

# Linguistic Features of China English and Pedagogical Implications: A Systematic Review (2003–2023)

Shuang Yang, Wan Nur Asyura Wan Adnan

Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2025.90400116>

Received: 19 March 2025; Accepted: 01 April 2025; Published: 01 May 2025

## ABSTRACT

As the emergence of world Englishes, an uncertain content standard for nativized English language teaching (ELT) model primarily requires a more comprehensive understanding of linguistic features of China English (LFCE) to facilitate the appropriateness of the application in the classrooms. Previous studies were broad in scope, primarily focusing on the definition and attitude regarding China English (CE) and partial LFCE (Mahboob & Liang, 2014; Xu, 2017). Therefore, this systematic review study thoroughly analyzed the current status and diachronic trend in this field by analyzing 44 included studies published from 2003 to 2023 and identified the unexplored areas to be bridged for the future research direction. Seven major research parameters to construct an analytical framework were identified: published time, geographic distribution, publication outlets, indexing databases, research methods, data analysis methods, and research themes. The findings revealed that LFCE studies demonstrated distinctive distribution patterns and chronological trends, which served as useful evidences and reference to develop valuable studies on nativized English teaching model in China.

**Keywords:** World Englishes, China English (CE), Linguistic features of China English (LFCE), English language teaching (ELT)

## INTRODUCTION

With the development of globalization, English has evolved from the Anglo-Saxon language into a number of new English varieties, each of which is officially owned by different countries. In the late 1970s, when World Englishes theory was introduced into China, many researchers initiated discussions and substantial studies on China English (Bolton, 2003; Ge, 1980; Kirkpatrick & Xu, 2002; Qin & Gao, 2020; Xu, 2010, 2017; Yu & Ma, 2022). This development has primarily generated a heated debate on definition about localized form of English in the Chinese context, such as 'Chinese English', 'China English', etc. Overall, there seems to be little distinction between the denotations and connotations of 'China English' and 'Chinese English' (Siqu & Sewell, 2012). Ultimately, the term of 'China English' has been adopted in this study due to the highest frequency according to an extensive academic research (He, 2020).

In terms of geographical spread and large population, Zhang and Mi (2019) highlighted that around 450 million Chinese individuals have learned or were currently learning English, forming a strong foundation for the global spread of China English. Subsequently, studies on China English (CE) have made a huge impact on English language teaching (ELT) and learning in China within the past decade. Since many scholars have questioned the claim that the aim of learning and teaching English in non-native contexts is to achieve a native variety of English (Jenkins, 2014; Kachru, 1992; Kachru, 2008; Seidlhofer, 2001; Sridhar & Sridhar, 1986), He and Li (2009) the preferred teaching model for college English in mainland China is a standard variety of English, enriched with distinct, well-codified, and appropriately integrated features of China English. Li (2019) further notes that Chinese speakers of English were increasingly moving away from the pursuit of a 'standard' English variety, influenced by China's expanding role in international affairs and business. After all, the goal of fully mastering a native English variety is largely unrealistic and impractical for most Chinese EFL learners.

Recent assessment reports indicate that Chinese accents will now be included in the TOEFL listening section to align with China's rapid globalization. Given that China represents the largest market for TOEFL test centres, ETS (Educational Testing Service, an organization located in the USA) has decided to introduce this measure to adapt to the significant global shifts underway. Obviously, the current sole native teaching model cannot simply meet the diverse needs of Chinese EFL learners. Apart from that, it still remains unclear what linguistic features of CE should be included for ELT in China. Therefore, teachers and ELT professionals should possess knowledge of the current status of LFCE and the challenges it poses for learners, educational institutions, and policymakers. This insight allows them to tailor their professional approach to meet the specific needs of their students and the contexts in which they must understand and communicate effectively.

To date, as exploring CE studies have gained popularity among researchers after 21st century, the number of the relevant studies in this field rapidly increased in the last two decades. However, previous review studies have been largely general in scope, with their focus predominantly centred on the definition and attitude regarding China English (CE) and partial LFCE (Mahboob & Liang, 2014; Qin, 2023; Xu, 2017). In addition, those systematic reviews on LFCE and their impact on ELT were still scarce within the World Englishes paradigm (Yu & Ma, 2022). In order to construct a clear framework of proper LFCE, this study aims to comprehensively review studies on LFCE and explore its diachronic trend for the future preparation on ELT reformation in China. The primary objectives of this systematic review were to outline the current state of research on LFCE between 2003 and 2023 from both international databases and domestic database, and identify the diachronic trend on LFCE, and where further ELT implication should be emphasized.

Building on the current research gaps in the field, this review study aims to answer the following questions:

Q1. What is current status of research on linguistic features of China English (LFCE) between 2003 and 2023?

Q2. What were the diachronic trends of studies on linguistic features of China English (LFCE) in the past 20 years?

Q3. What pedagogical implications for future English language teaching (EFL) in China?

In answering these questions, this study conducted a comprehensive and systematic synthesis of LFCE scholarship in 2003 to 2023, retrieving articles from high quality databases, such as Web of Science (WoS), Scopus, and China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI), and a total of 44 articles with full texts were included.

## METHODOLOGY

This study adopted the systematic review method. Bettany-Saltikov (2010) defines that a systematic review is a comprehensive analysis of the scholarly literature pertaining to a certain topic, with the aim of identifying, selecting, evaluating, and synthesizing all the high-quality research evidence that is relevant to that topic. In general, A systematic review adheres to a well-defined protocol that outlines its aims, principles, and methods in advance. Its purpose is to synthesize the existing research in order to reach reliable findings. Compared with other review designs such as narrative review, the systematic review could provide a more suitable example of taking adequate measures to minimize error and bias (Littell et al., 2008). In this study, the review protocol was established based on the research questions to search for the relevant studies.

### Paper Retrieval

This literature review was undertaken by an intensive comparison of peer-reviewed journals on the CE domain from both international database and domestic databased. To entail a comprehensive and in-depth study, Green et al. (2006) argue that it is typically advisable to search across a minimum of two databases. In pursuit of authoritative sources that index education research field, the current study utilizes three prominent and influential electronic databases: Web of Science, Scopus, and CNKI, due to their influential positions in research community and a great number of publications they own in the CE domain.

In order to design a suitable framework on paper retrieval, this study adopts PRISMA flow chart diagram to conduct publications retrieving and screening (Moher et al., 2009). Qin (2023) supports that the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses Statement (PRISMA) is an appropriate method to retrieve relevant publications with accuracy and comprehensiveness in various academic fields. In this study, a three-step framework as shown in Figure 1, was designed to illustrate the paper retrieval and selection process. Firstly, aiming to yield the most appropriate results in each of the databases, the search terms were designed to furthest enlarge the emergence of potential publications on CE domain by using search parameters of “China English” OR “Chinese English. The retrieved articles were published from 2013 to 2023. The search was conducted on February 3-5, 2024. It is worth noting that the initial retrieved articles were ready to be exported as .ris files and then imported to EndNote to use its automatic tool to delete duplicates. Finally, the initial searching produced over 4000 potential papers.

Subsequently, the screening procedure was the second stage. Potential publications on the CE domain were identified in terms of the keywords, titles and abstracts. However, some of the contents seem to be unrelated to the relevant topics. Given the volume of data, it was imperative to implement procedures to exclude extraneous articles. Articles in relation to book reviews, editorials, review and conference proceedings were filtered out. Articles reported in English with full text were included. After records screened, leaving a total of 1963 publications for further visual examination. In order to extract LFCE parts from the whole CE studies, the criteria for including or excluding these included papers should be explicitly and implicitly outlined. In this paper, as can be seen in Table 1, six main inclusion and exclusion criteria, together with their subsets have also been outlined. While this search took place, unsuitable articles were removed from visual examination. This search strategy yielded 44 studies for inclusion in the systematic keyword map.

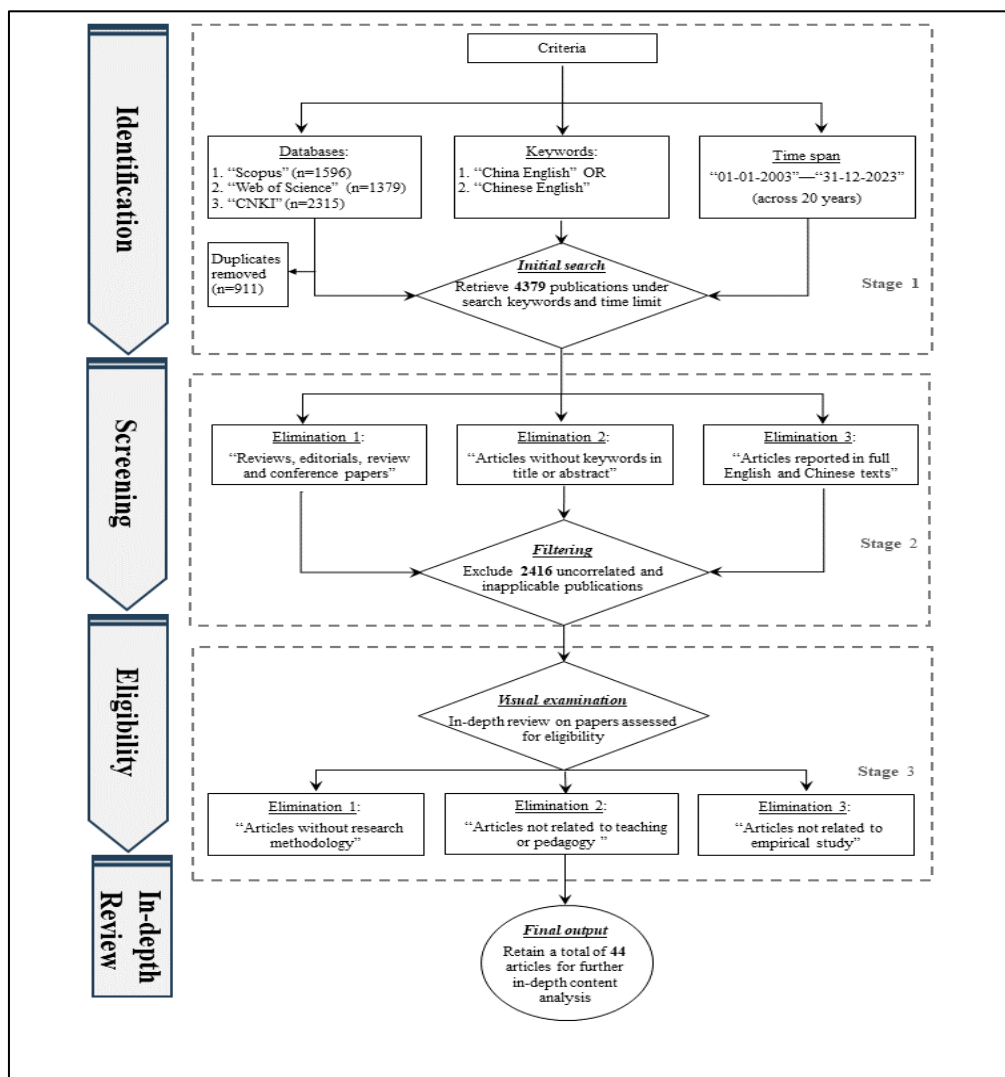


Figure 1 PRISMA Flow Diagram of Literature Search and Selection

Table 1 Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria for Visual Examination

Inclusion/Exclusion	Criteria	Explanation
Inclusion	Databases (DB)	Web of science; Scopus
	Search terms (ST)	China English; Chinese English
	Time span (TS)	Publications between 2013 and 2023
	Search engine reason (SER)	Search terms can be found in title or abstract or keywords
	English language teaching (ELT)	A paper on the CE domain must be related to ELT.
	Partially related (PR)	PR-1: A paper focuses on attitudes, bilingual creativity, identity, and so on, but with stated any aspect of linguistic features. PR-2: A paper focuses on topics other than language teaching, but with stated pedagogical implications. PR-3: A paper is concerning about nativization of English in China without mentioning China English or Chinese English.
Exclusion	Without methodology	A paper without methodology to be assessed
	Without full English text	A paper without full English text to be assessed
	Non-related (NR)	NR-1: A paper is not an academic article. For example, editorial materials, conference reviews, contents, or forewords NR-2: A paper is not related to empirical study. NR-3: A paper is not related to linguistic features.

## Data Analysis

The application of these three additional criteria yields 44 studies which were included in the in-depth content analysis. For the content analysis, it is a structured and systematic approach to organize and compress many words of text into specific categories by using coding rules, to identify LFCE and methods for a literature review (Weber, 1990). The analytical framework of the present study is adapted from the study of Qin (2023) in her review of Chinese English scholarships in 1980 to 2020, where she explores six major research parameters by coding and analysis to produce a comprehensive and systematic synthesis on the CE domain. In order to better accommodate the purpose of this review rather than a preliminary overall glimpse at CE studies, “citations”, “research approach”, and “research strands” were replaced by three new parameters “published time”, “analysis methods” and “research themes”, and a new parameter “indexing databases” was added in the study. Table 2. illustrates the structure of the codebook used for content analysis of this study. Therefore, the current study consists of seven parameters: published time, geographic distribution, publication outlets, indexing databases, research methods, data analysis methods, and research themes.

Table 2 Coding Framework for the Seven Reviewing Parameters of LFCE Literature (Qin, 2023)

Variable	Coding scheme	Value
Published time	Open	Release date and time
Geographical distribution	Open	Author’s affiliation
Publication outlets	Open	Name of the journal
Indexing databases	Open	Name of the database
Research methods	Pre-constructed	Non-empirical; qualitative, quantitative; mixed methods
Data analysis methods	Open	Content analysis, comparative analysis, etc.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### RQ1: The Current Status of Linguistic Features of CE

#### Published Time

The analysis of publication trends reveals that research on the linguistic features of China English (LFCE) has undergone notable shifts over the past two decades. In 2003, no relevant studies were published, which can be attributed to the limited recognition of CE as a legitimate research topic despite ongoing discussions in linguistic and educational circles. A discernible increase in scholarly attention did not emerge until 2015, marking a turning point in the field (Figure 2).

Notably, over 60% of the studies included in this review were published between 2015 and 2020, with 2017 witnessing the highest number of publications (seven articles). This surge in research output suggests a growing academic interest in LFCE, likely driven by continuous efforts to establish its linguistic characteristics and pedagogical applications in ELT.

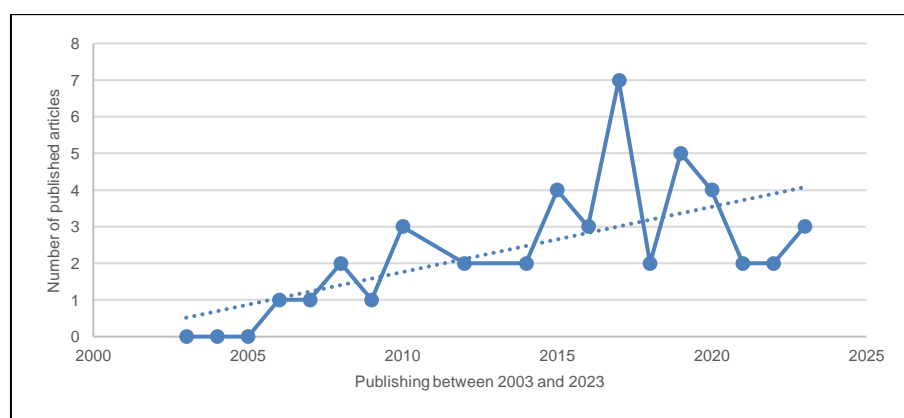


Figure 2. Number of Relevant Articles Published Yearly from 2003 to 2023

#### Geographical Distribution

Figure 3. illustrated the geographical distribution of authors across seven locations. The majority (88.64%) were affiliated with institutions in Mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, while the remaining contributors came from four other countries: the United States (13.64%), the United Kingdom (2.27%), Australia (4.55%), and Brunei (2.27%). This distribution highlighted that research on the linguistic features of China English (CE) is largely shaped by national or regional contexts. As a result, generalizing findings beyond these regions may have limited practical applicability, underscoring the need for cross-cultural investigations to enhance the global relevance of CE research.

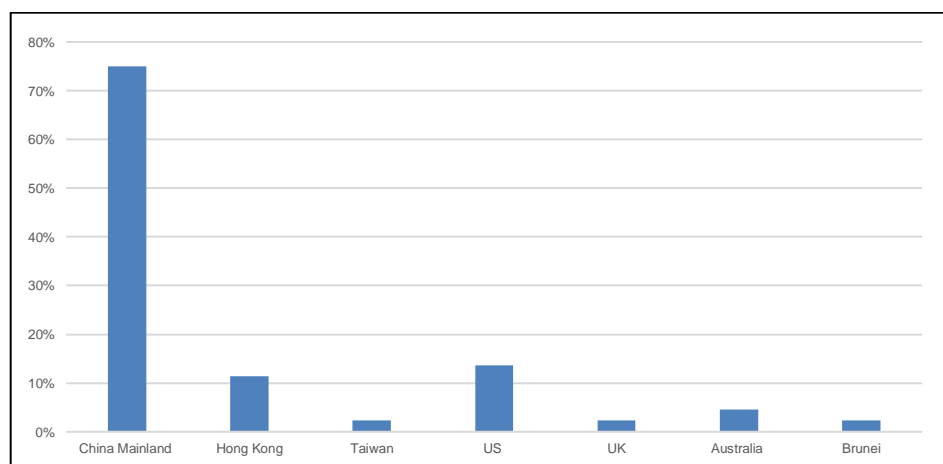


Figure 3. Distribution of Included Publications by Geographical Distribution

Note: one added to each location's count for authors with affiliations in multiple locations



## Publication Outlets

The analysis of publication outlets for the 44 identified articles revealed notable trends in the dissemination of research on the linguistic features of China English (LFCE). Among these articles, 6 were published as part of book series, while the remaining 38 appeared in 27 different peer-reviewed journals. As shown in Table 3., the highest proportion of publications was concentrated in World Englishes (18.18%), followed by Multilingual Education (13.64%) and Asian Englishes (9.09%). These journals, indexed in Web of Science (W/S) or Scopus, indicate that LFCE research is gaining recognition within the broader field of global English studies. Additionally, several other well-established English-language journals, such as TESOL Quarterly, Lingua, and English Today, also contributed to the dissemination of LFCE-related studies, though each accounted for a smaller proportion (2.27%) of total publications.

Table 3. Publication Outlets of Included Articles

Journal name	Frequency	Indexing	Language
World Englishes	18.18%	W/S	English
Multilingual Education	13.64%	W/S	English
Asian Englishes	9.09%	W/S	English
Word	2.27%	W/S	English
Tesol Quarterly	2.27%	W/S	English
Overseas English	2.27%	W/S	English
Lingua	2.27%	W/S	English
Chinese Journal of Applied Linguistics	2.27%	W/S	English
China National Conference on Chinese Computational Linguistics	2.27%	W/S	English
Asia-Pacific Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences	2.27%	W/S	English
Journal of World Languages	2.27%	W/S	English
Eurasia Journal of Mathematics Science and Technology Education	2.27%	W/S	English
English Today	2.27%	W/S	English
International Journal of English Linguistics	2.27%	W/S	English
Algorithms, Computing and Artificial Intelligence	2.27%	W/S	English
China Foreign Language	4.55%	CKNI	Chinese
Modern English	2.27%	CKNI	Chinese
Journal of Dalian University of Technology	2.27%	CKNI	Chinese
Journal of Yangtze University (Social sciences)	2.27%	CKNI	Chinese
Journal of World Englishes and Educational Practices	2.27%	CKNI	Chinese
Journal of Tianjin Foreign Studies University	2.27%	CKNI	Chinese
Journal of Sichuan college of education	2.27%	CKNI	Chinese
Journal of Mudanjiang College of Education	2.27%	CKNI	Chinese
Journal of Heilongjiang Vocational Institute of Ecological Engineering	2.27%	CKNI	Chinese
Foreign Language Education	2.27%	CKNI	Chinese
Foreign Language and Their Teaching	2.27%	CKNI	Chinese
Foreign Language and Literature	2.27%	CKNI	Chinese
Corpus Linguistics	2.27%	CKNI	Chinese

Note: W/S refer to Web of Science/ Scopus, while CNKI means China National Knowledge Infrastructure.

A closer examination of the indexing and language of publication reveals that a significant portion of high-impact studies on LFCE were published in English-language journals included in Web of Science and Scopus. This trend suggested that international interest in LFCE has been growing, reflecting an increasing engagement with China English within global linguistic discourse. However, a substantial number of studies were published in Chinese-language journals, particularly those affiliated with university-level institutions and indexed in the China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI). These Chinese journals, such as Journal of Tianjin Foreign Studies University and Journal of Sichuan College of Education, played a crucial role in advancing LFCE research within domestic academic circles.

The distribution of publications across both international and domestic platforms carries important implications for the field. The strong presence of LFCE studies in internationally recognized journals demonstrated that research on China English is no longer confined to local academic discussions but is increasingly contributing to broader conversations on World Englishes. At the same time, the continued prominence of Chinese university-affiliated journals highlights the role of domestic scholarship in shaping the understanding and theoretical development of LFCE. This dual dissemination pattern suggested that while international scholars were becoming more aware of LFCE, much of the foundational research and theoretical discussions remained rooted in Chinese academic institutions.

## Indexing Databases

Of the 44 articles reviewed, 30 were published in Web of Science (WoS) and Scopus-indexed journals, accounting for 68.18% of the total, while only 14 articles (31.82%) proportion in CNKI. As illustrated in Table 4., the distribution of articles across these indexing databases highlighted a significant preference for publishing research on the linguistic features of China English (LFCE) in internationally recognized journals.

Table 4. The Number of Included Articles in Indexing Databases

Indexing Database	Number	Frequency	Language
WoS/Scopus	30	68.18%	English
CNKI	14	31.82%	Chinese
Total	44	100%	English/Chinese

A closer examination of the diachronic trends revealed that the majority of articles indexed in WoS and Scopus were published after 2013, while earlier publications were primarily found in CNKI, suggesting a growing internationalization of LFCE research, with scholars increasingly seeking visibility in global academic discourse (Figure 4). However, the limited presence of LFCE studies in CNKI also indicated that Chinese journals were not contributing substantially to this area of research. This could be attributed to the scarcity of specialized journals dedicated to World Englishes and China English within the Chinese academic publishing system.

The underrepresentation of LFCE studies in CNKI raised important considerations for future research dissemination. The lack of dedicated publication outlets in China may hinder the accessibility of LFCE research to domestic scholars and practitioners, potentially limiting its pedagogical and theoretical impact within China's English language teaching (ELT) community. Addressing this gap through the establishment of specialized journals or increased collaboration between Chinese and international publishers could enhance the visibility and development of LFCE as a recognized field of study.

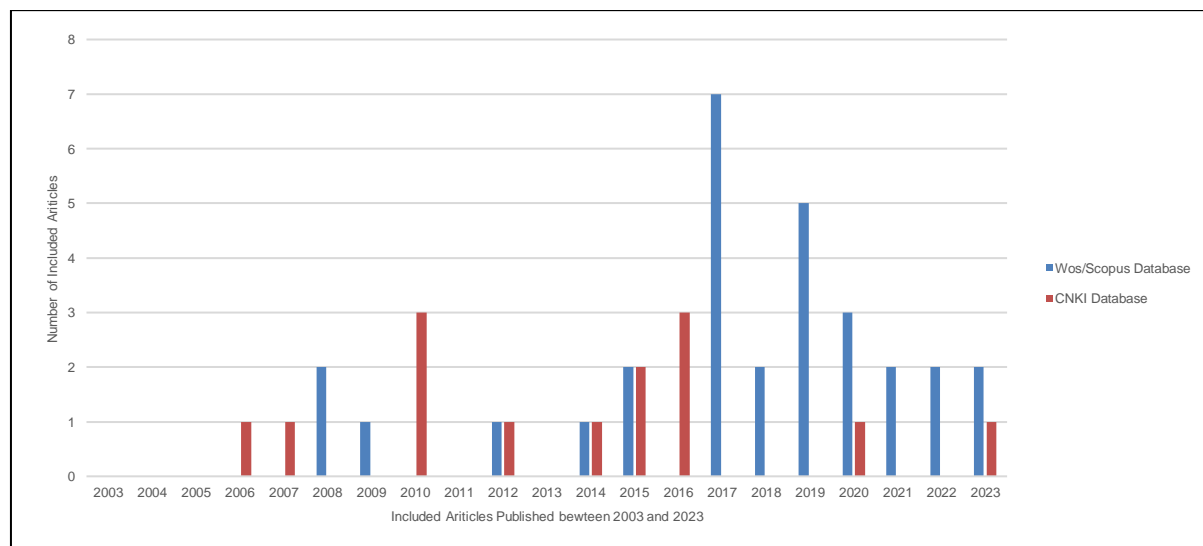


Figure 4. Number of Included Articles in Each Indexing Database

## Research Methods

Research methods provided a structured framework that enables researchers to conduct their studies rigorously and systematically, ensuring the reliability and validity of their findings (Creswell, 2012). In this systematic review, the majority of the included studies adopted a qualitative methodology, accounting for 68.18% of the total, while only 15.91% employed a quantitative approach. Additionally, 15.91% of the studies utilized a mixed-methods approach (see Table 5).

This distribution indicated a strong preference among researchers for qualitative methods in the study of linguistic features of China English (LFCE). The predominance of qualitative research suggested that scholars prioritize an in-depth exploration of the underlying sociolinguistic factors influencing linguistic phenomena, rather than relying solely on numerical data. Since qualitative research is particularly suited to examining “why” and “how” a linguistic feature emerges within a given sociolinguistic context, it offered valuable insights into the dynamic and context-dependent nature of LFCE.

Conversely, the relatively low adoption of quantitative methods highlights a notable limitation in the field. While quantitative research is useful for measuring patterns and trends through statistical analysis, it may fall short in capturing the nuanced, context-dependent aspects of language variation and use. This limitation suggests that future research could benefit from a more balanced integration of qualitative and quantitative approaches, particularly through mixed methods, to enhance both depth and generalizability in the study of LFCE.

Table 5. Research Methods of Included Publications

	Research Methods	Frequency
1	Quantitative	15.91%
2	Qualitative	68.18%
3	Mixed methods	15.91%

## Data Analysis Methods

Among the 6 identified analysis methods, the majority of articles adopted content analysis (21, 47.73%) and comparative analysis (19, 43.18%), while the remaining articles only employed one different analysis method among them, namely contrastive interlanguage analysis, discursive analysis, statistical analysis, and synchronic formational analysis (see Table 6). This distribution highlighted a lack of methodological diversity in the analysis of linguistic features of China English (LFCE). The heavy reliance on content and comparative analysis suggested that researchers predominantly focus on textual examination and cross-linguistic comparisons, rather than employing more varied or innovative analytical techniques. While these methods offer valuable insights, the limited methodological scope may restrict the depth and breadth of findings in the field.

Table 6. Data Analysis Methods

	Analysis Methods	Number	Frequency
1	Content analysis	21	47.73%
2	Comparative analysis	19	43.18%
3	Contrastive interlanguage analysis (CIA)	1	2.27%
4	Discursive analysis	1	2.27%
5	Statistical analysis and content analysis	1	2.27%
6	Synchronic formational analysis	1	2.27%



## Research Themes

According to Table 7., the majority of studies on the linguistic features of China English (LFCE) concentrated on syntax (25%) and collocation (22.73%). Then the phonology and lexis of CE represented (15.91%) of included studies respectively. After that discourse came with (13.64%), lexis-grammar (11.36%), semantics (9.09%), rhetorical strategies (9.09%) and finally, colligation (9.09%). It was clear that the rest of the studies (18.18%) focused on morphology, phraseology, pragmatics, nominalization, phonetics, and modifying-modified sequence together. Notably, nominalization, phonetics, and modifying-modified sequences appeared to be significantly underrepresented, with only 2.27% of studies addressing these topics. While both nominalization and modifying-modified sequences were closely linked to syntax, it obviously generates a significant gap that CE studies in these two strands were often neglected. The lack of attention and awareness may be seen as the cause of such neglect, and it is commendable to integrate these two strands into the syntax of CE studies. It is worth noting that as it enhances the understanding and application of CE syntax, there is a need for more relevant studies for future research directions.

Table 7. Linguistic Features of Included Publications (Qin, 2023)

	<b>Linguistic Features</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
1	Syntax	11	25.00%
2	Collocation	10	22.73%
3	Phonology	7	15.91%
4	Lexis	7	15.91%
5	Discourse	6	13.64%
6	Lexis-grammar	5	11.36%
7	Semantics	4	9.09%
8	Rhetorical strategies	4	9.09%
9	Colligation	4	9.09%
10	Morphology	2	4.55%
11	Phraseology	2	4.55%
12	Pragmatics	2	4.55%
13	Nominalization	1	2.27%
14	Phonetics	1	2.27%
15	Modifying-modified sequence	1	2.27%

Note: one added to each strand's count due to some articles examined more than one Linguistic Features.

## RQ2: Diachronic Trends of Studies on Linguistic Features of CE

In order to answer the second research question: "What were the diachronic trends of studies on linguistic features of China English in the past 20 years?" This section focuses on the in-depth review to diachronic trend of four parameters in four time periods (period 1 to 4: 2003-2007, 2008-2012, 2013-2017, 2018-2023). As the geographical locations, indexing databases, and journal outlets were self-evident, the parameters of them were not examined diachronically. Thus, publication time, research method, data analysis method, and research theme were in-depth illustrated below.

## Included Articles in Four Time Periods

Figure 5. presented the number of articles included in each indexing database throughout four specified time periods. This further indicated that studies on linguistic features of CE have steadily maintained a high degree of research awareness in international journal databases than domestic journal database.

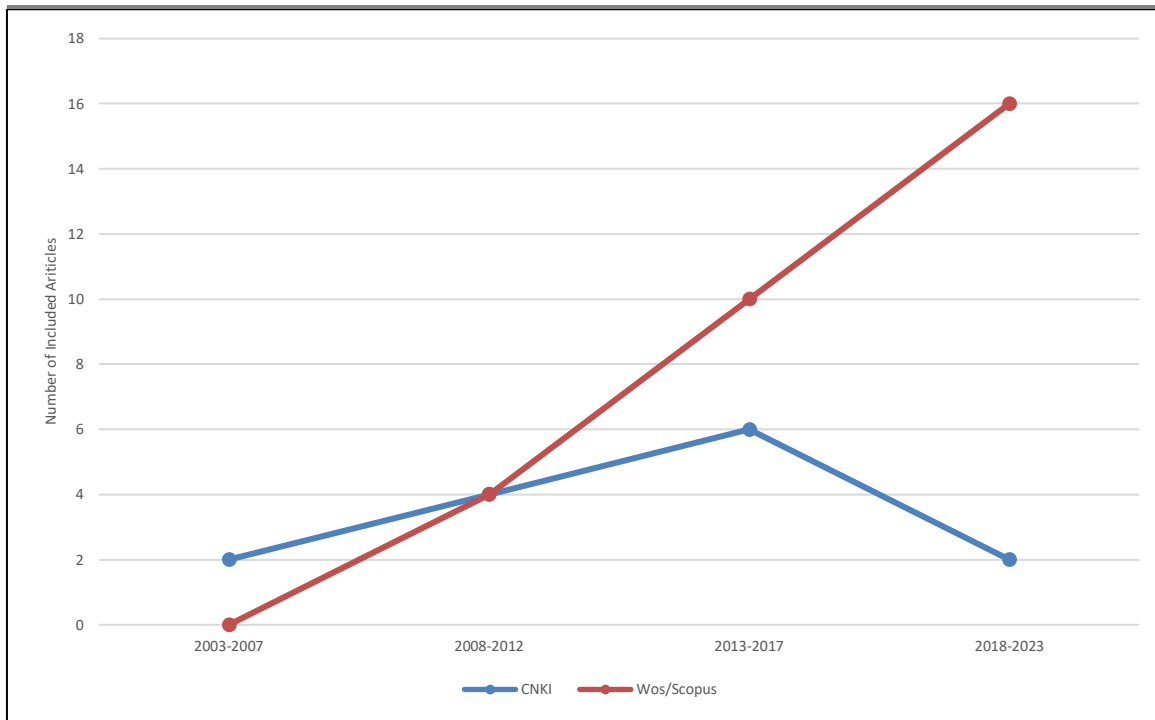


Figure 5. Number of Included Articles in Each Indexing Database in Four Time Periods

### Research Methods in Four Time Periods

Figure 6. illustrated research methods for each time period. Two articles were evenly divided between qualitative method and quantitative method in the first period. There was a significant increase of studies with qualitative method from 2013 to 2017 and still kept a high level until 2023. However, as for quantitative method, the relevant studies have exhibited significant fluctuations over the past 20 years, with slightly rises followed by slightly declines, reflecting a stable trend in the academic field. Apart from that, mixed methods have shown a consistent and stable pattern after 2008, with minimal fluctuations or deviations from the average, indicating a steady trend in the current research.

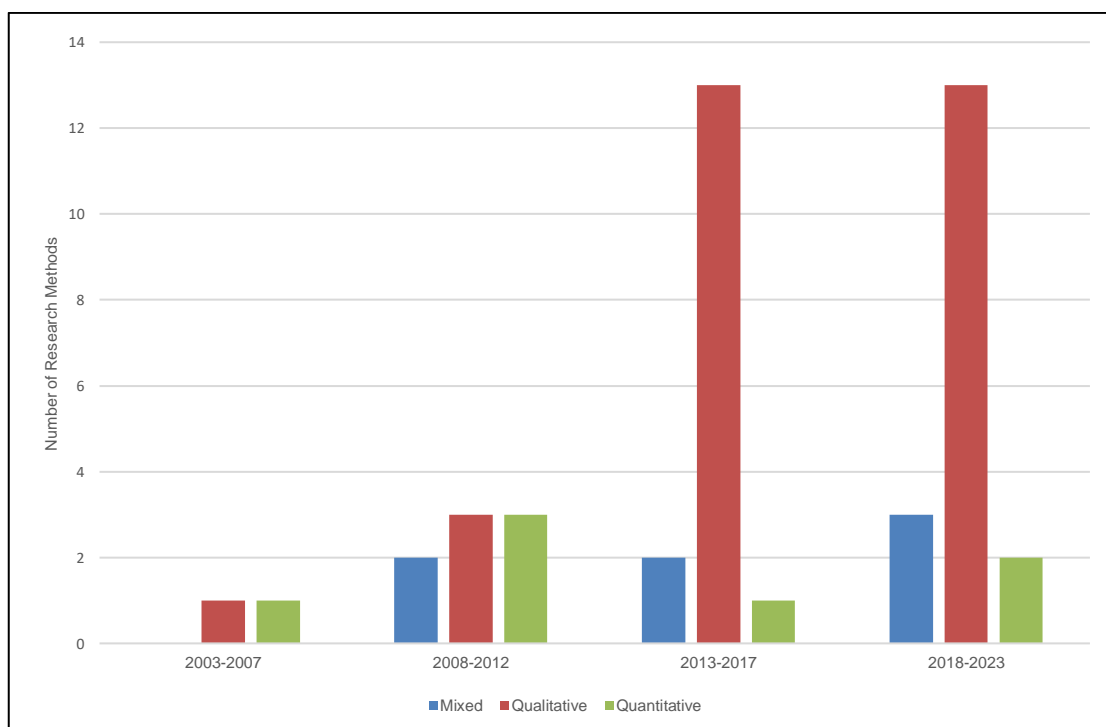


Figure 6. Number of Research Methods in Four Time Period

## Data Analysis Methods in Four Time Periods

As shown in Figure 7., comparative analysis methods have consistently been the most favoured method for CE studies, as it demonstrated a sustained upward trajectory, steadily increasing over the past 20 years. However, midway through the observation period, it was replaced by content analysis method showing a similarly consistent and continuous growth trend. Additionally, the remaining analysis methods only reflect a bit diversity in the field of CE studies.

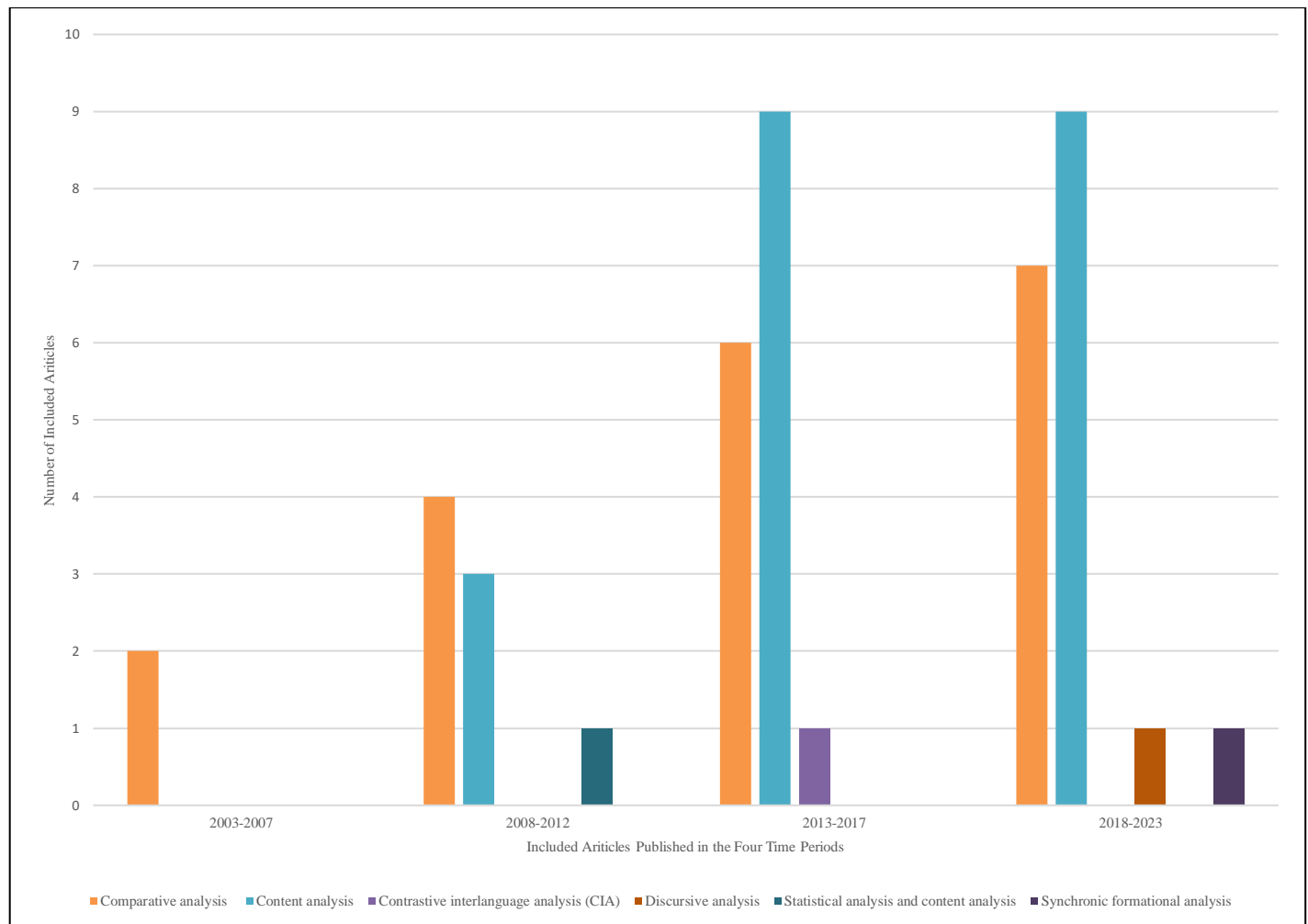


Figure 7. Number of Included Articles in Each Indexing Database in Four Time Period

## Research Themes of CE in Four Time Periods

Based on the overview of previous reviews, this section mainly described the distribution of the linguistic features from 2003 to 2023 which indicated a significant growth of CE studies during the past 20 years. Based on some descriptive statistics of the diachronic trends of studies on linguistic features of CE in the four time periods, the number of publications in each time period was calculated and compared below.

According to Table 8., the two studies were regarding syntax (1, 9%) and collocation (2, 20%) in the first phase, while the six studies were about syntax (3, 27%), collocation (2, 20%), phonology (2, 29%), lexis (1, 14%), discourse (2, 33%), and rhetorical strategies (1, 25%). In the third phase, there is an increasing phenomenon compared with the previous studies, whereas the majority of studies still investigated syntax (3, 27%), collocation (5, 50%), discourse (2, 33%), lexis-grammar (3, 60%), semantics (2, 50%), colligation (2, 50%), pragmatics (2, 50%) and rhetorical strategies (2, 50%). Only 3 studies investigated phonology, phraseology and nominalization in total. In the final phase, distribution of the 15 linguistic features were lexis (6; 86%), syntax (4, 36%), phonology (4, 57%), and the rest 12 linguistic features either have one or two articles for each.

Table 8. Linguistic Features of CE in Four Time Periods

Linguistic Features		Period								Total
		2003-2007		2008-2012		2013-2017		2018-2023		
		N	F (%)	N	F (%)	N	F (%)	N	F (%)	
1	Syntax	1	9	3	27	3	27	4	36	11
2	Collocation	2	20	2	20	5	50	1	10	10
3	Phonology	0	0	2	29	1	14	4	57	7
4	Lexis	0	0	1	14	0	0	6	86	7
5	Discourse	0	0	2	33	2	33	2	33	6
6	Lexis-grammar	0	0	0	0	3	60	2	40	5
7	Semantics	0	0	0	0	2	50	2	50	4
8	Rhetorical strategies	0	0	1	25	2	50	1	25	4
9	Colligation	0	0	0	0	2	50	2	50	4
10	Morphology	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	100	2
11	Phraseology	0	0	0	0	1	50	1	50	2
12	Pragmatics	0	0	0	0	2	100	0	0	2
13	Nominalization	0	0	0	0	1	10	0	0	1
14	Phonetics	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	100	1
15	Modifying-modified sequence	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	100	1

### RQ3: The Pedagogical Implications of Linguistic Features of CE

After identifying various linguistic features of China English (CE), Yu and Ma (2022) explored how CE corpora can be effectively integrated into English creative writing courses in China. Their study, which examined the presence of ‘Chineseness’ in CE literary works, highlighted the potential benefits of exposing students to such texts. They argued that incorporating a substantial body of CE literary works into students’ reading materials can expand their perspectives on how to craft successful CE literature. This, in turn, provided a platform for Chinese voices to be heard globally and fosters cross-cultural understanding between Chinese speakers and international audiences. Learners placed a high priority on intelligibility of English listening, so English courses were required to broaden beyond the traditional emphasis on native pronunciation to include comprehensive oral communication skills. If that is the case, English language learners might have the opportunity to listen to, study, and compare important characteristics of different accents, rather of relying on just one pronunciation model (Scales et al., 2006). Siqi and Sewell (2012) also conducted research on phonological features of CE, claiming that the effects of nativized features on intelligibility would be considered for teaching and testing. Additionally, some findings also indicated that students have naturally acquired much of the standard derivational morphology, correcting errors in their writing is ineffective in second language writing classrooms. Hence, teachers should capitalize on the evolving language skills of learners (Petrovitz & Pierson, 2018).

## CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study reviewed the studies on LFCE published from 2003 to 2023 and then discussed the diachronic trends to be bridged in the future. The searched items yielded 44 studies for inclusion in the systematic map. In general, the most commonly used research methods in the included studies were found to be qualitative methods and syntax was the most commonly studied feature. To be more specific, this review revealed that the majority of those studies (68.18%) were published in English language at the international database and the rest of them (31.82%) were published in CNKI using Chinese language. The majority of studies on the linguistic features of China English (CE) (66.97%) were conducted within mainland China, highlighting a significant lack of collaboration between Chinese and international researchers in this field. It also suggested that studies on CE remained largely region-specific hindered its broader applicability and cross-cultural understanding. Without diverse scholarly perspectives, the development of CE research may remain insular, limiting its potential contributions to the global understanding of World Englishes.

Encouraging interdisciplinary and cross-national research partnerships could enhance the robustness and international relevance of studies in this field.

Additionally, the most frequently used research methodology was the qualitative method (68.18%) which indicated the need for using quantitative and mixed method approaches to gain insight findings for the future research. Moreover, content analysis and comparative analysis were adopted in those studies with 47.73% and 43.18% respectively, while the rest of them were contrastive interlanguage analysis, discursive analysis, statistical analysis, and synchronic formational analysis which required conducting more studies on linguistic features of CE. Furthermore, although most of those studies focused on syntax (25%) and collocation (22.73%), the subbranch of various syntactic patterns still required the necessity to be given more attention in the future, such as nominalization and modifying-modified sequence, etc. The in-depth review also indicated an obvious focus on syntax in four time periods, while the specific branches of syntax were often neglected, which obviously generated a significant gap on linguistic features of CE studies.

By conducting content analysis of data that illuminated the prevailing directions in linguistic features of China English research, this study also explored an increasing inclination to acknowledge China English, notwithstanding the continuing influence of native English ideologies. On the basis of the review, various suggestions were made for pedagogical implications and future research. Most importantly, it suggested that language teachers and policymakers should work to develop a practical linguistic framework for China English that is well-codified and conducive to English language learning. Reformation of English curricula and assessments is an urgent need in contexts where local varieties of English, such as China English, were gaining prominence. Hence, the inclusion of a nativized model in the current English Language Teaching (ELT) curriculum in China is an important step in this direction.

To sum up, this systematic review could contribute to the codification of proper linguistic features of CE and the establishment of nativized teaching model in China.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The authors wish to express their utmost appreciation and gratitude to University Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) for supporting this study.

## REFERENCES

1. Bettany-Saltikov, J. (2010). Learning how to undertake a systematic review: part 2. *Nursing Standard (through 2013)*, 24(51), 47.
2. Bolton, K. (2003). Lexical innovations in Hong Kong English and Chinese Englishes.
3. Creswell, J. W. (2012). Educational research. pearson.
4. Ge, C. (1980). On Chinese to English translation. *Translation Communication*, 1-8.
5. Green, B. N., Johnson, C. D., & Adams, A. (2006). Writing narrative literature reviews for peer-reviewed journals: secrets of the trade. *Journal of chiropractic medicine*, 5(3), 101-117.
6. He, D. (2020). *China English in World Englishes*. Springer.
7. He, D., & Li, D. C. (2009). Language attitudes and linguistic features in the 'China English' debate 1. *World Englishes*, 28(1), 70-89.
8. Jenkins, J. (2014). *Global Englishes: A resource book for students*. Routledge.
9. Kachru, B. B. (1992). World Englishes: Approaches, issues and resources. *Language teaching*, 25(1), 1-14.
10. Kachru, Y. (2008). Language variation and corpus linguistics. *World Englishes*, 27(1), 1-8.
11. Kirkpatrick, A., & Xu, Z. (2002). Chinese pragmatic norms and 'China English'. *World Englishes*, 21(2), 269-279.
12. Li, J. (2019). (r) we Americanised?: The emerging rhoticity features in China English. *English Today*, 35(1), 28-35.
13. Littell, J. H., Corcoran, J., & Pillai, V. (2008). *Systematic reviews and meta-analysis*. Oxford University Press.



14. Mahboob, A., & Liang, J. (2014). Researching and critiquing world Englishes. *Asian Englishes*, 16(2), 125-140.
15. Moher, D., Liberati, A., Tetzlaff, J., Altman, D. G., & PRISMA Group\*, t. (2009). Preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses: the PRISMA statement. *Annals of internal medicine*, 151(4), 264-269.
16. Petrovitz, W., & Pierson, H. (2018). Morphological creativity in a China English corpus. *Word*, 64(2), 59-68.
17. Qin, M. X. (2023). Across 40 Years: A Bibliometric Analysis of the Chinese English Scholarship (1980–2020). *SAGE Open*, 13(4), 21582440231210410.
18. Qin, M. X., & Gao, J. (2020). The Chinese English dictionary: An online resource for Chinese English lexicography. *World Englishes*, 39(1), 154-170.
19. Rose, H., Briggs, J. G., Boggs, J. A., Sergio, L., & Ivanova-Slavianskaia, N. (2018). A systematic review of language learner strategy research in the face of self-regulation. *System*, 72, 151-163.
20. Scales, J., Wennerstrom, A., Richard, D., & Wu, S. H. (2006). Language learners' perceptions of accent. *TESOL quarterly*, 40(4), 715-738.
21. Seidlhofer, B. (2001). Closing a conceptual gap: The case for a description of English as a lingua franca. *International journal of applied linguistics*, 11(2), 133-158.
22. Siqi, L., & Sewell, A. (2012). Phonological features of China English. *Asian Englishes*, 15(2), 80-101.
23. Sridhar, K. K., & Sridhar, S. N. (1986). Bridging the paradigm gap: Second language acquisition theory and indigenized varieties of English. *World Englishes*, 5(1), 3-14.
24. Weber, R. P. (1990). *Basic content analysis* (Vol. 49). Sage.
25. Xu, Z. (2010). Chinese English. *The Routledge handbook of world Englishes*, 282.
26. Xu, Z. (2017). Researching Chinese English: A meta-analysis of Chinese scholarship on Chinese English research. *Researching Chinese English: The state of the art*, 235-266.
27. Yu, A., & Ma, Q. (2022). A corpus-based approach to Chinese English study——Pinning down the ‘Chineseness’ and implications for creative writing in English in China. *Asian Englishes*, 1-20.
28. Zhang, Y., & Mi, H. (2019). A Corpus-Based Evolution of Chinese Englishes from a Language Contact Perspective. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, 9(6).