

POSTSCRIPT

This Special Issue provides an important contribution to both pragmatics and discourse studies. Yet, for scholars like myself who are fascinated by Chinese culture, perhaps its most significant contribution is the study of Chinese language use in a variety of settings of daily interaction, spanning the service sector and the language use of customers, through to news articles. Considering the impact that Chinese linguaculture has had on the field of pragmatics, no serious academic would think of referring to Chinese as a 'lesser studied' language. However, it still remains the case that international academia is somewhat lacking in empirical research on Chinese language use, as Chinese has - regrettably - often been used as a 'testing ground' for 'Western' theories of pragmatics and discourse (see Kádár and Mills 2011), instead of being studied for its own sake. Therefore, it is an absolute academic pleasure to read the analyses presented in this collection of studies, which provide insight into language use in a cluster of Chinese linguaculturally embedded interaction types.

Another important aspect of this Special Issue is its focus on online settings. The study of internet language has become a popular area in pragmatics, with a number of specialised outlets such as *Language@Internet* and *Internet Pragmatics*. While Chinese academia has been particularly active in studying online settings, the publication of this collection of studies on internet language use in Chinese is a timely endeavour. This is because this Special Issue systematically covers a wide variety of types of online communication, including online teaching, WeChat, Weibo, online discussion forums, and so on. While some of these - such as WeChat - have received some attention in pragmatics, primarily because academics (including the author of this Postscript) use them on a daily basis, some others, such as online teaching in Chinese, have received little attention in international pragmatics.

The fact that this Special Issue appears in a 'mainstream' Sinology journal is important and one worth mentioning in this brief article. Conventionally, Sinologists have focused on Classical Chinese and subjects relating only to China, and even very traditional areas of linguistics - not to mention pragmatics! - have been sidelined in Sinological inquiries. The author of this Postscript recalls many Sinology conferences during which linguistic sessions were poorly attended, apparently due to the invisible dividing line between Sinologists and linguists. This Special Issue demonstrates that those

days are long gone: with China's increasing importance, it has, fortunately, become less acceptable to withdraw into a Sinological 'ivory tower', and it is therefore imperative that Chinese studies recognise pragmatics and the broader field of applied linguistics as mainstream subjects. This Special Issue takes important steps in this direction, and my sincere hope is that more Sinological journals will publish similar collections.

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