Unpacking cultural conceptualizations in Chinese English

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Considerable depth and breadth of research on Chinese English has been undertaken over the last three to four decades, contributing to the epistemological advancement of a number of academic disciplines, including world Englishes, Intercultural Communication, and Cultural Linguistics. Researching Chinese English involves engaging in ongoing theoretical developments in relevant disciplines that primarily focus on language and cultural studies, and the globalization and nativization of English in China. In this paper, we explore a Cultural Linguistics approach to researching Chinese English, and use cultural conceptualizations, including cultural schema, cultural category, and cultural metaphor, as the analytical framework with which to analyze a range of empirical linguistic data, including interviews, newspaper articles, textbooks, literary works by authors writing in Chinese English, and online media articles about China. We also draw out implications from researching Chinese cultural conceptualizations for intercultural communication involving Chinese speakers of English.

Keywords: Chinese English, cultural conceptualizations, metacultural competence, intercultural communication

1. Introduction

Over the last three to four decades, considerable depth and breadth of research on Chinese English has been undertaken. This research ranges from the question of whether Chinese English even exists to what implications Chinese English may have for intercultural communication. Major themes surrounding Chinese English research include 1) naming and defining the Chinese variety of English; 2) distinguishing China English/Chinese English as a variety of English from Chinglish; 3) identifying and analyzing the key features of the Chinese variety of English; 4) investigating awareness of and attitudes towards the Chinese variety

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of English; and 5) exploring the implications of researching Chinese English for Chinese-English translation and English language education in China. Such research centers on nativization or 'glocalization' of English, a phenomenon summarized by Hundt (2009: 287) as globally used patterns displaying "divergent behavior locally." Despite occasional papers on discourse and pragmatics, the majority of the research on Chinese English remains at the levels of phonology, lexis, and syntax. Systematic research on Chinese English from the perspective of Cultural Linguistics (Sharifian, 2011, 2013a) has been minimal.

Cultural Linguistics is a multidisciplinary area of research that explores the relationship between language and cultural conceptualizations. It offers an indispensable approach to examine world Englishes because, as Sharifian states (2014b: 1), "English is used by communities of speakers around the world to express their culturally constructed conceptualizations and worldviews." In the Asian context, Honna (2014: 61) argues that "English is the language to express our own culture, not to imitate others." Adopting a Cultural Linguistics approach, with a focus on cultural conceptualizations, including cultural schemas, cultural categories, and cultural metaphors, Z. Xu (2014: 173) suggests that

> Asian speakers of English should not only acquire linguistic competence and communicative competence associated with Asian Englishes, but also understand cultural conceptualizations and develop metacultural competence for intercultural communication.

In this paper, we intend to unpack cultural conceptualizations in Chinese English. We analyze empirical linguistic data, including interviews, newspaper articles, textbooks, excerpts from literary works written in English by Chinese authors, and online media articles about China. Our research questions include: 1) What are the major cultural schemas, cultural categories, and cultural metaphors that are embedded in the empirical linguistic data? 2) To what extent are Chinese cultural conceptualizations grounded in the knowledge and experience of the users of Chinese English? 3) What are the implications of researching cultural conceptualizations in Chinese English for intercultural communication involving Chinese speakers of English?

2. Background

Systematic research on Chinese English started in the late 1970s when Chinese researchers (e.g., Ge, 1980; Wang, 1991), who were mainly working in the fields of Chinese-English translation and English language education, identified those misshapen and awkward word-for-word translations from Chinese into English,

or English words in Chinese phrasal or sentence structures, as 'Chinglish' expressions, which are not synonymous with 'China English'. How to distinguish between Chinglish, e.g., "people mountain people sea" (meaning crowds of people), and what researchers named 'China English' has been one of the major themes in Chinese English research. Wang (1991: 4) defines 'China English' as "the English used by the Chinese people in China, being based on standard English and having Chinese characteristics." Z. Xu (2010b: 17) views Wang's definition as "a milestone in the studies of Chinese English, because unlike previous definitions, which focus on Chinese-English translation, Wang's definition deals with the issue of China English as a variety in itself." Informed by the previous research on China English, Z. Xu (2006: 287; 2010b: 1) rectified the proposed names for this variety from 'Sinicized English', 'Chinese-Coloured English', 'Chinese Style English', and 'China English' back to its original name 'Chinese English', which he defines as

> a developing variety of English, which is subject to ongoing codification and normalization processes. It is based largely on the two major varieties of English, namely British and American English. 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.

Although this definition needs further deliberation, given the changing nature of all varieties of English, it acknowledges the existence of Chinese English, and its status as a variety of English that is increasingly used for intra-and international communication. Regarding the existence of Chinese English, Deterding (2006: 176) argues that although China is a huge country where there is inevitably substantial variation in the English of speakers from different regions, there exist features in common, and these mark "the English of speakers from China as distinct from other varieties of English."

The literature that is relevant to this paper involves two areas of research, namely, cultural conceptualizations and Chinese English. Cultural conceptualizations comprise cultural schemas, cultural categories, and cultural metaphors (Sharifian, 2009, 2011, 2013b, 2014b; Z. Xu, 2014). Chinese English has been increasingly regarded as a variety in Asian and world Englishes (Wang, 1991; Kirkpatrick & Xu, 2002; Z. Xu, 2010a, 2010b, 2013).

Proshina (2014: 6) argues that "it is not the formal differences between the varieties that make the most difficult part of intelligibility and intercultural communication via English. It is the cultural underpinnings that create the greatest challenge for intervarietal communicators' interpretability." These 'cultural underpinnings' are what is technically referred to as *cultural conceptualizations* in Cultural Linguistics.

Cultural Linguistics is "a sub-branch of Linguistics with a multidisciplinary origin that explores the relationship among language, culture and conceptualization" (Sharifian, 2014a: 118). It employs analytical tools such as 'cultural schema', 'cultural category', and 'cultural metaphor' to explore features of language that have a cultural basis. Sharifian (2014a: 118) refers to these notions collectively as 'cultural conceptualizations':

> Cultural conceptualizations 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: 1592)

Cultural schemas are "an emergent property of cognition at the level of cultural group rather than the individual" and they emerge from the interactions between the minds that constitute the cultural group. There are *event* schemas, *role* schemas, *image* schemas, *proposition* schemas, and *emotion* schemas (Sharifian, 2011: 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" that "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: 8–11; see also Z. Xu, 2014: 174).

In addition to cultural *schemas*, cultural *categories* are also grounded in cultural cognition. Rosch (1975: 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" (Z. Xu, 2014: 176), e.g., the Chinese conceptualization of the cultural category of *festival* varies from that in some other cultures (See examples 7-1 and 7-2 in Section 4 of this paper). According to Rosch (1978: 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:

1591). Sharifian (2014a: 118) also proposes that a 'conceptual metaphor' can be viewed on a continuum ranging from fundamental metaphors that reflect worldview to cases where the metaphor appears to be simply a figurative use of language: "At one end of the continuum, the conceptual metaphor involved provides a cognitive framework, a frame of thought, and at the other end, it has only a rhetorical function." Z. Xu (2014: 177) argues that "cultural *metaphors* shape the way we think and act in intra- and intercultural communication," e.g., one of the cultural metaphors in some Asian Englishes is about one's HOME COUNTRY OR NATION AS LAND OF PARENTS, i.e., the use of *motherland* or *fatherland* to refer to one's home country. Another example of cultural conceptual metaphor is the Chinese *xin* "heart" as the central faculty of cognition and the physiological center of the human being, because in Chinese, the word *xin* literally means "center" or "core." It is metaphorically seen as an organ that governs both the body and the mind (c.f. Yu, 2009; Sharifian, 2014a).

When Chinese people communicate interculturally using English, they convey not only sounds and meanings in English, but also their own Chinese cultural conceptualizations. Such Chinese cultural conceptualizations are grounded in the sphere of bilinguals' creativity. Kachru (1985: 20–24) argues that bilinguals' creativity can be applied to both "an individual bilingual" and "a bilingual speech community." Bolton (2010: 465) follows Kachru's notion of bilinguals' creativity and relates it to the Chinese Hong Kong context. He points out that Chinese language 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 'spillover to English' phenomenon is common among Chinese English bilingual speakers when they interact with other speakers of English and 'glocalize' the English language.

Sharifian (2013b: 7–8) has provided a number of examples of "glocalization" of English in the Chinese cultural context. These examples include the cultural schema of *guanxi*, often loosely translated as "relation," "relationship," "connection," and "networking," and the cultural schema of *mianzi* "face." Examples of cultural categories include *yuebing* "moon cakes," which symbolizes the Chinese Mid-Autumn Festival; and *lai see* "lucky money," commonly perceived as a "gift" traditionally given in red envelopes, or in some circumstances, symbolically understood as a bribe. An example of cultural metaphor is the expression *tiefanwan* "iron rice bowl" and its current extension *jinfanwan* "golden rice bowl," both of which refer to a secure high-paying job.

Sharifian (2013b: 7–8) argues that the practical importance of understanding these cultural conceptualizations is grounded in the fact that users of English, including Chinese English, can develop *metacultural competence*, a term he uses to refer to "a competence that enables interlocutors to communicate and negotiate

their cultural conceptualizations during the process of intercultural communication." Such competence involves *conceptual variation awareness*, *conceptual explication strategy*, and the use of *conceptual negotiation strategies*. Sharifian (2013b: 8–9) claims that, when developing metacultural competence, "the cultural backgrounds of learners become assets and resources enabling them to reflect on their cultural conceptualizations, while allowing them to learn the necessary skills to explicate and negotiate them with speakers from other cultural backgrounds."

Bolton (2012: 30) points out 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." It is also worth pointing out that, apart from describing 'linguistic landscapes', we should also explore 'linguistic mindscapes', where multilingual people express their cultural conceptualizations through multiple languages. As pointed out by Gasiorek, Giles, and Soliz (2015: 3), individuals have "expectations and cognitive schemas about what constitutes appropriate and desirable accommodation" during intercultural communication depending on the "general context, the sociocultural backdrop to an interaction, and idiosyncratic preferences." This paper is an attempt in this direction and unpacks Chinese cultural conceptualizations in Chinese English.

3. Approach

We adopt a qualitative approach to collecting and analyzing data in order to identify Chinese cultural conceptualizations in Chinese English. The following table shows the data that this paper is primarily based on and how it was coded.

The informants were all Chinese with either Putonghua or Chinese dialects as their mother tongues, and English as their second language. They were all bilingual users of Chinese and English. They varied in terms of age, occupation, and length of stay in English-speaking countries. The interviews were conducted primarily in Chinese, with certain sections in which the informants were asked to recall their particular stories, past experiences, current thoughts, or future plans in English.

The newspaper articles data were selected from the *China Daily* website, and the print copy of *China Daily Asia Weekly*. Four articles, which all contain Chinese-ness in terms of linguistic expressions and cultural conceptualizations, were selected.

The textbooks were *New Senior English for China: Student's Book* volumes 1 to 5. These were written for Chinese public secondary school students. Each volume has five units, with a number of sections on functional items, structures, reading, and writing, and workbooks centering on specific topics. For example,

Type	Quantity	Details	Code
Interviews	5 (with a focused group interview of 2)	Informant 1: female; in her late 50s; born in Beijing, China; TV producer	I-1
		Informant 2: female; in her early 50s; born in Hubei province, China; translator	I-2
		Informant 3: male; in his mid-20s; born in Liaoning province, China; Master's student majoring in Media and Communications in a university in Australia	I-3
		Informant 4: female; in her early 40s; born in Jiangsu province, China; a visiting scholar to a university in Australia	I-4
		Informant 5: female; around 20 years old; born in Heilongjiang province, China; an exchange student in a university in Australia	I-5
		Informant 6: male; in his late 30s; born in Shanghai, China; a visiting scholar in a university in Australia	I-6
Newspaper articles	4	1: 'State gifts give new look at China' by Zhao Shengnan, 1 September 2014, *China Daily*	N-1
		2: 'In Chinese marriages family still comes first' by wpywood, 4 September 2014, *China Daily*	N-2
		3: 'iPhone 6 spawns Chinese satire' by Raymond Zhou, 17 September 2014, *China Daily*	N-3
		4: 'Cover Story: All in the family' by Krishna Kumar VR, in New Delhi, 15–21 August 2014, *China Daily Asia Weekly*	N-4
Textbooks	5	*New Senior English for China*: *Student's Book* volumes 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
Works by Chinese authors written in English	4	1: *Moment in Peking*, by 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
		4: *The Great Dragon Fantasy: A Lacanian Analysis of Contemporary Chinese Thought*, by Guanjun Wu, 2014, World Scientific	W-4
Media websites	2	1: English version of the Chinese government website (http://english.gov.cn/)	M-1
		2: An Australia-based 'China Story' website (http://www.thechinastory.org/) containing Yearbooks of the China Story (e.g., 'Yearbook 2012: Red Rising, Red Eclipse' and 'Yearbook 2013: Civilizing China')	M-2

Volume 1 topics include 'Friendship', 'English around the world', 'Travel journal', 'Earthquakes', and 'Nelson Mandela–a modern hero' (c.f. Z. Xu, 2013 for a detailed analysis of the themes and features of the texts).

Works by Chinese authors written in English include *Moment in Peking*, by Lin Yutang. The 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 the Chinese American migrant author Ha Jin. It is based on a true Chinese story about an army doctor who waited for eighteen years to get a divorce from his wife, and lived in a remote county in order to marry a nurse in a city. It is set between 1963 and 1983 during a time of transition in which the Chinese Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) took place. The third work is *The Unwalled City*, by Xu Xi, a Hong Kong-based writer and academic. The novel was written in 2001, and is about Hong Kong 'yan' (people) stories in the years immediately before the 'return' of Hong Kong to China in 1997. The fourth work is *The Great Dragon Fantasy*, by Guanjun Wu, a Chinese academic. It is a research monograph analyzing how contemporary Chinese thinkers understand China's prosperity and rapid development, and whether there is any hidden mechanism for contemporary Chinese intellectual thoughts.

The two media websites, i.e., the newly launched English version of the Chinese government website, and an Australia-based 'China Story' website, both contain articles that showcase ongoing Chinese political discourse. The first represents the official 'voice' of the Chinese government, while the second contains voices from Western academia affiliated with the Australian Centre on China in the World (CIW) at the Australian National University. For this paper, two yearbooks from the China Story website, which contain various chapters on current Chinese social and political discourse, were selected.

One of the major reasons for the selection of such a wide range of data is the desire that the data reflect a range of the actual domains, such as education, creative writing, and academia, in which Chinese English is realistically used in and about China. It also takes a range of texts, including both print and online media, written by bilingual Chinese, some of whom are members of the Chinese diasporas, as well as by China researchers across the world. In addition, except for the interviews, the other data sources are readily available, and constitute an ongoing and sustainable 'virtual' corpus for researching Chinese English. Given the ongoing and open-access nature of this virtual corpus, the examples for the data analysis must be highly selective, and occasionally anecdotal. However, one of the advantages of this research is that interested readers and researchers can always access the virtual corpus data. Similarly, they can conduct their own interviews. In

this way they can verify, substantiate, and extend the data analysis and discussion, or even raise counter-arguments.

4. Data analysis and discussion

In this section, we identify and select relevant examples from the corpus data and apply the cultural conceptualizations framework to analyze them. We also explore the extent to which Chinese English corpus data validate or substantiate the cultural conceptualizations framework, and the extent to which the current framework can be stretched and expanded to interpret various types and sources of Chinese English data.

Although Chinese English is not an outlier in world Englishes, what sets it apart from other varieties of English is not only in its characteristic phonological, lexical, syntactic, discourse, and pragmatic features, but also its employment of unique Chinese cultural conceptualizations. These conceptualizations are substantiated by specific Chinese cultural schemas, categories, and conceptual metaphors. In some cases, the cultural conceptualizations that exist in Chinese English are not exclusive to Chinese, but result from the glocalization process of English in China and emerge in the form of cultural blends (Z. Xu, 2013).

4.1 Cultural schemas

Cultural schemas can be classified into *event* schema, *role* schema, *image* schema, *proposition* schema, and *emotion* schema (Sharifian, 2011: 6). Examples identified from the data are as follows:

4.1.1 *Event schema*

Example 1 is from W-3, and it is about a mother and daughter discussing attending a wedding in North Point in Hong Kong.

> "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: 10–11)

Example 1 embodies the Hong Kong event schema of a 'wedding', in which relatives are expected to prepare a *laisee*, a red envelope with money, for the bride and groom. The term *laisee* is not simply a linguistic borrowing from Cantonese, but a cultural reflection of 'face' (the more money it contains, the more 'face' the family gain and offer to the newlyweds' families), 'politeness' (a small *laisee* containing an amount that is lower than the commonly accepted standard is considered not merely as a loss of face, but also an act of impoliteness or insult), and *guanxi* (the family hierarchy, reflecting the father being the head who takes care of the *laisee*, and the extended interfamilial relationship among the parents, aunts, and uncles). A Chinese 'wedding' event schema thus embodies a number of implicit Chinese cultural schemas such as FACE, POLITENESS, and GUANXI.

4.1.2 *Role schema*

Example 2 is from I-2, who talks about her "multiple roles" as a Chinese migrant in Australia.

Researcher: What do you usually do in your spare time?

I-2: Yeah so… Currently my daily routine maybe I think it's quite busy. Because I… actually… my roles… I play a few roles, multiple roles. So like a teacher, like administrator, a student. Yeah, I have many, like, study activities, and professional activities, every day.
R: You also fulfill 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.

Example 2 shows how a Chinese middle-aged woman perceives herself in the early years of her family migration overseas. She is expected to take up multiple roles both at work and home. Given that she does not have full-time work at the time of the interview, her identities and roles shift, between part-time teacher, administrator, student, mother, wife, and home cleaner. This multiple-role schema of a middle-aged married woman is common among many migrants; however, what is culturally interesting here is I-2's response regarding her "family role"; that is, "Yeah, like a mother, a wife." A Chinese family is usually perceived vertically in terms of the relationships among its members, e.g., a married woman with a child would see herself as a mother first, instead of a wife, while in certain other cultures, a married woman may perceive herself first as the wife of her husband rather than the mother of her child.

4.1.3 *Image schema*

Example 3 is a section of the lyrics of a song that was popular in China and among the members of the Chinese diasporas throughout the 1980s and 1990s. It is cited from W-4.

> In the ancient east flies a dragon; *Zhongguo* (China) is its name. In the ancient east resides a group of people; they are all descendants of the dragon. I grew up beneath the feet of the great dragon, I'm a descendant of the dragon. With black eyes, black hair and yellow skin, I'm forever a descendant of the dragon.
>
> (Lyrics of 'Descendants of the Dragon', cited in Wu, 2014: 57–58)

Images such as this imaginary dragon, in association with concrete objects including the *Great Wall*, the *Yangtze River* and the *Yellow River*, are perceived by the overwhelming majority of Chinese as representing China. According to Wu (2014, p. 63, emphasis original), these are "symbols of grandeur that *project an image of an eternal China*." In a follow-up interview (I-6), the author of *The Great Dragon Fantasy* elaborates on the image of a dragon by saying that "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."

4.1.4 *Emotion schema*

Example 4 is from I-5, where the informant mentioned 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.

> I-5: 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 think one of the words is 'bubbly'. I never know this word. Some bubble, many bubbles. That's a very interesting word. When you know the meaning of that word, it's exactly many bubbles. **I just feel so … a little kind of sad**, because I've never learned English this way. I said that … I felt that all the multiple choice questions I have done, all the filling-in questions I have done, that's nothing, that's not English, that's not English culture, and I have never known English culture before. **I'm just a stranger.**

Informant I-5 feels "sad" about herself as a learner and user of English when she encounters more proficient speakers of English. She feels like a "stranger." This emotion schema of SADNESS is rooted in her lack of exposure to other speakers of English. As a result, she feels insecure, inferior, and insufficient, i.e., the opposite

of confident or proud. Much research has been conducted about Chinese cultural emotion schemas (e.g., Z. Xu, 2014), indicating that English words such as *shame*, *guilt*, and *pride* may not really index Chinese emotions. Z. Xu (2014: 176) summarizes a Chinese PRIDE schema as

> X feels PRIDE because of his/her hardworking; becoming better than others; bringing something good to his/her family or where he/she belongs (e.g. workplace, city, province or country). In addition, X feels PRIDE because of his/her feeling too good about him/herself; and so he/she stops working hard and becomes left behind.

Likewise, a Chinese SADNESS schema can be elaborated as: X experiences SADNESS when he/she senses the gap or lack, because of a lack of exposure, awareness and sufficient knowledge, when he/she compares himself/herself to others. This Chinese cultural SADNESS schema indexes INFERIORITY, SELF-PITY, and HELPLESSNESS.

4.1.5 *Proposition schema*

Examples 5 and 6 below reveal Chinese proposition schemas regarding family and being a "good man."

Example 5 is from W-2 (*Waiting*). Jin (2000: 123) captures a conversation in a courtroom about the protagonist of the novel, Lin Kong, divorcing his wife who lives in the countryside.

> "So he's a big officer or something? Still he mustn't be bigger than the law,' a middle-aged woman said to others.
>
> 'Even an emperor isn't free to divorce his wife,' a toothless crone put in.
>
> 'Men are all alike, beasts.'
>
> An old man in bifocals retorted, 'A woman shouldn't be allowed to divorce either, or else there'll be disorder everywhere. The order of the world is rooted in every family, as Confucius said.'
>
> 'What a heartless animal!'
>
> 'He has no reason to do this to her.'
>
> 'The army should send him back and let him scratch a living out of the earth.'
>
> 'I heard he's a doctor.'
>
> 'Small wonder he has no heart. Doctors are butchers.'

In the conversation, a Chinese proposition schema emerges in the form of a Confucius saying, i.e., THE ORDER OF THE WORLD IS ROOTED IN EVERY FAMILY (*Jia he wanshi xing*). Those people commenting on the case of the army officer divorcing his wife made use of this Chinese proposition schema to express their sentiment opposing this lawful but (in their terms) immoral divorce.

Example 6 is from W-1 (*Moment in Peking*). Lin depicts the drivers of the mule carts of a wealthy family named Yao, commenting about a young and pretty woman.

> 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 6, a "good man" is depicted through his words, behavior, and above all, how others talk about him. A proposition schema emerges as A GOOD MAN ALWAYS IS REWARDED WITH GOOD LUCK. This can be interpreted in two ways. One interpretation is that because Master Yao is a "good man," he is rewarded with a young and pretty woman. The other interpretation is that it is precisely because the young woman is thought to be Master Yao's adopted daughter or a widow and not his concubine that Master Yao can be said to be a "good man." In whichever sense the meaning is taken, the Chinese "good man" proposition schema appears to be an internalized understanding among the drivers in the context of the novel, and Chinese society in general. The "good man" proposition schema is not only associated with "good luck," but also with *ping'an*, a Chinese expression for peace, calm, and safety, as per the Chinese saying *Haoren yi sheng pingan* "God bless good man," or "All is well for good man."

4.2 Cultural categories

Cultural categories are clearly bounded entities, with membership being defined by their criterial attributes. Cultural categories are rooted in people's cultural experiences.

Examples 7-1, 7-2, and 8 reveal a Chinese cultural category of *festivals*. Example 9 shows the emerging cultural category of the *Red Boomers*, and Example 10 shows how Chinese categorize *the West*.

> Example 7-1.
> '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.' (T-3: 2)

> Example 7-2.
> "Nowadays, most traditional Chinese operas have lost their popularity. I think the Mei Lanfang art festival can serve as a great opportunity to promote Chinese opera among the public, especially among the younger generation," said Chen Shihong, organizer of Mei Lanfang Art Festival. … The festival includes a special forum on Peking Opera, and a collection of commemorative stamps are set to be released. The Mei Lanfang Art Festival runs until the 29th of October. (M-1)

Apart from the common understanding that festivals are joyous and celebratory, Chinese also conceptualize certain commemorable days or events as festivals. For example, Example 7-1 shows that a particular day (the fifth of the fifth Chinese lunar month) is conceptualized as a festival, namely, Dragon Boat Festival (the name itself conjures a Chinese image schema and contains a Chinese conceptual metaphor), commemorating the ancient Chinese poet Qu Yuan. Example 7-2 is about an art 'festival' commemorating the Chinese Peking Opera artist Mei Lanfang. These examples show that the Chinese conceptualize certain days and events as falling within the cultural category of *festivals*.

> Example 8.
> The red boomers, or 'princelings' (*taizi dang* 太子党), typified by the deposed Chongqing Party Secretary Bo Xilai … … are the generation of men and women born either at the war-era Communist capital of Yan'an in Shaanxi in north-west China in the 1940s, or around the founding years of the People's Republic. For decades the progeny of Party leaders at all levels have been active both politically and economically. Through alliances, marriage and various coalitions of interest they form a complex socio-political strata in the Chinese world. (M-2: vii)

Example 8 describes a recently developed cultural category of people collectively labeled as the "red boomers" (*taizi dang* 太子党). The text in Example 8 itself is self-explanatory. The "red boomers" stand in contrast with the "red guards" (*hong weibing* 红卫兵), another cultural category of Chinese youth, who were regarded as the "red soldiers" of the Red-Commander-in-Chief Chairman Mao Zedong during the Chinese Cultural Revolution (1966–1976). What is interesting about such cultural categories is that the very notion of "cultural category"' is not static

but dynamic. Some cultural categories may emerge as society progresses, while others may lose their relevance.

> Example 9.
> '[T]he West' is effectively a fantasmatic domain: it cannot be located in geography. In fact, this fantasmatic West often includes Japan, as Peter Gries notes in his China's New Nationalism, "Japan is not geographically west of China, but Chinese often include Japan in both the noun and adjective 'Xifang' – 'the West' and 'Western'. Thus, 'the West' is a 'category' that Žižek calls 'an imaginary cartography'" (W-4, Wu, 2014: 114).

This cultural category of *the West*, including Japan, which is geographically east of China, arose as a Chinese cultural categorization for historical, economic, and political reasons.

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 (c.f. Sharifian, 2014a).

Example 10 is taken from W-2, and presents the cultural metaphor of "a pair of mandarin ducks" to describe an affectionate couple. Example 11 is taken from W-4, in which the metaphor of the "Great Dragon" is elaborated.

> Example 10.
> Unfortunately his wife had died two 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 widely used in Chinese culture, because the Chinese believe that mandarin ducks are lifelong couples, and they symbolize fidelity and conjugal affection. This metaphor is a figurative use of Chinese and is loan-translated into Chinese English.

> Example 11.
> Symbols such as the Great Dragon become the objects of desire precisely because they *present and represent* the (imagined) fullness of Chinese civilization … Once being organized in the "Great Dragon fantasy," the Yellow River, the Yangtze River, the Great Wall – the list can almost infinitely go on: panda, chopstick, Confucian temple, *gongfu/wushu* (Chinese martial arts), *hanfu/tangzhuang* (Chinese clothing), *weiqi* (encir-cling game), Sun

> Wukong (the Monkey King), and so on and so forth – are suddenly turned into objects of desire, magically elevated into something which are 'more than themselves' (W-4, Wu, 2014: 89).

Example 11 is a case in point about cultural conceptual metaphors that reflect culture-specific worldviews. The "Great Dragon" does not only present a metaphor, it also triggers a sense of imaginary power in terms of a "fantasy" of the Chinese people, and in turn, it triggers a series of metaphors in which cultural objects or notions become "more than themselves." In the interview, informant I-6 confirmed that "the Great Dragon of China is a very powerful metaphor, if it is a metaphor. It is something existing that can be adopted to express a kind of sentiment of the Chinese." Both Example 10 and Example 11 embody Chinese cultural conceptual metaphors and demonstrate the continuum of linguistic expressions and cognitive structures that substantiate Chinese cultural conceptualizations.

5. Research findings

The identification of cultural conceptualizations in their various types and forms and the data analysis in the previous section give rise to the following research findings.

First of all, the cultural conceptualizations framework renders a useful analytical tool for identifying Chinese-ness in terms of Chinese cultural schemas, categories, and cultural conceptual metaphors in Chinese English. The wide range of data selected for this research contains rich examples of Chinese cultural conceptualizations. The study must therefore be highly selective in identifying relevant examples of Chinese cultural schemas, categories, and cultural conceptual metaphors in Chinese English for elaboration purposes within the scope of this paper.

However, the current framework can be expanded from its 'cultural' orientations to include a number of other dimensions such as domain-based schemas, including schemas of politics, economy, education, ideology, religion, science, and technology. For example, the corpus data contain examples of "Chinese Dream"; "River Crab," a political pun in Chinese meaning "harmonizing" or censorship on the Internet; and "Three Watches," a political word play in Chinese meaning "Three Represents," a political agenda of the Jiang Zemin era (M-2: xviii). The understanding of such expressions and notions requires knowledge of Chinese political schemas. For example, the *Zhongguo meng* "Chinese dream" has a connotative meaning that goes beyond the English word 'dream' in the sense of aspiration or national aspiration. It serves as a notion that unites the Chinese people and

as a call for actions to implement a series of Chinese political agendas. Example 12 from the data is a case in point.

> Example 12.
> Both the Chinese leadership and the media have previously used the word 'dream' (meng 梦) metaphorically to describe the country's re-emergence as a major power and other contemporary national aspirations. (M-2)

Therefore, in order to account for the increasingly sophisticated empirical linguistic data of Chinese English, the five types of schemas can be further developed into an open list of domain-based schemas.

Secondly, as can be noted from the data descriptions, Chinese English is primarily used by Chinese first language speakers. However, it is certainly not exclusively produced and consumed by Chinese first language speakers. It can be utilized and shared by any people who have an interest in Chinese history or Chinese current affairs as well as other China-related issues and cultural phenomena. The *Asia Weekly of China Daily* journalists who produced the N-4 data, and the majority of the contributors to the China Story website who produced the M-2, are sinologists or specialists on China issues, or people whose first languages are not necessarily Chinese. This finding corrects the common misconception that Chinese English is confined to China and Chinese speakers of English.

Thirdly, cultural conceptualizations are dynamic notions. They vary both diachronically over time and synchronically over space. For example, the cultural category of the *Red Boomers* has been an emerging category since the beginning of the current century, while the category of the *Red Guards* has lost contemporary relevance. In addition, geographical variations in terms of the cultural schemas, categories, and conceptual metaphors are apparent. For examples, the cultural conceptual metaphor of "mandarin ducks," used to symbolize wedded bliss and fidelity for an affectionate couple, is a widespread metaphor across China and among members of the Chinese diasporas; however, the Chinese equivalent expressions, *yuan-yang* in Putonghua or *yuen-yeung* in Cantonese, have additional connotations, including an "odd couple" or an "unlikely pair" because the male and female plumages of mandarin ducks are so different to one another. In Hong Kong, the expression *yuen-yeung* is also commonly used in *dai pai dongs* (open-air food vendors) and *cha chaan tengs* (cafes) to refer to a drink, served either hot or cold, containing a mixture of coffee and tea with milk. This 'coff-tea' is obviously a completely different cultural category.

Lastly, the data collected for this research also reveals a considerable number of cultural blends. In one of the texts in T-3, the topic of "festivals around the world" is introduced. The text categorizes festivals around the world into "Festivals of the Dead," e.g., Japanese Obon and the Mexican Day of the Dead; "Festivals to Honor

People," e.g., the Chinese Dragon Boat Festival, the American Columbus Day, and the Indian national festival to honor 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 T-3 can be regarded as an exemplar of cultural blend or the blending of cultures, in which a "sad love story" is depicted, about a Chinese girl who missed her date on Valentine's Day, disappointing the boy. The text blends this modern-day Valentine's story with a classical Chinese love story about two traditional Chinese lovers who are cruelly separated by the Milky Way (conceptualized as *tian he* "heavenly river") and can meet each other only once a year by crossing the river on a bridge of magpie wings.

6. Implications and conclusion

Researching cultural conceptualizations in Chinese English has implications for intercultural communication involving Chinese speakers of English, in which metacultural competence plays a pivotal role.

For effective intercultural communication, learners of English should develop not only linguistic and communicative competence, but also metacultural competence, in terms of their awareness of cultural conceptual variations, their ability to explain their cultural conceptualizations, and their ability to negotiate cultural meaning and authenticity. Variations in cultural conceptualizations can also serve as interesting topics for intercultural communication. For example, it might interest other English speakers to learn about the different cultural conceptualizations of *yuan-yang* or *yuen-yeung* (mandarin ducks) at the level of cultural image schemas, cultural categories (e.g., wedding and drink), and cultural conceptual metaphors for either a lifelong affectionate couple or an odd and unlikely pair.

This research also has methodological implications for corpus-based research on varieties of English. Instead of collecting and coding a predetermined number of words for a particular corpus, researchers can take a flexible approach to the utilization of corpus data. The quantity and range of the datasets should be open rather than closed in the sense that it should be possible for new and emerging data to be added as part of an organic and ongoing process. For example, new interviews can be conducted whenever circumstances permit, additional works written by authors of the designated varieties of English, and new series of textbooks added to the corpus on an ongoing basis. One good example of this ongoing nature of the corpus is the data from designated websites, such as the two media websites adopted for this research. As the websites are updated, new articles are automatically considered as fresh data for research purposes.

In conclusion, in this paper we have explored cultural conceptualizations in Chinese English via a Cultural Linguistics approach. In particular, we have collected data and established a corpus of Chinese English, and identified and analyzed Chinese cultural conceptualizations in terms of cultural schemas, cultural categories, and cultural conceptual metaphors. We have also drawn implications for researching Chinese cultural conceptualizations for intercultural communication involving Chinese speakers of English. We suggest that future research on Chinese English should be directed towards differentiating and unpacking more deeply rooted Chinese cultural underpinnings that learners and users of Chinese varieties of English have subconsciously encoded. We hope that this research may also shed light on other varieties of English, including established and well-researched varieties of English, from a Cultural Linguistics perspective.

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