Panoramas, problems and prospects of Chinese English today

Reviewed by Jianli Zhang, Harbin Engineering University, Heilongjiang Province, China

As an up-to-date addition to Springer's *Multilingual Education* series, the volume under review is designed to account for the current status of Chinese English (CE) and to provide discussions of issues and trends at play through an enlightening reflection of the field. With a diverse range of critical and data-rich chapters, not only does the volume take the detailed profiling of CE in use as central to the book's argument, but it is also in dialogue with recent works in sociolinguistics, applied linguistics and corpus linguistics that study English as lingua franca in China or Asia beyond.

Serving as the starting point of the volume, Chapter 1 helps to set the scene for further discussions in the remaining 15 chapters, which are thematically arranged into five parts. The first part (Chapters 2–3) concentrates on the phonology of CE and challenges previous research findings and current misconceptions related to phonological variation on the basis of systemic studies. Chapter 2 finds no correlation between accuracy of pronunciation by Chinese speakers and misunderstandings, which poses a stimulating challenge to the priority given to accuracy in English pronunciation teaching in China. In the same vein, Chapter 3 concentrates on the Hong Kong English syllable structure (p. 33), arguing against the lasting belief that accurate syllable manipulation is a must to achieve smooth communication.

The second part (Chapters 4–8) discusses a range of specific aspects of CE nativization with regard to lexis, grammar and text. Chapter 4 focuses on the interface between lexis and grammar, chapter 5 turns to CE-specific collocational patterns as a significant source of innovation, and chapter 6 is devoted to nominalized syntactic structures in CE. All three are a must for a systemic understanding of the lexical, grammatical and textual properties of CE. To shed further light on the nativization of CE, Chapter 7 illustrates transfer from Chinese at the syntactic level. Chapter 8 analyzes gratitude emails by CE users across two proficiency levels from a textual analysis perspective. Here, unique patterns of nativization of CE are found in terms of text length but none as regards overall and individual pragmatic strategies. The chapters in this part can not only be read independently of each other, but may also be taken collectively to represent the multiple sides of CE nativization.

The third part (Chapters 9–13) presents insights into the major issues and progress in relation to perceptions, reactions and attitudes towards CE. To this end, Chapter 9 argues that English teaching should consider both Standard English and well-codified features of CE, which is in full consistency with McPherron (2017). Standing in line with Chapter 2, Chapter 10 argues for a second thought to the current teaching aim, scope and model of pronunciation after investigating CE users' attitudes towards their English accent. For instance, the author believes that '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' (p. 152). Rather, in the context of global communication, exposure to various accents is held to be more important than imitating any particular native English accents. Chapter 11 focuses on the reactions of EFL teachers (both native and non-native Chinese) to the characteristics of CE output by college students in China, showing that most loan words or loan translation are generally well accepted. Along the same lines, Chapter 12 explores 'four Chinese student-teachers' views on the necessity and practicality of teaching English as an International Language in a Chinese context' (p. 173), suggesting that CE as one form of English diversity has 'a good prospect of being accepted' (p.184). The findings of these two chapters are of great value for both English language teaching

JIANLI ZHANG is a lecturer in the Foreign Languages Department of Harbin Engineering University, China. Her research interests include EFL acquisition and cognitive linguistics. She has published about 20 papers on EFL acquisition, Chinese English and metaphor in both Chinese and international journals.

and EFL teacher training in consideration of the difficulties envisioned in Chapter 13 where the development of CE is discussed as that towards a nativized variety among other World Englishes.

The two chapters in the fourth part (Chapters 14–15) illustrate the nativization of CE regarding cultural conceptualizations and identities. While Chapter 14 argues from a Cultural Linguistics perspective that 'CE varies from other varieties of English both linguistically and culturally' (p. 216) in terms of conceptualizations and embodiment of schemas, categories and metaphors, Chapter 15 highlights a more situated approach to CE, demonstrating that the sense of Chinese identity today is 'less constrained by previous ideologies about learning English' (p. 219) but more defined within Chinese people's construction of global identities through English. These two chapters together offer a new interpretation of the sense of 'being Chinese' in the 21st century, where globalization and localization merge.

The fifth part (Chapters 16–17) completes the volume by providing a cutting-edge review of CE research via textually analyzing 100 articles about CE. Chapter 16 critically identifies potential research themes, and Chapter 17 summarizes current issues and prospective problems related to CE. While drawing all the strands of the volume together, this part indicates that more research needs to be done with regard to a well-balanced understanding of *Ti*, or essence, and *Yong*, or practical use, of CE (p. 278)

As a refreshing collection of papers on CE, the volume is unique with its comprehensive scope and innovative focus. With its wide coverage of concepts, aspects, and approaches as well as of the development of CE research, the volume should be highly praised for its commitment to expose its readers to a set of the latest researches on CE. Stimulating researchers to compare or contrast the diverse sides, theories and methodologies to identify research gaps for further exploration, the volume can be taken as a mind-opener for graduates, postgraduates or advanced researchers. Another strength of the volume is its diverse but skillful illustration of research findings with data retrieved from corpora, classroom discussion, interviews, surveys and emails. These contribute to the authors' reports of the complex panorama and prospects of CE, and serve readers well to understand and undertake research on CE.

However, my major reservation concerns the volume's depth and breadth of CE use in China. For instance, what is missing are empirical studies of CE in the areas of Macau and Taiwan, which to some degree undermines the editors' claim to examine CE in China as a whole. Furthermore, this volume would be made more commendable if some diachronic perspective had been integrated into the synchronic studies of CE as a linguistic outcome of both globalization and localization.

Despite the lack of a coherent theoretical paradigm, this book is compact, cheering, and challenging as a comprehensive addition to the field of CE research and is strongly recommended as an essential resource for scholars, researchers or students with interest in CE or English as a lingua franca in Asia.

Reference

McPherron, P. 2017. *Internationalizing Teaching, Localizing Learning: An Examination of English Teaching Reforms and English Use in China*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.