

**ТЕРРИТОРИАЛЬНАЯ ВАРИАТИВНОСТЬ СОВРЕМЕННОЙ
АНГЛИЙСКОЙ РЕЧИ КАК ПРОБЛЕМА РИТОРИКИ**

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Аннотация. Цель настоящей статьи заключается в том, чтобы заострить внимание на риторических особенностях публичного выступления в поликультурном англоязычном сообществе. За исходное принимается положение о том, что для представителей различных национальных коллективов характерны свои, прочно укоренившиеся в их сознании, лингвокультурные, а также этические и эстетические стереотипы речевой коммуникации. Так, публичное выступление в Китае отличается логикой, опорой на факты и статистические данные, нейтральной и преимущественно свободной от экспрессивно-эмоционально-оценочных обертонов тональностью, что подтверждается в ходе анализа фоностилистического оформления речи китайских экспертов, которые принимают участие в международных форумах. Более того, говорящий, как правило, читает заранее подготовленный текст, что положительно воспринимается целевой (китайской) аудиторией и соответствует их коммуникативным ожиданиям. Это объясняется целым рядом географических, исторических, философских и религиозных составляющих китайского мировоззрения, такими как конфуцианство, которые диктуют свои правила речевого поведения и взаимодействия с аудиторией. В статье подчеркивается, что сегодня максимальная эффективность публичного выступления в глобальном англоязычном пространстве обеспечивается глубоким пониманием особенностей интеллективного общения в западных и восточных сообществах.

Ключевые слова: поликультурное англоязычное сообщество; лингвокультурные стереотипы речевой коммуникации; фоностилистическое оформление речи; целевая аудитория; интеллективное общение

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**TERRITORIAL VARIABILITY OF MODERN ENGLISH
AS A RHETORICAL PROPOSITION**

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Abstract. This article is meant to outline the rhetorical specificities of public speaking in the multicultural Global English space. We come from the premise that there are some deeply-rooted linguacultural, ethical and aesthetic stereotypes of addressing the audience, typical of the representatives of different national communities. Thus, a public performance in China

is mostly logical, laconic and data-bound, which can be proved by analyzing the phonostylistic peculiarities of presentations delivered by Chinese experts at various international public speaking events. The text, as a rule, is just read and is mostly devoid of any expressive-emotional-evaluative overtones. It is neutral, serious and unmarked enunciation, which satisfies the demands of the target audience (i.e. the Chinese addressees). This can be accounted for by a number of geographical, historical, philosophical and religious components of Chinese worldview, such as Confucianism, that dictate their own rules of both speech behavior and communication with the audience. The article is, therefore, meant to highlight that today the rhetorical efficacy in a multicultural English-speaking space in can hardly be achieved without a thorough understanding of the specificities typical of both the Eastern and the Western traditions of intellectual communication.

Keywords: multicultural Global English space; linguocultural stereotypes of public speech; phonostylistic peculiarities; target audience; intellectual communication

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Introduction

This article is meant to highlight the underlying mechanisms, or more specifically, phonetic peculiarities of rhetorical efficacy in a multicultural English-speaking space. Very briefly and generally, what we are after is the phonostylistic acceptability of public speaking through the prism of ethical and aesthetic peculiarities of communication, typical of the representatives of Global English with their own speech production and speech perception characteristics. Besides, the ever-changing speech actualities and the new requisites for optimization of people's interaction by means of natural human language are also taken into account.

The fact is that the rhetoric of intellectual communication may vary [1, c. 3] with respect to the tastes and demands of the target audience and their speaking stereotypes. To put it in a nutshell, very much depends on the socio-cultural-educational, historic, psychological and philosophic views of the participants of the speech act. Moreover, there may be all kind of segmental and suprasegmental properties in one's delivery, that are occasion- or situation-bound.

The material, that has been chosen for closer inspection in this article [2], demonstrates conclusively that the age-old properties of public speaking appear to be extremely diverse insofar as their rhetorical characteristics are concerned. Of special interest is the fact that the rhetoric of public speakers in the East and the West is far

from being identical. To be more exact, their rhetoric has its own national, cultural, historical and philosophical principles regulating one's language behavior in front of the target audience.

What we are driving at is that side by side with intelligibility and lucidity of presentation, which is easy to follow and pleasant to listen to, a further discrimination between the so-called Western spirit of competitiveness or agon (from Greek ἀγών, rivalry or competition) [3], on the one hand, and the Eastern communicative culture with its tendency towards mediation and compromise [4, с. 27], on the other, proves to be highly essential. For example, if what one is after is Chinese public speaking skills, the Confucian ideology should necessarily be taken into account. To be more exact, according to the main postulates of Confucianism [5], public speakers will avoid confrontation of any kind and foster a climate of harmony and mutual respect with their addressees. As a result, their performances will mostly be calm and anti-militant both in terms of their phonetic and rhetorical organization.

It should be noted here, that until quite recently it has been invariably Western – or, more specifically, American – communicative efficacy, which attracted elocutionists' attention the world over. There are quite a few publications, both in this country and abroad, where it is described in minute detail from different angles, including the latest psychological and neurolinguistic peculiarities of speech [6; 7; 8]. At the same time, the rhetorical properties of other English-speaking communities have almost remained uncovered. This being the case, it is high time that the focus of attention should be shifted from the predominantly West-oriented public performances to the rhetorical specificities of the East, and China with her number of people and her growing economic and military power is of special interest in this respect.

The specificities of Chinese speaking culture

In this part of our work a brief survey of China's rhetoric and its present-day linguocultural realia is carried out, because without it some of the fundamental properties of Chinese people's speaking strategies will largely remain uncovered.

It should be pointed out, first and foremost, that Chinese rhetoric in its current shape is deeply rooted in the country's geography and history of more than 3000 years ago [9, c. 90]. This, in turn, led to the formation of the Chinese national character and their style of speech communication.

In other words, over the centuries, harmony, dignity, respect for the past and authority, as well as pragmatism [10], were of special value in China and took precedence over people's personal attitudes and judgements. It is only natural, therefore, that they should have formed the basic properties of speaking techniques, as well as Chinese people's views of the underlying requisites for elocution.

Let us look more closely at what they actually are. People's love for harmony seems to be one of the basic factors, which affects the rhetorical preferences and predilections of the Chinese. This being the case, in front of a big and competent audience they are usually formal and quite ritualistic. Besides, any heated discussion is carefully avoided, giving way to cool reasoning and a very polite, civilized manner of communication by means of natural human language.

Moreover, the state of communicative harmony in speech is usually achieved via the so-called 'saving face' strategy [9, c. 97-98] and a strict social hierarchy. In rhetorical terms, it means logic and credibility in any public address. Otherwise stated, the most significant arguments are supported either by citing one's authoritative contemporaries or philosophers of the past. This seems to be an effective means of persuading one's interlocutors, which does not require any additional argumentation on the speaker's part.

It follows that adhering to the rules of Confucianism is still considered to be one of the priorities of communicative efficacy. Thus, while taking the floor, the Chinese speakers will usually not only preserve their own dignity, but also demonstrate respect to their addressees, avoiding any manifestation of aggression in speech carefully. Citing authoritative sources, especially philosophical works of the past, is another pragmatic tool for maintaining a balanced and harmonious speech interaction.

To this we have to add that Chinese rhetoric is primarily oriented towards passing on special message (or information). It is generally believed that this brings credibility to public performances, whereas captivating people's attention through an extensive use of speech ornamentation appears to be a minor matter. Hence, Chinese people's distaste for wordy and emotional performances and their aspiring for plain, clear and discreet manner of speech [11, с. 31].

Cognitive processing of Chinese English public speaking

It goes without saying that rhetoric in general and the peculiarities of Chinese speaking image in particular require a deeper insight into the pronunciation properties behind people's public performances. Therefore, this part of our work is meant primarily to highlight some of the pivotal points of Chinese English segmental and suprasegmental characteristics. At the same time, in strict accordance with the latest trends in phonetic studies, and especially cognitive syllabics [12, с. 96], side by side with the in-depth analysis of the sound form, all the other socio-cultural-historical-psychological and philosophical antecedents of public speaking are to be necessarily taken into account.

The material that we have chosen for closer inspection, demonstrates Chinese English for professional purposes. Otherwise stated, it is the English language for journalists, educationalists, politicians and others, who usually participate in all kind of public-speaking activities (international conferences, forums, debates, etc) or, as the case may be, express their ideas in articles, books and special publications on the subject of their immediate interest. What we are after, however, is something which is generally described as rhetorical phonetics [6]. Therefore, it is the oral form of speech, which first and foremost we are going to focus upon.

Here comes an extract from one of the Chinese speakers' public performances in English, presented at an international forum [13]:

I'd like to thank Intelligence Squared for inviting me to participate in this Debate, addressing the motion that "Western liberal democracy would be bad for China". I think the selection of today's date could not be more apt, neatly sandwiched between

yesterday's U.S. presidential election and tomorrow's opening of the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China that will usher in the next generation of Chinese leadership. The contrast between the nail-biting finish of one with the carefully choreographed outcome of the other, could hardly be more stark. I'd like to begin by addressing the subtext to the motion, namely that the Chinese model of government has done more for the Chinese, than the Western model of government ever could.

It does not require a close examination to see that this speaker demonstrates a faithful command of the English language and almost all the core features of classical RP are observed, especially insofar as the pronunciation of separate vowel and consonant phonemes is concerned. They are as follows:

- the opposition of tense and lax vowel phonemes: *room* [ru:m] and *Communist* ['kɒmjʊnɪst], *Chinese* [tʃaɪ'ni:z] and *liberal* ['lɪbərəl], etc;
- relying on consonants: *Squared* [skweəd], *democracy* [dɪ'mɒkrəsi], etc.;
- silent [r]: *more* [mɔ:], *government* ['gʌvənmənt], etc.;
- two allophones of the lateral [l] – dark [ɫ] and clear [ɹ]: *large* [la:dʒ], *believe* [bɪ'fi:v], etc.

As for the non-core features, they are very few and boil down to the following:

- monophthongization of British English diphthongs: *hopeless* ['hɒpləs], *China* ['tʃanə].

As for the deviations from the core features, they are mostly observed on the suprasegmental level:

- the Descending Scale is interrupted by a mid-fall at the end of each syntagm:

To be frank, | this kind of { state } cannot afford { one person-one vote } multiparty system.

- instead of a high fall, it is usually a mid-fall on the words, which are accentually highlighted, and both falling-rising and/or low-rising tones are just missing:

*'And after three **decades** § of misplaced predictions about **China** | it is time
now | to think § outside the \box,| to consider **seriously** | the theme of our de-
bate to**day**:| 'Western § 'liberal § de•mocracy | would be **wrong** | for § **China**.*

- tempo is relatively slow (≈ 100 words per minute or $\approx 2,9$ syllables per second, which is a little slower, than average in British English):
*It's a product of hundreds of Roman states amalgamated into one with its long
history. sl The inaccurate analogy would be something like the Ancient Roman
Empire continuing to this day as a centralized government, modern economy
or its diverse traditions and cultures vsl and huge vsl nomulation that all speak Latin.*
- there are numerous pauses of almost equal length in the speaker's delivery, that do not only accompany syntagms, but are also widely used within them: *It's a
forever § pessimistic forecast | about China, | China's § collapse | tends to be
always | wrong.|| And § after three § decades | of misplaced predictions |
about China | it is time § now | to think § outside the box, | to consider seri-
ously | the theme of our debate today: | Western § liberal democracy | would
be wrong | for China.||*

This makes us believe that Chinese delivery in English is generally formal, un-emotional, business-like and monotonous. This can be accounted for by the fact that in Chinese culture any expressive-emotional-evaluative overtones can be associated with one's ideological weakness [14]. Hence, the predominantly neutral prosody of their public performances.

As for cessation of phonation and an excessive use of low falls within the utterance, they also make for a special coloring of Chinese speaking voice that may

seem to be rather straightforward and categorical to the British [15]. What lies behind is typically Chinese rather didactic manner of interaction with the public, when every element of the utterance is pronounced very clearly and distinctly, and the tempo is generally slowed down. It is meant to express respect for the addressee and public speech at large, which is regarded as the embodiment of Celestial Wisdom.

Conclusions

To conclude: these days Chinese rhetorical specificities (as well as those of so many other territorial variants of the English language) seem to be a highly promising field of philological knowledge. This can be accounted for by the fact that on the whole, it is typical of the Chinese to preserve their public speaking stereotypes, despite all kind of globalization tendencies that take place the world over.

In other words, their rhetoric of public speaking is largely conditioned by their own, as well as their Chinese addressees' ethical, aesthetic, historical and philosophical traditions of moulding their public performances in such a way that it is not their personal judgments and attitudes towards the subject matter of their speech, but facts, figures and statistical data that come to the fore. This being the case, relying mostly on the pre-written text (or actually reading it) is highly welcome by the people and considered to be a demonstration of the speaker's presentation literacy or rhetorical proficiency. To be more exact, Chinese public speaking seems to be almost free from external influence and the innovative tendencies to entertain, inspire and involve people emotionally [16]. It follows, that communicative efficacy in a multicultural English-speaking world can hardly be achieved without a deeper insight into the properties of public address in the East and the West.

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