



## DEVELOPMENT AND PERSPECTIVES OF ENGLISH, AS A LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION AND LEARNING IN CHINESE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM



Maria Khan<sup>1+</sup>

Misbah Waheed<sup>2</sup>

Hong Chengwen<sup>3</sup>

Tahir Munir Butt<sup>4</sup>

Jamil Ahmad<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>International & Comparative Education Faculty of Education (FOE), Beijing Normal University-China

<sup>1</sup>Email: [maryak9@gmail.com](mailto:maryak9@gmail.com) Tel: +8618811603309

<sup>2</sup>Email: [chrzhong@bnu.edu.cn](mailto:chrzhong@bnu.edu.cn) Tel: +8613910976732

<sup>3</sup>Department of Management Sciences, COMSATS Institute of Information Technology Islamabad-Pakistan

<sup>3</sup>Email: [enr.misbahk@gmail.com](mailto:enr.misbahk@gmail.com) Tel: +9203361050218

<sup>4</sup>IAE & RD, University of Agriculture, Faisalabad (Depalpur Campus)-Pakistan

<sup>4</sup>Email: [tahirmunir2013@gmail.com](mailto:tahirmunir2013@gmail.com) Tel: 00923009468909

<sup>5</sup>Institute of Tourism and Hospitality, Cultural Heritage, University of Swat-Pakistan

<sup>5</sup>Email: [jamiltm584@gmail.com](mailto:jamiltm584@gmail.com) Tel: 00923466615836



(+ Corresponding author)

### ABSTRACT

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World has a new mania of ENGLISH learning. English as a language of learning or scholarly production and advanced studies, as well as the language of business and diplomacy has increased throughout the world but in China, its increasing trend as the language of instruction and learning in the last quarter century has received much more importance. Moreover, major developments and modifications in English language teaching have been made in last three decades. As we know, that China stood as political, social, most importantly economic and powerful socialist state throughout the world, due to the reason, Chinese leadership felt the need of the hour to have a grip on western languages especially English to compete with the contemporary super power countries. This review paper discusses a historical overview of Development and prospects of English, as language of Instruction and Learning, in Chinese Educational System and touches the present issues and trends. It originates that Chinese academia and students are giving much importance towards the communicative proficiency in their daily life. This scientific paper also dig out a logical finding that how Chinese educational System is evolving itself to meet up with the outer world and to open ways for their learners to utilize the opportunities in first world for the purpose of gaining English language proficiency.

**Contribution/ Originality:** The primary contribution of this review study is how historically English language developed in China and it made huge place in the traditional society of China. It plugs towards the prospects of English language as an instructional language in Chinese Educational system and society.

### 1. HISTORY AND PRELUDE OF ENGLISH

In the last few decades, the English language has gained significance and reputation swiftly in the People's Republic of China (PRC) (Krikpatrick, 2016) and Chinese nation accepted English language to become a part of the modern in world (Cortazzi and Jin, 1996). English is vital to endorse global interchange, assimilate technical

information and scientific proficiency, nurturing commercial advancement, and contributing in worldwide struggle (Ross, 1992). Almost 2 billion people are trying to learn English worldwide including Pakistan, India, Latin America, South East Asia, and China. Under the opening up policy program the government of PRC stepped in contemporary global modernization struggle (Ross, 1992; Maley, 1995; Cortazzi and Jin, 1996; Hu, 2002; Zhang and Zeegers, 2010) and this change introduced rule of law that head starters since grade 6 start learning English language due to which China is falling in the category of the largest English speaking nation in the world. Consequently, it has become a national, societal rather industrial esteem of every individual in Chinese society at large to acquire English adeptness (Cortazzi and Jin, 1996; Hu, 2002; Krikpatrick, 2016). In the late 1970s, English has played a vibrant role, as a dynamic connection concerning China's succeeding renovations in socio-politico and, economic concerns and as hastening contemporary advances exchanges with outer world. China is growing its contributions all over the world in the fields of economy, social and politics, because of which the trend of learning English as a second language is increasing in the mainland of China. So many business companies in Asia are spreading their business in all over the world especially in Asia, which creates jobs for locals; this fashion boosts the Chinese students to take up advantage in the form of English language as a tool for the job, also to take advantage to study abroad. English language is serving as a source of link or communication between China and other parts of the world (Maley, 1995). Many students learn English language for so many reasons, likewise in search of opportunities, for better job, to study abroad, to establish their businesses, some learn because they want to go to visit other countries. Learning foreign language always comes with challenges of new words, different grammar, and sometimes-strange pronunciation too and for the Chinese learners these concepts of grammar and pronunciation are really the uphill tasks. English as a second language for the Chinese students comes up with the unique scenario as they have tones in their own language as compared to phonetics in English and characters or symbols as compared to alphabets and a need of grammar and articles that are absent in Chinese language (Pavlik, 2012).

This study is based on detailed review and evaluation of secondary data where the previous literature teaches and studies China transition towards the acceptance of English as the language of teaching and learning. Different databases related to the language have been searched to create a clear picture of developing English as a teaching language, early and present, in the system of education in China. This scientific review study is an effort to examine the research repository yield on development and perspectives of the English; as the language of instruction in Chinese education system in China, formed at the turn of the century and to allocate the nature of this body of research. This methodical review concentrates on the research productivity published in journals internationally over last three decades. This paper construct the implication how English Language Teaching (ELT) English as a Foreign Language (EFL) established and since 1970 till 2018 and what are its perspectives and implications for the future measures of China. The areas this review encompasses are language learning developments, culture and arising situation in China.

### *1.1. Development of English Language in China*

At the end of the 1970s worldwide academic community had become progressively acquainted with research in learning foreign language in China (Wenfeng and Gao, 2008) but before this period there is found less attention towards the development of English Language in China (Bolton and Graddol, 2012). Chinese history in itself is keeping very strange attraction for outer world especially for European and Western world. Many different aspects of Chinese culture, which have attracted the West, are the utter size of its population, its mysterious culture, and the difficulty of its language. At the same time, Western world has attracted China with its technological advancements, its traditional miscellany inside the slight universe, and among other dialects English has developed itself as the lingua franca of the world. The desire of China to join the World Trade Organization (WTO) in

2001, China has welcomed and listened politely to leaders of Western countries as they gave their views on democracy and human rights (Lam, 2002; Bolton and Graddol, 2012).

### *1.2. Establishment of language Translating programs*

In past there was less responsiveness can be found towards the growth of English language in China but it has a complex historical account (Bolton and Graddol, 2012). It started growing since early years of the 17<sup>th</sup> century through the Chinese pidgin English period which was cultural and linguistic contact between China and outer world (Bolton, 2002; Bolton, 2003; Bolton and Graddol, 2012). English learning has been started from the 'missionary schools and the thirteen Christian colleges' which are today turned into prominent institutions of higher education in China (Bolton and Graddol, 2012). Establishment first interpreters' college of Tongwen Guan in Peking during mid-nineties was the first conscious effort of PRC towards teaching English (Adamson, 2002; Lam, 2002; Bolton and Graddol, 2012). In 1978, it was first time a program for 'Converters and Interpreters' was initiated in 'Beijing Foreign Language Institute'. The program was later established in 'Beijing Foreign Studies University' which is a prominent school for interpretation. A team of US international Communication agency has expressed their opinion very positively by visiting Chinese five cities, many of the Chinese educational institutions and greatly welcomed the China's reasons for learning English. A summary, of the American visit on the Chinese wish of entering in the world of English Language learners, was express in two ways, firstly, the Chinese vision to learn English predominantly as an indispensable instrument that expedite admittance to contemporary developments and Secondly, to promote the language of business, trade and socio political indulgent with other outer world and Chinese nation (Cowan *et al.*, 1979). In two prominent institutions of the People's Republic of China, the State Education Commission and British Council, to learn English as a second language is obligatory because, it has the status of scientific language and language of business, transnational tourism and transportation. The most of programs are in English which bound them to learn English and other languages are fall short of this facilitation of superiority (Bowers, 1995).

### *1.3. Status of Learning English Language in different Parts of China*

Geographically China is very vast and has different regions administratively. So the thinkers and educationists have took this thing in mind that before getting on the educational reforms or any academic change the difficulty in regard to geographical construction of China should be considered (Maley, 1995). In far flung and less developed areas of china learning and teaching English language is huge different as compare to big cities which highlight the regional discrepancy (Hu, 2002). However, in different parts of PRC, there lie adequate wide-ranging accounts of the learning of English to remind us of the pendulum swings of China's history this century (Maley, 1995). In 1954 Russian language replaced the English language in Chinese schools' curricula and stood the single foreign language of instruction in Chinese schools. However, in very next year the Ministry of Education resumed English as the language of instruction in secondary schools. In 1962 English language was made part and parcel of the entrance exam for higher secondary education that established the prominence of English. This step launched a good stage in China for English Language Teaching (Price, 1971). In 1902 it was first time during Qing Dynasty English was included in the syllabus of schools till the time of the nationalists government (Adamson, 2002; Lam, 2002; Bolton and Graddol, 2012).

#### *1.1.3. Establishment of English Language during Cultural Revolution*

The Chinese pendulum swung, and the progress made in the early 1960s was swept aside by the Cultural Revolution, which began in 1966 and lasted for ten dreadful years. English was .again banned in schools and it really interrupted the educational and economic evolution of China (Hu, 2002). During the Cultural Revolution, when workers' propaganda teams for the spreading of Mao Tse-Tung's thoughts came to China's colleges, classes

were stopped altogether, and the students travelled instead all over the country in order to take part in criticism and debate and to exchange revolutionary experiences". Learning a foreign language objective and impulse was entirely became a challenge (Ross, 1992; Hu, 2002). Officially schools, colleges, universities were barred and curricula was terminated to flourish in the educational system of China (Hu, 2002).

#### *1.4. Development of English Language after Cultural Revolution*

In the year 1978, a vital conference on English as language of instruction for another time established eminence of English language in Chinese schools for the subject of mathematics and Chinese. Till the end decade English subject became the obligatory to enter for graduate studies and electronics mass media was broadcasting English learning programs to fulfil the English learning needs of masses. For one thing, China's own language is liable to become of more global importance in the future that replacing the oligarchy of Chinese and Spanish. Nevertheless, at this stage in the last few years of the millennium, it appeared that at the beginning of the new era China wanted it badly for industrial, scientific and commercial expansion to become biggest economic giant on the face of the earth (Boyle, 1980). To deal with this purpose China was in need of good amount of English Proficient in quantity and quality (Maley, 1995).

#### *1.5. Perspectives of English as a Language of Instruction in China*

Culture is one of the important components to learn language, hence without understanding a culture English teaching or learning is not effectively conceivable (Fu, 1986; Hu, 2002). Recently, most of teachers learnt, taught English, and completed their higher education in China, due to which they lack experience of living abroad, this instance brought unfavorable state in the development of the English language teaching (ELT) (Hu, 2002). Government of People republic of China (PRC) instigated English Teachers Training program under which to experience English culture English teachers were sent to abroad, but comparatively with the aggregate of English teachers in China this transportation of teachers was very small (Zhou, 2014). Actually this program was costly and lack of funds remained an issue that seems to be resolved in this future (Neave, 2000).

#### *1.6. Development of English as the Language of Instruction for Teaching*

The most significant change in English Language Teaching (ELT) in China is the rise in the number of teachers and learners (Maley, 1995). In 1957, there were only 843 full time middle school teachers, of English in the whole China, compared to 1995 figures of about 400,000 middle school teachers of English and approximately 28,000 at tertiary level (ibid). In the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century above 57 million regular students in Chinese schools and universities were being taught English (Zhou and Chen, 1991) and 150 million students occasionally were learning English or more conservative estimates of around 200 million users of English (Yong and Campbell, 1995). This development of English is informally supported in a variety of ways, e.g. through the media. National and provincial TV channels show the news, films, and other programmes in English (as well as in other languages). There are English lessons broadcast on TV and radio, which attracted large number of audiences. The English language newspaper *China Daily* has a large circulation nationwide, while Hong Kong has a thriving English language press. In parks in many large cities, 'English corners' have spontaneously sprung up, where people meet every week to practice English informally. After the inception of China ELT growth has been passed through many ups and downs (ibid). ELT course books should be taught through assistive Audio Visual (AV) aids like multimedia software (Cortazzi and Jin, 1996). This software is very expedient to use that students can learn English even at home (Warschauer, 2000; Lin, 2005). Hence, for the purpose of national advancement, transformation, English language has been extensively established as a practical instrument. Sometimes in conflict with the view that English might also be a pathway to individual and cultural transformation, a spiritual pollution, harmful for Chinese identity

(Ward *et al.*, 1995). Chinese Education is still going through the sway of Confucianism but modifying itself according to the patterns of American system of education (Pavlik, 2012).

## 2. ENGLISH LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION, TRAINING AND MARKET IN CHINA

With China's economy and internationalization advancing, there is perpetually an accumulative appeal for acquisition of English and the occurrence of an English language learning business was outcome of the incredible market claim (Krikpatrick, 2016). The business functions on a market appliance, where the resource, claim, struggle, and value, etc, interact in influencing its development. Certainly, that the market will expand by each day, and fascinate fresh stakeholders. However, in advance making any share, they must be aware that branding competition will be the theme of the market development, where teaching approaches, foreign faculty teachers accessibility, scientific investigation for enhancing training programs, and industrial approach will make a big difference, when the training quality will be guaranteed (Jiancheng, 2010). The status of the English language has been shifted from foreign to second language due to the usage of English as language of instruction (Maoying, 2003). In the point of fact, vital variation brought by inclusion of the English as language of instruction in primary schools. The strategic standpoint and supplementary emphasis of Chinese regime on teaching English will readily establish English as second language in country (Hui, 2001). New researchers have recommendations for learning English language from the primary level in their chinese schools instead starting from kindergarten (Yadong, 2016).

### 2.1. Challenges and Consequences of EFL and ELT in China

The cumulative economic and political involvement of China has expanded education of English majors, who are, on the other hand, affected by the worldwide and domestic fluctuations as well. Since the launch of opening up policy of contemporary China for embracing the outer world and modernization a huge concentration on teacher education is being made (Hu, 2002). There are many errors in English learning materials. Although there are no spelling errors, there are many non-standard English words. English learning materials do not teach native English. The capabilities of authors are limited, because they are native Chinese, without the possibility of translating the English environment, which misleads students from generation to generation, if no one can correct the errors. Krikpatrick (2016) in his book 'English Language Education Policy in Asia' mentions some policy issues and challenges are appeared for the future industry of China. English language expansion opportunities and activities are at rise in China. In universities student organize English language clubs or activities in the form English corner groups, to improve their English language skills (Krikpatrick, 2016). Prospectively in few primary and middle schools ELT would be used for teaching few courses (Hu and Alsagoff, 2010) and about thirty four Chinese universities currently offered varied purely and semi English taught or mixed with Chinese instruction, programs and courses in different disciplines (Krikpatrick, 2016). According to Bolton and Graddol (2012) recently, English learners in China are over reaching one third of the China's total population is learning English language due to the swift increase of the private English language learning institutes. This situation raised many sociolinguistics inclinations of English language in contemporary Chinese culture. One of the most important "link between money and English has been imbricated in the discourse of English in the Middle kingdom since the days of 'pidgin'(from business') English, but alive and well in current discourses, not least because of the perceived instrumental and pragmatic attractions of the language" (Bolton and Graddol, 2012). He further expresses that English language has more prominent role to play in China without having official status as compare to those countries where it has official status like Pakistan or India, which is the point to ponder (Krikpatrick, 2016). So, there is need to revise the language policies in higher education learning institutions to bring a multilingual realm to connect China through education and research (Kirkpatrick, 2014). Since 2010 above 200 Chinese academic journals are publishing exclusively in English (Montgomery, 2013). It is not only confined to the language of Educational institutions' publication or journals in China but also became the language of electronic media and

print media as well. English is used to broadcast and print varied programs (Gil and Adamson, 2011; Krikpatrick, 2016). Tourism is a prominent reason to expand behind the exchange of language, one of the biggest establishing industries in China and providing a good chance to the Chinese people to improve their language proficiency with native speakers (Krikpatrick, 2016). Apart from this modern music industry is appeared to recognize Chinese language by adding Chinese expressions and verses in musical numbers to make their compositions appealing and attractive for international listeners (ibid). English language has become an important part of the social life of people, as it starts interrupting individual learner's life from primary school to getting jobs or doing business which can be summarized in Zhang and Zeegers (2010) words "part of what it means to be a Chinese citizen". In the neoliberal free market south Asian states are tend to learn English language at the expense of their local languages (Sah, 2018).

### 3. CONCLUSIONS, SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Is English fashion good or horrific in case of China? Is English language washing away the Chinese language? It is not like that, Chinese language (the native language) is the life for Chinese people, but English is the world's second language, which has become an important part of China's educational, political, and economic system. Chinese History of culture and its different philosophies of learning and teaching have definitely influenced the English teaching and learning in China. There is need to improve teaching English in colleges by doing scientific research and suggest to English teachers better teaching strategies. Different studies can be conducted in this regard for instance on instructional approaches, assessment methods, innovative course books and outstanding workbooks or manuals from abroad, English instructional methods and courses etc. English language will definitely contribute in China to become the giant of technologies and trade because only ELT is not adequate, but most importantly quality of ELT matters. Teaching English in China should not only develop the reading skill, rather it should develop the listening and speaking skills as well. This intention could be appropriate in classrooms students are taught about culture abroad as well. Currently, it is additionally imperative for learners to maneuver and advance their communication aptitude. This is the right stage we can alleviate the occurrence of "deaf English" and "dumb English" (mean learners may not correctly understand and speak but only read and write English). Teaching English should be extensively funded because it needs more resources to be used but with provision of very few funds in response. Weak Financial backing is a permanent fragile feature of teaching and a difficulty attached with specifically teaching English. This scientific study concluded that English language proficiency craze is increasing in China under the purpose of seriousness towards becoming vocal about global issues like, education, human rights, climate change, hunger, poverty, disease etc. China wants to share its culture and wants to adapt with other global instances. Currently, English is used to solve global issues because there lays an international pull for its usage. Consequently, English language represents an optimistic solution or approach for the recovering prospect, of the shared problems.

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