



Universidade de Aveiro Departamento de Línguas e Culturas
2005

Tianbo Li

O Inglês como Língua Global na China

English as a Global Language in China



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dissertação apresentada à Universidade de Aveiro para cumprimento dos requisitos necessários à obtenção do grau de Mestre em Estudos Ingleses, realizada sob a orientação científica do Dr. Gillian Moreira, Professor Auxiliar do Departamento de Línguas e Culturas da Universidade de Aveiro

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palavras-chave

língua global; educação em línguas; indigenização da língua inglesa; as quatro Modernizações; Revolução Cultural

resumo

O objectivo desta tese é a análise do desenvolvimento e funcionamento da Língua Inglês na China de uma perspectiva histórica no âmbito da globalização económica e cultural. Tomando em consideração a relação com as políticas, economia e pedagogia na China, exemplificamos alguns problemas no ensino de inglês na China. Por um lado, examinamos o desenvolvimento das políticas educativas em relação às línguas estrangeiras; por outro, analisamos o desenvolvimento do ensino/aprendizagem do Inglês. Os papéis e estatutos do Inglês na China, bem como questões pedagógicas relacionadas com o ensino do Inglês são analisados através de questionários de várias províncias da China. Finalmente consideramos diferentes variedades de Inglês na China, questões de identidade e cultura e o futuro do Inglês como língua global na China.

keywords

Global language; foreign language education; Chinese Englishes; the Four Modernizations; Cultural Revolution

abstract

This thesis addresses the question of English as a Global language in China from a historical angle in the context of economic and cultural globalization. Considering the relationship between politics, economics and pedagogy, it exemplifies some problems in China's English education. On the one hand, it analyzes the development of foreign language learning; on the other hand, it looks at the development of the teaching of English as a foreign language. The role and status of English in China, as well as pedagogical issues related to the teaching of English are analyzed through questionnaires from different provinces of China. Finally, it considers different varieties of English in China, questions of identity and the future of English as a global language in China.

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Introduction

There is no doubt that the importance given to English in China nowadays is great. My studies on the English Studies Masters at the University of Aveiro led me to question the role played by English, or Englishes, in many different parts of the world, and especially in my own country where the status and need for English seem to be increasing all the time.

As a teacher of English in China, I had contact with the reality of this situation and also the way in which the demand for English was not always met by the teaching and examination methods employed. Although the Chinese Ministry of Education has taken some measures to reform English education at present in China, it is likely that it will be some time before they have a deep and lasting effect on the cultural and educational traditions.

There is also the question of the English language itself. What English is it that Chinese people are learning? When Chinese people learn and use English, a variety of English appears, which has been variously characterized as China English, Chinese English, Chinglish and is one of many varieties of indigenized English developing in parts of the world where English is widely used but is not a native language of the country or people. The extensive learning and use of English in China places it in the environment of world Englishes, and raises questions as to its status and roles. On the other hand, English has affected the Chinese language, culture and identity.

The coming of globalization has strengthened the learning of English

and enhanced the development of the English language. According to David Crystal, the role of the English language in international communication can be summarized in the following way:

There is enormous motivation, given the way that English has become the dominant language of world communication.... It is the main language of the world's books, newspapers, and advertising. It is the official international language of airports and air traffic control. It is the language of international business and academic conferences, of diplomacy, of sport. Over two-thirds of the world's scientists write in English. Three-quarters of the world's e-mail is written in English. Eighty per cent of all the information stored in the electronic retrieval systems of the world is stored in English....

(Crystal, 1988; cited in Graddol, 1996:31)

With the globalization of world politics and economies, a global language is required in order to facilitate communication with people all over the world. Such a language should be one which is easy and convenient for people and can be used worldwide. According to Crystal (1997) "a language achieves a genuinely global status when it develops a special role that is recognized in every country" (p.2). A global language is not only widely used by large numbers of people all over the world, but its role and importance are recognized by most people in the world and it has a strong (and reciprocal) effect on global politics, economy, military, education and entertainment.

The global status of English is also reflected in the data from Table 1. This data shows the “global influence” of major languages in the world.

Rank	Language	Score
1	English	100
2	German	42
3	French	33
4	Japanese	32
5	Spanish	31
6	Chinese	22
7	Arabic	8
8	Portuguese	5
9	Malay	4
10	Russian	3
11	Hindi/Urdu	0.4
12	Bengali	0.09

Table 1. ‘Global Influence’ of Major Languages according to the Engco Model¹

Source: Graddol (in Burns et al., 2001)

This table, based on data from 1995, shows that English has the dominant position in global influence amongst major languages. This influence also strengthens English to become a global language.

There are some reasons for English being used as a global language throughout the world. On the one hand, “it is used as a first language by

1 Source: “The engco forecasting model has been designed by The English Company (UK) Ltd as a means of examining the relative status of world languages and making forecasts of the numbers of speakers of different languages based on demographic, human development and economic data” (Graddol, in Burns et al., 2001).

some 400 million people"², mainly in the USA, Britain, Canada, Ireland, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand and some Caribbean countries. These constitute what Kachru (1992) described as the inner of three concentric circles. Some of these so-called English-speaking countries, such as the USA, Britain, Canada and Australia play an important role in international trade, diplomatic affairs and have also played a major role in the exportation of English language teachers and the English language to other parts of the world, promoting the development of English as a global language.

On the other hand, English is used as a second (or other) language in many former British colonies spread across Africa and Asia, which make up the bulk of Kachru's outer circle, for example: Singapore, India, Nigeria, Pakistan, South Africa and Zambia. Here English functions as an official language and plays an important role in education, diplomacy, literacy and popular culture, all these nations were historically colonized by Britain. The special colonial historical background gives priority to people from these countries to use and learn English as a global language.

As a foreign language, English has spread all over the world. It is widely taught as a foreign language in "over 100 countries, such as China, Russia, Germany, Spain, Egypt and Brazil" (Crystal, 1997:3-4). In this expanding circle (Kachru, 1992), are nations where English is widely studied and used, such as China, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Korea, and Nepal. Most of the nations have potential power in expanding the global spread of English. Members from this circle have been expanding step by step by perceiving and using English as an important international language. The potential power pushes English to the extreme to become a global

² Crystal, David. "English in the new world." Downloaded on [http:// www.babylonia-ti.ch](http://www.babylonia-ti.ch) on 21/04/2005.

language. For the purposes of this dissertation, it is worth noting that China, where English is learned and used so widely at present, has an important function in the expanding circle.

But this global spread of English has also brought much discussion and debate about the power and status of English. Phillipson (1992) asserts that English linguistic imperialism brings cultural inequalities between English and other languages. English has intruded on other languages that it contacts. Educational imperialism is reflected in international examinations and textbook compilation. The TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language), GRE (Graduate Record Examinations) and other international examinations are passports to go abroad. According to Phillipson (1992), "examinations ensuring international 'standards', higher education links, educational 'aid' projects, etc. Many of these could be classified as educational imperialism"(p.58). The Chinese Ministry of Education invites English experts from Longman and Cambridge Press to compile textbooks for Chinese middle schools every year.

According to Pennycook (1994), "English poses a threat to other languages" (p.14), acting as a gatekeeper to prestigious positions in a society. Pennycook questions whether the global spread of English is natural, neutral and beneficial. The concept of the 'worldliness' of English is termed to suggest the cultural and political implications of the spread of English. "The concept suggests that English can never be removed from the social, cultural, economic or political contexts in which it is used"³.

This dissertation will focus on questions relating to the status and roles of English in China. China has a population of 1.3 billion and a

³ Source: Candlin, N.Christopher's comment on *The cultural Politics of English as an International Language* by Pennycook (1994), it is on the back cover of this book.

territory covering 9.6 million sq. kilometers. China is an old country, with a unique history and culture different from the Western countries. Since China opened its door to the world in 1978, the English language has been a useful tool for Chinese international communication.

Since China launched its open-door policy and reform in 1978, foreign languages have been used and learned more frequently than before. Especially in recent years, there has been an enthusiasm for English in China. With China's entry into the World Trade Organization in 2001, and success in winning the 2008 Olympic bid and hosting the 2010 World Fair, other questions arise, for example: how is English functioning at present and in the future in China? will the dominant position of English in foreign languages remain in the future in China?

It is against this background that I chose the theme for my dissertation, and the questions I will aim to answer are:

- ✧ Why is English as a global language in China?
- ✧ What roles does English play at present in China?
- ✧ Why do Chinese people learn English?
- ✧ What effect does English have on the Chinese language, culture and identity?
- ✧ What is the development of English in the future in China?

In China, foreign language education has been studied by some researchers, for example, Fu (1986), who draws attention to foreign language development in China from the seventh century to the late 1980s, exploring the history of foreign language education in relation to social development. Qun and Li (1991) provide the strategy for the development of foreign language in China until 1990s. Fu (1986) and Qun

and Li (1991) introduce foreign languages in China generally, without focusing on the development of the English language.

Ross Heidi (1993) uses her own experience of teaching English in an elite foreign language school in Shanghai to historically analyze the learning and teaching of English. This book provides background for our study of English in China today. Kingsley Bolton (2003) explores the history of English language in China from the early 17th century to the present, analyzing English in Hong Kong and mainland China from a historical and sociolinguistic perspective.

On the other hand, many articles focus on English language education (Li, 1993; Dong, 1995; Jiang, 1995; Wang, 1999; He, 2002; Hu, 2002; Yu, 2003) and the variety of English in China, for example China English, Chinglish and Chinese English (Du, Zhengming, 1998; Du, Ruiqing, 2001; Niu, 2003). Emphasis has also been given to the global role of English in China (e.g. Kang, 1999; Ji, 2002), and the economic and social status which makes it a Chinese language (Jiang, 2003).

This thesis' historical and social account of English in China is supplemented with the personal testimony of Chinese teachers and academics gathered through a questionnaire answered in 2003 (in Appendix). This questionnaire aimed to enrich my understanding of English development in China by gathering information from people who live and work with English today.

I hope that my dissertation will contribute to an understanding of foreign language, and especially the English language development in China, from the establishment of the 'new' China in 1949 to the present. I also hope to provide answers or new ideas of the rapid development of English in China.

Outline of thesis:

This work is divided into three sections.

Section One outlines the history of language education in China from 1949 to 1978, drawing on Fu's (1986) and Qun and Li's (1991) work on the development of foreign languages before 1978. Statistics are taken from Fu (1986) and Hu (1962, 1974). The background on education is based on Macfarquhar and Fairbank's (1987) work on China. Section One is separated into three Chapters and deals with the situation of Foreign Languages before China opened its door in 1978.

Section Two traces the history of language education from the Cultural Revolution to the present day, including seven chapters. Here, I rely on Ross (1993), David Crystal (1996, 1997), Qun and Li (1991), Bolton (2003), Jiang (2003), Phillipson (1992) and Pennycook (1994).

Section Three discusses the current status and future of English as a global language in China according to Graddol's (1997, 2001 in Burns et al.) and Crystal's (1997) writings. It includes five chapters based on the results of a questionnaire answered by 81 Chinese teachers and students, and research from newspapers, periodicals and the Internet.

1. The Situation of Foreign Languages before China Opened Its Door in 1978

From the founding of “new” China by the Chinese Communist Party in 1949, Chinese education was closely associated with the central government’s policy and strategy. Education served and was directed by the government. The new government needed to build foreign relations and its policies were based on isolating itself from America and Britain, constructing close relationships with the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. The communist administration wanted to consolidate its position in the world, so it developed good relations with former socialist countries in the world such as the Soviet Union and other countries in East Europe, while it kept distance from the UK and the United States, which were recognized as countries of imperialism. A sensitive part of the Chinese foreign language education development reflected the Party’s foreign policies at this time.

This section will discuss foreign language development before China launched its open-door policy in 1978 from a historical perspective. Foreign languages from 1949 to 1976 made little progress except for the Russian language, and during the period of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), they almost disappeared from Chinese history. This section will explore the reasons for this and the torturing experience of foreign languages during these years, making a historical review of these reasons and drawing a conclusion of the close relations between foreign languages and the politics and proposals of the Chinese government at that time. The section divides foreign language progress between the years of 1949 and 1976 into three stages: stage one from 1949 to 1956, which is the development of the Russian language; stage two between the years of 1957 and 1966, the decrease of the Russian language and the increase of other foreign languages, especially the English language; the last stage is the coverage of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), in which education at all levels was destroyed and suspended.

1.1 Foreign Languages from 1949 to 1956 in China

At the First National Work Conference on Education, held in December 1949, it was stated that the education of the new China should use the experiences of the former Soviet Union⁴. And Chairman Mao advocated learning from the Soviet Union in his article on the People's Democratic Dictatorship⁵. Barnett Doak (1977) explains the reasons of Chairman Mao's position: Mao considered the worldwide conflict as a struggle between the socialist camp and the capitalist camp, and he assumed that the Soviet Union was the most reliable.

The effort to learn from the Soviet Union was most evident in higher education (MacFarquhar, 1987). To learn advanced experience from the Soviets, the new Communist government needed to educate a number of talents to master the Russian language. So 36 universities set up Russian departments in the 1950s (Fu, 1986). Meanwhile, according to one estimate, as many as 38,000 Chinese were sent to the Soviet Union during the 1950s for study or training, including scientists, technicians, teachers, students, and workers (MacFarquhar, 1987).

To consolidate the teaching of Russian from 1949, the First National Russian Language Teaching Conference was held in 1951. It stated that the quality and quantity of Russian teaching was insufficient. And it proposed that all universities and schools make the best use of time to train Russian language teachers. The Russians also helped to reorganize the Chinese educational system along Soviet lines (Barnett, 1977). By 1960 they had trained about 1,700 Chinese teachers in the Soviet Union, and by 1962 over 11,000 Chinese students and postgraduates had

4 Source: Peter, J. Seybolt. ed., 1967, cited in MacFarquhar, Roderick. and Fairbank, K. John (1987:202).

5 Source: Mao, 1951; cited in Fu (1986:67).

attended Soviet institutions of higher education. 13,000 students graduated from the Russian training schools or Russian departments of universities (Fu, 1986).

According to Fu (1986), from 1952, Russian language education developed quickly. Since the Soviet Union sent a large number of experts to help China with economic construction, the needs for Chinese talents specializing in Russian increased rapidly. The Ministry of Higher Education held the Second National Russian Language Teaching Conference in 1953 and this conference made some important decisions about the teaching of Russian, which were ratified by the central government. In 1954, "The Directive on Russian Language Teaching" was issued to the whole country. It was the first important document issued by central government since 1949. It proposed the objective of the teaching of Russian in universities: institutions of higher learning should open Russian language courses in accordance with their actual conditions. Most of College foreign language courses were offered in Russian in the 1950s (Fu, 1986:69). By 1954 Russian had become the only foreign language taught in Chinese schools.

Learning from the Soviets was also reflected in the published materials. One study showed that from 38 percent to 45 percent of all books published in China were translated from Russian between the years of 1954 and 1957. The proportion of books translated from other foreign languages was between 3 per cent and 6 per cent. Seen from the statistics, the position of Russian in China was dominant in the mid-1950s. The period was one of rapid development of China's Russian language education.

Supervised by Soviet experts, teaching plans, syllabi, and materials appeared, new courses opened, the teaching level was promoted. Over

1,300 Soviet educational specialists worked in bodies attached to the Chinese Ministry of Higher Education, and hundreds of Soviet specialists went to China and helped to train over 17,000 graduates there. The Soviet educational system had deep influence on Chinese education in the 1950s. For example, foreign language learning in the Soviet Union at that time drew attention to literature and obtained the foreign language knowledge through literature studies. We find that foreign language studies emphasize the learning of foreign literature everywhere in China's higher education.

The new government didn't realize the distinctions between China and the Soviet Union, blindly learning from Soviet experiences, and ignored China's concrete situation of weak foreign language development. It was very dangerous and brought bad results in the following years. Ironically, as China endeavoured to learn from its Soviet older brother⁶, the brother was also learning advanced educational experience from other developed Western countries.

Because the government overemphasized the Russian language and also China's change of direction limited demand for Russian language elites, the supply of Russian language personnel was surplus. In addition, the Sino-Soviet split in 1956 caused the Russian language not to be promoted in the mid-1950s. Some measures were taken to limit educating those specializing in Russian language. Meanwhile opportunities for other foreign languages had come.

In 1949, the Ministry of Higher Education issued a new "Scheme for English Instruction in Secondary Schools"⁷ in which the goal of English

6 Older brother means one person has rich experiences in Chinese.

7 Source: Boyle, Joseph. "A Brief History of English Language Teaching in China." (2000) *In IATEFL Issues155*, on <http://reference.allrefer.com/country-guide-study/china/china123.html>

language teaching was to serve the New Republic. Capitalist thought, especially educational ideas from the United States and the UK were regarded as unpatriotic (Boyle, 2000). In the early 1950s, China took part in the Korean War to “protect home, and defend the nation”. The Americans were regarded as aggressive imperialists, and their native language-English-was ignored at that time.

According to Fu (1986), most English departments were closed or combined in 1952. Departments of German and French languages were reduced. There were only eight English teaching posts, three French and three German ones throughout China. Some teachers of English were forced to learn and teach the Russian language. The English for college and primary and secondary school was damaged seriously when foreign language departments were changed (p.71). English was substituted in school syllabi by Russian and by 1954 Russian was the only foreign language taught in Chinese schools. But luckily, the government had recognized this academic imbalance of foreign languages by drawing up the so- called twelve-year plan of talents in 1956. The government found that “the decrease of Western language teaching was not good for Chinese people to have a contact with the West or to learn the advanced experience from them” (Fu, 1986:72). In Chinese leaders’ minds at that time, the aim of learning foreign languages was to learn from the world; in addition, according to Boyle (2000), as China wanted to extend its markets throughout the world, it felt its lack of English. So it was decided to keep on the teaching of Russian, while strengthening other foreign language teaching (especially English language teaching).

In 1955, the Ministry of Education declared that English teaching should be restarted in secondary schools. The English teaching area was enlarged with twenty-three institutions of higher learning founding

English departments in 1956. Four universities set up courses of German, with as many as 460 graduates, five universities opened French language courses. Respective numbers of students specializing in Spanish, Romanian, Polish and Czech were eighty-two, eighteen, twenty-one and twenty-three.

Respectively, but compared with the prosperous development of Russian, other foreign languages progressed slowly. We can see a little of other foreign language progress (see Table 1.1). The total number of university teachers of foreign languages other than Russian was 754.

Languages	Professors	Associate Professors	Lecturers	Teaching Associates	Total
English	132	68	183	162	545
German	18	4	17	27	66
French	32	7	40	44	123
Spanish			1	10	11
Romanian				2	2
Polish				4	4
Czech				3	3
Total	182			252	754

Table 1.1 Total Number of Foreign Language Teachers in 1956 in China

Source: Fu Ke (1986:72)

In conclusion, the development of foreign languages during this period presented a strong tendency towards Russian and some progress of English and other foreign languages.

1.2 Foreign Language Education from 1957 to 1966

This Chapter discusses the situation of foreign languages in this period and deals with some problems of Russian language education. The chapter also raises an interesting question: what was behind the complicated development of the Russian language in China at that time? Education in relation to the Great Leap Forward in 1958 is introduced and its influence on foreign language progress is analysed. The guideline of 1964 indicated some progress in foreign languages especially in the English language. "Students in full-time middle and elementary schools should study languages, including Chinese and foreign languages and mathematics properly. These branches of knowledge are the basic tools to be mastered by our students. After mastering languages and mathematics, it will be relatively easy to master other branches of knowledge"⁸ (Yang, 1960; cited in Hu 1962,1974:130).

In 1957 the Ministry of Higher Education drew up a secondary school syllabus, resumed English in junior middle schools of many cities, increased the proportion of English for institutions of higher learning, and compiled and published English textbooks for junior secondary schools. Moreover, other Western languages were developed over several years. For example, Beijing Broadcasting Institute set up foreign languages departments including English, Persian, Spanish, Portuguese, Turkish, and Italian. However, the trend towards foreign languages didn't last for a long time; it was broken by the Great Leap in education which took place in 1958.

The CCP Central Committee and the State Council issued jointly the "Directive on Education Work" on 19th September 1958, "calling for a

⁸ Source: "Actively carry out the reform of the school system to bring about greater, faster, better, and more economical results in the development of education." By Yang Hsiu-feng (1960, cited in Hu, ed. 1962, 1974:122-138).

cultural revolution and criticizing education for the errors of neglecting politics, CCP leadership, and productive labour.”⁹ Then the “Educational Revolution” began, trying to attack the “four olds” of old educational thought: the old system, old teaching materials, old teaching methods, and the old teaching order. For example, in the foreign language domain, it criticised foreign language teaching for losing contact with reality and emphasized that foreign language teaching serves politics and people and must be separated from the system of Western Literature. Therefore in the contents of foreign language textbooks newly compiled in 1958, contents concerned with Chinese political reality occupied a large proportion (Fu, 1986:74). To combine education with labour, teachers and students of secondary schools and above formed groups to work in factories, mines, farms, and in road construction that was called “half work and half study” (Hsu, 1995). Teachers and students had no time or energy to study, so it was very difficult to raise the quality of education at that time and improve the learning of foreign languages.

The September 1958 directive also stipulated that regular schools should be responsible for education.

Special power lay in the educational system in that period of 1958. Candidates with worker and peasant origins or people who were directly appointed in charge of organizations at all government levels, participating in revolutionary work could be allowed to go to college by recommendation, without taking any examinations. The literal translation from Chinese for these university students is worker-peasant-soldier. The chances of going to university depended heavily on social relationships, not on a person’s knowledge level, which affected the selection of elites and the quality of education. Especially for some worker-peasant-soldier

9 Source: Macfarquhar and Fairbank (1987)

That is, regular full-time secondary and tertiary schools responded in a variety of ways to the 1958 Directive that every student must participate in manual labour (Macfarquhar and Fairbank, 1987:400-408).

university students, there was a lack of the necessary foreign language knowledge, so how were our university teachers to teach them? Would they begin to teach English from the beginning, with ABC?

The Great Leap in education in 1958 broke the normal rule of schooling and had a negative influence on education. Half work and half study dispersed teachers' and students' energy; university enrolment based on recommendation affected the enthusiasm for learning of the common students without any family political backgrounds. Foreign language education integrated with more political features, took language development in a wrong direction. This language tendency towards politics also made language lose its connection with natural development.

Luckily, the CCP Central Committee corrected the "left method" in the Educational Revolution, and later decreed Sixteen Regulations of Higher Education and Fifty Regulations of Regular Education in 1960; then the order of schooling became normal. Because the compiled textbooks in the Educational Revolution couldn't satisfy the needs for teaching, English for primary and secondary school was compiled. English language teaching in most schools put stress on listening, speaking, reading and writing, fundamentally, altering the "deaf and dumb English" language learning, when learners could neither understand native or other speakers of English, nor speak in English. At the beginning of the 1960s, Prime Minister Zhou Enlai pointed out that learning foreign languages in childhood was good to learn idiomatic foreign languages, to get the habit of thinking and using them. Later, in accordance with his speech, many foreign language schools were set up in eleven big cities throughout China.

"The Great Leap Forward's economic target of 'catching up with Great Britain in 15 years' was used to justify renewed interest in English-language study at the official level. Between 1958 and 1960, the

Ministries of Higher Education and Foreign Affairs, with the backing of Zhou Enlai, formulated five and ten-year plans for foreign-language personnel's rational recruitment and training..."(Ross, 1993:45).

In 1961, Chen Yi, now Vice Premier, delivered a speech to Beijing students to emphasize the importance of foreign languages (Ross, 1993). Chen said: "break through the barrier of foreign languages". He also stressed: "please do not misunderstand me by thinking that I am talking against politics," and "foreign languages are prone to have a connection with politics. We want our students to be able to distinguish politically what is right from what is wrong in regard to the major issues" (cited in Ross, 1993:46). Chen's tone actually made students confuse the relationship between foreign languages and politics. Language has its own objective rule of development, to learn a foreign language is to use it for communication with the outside, the learning needn't be the distinction between wrong or right or politics.

The progress of foreign languages has also been connected with examinations. China is an examinations country, where too much attention is attached to tests. When foreign languages were related to tests, people's attention was drawn to them. For students, test results can decide whether they go to good schools. Because the most important examination in China is the College Entrance Examination once a year, the proportion of foreign languages in tests reflects the importance of foreign languages. "From 1954 to 1957 College Entrance Examinations did not include a foreign-language component, because even some of China's most prestigious secondary schools lacked foreign language departments "(Ross, 1993:50) and qualified staff, students disregarded foreign languages. By 1962, foreign languages had become a compulsory subject in China's college matriculation examinations. The students' attitude towards foreign languages began to change. In other words, the

status of foreign languages in China and Chinese education was more important than before.

According to Fu (1986), in 1964, the Ministry of Higher Education drew attention to Chinese people's attitude towards foreign languages and summed up the situation of the teaching of foreign languages, thus: of the students who learned a foreign language at secondary school level, two thirds of them learned Russian and one third of them learned English. Of the 25,000 students studying in institutions of higher education, 46 percent were learning Russian, 54 percent were learning English and other foreign languages (p.77). To change this situation and expand foreign language education, the Ministry of Higher Education decreed the Seven-Year Outline of Foreign Language Education in 1964.

The October 1964 Outline required a change in the proportion of the number of students learning the Russian language and other foreign languages, and extended the scale of foreign language education. Meanwhile, the October 1964 Outline drafted four policies and proposed some targets:

- ✧ Emphasizing both foreign languages for majors and for non-majors.
- ✧ Emphasizing both education in regular schools and spare time schools such as night schools, or via radio broadcasting or TV universities.
- ✧ Ensuring the role of English as the first foreign language, adjusting the proportion of foreign languages, increasing numbers of students learning English, appropriately increasing numbers of students learning French, Spanish, Arabic, Japanese and German, decreasing students learning Russian in school.
- ✧ Ensuring the quality of foreign language education.

(Fu, 1986:77-79)

From 22nd June to 6th July 1965, the Ministry of Higher Education convened a special conference on foreign language work in order to carry out the October 1964 guidelines. This conference reported that the higher foreign language education had made great progress: the number of foreign language institutes had developed from 30 in 1956 to 78 in 1965. Student enrolment in foreign language institutes and foreign language departments was 13.5 times as many as in 1949. Foreign languages had risen from 12 in 1949 to 42 (Fu, 1986). The Conference drew attention to the schooling objectives, system, teaching rules and content.

From the October 1964 Outline, we can see that the position of the English language in foreign language teaching took first place. This change reflects China's attitude towards the English language and the importance of this language. It was a pity that these guidelines were carried out for only two years and interrupted by the coming of the Cultural Revolution in 1966.

The development of foreign languages can be pictured as a curve since the Liberation (1949). Firstly, the central government carried out a 'one-sided' policy, blindly learning from Russia from 1949 to the mid of 1950s. The national orientation towards the Russian language resulted in a one-sided development of this language that created superfluous Russian personnel and made China lack other foreign language elites. In 1954, all foreign languages were suspended at the junior secondary school level, and resumed in 1957. After 1957, when the paths of China and the former Soviet Union split, the number of people learning Russian decreased, and other foreign languages developed rapidly. It was not until the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) that all foreign languages were discontinued. We can see how linguistic development in China was controlled by national political behaviour in an abnormal way.

1.3 Foreign Language Education in the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) and the Post-Cultural Revolution before 1978

Chairman Mao Zedong launched the Cultural Revolution, which began in the spring of 1966 and brought endless disaster to Chinese people and their culture. With regards to Chinese education, the "Decision Concerning the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution" reported the content of educational reforms in 1966 as follows:

In the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution a most important task is to transform the old educational system and the old principles and methods of teaching. The period of schooling should be shortened. Courses should be fewer and better.. Students should also learn industrial work, farming, and military affairs and take part in the struggles of the Great Cultural Revolution as they occur to criticize the bourgeoisie.

(Schoenhals, 1996:40)¹⁰

Accordingly, China's education must be combined with productive labour under the leadership of Chairman Mao. The Cultural Revolution began in the educational field, lasted for ten years and devastated the national educational system.

"Ceasing courses to make revolution" and nation-wide contact between Red Guards¹¹ meant that the normal order of schools was

10 This decision was adopted by the Eleventh Plenum of the Eighth CCP Central Committee on 8th August 1966 and published in the *People's Daily* the next day (Schoenhals, Michael. ed., 1996).

11 The name "Red Guards" occupies a hallowed place in the Marxist revolutionary tradition. The original Red Guards were the armed Russian workers and soldiers who seized power in the

seriously destroyed. The school campuses were empty. The "Gang of Four"¹² concocted "two estimates"¹³ in order to prosecute intellectuals and school educators politically. A large number of teachers were sent to the countryside to "be re-educated by the poor and lower peasants" through labour. Students all took part in political movements. Foreign language teaching was interrupted by the "Red Guards" (see Figure 1.1), who were made up of students, travelled throughout China to exchange "revolutionary experiences", destroyed the school system and damaged public property. Most secondary schools abolished foreign language courses so that institutes of higher education suspended the recruitment of students specializing in foreign languages for five or six years (Qun and Li, 1991:62). The disordered situation of that decade had influence on the education of foreign language elites with the result that China was short of foreign language personnel at the end of the Cultural Revolution.

Cultural Revolution policies not only discredited elite secondary schooling in China but also broke connections with the world beyond China's borders (Ross, 1993). Everything concerning the word "foreign" was considered as reactionary. For example, reading foreign books and magazines, listening to foreign broadcast stations, and watching original foreign films were forbidden. It was prohibited to import modern foreign

Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. In the Chinese Communist revolutionary movement during the 1930s and 1940s, the local peasant militias who supported the soldiers of the regular Red Army were called Red Guards. In early August of 1966, young students wearing armbands bearing the characters for "Red Guards" appeared on the streets of Beijing. Within a few weeks, and with the encouragement of Maoist leaders in the capital, "Red Guard groups were organized at virtually every university and middle school in the land"(Meisner, 1999).

- 12 The Gang of Four constituted by Wang Hongwen, Zhang Chunqiao, Yao Wenyuan and Jiang Qing (Mao's wife), before they were banished as the "Gang" in October 1976, they were among the highest leaders of the Chinese Communist Party.
- 13 "The 'two estimates', were the fundamental assumptions upon which radical criticism of Chinese educators, intellectuals, and schools rested. The first was that from 1949 to 1966 China's entire educational system was dominated by a revisionist, bourgeois line. The second was that, by extension, the world outlook of most teachers, intellectuals, and students was also bourgeois and that they should be considered potential enemies of socialism" (Ross, 1993:63).

books, so students had no way to know about things concerning the politics, economy, history, geography, society, customs and national characteristics of foreign countries.



Figure1.1 Chairman Mao Met Red Guards on Tiananmen Square

Source: <http://www.sina.com.cn>

One interviewee, an English teacher at the Suihua Teachers' College in Heilongjiang province, China, aged 35, told me that his uncle was treated with suspicion as a "foreign secret agent" for his listening to the BBC programme at night during the Cultural Revolution.

As we all know, to learn a foreign language needs a good environment. But in that period of Chinese history, in order not to be branded as foreign spies, people tried hard to be away from the foreign language environment. Foreign languages had become a "malignant tumour" during that period.

In February and March 1967, the Central Committee of the Chinese

Communist Party launched the call to “resume classes to make a revolution”. The Notification issued on 14 October 1967 aroused educators’ attention: “Chairman Mao’s thoughts about educational revolution are to be implemented in the teaching process, and plans for a revolution of the contents and system of education are to be drawn up step by step”¹⁴. So it was not strange that the atmosphere of classes at all levels filled with politics in this period.

Although Chairman Mao himself didn’t know about foreign languages, he placed emphasis on the importance of foreign language study in 1968, when he declared to a group of sceptical Red Guards at Beijing University: “It’s good to learn English. Foreign language study should be started in primary school” (Unger 1982; cited in Ross, 1993:57). On 27 July 1970, a Radio Beijing commentary condemned students who neglected their English studies and pointed out that foreign languages were tools for “making revolution” (Ross, 1993). Foreign languages are vehicles for communication, and foreign language learning depends on the appropriate environment, but in the chaos of this period, learning English or other foreign languages were just “slogans” for the learners.

Zhou Enlai, the Prime Minister of the Cultural Revolution did actual work on protecting foreign language personnel during the disastrous ten years. According to Fu (1986), Zhou intervened in the job assignments of thousands of foreign-language college students who graduated in 1967 and 1968, temporarily assigning them to special positions on PLA¹⁵ farms for awaiting foreign language jobs (p.84). In five evening lectures delivered to students and teachers from foreign institutes and departments in Beijing, he pointed out the importance and necessity of

14 Source: Schoenhals (ed., 1996)

15 The PLA is short for the People’s Liberation Army.

“three fundamental abilities”: “correct political thinking, linguistic skill and general cultural knowledge” (cited in Ross, 1993:58).

According to Ross (1993), “Zhou’s advocacy of foreign-language education was but one offshoot of China’s efforts to re-establish contact with the West and normalize Sino-American relations” (p.58). American President Nixon visited China in February 1972 and worked out with Zhou the remarkable diplomatic document, the “Shanghai communiqué”, which was a sign of new diplomatic relations of China and America. With the normalization of Sino-US relations, being a member of the UN in 1971 (Fu, 1986), China began to play an important role in international affairs. Therefore the foreign language field must educate foreign language elites for China’s diplomatic role.

Because the education of foreign languages had been devastated in the Cultural Revolution, the existing foreign language personnel didn’t meet the nation’s diplomatic needs, and the foreign language field faced the problems of educating foreign language talent and the decline of the quality of foreign language teaching. After issuing the “Shanghai communiqué” in 1972, the Chinese government realized the importance of the foreign languages with deepening contacts overseas. A national foreign language conference in 1972 captured the tension between professionalism and politics, theory and practice (Ross, 1993). In the years between 1970 and 1972, foreign language institutes and departments began to recruit new students (Qun and Li, 1991:64), some of the foreign institutes increased foreign languages; for instance, the Shanghai foreign language institute established specialisations in Albanian, Italian, Greek and Portuguese (Fu, 1986).

We can conclude that foreign language development in the years

between 1949 and 1976 was deeply influenced by political movements. Bolton (2003) has summed up English language development in China as follows:

Up till the 1990s, Chinese education would experience a roller-coaster ride of changing policy directives, most dictated by the prevailing political winds. Immediately after the revolution, Russian began to replace English as the major foreign language in schools. By the beginning of the 1960s, however, with the weakening of the Soviet influence, English was reintroduced as a school language, but, shortly afterwards its resurgence was abruptly halted by the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) which devastated not only the national education system, but the whole of the Chinese nation.

(Bolton, 2003:247)

In retrospect, the Cultural Revolution is often referred to as “ten lost years” which brought endless torment and loss to Chinese people and their education, and spoiled two generations. In the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution decade, China needed developing, the progress of China depended heavily on education and advanced science and technology. Education, especially foreign language education had been regarded as good medicine to cure China’s “illness”.

2. English Development since 1978

China launched its open-door policy in 1978; and more chances were given to foreign language development. On the one hand, Chinese leaders emphasized that education must face modernization, face the world and face the future. Meanwhile, they thought that foreign language ability was closely related to China's modernization. On the other hand, Chinese people had more opportunities to contact the outside world using their foreign language knowledge.

Today, English is learned and used as the major foreign language at present in China. Chinese people are enthusiastic about this language, and this section will consider some reasons for this enthusiasm. The development of English education in China will be traced. Meanwhile, the reasons for some problems in China's foreign language education will be analyzed and a series of English language reforms, which have been carried out in present day China, will be introduced.

2.1 Foreign Languages and the “Four Modernizations”

This chapter deals with the foreign language situation of China in the period following the Cultural Revolution, explores China’s modernization drive and introduces the open-door policy.

The death of Chairman Mao Zedong and the smashing of the “Gang of Four” in 1976 marked the end of the great ten-year calamity that was the Cultural Revolution, which had brought about endless turmoil and suffering to the Chinese people. Numerous tasks remained to be undertaken in the Post-Cultural Revolution period. To change the bad conditions in the post Cultural Revolution and modernize China, the Chinese government held the Third Plenum of the Party’s Eleventh Central Committee and began to reform and work on the socialist modernizations. During the process of opening and reforming, the government also wondered whether foreign languages were a key to realizing its modernizations.

At the Third Plenum of the Party’s Eleventh Central Committee, which convened in December 1978, it was decided to “shift the emphasis of the Party’s work to socialist modernization”. It officially made the four modernizations¹⁶ the basis of national policy and re-emphasized the importance of intellectuals in achieving them¹⁷. It was the Third Plenum that created a dynamic atmosphere for Chinese people after the end of the Cultural Revolution. In contrast to their bitter experiences in the Cultural Revolution, the intellectuals sent to the remote rural areas were

16 Modernizations refer to the modernizations of Chinese agriculture, industry, national defense, and science and technology.

17 (Meisner, 1999)

rehabilitated, and slowly returned to cities to resume their work in 1977 and 1978. This phenomenon and the Party's policy to "respect knowledge and respect talent" objectively stimulated the development of education in the post-Mao decade. Furthermore, "invoking Mao's hallowed injunction to 'make foreign things serve China', the government promoted international cultural exchanges and encouraged the publication of new translations of Western literary classics..." (Meisner, 1999:428). The related policies resuscitated Chinese education. The changed position of the intellectual and the reinstatement of the National College Entrance Examination (NCEE) in 1977 stimulated teachers and students to work or study for China's modernization.

The process of reform was based on the "four modernizations" and these depended on advanced science and technology from developed countries and also on Chinese foreign language elites. Foreign language education became responsible in this way for China's modernization.

The first national conference on foreign language education held in September 1978 was a new beginning for China's foreign language education (Qun and Li, 1991). The conference improved the situation and function of foreign language education by pointing out its fundamental role in the achievement of the modernizations (Fu, 1986), and the urgent need for a higher level in foreign languages (Qun and Li, 1991). As Ross (1993:17,38) concluded, the educational phenomenon, including foreign languages, was targeted as a precondition for the "four modernizations" in Chinese agriculture, industry, national defence, and science and technology. Before this time, foreign languages had not been emphasized like this and a new role thus emerged, which linked international

communication to modernization and encouraged the idea that foreign language proficiency was in the nation's best interests.

Chinese leaders associated English proficiency with advanced science and technology and placed emphasis on education and modernization. For example, Deng Xiaoping, who led China to open up in the post-Cultural Revolution, highlighted the relationship between education and modernization in 1983: "Education should serve the modernization drive and should be geared to the world and future." As Chinese people learned from the developed countries to attain the goal of modernization, foreign languages would become a vehicle of communication with the outside world. Furthermore, a high level of foreign language proficiency was taken to be a condition that an advanced country and people must have.

In other words, to realize its modernizations in agriculture, industry, science and technology and national defence, the Chinese must master the English language in all walks of life. It was proposed that China would realize its four modernizations by the year 2000. Modernization in China meant building a modern society and taking its place as an advanced nation in the world (Lu, in Itoh Fumio 1997:180) and particularly the promotion of English with its connection to developed science and technology to obtain China's modernity. In this process, English was primarily viewed "as a necessary tool which can facilitate access to modern scientific and technological advances, and secondarily as a vehicle to promote commerce and understanding between the People's Republic of China and countries where English is a major language"¹⁸.

18 Cowan, cited in Boyle (2000)

In short, foreign language skills became a must for gaining the advanced science and technology from other countries, and in the close relationship between foreign languages and China's modernization, the function of the English language was highlighted.

Thus, among all the foreign languages, English has developed rapidly in China since 1978, precisely because it is a means of realizing modernization. English provides access to knowledge and is the native language of some modernized countries such as the USA, the UK, Canada and Australia. The spread of English will inevitably be one process in China's modernization due to the underlying power relations between nations and languages (Zhang, 2003).

So English has flourished in China since China opened its door to the outside world and China now has the largest population of English users and learners in the world. Among the total numbers of secondary school teachers of Chinese, English and Russian languages after 1978, only English-language instructors have gradually increased. The increased number shows that the English language in secondary schools has developed dramatically after 1978. Furthermore, the amount of senior school English-language instructors increased tenfold from 1965 to 1978 (see Table 2.1).

The relations between foreign languages and China's modernization drive indicate that "modernization needs foreign languages and foreign languages need modernization".¹⁹ But can foreign languages really help China to realize its modernization? What are the roles of the English

19 Source: Gui, 1984; cited in Ross (1993:16).

language in China? We will discuss these problems in the following chapters.

Year	Chinese		English		Russian	
	Junior	Senior	Junior	Senior	Junior	Senior
1957	56621	8,624	73	770	195	3,991
1958	60,984	11,449	635	1,005	1,932	4,724
1959	85,403	14,899	1,859	1,471	3,976	5,694
1960*	87,500	16,503	----	----	----	----
1961	94,402	19,707	3,384	2,017	11,704	7,523
1962	87,581	19,301	5,822	2,288	13,976	8,052
1963	93,402	18,915	11,704	2,801	18,704	8,295
1964	97,700	18,433	15,608	3,402	20,005	8,007
1965	99,106	17,757	19,751	4,033	19,543	7,727
1978	833,411	189,000	113,866	49,473	5,407	3,439
1979	789,878	158,104	153,802	50,968	3,865	2,669
1980	773,307	123,412	182,150	47,540	2,904	2,151
1981	686,096	99,110	210,937	48,117	2,510	1,641
1982	604,129	88,760	230,327	50,522	2,557	1,398
1983	565,277	84,000	240,989	52,017	2,995	1,465
1987	575,175	96,856	296,914	69,634	2,960	1,716
1989	568,266	95,736	313,369	71,679	2,887	1,524

Table 2.1 Number of Full-Time Junior and Senior Secondary School Chinese, English and Russian Language Teachers

Source: Ross Heidi (1993:39)

*Total foreign-language teachers for 1960:22,415

2.2 The Open-Door Policy and Foreign Languages

China's modernization drive and reform brought advantages to China's foreign languages development. Living in the opening environment, foreign languages in China made great progress.

The post-Mao administration realized that China couldn't develop in a closed environment like before. "Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping and his pragmatic followers realized that China could not develop in isolation and that she must import foreign science, technology, capital, and management skills in order for her modernization to succeed" (Hsu, 1995:858).

The "open-door policy" played an important role in opening China to the outside world by proposing links, not only with the Soviet Union and the East European countries, but also with the advanced Western countries and other countries in the world. This policy was not only to be carried out in the economy, but also in politics, culture, education, sports, and so on.

Developing the economy, however, was a core aspect of this policy. To attract foreign capital and investment, China took a number of measures to improve investment. Some of the more salient steps were taken as follows:

- ✧ Opening four 'Special Economic Zones' (Shenzhen, Zhuhai, Xiamen and Shantou in Southeast China) in 1979.

- ✧ Opening fourteen coastal sites and Hainan Island in 1984 to foreign investment, with preferential terms on taxes and import duties...

(Hsu, 1995:861)

As a result of these and other measures, the economy developed and foreign investment increased. From 1978 to 1988, foreign trade more than quadrupled, and then quadrupled once again over the next six year (Meisner, 1999:457).

The world began to pay attention to China. More and more foreigners came to visit or to invest. The open environment also stimulated foreign language education. In order to let the world know about the new China, and let China know about the world, some salient measures were taken in the educational field:

- ✧ Selecting excellent teachers and students to study abroad.
- ✧ Inviting some foreign experts and foreign teachers to teach in China's universities and colleges. (Annually, public universities invited about 20 to 30 foreign experts; some universities invited more than 70.)
- ✧ Hosting international academic conferences. (For example: 'The International Conference on China's English Language Teaching' held in Gangzhou, Guangdong province, 1985.)
- ✧ Sending Chinese people to attend international conferences (such as the TESOL Conference held in Hawaii in 1982).
- ✧ Communicating with foreign universities throughout the world

- ✧ Receiving foreign students in China to learn the Chinese language, history and culture.
- ✧ Directly using foreign magazines, video, records and materials from foreign countries.
- ✧ Cooperating with foreign universities or institutes to educate Chinese talents.

(Qun and Li, 1991:78-80)

The reform and open-door policy has made Chinese foreign language education prosperous by widening Chinese people's world outlook through foreign enterprises and studying abroad. Meanwhile, the open-door policy objectively stimulated foreign language progress in the Post-Mao period.

A large number of foreign enterprises came to China and foreign investment attracted lots of Chinese elites, who were employed for their proficient foreign language skills. Chinese people found out that excellent foreign language skill is a means of living and progressing, and they wanted foreign languages. To this extent, foreign enterprises pushed forward the foreign language development in China. Some foreign investment was used to change the conditions of foreign language learning and teaching. This has turned from purely teaching and learning to the application of languages. Foreign languages developed at all academic levels of graduate, postgraduate and training school students and foreign language institutes broadened their activity to include foreign languages for special purposes, for example:

- ✧ Foreign languages or foreign language and literature
- ✧ Foreign language and culture
- ✧ Foreign language education
- ✧ Foreign languages for specific purposes, such as: science and technology; tourism; economy and trade etc.

During the course of the opening up of China to the outside, Chinese people directly faced the tide of the market-oriented economy. Some of them blindly believed in Westernization and lacked confidence to construct China. They considered everything in the Western countries good regardless of the developing condition of China. English became an international medium to understand the West, causing “foreign language fever”, especially “English fever”. As Meisner (1999:459) concluded, post-Maoist leaders considered “Western capitalist methods and techniques as a panacea for all Chinese problems”, presenting “blind admiration of the West”.

It is the open-door policy that made Chinese education open up to the world, and foreign language education provided the opportunity to have contact with the target languages in the opening environment. The environment and people’s enthusiasm for foreign languages also stimulated the learning of English as a foreign language by Chinese people.

2.3 The Learning and Using of English as a Foreign Language in the People's Republic of China since 1978

As we have seen, since China adopted its reform and open-door policies, large amounts of foreign investment entered China, foreign ventures and joint ventures were set up in the coastal areas and needed a large number of foreign language elites. English with its specific characteristics in world communication definitely became the dominant foreign language in China after 1978, leaving other foreign languages behind.

Besides being the largest English learning population in the world (there are over all 350 million students and people from society who are learning English²⁰), English has grown into many aspects of everyday life in Chinese cities, where bookshops are filled with books about English examinations, English language and culture. The Chinese Central Television Station has one international channel broadcast in English and provincial TV Stations broadcast English news everyday. Hundreds of millions of people watch English programmes produced by China's Television Stations or foreign companies in their spare time. Currently, the government permits CNN and the BBC to be broadcast in five-star hotels in China. So some people can touch the real English.

Crystal David (1988) described Chinese people's interest in learning English in the 1980s. He said:

In China, there has been an explosion of interest in the English in recent years...In 1983, it is thought, around 100 million people watched the BBC television series designed to teach the language, *Follow Me*. Considerable publicity was given in the Western media to the sight of groups of Chinese practising

20 Source: [http: www.xinhua.net.com](http://www.xinhua.net.com) 2005/04/14

English-language exercises after work, or queuing to try out their English on a passing tourist. The presenter of *Follow Me*, Kathy Flower, became a national celebrity, recognized everywhere. And the interest continues, with new series of programmes being designed to meet the needs of scientific and business users.

(Cited in Graddol et al., 1996:31)

So, why do Chinese people learn English? They learn it because English currently functions as an international language of communication in China, especially in the big cities. It is widely used in culture, science and technology, business, media communications, transportation, and tourism. This language is convenient and benefits Chinese people by changing their fates, such as in seeking jobs, job promotions or going abroad, etc. The need for English has been apparent at academic and business levels since China opened up and English is regarded as a useful tool of communication and economic advancement.

Bowers (1996:3) drew the following conclusion as to the reasons for the learning English in China:

They learn English because it is the language of science, specifically perhaps of the majority of research journals. They learn it because it is the neutral language of commerce, the standard currency of international travel and communication. They learn it because you find more software in English than in all other languages put together.

(Cited in Boyle, 2000)

The English language has continued to flourish in urban areas, where foreign language proficiency has been perceived as a gateway to social, economic, and geographical mobility, and numerous students have been

willing to pay for privately run, short-term courses (Ross, 1993:35).

Bilingual kindergartens are popular and welcomed in China's big cities and English is a compulsory course in Beijing's kindergartens as parents prepare their children's English ability for the future. In Anshan, a heavy industrial city of Liaoning province, in Northeast China, lots of working adults are having English classes at night schools²¹. In Xi'an, the capital of Shanxi province in West China, salesmen utilize English to sell their commodities. But the enthusiasm for the English language is concentrated in China's cities where students and their parents draw attention to English and can pay extra money for English extracurricular classes.

Though in a more limited way, English is also used in schools in the countryside. A few rural people use English to contact with foreigners for business or to broaden their knowledge.

The learning and using of English is promoted by the Chinese government, which regulates professional promotion and English as a major foreign language in present-day China has a close relationship with these promotions. The Chinese government thinks that English proficiency is a must for the Chinese people and promotes the learning of English, encouraging Chinese people to learn it. For example, the Beijing and Shanghai governments called for all citizens to learn English to meet the needs for international contacts. The employment units require their employees to have English qualifications. So there developed "a growing perception that foreign-language proficiency increased economic and social mobility also enhanced the popularity of English-language study" (Ross, 1993:201). English proficiency is both a passport to go outside China and a social status symbol in society. "English skills are tested for all those seeking promotion in educational, scientific research, medical, financial, business and other state-supported institutions"²².

21 Source: <http://www.Xin hua.com.cn>

22 Source: <http://www.miis.edu/docs/langpolicy/ch15.pdf>, downloaded on March 20, 2004

The Chinese government's promotion of English is shown in Table 2.2.

Time	Chinese government's involvement in English language education
Since the late 1970s	The national unified English textbooks for all levels have been compiled by a panel of educational specialists organized by the Ministry of Education English has been a mandatory secondary-school subject
At the beginning of 1980s	Two advisory committees for foreign language education were formed
Since 1982	English has been a compulsory course for the National College Entrance Examination (NCEE)
In 1987	A national mandatory College English Examination was instituted (CET. Band Four or Band Six). All college students were required to take Band Four
Since Sept. 2001	Schoolchildren have been studying English language up to three years in primary schools except for those in the countryside in the P.R.C.
In 2001	Key Comprehensive universities such as Qinghua and Beijing and Zhongshan Universities offered courses in English-Chinese. Qinghua University had 57 courses being taught in English to make itself more competitive internationally

Table 2.2 Chinese Government Regulation of English Education in China since 1978

Source: <http://www.miis.edu/docs/langpolicy/ch15.pdf> & <http://www.Xinhua.com.cn>

Apart from these facts, English is an examination subject for entering secondary schools or graduate schools, for non-English majors obtaining bachelor degrees, as well as for students specializing in foreign languages. English is an obligatory subject for majors at the tertiary level, and non-English majors are required to study English for two years.

In general, English is promoted by the Chinese government at all levels. The position of English is excessively emphasized.

2.4 The Teaching of English as a Foreign Language since China Opened up

This chapter will discuss the development of the teaching of the English language, teaching materials and the teaching syllabi since China opened up in 1978, and explore three orientations in English language education in China.

English Language Teaching has developed so fast in the primary schools in China, that currently eight million primary school pupils are studying English at school²³. China has set up lots of foreign language secondary schools and foreign language universities since China opened to the outside. Chinese education establishments at all levels-universities, secondary and primary schools-offer foreign languages. The wide usage of English as a global language and the promotion of English in China have made Chinese people focus their attention on this language. English is used and learned as a main foreign language, so the Chinese stress the teaching and learning of English.

According to estimates, there are nearly 100 million students learning foreign languages (mainly English), and it is estimated that China has over 500,000 middle school foreign language teachers, and about 500,000 primary school foreign language teachers (Yi, 2002:12). In this enormous foreign language country at present, foreign language instructors comprise mainly English language teachers throughout China. English language teaching has a dominant position in foreign language teaching in middle schools, universities and colleges throughout China, and the teaching of the English language is based on textbooks, syllabus

23 Source: *ZhongGuo Jiaoyu Bao*, 2001; cited in Hu (2002:34).

and tests at all English educational stages. We will discuss them as follows.

English syllabi regulate the aims and tasks of teaching English, the arrangement of class hours and also regulate the profundity and extension, schedule and basic demands on the teaching methods. Moreover, English syllabi provide examples of teaching materials and standards of teaching assessment. English teaching should be based on and be guided by the English syllabi.

The National Ministry of Education has issued four drafts of English syllabi and five English syllabi for secondary schools since the establishment of the P.R.C. in 1949. (Zhang and Ding, 2002, Vol.9: 36-39).

At a level of higher education, a similar scenario can be observed. According to Zhang, "since the Liberation in 1949, Science and Engineering Universities have experienced three teaching syllabi of the years of 1962/1980 and 1985" (Zhang, 1999:28). The teaching syllabus of 1985 was the first to propose listening, reading and writing competence as the aims of teaching (Yang, 1990; cited in Zhang, 1999: 29).

The compilation of textbooks is directed by the syllabi. Most middle schools use textbooks organized and compiled by the National Ministry of Education, although some key secondary schools in big cities choose to import teaching materials as complementary methods to satisfy the needs of advanced students.

"*Junior English for China*" textbooks, compiled by a government-appointed panel of experts working with Longman Corporation, in accordance with the national unified syllabus, have been used in Chinese

junior middle schools since the 1990s. And the textbooks of "*Senior English for China*" were first adopted in 1993. Since the mid-1990s, local education authorities from different regions have been given the right to compile textbooks according to their teaching practice.

Since the late 1970s, China has imported some teaching materials of English, such as "*Look, Listen and Learn*"; "*New Concept English*"; "*English This Way*"; "*New Active English*" and "*Access*"²⁴. These foreign materials are used by some key schools as complementary methods to enrich and broaden students' English knowledge, and the foreign materials meet the needs of other Chinese people who are businessmen or employees in foreign companies or workers in the factories and are interested in English.

Moreover, the University of Qinghua (in Beijing) and Zhongshan (in Guangdong province) have imported more than one thousand textbooks in order to be top-class, world universities. At tertiary level, "*College English*" textbooks have been used by English non-majors since the mid-1980s. English majors adopted textbooks compiled by Beijing Foreign Studies University or Shanghai Foreign Language University.

The teaching of English at all levels is based on textbooks and syllabi, concentrating on examinations. For example, once I worked as a Junior English teacher in a key middle school of Jiangsu province (in East China), where I observed many "demonstration classes" shown by my colleagues or some merit teachers from Nanjing (the Capital city of Jiangsu province) or other regions of Jiangsu province in English. The method of teaching Junior English (The class-hour is 40 minutes per lesson) was carried out as follows according to the English syllabus for nine-year compulsory

24 Zhang and Ding, 2002, Vol.12:34.

education:

Step 1 Revision: teachers spent three minutes revising the content of the previous lesson with questions on flashcards and pictures. (3')

Step 2 Presentation (with closed textbooks): It took teachers ten minutes to present new words and key language points of the texts, students read them aloud with teachers, and then students listened to the tape-recording of the texts and answered questions. (20')

Step 3 (with opened up textbooks) Teachers taught new content and new grammar in detail, then got students to take notes of language points, students read the texts aloud with teachers and did some grammar exercises. (10')

Step 4 Consolidation: students worked in pairs to practice what they learned (this procedure was usually omitted in ordinary classes), and listened to the tape again. (5')

Step 5 Assignment: grammar exercises or recitation, copying texts and vocabulary. (2')

Analyzing this process of teaching, teachers talk too much in class, while students have little chance to speak English. At the secondary school level, one teacher has to face more than fifty students in a classroom, and this large-size class disobeys the rule of foreign language teaching, because small-size classes can provide students with more chances to improve their communicative competence. From the teaching process, we can view teaching junior English in China as "teacher-centered, textbook-oriented and grammar-centered" (Wang, 1999).

But compared to the traditional teaching methods of the 1980s, the

teaching procedure exemplified above has progressed greatly during the 1990s. Traditional teaching methods of my own career as a student in the 1980s followed the steps: English teachers taught students new words, pronunciation, language points and grammar, and explained English knowledge in Chinese. Then students took notes and learnt the materials by heart to deal with the tests. English teaching in the 1980s was purely translation. At that time, few schools provided tape-recorders for listening comprehension not related to the content of tests. In order to deal with examinations, English teachers had to carry out these traditional teaching methods in their teaching, that is, 'teacher talks, students listen', because teaching serves examinations. Intensive reading must be focused, because English tests give great importance to it. Ross (1993) quoted an old English teacher's saying in Lun Xun Foreign Language School, Shanghai: "We have to go back to the basics, intensive reading based on a good textbook combined with many oral and written exercises. Students must be able to understand texts completely and read them fluently" (p.203).

Recently, the content of tests is concerned with the reading, writing, translation and listening comprehension skills emphasized by the Ministry of Education, so teachers must change their teaching methods and must demand of students a larger amount of exercises related to the four skills.

The teaching and learning of English in secondary schools is teacher-oriented, test-centered, and grammar-centered, and how about the situation of teaching college English?

At college level, students have to face challenges from the national College English Tests of Band Four or Six (CET. Band Four or Six). The aim of teaching College English is to pass the examinations. Translation and

grammar are the targets of tests, the listening and speaking skills of students are too weak, and university teachers, like English teachers of middle schools, give their English lessons in Chinese. College English teaching is examination-centred and based on translation, both teachers and students trying hard to pass the examinations. To get students to pass the examinations, teachers must follow traditional teaching patterns.

Since most teachers teach English by way of the mother tongue, their students' communicative competence and listening comprehension develop slowly. Recently, this education sphere has attracted people's attention, that is, students often miss regular English classes to learn English outside the university. University students can obtain oral English competence or other practical English skills in English training class outside the universities.

Reflecting on the Chinese educational system, Parry (1998) draws a conclusion about the relationship of this system and examinations in the following way:

A third and most striking feature is the way in which English-language teaching, as conducted in China, reflects Chinese patterns of authority. The education system, like the political system, as a whole, is both centralized and hierarchical; the means of maintaining the central authority, as well as all the gradations beneath it, are exams, backed up by prescribed textbooks. English teaching is as dominated by the exams as is any other subject-indeed, more so, because the score in English in the CEE (College Entrance Examination) is now considered the most decisive factor

in determining whether a student is successful. It seems, then, that the English exam has come to play in the modern times the part that the ke ju, or imperial examination essay, played in the past.

(Parry, 1998:134)

But the teaching of English in foreign language schools is better than it is in normal middle schools. Communicative ability is reflected. Ross (1993) described what teachers thought about the teaching in Lu Xun Foreign Language School in Shanghai as “a process of communicating with students, where the students learn new words through understanding the context in which the communication is taking place” (p.104).

Chinese people who are specialized in English and trained in foreign countries and returned, teach students in both English and Chinese. Their courses are welcomed. Scholarly faculty are encouraged to offer their courses in English and Chinese.

The spread of English in China is thus reflected in education. The teaching of English as a foreign language has made great progress since China opened up to the outside. We can see the progress from the drafting and implementation of many English syllabi of different periods, from the compilation of textbooks at all levels and the importation of teaching materials. Meanwhile bilingual teaching at all levels at many schools in big cities is welcomed. English syllabi, different edition textbooks and foreign materials for teaching and bilingual teaching strengthened the development and spread of English as a global language in China.

2.5 Foreign Languages and Examinations

This chapter will deal with the relationships between the teaching and learning of foreign languages and examinations. The Chinese examination system was elaborated to select qualified personnel for administration. For China's special situation of over-population, the Chinese administration has adopted this system to select personnel, although some forms of examinations have been changed with time. The pass rate of the National College Entrance Examination (NCEE) is very low. For common Chinese people, the most important examination is the National College Entrance Examination (NCEE), which determines peoples' future fate.

As mentioned in the previous chapters, from 1954 to 1957, National College Entrance Examinations (NCEE) did not include a foreign-language examination; by 1962, however, foreign language had become an obligatory subject for the NCEE (Ross, 1993). It was the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) that cancelled the NCEE and foreign language tests. When the National College Entrance Examination was restored in 1978, foreign language was an elective subject of the NCEE. From 1982 until now, foreign language has been a compulsory course for the NCEE. According to Ross (1993), Chinese "entrance examination remains a powerful determinant of China's social talents, an instrument for allocating scarce post-secondary training, an intriguing shadow of China's imperial legacy, a touchstone for academic achievement and pedagogical success, and one of the most controversial aspects of China's educational system" (p.123).

From the imperial examination of ancient time to the National College

Entrance Examinations (NCEE) or College English Tests (CET) and so on, examinations have been an important part of the Chinese education system. Because the majority of Chinese students learn English as a foreign language, and English is one of the three compulsory subjects for the NCEE, people draw much attention to the Matriculation English test.

Foreign language tests are associated with job promotions, professional titles and going overseas. So foreign language tests (especially English tests), for example: Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), are closely related to Chinese people's daily lives (see Figure 2.1). If Chinese students would like to study abroad, especially in America, they must pass the international foreign language tests, of which the TOEFL is very important.

Foreign language tests have also become tools for selecting talents in China. Test results are a standard for evaluating the effects of teaching and learning and the examination results are the main indicators of the quality of English teaching. Test results are also used as indicators in the distribution of professional titles or money awards and job promotions to teachers. From this point of view, we can see that test results are associated with teachers, students and society. So the aim of teaching and learning in China is to obtain higher scores and ranks. The lower pass rate of the NCEE makes university candidates cherish the opportunity of studying at universities. Only a small minority of college candidates can enter the tertiary level of education. According to Hu (2002:40) "the enrolment rate of regular secondary school is only 5%". Most college students become English non-majors, who are required to take the national College English Test (CET) Band Four.

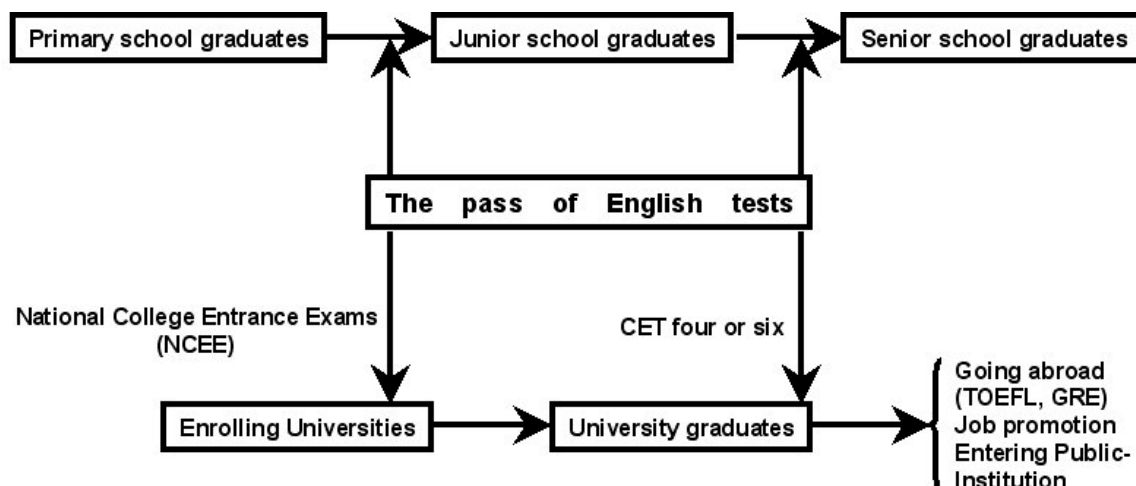


Figure 2.1 English Examinations Accompany a Person for Their Whole Life in Present Day China

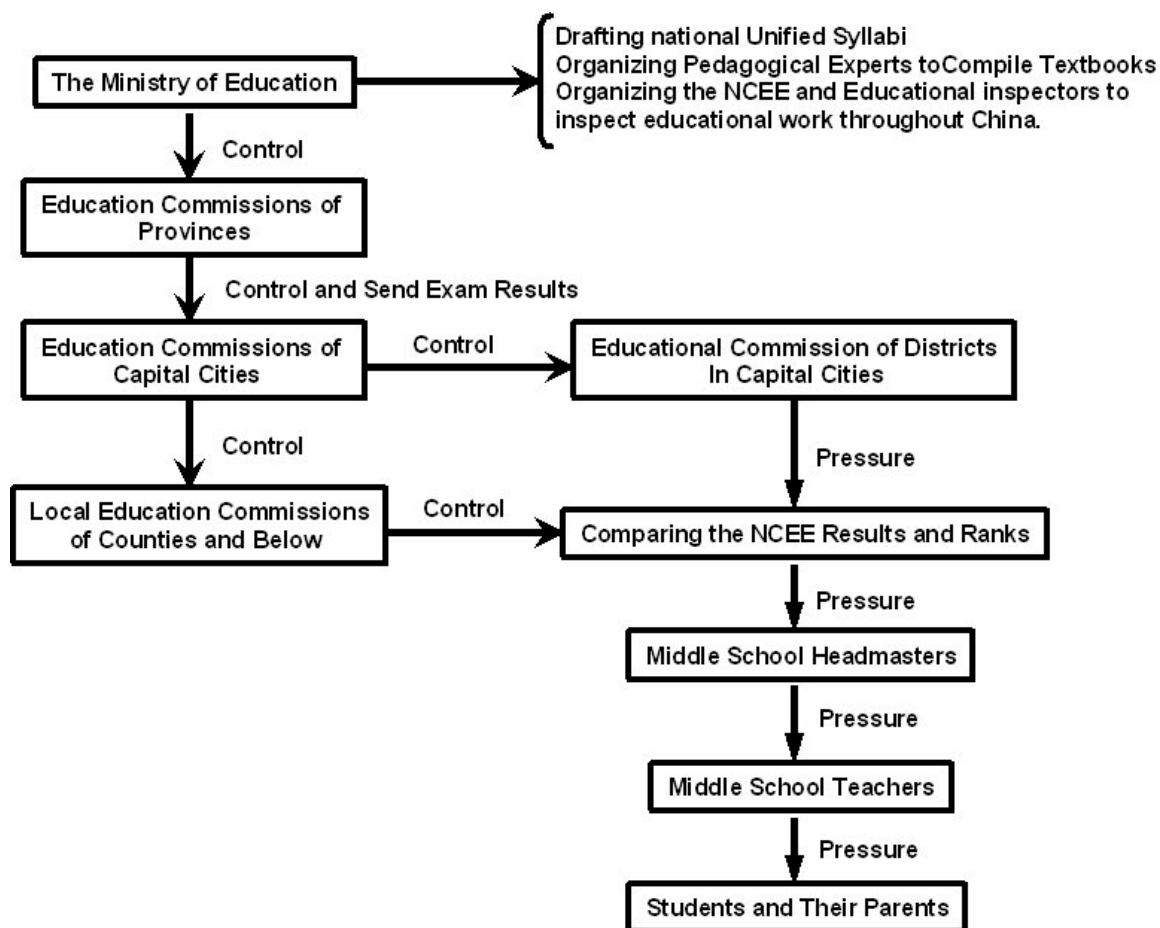


Figure 2.2 Chinese Education System of All Levels

Now the pass rate of the College English Test (CET) Band Four or Band Six related to the teaching quality of universities is equivalent to the ones of the National College Entrance Examination (NCEE). For instance, in a middle school where I once taught English for three years, all students were required to take English examinations once a month besides the mid-term and final tests. The students' marks were reported to the headmistress. Teachers and their students were under great pressure. Students were tired of practising lots of tests as they approach the national examinations. The cycle of Chinese educational system runs repeatedly like a political system and brings much pressure to teachers and students (see Figure 2.2).

Foreign language examinations play an important role in the Chinese education system, and are associated with Chinese people's daily lives.

2.6 Some Problems in English Language Teaching and Learning

In 1991, a person in charge of the College English Test Band Four or Band Six (CET. Band Four or Six) Commission claimed that the pass rate of the CET Four in some universities was increasing, but actual English proficiency was decreasing (Jing, 1999).

Because spoken English is not included in the National College Entrance Examination (NCEE) and College English Test (CET), the roles of spoken English and communicative abilities are neglected.

College foreign language teaching has been carrying out the rule of "reading-based" teaching (Luo, 1999:21), despite the fact that, according to Yang Xiuzhu's survey in Tianjin in 1998, 82% of the 573 students being investigated thought "spoken foreign language" is the most important competence for seeking jobs (Luo, 1999).

But, as we have seen, the question existing in China's education is that it is test-centered. Educated students lack creativity and competence in practice. According to some foreign supervisors of Chinese students, the teachers evaluated their students: they work hard but lack creativity, and they work dependently and impractically.

The aim of teaching English is to teach students how to deal with examinations rather than to teach English competence. At college level, people draw attention to the students who have passed the College English Test Band Four or Six. They can write excellent articles and read many subject-based English books, but when faced with a native English speaker, they cannot use English to communicate.

According to Lewin & Wang (1991, cited in Hu, 2002:41), up until

1988, at least 85% of the items on the CEE were multiple-choice and gap-filling exercises. To help students achieve higher scores, middle school teachers racked their brains to teach them how to deal with examinations, neglecting the fostering of communicative competence and creative ability.

Pursuing high marks ignores communicative competence. The test-centered educational system promotes high marks. Local education committees overemphasize marks, which are a premise of their job promotions. Educational officers put pressure on schools at all levels (see Figure 2.2). The Examination results are used as the basis for evaluating these schools. Under these pressures, teachers and students have been exhausted, and active engagement in language learning prevented. As Ross confirms:

The goal of cultivating students with “communicative” language skills requires students, teachers, and foreign colleagues to be actively involved in the exchange of opinions in classrooms. Educational settings with the potential for unpredictable interaction are rare in Chinese schools.

(Ross, 1993:10)

According to Parry (1998), “the astonishing spread of English across the globe has resulted in new perceptions not only of the language, but also of what is involved in language teaching” (p.129), but Chinese teachers of English must face the challenges of examinations, which is the only way of evaluating teachers by the society. Expansion of universities

and colleges since 1999, using original facilities to deal with many more students than before, without any increase in teaching staff, brings a heavy burden to College English.

Ross (1993), who worked as a native English teacher in Lu Xun Foreign Language School (a leading foreign language school in Shanghai) in the 1980s, evaluated the impact of examinations on students and teachers at secondary level with her own experiences and concluded:

From the setting of its questions to its evaluation, the examination was in the early 1980s a mammoth and surprisingly public undertaking with direct impact on the daily work and lives of both students and teachers. Justifications for changes in examination form and content, the relative importance in total score of different subject areas, the grading sites and formal procedure for scoring different sections of the examination, were all published in education journals and discussed in detail by senior level teachers whose responsibility was to review examination materials with their pupils. The examination created a subculture of college and secondary school teachers who participated in its evaluation year after year.

(Ross, 1993:123)

Teachers and students spend most of their class hours dealing with examinations. So students function as multiple-choice machines and spend 10 years learning "deaf and dumb" English. Our universities and

colleges have been fostering students with defective English. In real life, people have often found Chinese students who earned high scores in the TOEFL examination not good at speaking and listening comprehension. Chinese students spend a great deal of time learning English, but in the end they find themselves with weak skills in practising the language. Commonly, Chinese students have strong skills in dealing with tests, and linguistic competence in phonetics, vocabulary and grammar, but their communicative competence is very weak. Zhu (2003:37) stated that when communicative language teaching (CLT) was introduced in China in the early 1990s, some pioneer teachers attempted to apply it to their teaching, making it more student-centered, but they gave in under great pressure of tests, which required a grammar-centred approach.

Definitely, the teaching methods of English in China are unitary and impractical with Chinese characteristics. The methods prevent students from improving their communicative competence and thinking creatively. Even though they have learned English for many years, they can neither freely communicate with people in English nor can they write what they want to say. People learn language to use it for communication. Our educational system should be reshaped to liberate students and teachers from the "sea" of tests, so teachers can teach practical knowledge freely, and students can acquire communicative skills with which to face globalization.

The test-oriented education system has brought some problems to foreign language pedagogy in present day China, and questions of foreign language teaching have attracted the attention of the Minister of Education. At a conference on foreign language teaching in June 1996, Vice Prime Minister Li Lanqing discussed the current situation of foreign

language teaching. He thought that, despite many students learning foreign languages for eight years, at least to secondary level or above, the majority of them were not able to communicate with native speakers. This fact illustrates that the effect of our teaching is not good; or corresponds to what Li describes as "a waste of time with little effect" (Li, 1996; cited in Chen, 1999). Seven years later, one delegate questioned the learning of English in China at present, at the National People's Congress in 2003. He said the main question is how to learn English and how much to learn ...²⁵

Professor Jing (1999) presented this idea in a different way. He calculated 4000 vocabulary items listed by the National Unified Syllabi for College English teaching and compared them to what students learned in their middle schools. His conclusion is that 1,600 English words like father, mother, brother, cat, dog, etc. are included in the vocabulary lists of the textbooks at all levels of schools. The overlapping of learning at a low level is one reason for the "waste of time with little effect" at the college level. But the College English syllabus requires students to grasp English vocabulary repeatedly, and the vocabulary to be learnt has not included the words used frequently in our daily lives, such as "telex, E-mail, intellectual property, patent, trademark, copyright, social security, enterprise, entrepreneur and premier", etc. Inefficient teaching makes learners lose interest in the English course. English teaching should place emphasis on language skills and practical usage.

Bao Jingying (1998) reported some problems related to English teaching in senior schools of China. Bao thought, on the one hand, that Chinese teachers use their mother tongue as a medium to teach English

²⁵ Source: <http://www.sina.com.cn> 2004/03/10 11:13

(the phenomenon is very usual in teaching English in secondary schools, or even teaching English at colleges); on the other hand, teachers talk a lot, students listen too much, and there is a shortage of interaction between teachers and students (in Parry, 1998:141-144).

The facts above actually exist at all levels of English education. Students are too silent in the classroom. They don't know how to think, or how to raise questions. In the process of teaching, communicative competence is ignored, because it is not related to examination contents, which is an unseen indicator. Teachers and students consider learning English as reciting phrases and texts. According to Ross (1993), teachers thought the saying "the more you have recited, the more you learn" can deal with all tests. What students recited has become their knowledge. So students lack background knowledge of the target language. Teachers value students' good memory in learning English rather than students' learning to think independently.

But concentrating on exams also means neglecting the learning of target culture. Language is a carrier of culture; language reflects culture. Brown (1994:165; cited in Zhu, 2003:39) considered language and culture in this way: "A language is a part of a culture and a culture is a part of a language; the two are intricately interwoven so that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture." So, to learn the target language, a person must make sense of the target culture. The ignorance of target culture learning results from a grammar-centered and not a culture-centered test system. Moreover, the Syllabus for College English (1999:10) requires that the teaching of College English help students enlarge world knowledge and improve their cultural awareness; it also requires that the teaching of culture should

closely contact with language. It proposes that definite cultural background can help students to improve practical ability of language. Because the teaching contents and forms are decided by tests which concentrate on grammar, the learning of culture is ignored. The syllabus requirement becomes an "empty sentence", in fact. Teachers and students have not realized the importance of culture learning.

In addition, teaching to large class sizes (one teacher faces fifty or fifty-five students in one class hour in middle schools; and fifty or more university students concentrated in a classroom for College English at universities) makes teacher and student communication difficult. As a result, universities or schools nourish graduates with high scores and low competence who are short of creative and communicative abilities, problem solving abilities and thinking skills.

In addition, there is a shortage of qualified teachers and unstable foreign language teacher groups. According to the *China Youth Daily*²⁶, there are over 500,000 Middle school English teachers and 200,000 Primary school English teachers nationwide and over 10,000 people in charge of English teaching and research on middle schools and primary schools, but few of them master proficient English.

Ross (1993) demonstrated that "the increased importance of English in the National College Entrance Examination (NCEE) forced schools to implement language programmes despite the lack of well-trained instructors. This shortage of qualified language teachers was considered the most significant problem facing foreign-language education" (p.67).

Zhang (1999) considered that the quality of foreign language

26 Source: *Zhongguo Qingnian Bao (China Youth Daily)*, 13th June 2002

teachers could not satisfy the needs for teaching, because foreign language teaching methods of the foreign language departments in normal universities lagged far behind the other universities. China's normal universities opened 50 years ago, adopting the teaching methods from other countries. These methods have not been changed with time and actual situations of learning, nor have they been suitable for Chinese students.

According to the *China Youth Daily*, the reported examination results of "A studying abroad scholarship for excellent foreign language teachers of Middle schools and Elementary schools" showed that the excellent teachers nationwide are short of listening comprehension and writing abilities (June 13th, 2002). The result is representative of English proficiency of English teachers in elementary and secondary levels. The Chinese Ministry of Education has realized the situation regarding the quality of foreign language teachers.

Because of teachers' low wages, and relatively low social status, numbers of excellent graduates from institutions of tertiary education do not want to be teachers. Many qualified English teachers have flowed into foreign companies or schools in the coastal regions, attracted by lucrative employments. Cen (1999) claimed that at the tertiary level, "college English teachers are short of 33%, and every year loss of university teachers is from 4% to 5%".

Besides, the development of teacher training has lagged far behind. Li and Liu (2001:43) investigated English teachers in English specialization among 10 universities in North and Central China. This survey partly reflected the current situation of China's teacher training. A part of university teachers are MA graduates and BA graduates; a few of them

hold doctorates. But only a few of them studied the TEFL theory and teaching methods. They unconsciously imitated the way their own teachers taught English without any pedagogical background. The majority of English-language teachers in China are Chinese teachers who seldom have the opportunity to be trained in English-speaking countries or in their homeland. Because of the shortage of English teachers, some other subject teachers have been trained in the short term to teach English in the elementary schools of the rural areas.

There are some reflections of Confucius in foreign language education. In China, according to Confucian doctrine, people should emphasize and respect holders of authority. When the SARS virus spread in China in 2003, Hong Tao, who was considered an authority on SARS, judged wrongly. Meanwhile, some Chinese scientists obtained the same result as the scientists in Hong Kong. Since Mr Hong Tao is a famous scientist and people seldom dared to challenge him, they didn't reveal the truth about SARS. The Chinese government trusted his judgements too much. Mainland China lost a good chance to deliver the speech on the SARS virus to the world. It is the same with teaching. Chinese teachers are considered an authority; students are afraid of challenging them. Ross (1993) states her teaching experience in an elite foreign language school in Shanghai:

Each term we talk about the students' behavior and progress, and what we want the parents to do at home to complement our work at school. Parents educate their children by saying they should listen to the teacher in class. Parents pay attention to us, because they respect what we are doing for their children.

(Ross, 1993:142)

Parry (1998) also demonstrates that “Chinese education is dominated by the study of the Confucian classics. ... although these classics no longer provide the content for most of the curriculum, the old beliefs about the purpose of study and the most effective methods of teaching still persist; these constitute a straitjacket that constricts both social and individual development” (1998:34).

Studies have shown that students too are dissatisfied with English teaching. According to surveys by some teachers in universities and colleges, university students were not satisfied with English teaching. Education based on examinations has seriously blocked our educational development.

In 1996, the Theoretical Group of Beijing College English Research Institute made a survey of more than 1,000 students from 12 universities in the Capital of Beijing (most of the 12 universities are prestigious around the country). The results showed that 57% of the students were not very satisfied with College English teaching; 18% considered the teaching to be very bad.

Yang Xiuzhen, a teacher of Tianjin Normal University investigated 696 students from 8 universities of Tianjin (a city directly controlled by the central government); she obtained the same results: 78% of the interviewees were dissatisfied with the current College English teaching (Tang, 1999).

There is another typical example reflecting students’ rethinking of English teaching: Zhao Hua (1999), an MA candidate, wrote an article to rethink her experience of studying English: she has passed all the compulsory English tests and memorized over 5000 English words, but she cannot use English to consult English journals, or to communicate

with foreign experts. Her experience exemplifies the current teaching situation of English in China.

As the Chinese government accelerated their steps towards modernizations, some problems for education in China became apparent, for example, the question of expenditure dominates educational development. According to Dreyer (1993:230), "the percentage of gross national product devoted to education in China in 1993 was 2.6 percent. According to United Nation's data, this compares with 6.1 percent in the developed world, 4.1 percent in the developing countries, 4.6 percent in Asia as a whole, and 5.7 percent for all countries of the world".

These figures clearly indicate the Chinese central government's low investment in education. This low investment cannot achieve success in Chinese education and brings a lot of problems to the improvement of the quality of life of the Chinese population. The low investment makes lots of school children leave school every year, because their parents cannot afford their education. Thus, the tuition fee has become a burden to low-wage families.

Another deepening problem has arisen from the increasing disparity among various regions. The situation of foreign language education is backward and there is considerable disparity between various regions. China is a large country with many regions. The educational gap in different regions is very large, with provinces in the East of China more developed, while in Western China, the education is backward, and it is very difficult for the Western people to speak Putonghua (Mandarin). The disparity of education in different regions leads to the disparity in English development in China.

The governments of big cities like Beijing, Nanjing and Shanghai have

called on all their citizens to learn English. Johnson (2001) described how citizens of Shanghai learn English in their daily lives:

At many Shanghai schools, Wednesday is English day. Dormitories wake up to broadcast of recorded English news and stories. All day, students make their own radio shows, study math, search the Internet, and watch movies in English. They sing the Back Street Boys and Jennifer Lopez songs in class, and view 'Sesame Street' after schools on Shanghai TV. In addition to English day in schools, they've passed out English tapes and books to other sectors of society likely to encounter English-speaking visitors, such as taxi-drivers.

(2001:7; cited from Bolton, 2003:227)

A project team of "Survey and Research for Senior English Teaching throughout China" conducted a questionnaire throughout China. The data collected shows that the scores of sample students from the capital cities in the Western provinces (except for the autonomous regions of Tibet and Inner Mongolia, where students' scores are by far the lowest in China) are absolutely lower than the ones of sample students from the capital cities in the coastal areas. The educational level differs from the West to East of China and between urban and rural areas.

Ross (1993) brought evidence of the differences:

Primarily rural regions of China, where 3.8 percent of the population had attained a senior secondary

school educational level, a proportion identical to the number of urban Chinese who had attained a college education. Illiteracy rates for rural youths between the ages of 12 and 19 were three times the level of their urban peers. ...At the same time foreign-language education has been relied upon to reduce inequalities between China and other nations, it has clearly exacerbated educational stratification within China. Foreign-language proficiency varies widely from the best municipal key schools to regular academic and vocational secondary schools in rural areas, which may offer foreign-language instruction only in senior secondary school²⁷.

(Ross, 1993:196-204)

In addition, the development of English education in China is also divergent from South to North, from the Coastal areas (partly colonized by the British) to the inland, depending heavily on economic levels. The imbalance of economic developments has determined educational level. Pennycook (1994) also considered this problem, stating that: "a persistent problem in providing widespread English education has been the difficulty in supplying rural areas with competent teachers and other resources"(p.203).

27 The policy of beginning foreign-language instruction in senior secondary schools is designed for institutions located in rural or remote regions with a shortage of teachers and facilities. Students study a total of 552 sessions of English. Shanghai 1987 examination scores ranged from an average of 80.83 for pupils in municipal key schools to 70.98 for pupils attending district key schools to 50.57 for pupils in regular senior secondary programs. Ninety-six percent of municipal key students, 82 percent of district key pupils, and 32 percent of non-key students received passing marks on the examination (Ross, 1993:129).

2.7 Foreign Language Education Reform

A series of reforms have been made in order to improve the quality of foreign language education in China. The premise of reform in foreign language education is to restructure the test system. In 1985, the Ministry of Education held a conference on revising the National College Entrance Examination (NCEE) which led to test reform, as explained, for example, by Hu (2002): "largely based on the proposals made at the conference, a number of influential decisions were made to promote test reforms" (p.41).

According to a report named "Our Country's College English Tests are Getting Ready for Reform"²⁸, the College English Test (CET) Band Four and Band Six will be reformed. The National College English conference held in Nanjing in 2002, reported that the specialists wanted to change reading-oriented examination content to testing listening comprehension, speaking and writing abilities. An optional oral test of College English Test (CET) was tried out in some provinces, amongst a restricted number of students (Zhu, 2003:40). Listening comprehension was not included in the National College Entrance Examination (NCEE) for a long time. Since 2002, a score for listening comprehension has been included nationwide in the NCEE (except for few provinces) (Yi, 2002).

In the light of teacher-centred, grammar-centred and textbook-centred teaching methods, the syllabus issued by the Ministry of Education in 1996 was the first syllabus revising "diverse regional needs, rather than for nationwide use". And the new national syllabus of 2000 tried to give priority to competency-oriented teaching (Hu, 2002:36).

²⁸ Source: *Zhongguo Jiaoyu Bao (China Education Daily)*, October 17th, 2002

Regarding teacher training, and in order to improve teaching effect and quality, governments and schools at all levels have invested time, money and energy in the promotion of reform of foreign language education. The central government set up scholarships for teachers to study overseas, and the governments of other cities have followed the example.

"A studying abroad scholarship for excellent foreign language teachers of Middle school and Elementary school" was carried out from 2001, which was the first scholarship for secondary and primary school teachers for studying overseas and has been functioning for five years. 106 English teachers selected from the whole nation were sent to study in some English speaking countries²⁹. According to the *Guang Ming Daily*³⁰, after the returning from studying abroad, the teachers discussed the change in their teaching methods and thought.

One thousand teachers from Shanghai, including English and other subject teachers, went abroad to be trained in Britain, America and other English-speaking countries in the summer of 2002³¹. Moreover, some economically developed cities like Beijing, Nanjing (the capital city of Jiangsu), Daqing (China's petroleum city in Northeast, Hei longjiang province) also sent middle school English teachers abroad to study. Moreover, many foreign experts have been invited to China to teach or research on teacher development in Chinese universities or schools every year. For example, the Educational Department of Fujian province invited

29 Source: "Zhuanye Kaoshi Xianshi: Zhongxiaoxue Yingyu Shizi Shuiping Jiaodi." ("The results of Specialization tests show that English proficiency of secondary and primary school English language teachers is very low.") In *Zhongguo Jiaoyu Bao (China Education Daily)*, June 13th, 2002.

30 Source: "Qujing Huilai Tan Jiaogai." ("Discussion of education reform after returning from studying abroad.") In *Guangming Daily*, August 22, 2002.

31 Source: "Shanghai qianming jiaoshi shuqi haiwai 'dalianbing' " ("One thousand of teachers of Shanghai received training abroad on summer holidays.") In *Xinhua Ribao (Xinhua Daily)*, September 1st, 2002.

10 experienced English teachers from the USA to train 280 primary English teachers from the province, for about three weeks³². Teacher training has altered teachers' knowledge construction and enriched their teaching experiences.

Concerning curriculum reform, in order to improve students' communicative ability as early as possible, the Ministry of Education required in the autumn of 2001 that all primary schools, except those in rural regions, started to offer English courses at Primary Three. Primary schools in the former colonial cities of Shanghai and Guangzhou offered English classes in the first year of Primary School.

On account of the educational differences between regions, the State Education Commission took new measures to ensure that seven economically developed provinces have regional autonomy (such as working out new curricula, syllabi or textbooks). Shanghai and Zhejiang province were pointed out as having pioneered curricular changes in other parts of China and got clear results (Hu, 2002:33-34).

China's foreign language education reform is growing and deepening, and, except for some bad effects, it has made great progress. With deepening reform, English Language Teaching in China, with the largest English learning population in the world and different educational conditions in various regions, will bring some changes to English language teaching in the rest of the world.

32 Source: "Fujian Xiaoxue Yingyu Jiaoshi Jiashou 'Waixun'." ("Primary English teachers of Fujian province received training by foreigners." In *Zhongguo Qingnian Bao (China Youth Daily)*, July 19th, 2002

3. The Future of English in China

This section will discuss the status and future of the English language in China, and outline a series of foreign language education reforms which have been carried out in present day China, such as test reform, teaching method reform and curriculum reform. This section illustrates how English will be everywhere in China in the future with respect to international conferences, international fairs and sports, in education and Internet and computer technology. As Maley suggested in 1995:

China is in a phase of industrial, scientific and commercial expansion which will make it the world's largest economy by the early years of the next century. In order to function efficiently in this role, it needs to bring large numbers of its people to high levels of proficiency in the use of English for a wide variety of functions.

(Cited in Boyle, 2000)³³

The question of English 'varieties' is raised, such as China English, Chinglish, and Chinese English. The impact of English on the Chinese language, culture and identity is also considered.

33 Maley (1995:4), cited in Boyle, Joseph. "A Brief History of English Language Teaching in China", in *IATEFL Issues 155*, June–July 2000.

Source: <http://reference.allrefer.com/country-guide-study/china/china123.html>

3.1 Opinions of Teachers and Learners

In order to learn more about Chinese people's opinions of English, I developed a questionnaire (see Appendix 1) in 2003, which was given to ninety-three Chinese people including teachers and students by e-mail or in paper form, in China and in Portugal. The questionnaire was given in Chinese and English versions and eighty-one valid questionnaires were received. The detailed data from the Chinese people is shown as follows (see Table 3.1)

Occupation	Numbers	Academic Background	
English Teachers	17	3 masters	14 bachelors
Non-English Teachers	4	1 doctorate	3 bachelors
English-Major Students	4	----	4 bachelors
Non-English Major Students	42	11 doctorates	14 bachelors
Middle School Students	14	None	

Table 3.1 Data of the Chinese People Surveyed in China and Portugal

The investigated Chinese people include:

- ✧ Three teachers of English from the Seventh Middle School of Suihua (in Hei longjiang province, Northeast China), the other three English teachers and fourteen students from the Fiftieth Middle School of Nanjing (in Jiangsu province, East China).
- ✧ Eleven English teachers and four non-English teachers from other Departments; twelve students specialized in Geography and four English-majors from Suihua Teachers' College.

- ✧ Twelve students specialized in Chemistry from Nanjing Normal University.
- ✧ Eighteen students specialized in Chemistry, Education, Ceramics, and Physics etc. from the University of Aveiro, Portugal.

To the question in my survey about the aim of learning English, the Chinese people answered: communicating with people, going abroad, passing the examinations and widening knowledge. In talking about the purposes of English teaching, they said to help students pass the tests and improve their competence.

The results show that Chinese people have strong feelings about too much time being spent on the learning of English and the teaching and learning for tests, while the learning of Chinese language and culture and communicative competence is ignored.

Facing the invasion of English, Chinese people are concerned about the purity of the Chinese language: two interviewees from the Departments of IEETA and Ceramics and one student from the Suihua Teachers' College talked about how the phenomenon of Chinese with bits of English influences the purity of the Chinese language. The phenomenon of widely using this mixed language in the Chinese media is not good for Chinese language, culture and identity.

When asked about the active impact of English on the Chinese language and culture, Chinese people perceive that English, as a useful communicative tool, can contribute to learning about the way Westerners think and Western culture and customs. From the results of this questionnaire, I think that the Chinese people have perceived the influence of English on the Chinese culture, language and identity. The perception is very important because Chinese culture and language have

their own characteristics, we should learn how to protect and develop them in face of the wide spread of English in China. At the same time, they are also considering how to use English to serve China. In my opinion, Chinese people can use this bridge language to widen their world knowledge and learn advanced science and technology and democracy to develop China.

I will now outline the current and future situations of English in accordance with the results of my questionnaire.

According to my survey in China, 8 out of 81 Chinese people agree that English is an easy language for Chinese people, 20 agree but not completely; while only one has no view, 27 somewhat disagree with it and 23 disagree completely with it. The results (see Figure 3.1) demonstrate that English is a difficult language for Chinese people.

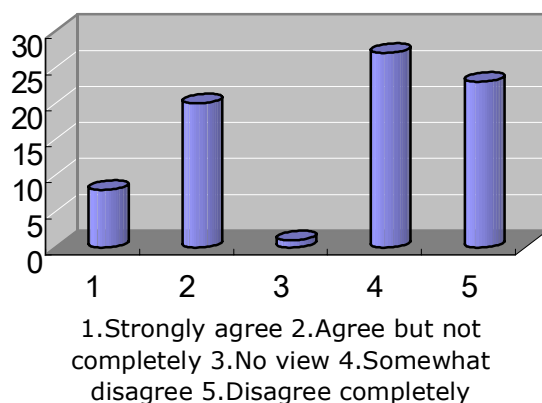


Figure 3.1 English Is an Easy Language for Chinese People

In my survey, 54.32% of the 81 Chinese people questioned strongly agree that English is the dominant language among foreign languages in China, 19.75% agree but not completely, 4.94% have no idea, 2.47% somewhat disagree with this view and 11.11% disagree with it completely. The results (see Figure 3.2) illustrate that English is felt to be a dominant

foreign language at present in China.

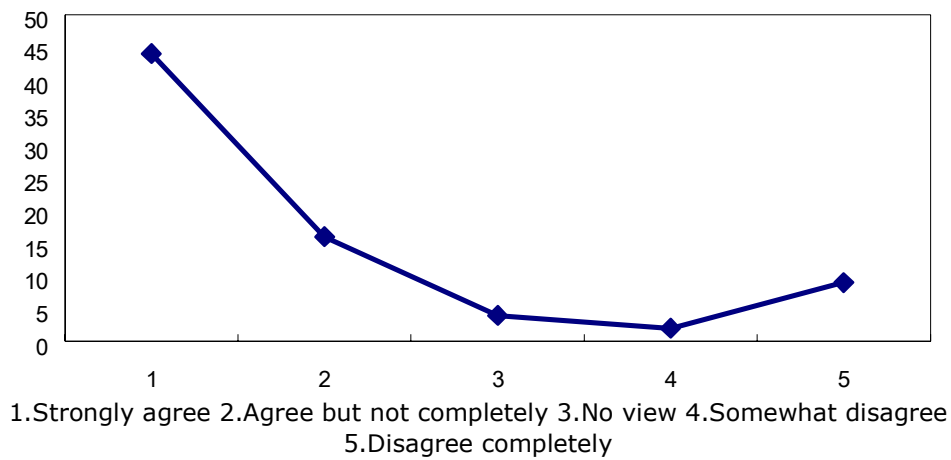


Figure 3.2 English Is the Dominant Foreign Language at present in China

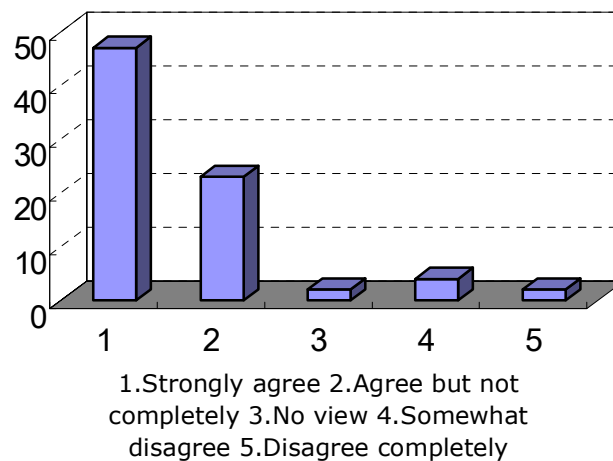
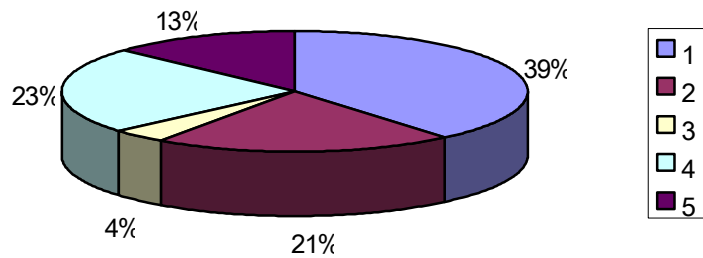


Figure 3.3 The English Language Is a Useful Tool for Communication

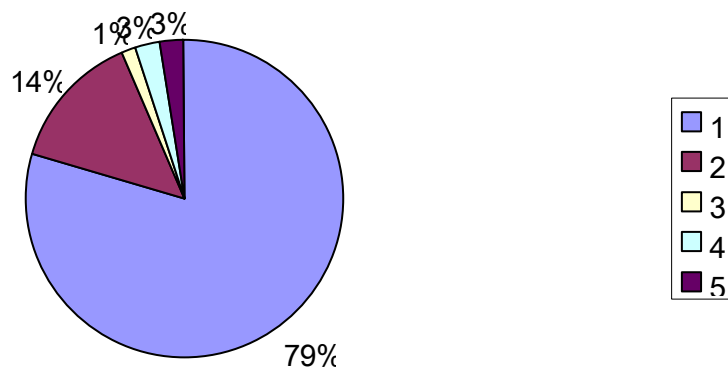
According to this questionnaire, 47 of the 81 Chinese people strongly agree that English is a useful communicative tool, 23 agree but not completely, while 2 have no idea, 4 somewhat disagree and 2 disagree with it completely. The results indicate that Chinese people consider English as a useful tool for communication (see Figure 3.3).



1.Strongly agree 2. Agree but no completely 3. No view 4. Somewhat disagree
5. Disagree completely

Figure 3.4 English Is now widely Used in China

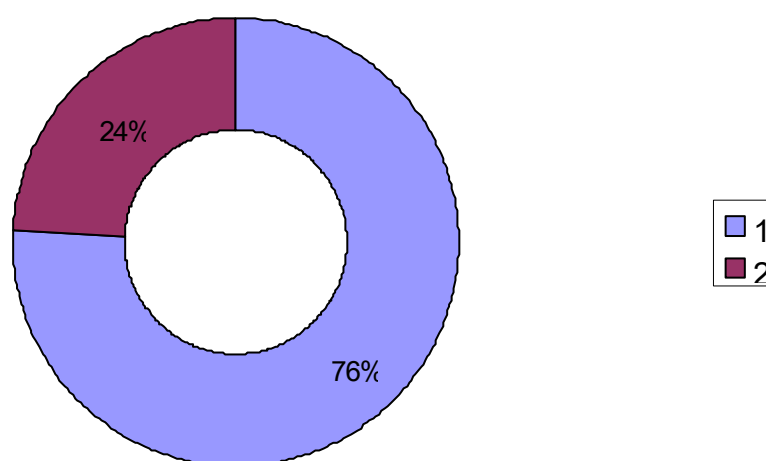
The results from my questionnaire show: 39% of the 81 Chinese people strongly agree with the wide usage of English in China now, 21% agree but not completely and 4% have no view; while 23% somewhat disagree and 13% disagree with it completely. The results demonstrate the feeling that English is now widely used in China (see Figure 3.4).



1.Strongly agree 2. Agree but no completely 3. No view 4. Somewhat disagree
5. Disagree completely

Figure 3.5 The Current Situation of English as a Global Language Is excessively Emphasized in China

In this questionnaire, 79% of the 81 Chinese people strongly agree that the current situation of English is excessively emphasized, 14% agree but not completely, 1% have no view, while 3% somewhat disagree or disagree completely. The results show that the respondents overwhelmingly feel that the current situation of English is over-emphasized (see Figure 3.5).

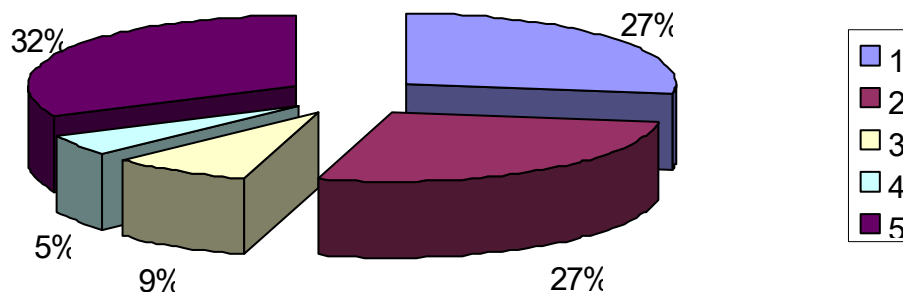


1. No /2. Yes

Figure 3.6 Is the Influence of English Harmful to Chinese Culture?

The result shows that (see Figure 3.6) the respondents to my questionnaire generally consider English not to be harmful to Chinese culture with 76% disagreeing with the statement, and 24% of the 81 respondents agreeing.

Regarding the future of English, 54% of those who answered my questionnaire agree that English will have a dominant role in the future, although some do not agree completely, 9% have no idea, while 5% somewhat disagree, and 32% disagree with this viewpoint completely. The survey result demonstrates that in general there is a feeling that English will have a dominant role in the future of China (Figure 3.7).



1.Strongly agree 2. Agree but no completely 2. No view 4. Somewhat disagree
5. Disagree completely

Figure 3.7 English Will Have a Dominant Role in the Future of China?

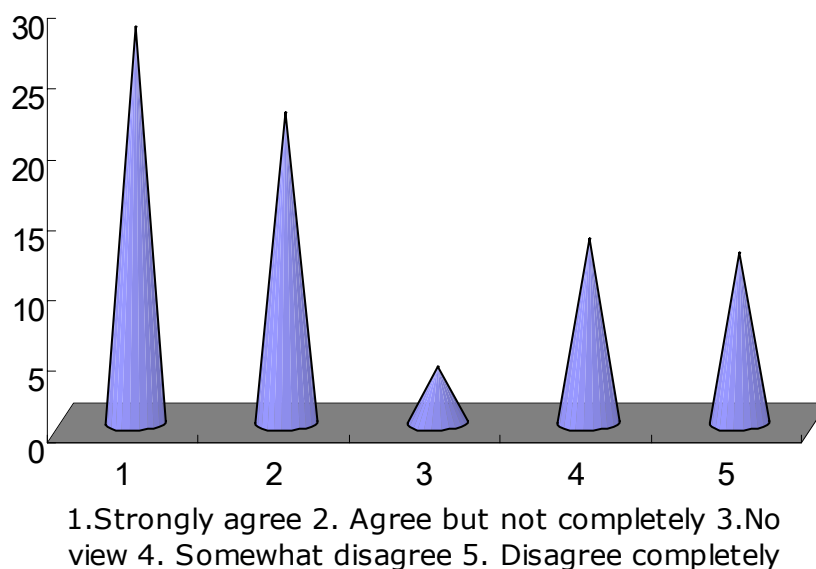


Figure 3.8 English Will Spread everywhere in China

According to the answers to my questionnaire, the respondents confirm that English will spread everywhere in China (see Figure 3.8). 28 of the 81 Chinese people strongly agree with this view, 22 agree but not completely, 4 have no view; while 13 somewhat disagree and 12 people disagree with it completely.

The results from the questionnaire reflect the view that English is a difficult language for Chinese people (see Figure 3.1) and that it is the dominant foreign language at present in China (see Figure 3.2). Answers to this questionnaire confirm that English is now widely used (see Figure 3.4), but the responses also indicate that too much attention is given to English at present (see Figure 3.5) although English is not felt to be harmful to Chinese culture (see Figure 3.6). At the same time, answers to my questionnaire agree on the role of English in the future of China: the dominant role of English (see Figure 3.7) and the wide spread of English in China (see Figure 3.8). Most of them recognize English as a useful tool for communication (see Figure 3.3).

3.2 Chinese Englishes

The first British missionary came to China to teach English in 1807, so Chinese people have had contact with the English language for two hundred years. In the eighteenth century, China's closed door was forced open to the West, and the Chinese had to learn English to communicate with the British and other imperial powers in a few former colonized areas along the coast like Guangzhou, Xiamen and Shanghai. During these contacts, Chinese Pidgin English came into being. When the Chinese government reopened the door actively to the rest of the world in the late 1970s, Chinese people began to learn English on their own initiative. As mentioned in previous chapters, China now holds the largest English learning group of the world, and therefore "China should not be neglected in the research on the spread of English worldwide" (Yan, 2002:217).

Tom McArthur (1998:xiv) considers a range of world Englishes with "distinctive history and characteristics, such as American English, British English, Canadian English, Indian English, Irish English, New Zealand English, Malaysian English, Nigerian English, Singapore English, and Zimbabwean English." And in McArthur's *The Oxford Guide to World English* (2002, 2003), certain features of 'Hong Kong English' are explained in detail, as indicated a 'new English' in Bolton (2003:199-225). The English language phenomenon exists in the Chinese cultural context with Chinese characteristics. This process of nativization or indigenization is referred to as Chinese Pidgin English, Chinglish, Chinese English or China English.

McArthur (1998) commented on Pidgin English as follows:

The Oxford English Dictionaries (1928, 1989), have

given the etymology of pidgin as 'a Chinese corruption of English business', adds: hence pidgin-English, the jargon, consisting chiefly of English words, often corrupted in pronunciation, and arranged according to Chinese idiom, originally used for intercommunication between the Chinese and Europeans at seaports, etc. in China, the Straits Settlements, etc.

(McArthur, 1998:162)

McArthur (1998:162) and Bolton (2003) both gave evidence for the earliest European traders, such as the Portuguese and British, using Pidgin English to do trade with the local Chinese. Hall (1944) divides the history of Chinese Pidgin English into four stages: original, "classical", expanding and declining (cited in Kachru.ed.1992:164). It lasted during the period of between 1720 and 1839 (Bolton, 2003:148). Chinese Pidgin English "with a limited vocabulary, a reduced grammar and a simplified phonology" (Wei and Fei, 2003:42) is a mixed language based on Standard English, but both speakers and listeners can understand each other. Looking at some examples:

- ✧ "Tailor, my have got one piece plenty hansom silk; my want you make one nice evening dress" (cited in Kachru ed., 1992:164).
- ✧ "Dat master poni" (that [is] master's pony) and "yu legan" (your leges)

(Bailey & Robinson, 1973:97; cited in Wei and Fei, 2003:42)

Although "old" Chinese Pidgin English has passed, some scholars find that a "New Chinese Pidgin English" has risen since the late 1970s. According to Wei and Fei (2003), "This is a mixed language based on British English with an American accent or on other varieties, such as Australian English" (p.46).

Gu (2000) also found the new Pidgin English rising in the universities and society in recent years. He made a survey in the Departments of Foreign Languages, International Trade, and Accounting in Guangdong Business College (in Southeast China). The results show that 77% of 111 students investigated speak "British English, with bits of American English"; over 4% of them speak "American English with bits of British English". He explained this mixed language phenomenon because most of Chinese middle schools and universities adopted the British linguistic system, but use videos or tapes or disks of American English (p. 479-483). In fact, most middle schools use tapes of British English, but at the college level, most tapes or videos or textbooks reflect American English norms. Many universities or middle schools, especially in big cities or the coastal regions, employ short-term American teachers more than British teachers. Even Wang (1999) concluded that the current situation of "the English in China is already a blend of British and American English with tints of Chinese localization" (p.50).

The hybrid usage of the English language in China is often referred to as Chinglish, which, like Anglikaans, Arablish, Prenglish, Franglaish, Gerlish, Engleutsch, Deutschlish is a blend-name. Jiang (1995) describes it thus:

Chinglish is somewhat a pidgin, or an 'interlanguage', a term used by Selinker (1972) to emphasize the structurally and phonologically intermediate status of a learner's language system between mother tongue and target language...

(Jiang, 1995:51)

But according to Abercrombie (1963; cited also in Jiang, 1995), it is also a 'foreign', ill-formed or even erroneous, and not a 'comfortable intelligible' term (p.51).

Fei and Wei (2003:43) exemplified some Chinglish sentences like the following:

✧ Good good study, day day up!

(From: haohao xuexi, tiantian xiangshang)

'Study hard: do have a progressive spirit every day'

✧ People mountain people sea

(From renshan renhai)

'Many people', 'very crowded'

According to Zhang (1997), Chinglish or Chinese English is defined as the "incorrect use of English with Chinese grammar, syntax and tone", for example: "I very like that book" (p.40). In *International English Usage* (Loreto, Todd & Ian Hancock, 1986; cited in Lin, 1998:17), the item "Chinese English" was listed and explained with respect to phonology, vocabulary and grammar. Chinese English, belonging to the East Asian Standardizing English, has entered the family of world English; evidence for this idea can be found in the *Circle of World English* by McArthur Tom (1998:97).

According to Wei and Fei (2003), Chinglish and Chinese English are old terms, the term China English derives from Chinese English (p.43). According to Lin (1998), "China English is an English language influenced by Chinese culture and language as an English variety" (p.17). China English is more formal than Chinese English; this item is equated with Singapore English, Malaya English, Philippine English and has been a family member of World Englishes. With China's deepening reform and opening up, and the return of Hong Kong to China, China English has been emphasized by the linguistic world along with other English varieties, such as Nigerian English, South African English, Australian English, Indian

English and Singapore English.

Ge (1980) was the earliest person to propose the concept of China English in China in 1980. In his article "On translation from Chinese to English", he pointed out that English usages in China can express specific Chinese things such as 'eight-legged essay' (from Ba Guwen), 'Four Books', (from Si Shu), and 'Four Modernizations' (from Sige Xiandaihua) (cited in Lin, 1998:16).

Cheng (1992) explained the features of China English as follows:

When China is inward-searching, the English there acquires more Chinese elements, and when China is outward-looking, the English is more Western. That is, English in China is always changeable: when Chinese people utilize English to communicate with foreigners, the English will be linked to normalized world English; when Chinese people use English in their homeland, the English there will be nativized.

(Cited in Kachru ed.,1992:163)

This nativization is reflected in the changing of English in grammar, syntax, vocabulary, and pronunciation.

China English reveals interference from the Chinese language, with Chinese characteristics; the Chinese language has no verb changes, comparative, superlative and so on. Chinese learners usually study English according to Chinese grammar and forget to change forms of nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs as shown in Table 3.2.

	China English	Standard English
The Articles	China English doesn't have definite or indefinite article, for example: <i>He be student.</i>	Standard English has definite or indefinite article, for example: <i>He is a student.</i>
Tense Changes	Tense changes are not expressed by the changing forms of verbs. <i>I do homework yesterday.</i> <i>I take English lessons tomorrow.</i>	The changing forms of verbs reflect different tenses: <i>I did homework yesterday</i> <i>I will take English lessons tomorrow.</i>
Nouns	There is no change in the ending of nouns. <i>Tony Blair have 5 book.</i>	There are single or plural changes of nouns. <i>Tony Blair has 5 books.</i>
	Nouns in China English aren't countable or uncountable nouns. <i>George W. Bush buy 6 bread.</i>	Standard English has countable, or uncountable nouns. <i>George W. Bush bought 6 pieces of bread.</i>
Passive Voice	China English tries to avoid using passive tense <i>Some people tell me that you pass examination.</i>	Passive voice is frequently used in some fixed usages. <i>I was told that you had passed the examination.</i>
Response to negative questions	A: "Be not you student?" B: "No, I be." (It means that "Yes, I am a student.")	A: "Aren't you a student?" B: "Yes, I am."
Adjective	China English doesn't have comparative or superlative forms of adjectives or adverbs. <i>This student be good than that one.</i> <i>She is good of all the class.</i> <i>Boy work hard than others.</i> <i>This worker work hard among all his colleagues.</i>	Adjectives or adverbs often change comparative or superlative forms in different contexts. <i>This student is better than that one.</i> <i>She is the best of all the class.</i> <i>The boy works harder than others.</i> <i>This worker works hardest among all his colleagues.</i>

Table 3.2 Grammar Comparisons between China English and Standard English

According to Dong (1995) "unlike English, the Chinese language is syllabic, relying on tonal variations to increase the inventory of sounds

available for vocabulary" (p.54). So it is very difficult for Chinese people to pronounce some consonants and vowels. There are no voiced /ð/ as in 'this', unvoiced /θ/ as in 'thing'; or voiced /v/ as in 'very'. Chinese learners often replace them with /z/, /s/ and /w/. These pronunciations seriously puzzle foreigners. Since in the simple or compound vowels of Chinese syllables, there is no distinction between long or short, Chinese learners pronounce them with the same length (p. 54). They are often confused by /I:/ and /i/, /u:/ and /u/, for example. It is very difficult to change tone and pronunciation, so Chinese people definitely speak English with Chinese accents.

With China's holding many international conferences in which English functions as a working language, Chinese will continue to adapt lots of borrowing words from other languages (mainly from English) (Hu, 2004: 35). In recent years, Chinese has adapted some English abbreviations, such as WTO, CPU, AIDS, NBA, VCD, DVD, E-mail, SARS are associated with Chinese people's daily lives. Recently English words enrich and enlarge Chinese vocabulary and the Chinese people have begun to be familiar with them and utilize them directly as part of the Chinese language. English can bring new ideas or concepts to Chinese people and their language with time. Now Chinese people are not remote from English.

Like Singapore English and Indian English, China English will become a member of the family of world Englishes; it will arouse people's interest in this kind of new English. The English language in China will be more popular and be used more and more widely. In etymology, more and more Chinese words will flow into English, and the English vocabulary will be enlarged and enriched. Borrowings from Chinese with specific and unique Chinese characteristics cannot be displaced or easily disappear. As Kachru (1997) argues "The focus of English language teaching and learning in China needs to change...attitudes need to change, and it is to be hoped that in the course of time China English will become an honored member of the Inner Circle" (cited in Hu, 2004:26).

3.3 The Influence of English on Chinese Culture, Identity and Language

In this chapter, we will explore how the English language has impacted on the Chinese culture, identity and language. English in China has developed very fast, especially in recent years, and China's enthusiasm for English has surprised the linguistic world. But do foreign languages affect Chinese identity?

English and Chinese identity and nationality

Before China's door was opened forcibly to the outside, the Chinese empire regarded China as "the middle kingdom" with cultural pride and regarded Western imperialists as "foreign devils" (Yang Guizi in Chinese pinyin). "A deep-rooted sense of exclusivity and cultural pride impelled the Chinese to view external influence as threatening to China's identity and integrity" (Ross, 1993:5-9). Now that the Chinese government launched "the open door" policy, is foreign language also considered as a threat to Chinese identity?

The impact of English on Chinese language

The Chinese use foreign language knowledge to propagate Chinese culture and language to let the world understand China. Chinese people can deepen understanding of their mother tongue and homeland through the learning of foreign languages. English lets Chinese people make sense of the outside world; make sense of foreign traditions, customs and languages. It is the English language that broadens Chinese people's horizons and converts their traditional idea. In the meantime, they enlarge their international communications by using English. Moreover

people who have strong abilities in English can go abroad or find well-paid jobs in foreign companies or joint capital companies. English can change the fate of ordinary Chinese people. English enriches their knowledge of advanced science and technology; they access the advanced knowledge in China's development and construction. In recent years, large numbers of Chinese have returned from America or other English speaking countries, and been given higher positions or higher salaries by the Chinese government. While English flourishes in China, some Chinese people have worried about the possible bad effects of English on the Chinese language, identity and culture. At the Global Chinese Physicians Conference in Shanghai in 2004, the Chinese physicians were ashamed of being refused to give speeches in Chinese (only English can be used at this conference). They were infuriated that their identity was threatened³⁴.

But English now in China is considered good medicine to cure all kinds of disease. English proficiency is a premise for realizing the Four Modernizations. Sometimes Chinese people lack confidence in doing things and they depend on foreign power to settle them. With respect to this, Chinese people should learn from the Singaporeans.

Singapore depends on its strong confidence in nationality and Singaporean strength; it obtained national independence from Britain, developing quickly among East Asian countries. Chinese leaders should be confident and believe in China's special social conditions and highly developing economy and traditional culture. They should believe that Chinese people can only depend on their strength to construct China in specific Chinese contexts, referring to Western advanced experience and knowledge.

34 Source: <http://www.sina.com.cn> 2004/07/09 16:17

Having an effect on Chinese mother tongue

The extreme "fever" for English and benefits from this language make Chinese people ignore their mother tongue. According to "English Dominance"³⁵, Professor To Choyee of Hong Kong, "argues that the widespread study of English is a waste of valuable resources to the detriment of the study of Mandarin". According to a survey³⁶ of the opinion of people speaking Chinese with bits of English, 37.3% of people dislike it, 30% don't think that it matters and 31.5% support the opinion. The result confirms that the English language has had a strong effect on Chinese. In addition, Sina campus on line investigated 4,986 university students' idea about the national English tests³⁷, the result of the investigation shows that 88% of people think that university students are busy learning English, while their Chinese level is decreasing.

In this respect, English has threatened the Chinese language and identity. Some Chinese who are fluent in English but not good at their mother tongue don't feel shame but are very proud. Fluent English is a symbol of status in Chinese society. Yu undertook an investigation among students of all ages in Shanghai (students from universities, middle schools and primary schools), "covering their daily language learning time, the goal of learning English and the nationality students would prefer if they had the choice. About 30 to 40 per cent of those surveyed said that they would like to be Americans"³⁸. If a nation endeavours to pursue foreign languages but neglects its own language and culture, it is very dangerous for the future of this country. Once somebody has lost their mother tongue, they also lose their nationality.

35 Source: Shang-hai Star 24th, October 2002, cited in Niu, 2003:10

36 Source: <http://www.edu.com.cn>

37 Source: <http://www.sina.com.cn> 2005 /01/17, 15:19

38 Source: <http://www.sina.com.cn> 2005/04/07, 17:51

Chinese people should learn from the cultural intrusion of the English language, that is, they should strengthen spiritual cultural construction and national self-confidence; government officials should promote the national culture and language.

Having influence on China's education

In the same investigation by Sina campus online, 54.48% of the university students use class hours of other courses to prepare for English tests³⁹. Chinese students pay too much attention to the English language, while their own specializations are ignored. In this light, English has influenced China's recruitment practices. The excellent students use English to realize their dreams of going abroad. The malformed development of English in China functions as a reaper of Chinese talents in the field of science and technology. An article⁴⁰ in the *China Youth Daily* reported the ratio of students going abroad at Qinghua University and Beijing University, which are leading universities in China. 15.3% (457 graduates) of the total graduates of Beijing University studied abroad in 1997; in the following year of 1998, 13.6% (302 graduates) went abroad. At Qinghua University, 357 or 14.5% graduates went abroad in 1997; while in 1998, 379 or 15.4% went abroad. An old Chinese saying tells us that "it takes ten years to grow trees, but a hundred to rear people", so the loss of talent every year is the greatest sadness for China. The following statement by Mikie Kiyoi (1995) shows the feelings of a non-native speaker of English; it reflects what non-native speakers of English feel about their learning of English:

39 Source: <http://www.sina.com.cn> 2005 /01/17 /15:19

40 Title of the article: "Where do the Tsinghua and Beida graduates go?" Cited in Xiao, 2000:23, In *China Youth Daily*, 7th April 2000.

We non-natives are desperately learning English; each word pronounced by us represents our blood, sweat and tears. Our English proficiency is tangible evidence of our achievement of will, not an accident of birth. Dear Anglo-Americans, please show us you are also taking pains to make yourselves understood in an international setting⁴¹.

(Cited in McArthur, 1998:211)

Impact on Chinese festivals and customs

Some Western customs and festivals are now given great attention, while Chinese traditional ones are ignored. Western festivals like Valentine's Day and Christmas are celebrated warmly in big cities of China. But Chinese people spend their traditional festivals like Lunar New Year's Day or Chinese Valentine's Day coldly. Even some Westerners said the atmosphere of the Christmas Day in China is thicker than it is in their hometowns (Figure 3.9).



Figure 3.9 Chinese Youth Celebrating Christmas Day in 2004⁴²

41 Source: Mikie Kiyoi, 1995; cited in McArthur, 1998:211

42 Source: <http://www.sina.com.cn> 2004/02/25 08:34

Now Chinese people bring cakes to celebrate somebody's birthday, while in accordance with Chinese traditional customs, people give noodles to the person on his birthday to predict his long live.

But is the influence of English harmful to Chinese culture? As we have seen from the answers to the questionnaire, 76% of Chinese people consider that the influence of English is not harmful (see Figure 3.6).

Facing the intrusion of the English language and its culture, Chinese people should show their self-esteem and self-confidence in the face of the world nationalities, widening eyesight to see the outside and rethinking what English is for and how to further use it in Chinese construction and development.

Recently, we have witnessed two examples of this tendency. On the one hand, the famous writer Wang Meng has called for the protection of the Chinese language from the wide usage of English in China. On the other, the Chinese government has set up more Confucian schools in America and countries in East Asia to promote Mandarin teaching.

3.4 The Future of English Language in China

Under the circumstances of deepening reform, economic development and further opening up, being a member of the WTO in 2001, having held many international conferences, hosting the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games and the World Fair in 2010, hosted by a developing country for the first time (Jiang, 2003:4), strengthening international relations with other countries, China will have a strong need to develop foreign languages and propagate the Chinese culture and language. In order to enlarge its effect on the world and expand its international contacts, China will continue to want English. According to Tollefson (1991), as long as China continues to open its door to the outside and trade with Western countries, it will continue to set demands on English teachers and English speakers (p.96). Chinese people will advance their skills and knowledge including learning English. In order to meet their demands, the future development of English in China will occur.

As long as the strong economy and important impact of the English speaking countries on the global economy, politics and culture continue to exist, the strong tendency for English will not stop in the future, because there is "the closest of links between language dominance and cultural power" (Crystal, 1997:5). The English language will consolidate its dominant position in the near future. The dominance of English is demonstrated by Graddol (in Burns et al., 2001): " There is no reason to believe that any other language will appear within the next fifty years to replace English as the global lingua franca. The position of English has arisen from a particular history which no other language can, in the changed world of the twenty-first century, repeat" (p.29). Other people also predict English in the future, for example Chris Julios⁴³ proposes "English is certainly well poised to become 'the' language for the next

43 Source: <http://www.psa.ac.uk/cps/1999/julios.pdf>

Millennium” (p.18) after concluding the dominant influence of English in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Crystal⁴⁴ attests that English will dominate in the near future based on the current situation of English worldwide as follows:

The evidence suggests that English is now the dominant voice in the international politics, banking, the press, the news agencies, advertising, broadcasting, the recording industry, motion pictures, travel, science and technology, knowledge management, and communications. No other language has achieved such a widespread profile-or is likely to, in the foreseeable future.

Global English in China will be in accordance with the world trend and develop with its own characteristics.

In March 2005, the Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao gave a speech of Government Work⁴⁵, in which he emphasized that developing education is a top priority, while compulsory education in rural areas is overly stressed. Students from poor families in poor counties, where the national supports will not pay book and other fees, will be given extra money for living this year. In 2007, this policy will be adopted in all rural areas nationwide, ensuring that all students from poor families can complete their compulsory education. The economic measures will ensure students' compulsory education and eliminate educational divergence of different regions. So English like other main subjects will be widely learned in the countryside nationwide. In other words, the effect of English will be taken to a wider majority of the Chinese population.

44 Source: Cited from “English in the new world.” on <http://www.babylonia-ti.ch> downloaded on April 10, 2005.

45 Source: <http://edu.cn/20050307/3130294.shtml>

To be appropriate for the recent situation of English language development, the Ministry of Education has adopted several reforms in English education. Apart from the decision of English being a compulsory course in primary schools, a nine-year voluntary education programme was proposed in 2001. A new Standard English course was being used. According to the international system, the English course in the period of primary school and middle school was divided into nine levels in the new standard, which lays great emphasis on listening and speaking skills, cultivating students' communicative skills, participation and arousing students' interest. Thus the former teaching methods of concentrating on grammar and vocabulary has been replaced. It is worth noting that "listening comprehension" was first adopted nationwide in the National College Entrance Examination (NCEE) in 2003.

The Ministry of Education began to reform College English teaching in 2003: promoting modern information technology, drafting the Requirement of College English Course Teaching and preparing for reforming the College English Tests Band Four or Band Six⁴⁶. The new requirement aims at developing students' comprehension abilities to meet the demands for China's economic development and international communications. This requirement stresses listening and speaking abilities and learner-centered teaching methods and small-class teaching, putting forward multi-media College English teaching. College English vocabulary is selected from the Collins Bank of English, being used more practically and frequently. In February 2005, the Ministry of Education announced "China's College English Test Band Four and Band Six Reform Programme"⁴⁷, in which the proportion of Listening comprehension in Band Four or Six will be increased to 35%. According to this Programme, oral English tests will be expanded based on computer-aid systems. Students who attend Band Four or Six will be given mark lists, which the

46 Source: <http://www.bachchina.com/search/index.php?word>

47 Source: <http://www.edu.cn/20050228/3129643.shtml>

qualification certificates of the two tests will not be sent. Thus the certificates of the Band Four or Six will not be linked to graduation and employment.

The reform measures ensure that English language education will develop practically. The English education reforms are taken in schools run by the country. With the encouragement of the central government, China-foreign cooperated schools have developed quickly. According to Wang⁴⁸, there were 746 China-foreign cooperated schools in China by the end of 2003 (there were only about 70 in 1995), more than half of them are run by English speaking countries or regions, for instance, America (138), Australia (125), Canada (54), Singapore (41), Britain (35), Hong Kong (52) and Taiwan (30). In 2003, the State Council announced the Regulations of the People's Republic of China on Chinese-Foreign Cooperation in Running Schools, and the Ministry of Education supplemented some rules in the Regulations in detail. These stimulated the development of Chinese-foreign cooperated schools in China. International cooperation in education has put forward the spread of English in China. Being a WTO member means that China will open wider to the outside world, and provide more opportunities for international cooperation. English as an interlanguage will play an important role in international communications in China.

It is worth noting the strong impression given through the questionnaire that English will maintain its dominance in the arena of foreign languages in China (see Figure 3.7); indeed, the tendency will not be changed in the short term. In the future in China, the foreign language environment will be changed. Foreign languages will flourish, that is, foreign languages will be for foreign languages' sake.

48 Source: http://www.acpet.edu.au/__data/page/113/Professor_Wang.pdf

3.5 English everywhere in China?

The Global English has been spreading in many aspects of China. The trend will continue in the future. That is, English will spread everywhere in China (see Figure 3.8). This chapter addresses the spread of English and presents English in many aspects of life in China.

According to Kachru (1997), "Asia's English can be viewed in term of nativeness, which includes uses of English: one point is English as a vehicle of communication across distinct linguistic and cultural groups at one level of interaction" (p.102). English in China illustrates this point through the Internet, international exchanges, cooperation and English language education.

English as the working language is being used in many international conferences or Festivals held by China, concerning society, science and technology and international relations. Apart from the Shanghai APEC meeting in 2001, the Beijing Olympic Games in 2008 and the Shanghai World Fair in 2010, China successfully hosted the Fourth World Women's Conference in Beijing in 1995, sponsored by the United Nations, with more than 10,000 delegates from 184 countries and regions, UN organizations, inter-governmental organizations and non-governmental organizations⁴⁹. The 13th China International Medical Equipment and Facilities Exposition and Symposia was held in 2004, Beijing. In addition, many international conferences will be held in China. For instance, the 10th International Conference on Database System for Advanced Applications in 2005, Beijing; the 18th World LP Gas Forum in Shanghai and the 27th Annual International Conference of the IEE Engineering in

49 Source: Zhi, 1998

Medicine and Biology Society in 2005, Shanghai; China International Energy & Power Exhibition in 2005, Beijing; the IAPR International Conference on Pattern Recognition in 2006, Hong Kong; the 4th Asian-Pacific Congress on Thrombosis and Hemostasis in 2006; the 5th International Congress of Pathophysiology in 2006; and the IEEE/RSJ International Conference on Intelligent Robotics and Systems in Beijing in 2006⁵⁰.

It is worth noting that the Third Asia TEFL International Conference⁵¹ and the 2005 China International Conference on Net English⁵² will be held in Beijing in 2005. The Asia TEFL international conference aims at accelerating Asian English Teachers' contacts and letting the world hear "the voices of China's English teachers and researchers". The Net English Conference will discuss new technology and net English, the role of teachers and students in net English teaching. On 11th April 2005, the fourth debate on twenty-first international English teaching was held in Beijing⁵³.

Many cities in China have been holding various international festivals or exhibitions, for example Dalian (one of the fourteen opening coastal sites) holds an International Garment Festival once a year. Mr Bo, the Mayor of the Dalian city in 2002, gave a speech in English with an American accent; other examples include the Sanya International Wedding Festival and the Shanghai International TV Festival held in the 1990s (Zhi, 1998). In these festivals, a large number of foreign guests were invited to participate. China hosted the Third Shenzhen International

50 Source: <http://www.conferencealerts.com/energy.htm> & <http://www.ntpe.com.cn>

51 Source: <http://www.backchina.com/search/?word>

52 Source: <http://www.beiwaionline.com/research/default.htm>

53 Source: <http://www.backchina.com/search/index.php?word>

Computer and Information Technology Exhibition in April 2005 and will hold the 2006 China Shenyang World Gardening Exhibition.

English will strengthen its role in China through these and many other international conferences, festivals and exhibitions. Apart from these associations, English has also a strong relationship with the Internet, the Chinese educational system, business and English contests.

Oxford University Press, Cambridge University Press, McGraw-Hill Education and Pearson Education Press have been cooperating with China in the English learning market. This cooperation also reflects on kinds of international English tests in China, for example: the Cambridge Young Learners English (YLE), BULATS, Educational Testing Service (ETS), Certificate in English Language Skills (CELS) and the Public English Test System (PETS). This cooperation has been expanding.

Regarding economic development and foreign investment, by the end of July 2000, China had approved more than 353,000 foreign-funded enterprises, involving a total foreign investment of US\$ 641.7 billion by contract and actually utilizing US\$327.75 billion in foreign capital. For seven consecutive years since 1993 China has been the largest recipient of direct foreign investment among developing countries (Zhong, 2000:23). The more foreign enterprises, the more foreign language talents needed. Because of the foreign enterprises' high salaries and high efficiency, they attract and stimulate Chinese people to learn foreign languages well. As the main foreign language taught in China, English will be the international medium used most widely in the foreign enterprises.

"To adapt to the new situation of joining the WTO, the Chinese Government will adopt stronger measures to further open its market in

the fields of goods and service traders” (Zhong, 2000:24).

The Internet and computer technologies are developing rapidly at present in China and Internet users have been increasing rapidly in recent years (see Table 3.3).

Internet Population (million)	Year
0.62	1997
1.175	1998
94	By the end of 2004

Table 3.3 Comparison of Internet Population in China

Sources: Beijing Review, November 2-8, 1998

<http://www.internetworldstats.com/articles/art045.htm>

The China Education and Research Network or CERNET (belonging to the Ministry of Education) was founded in 1993. It has provision of Internet connections to universities as well as secondary and primary schools. According to Eric Harwit (2004), in mid-1998, 300 universities built Internet facilities connected by CERNET and had 200,000 users. In the following five years, CERNET has connected 1,400 universities and has 10 million users, while at secondary and primary school level, only about 200 secondary schools and a small number of primary schools built Internet connected by CERNET (p.1027).

Other statistics show that the Chinese Ministry of Education has 25 major universities, including Foreign Studies University to 'conduct trials on cyber education, or education via the Internet', enrolling 2.8 million

college students (Zheng, 2000). Zheng also exemplified an English class for finance majors in a Cyber Classroom offered by teachers of the Beijing University (p.22-23).

English is closely related to the Internet. Graddol (in Burns et al., 2001) concluded several reasons for leading-edge technology (particularly computers and information technology) being largely based on the English language. One is the research and development of the leading-edge technology produced in the USA. Other reasons are the research findings of literature and conferences; communications technology and document-handling software are English based (p.33). About the important relations between the Internet and the English language, Specter (1996; cited in Crystal, 1997) concluded: "if you want to take full advantage of the Internet, there is only one way to do it: learn English, which has more than ever become America's greatest and most effective export" (p.107).

Many web sites in China offer English and Chinese versions, for example:

<http://www.sina.com.cn>,

<http://www.sohu.com.cn>,

<http://www.edu.cn>,

<http://www.CCTV.com.cn/default.shtml>,

<http://www.china.com>,

<http://www.chinamil.com.cn>,

<http://www.21cn.com>,

<http://www.Chinanews.com.cn>,

<http://www.Xinhuanet.com> etc.

Searching on the websites above, I found pages of these sites frequently mixed with English. For example: <http://www.good.com.cn> presents a Chinese version mixed with advertisement provided by Google in English. On these websites, abbreviations like NBA, MBA, HIB, HIV, GDP, F1, TOEFL, GRE, IT, CD, CPU, AMD and VS are used directly on homepages in Chinese.

The Internet in China plays an increasingly important role at present. There will be more and more Internet subscribers and cyber education will develop rapidly. English will be used more and more widely on the Internet. Meanwhile, English is also an important communicational tool for Chinese people on the Internet with easy and simple characteristics. Liu⁵⁴ compared Kanji and English used on the Internet and found a lack of standardization in using the same character set between nations, for example:

Mainland China, Taiwan, Japan and South Korea all use kanji ideograms, but each has its own unique kanji code. Mainland China uses the GB code, whereas Taiwan has a code known as BIG5. If you try to send an e-mail from Beijing to Taipei, the characters turn into garbage. Websites present the same challenge. Consequently, it is not at all unusual to find Chinese speakers relying on English, not Chinese, to communicate with one another by e-mail.

54 Source: C: \Documents and settings\Li\Local settings\Temp\Rar\$DI19.216\menu9.html.
Title: "Economic Clout and Information Volume: Factors in Determining a Common Language." by Liu, Zhiming

To welcome the Beijing Olympics and strengthen the English learning contacts for Beijing universities students, the English Contest of the Second New Oriental Cup "Star of Study" is being held in Beijing, from 9th April to 22nd May 2005. This contest is divided into a vocabulary spot, a speech spot, a host spot and an English song spot.⁵⁵ In addition, the "Twenty-First Century Cup" English Speech Contest has been held for ten years by the China Daily Press and Shanghai Foreign Language Press. The National Youth Oral English Contest will be held in May 2005 in order to develop Chinese youth's listening and speaking abilities and communicative competence for welcoming the Olympic Games⁵⁶.

Cities like Beijing, Shanghai, Nanjing, Hangzhou, Wuhan, Chongqing and Shenzhen called for millions of citizens to learn English. In Shenzhen (in Southeast China), civil servants have been learning English through a telephone hot line, where native speakers as operators serve them. The citizens of this city show interest in the new style of learning. In Guangzhou, the capital of Guangdong in Southeast China, the government requires all its citizens born after 1960 to pass an English test to ensure that they can communicate in English by 2004⁵⁷. The Provincial Government Department of Security of Jiangsu required its policemen to use English to communicate in 2005. "It seems there are more people learning to speak English in China than there are English speakers in the whole of the United States"⁵⁸. Therefore, the future of English will pay much more attention to practical ability and communicative skills.

Even some famous Chinese movie stars like Chen Chong, Wang Ji,

55 Source: <http://www.backchina.com/search/index.php?word>

56 Source: <http://www.sina.com.cn> 2005/12/April/14:21

57 Source: Jiang, 2003

58 Source: CIR Online, cited in Jiang, 2003:4

Zhang Tielin, Gong Li, and Zhang Ziyi, etc.⁵⁹ have been working hard at learning English to improve their position on the international stage.

There are 30 universities that offer bilingual teaching to university students in China. The specialities are English literature, English language education, Physics, Geology, Chemistry, Computer Science, Communication and Information Technologies, Medical Science, Engineering, Finance, etc⁶⁰. Apart from the learning of English in class, Chinese people learn English through English papers and in English training services which provide English learning in class or online. China has six English papers: *China Daily*, *Beijing Weekend*, *HK Edition*, *Shanghai Star*, *21st Century* and *Business Weekly*.

The Beijing New Oriental School (China) is the best English language training school for international tests such as GMAT, TSE, LSAT, IELTS TOEFL and GRE. It is very welcomed in China (see Figure 3.10). The total number of learners in this school in 2004 was 750,000; while in 2003, the figure was 300,000. The number has been rising year by year. Other famous English training schools are Dell English School (China), Global IELTS (British), Wall Street (America) and Shane English School (British) etc. Most of these have chain schools throughout China.

The Cambridge Young Learners English (YLE) provides English for children aged between six and twelve. Gross pupil learning the YLE in 1997 was 100,000, while the number increased 10,000,000. Numbers of Chinese children are learning English at present (see Figure 3.11). The increasing trend will continue.

59 Source: <http://www.backchina.com>

60 Source: The Ministry of Education of the P.R.C. Downloaded on <http://202.205.10.1/20041130/3122900.shtml>



Figure 3.10 Headmaster of the Beijing New Oriental School Giving a Speech on English and Life to University Students⁶¹



Figure 3.11 Chinese Primary Children Learning English⁶²

61 Source: <http://www.sina.com.cn> 2005/08/April

62 Source: <http://www.xinhua.net.com> & <http://www.shanxinewsnet.com>

The Chinese government required primary schools to offer up to three years of English language for pupils except for those in the countryside in the P.R.C. in 2001. In the near future, primary schools in rural areas will also offer English language.

According to Yong and Campbell, there were over 200 million students enrolled in programs in English as a foreign language (cited in Kachru, 1997:95), the number was calculated in 1995. Recently Jiang Yajun (2003), has calculated over 200 million are learning English in schools, and about 13 million young people at university (p.3). More recently, according to the Ministry of Education, at present, there are over all 350 million students and people from society who are learning English⁶³. We can see the figure rising clearly.

As Chinese economic growth or GDP mainly depends on exports to the Western English speaking countries, the English language will have a strong influence on China. With the development of computer and Internet technology, "net English" will progress. Chinese people will make sense of English and take advantage of advanced science and technology to construct and develop China.

The British Minister of Finance, Gordon Brown forecasted the future of English in China on his visit for Beijing in 2005: the amount of Chinese people who can speak English will perhaps surpass the number of native English speakers in the world⁶⁴. He also said "that is a great opportunity...". Yes, Chinese people can make use of this opportunity to develop China. English as a global language in China will have a bright future.

63 Source: <http://www.xinhua.net.com> 2005/04/14

64 Source: <http://www.backchina.com> 2005/04/17 10:04

Conclusion

Based on what I have read, learned and observed, I can conclude that the spread of English is closely related to Chinese socio-economic, cultural and political developments. While China's door was closed to the outside, English was not developed. To build a modernized country, China launched its open-door policy in 1978, the opening environment provided a social, economic and political context in which English could spread.

Entering the WTO membership in 2001, the 2008 Olympic Games, the 2010 World Fair and China's increasing integrated global economy has stimulated the spread of global English in China. "The Campaign of Millions of Citizens Learning English" has spread throughout the cities of China, from the children in kindergarten to the youth generation to adults of all professions, including the 11th Panchen Lama-the highest-ranking figure of Tibetan Buddhism currently in China⁶⁵ and a nun⁶⁶. The 11th Panchen Lama aged 15 is now receiving a Buddhist education in Beijing, and the nun from Lingquan Temple which is located in south China wanted to learn English to contact foreigners and introduce Buddhism to them.

And this trend is set to continue. According to Graddol, "China is a major player in terms of people learning English over the next decades"⁶⁷. English means opportunities for business, studies and jobs, English is a

65 Source: "Panchen Lama Surfs Net, Learns English." Downloaded on <http://www.chinaembassy.org.in/eng/zgbd/t172870.htm> 2004/12/March

66 Source: "English Language Training Profitable Industry in China." Downloaded on http://english.people.com.cn/200201/22/eng20020122_89150.shtml

67 Source: "Making sense of English." Downloaded on <http://www.sina.com.cn> 2005/04/07 17:51.

window to the world and a required qualification for more and more people in this country.

Since 2003, the Ministry of Education has started to reform the teaching and examination forms of College English and middle school English⁶⁸. Students' comprehension abilities in English, especially listening and speaking competence have been drawn attention to and computer-aided English teaching has been promoted.

Recently, Chinese people are speaking American English, British English and China English. There exists much variety amongst Chinese Englishes. With the growth of China's economy and national power, foreigners want to know China through China English. The Chinese Englishes will continue to exist.

More than three thousand foreign language training schools run by the British Council, the American Council or the Chinese services in China⁶⁹ mostly provide extracurricular English courses, such as Beijing New Oriental Language School, the Wall Street English Institute, Dell International English School, Beijing Global IELTS School, Shane English School etc. In addition, many international language schools and the co-operation of China and Britain in setting up courses have strengthened the position of English in China⁷⁰.

The strong trend of English and its profit make more and more Chinese people go to English speaking countries in order to improve their English abilities. According to an investigation of UNESCO, the rank order

68 Source: <http://www.backchina.com/search/index.php>

69 Source: <http://www.sina.com.cn> 2001/11/14

70 Source: <http://www.sina.com.cn> 2005/04/05 13:25

of countries where Chinese students are studying is the United States, Britain, Australia and Canada⁷¹. Students studying in these countries have been increasing year after year. English will have an important impact on Chinese people in the near future.

Based on my questionnaire surveyed in 2003 and what I have mentioned above, I will sum up my thesis: English isn't an easy language for Chinese people; the reason for their enthusiasm for learning this language is that English is considered to be beneficial and necessary, and, as such, is forcefully promoted by the Chinese government. We have seen that English is a useful tool for communication which is widely used at present in China. It plays an important role in China's education, foreign diplomatic relations and international co-operations and exchanges. English has impacted positively and negatively on the Chinese language, culture and identity. Chinese people should use the strong tendency of English to propagate Chinese culture and language overseas and also use the dominance of English to construct Chinese society in an open and democratic way. The dominant role of English will remain and expand, spreading everywhere in China.

71 Source: <http://www.backchina.com>

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c. speaking

d. writing

e. vocabulary

f. others

English as a Global Language in China

This questionnaire aims to find out some of the opinions and ideas of teachers and students on the topic of English as a Global Language in China.

Part Two: for students

Please answer the questions as truthfully as possible. Thank you for the time and attention you have dedicated to this questionnaire.

Please answer the questions in the space provided or circle the letter which corresponds to your answer.

1. Age _____
2. Gender _____
3. Academic background
a- bachelor
b- master
c- doctorate
d- no academic degree
4. Occupation
a- middle school student b- college student c- university student
5. Work unit _____
6. Professional experience _____
7. How many years have you been learning English? _____
8. Your English homework is ...
a. a great amount b. a lot
c. a reasonable amount d. little
e. none
9. If you have homework, the content of your homework is about:
a. rewriting the text b. reciting vocabulary and text
c. doing grammar exercises d. others
10. What is the aim of your English learning? _____
11. How many English lessons do you have each week? _____

If yes, which one(s)? _____

2. What were their study experiences during the period of the Cultural Revolution?

3. Do you have extra English interest classes outside school? Yes/No

4. Some people think Chinese people's enthusiasm for English has affected our Chinese learning. Do you agree? Yes/ No

5. If yes, what influence does English have on Chinese culture and language?

6. Can this influence be used to develop Chinese culture?

Yes/ No

7. If yes, how can this be done?

8. Is the influence of English harmful to Chinese culture? Yes/ No

9. If yes, in what ways?

Thank you for your help!

英语作为国际通用语在中国

这份问卷是为了了解您对“英语作为国际通用语言”在中国发展情况的看法和意见。请您如实回答问题。非常感谢您对此所付出的时间和精力。

第一部分：教师问卷

请填空或选择您认为合适的字母

- 1 年龄_____
- 2 性别_____
- 3 学科背景
a-本科
b-研究生
c-博士
d-无学位
- 4 职业
a-中学教师
b-学院教师
c-大学教师
- 5 工作单位_____
- 6 职业经历_____
- 7 你教了多少年英语? _____
- 8 除了在你的单位外, 你在其它地方用英语吗? 是 / 不是, _____
- 9 你的学校或大学如何评价老师的教学效果? _____
- 10 除了课本外, 你用其它材料教学吗? 是 / 不是, _____
- 11 你的教学目的是_____
- 12 在课堂 4 5 分钟内, 你的讲授时间多还是学生的练习时间多? _____
- 13 请评价一下现在中国英语语言的现状_____
- 14 您的教学重点是
a-语法
b-阅读
c-口语
d-写作
e-词汇
f-其它

英语作为国际通用语在中国

这份问卷是为了了解您对“英语作为国际通用语言”在中国发展情况的看法和意见。请您如实回答问题。非常感谢您对此所付出的时间和经历。

第二部分：学生问卷

请填空或选择您认为合适的字母

- 1 年龄_____ 2 性别_____
- 3 学科背景
- a-本科 b-研究生
c-博士 d-无学位
- 4 职业
- a-中学学生 b-学院学生
c-大学学生
- 5 工作单位_____
- 6 职业经历_____
- 7 你学了多少年英语? _____
- 8 你的英语作业是
- a-过多 b-很多
c-合适 d-少
e-偏少 f-没有
- 9 如果你有作业，它的内容是
- a- 抄写课文 b-语法练习
c-背单词和课文 d-口语练习
e-写作 f-其它
- 10 你学习英语的目的是 _____
- 11 你一个星期有几节英语课_____
- 12 在课堂45分钟内，你和你的同学们_____说和写英语
- a- 经常 b-频繁
c-有时 d-很少 e-从来不

第三部分：教师和学生问卷

请表明你对下列陈述的态度选择相关的字母

a-完全同意

b-部分同意

c-没观点

d-有点不同意

e-完全不同意

1 对中国人来说，英语是一门简单的语言。

A. B. C. D. E.

2 在现在的中国，英语是一门最有支配地位的外语。

A. B. C. D. E.

3 在将来，英语在中国将具有支配地位

A. B. C. D. E.

4 在将来，英语会遍及全中国各地。

A. B. C. D. E.

5 在现在的中国，英语作为国际通用语言的地位被过分强调。

A. B. C. D. E.

6 英语是一个有用的交际工具

A. B. C. D. E.

7 现在，英语在中国应用广泛。

A. B. C. D. E.

请回答下列问题

1 当你的父母在学校的时候他们学外语吗？是 / 不是, _____

如果他们学外语，学哪门外语？ _____

2 他们在文化大革命中的学习经历怎样？ _____

3 你在课外教/学英语课吗？是 / 不是, _____

4 有人认为中国的“英语学习热”已经影响了汉语学习，你同意这个观点吗？

a-同意

b-不同意

5 如果同意，英语对中国的语言和文化有那些影响？ _____

6 这些影响可以用来发展我们的文化吗？可以 / 不可以, _____

7 如果可以，如何去做来发展我们的文化？ _____

8 英语对中国文化的影响有害处吗？有 / 没有, _____

9 如果有，以那种方式？ _____

多谢合作！