing each performance with a single model of native speaker performance.

This pedagogy cannot be said to canonize the regularity of every practice as a ChE norm or to see difference as deficiency. It fosters students' ability to absorb culturally significant resources and to foresee alternate ways of interpretation and to make informed communicative decisions. The socio-pragmatic education value is just this ability to relate identity and adaptability.

5. Conclusion

ChE is now located in a socio-pragmatic and discursive repertoire, as opposed to being only a body of localised lexical and grammatical forms. The literature demonstrates that English in Chinese contexts can be used for organising authority, negotiating affiliation and making cultural identities legible, as evidenced by the ways in which English has been used in Chinese contexts.

The relationship of authority, face management, guanxi orientation, collectivist attitudes and symbolic expressions is a closely intertwined set of issues across the scholarship. ChE is further engaged in positions of ideological positioning and creative self-representation in more recent research in media, diplomacy, literature, gender, and sexuality. These strands show that pragmatic nativization is a complex process that is double-stranded: interpersonal routines and institutionally circulated discourse.

The synthesis also uncovers an important evidence gap. Sometimes features found in official, literary or historically specific texts are considered as manifestations of a unified Chinese culture or as features of a consolidated ChE. This should be the case for claims and be attuned to genre, institutional authorship, region, generation, audience, and over time. It is not necessary to take cultural predispositions as national traits to recognize the localization process.

More natural interaction, similar corpora for different domains, and reception studies with Chinese and international participants are desired for future research. Longitudinal designs may determine if specific pragmatic decisions are being made to stay, go back, or be deployed strategically. It should also distinguish between the effects of Chinese cultural conceptualizations and translation, genre, institutional control and professional practice in comparative work.

ChE is best understood then, as a shifting resource with which local meanings are introduced into global English communication. This account maintains the insight that English remains culturally appropriated, but allows for variations, contestations, and intercultural negotiations.

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