Pragmatic Transfer in English Emails Produced by Chinese L2 English speakers:

A Study of the Underlying Cultural Ethos, and the Effect of Speakers’ English Proficiency and Exposure to English

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Abstract

This study focuses on the pragmatic transfers that emerge in the English emails produced by Chinese L2 English speakers. Despite doubts about taking Chinese English as a new variety, the study believes there are some common and unique pragmatic features existing in the English text produced by Chinese L2 English speakers. 104 emails written by 13 subjects with different English proficiency and different English exposure were collected. Questionnaires were sent out to the same subjects, trying to find out the factors that affect their pragmatic performance.

The study accomplished the following main findings: 1) There are differences in the extent to which pragmatic transfer occurs among different subjects. 2) The individual subject’s pragmatic performance in English is not necessarily decided by the subjects’ English proficiency. 3) The extent of pragmatic transfer in the individual subject’s case seems to be much more complex situation than depending on any single factor of the following: English proficiency, exposure to English, or confidence in using English. 4) Some email writers have different extent of pragmatic transfer in the situations with different levels of tension. 5) However, whether the subjects have different extent of pragmatic transfer or not seems again to be too complex a situation to decide which of the factors (English proficiency, exposure to English, or confidence in using English) plays a decisive role.

Keywords

English emails written by Chinese L2 English speaker, pragmatic transfer, English proficiency, exposure to English.
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1. Introduction

Since 1978, when China started to participate more and more in international affairs, English has been taken by China as an essential means to understand the outside world and also to exhibit China itself, and has been developing in this country at a faster pace than ever in history. Despite the hesitation to identify it as a new variety, it is widely believed that there are some common features revealed in the written form of English produced by Chinese L2 English speakers. These include lexical innovations, syntactic features, and pragmatic features. It is not clear however how uniformly these features are transferred into English, so one topic for investigation is the extent to which ‘Chinese features’ actually occur in the output of Chinese writers of English. This is relevant to the status of ‘China English’ as a stable variety comparable to Indian English, in that a stable variety should be relatively consistent across writers.

Emails, as an important communication method in the modern world, can serve as valuable data for the study of linguistic features. First, compared to the text in newspapers and short stories, email writing usually does not bear any style restrictions or editing from the newspaper or publisher, thus can provide more genuine data for linguistic study. Besides, compared to self-report in interview data, emails can show comparatively more stable and therefore more reliable features. In other words, emails can provide fairly valuable data for the study of linguistic features especially on the discourse level, for the reason that writers are more autonomous and have enough space to show whatever linguistic features they might have.

In the process of collecting and analyzing data, as will be shown below, the present study found from the email data that some common pragmatic features are transferred from Chinese. However at the same time, there is a big difference in the extent to which those transfers occur in an individual subject’s case, even though all the subjects are from the same cultural context (mainland China). This brings the first research question: what features are transferred and how consistently across individuals? Also, if it is not consistently happening to all the subjects, what are the factors that determine the different extent of pragmatic transfer of subjects? Former studies seem to agree on the decisive role of L2 proficiency in pragmatic
transfer, but disagree on the way that L2 proficiency works in affecting pragmatic transfer: some studies found that the higher proficiency level the speaker has in the second language, the less pragmatic transfer from their first language would occur in the second language production; while some other study suggested the opposite direction. This gives rise to the third research question of the present study: how the proficiency level affects the subjects’ pragmatic performance.

At the same time, a pilot view of the present study surprisingly found that even within the emails of individual subject, different extents of pragmatic transfer exist in situations with different levels of tension. So the fourth question of the study is to find the relationship between situational tension and pragmatic transfer.

In the globalized world, Chinese people can have very different degrees of exposure to English, independently of their proficiency (or at least of the proficiency measured by conventional tests). Therefore, the study takes the English users’ exposure to English into consideration as well, and tries to find out if the different exposure to English also plays an important role in deciding the extent of the subjects’ pragmatic transfer.

2. Literature Review

When pragmatics and pragmatic transfer are regarded, cultural difference might be the first thing that comes to consideration (Connor 1996). Yet, based on Leech’s (1983) distinction between pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics, two types of elements should be taken into consideration: one is the speakers’ cultural background based on their first language; the other one is the speakers’ first language background and second language proficiency. In other words, when some special pragmatic features occur in a speaker’s second language production, there may be three possible causes for that—the speaker’s cultural background, the speakers’ first language’s influence, or the speaker’s proficiency in the second language. This might be easier to explain with an example. If it is found that an EFL speaker never uses the pattern ‘I would love to, but…’ to turn down an invitation, but instead, tends to use more direct and simple pattern, for example, ‘Sorry, I have other plans for that day.’, then there would be three possible reasons for that: first, the speaker grew up in a culture that values directness and considers all the indirect strategies as being hypocritical; second, according to
the convention of the speaker’s mother tongue, people do not have such a discourse cohesion that ‘I would love to, but…’ is always taken as a sign of refusal and followed by an excuse, or simply, in the speaker’s mother tongue, there is no conditional mood as a linguistic device; thirdly, the speaker is not competent enough in the second language to know how to use this phrase well enough, and just avoiding it consciously or subconsciously.

Nevertheless, if we look closely, the first language conventional reason seems to be closely related to both the cultural and second language proficiency reason—it is first of all decided by the cultural background, and also can be easily overcome as the speaker’s second language proficiency improves. Figure 1 below might give a better illustration. So, all in all, when we discuss pragmatic transfer, two main factors should be taken into consideration all the time: influence of the speaker’s cultural background and his or her second language proficiency.

Figure 1. Pragmatic performance and the possible factors that affect it.

Trosborg (1995), following earlier writers, recognized four components of communicative competence: linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence, which are illustrated in the following Figure 2.
These four kinds of competence determine people’s communicative performance. If we analyze these four competences, the first one, linguistic competence, is definitely decided by the speakers’ language proficiency; sociolinguistic competence is decided by cultural convention, since different cultures can have totally different standards about linguistic appropriateness in a certain social context; discourse competence is largely decided by the first language, and can be changed as the second language proficiency improves; strategic competence is more related with the speakers’ personality factors which are also affected by the three factors mentioned before.

All in all, Trosborg (1995) supports the former analysis of the factors that affect pragmatic performance which are language proficiency and cultural background. At the same time, the speakers’ personality must be taken into consideration.

Accordingly, the literature review will cover the culture discussion, second language proficiency discussion, and since the present study works on pragmatic transfer in the English output by Chinese speakers specifically, previous research on the pragmatic features of English produced by Chinese English speaker in the contrastive-rhetoric tradition (Connor 1996) will be reviewed as well. Above all, some definitions and basic classification in pragmatics need to be clarified.
2.1 Pragmatics

Pragmatics is usually discussed by means of comparison with syntax and semantics. Levinson (1983:5) defined pragmatics as ‘the study of language usage’, to be distinguished from syntax, which is ‘the study of combinatorial properties of words and their parts’, and from semantics, which is ‘the study of meaning’.

As far as the present study of emails is concerned, the following topics of pragmatics will be discussed: speech acts and politeness.

2.1.1 Speech acts

2.1.1.1 General introduction of speech acts

The concept of speech acts is first introduced as illocutionary act by John L. Austin (1962), and it basically means that ‘by saying something, we do something’. Searle (1975) set up the following classification of illocutionary speech acts:

- assertives—speech acts that commit a speaker to the truth of the expressed proposition, e.g. reciting a creed;
- directives—speech acts that are to cause the hearer to take a particular action, e.g. requests, commands and advice;
- commissives—speech acts that commit a speaker to some future action, e.g. promises and oaths;
- expressives—speech acts that express the speaker's attitudes and emotions towards the proposition, e.g. congratulations, excuses and thanks;
- declarations—speech acts that change the reality in accord with the proposition of the declaration, e.g. baptisms, pronouncing someone guilty or pronouncing someone husband and wife.

2.1.1.2 Requests

Making requests, as an important directive speech act in life and linguistics, deserves some more attention. Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) made a comprehensive and detailed analysis
on the realization of request making.

Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) first recognized three main segments in realizing a request: (a) address term(s); (b) Head act; (c) Adjunct(s) to Head act. However, they do not necessarily exist in every request-making situation. For example:

A: You left the kitchen in a mess last night.

B: Ok, I’ll clean it up. (Blum-Kulka and Olshtain 1984: 200)

In A’s utterance, it is actually the adjuncts functioning as a head act.

Brown and Levinson (1978) defined requests as face-threatening acts, because by making a request, the speaker impinges on the hearer’s claim to freedom of action and freedom from imposition. Consequently the speaker would try different ways to mitigate the face-threatening acts. Faerch and Kasper (1984), cited in Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984), classified two kinds of mitigation: internal and external. Internal mitigations are achieved through devices within the same ‘Head act’, while the external mitigations are localized not within the ‘Head act’ but within its immediate context.

Regarding internal mitigations, the following issues were analyzed by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984): strategy types, request perspective, syntactic downgraders, other downgraders, and upgraders. Each of them will be introduced as following.

Nine request strategy types were recognized on the base of three directness levels (the most direct, the conventionally indirect level, and nonconventional indirect level) concluded by former studies.

(1) Mood derivable. E.g. Leave me alone.
(2) Explicit performatives. E.g. I'm asking you not to park the car here.
(3) Hedged performative. E.g. I would like you to give your lecture a week earlier.
(4) Locution derivable. E.g. Madam, you'll have to move your car.
(5) Scope stating. E.g. I really wish you'd stop bothering me.
(6) Language specific suggestory form. E.g. How about cleaning up?
(7) Reference to preparatory condition. E.g. Could you clear up the kitchen, please?
(8) Strong hint. E.g. You've left this kitchen in a right mess.
(9) Mild hint. E.g. I'm a nun (in response to the persistent boy) (Blum-Kulka and Olshtain 1984: 202)
Given the fact that in requests it is the hearer who is ‘under threat’, any avoidance in naming the addressee as the principal performer of the act serves to soften the impact of the imposition. Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) called this dimension of the analysis request perspective and distinguished between the following categories:

a. Hearer oriented. E.g. Could you tidy up the kitchen soon?
b. Speaker oriented. E.g. Do you think I could borrow your notes from yesterday's class?
c. Speaker and hearer oriented. E.g. So, could we please clean up?
d. Impersonal (The use of people/they/one as neutral agents, or the use of passivation). E.g. So it might not be a bad idea to get it cleaned up. (Blum-Kulka and Olshtain 1984: 203)

Mitigating the speech act of request might also be achieved by purely syntactic means:

a. Interrogative. E.g. Could you do the cleaning up?
b. Negation. E.g. Look, excuse me. I wonder if you wouldn't mind dropping me home?
c. Past tense. E.g. I wanted to ask for a postponement
d. Embedded 'if clause’. E.g. I would appreciate it if you left me alone. (Blum-Kulka and Olshtain 1984: 203)

Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) also concluded some other downgraders:

a. Consultative devices. E.g. Do you think I could borrow your lecture notes from yesterday?
b. Understate. E.g. Could you tidy up a bit before I start?
c. Hedges. E.g. It would really help if you did something about the kitchen.
d. Downtoner. E.g. Will you be able perhaps to drive me? (Blum-Kulka and Olshtain 1984: 203)

Besides the options for decreasing the impact of the speech act, Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) suggested speakers also have available means by which to increase its compelling force, which was termed ‘upgraders’. However, this kind of devices does not seem to mitigate the face-threatening acts, but have quite an opposite effect.

a. Intensifiers. E.g. Clean up this mess, it's disgusting
b. Expletives. E.g. You still haven't cleaned up that bloody mess! (Blum-Kulka and Olshtain 1984: 204)
Apart from all the internal mitigating devices mentioned above, the following types of external mitigation, or the adjuncts to the head act were also analyzed.

a. Checking on availability. E.g. *Are you going in the direction of the town? And if so, is it possible to join you?*

b. Getting a precommitment. E.g. *Will you do me a favor? Could you perhaps lend me your notes for a few days?*

c. Grounder. E.g. Judith, *I missed class yesterday, could I borrow your notes?*

d. Sweetener. E.g. *You have beautiful handwriting, would it be possible to borrow your notes for a few days?*

e. Disarmer. E.g. Excuse me, *I hope you don’t think I’m being forward, but is there any chance of a lift home?*

f. Cost minimizer. E.g. Pardon me, but could you give me a lift, *if you’re going my way, as I just missed the bus and there isn’t another one for an hour.* (Blum-Kulka and Olshtain 1984: 204)

### 2.1.1.3 Other studies and new suggestions

A contrastive study by Al-Ali and Sahawneh (2008) recognized another lexical/phrasal device—politeness marker (i.e. *please*), which also constitutes an internal mitigating device. Su (2010) concluded all the external mitigating devices as discourse supportive moves. Based on these two studies, the following figure can be concluded.
Accordingly, politeness was identified into two types: positive politeness strategies, which seek to minimize the threat to the hearer’s positive face; and negative politeness strategies, which are oriented towards the hearer’s negative face and emphasize avoidance of imposition on the hearer.

Brown and Levinson (1987) defined positive face in two ways as "the want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others", or alternately, "the positive consistent self-image or 'personality' (crucially including the desire that this self-image be appreciated and approved of) claimed by interactants". Negative face was defined as "the want of every 'competent adult member' that his actions be unimpeded by others", or "the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, rights to non-distraction--i.e. the freedom of action and freedom from imposition".

Accordingly, politeness was identified into two types: positive politeness strategies, which seek to minimize the threat to the hearer’s positive face; and negative politeness strategies, which are oriented towards the hearer’s negative face and emphasize avoidance of imposition on the hearer.
Four types of politeness strategies of face-threatening acts were identified accordingly: bald on-record, mitigated by negative politeness, mitigated by positive politeness, and off-record (indirect) (Brown and Levinson 1987). They were placed in the following Figure 4 to show the situations where they might be applicable.

![Figure 4: Circumstances determining choice of strategy](image)

**Figure 4. Circumstances determining choice of strategy (Brown and Levinson 1987: 60).**

### 2.1.2.1 Native and non-native proficiency and politeness

Both Su (2010) and Al-Ali and Sahawneh (2008) found in their research that, when writing in English, people’s habits of using different devices to show politeness or to mitigate face-threatening acts differ according to whether they have English as their first language or not. Both investigations found an interesting conflict among EFL speakers (native Chinese speakers and native Arabic speakers respectively), that EFL speakers tend to use more direct request strategies, and at the same time express their indirectness or politeness by using more external mitigating devices and non-syntactic internal mitigating devices (cf. 2.1.1.2), instead
of syntactic devices (i.e. interrogative, negation, past tense, and if-clause) which are largely used by native English speakers to show politeness when making requests. Chang and Hsu (1998) came to a similar conclusion that English-language request act structures of Chinese are found to have an indirect sequence, but their linguistic realizations are more direct. However, the request discourse structures of the native speakers are direct whereas the linguistic realizations are indirect.

In fact, Kasper (1992) found that non-native English speakers have tendency to use such an indirect even a bit rambling sequence in the discourse level that it seems that they would like to lead their readers to realize their request intention before it is actually brought up.

2.1.2.2 Culture and politeness

To continue the earlier discussion of native English speakers’ and non-native speakers’ different ways of showing politeness in making requests, there was one common recognition in both Su (2010)’s and Al-Ali and Sahawneh (2008)’s studies--that it has a close relation with speakers’ English proficiency. There will be more discussion of this in the later part of pragmatic transfer and second language proficiency. Yet, it is worth thinking here that whether it could be possible that it is simply because that in different society, people’s ideology of politeness is different.

In a research by Ide, Hill, Carnes, Ogino, and Kawasaki (1992), it is suggested that although the concept of politeness exists in a worldwide range, different societies have various terms and understanding of it. Their survey supports their assumption.

Using native-speaker judgments, we have demonstrated that among groups of American English and Japanese speakers, the seemingly corresponding terms ‘polite’ and terneina differ in their conceptual structure. For the American subjects, the adjectives ‘polite’ and ‘friendly’ correlate highly when applied to certain behaviours in specific situations. For Japanese subjects, however, teineina and sitasigena fall into different dimensions when applied to the same cross-culturally equivalent situation. (Ide, Hill, Carnes, Ogino, and Kawasaki 1992: 282)

It might be interesting to mention that some of my Japanese acquaintances think that ‘polite’ and ‘friendly’ are not correlated at all, even quite opposite in meaning.
Till now, a close connection of pragmatics and culture seems to have been established. Next, we will go further into the discussion of culture with the reference of Hofstede’s book ‘Cultures and Organizations’ in 1994.

2.2 Cultural discussion

2.2.1 What is culture?

This part of the review will be based on the framework of the IBM survey introduced by Hofstede (1994), not because this is the best or most subtle analysis of this very complex phenomenon, but because it provides a clear and accessible framework.

A distinction between human nature, culture, and personality is made by Hofstede (1994).

![Figure 5. Three levels of uniqueness in human mental programming. (Hofstede 1994: 6).](image)

From the above Figure 5, the conclusion can be made that culture has some sense of stability within a group, but at the same time, whenever we think about ascribing any behavior feature to the culture of a group of people, we should always keep in mind the individual personality factors and the basic human nature factors.

2.2.2 National cultures

Hofstede (1994) explained that he collected data at the level of nations because one of the
purposes of the research was to promote cooperation among nations, whereas in the present study, it seems necessary to stay on the national level of cultural study simply because the present study is a linguistic study on the national level.

Hofstede (1994) formed a four-dimensional model of differences among national cultures. Each country that appeared in the IBM data was characterized by a score on each of these four dimensions, which were power distance; individualism vs. collectivism; masculinity vs. femininity; and uncertainty. Hofstede also incorporated Michael Harris Bond’s Confucian dynamism this into his framework as long vs. short term orientation. Now, let’s look at how each dimension describes China (mainland) culture and English-speaking culture, and whether there is an obvious cultural difference between the two communities. If there is, what would be the reflection on English email writing by Chinese L2 English speakers? What would be the predictable pragmatic features of the English email written by Chinese L2 English speakers?

Data for the present study was collected among L2 English speakers from mainland China, yet in Hofstede’s book in 1994, the data of mainland China is not available, so the rest of comparison and analysis on culture will be based on more updated data with more countries involved which are provided in http://www.geert-hofstede.com/index.shtml (Hofstede 2010). Nevertheless, it should be always kept in mind that Hofstede’s survey has a Eurocentric point of view, so the questions in the survey might not be totally applicable in the Chinese culture (it is shown in the later survey that when the questions were collected in China, some questions that had never been brought up in the IBM survey caught considerable attention and consideration from Chinese people). What is more, it is also worth noting that people’s behavior is rooted in their values, but there is also discordance between people’s values and their behavior in reality. Another technical issue is that the entire index related to mainland China was estimated and this might also influence the accuracy of the result.

2.2.2.1 Power distance

Regarding power distance, the following data about mainland China and native English speaking countries is presented. Estimated scores are marked with *.
Mainland China shows an obviously higher score than the native English speaking countries. According to the explanation by Hofstede (1994), it means that compared to NESC (Native English speaking country) with a much lower power distance index, in mainland China, it is considered more as a problem if there is inconsistency between various areas of one person’s status (politicians enjoy power without wealth; businessman, wealth without political power). By making the areas more consistent, overall inequality is increased.

In fact, the social hierarchy has been long valued in Chinese ideology and also a main proposition of Confucius. Another everyday saying in Chinese ‘wu lun’ (‘five relationships’) also shows Chinese value on a distinct hierarchy, even within the family. Xu (2005: 157) presented the Chinese ‘wu lun’ in the following figure:

![Figure 6. ‘wu lun’ (‘five relationship’) ideology.](image_url)
It is predictable that Chinese L2 English speakers will show their ideology of this social hierarchy in their English email writing, especially when the addressees of emails are in the upper side of the hierarchy. To be specific, it might be possible that Chinese L2 English speakers would take the value of social hierarchy into account when they write English emails, and have different extent of pragmatic transfer when they write to addressees with different power distance.

2.2.2.2 **Collective versus individual**

Regarding individualism, the following data about mainland China and native English speaking countries were presented.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Individualism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>20*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2. Comparison between Native English speaking countries and mainland China on individualism.**

There is an obvious difference between mainland China and native English speaking countries: mainland China shows a much lower score in individualism, in other words, mainland China is a comparatively collective society.

How would this cultural feature of mainland China affect Chinese L2 English speakers’ English email writing then? One reasonable hypothesis would be that Chinese L2 English speakers’ English emails should show more positive politeness, since being accepted by others and fitting in a group should be among the tops values in a collective culture.

2.2.2.3 **Assertiveness versus modesty**

Hofstede (1994) took ‘masculinity’ and ‘femininity’ to describe the features of a society. However, apparently, there is no significant difference between these two groups of countries in the score of masculinity, so it is difficult to predict, at least at this stage, any specific pragmatic features due to this parameter that would be shown in the English emails written by Chinese L2 English speakers.
2.2.2.4  The avoidance of uncertainty

Mainland China does score lower in the uncertainty avoidance index, but there is no significant difference (e.g. between China: 30 and Ireland: 35, United Kingdom: 35), so it might be predictable that Chinese culture regarding the avoidance of uncertainty would not cause any pragmatic transfer to the English emails written by Chinese L2 English speakers.

2.2.2.5  Long term oriented versus short term oriented

Regarding long-term orientation, there is obviously a significant difference between mainland China and most of the native English speaking countries. But this dimension of culture seems to be more related with economy than linguistics, e.g. mainland China, Hong Kong, Singapore and South Korea might understand the importance of thrift better and therefore do better in economic development. Nevertheless, this later added dimension based on Chinese value strengthens the fact that there are considerable differences between different cultures and nations.

So far, based on Hofstede’s culture dimensions and my own experience, the following pragmatic features are predicted to occur in the emails written by Chinese L2 English speakers:

1. The subjects might have different pragmatic performance or different extent of pragmatic transfer when writing to addressees with different power distance.

2. The subjects might show more positive politeness in their English emails.

In the next part of literature review, we will go back to some of the former research on pragmatic features of English produced by Chinese L2 English speakers, aiming at a more comprehensive list of hypothetical pragmatic features.
2.3 Previous discussions on the pragmatic features of English produced by Chinese L2 English speakers

There are two types of studies working on the pragmatic features of English produced by Chinese L2 English speakers. One tries to analyze the Chinese L2 English speakers’ English production, while the other group tries to analyze the Chinese text produced by native Chinese speakers in order to explain or indicate the pragmatic features that might emerge in English produced by Chinese EFL speakers. The present study believes that they both provide valuable insights and takes both of them into consideration. Besides, previous studies have been done on both oral production and written form. Due to the unstable style of emails which can vary from very formal correspondences to fairly casual greeting ones, research on both written and oral material is taken into consideration.

The discussion will focus on the body part of emails, and the features suggested in previous studies will be focused on two of the speech acts—invitation and request. Xing, Wang, and Spencer (2008) summarized five contrastive features of argumentative texts from previous studies. Although they are not features of email writing, they may still shed some light on the structure of the emails. The five features are:

1. **Inductive vs. Deductive (Presence and placement of thesis statement)**

   Chinese students tend to write in an inductive way with the thesis statement in the beginning of a paragraph or the first paragraph if it is a comparatively long essay, whereas, the deductive way of writing is largely preferred by native British and American speaker.

2. **‘Start-Sustain-Turn-Sum’ vs. ‘Introduction-Body-Conclusion’ (number of paragraphs)**

   It is a usual way to organize paragraphs in Chinese writing by the four-section pattern. On the other hand, native English writers and readers are more used to the three pattern organization.

3. **Circular vs. Linear (Topic sentence and topic changes)**

   This feature might be the best known one. It is actually a combination of the above two features and the following one. Nevertheless, this feature focuses more on topic changing in a
text rather than structure.

4. Metaphorical vs. Straightforward (Use of metaphors and proverbs)

Chinese students are found to use many more fixed patterns such as proverbs, idioms, and also defer to tradition and to the authority of the past, which are taken by western readers as clichés and avoided by writing in their own voice.

5. Explicit Discourse Marker (Marks of coherence and unity)

In Chinese, the beauty of writing is believed to lie in delicacy and subtlety, not in its straightforwardness. And as long as ideas are flowing, it does not matter whether there is coherent form.

It is predictable that people write emails to carry out some speech acts. Making and responding to requests and making and responding to invitation seem to have received more attention than other speech acts in the pragmatic feature studies of English produced by Chinese L2 English speakers.

2.3.1 Invitation

When Chinese give a negative response to an invitation, they tend to use less positive expressions (e.g. I would love to, but…; that sounds really nice, but…; thanks for inviting me, but…) than native English speakers (Chang 2009). Also, together with the refusal of an invitation, Chinese people tend to give more specific reasons (Chang 2009).

2.3.2 Request

2.3.2.1 When responding to a request

Far fewer direct refusals to requests are given by Chinese, compared to native American English speakers; instead there is more avoidance of requests that would be given refusal response; or giving an unclear answer (Jiang 2006). Liao and Bresnahan (1996) found a common mode of politeness in refusal in Chinese (and perhaps in Oriental countries): address
form (if the refusee is of high status), plus one of the politeness markers of apology followed by the reason for refusal. E.g. 'Sir, I'm sorry. I have to write my homework in the evening.' (Liao and Bresnahan 1996: 711), and 'Sir (Ma'am), I'm sorry, I have other things to do. I can't stay.' (Liao and Bresnahan 1996: 712)

2.3.2.2 When make a request

Su (2010) finds that previous studies are not always in agreement with each other on the difference in strategies between EFL speakers and native English speakers. L2 users have been found to be more direct than native speakers in some studies (House & Kasper, 1987; Koike, 1989; Yu, 1999) but not in others (Blum-Kulka, 1982; Byon, 2004). One possible explanation of this might be exactly that those studies have been done among different first language speakers with different cultural backgrounds. And this in turn proves the point that is made in the beginning of the whole literature review, that pragmatic transfer is decided by two factors—second language proficiency and the speakers’ cultural background.

Chang and Hsu (1998) find that the requestive act structures of Chinese have an indirect sequence, but their linguistic realizations are more direct. However, the request structures of the native speakers of English are in direct sequence whereas their linguistic realizations are indirect. Please see the following email example from their study:

```
Hi, it
This is - Long time no see! How are wife and children in Taiwan? You must miss them a lot. I heard your family is coming to Ann Arbor this summer Isn’t it great? I hope my family will come to see me, too. By the way, I must attend a conference in New York Please give me a ride on April 3 to the airport.
Good luck to your work! Bye-Bye’
(first name) (Chang and Hsu 1998: 141)
```

Both Chen (2006) and Su (2010) find that Chinese L2 English speakers use many fewer conventional indirect strategies (cf. 2.1.1.2) when making requests in Chinese than their native English counterparts in English. However, directness when Chinese are making requests is not considered as rude, because politeness in Chinese is usually manifested at the discourse level in terms of ‘small talk’ or supportive moods (Zhang, 1995). With regard to the use of internal and external mitigating devices, however, Su (2010) finds no significant difference between the two groups.
Similarly, when writing in English, Chinese speakers are found to be more direct than their English counterparts. Advanced Chinese EFL speakers are found to employ significantly fewer lexical/phrasal downgraders than intermediate EFL speakers, but elaborate more on the preconditions, the reasons, and the justifications for the requests, whereas intermediate EFL speakers use more lexical politeness markers, e.g. please. Su (2010) believes that is exactly because of the speakers’ different proficiency in English.

### 2.4 Pragmatic transfer and second language proficiency

The relationship between first language transfer and second language proficiency in inter-language pragmatics has been controversial. Takahashi and Beebe (1987) reported that more proficient learners were more likely to transfer L1 socio-cultural norms than less proficient learners because they have enough control over the L2 to express their feelings. Maeshiba et al. (1996) examined the apology strategies used by ESL Japanese learners of different proficiency levels to test Takahashi and Beebe’s (1987) hypothesis. The findings, however, revealed that the higher proficiency learners were less likely to transfer L1 apology strategies than the lower proficiency learners. Likewise, Robinson (1992) found that the lower proficiency ESL learners were more affected by L1 refusal style than the higher proficiency learners. The findings of Takahashi and DuFon’s study (1989) also showed that beginning-level Japanese ESL learners were influenced more by their L1 request strategies than the advanced learners.

One possible explanation for the controversial findings on the relation between pragmatic transfer and L2 proficiency could be that in those studies, pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics are conflated. To be specific, high-proficiency EFL speakers might have more transfer of sociopragmatics because they are more confident and freer with expressing their feelings with the second language, then of course more features from their cultural background is transferred; whereas, for the EFL speakers with lower proficiency, more transfer would be found at the linguistic level rather than the social cultural level, simply because their L2 proficiency hinders the transfer going further to the social level. Qu and Wang (2005) show supportive findings in their research.

The result reveals that the students with lower English level make more pragmalinguistic transfer than the students with a relatively high English level. As the learners improving their English level,
they still make negative pragmatic transfer, but the pragmalinguistic ones are significantly reduced. They make sociopragmatic transfers. (Qu and Wang, 2005: 72)

Based on the above review, the present study is also interested in finding out what the email data reflect on the relation of pragmatic transfer and second language proficiency. And it is also worth rethinking how second language proficiency can be measured, especially when pragmatic proficiency is concerned. Does the proficiency test result reveal the speaker’s pragmatic proficiency in real life, since the usual language proficiency tests focus more on grammar, academic writing skills and so on?

3. Methodology

Two types of data were collected: emails from L2 English speakers from mainland China located in various countries, with different English proficiency and different exposure to English; and questionnaires to the same group of subjects in order to estimate their exposure to English in their daily life, their general English proficiency, their confidence when using English, and their attitude towards English.

The aim of the study was especially to collect emails from both Chinese English users living abroad and those living in China, with the expectation that they would have considerably different exposure to English. Yet, an interesting episode while collecting emails suggests that Chinese English users’ exposure to English does not necessarily only depend on whether they are staying abroad or in a native speaking country or not. A Chinese student doing doctoral research in the US reported that he seldom sent any English emails, because all his colleagues around were Chinese. So the language he communicated with, at least in the work setting and quite probably in his daily life, was Chinese. This confirmed the necessity of questionnaires to more reliably reveal the situation of the English exposure in each subject’s individual case.

3.1 Email collection

141 emails were collected from 20 subjects with Chinese as first language. The background information is listed in Table 3. Subjects were requested to select at least five English emails that they had sent lately, and were suggested that the preferred length of the email was more
than 50 words. The number of emails and the preference for length are to assure that more stable features could be revealed by this individual subject. No instruction about the content of emails was given to the subjects.

Table 3. Information about all the subjects.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjects</th>
<th>Present location</th>
<th>Ever studied or lived abroad, where, for how long</th>
<th>Education background</th>
<th>Professional background</th>
<th>Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S1 China</td>
<td>Yes, 10 years, US</td>
<td>MA in Film Production Management</td>
<td>Working as a movie producer</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S2 China</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>BA in medicine</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S3 China</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>MA in ?</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S4 China</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>MA in ?</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S5 China</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Associate degree in English.</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S6 China</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Associate degree in English.</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S7 China</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Associate degree in English.</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S8 China</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Bachelor in English</td>
<td>Working as translator</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S9 China</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Master in ?</td>
<td>Working as international sale</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S10 China</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Bachelor in English</td>
<td>Working as Chinese teacher</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S11 China</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Bachelor in Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language</td>
<td>Working in a post-doctoral position</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S12 Sweden</td>
<td>Yes, 1.5 years, Sweden</td>
<td>PHD in Chemistry</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S13 Sweden</td>
<td>Yes, 4 years, Sweden</td>
<td>PHD in Physics</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S14 Sweden</td>
<td>Yes, 1.5 years, Sweden</td>
<td>MS in Biotechnology</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S15 Finland</td>
<td>Yes, 2 years, Sweden</td>
<td>MA in Economy</td>
<td>Working as an accountant in Finland</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S16 Sweden</td>
<td>Yes, 1.5 years, Sweden</td>
<td>MA in Law</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S17 Sweden</td>
<td>Yes, 6 months, Sweden</td>
<td>PHD in Physics</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S18 Sweden</td>
<td>Yes, 6 months, Sweden</td>
<td>MA in chemistry</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S19 Sweden</td>
<td>Yes, 6 months, Sweden</td>
<td>MA in Media</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S20 Sweden</td>
<td>Yes, 6 months, Sweden</td>
<td>MA in English literature</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: All the information is about the subjects’ situation when writing the emails that are taken as data for the present study.

3.2 Questionnaire survey of background, attitude and proficiency

After the emails had been received, questionnaires were sent to all the 20 subjects, and 13 of them responded. Due to the importance of the questionnaires to this study, only these 13
subjects’ emails (104 emails) were given close analysis and comparison in the later part of the analysis.

The questionnaire aimed to cover the following main issues about the subjects: background information, history of learning English, attitude towards English, self confidence when using English, English proficiency level revealed by English test results, and exposure to English in daily life. The questionnaire was given in both English and Chinese with identical instruction and questions. The subjects could choose to answer the one in their preferred language. The English version of the questionnaire is presented as Appendix I. Questionnaires were sent out to the subjects as an attachment with an email, and were collected in the same way.

Subjects’ proficiency level was basically evaluated by the scores that the subjects got for an international English proficiency exam or a Chinese English proficiency exam. For the international English proficiency exam, there were two different ones that the subjects took: TOEFL and IELTS. In order to make comparison between these two, the present study resorted to a comparison table from Sheffield University (2010) to convert the subjects’ TOEFL result to IELTS (if they only took the TOEFL test), since more subjects took IELTS. There are four types of Chinese English proficiency tests: CET4, CET6, TEM4, and TEM8. All of them have 100 as full mark, and 60 as the pass mark. TEM (Test for English Major) is for college students with English as their majors. TEM4 is for the second year English majors, whereas TEM8 is for the senior students at the beginning of their last semester. On the other hand, CET (College English Test) is for non-English major college students. CET4 is usually passed by students in their third or last year of their bachelor study, and CET6 is usually passed in the last year of bachelor or during master study. There is no official way to convert results between two tests; however it is widely believed in China that CET6 and TEM4 have the same level of difficulty. To conclude, the ranking of these four Chinese English proficiency tests on the difficulty level would be CET4<CET6=TEM4<TEM8. When the comparison between international tests and Chinese tests is needed, there seems to be no recognized ways to make comparison. I could only get an estimated ranking according to my personal experience, which is that I passed TEM8 with 68/100 in 2005, and scored IELTS 7.5/9 after one year working as English teacher. So it should be fair to say that IELTS 7.5/9 stands for a higher or at least the same proficiency level compared to TEM8 68/100. This was how I related the international English proficiency tests with the Chinese ones.
Possible problems of evaluation of the proficiency exist. For example, it would be difficult to decide who had a higher proficiency if one subject got 99/100 for CET4 and the other got 60/100 for CET6. Although CET6 ranks higher in difficulty level than CET4, it is possible that the subject who got a much higher score in CET4 has a higher proficiency level that the one who scored much lower in CET6. However, the above situation does not exist among any of the 13 subjects in the present study—almost all the subjects scored in the same range which was just passing the test (60-70). There was only one subject (S18) who scored 91/100 at CET6, but he also took TOEFL, so his TOEFL score, instead of CET6, was used to make the necessary proficiency comparison.

There are 9 questions in the questionnaire relating to exposure, with four questions focusing on leisure time, and five on professional setting. In order to evaluate the exposure, each question is given 100 points, and depending on the percentage the subject chose, s/he would gain corresponding number of points. For example, the first question relating to exposure is ‘What percentage of the reading (including all kinds of newspaper, magazines, advertisement, websites, menus at restaurant, and so on) is in English?’, if the subject chose the option B. 75%, then s/he gained 75 points for this question. In this way, the higher points the subject gained, the more exposed s/he was to English. The full score is 900 points.

Two questions in the questionnaire were concerned with the subjects’ confidence when using English in professional settings and spare time. They were ‘5. How do you feel about your English competence when communicating with work (study) colleagues?’ and ‘6. How do you feel about your English competence when communicating with friends and acquaintances?’.

One question was related to the subject’s attitude towards English: ‘7. How do you feel about speaking or writing English with some Chinese features?’

3.3 Method of Analysis

All the emails from these 13 subjects but one were included as data in this study (but not all were analyzed, see below under Analysis). The exception was a subject who contributed 55 English emails to her foreign teachers. All of them belonged to the same type of emails aiming at catching up and interacting, and sharing the same linguistic devices and discourse structure, therefore, only five of them were selected on a random basis.
The emails were then classified into different categories according to their different writing purposes, and analyzed by close reading, aiming to find out what general features of the subjects’ pragmatic performance were revealed in each group. To be specific, if an email was to make a request, what the ‘head act’ (cf. 2.1.1.2) of the mail was, how the adjuncts (cf. 2.1.1.2) were structured and what modification devices were organized to mitigate the face-threatening acts.

Then these data were compared within each individual with the purposes to see whether the extent of pragmatic transfer differed when the same subject was carrying out different speech acts, and writing to addressees with different power distance; and also across individuals to observe how they differed from each other when the two subjects under comparison have different English proficiency and English exposure. Transfer at the levels of lexis and syntax is not a primary concern of this study, although it did turn out to be associated with power distance (4.2.8: point 3).

To be specific, the process of analyzing emails can be described as follows:

1. All the emails from each subject were close-read with the aim of finding the general and consistent transferred ‘Chinese features’ that appeared in the previous studies described in the literature review.

2. After the first time close reading, the present study surprisingly found out that the subjects’ pragmatic performance can differ very much from each other, and even the same subject can behave differently in different situations.

3. All the emails from each subject were close-read again, and marked with different functions (i.e. making requests, responding to requests, transactional email exchange, and interactional email exchange), different specific purposes within each function (e.g. within the function of making requests, the following specific purposes were found: degree study application, academic questions, and so on), and different addressees with various power levels.

4. Four general categories of emails were recognized based on their different functions:
making requests, responding to requests, transactional email exchange, and interactional email exchange. To be specific: any emails that expressed a clear intent to ask for any kind of actual help, or suggestion, or information counseling were put into the category of ‘making requests’; among those that remained, any emails that clearly expressed an approval, or disapproval, or hesitation to a former request were counted as ‘responding to requests’; some emails among those now remaining did not suggest any kinds of requests, or response to any request either, rather, they exchanged utility information equally about work schedule, study process, or appointment making, and in this case they were included in the third type called ‘transactional emails exchange’; the remaining emails did not involve any clear requests or responding, and did not even exchange any utility information, instead, they were more of a casual greeting and catching-up to keep in touch with old friends, and the present study summarized them as ‘interactional emails exchange’. See Table 4 for more detailed information. The classification between transactional and interactional derives from Brown and Yule (1983).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories of emails</th>
<th>Number of emails</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Making requests</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responding to requests</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transactional email exchange</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactional email exchange</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. Four categories of emails identified in the data.

5. It is assumed that the four categories have different levels of tension. In fact even within one category of emails, especially the first one ‘making requests’, different situations with quite divergent levels of tensions were recognized: degree study admission, certification document, personal favor, study/work arrangement, academic suggestion, and service enquiry. The study recognized five sub-categories within ‘transactional email exchange’ as well: establishing business cooperation, work discussion, appointment making, social invitation, and service complaining, however, as it is too complex to tell a distinct difference in tension level of the five sub-categories of ‘transactional email exchange’, the study decided not to rank the five subcategories.

About the ranking among the four categories, ‘request making’ clearly belongs in the first place with the highest level of tension. It should be fair to put all the transactional email exchange after all the request making emails on the vertical scale of importance to the
email writer, since after all, any request-making should bear comparatively more tension than non request making situations.

Interactional email exchanges clearly belong at the very end of the vertical scale, since the casual chit-chat kind of emails between friends were assumed to have the least tension in them. Then, the request-responding was placed above interactional emails. And since the email writer was now at the comparatively more relaxed position of making responses to a request, s/he should feel much less tension than making a request her or himself, and probably also less tension than in the situation of transactional email exchange when the two sides are more in an equal position. So it should be appropriate to place the request-responding type of emails below the transactional email exchanges.

6. The situations in which the emails were written were analyzed in terms of the different power distance (cf. 2.2.2.1) between the addressees and subjects. Figure 7 includes all the addressees of the email data, and presents the assumed power relations between the addressees and the email writer.

Some explanation of Figure 7 might be necessary, especially on the ranking of the first three participants. The supervisor is undoubtedly the highest among these participants. Teachers have been given the most respect in Chinese culture. One of the most popular sayings in Chinese about teachers is that ‘yi ri wei shi, zhong shen wei fu’, which means ‘if a man were your teacher for even only one day, you should treat him as your father for the entire life.’ That also explains why supervisor was placed in a higher position than university administrator, since administrators do not actually have this ‘teacher-student’ relationship with subjects. Employers were placed under university administrator because the employment relationship is more of a mutual need, and the subjects can also even
change their job quite easily.

7. The above two factors were synthesized and the tension level of the situation in each email was evaluated. For example, the request email regarding admission to degree study bears the highest tension among all the purposes of emails; and (future) supervisors are considered to have the highest power distance. Therefore, the emails from a student to his or her (future) supervisor concerning the degree study admission were considered to have the highest tension level.

8. All the emails were read through again. 8 out of the 13 subjects (the present study labeled them as Group A subjects) had situations with different tension levels involved in their emails. The remaining 5 subjects (labeled as Group B) submitted emails all of which were at similar tension levels.

9. The emails from Group A were read closely, the ‘Chinese features’ as described in the literature review were searched for, and the subjects’ performance in different situations was analyzed to see how it differed. At least one email from each situation was selected for detailed analysis of pragmatic performance. The emails were selected on the criterion of length, with the expectation that the longer emails would have more chances to reveal more pragmatic transfer from Chinese.

10. The factors that seemed to affect the subjects’ pragmatic performance were analyzed with the assistance of the questionnaires.

11. The emails from Group B were close-read. Since their emails did not differ in levels of tension, the study of Group B was more focused on the questionnaire. Nevertheless, emails of each subject were still selected as examples with the criterion of length to make an analysis of the ‘Chinese features’ transferred.
4. Results and Discussion

4.1 A summary of the results of the questionnaire

Table 5 presents the results of all the questionnaires from the 13 subjects, as well as some general information on the subjects.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>English proficiency</th>
<th>Exposure to English</th>
<th>Confidence in using English (in professional setting and spare time)</th>
<th>Attitude towards using English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S2</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>TOFEL 90/110 (*IELTS 6.5)</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>Good; good</td>
<td>Want to sound like native speaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S8</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>TEM4 66/100 (*CET6 66/100)</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>Good; good</td>
<td>Lingua franca</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S10</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>TEM8 60/100</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>Barely can get meaning through to both Good; good</td>
<td>Want to sound like native speaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S11</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>CET6 80/100</td>
<td>375</td>
<td></td>
<td>Want to sound like native speaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S1</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Now in China, been abroad for 13 years</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>Good; good</td>
<td>Lingua franca</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S7</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Now in China, been abroad for 4 years</td>
<td>CET4 70/100</td>
<td>725</td>
<td>Very good; Very good</td>
<td>Want to sound like native speaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S12</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Sweden, two years</td>
<td>CET6 68/100</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>Good; good</td>
<td>Want to sound like native speaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S13</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Sweden, four years</td>
<td>TOEFL 597 (*IELTS 7.0)</td>
<td>675</td>
<td>Barely can get things through Good; good</td>
<td>Want to sound like native speaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S14</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Sweden, two years</td>
<td>IELTS 6.0</td>
<td>700</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lingua franca</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S16</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Sweden, two years</td>
<td>IELTS 7.0</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>Barely can get meaning through Good; do not use English at all</td>
<td>Want to sound like native speaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S17</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Sweden, year</td>
<td>CET6 437 (*CET6 60/100)</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>Good; do not use English at all</td>
<td>Speak with Chinese feature to show the Chinese identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S18</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Sweden, year</td>
<td>TOEFL 98/110 (*IELTS 7.0)</td>
<td>675</td>
<td>Good; good</td>
<td>Lingua franca</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S20</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Sweden, year</td>
<td>IELTS 8.5</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>Good; very good</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. Findings from the questionnaires from 13 subjects.

The following conclusions can be drawn from Table 5:

1. In most cases, the subjects who live abroad have a much higher exposure to English, but there are exceptions as well.
S17, living in Sweden, had the lowest (perceived) exposure among all subjects. And S7, living in China, had a higher exposure than some of the subjects living abroad.

2. Confidence in using English is better correlated with exposure to English than with English proficiency level.

A typical example is S7, who was a vocational college student in China with a mediocre score for the lowest English proficiency test in China (70/100 for CET4), had quite high exposure to English (725), and at the same time had the highest confidence among all the subjects (‘very good ‘to both questions). On the other hand, S10, who graduated as an English major and had a comparatively better proficiency, had a much lower exposure to English (300), and had a much lower confidence (barely can get meaning through to both questions).

3. ‘Speaking English with “Chinese features” in order to show the Chinese identity’ is not an idea that exists popularly among subjects. Only one subject (S17) reported that he appreciated the ‘Chinese features’ when he used English because those features emphasized his Chinese identity.

4. Subjects’ attitude towards the ‘Chinese features’ in their English production may be related to gender and experience living abroad.

Among all of the subjects, 7 out of 13 expressed they wanted to sound more like a native speaker, all of whom were female; and the remaining 6, including the three male subjects, chose the option that they do not mind about any linguistic features they have and the point is to communicate (with 1 male expressed the appreciation of his ‘Chinese features’). Four of these are living or used to live abroad.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overseas experience</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Want to sound like NS</th>
<th>The point is to communicate</th>
<th>Appreciate the ‘Chinese features’ to show Chinese identity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experienced</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inexperienced</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6. The relationship between the subjects’ attitude towards English and their gender and overseas experience.
4.2 An analysis of the findings from the emails

4.2.1 Method considerations

As noted in section 3.3, among these 104 emails, four general categories were identified: making requests, responding to requests, transactional email exchange, and interactional email exchange. The study first expected that subjects’ pragmatic performance would only vary depending on their English proficiency and exposure. However, after reading the emails closely, it was found that even the same email writer could have quite different performance in their emails in different situations. Some discourse structures and word choices were preferred in one situation and were avoided in some others. As described above, by comparing and analyzing, the study found out that there were two other possible factors that might decide how many ‘Chinese features’ the writers can reveal in their email—the importance of the purpose of email to the writer, and the power distance between the addressee and the writer.

Therefore, the study identified four main factors that affect the subjects’ pragmatic performance. They were the subjects’ English proficiency, the subjects’ exposure to English, the importance of the speech act to the subject, and the power distance or interpersonal distance between the writer and addressee. If we apply Kachru’s theory (Kachru 1985) of inner circle, outer circle, and extended circle to the present study of pragmatic performance, and agree that Chinese L2 English speakers’ pragmatic performance deviates from inner circle speakers’ by adding some new features (which will be further analyzed in the following discussions within each group of emails), then the above mentioned four factors seem to be the forces that drag Chinese L2 English speakers’ pragmatic performance away from their inner-circle counterparts’. See the following Figure 8.
Figure 8. How the four factors affect the subject’s pragmatic performance.

As noted in 3.3, by close reading, the four categories of emails in Table 4 were divided into sub-categories, according to the power distance between the writer and addressee, as well as the specific aim of the email. 41 emails were categorized into the first group of emails ‘making request’. The seven kinds of power relations between addressers and addressees (Figure 6) were identified: student and (future) supervisor (S\rightarrow Su), student and university administrators (S\rightarrow A), employee and employer (Ee\rightarrow Er), business and customer (B\rightarrow C), colleagues (Cs), friends (Fs), customers and business (C\rightarrow B).

As described in 3.3 Method of Analysis, all the emails were classified in order to see whether there was pragmatic transfer from Chinese, and whether the pragmatic performance in emails changed in situations with different levels of tension. The results are shown in Table 7. It’s
worth mentioning that Table 7 only gives a general description of how much all the levels of tension in the email data differ from each other, and when some specific emails are examined, the specific situation will be under analysis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>S→Su</th>
<th>S→A</th>
<th>Ee→Er</th>
<th>B→C</th>
<th>Cs</th>
<th>Fs</th>
<th>C→B</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>degree study admission</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>certification document</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>personal favor</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study/ work arrangement</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic suggestion</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service enquiry</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transactional email exchange</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Request responding</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactional email exchange</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7. All situations identified in the email data.

Note: S→Su: student and (future) supervisor;
S→A: student and administrator or other university staff member;
Ee→Er: employee and employer;
B→C: business and customer;
Cs: colleagues;
Fs: friends;
C→B: customers and business.
---: Emails in this situation are not available in the data.

Since the writers of the emails are all originally from mainland China, the features shown in the emails that are reported in previous studies to be different from the inner circle pragmatic feature are termed ‘Chinese feature’. However, it does not necessarily mean that they exclusively belong to Chinese English users, therefore the term is used in quotation marks.

As noted in section 3.3, analysis step 8, not all the subjects’ submitted emails covered different situations. Only 8 out of 13 subjects submitted emails covering more than one type of situation. Accordingly, as noted in 3.3 (point 8) subjects were classified into Group A (with diverse situations) and Group B (with homogeneous situations). The next part of the analysis will focus on the emails from the 8 subjects from Group A, in order to examine their different pragmatic performance in different situations and find out the possible factors.

The study found that the 8 subjects in Group A behaved differently in different situations. 5 of them (Group A1) had varied pragmatic performance in different situations, while 3 (Group A2) of them did not differ much.
The following are five groups of email examples from subjects in Group A1 (S16, S14, S17, S2, and S8). One email from each situation was chosen as an example. If there was more than one email from a situation, the selection of emails was based on the criterion of length, with the expectation that longer emails would have better chance to show the pragmatic features (cf 3.3). All the email examples are authentic material without any modification.

4.2.2 Group A1, Subject 16

The following passages are three emails of Subject 16.

Email 1 (S→Su: degree study admission)

Dear aron:

I am S16, now I am studing in IT law programme in Stockholm University, and I want to apply for the IP law programme starting from next month, I know the application period had passed but I really want to take part in this programme, so I send you this Email, and have a try if there are one more place for me.

Please find the attach about my presentation on IP law. If I am qualified to join in this programme, please give me a chance, it is really importance for my planning to study.

Thank you very much!

Best regards!
yours sincerely
S16

Email 2 (S→A: study/ work arrangement)

Dear Asa:

I would like to come to the seminar, but considering I have not even write down my draft about the thesis, I think I d better make a presentation next December. If I make a presentation this year, I dont think it would be a good one. so I think maybe next December is better, isn't it?

Thank you for your help about the visa certification. By the way, if you talk to Marianne about this, do I need to sent her an email as an application?

best regards
S16
Email 3 (C→B: service enquiry)

Hello, this is S16

I just booked a room in your hotel through book.com, I want to know the location of your hotel. I will arrive at international bus terminal station at noon, I think the check in time is around 3 o'clock. How to get to the place from the international bus terminal station??

Please contact with me as soon as possible!! Thank you!!

In email 1 with most intense situation (the highest importance degree and power distance), the subject had many of the ‘Chinese’ pragmatic features reported in previous studies. First of all, the subject barely used any syntactic devices as a mitigating device to face-threatening. She used rather direct verb and sentence structure (‘I want to apply for’, and ‘but I really want to take part in’). One possible reason can be that the subject wants to show her strong will in this way. What is more, she uses more devices on the discourse level. For example, disarmers (cf. types of external mitigation section 3.1.1) are used (‘I know the application period had passed but’); politeness markers (Al-Ali and Sahawneh 2008: section 3.1.3) are used (‘Please find the attach about’, and ‘please give me a chance’).

However, in another situation S→A: study/ work arrangement, which contains less power distance and less important purpose, the subject uses syntactic mitigating devices (‘I would like to come…’; ‘If I make a presentation this year, I don’t think it would be a good one.’; ‘I think I d better…’).

And in email 3 with the situation C→B: service enquiry, the subject seems to use less of both external and internal mitigating devices, and the whole structure of the email is also more simple and direct. The subject still uses ‘want’ to express her will.

From email 1-3, we can see that subject 16 is competent to use syntactic mitigating devices to make a request, but she might feel the more direct way of composing sentences and more strong and direct verb is better to express her feeling when she is making some important request and also writing to an addressee with bigger power distance. When the situation becomes more relaxed, she uses the syntactic devices to be polite. And when she is in a comparatively higher power position (as a client), she might just not pay much attention to her
language that much (it does not even have a real ending of that email), and turn to stronger verb and more direct sentence structure again.

4.2.3 Group A1, subject 14

Another group of examples shows a similar tendency to S16. Here are three emails from another subject, S14.

Email 4 (S→Su: degree study admission)

Dear Prof. Carmen Fernandez,

I am sorry to bother you for some personal questions. I applied for your master's programme in Molecular Life Science/09 spring term, I wrote an email to ask Ms Neus Visa, and she suggested me to send the abstract of my Bachelor's thesis to you. There must be some deficiency in this abstract, please let me know so that I could make revisions. Besides, I want to ask for some information:

First, what are the key points for you to decide whether a student is qualified for an admission? To be frank, I want to try my best to meet your requirements.

Second, I got my IELTS overall band 6.0, but, unfortunately, 5.0 in speaking. I am really afraid that it would have some bad influence, but, if I take this exam again, I think I could get a higher score, so I wonder whether it is helpful and possible for application if I send a new transcript of higher score, and what will be the deadline of delivery? Do you think there is necessity for another IELTS exam?

With best regards,
S14 (full name)

Email 5 (S→Su: academic suggestion)

Dear Helena,

I came up with these questions after reading.

For The Sacrifice: In my opinion, it is impossible to give the details in an experiment involving animals, that seems to lose the focus of an experiment and I think the mistakes in which animals were killed is mainly because people have the thoughts that humans are superior to nonhuman animals, so the life of these creatures are not so
precious as human's and it's difficult for us to bear it in mind all the time that we should respect the life of those experimental animals. And I was wondering if there is any law or declaration for using animal in experiment? Is it useful for stopping ill-treating animals in scientific study?

For the animal reader: I don't quite understand the Paragraph 3 in page 327. Does it mean if we don't change the standpoint that women are not objective when they do experiment on animals, we cannot change the way that we usually treat experimental animals, because "Women entering the life sciences have to overcome these associations." and they will be trained to be so-called objective to these animals, then they turn to use the same way --manly way in an animal experiment?

For Reinventing Biology: It mentioned in Page 68, Paragraph 3 "private property and private... They need to be restrained." But if we declare the word "nature", can we say ourselves as the "owners" for these animals? Because if we emphasized the these animals should be given the equal right as humans, how can we own them? As the human, we've never been owned by any others.

Best regards,
S14 (given name)

Email 6 (Fs: interactional email exchange)

dear jing-jing~~

was that amazing to be on a holiday in Malta? show me your photos!!! wuwu~, mediterranean sea!!! that's my dream place to go...envy+ing~~

sigh~my feelings about these days are hard to describe...too much more than excited...towards to disturbed. I heard that in Sweden sunshine is rare...OMG...I hate nights and low temperture!!!but those are not the main reason for me to worry about. when your first arrival to Uk, how long did you take to adjust yourself to the whole new life? did U feel it was hard? oh...maybe I think it over...hehehe...hehehe,recently I've been watching gossip girl~

my departure will be on 15th, not many days left...hahha, maybe the biggest exciting thing now for me about Sweden is I can meet you there~heihei, and we can have fun together.

I guess I think too much, but recently I keep thinking about my future...job, my dream, my life, I have no idea...hard to make choice...do you have the same feelings on your future?

looking forwards to your visition~aha~,heihei~
oh, by the way~tell me some useful sentences about taking the airline or in the airport~

miss you~

In email 4 with the highest level of tension, the writer showed slightly more ‘Chinese features’. First, the writer started the email with an apology, which can be counted as a way of making small talk and an external mitigation of face-threatening acts. Second, the writer did not use many mitigation devices on the syntactic level, instead, a more direct and strong word was used to express strong will (e.g. I want to ask for; I want to try my best to), and personal reasons were explained (e.g. To be frank, I want to try my best to meet your requirements).

On the contrary, in email 5, none of the above features were used to make the request. Instead, the request making was realized in a very concise way, and in the question part, no outstanding ‘Chinese’ linguistic or structural features were revealed either. The subject’s ‘Chinese features’ decreased when she was in a more relaxed situation where she did not need to try that hard for a high aim.

Email 6 was an interactional email exchange from the same subject to her friends. I found it interesting in two senses. First of all, it was obviously an email to the writer’s Chinese friend, but she chose to write in English. She answered in the questionnaire that the reason why she communicated with Chinese people in English is because some time the computer did not have Chinese input. But in this case, the email was not for an urgent purpose, and the subject could definitely wait until she went back home and wrote with her own computer. And from the last sentence of the email ‘tell me some useful sentences about taking the airline or in the airport’, we can tell that the possible reason why she was writing in English might be because the addressee had better English proficiency and the subject wanted to practice English with her. Secondly, the email had many Chinese features on both the sentence structure level and lexical level. Some code-switching into English is often used among Chinese young people talking in Chinese, and the feature was used here when writing in English as well. For example, ‘a Chinese verb +ing’ is quite a popular way to express progressive tense among Chinese young people. Since in Chinese, progressive tense is not expressed by a different form of verb, but an extra adverb, using a Chinese verb followed by the English letters -ing is a definite transfer from Chinese. And in this email, some sentences were structured in a Chinese language way, for example, ‘my feelings about these days are hard to describe...too
much more than excited...towards to disturbed’. This is grammatically inappropriate in English, and it is more of a literal translation from Chinese. It was obvious that Email 6 (Fs: interactional email exchange) showed many more Chinese syntactic features than the first two emails of the same subject. Two possible explanations would be that first, the email writer was in a very relaxed situation where she did not need to worry about her language at all, which also explained the much more frequent grammar misuse in the last email; secondly, the writer wrote in English to her Chinese friend, but did not want to sound distant to the addressee, so she wrote in English with some Chinese grammatical features and some Chinese way of using English to show intimacy.

Nevertheless, by comparing these examples from S16 and S14, some similar features are revealed (e.g. few syntactic devices; more external mitigating on the discourse level), however, it is noticeable that much fewer ‘Chinese features’ on pragmatics are shown by S14.

4.2.4 Group A1, subject 17

The following three emails are from subject 17.

Email 7 (S→Su: certification document)
Dear Sir,

I am S17, I wish I won't bother you, I need your help! I don't know how Yang and Mao prepared for their visit? Today they told me they need a invitation letter from you, which used for applying their visas, and they want it sent as fast as we can, but now is weekend coming. I didn't know how was going and also didn't find you in office. So I am very sorry for this email. I just hope it is useful for their necessary preparation. Thanks a lot!

Best wishes!

Sincerely,
Yours,
S17

Email 8 (S→Su: academic suggestion)
Dear Sir,

The difference between the results caused by adding (mxiter=500), if I remove (mxiter=500), the results are same. So what is your advice? Whether I need to calculate again without (mxiter=500)? Thanks!
Looking forward to your suggestion!

Best wishes!

Sincerely,
S17

Email 9 (Cs: work discussion)

Dear Aringsa,

Everything goes well, thanks! I am very glad to know that you will come back soon. I should tell you a matter, I heard from my boss's (Xiaohong Cai) email, she said our institute discussed the implemented project of molecule injection recently, they hope to focus on the DR process of mass number Z for 40—50 firstly, you know our present facility is limited, we choose this range, because the equipment requirements of the electronic cooling and power rise time are relatively low. so my boss expect that you could choose several molecular ions among this range, which have relative longer life, then estimate their storage life, and give their specific scientific or physical sense for us. Looking forward to!

Have a nice time!

sincerely,
S17

S17 showed more ‘Chinese features’ in email 7 with a higher tension level which was making a request to his supervisor of certification document. The subject started and ended the emails with apologies and never used mitigating devices on the syntactic level, instead he used more short sentences and mitigated the face-threatening at the external level, by making apologies and explaining the urgency. However, in the next email, email 8, which was also a request-making email, but about his routine research, S17 sounded more native-like, by using a longer sentence with if-clause and less small talk as external mitigation devices. In email 9 which discussed work with his colleague, he did not show many ‘Chinese features’ at the discourse level, but some misuse in sentence structures and grammar, which can be also related with the tension of the situation in the way that he was more relaxed with colleagues and did not pay much attention to grammar and spellings.

4.2.5 Group A1, Subject 2

The next two examples are emails from Subject 2.
Email 10 (S→Su: degree study application)

Dear Prof. Thomas Hemmerling:

Thank you very much for your prompt reply!

I forwarded your letter to my teacher this morning, after reading your letter, he’s sorry to say that the documents were still not qualified for the Chinese Top Students Studying Abroad program.

1. The school badge in the letter paper should be in color, not in black and white, because all applicants’ materials have to be color-printed.

2. The director’s signature should be his/her full name, not the abbreviated one.

3. The most important things is, the tuition fee waiver did not figure out the exact waiving time. Because the Chinese Scholarship Council requires a tuition fee waiver of waiving all tuition fees during the applicant’s studying abroad.

My teacher told me there once have been some cases that some Chinese students drop out of university because of the tuition fees. In order to avoid such cases appearing again, the Chinese Scholarship Council adjusted its policies in 2005. From then on, only applicants with the tuition fee waiver of waiving all tuition fees during his/her studying abroad can be passed through.

For the Ph.D study will take me 4 years, I will only be able to pass through the Chinese Top Students Studying Abroad program if I could get the 4-year tuition fee waiver from your university.

My dear Professor, since I am very interested in your research program, and I am willing to devote myself on this field, I sincerely hope you could consider my application for the 4-year tuition fee waiver!

Thank you extremely from the bottom of my heart!

With all my best regards!

Sincerely yours,

S2

Email 11 (S→Su: making appointment)
Dear Prof. Thomas Hemmerling:

I have called you for several times via SKYPE, however, it says that the number is not available at the moment. I will try to get through you later.

Sincerely yours
S2

The pragmatic performance in different situation was slightly different. In email10, the subject was more flattering and indirect in structure—it was a request made to the subject’s supervisor about application for a tuition, and the actual request (head acts) was put in the very end of the email, after all the explanations of the restrictions in her home university and her personal will for the tuition; whereas, in email 11 about making a phone appointment, the subject sounded much more straightforward and concise.

4.2.6 Group A1, Subject 8

The following emails 12, 13, and 14 are from Subject 8.

Email 12 (Ee→Er: Work discussion)

Dear Sir,

I shall appreciate it if you give me some information on the schedule of your arrangement for me, wherefore I could make arrangements for myself. You see, my internship in the company will be over by July 25th.

Look forward to hearing from you.

S8

Email 13 (Cs: negative response to request)

Dear MRS CHIOMA,

Sorry to hear your poor health condition. God bless you!

Thank you for your godly heart and your contribution to Christian undertaking. Frankly, I am yet not a Christian now, but my dear grandma was, who brought me up. And in these two months I am getting in touch with Christian brothers and sisters and joining christian activities. I don't suspect your intention and why so amazing that you sent this e-mail to me. I believe it's Lord's plan. I'm afraid myself cannot carry out your will, because I
am not a christian yet. I'll transfer this e-mail to a christian sister, who I believe will implement your will and Lord's plan in a godly way. She'll contact with you if Lord bless both of you.

Whole-heartly, I love you. Kiss you in the name of Lord.

My name is S8.

Thank you for your trust.

Email 14 (Cs: interactional email exchange)

Dear Wendy, Janet,

Thank you!

Thank you for that you share your spare time, your happy and jovial time, your comprehension on the Bible and the life and your love with me; thank you for your patience with and concern about me.

Truely, I am in a mess and feel at loss, and I'd like to cling to somethings that seem steady, reliable and safe to me. However, I am brave and cheerful toward the life, and will enjoy everything gifted by the God. What I need to do is to make my idears clear and to relieve the pain I may impose on who loves me. As for my future and my family, I would like to follow God's plan.

Nice to meet all of you.

Give my best regards to George and your roommates.

Give my blessing to FIFI.

And best wishes to you.

Yours,

S8

S8 provides an unusual example. She shows a quite unusual performance pattern in her emails from others. She had a much more straightforward and concise style when writing about business to her boss, but a more flowery ‘Christian’ way for interactional writing, especially in the choice of vocabulary and expression.

Next comes three example groups from three subjects of Group A2 who did not have different pragmatic performance in different levels of tension.

4.2.7 Group A2, Subjects 18, 13, and 11

The following Emails 15, 16, and 17 are from Subject 18

Email 15 (S→Su: degree study admission)

Dear Prof. Yang
My name is S18 from Lanzhou University. I have applied for the graduate program in the University of Hong Kong. Since I have been put on the waiting list, I decide to contract you enquiring the possibility to work under your instruction.

For the past few years, I have worked under the guidance of Prof. Xuegong She, Lanzhou University on both synthesis and methodology development. In 2008, I cooperated with a graduate student on Lewis-acid promoted cyclization and the paper has been published on Organic Letters (Org. Lett., 2009, 11 (3), 629¨C632). I am now interested in method-directed synthesis of natural products and design of highly efficient methods that could probably be utilized in chemical synthesis. And more importantly, I can start an independent project.

When in junior year, I was awarded the title of "Chun-Tsung Scholar", the highest award in Lanzhou University for undergraduate researcher, which was set by Tsung-Dao Lee, 1957 Nobel Physics Prize winner. Also, I was selected as the only representative of Department of Chemistry to work a whole summer-time in Prof. Chin-Kang Sha's laboratory, National Tsing Hua University. Different environments greatly strengthen my adaptability. And I completely understand how to start personal research based on the lab core method and add more into it.

I am looking forward to hearing from you.

With regards
S18 (full name)

Email 16 (C→B: service enquiry)

Dear Mr. Lillienberg,

I would like to ask something about the card service at Handelsbanken.

Since I am now a University student holding a frikort from Handelsbanken, I could only deal with the payment in department store or other shops. I wonder with what kind of condition I can apply for a card with VISA link, so that I could pay the bill everywhere.

One of my friends has a VISA card from Handelsbanken, but he said he could never overdraw. If I could apply for that kind of card, that will also be enough for me.

I will appreciate if you could give me some info or some web links about the corresponding service.

Best regards,
S18 (given name)
Email 17 (Fs: personal favor)

Dear Britt,

I twisted my ankle on Saturday and it seems quite serious since the ankle has swollen for two days. Some of my friends told me the health center at the University could only provide some help for regular illness. I think I need to visit Cityakuten or some real hospitals to check about what is wrong with my ankle.

I read on the Internet that if without the insurance, it might be quite expensive when we go to see the doctors. But I have never heard of anything like that. Tony suggested me to ask you about this, so I write an email to you.

Could you give me some information about the insurance or something related?
Thank you in advance.

Regards,
S18 (given name)

Obviously, S18 wrote in a more native-like way and did not change much on his pragmatic performance in different levels of tensions. There might be a Chinese feature emerging in discourse structure in Email 17 (Fs: personal favor), that the writer placed the head act after all the other discourse supporting moves (about how he twisted ankle, and medical information that he got before), and after all these, in the very end of the email he raised the request about the insurance information.

Examples from S13 can be found in Appendix II. There are not many ‘Chinese features’ shown in S13’s English emails. In Email 18 with the highest level of tension in S13’s case (S→A: work arrangement), the subject did not use many mitigating devices on the syntactic level, but he did not resort to other kinds of mitigating devices either. Therefore, it might be just due to his personality of directness. The request was made with quite straightforward moves as well, instead of making much external mitigation.

Examples from S11 can be found in Appendix II. S11 did not differ much in pragmatic performance at different levels of tension, or show many Chinese features in the pragmatic performance either. However, it is also noticeable that in email 23 (Fs: interactional email exchange), she has a more casual style on the lexical and syntactic level.
### 4.2.8 Group A, summary and relation to questionnaire

The following Table 8 has comprehensive information about all the subjects of Group A.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>‘Chinese features’ in emails</th>
<th>Stability of pragmatic performance in different situation</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>English proficiency</th>
<th>Exposure to English (in professional setting and spare time)</th>
<th>Confidence in using English (in professional setting and spare time)</th>
<th>Attitude towards using English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S16</td>
<td>Much</td>
<td>Much varied</td>
<td>Sweden, two years</td>
<td>IELTS 7.0</td>
<td>650 Barely can get meaning through</td>
<td>Want to sound like native speaker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S14</td>
<td>Some</td>
<td>Much varied</td>
<td>Sweden, two years</td>
<td>IELTS 6.0</td>
<td>700 Good; good</td>
<td>Want to sound like native speaker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S17</td>
<td>Much</td>
<td>Varied</td>
<td>Sweden, 1 year</td>
<td>CET6 437 (*CET6 60/100)</td>
<td>275 Good; do not use English at all</td>
<td>Speak with Chinese feature to show Chinese identity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S2</td>
<td>Some</td>
<td>Varied</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>TOFEL 90/110 (*IELTS 6.5)</td>
<td>350 Good; good</td>
<td>Want to sound like native speaker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S8</td>
<td>Some</td>
<td>Varied</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>TEM4 66/100 (*CET6 66/100)</td>
<td>400 Good; good</td>
<td>Lingua franca</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S18</td>
<td>Rare</td>
<td>Stable</td>
<td>Sweden, 1 year</td>
<td>TOEFL 98/110 (*IELTS 7.0)</td>
<td>675 Good; good</td>
<td>Lingua franca</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S13</td>
<td>Rare</td>
<td>Stable</td>
<td>Sweden, four years</td>
<td>TOEFL 597 (*IELTS 7.0)</td>
<td>675 Barely can get things through</td>
<td>Lingua franca</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S11</td>
<td>Rare</td>
<td>Stable</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>CET6 80/100</td>
<td>375 Good; good</td>
<td>Want to sound like native speaker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8. Comprehensive information about all the subjects of Group A.

From the above analysis on the 8 subjects of Group A, we can find that:

1. More than half of the subjects (5 out of 8) differed in pragmatic performance (have different amount of pragmatic transfer) according to different levels of tension.

2. Half of the subjects (4 out of 8) showed more ‘Chinese features’ (those described in previous studies) at the discourse level in the situations with higher level of tension;

3. while in the situations with lower level of tension, the subjects seem to show more transfer on the lexis and syntax, but less transfer on pragmatics.

4. English proficiency test does not necessarily evaluate the subject’s pragmatic performance.
5. The extent of pragmatic transfer from Chinese or ‘Chinese features’ in the emails appeared to have no clear or consistent relationship with any of the following factors: the subjects’ English proficiency, English exposure, and confidence when using English.

After analyzing the emails and comparing the questionnaires, the study found that there is no consistent relation between any single factor mentioned above and the subjects’ pragmatic transfer from Chinese. For example, S16, S13, and S18 have the same IELTS score, but have very different extents of pragmatic transfer, and also behave differently in different levels of tension (S16 has much higher pragmatic transfer in higher level of tension; while S13 and S18 have quite consistent pragmatic transfer in no matter which level of tension). Exposure does not seem likely to be the decisive factor for pragmatic transfer either. For example, S16 and S17 both showed much pragmatic transfer from Chinese, but have very different exposure to English. And S11, on the other hand, had quite a low exposure to English, had never been abroad, but at the same time had very few ‘Chinese features’. What is more, both S16 and S13 stated that they can barely get meaning through when they communicated in English, but they had quite different pragmatic transfer. And the rest of subjects who appeared to have higher confidence also showed different pragmatic transfer. Therefore, the only explanation can be that none of the three factors plays an essentially decisive role in the extent of pragmatic transfer; rather it should be a quite complex situation determining whether the subject shows more or less pragmatic transfer.

The relation between pragmatic transfer and the factors of English proficiency, English exposure, and confidence when using English seems to be too complex to make conclusion on with such small sample of data in this study.

6. However, whether the subjects have a more consistent pragmatic performance or a varied one in different levels of tension seems to be associated positively with the subjects’ English proficiency, since the three subjects (S18, S14, S11) all have a comparatively high score from proficiency test. However, three subjects seem to be quite weak evidence to draw any conclusions. Besides, the relation is not valid the other direction around, which means high proficiency level does not necessarily
guarantee a stable pragmatic performance in different levels of tension (e.g. S16).

There seems to be no clear or consistent association shown by the data in this study between the stability of pragmatic performance and exposure to English, or between the consistence of pragmatic performance and confidence in using English.

### 4.2.9 Group B, summary and relation to questionnaire

The emails from Group B subjects were also examined in the same way, although it was impossible to see how the pragmatic performance differed in different situations, because all the emails each subject submitted derived from a similar level of tension. They are still valuable data to test the 3rd and 4th findings drawn from Group A in 4.2.8.

Considering the length of the analysis, only a conclusion table of findings from each subject is presented, followed by a brief analysis. The examples from each subject in Group B can be found in Appendix III.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>‘Chinese features’ in email</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>English proficiency</th>
<th>Exposure to English</th>
<th>Confidence in using English (in professional setting and spare time)</th>
<th>Attitude towards English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S10</td>
<td>Rare</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>TEM8 60/100</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>Barely can get meaning through to both Good; good</td>
<td>Want to sound like native speaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S1</td>
<td>Rare</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Now in China, been abroad for 13 years</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>Good; good</td>
<td>Lingua franca</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S7</td>
<td>Rare</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Now in China, been abroad for 4 years</td>
<td>CET4 70/100</td>
<td>725</td>
<td>Very good; Very good</td>
<td>Want to sound like native speaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S12</td>
<td>Rare</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Sweden, two years</td>
<td>CET6 68/100</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>Good; good</td>
<td>Want to sound like native speaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S20</td>
<td>Rare</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Sweden, 1 year</td>
<td>IELTS 8.5</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>Good; very good</td>
<td>Lingua franca</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9. Comprehensive information about all the subjects of Group B.

The email data from Group B subjects supported the former findings in 4.2.8. All the subjects had much varied proficiency level; however they all showed rather few ‘Chinese features’ in their English emails. This supports the former finding 3 ‘the English proficiency test does not necessarily evaluate the subject’s pragmatic performance’. It is also hard to conclude a consistent relation between the three factors with the rare ‘Chinese features’ they showed.

It is worth considering, though, whether there is an association between the rare ‘Chinese features’ shown in group B subjects’ emails and the fact that group B subjects only submitted emails from homogeneous situation. If we look closely, S10 only submitted very formal
emails to business partners to establish business; S1 only submitted regular business letters to business partners exchanging information about work progress; S7 only submitted interactional emails with her former foreign teachers; S12 submitted only transactional emails with her academic colleagues purely exchanging information about the experiment progress; S20’s emails were to her classmates discussing classes or some extracurricular activities.

In S10 and S1’s cases, business letters always follow some conventional format, and would also be supervised by their superior, therefore, it’s quite understandable that rare pragmatic transfer happened in their emails. S12’s email are not business letters, however, they have the same function as business letters—exchanging information in an effective way. So this function also largely obstructed the pragmatic transfer from Chinese. In S7 and S20’s cases, interactional emails would be a too personal category of emails to include any pragmatic features on the cultural or national basis (on the basis of the findings so far). In other words, no matter whether it is in US or in China, there must be people who prefer to start an email to friends with a joke, or some latest good news of his or hers, or answering the questions that are raised in the last email. So that would be difficult to conclude any pragmatic transfers in the interactional emails.

5. Discussion

5.1 Looking back to the literature review

After all the analysis, we can see that many of the types of pragmatic transfer from Chinese to English that had been described in the literature review part were confirmed in this study. When making requests, most subjects tended to use fewer internal syntactic mitigating devices, instead, more the internal lexical level (disarmer, polite marker, and so on), and even more often mitigated the face-threatening acts on the discourse level or external modification (more supportive moods or small talk before the head act). In other words, when making requests most of the subjects in this study were found to be direct on the sentence level, but indirect on the discourse level (Chen 2006; Su 2010; Zhang, 1995).

Because of the limited email data (4 emails) which were responses to a request, the present study could not find any consistent pragmatic features of responding to request. Some subjects (e.g. S1 and S8) gave negative response in a very straightforward way, while some
others (e.g. S12) were more in the way that was described in the literature review that no clear and direct response was given, but some insufficient answers (Jiang 2006).

Regarding the relation between English proficiency and pragmatic transfer, the present study does not support the previous theories in the literature review. According to the analysis of data, it was found that the present study did not support either the theory that the higher proficiency the speaker has in a second language, the less pragmatic transfer happens (Maeshiba et al. 1996; Robinson 1992; Takahashi and DuFon 1989); or the opposite direction that the higher proficiency the speaker has in the second language, the more pragmatic transfer happens (Takahashi and Beebe 1987). Instead, the present study found that English proficiency, at least the result revealed by the proficiency test, did not necessarily decide how much pragmatic transfer there would be in the subject’s English production (English emails in this case).

The present study anticipated that pragmatic transfer is associated with some other factors, e.g. the subjects’ exposure to English and their confidence when using English. However, with the amount of data in this study, there appears to be no clear or consistent relation between those two factors and the extent of pragmatic transfer either.

The study also took the aim of the emails and the power distance into consideration and synthesized the two factors as ‘level of tension’, with the expectation that it would also play an important role in deciding the extent of pragmatic transfer. Among the 8 subjects whose emails varied in level of tension, 4 showed more pragmatic transfer from their first language (or culture) in the higher level of tension. And there was no consistent tendency among these four subjects in their English proficiency, exposure to English, or confidence in using English.

So far, the study’s attempt to build up a clear association between the subjects’ pragmatic transfer and the expected factors (the subjects’ English proficiency, exposure to English, confidence in using English, and level of tension) seemed to be shaken by the complexity of situations and small sample of data. Nevertheless, the study found that since in the emails with lower level of tension (transactional and interactional emails), the pragmatic features are not that distinctive to tell (cf. the analysis section in 4.2.9), the other linguistic transfer which is quite kept down in higher level of tension becomes much more visible. It is also a new finding that such informal texts actually show little influence from the source culture.
5.2 Limitations of the study

The study managed to collect English email data from 20 subjects. However, while collecting emails, the study was only focusing on collecting as many emails as possible and from as many subjects as possible, without any consideration of the practicability of sending and receiving the questionnaires. Therefore, when the questionnaires were sent out, not as many people were still within contact to be able to answer the questionnaire (for example, some subjects are friends’ students who had already graduated; some subjects are friends’ colleagues who had left the company years ago). Eventually, only 13 questionnaires were collected, and that largely limited the range of comparison.

Also, the study did not give any instruction to the subjects about the types of emails when collecting the email data. That made the subjects feel easier and freer to choose whatever type of emails they would like to submit and enlarged the range and the number of emails as data, but on the other hand, it turned out that subjects tended to submit emails that were without any specific instrumental aim or a clear head act and just interactional emails to friends. Therefore, the study collected a big number of emails of the same type which usually had quite free and personal style and it was not easy to tell the transfer from Chinese on the pragmatic level or make comparison between subjects.

What’s more, the study intended to collect data from subjects with different backgrounds with the expectation that they would differ considerably in their exposure to English. However, it was difficult to find an official and consistent scale to relate the different Chinese and international proficiency tests to one another. Since the subjects have different backgrounds, those who were studying abroad had usually taken an international English test, while the subjects studying in China usually took a Chinese English test which is more economical and probably more recognized in China. There were ways to convert the score between all the Chinese English tests, and also ways to compare between all the international tests, although neither of these ways are officially recognized. However, when a comparison needed to be done between a Chinese English test and an international English test, I could only try to analyze the situation with my own experience and my personal knowledge of the subjects’ background.
References


Appendix I The English Version of Questionnaire

English Proficiency and Exposure Questionnaire

Dear all,

Thank you very much for being supportive for my master thesis by providing emails! Here is a questionnaire aiming at a fairly objective knowledge of your English proficiency level and exposure to English in the daily life. The thesis I am working on is trying to find out how Chinese L2 English speakers’ English proficiency influences the pragmatic transfer in the English emails they write, and whether the exposure to English in their everyday life also plays an important role in how the pragmatic transfer occurs. Therefore, this questionnaire is of the same vital significance to me as the emails data. There are two versions of questionnaire in English and Chinese. Please choose to answer with the language that you feel more comfortable with. Your information will be processed confidentially and used only for this research. I would be grateful if you can take your time and consideration to each question, and send it back to my email iamshihui@hotmail.com as you finish all of them. Thank you very much for the help!

Yours sincerely,
Shi Hui

Attention! Please provide all the information of the time when you wrote those emails that you contributed to this study as data. For example, if the emails that you sent to me were written in May of 2008, when you just past CET4 test, and now you have past CET6, please answer the relevant question with the score you get for CET4, because that reveals the English proficiency at the time when you wrote the emails.

Section I. Personal Details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name (and the English name if it is used in the emails)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hometown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The highest academic degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major of which you received the degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you lived in English-speaking country?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For how long?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you lived in a non English-speaking country, but used English to communicate?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For how long?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Section II. About English Proficiency

1. From what age did you start to learn English?
   [ ] years old.

2. From what age did you start to use English in interaction (not in lessons) regularly?
   [ ] years old.
At the time of the emails,

3. had you taken any English proficiency tests held by a Chinese academic organization (e.g. CET, PETS, TEM)?
   [ ] YES; [ ] NO.
   If yes, what is the name of the test:
   The highest score you got:

4. had you taken any international English proficiency tests (e.g. IELTS, TOEFL, GRE, TOEIC)?
   [ ] YES; [ ] NO.
   If yes, what is the name of the test:
   The highest score you got:

5. How do you feel your English competence when communicating with work (study) colleagues?
   [ ] Very good
   [ ] Good
   [ ] Barely can get meaning through
   [ ] Need other’s help to get meaning through
   [ ] Do not use English at all

6. How do you feel your English competence when communicating with friends and acquaintances?
   [ ] Very good
   [ ] Good
   [ ] Barely can get meaning through
   [ ] Need other’s help to get meaning through
   [ ] Do not use English at all

7. How do you feel about speaking or writing English with some Chinese features?
   [ ] I appreciate Chinese features in my English production, to show my identity as Chinese.
   [ ] I do not like Chinese features to show in my English production; instead I want to sound like native speaker.
   [ ] I do not mind about what linguistic features I have. The point is to communicate.
   [ ] I do not think I have any Chinese features shown in my English production.
   [ ] I do not understand the question.
   Other feelings if any:

8. Do you sometimes communicate with Chinese people with English (written or spoken)?
   [ ] No, I communicate with Chinese people only in Chinese.

   If yes, why?
   [ ] I want to practice my English.
   [ ] I feel I can express myself better in English.
   [ ] I feel it feels better to use English.
   [ ] Because of some technical reason, e.g. no Chinese input in the computer.
Other reasons if any:

Section III. About Exposure to English

At the time of the emails, in your leisure time,

9. What percentage of the reading (including all kinds of newspaper, magazines, advertisement, websites, menus at restaurant, and so on) was in English?
   [ ] 100%   [ ] 75%   [ ] 50%   [ ] 25%   [ ] 0%

10. What percentage of the video and audio input (including music, radio, TV, movies, video games, and so on) was in English?
    [ ] 100%   [ ] 75%   [ ] 50%   [ ] 25%   [ ] 0%

11. When you communicated with people face-to-face (including all kinds of meetings, parties, counseling, shopping, and so on), how much of the time did you use English?
    [ ] 100%   [ ] 75%   [ ] 50%   [ ] 25%   [ ] 0%

12. When you communicated with people at a distance (including letters, talking and texting by mobile, emails and blogging on internet, and so on), how much of the time did you use English?
    [ ] 100%   [ ] 75%   [ ] 50%   [ ] 25%   [ ] 0%

If you were a student at the time of the emails, please answer the questions 13-17 (if you were working, please start directly from question 18)

13. What percentage of the classes (including all kinds of lectures, seminars, reports, distance courses, and so on) was given in English?
    [ ] 100%   [ ] 75%   [ ] 50%   [ ] 25%   [ ] 0%

14. What percentage of the readings (including all kinds of textbook, academic journals, and handouts in class, and so on) was given in English?
    [ ] 100%   [ ] 75%   [ ] 50%   [ ] 25%   [ ] 0%

15. What percentage of the audio and video material that you needed to work on was given in English?
    [ ] 100%   [ ] 75%   [ ] 50%   [ ] 25%   [ ] 0%

16. What percentage of the written assignments that you needed to fulfill was in English?
    [ ] 100%   [ ] 75%   [ ] 50%   [ ] 25%   [ ] 0%

17. What percentage of the oral assignments (including all the presentation, oral report, in-class speech) that you needed to fulfill was in English?
    [ ] 100%   [ ] 75%   [ ] 50%   [ ] 25%   [ ] 0%

If you are working, please answer questions 18-22 (if you were student, the following questions can be ignored)

18. What percentage of the material (including all the documents, instruction whether
written by you or not) that you worked with was given in English?

[ ] 100%  [ ] 75%  [ ] 50%  [ ] 25%  [ ] 0%

19. What percentage of the meetings (including all the in-person meeting and seminars with colleagues and costumers, and the distance meetings via telephone and internet) that you attended was in English?

[ ] 100%  [ ] 75%  [ ] 50%  [ ] 25%  [ ] 0%

20. What percentage of video and audio material that you received at work was in English?

[ ] 100%  [ ] 75%  [ ] 50%  [ ] 25%  [ ] 0%

21. What percentage of the writing assignment that you needed to fulfill was in English?

[ ] 100%  [ ] 75%  [ ] 50%  [ ] 25%  [ ] 0%

22. What percentage of oral presentations that you made to your colleagues and customers was in English?

[ ] 100%  [ ] 75%  [ ] 50%  [ ] 25%  [ ] 0%
Appendix II: Email examples of Subject 13 and Subject 11 from Group A2 (whose emails covered different levels of tension, but did not have different pragmatic performance)

Email 18 (S→A: work arrangement)

Hi:
I am a PHD student under professor Reinhold Schuch. I need to update the web pages for atomic physics. I got a problem to login "bloch.physto.se" by the user name "atom". Here is the web page link: http://atom.physto.se/

The software I used is WinSCP. It does work once today after I changed a little about the webpage. Afterwards, I can not login anymore. There is a server prompt to require a password except the password for the username "atom". Can you help me about this?

Thank you!!

S13

Email 19 (Cs: work discussion)

Hi:
Reinhold asked to write mail to Zoran about the dimensions of the chamber to see if it is possible to put in the goniometer we have here.
Since there is an expensive mirror mounted on the goniometer, it is not convinced to open and measure it if taking into account of the risk.

Have a nice day!

Email 20 (Fs: positive request responding)

Thank you!
Best wishes for you and your family for the coming new year!

Normally there is a number for classification. Can you tell me the model number?
I will look for the stuff and tell you the price. If it is below 800 sek, I will buy it for you.

Best regards!
Email 21 (B→C: transactional email exchange—establish business)

Hello, Tim.

Thanks for your interest in our college. I read your resume, you're qualified for this job vacancy. According to our school's recruitment policy, we offer our foreign teachers a salary ranging from 3500 to 4000RMB. And because of your MBA and your 24 months teaching experience, you can get a salary of 3800. If you're still interested in working in our College on this basis, please let me know as soon as possible.

Attached is the introduction of our college, also the benefit of the foreign teacher working in our college.

Looking forward to hear from you again!

S11

Email 22 (C→S: transactional email exchange—work arrangement)

Nina,

How are you? How is your wisdom tooth? Are you going to pull it out?

Hope everything goes well with you!

There's a notice school want me to tell you.

The foreign teachers' building is going to have a interior reconstruction, basically fix the cracks on the wall. That means you have to pack up the things inside your room.

Because you're not in Qinhuangdao, I can help you pack up your things if you agree.

The reconstruction will begin from the end of July. So it's not in a hurry. Just to inform you in advance.

Looking forward to your reply.

Joanna

Email 23 (F→S: interactional email exchange)

Dear May and Rob,

It's been nice to hear from old friends constantly. I read all your emails and know about your trips different experiences. It's been 4 years since we're apart. I feel ashamed of myself for replying sooooooo late. Everytime I received your email, I told myself don't forget to write back. I need to tell you that there isn't a minute that I forget you. I still remember the last dinner we had and Rob's speech. I can't do my job any better without you. I'll always be thankful for the days we're together. And also I still keep the canteen card you left to me with 200RMB inside. Thank you for that as well. That's the first tips I received in my life. So please forgive me for that. And I hope this mail can give you a suprise.

First of all, Happy Chinese New Year!

This is my fifth working year. Time flies really fast. I've gone through a lot of things. I went to Korea in 2007 to teach Chinese and stayed there for a year. Now I'm still working at QFLPC international cooperation office.
But I'm now in charge of foreign students and also teach them Chinese. There're twelve members in our office now. So it's not as busy as before. Everything is getting better and better in this school. We're having more and more foreign students but less foreign teachers. Hope you can pay a visit to me some time. I'll show you around Nandaihe. Things change a lot here.

Please forgive me for writing back so late. Hope this mail can surprise you and make you happy!

Yours,

S11
Appendix III: Email examples of Subject 10, Subject 1, Subject 7, Subject 12 and Subject 20 from Group B (whose emails do not differ in levels of tension)

Email 24 (B→C: transactional email exchange —establish business)
Dear…

We are a specialist in accessories & tools for glass deep processing since 2000. As one of the largest glass abrasive manufacturers in China, we are able to supply a variety of grinding and polishing wheels/pads/disc. All of our products are ISO9001:2000 certificated and among Germany MPA list. To further satisfy our clients, we've also added up more items to our products line to offer a comprehensive range of products for glass deep processing. Below is our brief catalog-
More products details are available at our web [www.anhuaglasstools.com](http://www.anhuaglasstools.com). OEM is provided. If you're interested in any models, pls feel free to contact us for more details and technical supports, we are happy to provide samples for your quality testing.

Thanks for your time and look forwarding to hearing from you.
S10

Email 25 (B→C: transactional email exchange—work arrangement)
Dear…,

Please find the attached PI with estimated freight charge by UPS. The shipping agent we cooperated with for a long time told me some discount is available from UPS lately. I inform you of actual freight charge once the goods are sent out.

Please note, 100mm diamond wheels we merely offer bronze body in view of quality and appearance.

As for goods value for customs and logo, I'll do as your requirements.

Best Regards

Email 26 (B→C: transactional email exchange—work arrangement)
Dear…,

Our clients commented that A grade diamond wheels could grind 8mm glass around 20,000 meters.
As I told you, we know you are a reseller in Pakistan and bought wheels from other Chinese suppliers before. We quoted you our lowest price with the intention that you'll sell our wheels in your market and benefit more from our cooperation. You could take a small trial order first as some of our other clients did. Our wheels will tell you price / performance ratio themselves.

Best Regards

Email 27 (B→C: transactional email exchange—work arrangement)

Dear Sylvia and Grace:

I am very sorry that according to our Financial Dept, our US dollar account is under different name and address, please adjust the name and address on the invoice as:

Name: ZHEJIANG HUAYI BROTHERS TIANYI MOVIE&TV CO.,LTD

Address: HENGDIAN MOVIE& TV INDUSTRY EXPERIMENT ZONE BUSINESS BUILDING ,DONGYANG ZHEJIANG PR.CHINA

Also, our amount is $7300, included the fee for the ad in the NATPE show guide.

And we also need the original documents..

Grace, if there isn't any trouble, please send the invoice with Ms Yu's updated invitation letter after I send you her new passport No. on Nov.2.

Thank you very much!

Best,

S1

Email 28 (B→C: transactional email exchange—work arrangement)

Dear Christy:

Yes, expect the Rememberance of Dreams Past in Vietnam area, the rest dramas are available in the locations you asked. By the way, do you want the every single drama for all the locations you mentioned, OR there has the
specific area for the specific serie? Please advise more detailed information, the providing of your expected price for each will be really appreciated. Thank you very much!

By the way, the DVDs /VHS are prohibited to send out China at these time for some political reasons I guess. And I don't think we can do all the screeners through email/internet. Maybe we can go a little bit further of our commitment, and we might have three options:
1. I find someone BRING them to you
2. I as our company invite you to Beijing, Aug 26-29, for Beijing International TV Festival
3. You and I meet at Taipei International TV festival if you are attending.

How's this? Please let me know your better options. And I can arrange the Screeners ASAP.

Thanks again.

Email 29 (B→C: transactional email exchange—work arrangement)

Dear Matt:

Nice talking to you! I personally must clearify something :

The previous Email is the formal email of passing on the info to the company.

About dramas of H. Brothers Tianyi Movie & TV Co, contact Mr. Gao will be fine.

And about the "Rememberance of Dreams Past", you might ALSO contact Ms. Lin

shannon0117@hotmail.com

She is our agent of THIS drama for the North America area. She might already have the screeners that you need, as well as a better deal maybe.

She also have other good dramas from all other companies, which might be suitable for you.

If you don't mind, I will connect you two for future reference.

Thank you for meeting me @ NATPE, and hope you have a good business.

I will be around as well, keep in touch.
Thank you very much!
Email 30 (Fs: interactional email exchange)

Keley,
You can not imagine how excited I am to see your e-mail and I am well pleased knowing you are safely back in America now and having fun with your family! Every time I look at the pictures I think of the great moments we were together. Things starts to change a little for me since you have left. Now I am busy working on my exams. I will be finished from them on July 3rd. The training classes will begin sooner or later after the exams.
I went to the brothers and sisters with Lily in a house outside Yanda but very close. They study in small groups every Sunday. It was a great experience with them for me and I was deeply moved by them for their warm welcome. We talked for about two hours and I did not feel anything uncomfortable. Thank our Father for having helped me so much ever since I followed him. I have been praying for you every single night before I fall asleep for your safety and future life. I am on the way understanding him which makes me feel comforted and peaceful.
By the way, how is everything going with your little nephew? I will pray for him. I hope that things will be worked out eventually.
I should apologize for making you feel disappointed by telling you the beautiful flowers would bloom before you leave while they did not. But now they start blooming. I will e-mail you pictures of the flowers and mail you real pictures to America right after I am finished from my exams.
Life is a little hard for me since you have left 'cause I always walk by your building seeing the lights are off. I am try to adjust myself but it takes time. Sometimes I even can not help myself crying with the pictures in hand. However, I believe that our Father will help me go through this situation. Let's think of him and think of each other all the time.
Keep telling me great things about your family and the lovely kids! I like them! Remember me to your family. Remember me to Preston. Hope you can feel great every day! Keep in touch!
Love
S7

Email 31 (Fs: interactional email exchange)

Hey! Keley and Preston,
It is always a great moment when I read your e-mail! I am sorry to hear that Preston's brother has gone through a surgery and I am a little easy hearing that they have played golf 3 days in a row! I can imagine how great he feels when he can play again~~ I surely will be thinking of him and remember him to our Father.
It is a pity that the study group have to stop for the summer holiday 'cause they all went back home for the vocation. But at least, I can read myself. I agree that Father's words can always make us fresh and clear in mind. I think he does have brought changes to my life which firmly encouraged me to keep on learning his stories and
It takes time for me to get used to the Chinese words on the Book but I am positive that I can be friends with both languages!

It seems that the beach there must be fascinating! There is no doubt that you will enjoy yourselves there then. The weather here has become much warmer than before and people from all around the country have come here to the beach though, even not as many as past years because of the Olympic Games. I never know that babies' birthday can be such a big deal in America! I can imagine the cute baby eating her birthday cake though. I am looking forward to seeing the pictures about both the birthday baby and your little nephew (his feet)"

My family is well also. My sister did not come to Qin Huangdao 'cause she is busy with filling in the papers for the universities she wants to go to and waiting for the letter of acceptance. My laolao (my mother's mother) is staying with my family for the summer! I call back home every week so I can talk to her and my little niece. I am in charge of checking the accreditation cards of people who work in the stadium, other than the audience. It is a pity that I can not get access to the audience and get the chance to talk to foreigners but I am satisfied with this position, still. I just need to stand in front of a certain door to the football playground so fortunately the game is in sight! I watched the game between Newzealand and China, which was a great success! The torch will arrived in Qin Huangdao on July 30th, on which we will be really busy.

I am excited to know that it was a good time being together with your family and I wish you can enjoy time spent with Preston's family as well!

Bring my best wishes to Preston and your family!

Talk to you soon!

Email 32 (Cs: transactional email exchange—work/study arrangement)

Hej Gerrit,

There is a question that I expect to get your help. I am working with a simple dye from Erik, the photocurrent got from IV is 2.05 mA/cm², and that from IPCE is 1.52 mA/cm². We measured the IV again under the laser irradiation (at 405 nm and 532 nm, respectively), not under 1 sun. At 405 nm, we got the photocurrent 4.7 mA. Erik made a calculation according to these data got under laser irradiation and got the EQE = 31.6%. But we got the IPCE = 71%. Why is so big difference between EQE and IPCE values?

Is the laser intensity too high or something else?

Looking forward to your reply

Have a nice weekend!

Sí

Email 33 (Cs: transactional email exchange—work/study arrangement)

Hej Leif,

Thanks for your information! Yes, the thin film is really easy to be damaged when you first did it. But it will be no problem when you get some experience. I first cut a strip with scissors from the whole piece, and tear a hole
or an opening with tweezers with pointed tip on the side of the supporting aluminum foil, and then it will be easy to peel off the foil. 

I ever compared the thick (30 um hitting by ourselves) and the thin film (30 um), the thin one is better than the thick one. especially the fill factor. I will send you the comparison result. I won't come to the optimization meeting tomorrow due to the other plan. See you next time!

Best regards!

S12

Email 34 (Cs: transactional email exchange—work/study arrangement)

Dear Nick, 

This project is very interesting and meaningful! But I am sorry that I did not understand your question very well. Do you hope me to assemble some solar cells with ionic liquids and get some performance data for this project? or Do you just need electrolytes consisting of ionic liquids and you make cells by yourself? In either case, I would be very happy if I can do something for this project. But the thing is that I've never worked on ionic liquids electrolyte. Maybe Misha and Ze have some experiences about ionic liquids. Anyway, please let me know what's your purpose and maybe I really can do sth. :) 

Best regards!

S12

Email 35 (Cs: transactional email exchange—work/study arrangement)

Sergio, 

At last a Chinese writer appears:) I'm happy.

Lu Xun is actually one of my favorite writers. We used to have his short stories in our Chinese textbooks. He is believed to be one of the founders of Chinese modern literature. He also became the leader of the League of Left-wing Writers. Mao was actually an admirer of his work. His ideas are inclined to the Left but he never really joined the Communist Party - he was basically Liberal.

He writes fictions(short stories mostly), political critics as well as poets. His most famous works are The Diary of a Mad Man, Ah-Q and Kong Yiji. The Diary is among the first works in literary history to be written in modern Chinese; Ah-Q is my personal favorite and is extremely ironic; Kong is cited by the writer as one of his favorite. I'm attaching the former two with this mail, as well as a photo of him.
On this website you can also find more short stories by Lu:

Enjoy!

S20

Email 36 (Cs: transactional email exchange—work/study arrangement)

Hey there,

I'm sending you information about the spring program of the Swedish Film Institute at Filmhuset (in Karlaplan).

http://www.sfi.se/sv/Cinemateket/Svenska/

For next week (1-7 March) it's free for students at Cinema Studies and according to my professor, we just have to tell the cashier that we're students there.

I'm thinking about Wong Kar-wai's In the Mood for Love, which will be shown on tuesday evening and friday afternoon. I like the movie and would love to watch it again. But if any of you want to see something else next week just let me know and we can go together.

Yours,
S20

Email 37 (Cs: transactional email exchange—making appointment)

Hi guys!

I'm so excited that you can all come. It's part of the Chinese idea of friendship to always want to get together and have some nice food, but last semester's been so busy that I couldn't make it. Now it's the beginning of the new semester and my courses in the English dep. haven't started so finally this is possible:

Let's say 7 p.m. on Friday, the 22nd. The address is Sturevägen 14 and this is how you can get here:

Take the subway to Ropsten, then bus 203 or 205 to Dalängen. When you get off the bus, there is a road leading to the right - that's Sturevägen. Keep going along that road till you see a yellow house with flat white roof at a crossroad. There are three doors and mine is the one on the right.

I attach the map with this mail (the buss stop is on the top right corner and my place is marked with an A) and
you can always call me in case you get lost.

Please tell me if there's anything you don't eat.

Looking forward to seeing you all,

S20

PS. I'm so not sure about the western etiquette of dinner parties so hope it's ok for me to just keep everything the Chinese way. Oh, and I only have chopsticks:)