



Call Me Fei: Chinese-speaking students' decision whether or not to use English names in classroom interaction

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Call Me Fei: Chinese-speaking students' decision whether or not to use English names in classroom interaction

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ABSTRACT

Unlike other groups of international students, Chinese speakers' use of English names while studying in English is an established norm. Relatively little discussion of the practice has taken place within recent literature, and less attention still has been paid to the minority of Chinese-speaking students who do not adopt English names. The choice of name used during classroom interaction is, though, both significant and meaningful, symbolising the social and cultural membership a person would like to evoke and impacting on student-teacher relationships. This article reports on a survey into the use of English names by Chinese speakers, which was completed by 330 Chinese-speaking students at UK universities - 255 of whom had adopted English names, 75 of whom had not. Survey responses reveal why and how decisions to/not to adopt English names are made. Interview data is then presented from discussions with eight Chinese-speaking students based in the UK who do not use English names. They explain why and describe their experiences of being a minority among Chinese-speakers studying in English.

Keywords

cultural content, language attitudes, teaching methods

Introduction

The number of Chinese people going abroad to study is increasing, and at the most recent counts there were over 95,000 Chinese nationals studying in the UK (HESA, 2018), over 140,000 in Canada (CBIE, 2017), over 200,000 in Australia (AG-DET, 2018), and over 360,000 in the United States (IIE, 2018). In each country, Chinese nationals represent the largest international student group and the number of Chinese-speaking international students is contributed to further by those from other countries where Chinese is spoken. Chinese speakers' use of English names while studying in English is an established norm, with many institutions adding them to documents such as class registers. The

term *Chinese speaker* is used throughout this article to mean people whose first language is a form of Chinese, not non-Chinese people who have learnt Chinese as an additional language. *English name* here is a direct translation of the Chinese term *Yingwen Mingzi* and refers to the wide range of non-Chinese names adopted by Chinese speakers, which can include names drawn from languages other than English, e.g. *Pedro* and *Yuki*, and words not usually considered personal names, e.g. *Golf* and *Celery*.

Because Chinese-speaking students' English names are not recorded on official government documents such as visas, exact figures showing the number who use them while studying in English are not available, but it has already been shown that a majority do so: Li (1997) found 87% of 542 students surveyed preferred using English names when studying English; Li et al. (2007) have described how in 30 years working with international students at the University of Missouri only a few had ever not adopted an English name; in the most comprehensive study conducted in the UK until now Edwards (2006) found that 65 of her 80 Chinese-speaking participants used English names.

Though the normality of this practice is established, relatively little discussion exists within literature about the reasons why Chinese-speaking students use English names, how they feel about doing so, and how they select names. That which does exist is reviewed below. Less attention still has been paid to the minority of Chinese speakers who do not take on English names during their studies in English. The names chosen for use during interaction are, though, both significant and meaningful, symbolising the social and cultural membership speakers would like to evoke (Hua, 2010), and impacting on the student-teacher relationship. It is therefore necessary to understand why Chinese-speaking students choose to/not to use English names during their studies in English.

This article first presents a description of how Chinese names are used among Chinese speakers, knowledge of which is necessary to fully understand the factors influencing decisions on adopting another name. Next, different explanations given for adopting English names will be discussed, as will accounts of how they were selected. Then, the little discussion already existing about why some students decide against using English names will be presented. The article continues by describing the survey format and the profiles of the eight students interviewed, before reporting the study's findings. Finally, the finding's implications for practice are considered.

Names within Chinese culture

Chinese names comprise two or three characters: one character, a family name, is passed down through generations, usually from the father's side, with the other character(s) chosen by parents at birth or soon afterwards. Although referred to in English and Chinese as a singular given name, when two characters are used each has a distinct meaning. There is therefore some debate over whether they should be equated to two separate given names, like first and middle names used by Anglophones and Europeans (See Louie, 2006), but one is rarely, if ever, used without the other in an official, written way.

While English speakers usually select names for their associations with people (e.g. family members or characters from books), Chinese names are selected for their meaning. Names in European languages are traditionally selected from, and sometimes legally restricted to, a relatively small bank of accepted names, words often with no other usage, while the choice of given names in Chinese is much freer (Huang and Ke, 2016; Li, 1997; Tan, 2001). Though machine-reading technology has somewhat restricted the choice of Chinese names in recent years (see IaRB-C, 2005 and LaFraniere, 2009), in principle any of the tens of thousands of Chinese characters can be used to form a given name.

Whether and how given names are used depends heavily on the relationship between speakers in Chinese society. In mainland China, unmodified given names, i.e. the one or two character name without the addition of a modifying term like *xiao* (little) or *lao* (old), are normally only used among family members and close friends (Blum, 1997; Gilks, 2014). For example, a woman called *Wang Yifei* may in China only ever be called *Yifei* by her parents. Some friends might also simply call her *Yifei*, but it is probable that the majority would call her by a variety of names involving some modification, such as *Xiao Fei* (Little Fei) or *Fei Jie* (Big Sister Fei), or repetition, e.g. *Fei Fei*. Meanwhile, in school her class teachers would most likely use her full name and professional acquaintances would address her by her job title.

The wide variety of ways in which a Chinese person may be addressed is further extended by kinship terms, which also contribute to the infrequency with which Chinese given names are used. The "ultimate expression of solidarity" according to Blum (1997, p. 360), kinship terms such as *meimei* (younger sister) or *yeye* (grandad) can at first seem merely classificatory, but their use is in fact a means through which relationships emerge and are maintained. *Wang Yifei* may be called *meimei* not only by an older brother or sister but also by older friends to indicate a close relationship.

Her husband would be unlikely to say *Yifei*, instead calling her *laopo* (wifey), and acquaintances who are not relatives may call her *ayi* (aunty) as a way to express or establish closeness.

The use of English names by Chinese speakers

English names have been taken by some Chinese speakers for many decades. Used regularly in diasporic communities based in the UK, US and elsewhere (Heffernan, 2010), they have also been common in Hong Kong, Taiwan and Singapore among people interacting with non-Chinese speakers (Bacon-Shone and Bolton, 1998; Huang and Ke, 2016; Tan, 2001). Now, with the numbers of Chinese people studying English at home and going abroad to study in English both increasing, the use of English names by Chinese speakers has become strongly associated with classroom-based interaction. There is, however, no consensus of belief regarding why they choose to use English names during their studies or how they feel about doing so.

Edwards (2006) described English language teachers as instrumental in decisions to adopt English names and found some Chinese speakers did so reluctantly. Some students she interviewed had been given English names by their English teachers whether they had wanted one or not, and one Chinese interviewee spoke of being coerced by an American teacher firstly into changing her name and then into adopting an English name she did not like. Li (1997) also found Chinese speakers reluctantly using English names against their will for the purpose of classroom interaction.

Other researchers have found that, while English teachers may be influential in decisions to adopt English names, Chinese speakers are often active and content in the decision to do so. Some students have been found to use English names due to feeling their Chinese names would be too hard for non-Chinese speakers to pronounce (Ghosh and Wang, 2003, Gilks, 2014; McPherron, 2009), while others have thought it would reduce the psychological distance between non-Chinese teachers and themselves (Sercombe et al., 2014). Li et al. (2007) reported on Chinese-speaking students happily using English names because they made classroom interaction less troublesome, while others enjoyed the feeling of a fresh start involved in taking a new name. Cheang (2008) has described how some Chinese students actively select certain English names in an attempt to project particular personal characteristics toward teachers, while Blommaert and Backus (2013) suggest that use of an English name can be an attempt to indicate English language ability.

Elsewhere however, use within classroom interaction is seen as less significant regarding the decision to use an English name: other researchers consider it more connected with the Chinese approach toward identity management. Thompson (2006) suggests that while negotiating bilingual, bicultural and binominal identities Chinese-speakers studying overseas are most strongly influenced by the desire to act comfortably as members of their new community. In agreement, Henry (2012) states that English names are used as dynamic signifiers in a complex and distinctly Chinese form of social interaction. As described above, Chinese given names are seldom used in full other than by close friends and family; for some therefore, it appears that the decision to use English names may be a way of preventing teachers from using their given name: “Can you imagine my feeling of being called by my first name by an unfamiliar person here? It felt so uncomfortable,” a Chinese student studying in America explained to Li et al. (2007, p. 5): “In China, only my close family members would call me that... So I had to give myself an English name, but I feel it is not me.” Gilks (2014) describes the use of English names as a method of maintaining the Chinese convention of only using given names with those to whom one has an intimate connection.

The selection of English names by Chinese speakers

In addition to discussion of reasons for Chinese speakers using English names during their studies and their feelings about doing so, there have been some reflections within literature about how English names are chosen. When selecting them, Chinese speakers can make choices that surprise non-Chinese people, including teachers and classmates. In both academic and non-academic discussions of the topic, the apparent oddness of some choices is often highlighted, with the names *Medusa* (Lee, 2001), *Money* (McPherron, 2009), *Dragon* (Henry, 2012), and *Ocean* (Gilks, 2014) being used in titles of academic articles to emphasise this point. Gilks (2014) explicitly set forth in his study to answer the question “Why do Chinese students make such inappropriate English name choices for themselves?” Henry (2012), however, argues that the use of unusual names represents linguistic domestication, the importation of non-native speech forms and the adaptation of conventional ideologies to another language. Non-native speakers using English to suit themselves in this way is something that Crystal (2003) considered a predictable consequence of English becoming a global language.

The characteristics of the names chosen often borrow more from Chinese than Anglophone naming practices. Henry (2012) feels English names are evaluated and decided upon through familiar schema. He likens a situation in which he was asked by a stranger to provide an English name for her

child to the Chinese tradition of seeking advice from a priest or fortune teller (see Chen, 2009) when selecting a child's given name. The intercession of people considered appropriate experts indeed appears commonplace in adopting English names: in 2016 British teenager Beau Jessup was widely reported to have made £48,000 by giving names to Chinese people through her e-business 'Special Name.cn' (BBC, 2016).

Chinese-speaking students who do not use English names

Despite the popularity among Chinese speakers of adopting English names, there are those who choose not to. Very little discussion of this group and their place within classroom interaction exists: 15 of the 80 students in Edwards' study had not adopted an English name, and four explanations are reported: "I don't need an English name in China", "it's too confusing", "I like my own name" and "my parents gave me that name" (2006, p. 99). Matthews (1996, p. 404) described a student who stopped using his English name due to what he called "a cultural or political reason": "I'm Chinese... what do I need a Western name for?" But extensive review of relevant literature found nothing further about this group.

Methodology

More detailed information on why some Chinese speakers do not use English names during their studies overseas is necessary. Also, a better understanding of why and how others do adopt them is important, especially because some may feel they have been coerced into doing so by their teachers, and also because it is not the norm within any other group of international students to adopt English names when studying in English. For these reasons, this study set out to answer the following questions:

- What are the main factors influencing decisions about whether to use an English name among Chinese-speaking students studying in English?
- How influential are teachers in the decisions about whether Chinese-speaking students choose to use an English name?
- What influences decisions over which English name is chosen?

- What are the experiences of the minority of Chinese-speaking students who do not adopt an English name?

Students from three UK universities were invited to complete an online survey, which was presented in English, simplified Chinese and traditional Chinese to increase response rates; 89% of respondents chose to respond in Chinese. Participation in the survey was anonymous and voluntary.

After selecting their language preference, respondents were asked whether they used an English name. Those that did so were asked why, how they chose the name, and whether they would prefer to use a Chinese name if their teachers could pronounce and remember it. Respondents who did not use English names were asked why, how well they felt their teachers could pronounce and remember their Chinese names, and how they felt about peers who did adopt English names. All respondents were asked about whether they felt teachers in the UK expected Chinese-speaking students to use English names and for their thoughts on the approximate percentage of Chinese-speaking students using English names.

For each question, students were presented with response categories, which were based on the existing literature, and they could select multiple responses when applicable. An option that allowed students to freely type a response in English or Chinese was also added where appropriate, and typed responses are included in the tables at the end of this article. Only the answers of students who completed all required questions were recorded in the survey results. The survey was closed after it was completed by 330 students.

After the survey, eight Chinese-speaking students not using English names were interviewed. Selected through opportunity sampling, all eight were studying at the same university but were from different classes and stages of education. Three were studying preparatory preessional courses in English for Academic Purposes before beginning their main degree programmes (Zhou, Chen, Wang); three were undergraduate students who had already completed two years of study (Xian, Xiuying, Ling); and two were postgraduate students in the final months of Master's degrees (Yang, Zhang). They were aged between 20 and 30, were all from mainland China, and were offered the chance to speak in English or in Chinese through a translator. Six interviewees reported having used an English name in the past: only one had done so while in the UK, the other five did briefly during their earlier education in China but had not since arrival in the UK. Two of the interviewees had never used an

English name though they were aware that the practice was common before coming to the UK. Pseudonyms are used in this article.

The eight interviews were semi-structured and the questions asked were informed by the survey responses. All interviewees were asked about their feelings toward being in a minority of Chinese speakers not using English names and their reasons for not doing so. They were all questioned about their attitudes toward the majority who do adopt English names, and were asked to reflect on the responses given by survey respondents about how they select which name to use. All interviewees were also asked to describe their personal experience of having their Chinese name used by teachers and follow-up questions related directly to their accounts.

Findings

Survey responses

255 out of 330 survey respondents (77.27%) did use an English name. This sample mean allows us to infer, with a confidence level of 95%, that between 72.76% and 81.79% of the larger population of Chinese-speaking students in the UK do so; therefore, with 95,090 Chinese nationals studying in the UK at the most recent count in 2017 (HESA, 2018) and students from Taiwan, Malaysia, the UK and elsewhere adding further to the number of Chinese speakers, it can be understood that at least 70,000 Chinese-speaking students in the UK currently adopt English names. With the same confidence level we can say that at least 17,000 are in the minority who have decided not to, which attests to the value of this study.

When asked which factors had influenced their decision to use English names, the survey demonstrates clear support for the view that teachers are influential in this decision, but does not support suggestions that they are regularly instrumental: 71% of Chinese-speaking students who use English names said they did so because English names are easier for teachers to remember, while 60% chose to because they were easier for teachers to pronounce. Only 15% had made the decision because they felt their teachers expected them to have an English name, and just 5%, a statistically insignificant amount when making inferences about the wider population, said an English teacher had said they must use an English name (Table 1).

<<insert Table 1 about here>>

Though not regularly instrumental, the influence of teachers upon the adopting of English names, particularly teacher's ability to pronounce and remember Chinese names, was underlined when only 38% said they would want to continue using their English name if their teachers could remember and pronounce Chinese names (Table 2). This allows us to say with a 95% confidence level that at least 22,000 Chinese-speaking students in the UK who currently use an English name would stop doing so if they felt their teachers could remember and pronounce their Chinese name.

<<insert Table 2 about here>>

Responses to the same question lend support for the view that discomfort in having their given name used by teachers is influential in the decision to use an English name. 24% of students using an English name would not want teachers to use their given name even if they could pronounce and remember Chinese names well, rather they would prefer teachers use a Chinese nickname. From this we can infer that at least 13,000 Chinese-speaking students in UK higher education who currently use English names do so to avoid their given name being used.

Though clearly showing that teachers are influential in students adopting English names, the survey also indicates that they do not have a major role in decisions about which names students adopt (Table 3). The most common reasons for choosing a particular English name were that it sounded nice (30%), had a desirable meaning (27%) or connection to a celebrity (15%), and that it was unique (13%). Fewer than 10% of the 255 respondents using an English name had based their selection on advice from teachers and, though family members were mentioned as having given English names to some, the overall influence of others in decisions about which name to use was minimal. This suggests that while, as shown in the literature, expert others do play a role in some English name choices, they do not do so for the majority of Chinese-speaking students studying in the UK: the students themselves are active and content in doing so.

<<insert Table 3 about here>>

Survey responses from the Chinese-speaking students who did not use an English name found that no single factor had influenced the majority in their decision to not do so (Table 4). Between 28 and 32% of this group said: they prefer using the name given by their parents; that using an English name would be confusing; and that they did not think Chinese-speaking students should use an English name. Further demonstrating the influence of teachers in Chinese-speaking students' decision making, 21% felt their teachers preferred them to use a Chinese name. The range of

responses given here validated the decision to interview eight members of this group and gain greater insight into their experiences, and these responses informed the interview questions used.

<<insert Table 4 about here>>

Interview comments

All eight students interviewed were aware they were in a minority of Chinese speakers not using English names. Some spoke of initial discomfort in finding themselves in a minority, especially when needing to introduce themselves during classes at the start of their course, but none had felt so uncomfortable that they reconsidered their decision not to adopt an English name. They all had similar attitudes toward the majority who do use English names as those expressed by their group within survey responses (Table 5), namely that this choice should be left to the individual. Their experiences of not using English names, however, varied in relation to: the extent to which they felt expected to use an English name; the form of their Chinese names being used; their feelings of comfort/discomfort toward having their Chinese name used; and whether they had previously used an English name.

<<insert Table 5 about here>>

The experience of taking a preessional English course could influence Chinese-speaking students' feelings towards whether they were expected to use an English name. Two interviewees (Li and Zhang), both of whom began their degree courses without first taking a preessional course in the UK, said that they did not feel expected to use English names. Zhang reported not ever having been asked for one. However, the three students who were studying a preessional course (Zhou, Chen, Wang) and two others who had previously taken one (Yang, Xiuying) all felt that they had needed to assert their decision not to use an English name. They had been asked for one by their teachers, and two spoke of not being happy when this happened.

Yang: *I didn't like being only one without an English name in my class at first.*

Zhou: *I was worried when my teacher asked us to give our English name one by one, six or seven others had given the teacher an English name, so I started to think I should make one up quickly, but I just said I don't have one.*

Both found though that their initial discomfort in not having an English name soon eased:

Yang: *...But everything was strange when I arrived. I got used to living in UK and I became comfortable in my class quickly.*

Zhou: *...I was happy when the teacher seemed not to mind.*

Xian, who had not felt expected to use an English name, experienced discomfort in having his given name used due to the infrequency with which it previously had been:

Xian: *Most people did have difficulty in getting my Chinese name in the first place. However, they would totally accept it afterwards. I must add one point here: at first I felt a bit uncomfortable letting people call me my given-name. In China people always call me by my full name. Calling people by their first name, especially when it only has one character, sounds too intimate.*

Despite first experiencing some discomfort, Xian continued to ask to be called by his given name and found himself quickly comfortable hearing it. This experience of getting used to a given name being used was echoed in other interviews and may relate to differences in pronunciation: when asked whether they felt uncomfortable with teachers using their given name two students' explanations related to difference with how parents address them:

Chen: *My teachers say my name differently to the way my parents do, so it's different. Not awkward.*

Wang: *My teacher is the only person who calls by my given name. My parents use a nickname, like my friends.*

The influence of how Chinese names are traditionally used affected the decisions of two interviewees, who had asked to be addressed by one part of a two-character given names (in both cases the second character) because this is what most Chinese people called them. Xiuying explained that, though she was only addressed simply as *Ying* by non-Chinese speakers, it did not feel uncomfortable due to the similarity with how she was usually addressed by this name with modification or repetition.

Xiuying: My parents and friends call me like 'Ying Ying' or 'sister Ying', so it seems normal when my teachers here say 'Ying', though they pronounce it differently. It would be strange for people to call me 'Xiuying'. No one calls me this really.

Pronunciation may also have been a factor in her decision not to be called by her full given name:

Xiuying:...saying 'Xiuying' would also probably be too difficult. Chinese names are very difficult for English people to say.

The ability of others to pronounce their Chinese name influenced the comfort levels of seven interviewees, who reported that a main reason they used a Chinese name rather than an English name was that the Chinese name they chose to use could be pronounced sufficiently well by English speakers. This echoed the responses about the pronunciation of Chinese names given in the survey (Table 6).

<<insert Table 6 about here>>

There were though comments in some interviews that may indicate the question of pronunciation should have been addressed differently in the survey:

Chen: My teacher seemed quite happy when she read my name out. She could say it well. So I decided that I did not need to use an English name.

Zhou: My teachers sometimes seem uncomfortable when they try to read my name out. But when I say it to them, they seem happier. They are always happy to use it afterwards.

These two comments, in addition to Xian's earlier, emphasise non-Chinese speakers' comfort when pronouncing names as opposed to the accuracy of their pronunciation. These are two distinct issues, requiring further thought and separation.

When asked whether they had previously used English names, all interviewees reported some experience of doing so: Xian described being given the name *Susan* by a friend of her mother.

Xian: *I never really liked the name. For a while, I did think that foreigners could only remember me by my English name... Gradually I just gave up calling myself Susan.*

Zhang described being given an English name by a Chinese teacher in English class at junior high school and said that hearing it now would make her feel like a child. Like Zhang, Chen and Wang reported being given English names by teachers at school in China but said that after the names were given they were not regularly used. Both said they had experienced no attachment to their English names. Xiuying said she had used an English name when studying at a different UK institution, a language school, before coming to university, but had decided against continuing to do so when starting her university course.

Xiuying: *I didn't really like the English name I selected after a while... but it was not easy to change it. My teachers and classmates all knew it. When I came here it was easy to not use it anymore.*

Like Xiuying, three other interviewees, Zhou, Ling, and Yang, reported having selected English names for themselves in the past, but having decided not to use them when beginning studies in the UK.

Implications for practice

Teachers dealing with Chinese-speaking students should be aware of the significant role they play in decisions about whether or not to adopt an English name, which has been demonstrated in this study. The majority of Chinese speakers using English names do so because they believe that their teachers expect it of them and/or because they feel teachers cannot pronounce or remember Chinese names. Questions need to be asked about whether there truly is, and whether there should be, an expectation that Chinese speakers change their names when studying in English, while other groups of international students do not. This is particularly necessary because many would stop using English names if they felt their teachers were comfortable using Chinese names.

Because many Chinese-speaking students who have adopted English names would prefer to be called by Chinese names, it seems important that teachers offer these students a real choice as to how they are addressed. This choice however should not simply be between using their given Chinese name and adopting an English name. This study has found preferences for the use of other

Chinese names, e.g. part of a given name, in survey responses and interviews. Willingness to use the other names would offer students the chance to be called by what they consider their normal name.

There would also be a benefit in giving students the opportunity to decide/change their mind about how they are addressed more than once at different stages of their education in English. As shown in the literature, multiple and changing forms of address are key to establishing and maintaining relationships in Chinese culture and, as revealed by the interviewees' description of previously using English names, name preferences can change during the course of a student's studies. Students can though be hesitant to assert the preference for change toward a teacher.

While the influence of teachers is strong in decisions about adopting an English name, this study has shown students themselves are usually active and content when selecting which English name to use. The reasons they express for their name choices, particularly the desire for something that is unique, may offer explanation for questions often raised in literature about the sometimes unusual nature of names adopted. This though needs to be considered carefully alongside other aspects of name use and name selection described in this study, as students may have a strong emotional connection to an adopted English name, however unusual it is. It would be beneficial for teachers to discuss connotations associated with different English names in class with their Chinese-speaking students when giving them an opportunity to decide which name to use. Teachers who feel compelled to guide a student away from using a particularly unusual name should first discover the degree of attachment the student has toward the name.

Conclusions

This study can usefully inform practice among teachers who find themselves working with the growing numbers of Chinese speakers studying in English. Some implications, e.g. the benefit of giving students more than one opportunity to choose how they are addressed, may though seem difficult to implement for some, particularly those whose one-to-one/small group interaction with their students is infrequent. Qualitative investigation into teachers' interpretation of issues covered in this study would be worthwhile in future, as would a study of the different ways in which teachers respond within the classroom once they have a better understanding of these issues. It would be interesting to see, for example, which methods for discussing name choices with students could prove most effective.

Something that this study has not discussed but that is relevant and could also be usefully explored in future is Chinese-speaking students' name choices when studying in foreign languages other than English. Better understanding of the names they use with teachers when studying in Japanese, for example, could serve to illustrate the extent to which issues described in this article relate to Chinese speakers' attitudes and experiences when they are studying in English in particular as compared to their attitudes and experiences of studying abroad or studying in a foreign language in general.

Another topic that needs to be explored further is the recent trend in urban parts of China to give English names to children, often at birth, with no specific expectation of them going on to use English or live abroad (Hua, 2010). Henry (2012) reported that English names have become a 'must-have item' among certain elite circles. This adds another dimension to the use of English names within Chinese culture, which will likely impact on the attitude Chinese speakers toward using English names when studying overseas in English in future. That is not to say though that all those studying overseas come from a privileged middle class: Soysal et al. (2018) have recently demonstrated that more than a third of Chinese students studying in Europe do not. Differences in attitudes toward the use of English names in relation to class could also be an area of future study.

Finally, something not covered in this study is the effect of how a Chinese name is Romanised on whether students would adopt an English name. This could though have an impact, because it relates to teachers' comfort when attempting to pronounce Chinese. The most common system of Romanisation used for Chinese is *pinyin*, which is the official system of PRC. A number of others however are in use, e.g. Wade-Giles, Yale and Canton, and differences between them can impact on the comfort and accuracy of English speakers attempts to pronounce Chinese; for example, the character 琴, used commonly in given names, can be Romanised as *Qin* (pinyin), *Tsin*, or *Chin*, with the last of these options likely to be most appealing for English speakers. Research into the impact of Romanisation could usefully inform teaching practice, potentially leading to Chinese speakers studying in English being able to more freely Romanise their own name, rather than adopt an English name.

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Tables

Table 1

Why do you use an English name?	n = 255 (multiple answers)
English names are easier for teachers to remember	182 / 71%
English names are easier for teachers to pronounce	154 / 60%
My teacher expects me to have an English name	39 / 15%
I think it is cool to have an English name	14 / 5%
My classmates have English names, so I should too	13 / 5%
An English teacher told me I must use an English name	13 / 5%
Other Comments including: 160*: <i>because I love this name</i> ; 196: <i>I have an English name myself</i> ; 270: <i>it's a nickname when i am in china</i>	12 / 5%

* Respondents have been assigned numbers in order of survey completion.

Table 2

If your teachers in the UK could pronounce and remember Chinese names well, would you prefer them to...	n = 255
continue calling you by your English name?	98 / 38%
use your Chinese name?	95 / 37%
use another Chinese name (e.g. a nickname)?	62 / 24%

Table 3

How did you choose your English name?	n = 255 (multiple answers)
It sounds like my Chinese name	77 / 30%
Based on a meaning I like	70 / 27%
Based on a celebrity I like	39 / 15%
Because I don't know anyone else with the name/ It's unique	34 / 13%
Advice from a teacher in the UK	24 / 9%
Advice from a native Chinese speaker in China	17 / 6%
Advice from a native speaker of English in China	16 / 6%
Other Comments including: 170: <i>My mother chose it for me</i> ; 217: <i>Picked from a dictionary</i> ; 220: <i>a family member gave it to me</i> ; 226: <i>chose it myself</i> ; 301: <i>went to a language school when I was little, and the teacher gave me some options to choose from</i> ; 302: <i>a character/ role in a game</i> ; 324: <i>a family member gave it to me</i>	34 / 13%

Table 4

Why do you not use an English name?	n = 75 (multiple answers)
I prefer to use the name my parents gave me	24 / 32%
Using an English name would be confusing	23 / 31%
I don't think Chinese-speaking students should use English names	21 / 28%
My teacher prefers me to use my Chinese name	16 / 21%
I don't need to use an English name	12 / 16%
Other Comments including: 31: <i>Don't know what English name to use, I feel only Chinese name is my real name</i> ; 36: <i>To teachers, my Chinese name is relatively easy to pronounce</i> ; 70: <i>Too lazy to think of an English name</i> ; 84: <i>The pronunciation of my Chinese name is easy</i> ; 92: <i>Do not know which English name should be used</i> ; 146: <i>No one has helped me to come up with an English name</i> ; 172: <i>My English name is not on the paper of tutorials</i> .	12 / 16%

Table 5

How do you feel about Chinese-speaking students who do use English names?	n = 75 (multiple answers)
It's up to them	66 / 88%
They should use their Chinese names instead	8 / 11%
It feels strange to me	6 / 8%
They are trying to change their identity	3 / 4%
Other Comments including: 2: <i>They are weirdos</i> ; 192: <i>Easy to remember</i> ; 203: <i>stupid</i> ; 306: <i>Just following the crowd</i> ; 322: <i>habitual practice</i>	7 / 9%

Table 6

Please select the statements that are true for you: My teachers in the UK...	n = 75 (multiple answers)
pronounce my name well enough	46 / 61%
remember my name well enough	42 / 56%
seem to easily remember my Chinese name	29 / 39%
pronounce my name perfectly	19 / 25%
seem to have difficulty pronouncing my name	10 / 13%
seem to have difficulty remembering my name	4 / 5%