The Impact of English Language Education in China

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English Signs in China

- 小心碰头
  Carefully bang head

- 你问我, 我问谁
  YOU ASK ME, ME ASK WHO?

- 危险—请避开
  ANGER
  KEEP OUT

- 开封公交进站口
  Kaifeng Bus Stop Jin mouth
  CivilitarianRidership. Please consciously queue

www.chenglish.de
Overview (Focus on higher education)

• Brief introduction of China
• A historical review of foreign language education and policies
• Current trends and language policies on foreign language education in China.
Two Folders

- A historical review since 1860s (Focus on higher education)
  - Review since 1949
    - 1949 - 1965
    - 1965 - 1976
    - 1977 - 2012
  - Current trends and language policy

1861-1949
- English education at University level

1949 - 1965
- Bilingual Schools

1965-1976
- International Schools

1977 - 2012
- Current policies on English education
1. A belief historical review of foreign language education

Since 1860s
1st Folder: Historical review of foreign language education

• Brief Introduction of China
• Shanghai and PISA
• Early time: The Tong Wen Guan Academy 京师同文馆
• Review since 1949
  • 1949 - 1965
  • 1965 - 1976
  • 1977 - 2012
Profile of China

- Capital City: Beijing
- Largest city: Shanghai
- “Mainland China"
  - 22 provinces,
  - 5 autonomous regions, and
  - 4 municipalities
- Ethnic groups
  - 91.51% Han
  - 55 minorities
- Languages: 292 living languages in China (Paul, 2009).
  - 70% of population speak Mandarin Chinese
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Shanghai

Old Town
Puxi

New Town
Pudong
Lujiazui
Profile of Education of Shanghai

• More than 930 kindergartens (1035)
• 1,200 primary (640)
• 850 middle schools (807) including both middle school and high school
• Two resources are adopted above.

• Over 30 universities and colleges (public).
• 60 universities and colleges including both public and private
Chinese Educational System

- **Graduate Level**
  - PhD Program (3–4 years)
  - Master or equivalent program (2–3 years)

- **Undergraduate Level (4 – 6 years) vs. College Level (2–3 years)**

- **K–Grade 12**
  - High school 3 years
  - Middle school 3 years (compulsory education)
  - Elementary school 6 years (compulsory education)
  - Kindergarten (various)
Early foreign language education
From 京师同文馆 (Jing shi tong wen guan) to 1949

- 京师同文馆 founded in Beijing, China during the late-Qing Dynasty (in January, 1861, Joined into 京师大学堂 in 1902)

American Presbyterian William Alexander Parsons Martin (汉名丁韪良)
Zuo Zongtang and Li Hongzhang

Zuo Zongtang

• Zuo Zongtang (Chinese Statesman and military leader)

Li Hongzhang (Politician)
Courses in Tong Wen Guan

- **Courses in Tong Wen Guan:**
  - English
  - Later on, added French, Russian, German, and Japanese.
  - as well as chemistry, medicine, machine-making, astronomy, mathematics, geography and international laws.

- Foreign language native speakers taught Chinese students foreign languages

- Chinese teachers taught foreigners Chinese
From 京师同文馆 (Jing shi tong wen guan) to 1949 2-2

• In 1937, because of Second Sino-Japanese war, Beijing University, Qinghua University and Nankai University all together moved to Yunnan province, united to a new university, named as “Southwest United University”. The Department of Foreign language was thriving and successful.

• After the war, above 3 university were back to Beijing and Tianjin. In 1946, Beijing University moved back in Beijing, Professor Zhu Guangqian was the head of the department.
When the Second Chinese-Japanese War broke out between China and Japan in 1937, 3 universities moved to Kunming, Yunnan province, and merged to Southwest United University.
1949 – 1965
Friendship with Soviet in 1950 to 1951
(Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance)

- 7 Russian language colleges
- More colleges and universities increased program on Russian Studies
- 34 universities and colleges
From 1949 to 1965

• After the domestic battle between two parties, in 1949, one party (Guo Ming dang) moved to Taiwan, whereas another party (Gong chan dang) stayed in mainland China. The new government established. In 1950, because Soviet and China signed an agreement (Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance) which Russia will support China multiple areas (e.g., economic, education). The growing numbers of Russian language schools or colleges started over the country.

• Because of needs, the government established 7 Russian colleges. In 1951, the numbers of departments of Russian studies and colleges increased to 34.
1949 - 1965

• In 1957, the Ministry of Education advocated that not only Russian studies, but also English needed to be implemented. There were 23 universities had English major program at that time. In addition, there were a few universities added more foreign languages (e.g., Spanish, Polish, Arabic, etc.).

• In 1965, due to political issue (Cultural Revolution), all universities slow down and no recruited students for almost 10 years.

• In 1971, US president Nixon visited China, English became important again. And all universities of foreign studies restarted to recruit students.
1950-1965

1950s

1957: English promoted. 23 universities had English major program. Also, a few universities added more foreign languages (e.g. Spanish, Polish, Arabic, etc.). As well as English found its way back into the junior secondary curriculum. (Hu, 2009).

1965

1965 -1976: It was a decade of chaos

No student recruitment in university level for many years.

1971: US president Nixon visited China, English became important again. All university of foreign studies resumed and restated to recruit students.
Since 1978

• In 1978, China opened door to the world. English became extremely boom since then. Without teaching materials, no well-educated teachers, they started to create their own teaching materials, and the government sent students to Europe, North America, and Australia to learn English.

• In 1981, universities of foreign studies restarted graduate program (MA and Ph.D.)
Opening up and Modernization (1977-1990)

At the University level
- Da yu zhong (Major foreign language)
- Xiao yu hong (Minor foreign language)

1978
China opened the door to the world

Gaokao resume

1981
Graduate school resumed (MA, Ph.D.)

Methods: grammatical approach

Other languages also follow with English policy

1978

English became a boom

Plentiful English schools and universities

Created their own teaching materials, edited dictionaries

MoE and other authorizations sent students and scholars to study or visit Europe, North America, Japan, Australia
Opening up and Modernization (1977-1990)

• In 1978, China opened door to the world. English became extremely boom since then. Without teaching materials, no well-educated teachers, they started to create their own teaching materials, edited various English-Chinese dictionaries. As well as the government sent students to Europe, North America, and Australia to learn English.

• In 1981, universities of foreign studies restarted graduate program (MA and Ph.D.)
Educational Reform (since 1990)

• In early 1990, there was a significant change of government policy. The economic and education rapidly developed since then.

• “In 1995, there were about 400,000 full-time secondary school English teachers and 28,000 tertiary English teachers (Maley, 1995). New language learning theories and pedagogies, notably communicative language teaching, were introduced and promoted (Hu2, 2009, p. 21).
The Number of English Teachers (1995)

English Teachers in 1995

- Secondary school English teachers (Full Time) 400,000
- University and college English teachers 28,000

(Maley, 1995; Hu2, 2009)
Foreign Language Education in 2000s

• In early 2000, it had an important chance in higher education in China. A great number of university combinations started. 2002 is a milestone of higher education. Many of foreign language departments merged to school /faculty of foreign studies.

• Only 34 universities that had foreign language major program in 1960s.

• 903 universities have English major program in 2012.
What happened with massive English boom?

• See next section
2. Current Trends and Language Policies

Multiple perspectives
2nd Folder: Current trends and language policies

- English language education at university level
- English major vs. Non-English major
- Subjects taught in English at university level
- Bilingual schools
- International schools
- Current policies of English language education
Symbolic Power

• Symbolic Power Theory: Pierre Bourdieu (1989) pointed that “symbolic power is a power of constructing reality”, it is “invisible power which can be exercised only with the complicity of those who do not want to know that they are subject to it or even that they themselves exercise it” (Bourdieu 1994; 164).
One of Chinese believes on Education

• 万般皆下品唯有读书高 (《神童诗》– 汪洙)
  
  To be a scholar is to be the top of society.
Another one of Chinese believes on Education

• 劳心者治人，劳力者治于人。（孟子）

Those who toil with their minds make others work for them those who toil with their hands work for others and serve those who use their minds.

• Mencius (BC 372 – BC 289): Philosopher

• Mencius was a Chinese philosopher who is the most famous Confucian after Confucius himself.

• Chinese people believe they can have better life if they pursue higher education.
Issues on Overwhelming English learning

• Test-focused English teaching and teacher-centered methods caused:
  • Both English teachers and students are weak in listening and speaking whereas they have better reading skills
  • Students can received full score on tests, but cannot speak English (A great numbers of Chinese students received full scores on TEFOL, GRE tests)

• Variety of English proficiency levels of Chinese students
  • Students who learned from international schools or other schools with native English speaking teachers have better oral communication skills
Current Chinese Higher Education System

Key Universities and Colleges
“985” or “211”

Regular public Universities
1166

Private and public universities
2542 (MOE, 2014)

Other miscellaneous colleges and universities
37
English Education in Higher Education

MOE China (2012)

- According to MOE, there are 1166 key universities at undergraduate level in China, and it has 903 universities have English major program. Which means 77.4% undergraduate universities have English major program. (MOE, 2012)
Compare with Chinese major program

Chinese major program
• Only 556 institutions have Chinese major program whereas 903 institutions have English major program, 47.7% universities have Chinese program.
Subjects taught in English at university level

• According to Chinese Ministry of Education (MOE) 2013-2014 data, Undergraduate Clinical Medicine Programs Taught in English for International Students

  • **52** Institutions (Medical schools)
  • **6020** students
Bilingual schools K-12 (Partial provinces)

- Beijing 8
- Guangxi 14
- Hunan 26
- Jiangsu 36
- Shanghai 34
- Shandong 28
- Shan’xi 12
- Sichuan 22
Chinese – English Bilingual Teaching Materials (K-12)
The major issues of bilingual schools

• The qualities of schools are diverse.
• Lack of qualified English teachers
• Lack of proper teaching materials
  • 《WHO EATS WHO?》 Grade 3 Science textbook
• Listening and speaking skills of students are weak
International Schools (K-12) in major cities in China

- Beijing 北京市 (233)
- Shanghai 上海市 (121)
- Guangzhou 广州市 (52)
- Wuhan 武汉市 (69)
- Xi An 西安市 (66)
- Shen Zhen 深圳市 (57)
International Universities

• New York University Shanghai
• Duke University Shanghai
• Nottingham University Ningbo China
If you don’t study English well, what future will you expect?
Current policies of English language education (Beijing) 3-1

Gaokao: from 2016, the total score of Chinese will be raised to 180 from original 150; English score will down to 100 from original 150.

Students who received full score of English in Gaokao do not need to take English course at the university.

Other cities also have similar policies related to English education.
Current policies of English language education
3-2 Elementary School Level

- 2013, MOE published 10 ways of how to reduce elementary school children’s heavy works:
  - Standard exams (Unified Examination): Grade 1, 2, and 3 should not have any Unified Examination which held at school, city, and provincial levels. From Grade 4, Unified Examination only occurs on Chinese, math, and English once a semester at school level. In addition, every subject should not have more than 2 tests each term. And the contents of test should not over syllabus.
Current policies of English language education 3–3

• From 2013, China bans English words in media: China has banned newspapers, publishers and website-owners from using foreign words – particularly English ones.
  • Shanghai seeks end to ‘Chinglish’
  • CCTV-5 Sports Channel has banned broadcasters from saying "NBA" during the NBA games.
Chinese cram school
Chinese cram school
Notes:

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