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The 'Real' Outcomes of Language Learning: The History of English Language Education in China

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Cover Page Footnote

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Introduction

The development of the English Language Education (ELE) in China has been in place since before the seventeenth century with the emergence of 'Pidgin English.' Pidgin means 'business' in Chinese pronunciation, and it was a popular trade jargon term in Shanghai between the British merchants and the local Chinese (Li 2017, 46). The formal education for the English language did not start until after the 1900s during the late Qing era. From over 100 years ago all the way till today, many key issues in China have been linked in correlation with the development of ELE. Overall, ELE was shaped by history and politics. Not only was ELE a tool for the West to colonize other linguistic cultures, it was also used by Chinese government to fight against colonization and imperialism in the 20th century. However, ELE in modern China has been associated with the idea of nationalism as the current Chinese ruling party uses it as a means for self-promotion. To discuss factors that shape the ELE in China, and to demonstrate the policy changes developed by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) which ultimately boast linguistic nationalism. This paper first looks at three different English textbooks in terms of their contents and discovers that the English language, rather than achieving its means of colonization as feared by Chinese society, has however, helped the learners come to a deeper sense of self-understanding in terms of their cultural, linguistic, and ethnical identities.

History of English Language Education (ELE)

Late Qing Era (1900-1912)

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in China has a long history since the late Qing dynasty, taught by two, missionaries and Chinese government. Western countries tried to colonize China with English language learning by establishing protestant 'Christian colleges' (Bolton 2002, 189) in an attempt to expand their cultural influence. Meanwhile, China developed a strategic way of learning English to fight against the forces of Western colonization during the learning process. This conflict over the use of EFL has existed since the late Qing and lasted until the modern period, which the modern period will be demonstrated later on this paper. While the Western missionaries viewed English as the essential path through which Chinese souls could be brought to God (Yang 2000, 1), the other group who started a different way of the English language formal education was Chinese reformers. In 1903, English entered the national secondary school curriculum as a required course in the hope of empowering the nation with Western technologies through the learning of English language (1). With these different purposes in mind, both parties developed the processes differently.

Firstly, the Western missionaries started missionary education to battle the Chinese for dominance in education. They preached that the traditional Chinese culture was declining (Gu 2009, 29). By suppressing Chinese values and promoting Western and Christian values, missionaries aimed to convert the Chinese populations to a conventional Western belief system. They believed that they would only be able to assimilate China as a whole through educational and cultural impacts (29). Moreover, their form of the ELE was deemed to socially reconstruct Chinese society as its goal was to facilitate the modernization of China in a Western way (Hu and Adamson 2012, 5).

At the same time, Chinese reformers introduced the New Type Education (*xin shi jiao yu*) by enforcing English to be one of the three mandatory subjects, along with Chinese and Mathematics, in schools in 1903 (Bolton 2002, 200). With employing both languages, English and Chinese, as mandatory subjects, the officials believed that this bilingual approach could maintain China's moral and social structures in its tradition (Gu 2009, 28). The purpose of implementing the New Type Education was to treat the English language as a linguistic device to learn military knowledge from the Western countries and use it to strengthen the weaponry equipment in China. It was the officials' rooted belief that despite its technology drawback, China was better than the Western nations (28). ELE was thus, merely a tool to actualize nationalist resolution. With this goal in mind, not all students were allowed to study English. They were carefully chosen in all schools for linguistic study in terms of a background check, honesty, reliability, and especially their Chinese language capabilities (28). Only those with strong Chinese language skills would be selected. Therefore, since they were two completely opposite types of education systems, most Chinese students in the late Qing period were influenced in two separate ways: those who studied in the missionary schools were more westernized, as the society generally considered going to missionary schools a symbol of prestige; and those who studied in Chinese system under the late Qing government were more conservative, as they took the utilitarian approach when they learned English.

Republican Era (1912-1949)

When the Qing dynasty was overthrown by Chinese reformers, with whom the original intention was to strengthen the dynasty, the Republican era began in 1912, where ELE increased its social status. During the Republican era, EFL obtained more attention as its learning was no longer a mission to reconstruct China, but rather, it was an added layer of social prestige to an individual's status in society. To begin, John Dewey, one of the most influential Western philosophers and educators in the early 20th century, came to China to lecture and

promote his academic theories (Hu and Adamson 2012, 5). Under his famous democratic theory of education that advocated a child-centered ideology, English became a core subject in secondary schools, which took its place among other mainstays in Mathematics and Chinese (6). This was a result of much campaigning by three of his most famous students, Hu Shi, Tao Xingzhi, and Chen Heqin, who prepared teachers through applying his child-centered philosophy (6). The aim of ELE was to prepare students' abilities to read and translate in foreign languages (6). While ELE was modeled toward a pragmatic direction, the English language being taught varied greatly across the nation due to an insufficient number of English resources, including various teacher qualifications and material supplies. For example, students who studied in the city possessed better English language skills than those who studied in rural areas. This resulted in various levels of proficiency in English Language Learner's (ELL) linguistic achievements in China.

From 1912 to 1949, the English language experienced some changes in trends due to some changing public opinions. Up until the 1920s, English was one of the main subjects in the secondary schools in China, as China was still under the influence of John Dewey (6). When the Kuomintang Party (KMT) took power in 1927, the English language became an element of disunity due to the upsurge of nationalism (6) caused by the May Thirtieth Incident. This event saw English policemen shoot at students and demonstrators protesting on Nanjing Road in Shanghai on May 30th, 1925. The aftermath of this incident quickly caused the public to identify the whole event as a representation of "imperialist aggression and oppression" (Wang 2012, 169). Here, the concept of "anti-imperialism" became tangible to the general public which led to anti-foreign sentiments. The protests and riots resulting from this event halted the prominence of the English language and decreased its status which coincided with the rise of anti-imperialism. The event as a whole led to the reduction of time allotted to learning English in the curriculum (Hu and Adamson 2012, 6). Despite that, a large number of young people continued to study English, as it opened up a wider selection of job opportunities, and an increasing number of jobs required English fluency. For example, in 1935, the telecommunication department in the Shanghai city was looking to hire wireless-telephone operators and required its applicants to be fluent in both Chinese and English (*Shen Bao* 1935). This demonstrated that English was deemed a necessary skill in most average- or well-paid jobs even when Chinese society was in its nationalist movement. The overall mood around ELE during the Republican era as a whole was relatively liberal throughout China.

Mao Zedong Era (1949-1977)

From 1949 to 1990, China's foreign language education experienced many changing policy directives (Bolton 2002, 193) due to both external and internal political changes. Here however, focus will be placed on the internal aspect of said issue. To begin with, when Mao Zedong came to power in 1949, the status and policy of English changed dramatically due to both of his traditional belief and the changing diplomatic relationships with the Western countries. The changes in the status and education policy of English could be classified in three different time periods: 1949-1960, 1961-1966, and 1967 to present day. To begin with, two main elements contributed to the decline of the status of the English language from 1949 to 1960. One being assistance provided by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) in rebuilding China as a country (Hu and Adamson 2012, 7), which boosted the status of the Russian language in Chinese society. At the same time, a number of English-speaking countries refused to recognize the People's Republic of China (PRC) as the newly established country led by CCP, which resulted in the decrease in the status of the English language (8). Changes began to occur from 1961-1966 in terms of the status of the English language and the Sino-Soviet relationships. In 1961, ELE was promoted again by Chinese government due to the failure of the Great Leap Forward movement and the Sino-Soviet split (9). Given that the nation's revolutionary movement failed, especially in alignment with the collapsed collaboration with the Soviet Union, China again promoted English to achieve social and economic efficiency. This demonstrated that when the status of the Russian language declined, the status of the English language rose. Chinese officials realized that in order to succeed in the national task of economic construction, learning English was a must. Due to the open attitude toward the English language and the English-speaking nations, English came to be the main foreign language in school curricula (9) since the Republican era. However, when the year of 1966 arrived, Mao launched the Cultural Revolution Movement in China in hope of achieving a classless, socialist society. Not only were those who spoke English denounced as traitors, also, in the first couple of years during the movement, "all broadcasts in foreign languages were banned, all imported foreign books forbidden, all ELT (English Language Teaching) program[s] were removed from the secondary curriculum ... formal education system ceased to function" (Hu 2002, 31). English was the target of denunciation, as it was deemed to be the source of imperialism.

The turning point for ELE started in 1968 when Mao made a speech in Beijing University to encourage the public to continue their learning in ELE (Hu and Adamson 2012, 10), along with the diplomatic visit to China paid by the president of the United States, Richard Nixon, in 1972 (10). Even when the English language courses resumed, minimal teaching or learning went on, as the

quality of ELE was at its lowest, and the teaching pedagogy was mainly teacher-centered and grammar-translation (Hu 2002, 31). At this point of ELE, it was as though the aim of its learning had returned to being the sole purpose of national reconstruction. English Language Teaching (ELT) during the Mao era was characterized by the inculcation of political expressions and an extreme lack of understanding of the English cultures (Yang 2000, 10). In essence, the status of the English language during the Mao era fluctuated in accordance to Mao's launching of a campaign to orchestrate a more diplomatic relationship with the west. This very well demonstrated the concept that English was merely a tool for reconstruction purposes in China.

Reform and Opening-Up Era (1978-1999)

When Deng Xiaoping came to power in 1978, after realizing the errors of political directives that resulted in economic backwardness, he announced the policy of Reform and Opening-Up. With the growth of China in mind, a switch in focus from the class struggles to economic prosperity was demanded. This subsequently opened China as a viable option for foreign investments. The intent of this new strategy was to transform China into a more developed nation with an economy rivalling those the United States, Japan and, other major European countries. Part of the economic reform was to embrace ELE and thus, opened its door to the outside world, especially to the English-speaking countries. Thereupon, Deng heightened the role of English in formal education systems and advocated quality teaching (Hu and Adamson 2012, 11). While Mao's political agenda focused on class struggle during the mid-20th century, Deng engaged in national and economic reconstructions, leading Mao's egalitarian approach to ELT abandoned. Hereupon, the utilitarian orientation became dominant (Hu 2005, 8). Therefore, in the early 1980s, the English language started to receive more attention in the national curriculum (Bolton and Botha 2015, 192). This led to the increase of the social status of the English language, which has continued to flourish in the Chinese education system from then to onwards.

When looking back at China's modern history in the 20th century, despite the drastic changes to the status of the English language and its education, the perception toward English was generally similar. All governments in all eras viewed "English as the gateway to national modernization" (Yang 2000, 21). In other words, while English was a tool for international understanding and for individuals' social and economic mobility, ELE in China was a result of the quest for modernization and the interplay of Western values and Chinese traditions (21). However, when one intentionally undermines the sociocultural element of a foreign language, for example, using Chinese cultural contexts as a means of

delivering ELE, the overall outcome frankly becomes compromised. Pedagogically speaking, it is nearly impossible to separate contents from contexts. For instance, if a Chinese student were to study abroad in the United States in the mid-20th century, meaning that this student has previously received some English language learning within the Chinese education system, this student usually could not so much as order food accurately. This was due to the lack of Western cultural contexts that were taught in English education in China. That being said, foreign culture should be taught along with languages in not just the utilitarian method that China has been implementing, but in a way that would be useful for proper communication and usage.

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in the modern Chinese history has also shown various differences among different time periods. During the Republican era, EFL was marked with inequality, advantages and disadvantages, and elitism. Being fluent in English was seen as an advantage for greater job opportunities and higher social status, whereas individuals would be at a disadvantage if they did not know English. During the later period when Mao came to power, EFL was presented with the categorization of classes in China. As class was an important factor when it came to the Communist China under Mao's ruling, the English language was a tool used to achieve the goal of a modernized, yet classless society. What became of today's ELE in China did not start until after the policy of Reform and Opening-Up during Deng's reign. Here the English language is again seen as symbol of status, a marker of inequality used to separate the different social classes. The idea of inequality was brought back into the forefront. It was in the late 20th century that EFL has started popularizing in not just China, but in the Asian countries, along with the ideal that everyone should speak English. English as the newly emerged global language becomes the ideal way of communication in a globalized world, which motivates people to learn English.

English Textbook Analysis

Three English textbooks will be discussed in the following arguments in order to properly examine the developments of the English language in China. Each one of the textbooks will be from a different time period that was ruled by a different political governmental leader at the time. The first textbook was published in the early years of the Republican era in 1913. It was during a time when the status of the English language was climbing to reach new heights in Chinese society. The Chinese population was warming up to exploring concepts of Western philosophy. The second textbook was published in 1974 during the Mao era. The social and political backgrounds to the publication of this textbook

were more complicated when compared to the former. The latter was published in the midst of a national movement launched by Mao Zedong as an instrument to his propaganda. Last but not least, the third textbook was published in 1978. While the third textbook was published only four years after the second one, it symbolized the end of the oppression of ELE in Chinese history, as well as the beginning of a new page for the modern China.

Examination of the First English Textbook Published in 1913

To begin with, the first textbook that will be examined is *An Elementary Composition for Chinese Students* by Fong F. Sec that was published in the beginning of the Republican era, 1913. The textbook is divided into two parts: the essentials of the English grammars and the outlines and suggestions for composition. According to the preface on the textbook, it states that the goal of this textbook is restricted for students who were only learning English in China during the Republican time (Fong 1913, ii). In part one, the selected grammar inquiry is mainly focused on the aspects that are especially difficult for Chinese students to use and understand (i). As for part two, the author states that writing is only hard when people do not know what to write (ii). Thereupon, the contents are intended as suggestive topics or materials that are composed with tales and objects students are familiar with (ii). This shows that toward the end of the late Qing period and at the beginning of the Republican time, while using ELE to reconstruct and modernize China was its ultimate goal, the approach taken by the government was not as utilitarian as it was during China's later periods. When the textbook asks students to construct sentences or to show examples, the message of the questions is mostly neutral and it concentrates on children's daily basis. The outline of the lessons in part one of the book consists of providing abstract concepts, asking readers to redefine and how to further explore the concepts. After the teacher pedagogically delivers the concepts and provides examples, students would practice individually to check for understanding. For example, questions usually focus on developing students' understanding of a concept:

The trees grow ... In the first sentence, what is said of the trees?
 What is the predicate of the first sentence ... Just as we have seen a
 subject may be enlarged by adding modifiers, so a predicate may be
 enlarged by modifiers. Thus, we may have:
 The trees grow *beautifully*.
 The trees grow *by year*...
In the sentences below, point out each predicate and its modifiers.
 The student writes well. (11)

One concept is broken into parts and various questions in order to deepen students' impression of the particular concept. Upon the presumption that students should pick up a valid foundation of English grammar, students learn how to write compositions in different forms in part two, including fables, comparative essays, and letters in both narrative and descriptive ways. Students have the opportunities to read a particular form of composition, then with a picture and a prompting question, students would compose their own compositions (113). Moreover, the compositions provided in the textbook also help the students to enhance their knowledge from a practical perspective. For instance, they would be shown and asked questions in regard to plants and animals, as the author has taken into consideration that China was heavily agricultural based. The theoretical and practical knowledge of the nature could eventually come into use for the students. To help with student understanding of various concepts in the textbook, it incorporates illustrations of characters and backgrounds in the late Qing fashions, including hairstyles and clothing. Overall, since China was under John Dewey's influence in 1912 as mentioned above, the textbook is child-centered, intending to enhance pupils' both "personal and intellectual development" by presenting its contents in an "integrated holistic" manner throughout the learning process (Hu and Adamson 2012, 3). By 1913, the status English held had been steadily rising. It is important to keep in mind that at the time, English was seen as a form of prestige for the middle to upper class. This, in combination with the impact John Dewey had for education in China, led to a relatively liberal view toward Western culture. Therefore, with it in mind, this textbook was created to analyze the process of learning, and help students develop the English language as a useful skill for individual advancement in the early Republican era.

Examination of the Second English Textbook Published in 1974

The second textbook that will be examined was published in 1974 during the Cultural Revolution. As mentioned above, since Mao launched Cultural Revolution in 1966 in hope of eliminating imperialism and achieving a classless socialist society, not only was ELE, the entire Chinese education system ceased to function. Although formal education was permitted to resume back in 1968, since the Ministry of Education was forced to close down, different provinces in China were publishing different versions of the English textbooks. This paper will look at the one that was published in Shanghai, one of the more politically-influenced regions. The main idea of this textbook, in short, is that all Chinese people should continually criticize Lin Piao and Confucius under the leadership of Chairman Mao (*Shanghai Elementary School English Textbook* 1974, 19). Since it was during the period of the Mao cult (Vogel 2011, 377), the structure of the textbook begins with the "Quotations from Chairman Mao Tsetung", then six lessons, and

ends with “Expressions used in Criticizing Lin Piao and Confucius”. Each lesson consists of a short paragraph as the lesson itself, students review “New Words and Expression” after the end of each lesson, which is mostly political phrases about the Cultural Revolution movement. Afterwards, students would also review “Notes to the Text”, which consists of sentences from the lessons for students for further discussion. This textbook does not aim to help students with improving their linguistic abilities, but rather, its intent is to politically manipulate the students into doing what the CCP wanted the public to do. For example, in lesson four called “Learn from Huang Shuai”, it is about a few students, whom are assumed to be approximately the same age as the students who were studying this textbook in 1974, gather together to talk about the revolutionary spirits and what to learn from Huang Shuai (7). This creates a false illusion for students that when they gather together, they would only be good Little Red Guards, which are a semi-militarized force led by students, to the CCP when they talk about revolutions and obey the CCP principles. This lesson also mentions that students should study theories (Marxism – Leninism – Mao Tsetung Thought) in order to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius well (9). This forms another false illusion for students that everything they learn in school is only for the preparation of being a good CCP member, and they should devote themselves to the betterment of not the government, but specifically the CCP itself.

Overall, although learners might be able to speak in English about the criticism of Lin Piao and Confucius, they cannot carry on a proper conversation in English using what they learn. Furthermore, the lesson structures are tedious with no knowledge of morality or practicality conveyed. Every lesson criticizes Lin Piao and Confucius in one way or another while promoting the leadership of Chairman Mao and the CCP. Since it is mainly a teacher-centered approach to encourage students to memorize textbook contents, little attention is paid to a pedagogical method. The textbook uses the approach of ideological transfer with the intent of passing on the “prevailing values and beliefs” (Hu and Adamson 2012, 3) of the social culture during the Cultural Revolution period in order to adapt to the CCP’s policy. This textbook also acts as evidence that the ideas of the CCP were being implemented, as they claimed to rule with democratic features using the system of democratic centralism, which is to choose representation for each revolutionary class in accordance with its status in the state. They, however, used the same tactic as the ancient imperial period by brainwashing their population into doing what the authority figures desired. Under this practice, since students were manipulated into criticizing Lin Piao and Confucius in the Cultural Revolution movement, they were easily mistaken by others in the later eras as a supporting political force of the CCP. As students were manipulated in politics,

the real aim of ELE was however, not achieved, as their language proficiency was at the lowest point in the system (Yang 2000).

Examination of the Third English Textbook Published in 1978

The third textbook that will be examined was the first English language textbook published in 1978 right after the end of the Cultural Revolution when China was moving toward transformation and looking to embrace the outside world. This textbook, like the first textbook that was published in the early Republican era, uses a more student-centered approach, in which ELE is once again seen as a process of learning for individual development. This phenomenon indicates that the higher the status of the English language, the more minimized politicization in its textbook contents, and the more focus is geared toward the development of pedagogical practices that were in place (Adamson 2004). Also, unlike Mao, who favoured educational equity, Deng put educational efficiency above educational equity and favoured stratification in education to prepare different types of skilled personnel for the economy (Hu 2005). In relation to ELE, this textbook is illustrated and thicker compared to the one published in 1974 during the Cultural Revolution movement, when students did not have daily classes. The structure of the textbook is divided into an introductory section, a total of seventeen lessons, “Words and Expressions” after each lesson, and “Rhymes and Songs.” In the introductory section, “Look and Say,” illustrations were provided which corresponded to the vocabulary being taught. When looking at the illustrations closely, all characters or objects are found to be within the Chinese contexts. For example, when the key term is “flag”, the picture is shown to be a Chinese flag, without even indicating it to be ‘Chinese’ (*Daily Ten Year-System* 1978, 1). In this case, both the People’s Education Press (PEP) and students were shown to be in a closed nationalistic environment, in which Western culture is still not fully accepted by the population. Moreover, lessons one to six teach students about the alphabet and basic greetings using English. The sentence structures are tedious with no variations:

- A: Good morning.
- B: Good morning.
- A: How are you?
- B: Fine, thank you. And you?
- A: I’m fine, too. (18)

This however, when comparing to the previous textbook that was published during the Cultural Revolution movement in 1976, is more useful in terms of delivering practical knowledge that students could employ outside of China. Some songs are also incorporated in between the lessons to reinforce key concepts and phrases in a creative way. For instance, right after the dialogue above, it follows

by a song called “Good Morning” (20). By repeating the lyric “Good morning to you” (20), students can better memorize the phrase. Lesson eleven is when the conversations among the characters become one or two sentences longer and more complicated. This is also the lesson when characters other than Chinese children appear:

Jim: This is Tom. He’s my friend.

This is May. She’s my sister.

Tom: Hello, May.

May: Hello, Tom.

Jim: Let’s go to school together.

Tom & May: All right. (48)

However, their dialogue proceeds exactly the same as the ones among Chinese children. This shows that the Chinese population at this point still lacked an apt understanding of the foreign culture. Although the PEP was perhaps able to depict the stereotypical white children in terms of their faces and clothing, they did not understand their cultures. This creates the illusion to the Chinese students who were learning this textbook that white children from the foreign countries were culturally similar to them, only with different names and skin colours. In terms of political contents, the first political figure’s name is not mentioned in the textbook until the last lesson, when there is a photo of a girl holding a picture of Tian An Men Square (76). Even so, the textbook only briefly mentions that “Beijing is the capital of China. / Chairman Hua is in Beijing. / We love Chairman Hua. / We love Beijing” (76). Although this textbook is designed to restore the formal ELE in China reacting from a politicized national movement, it contains some political messages carrying the central principles of the CCP. For instance, when the characters talk about their parents’ professions, they are all in working classes, working as nurses, factory workers, or drivers. This demonstrated that with the goal of becoming a socialist society in mind, the CCP continued to link the English language with the idea of imperialism. Thereupon, anything that was not of working class was discouraged. This showed that while the CCP was gradually loosening its ideological transfer to the public (Hu and Adamson 2012), English was still deemed a vehicle for national purpose. Overall, as this textbook is shown to be stressed on supporting national construction to the students, it also does not overlook the political dimension.

The Similarities and Differences of ELE in Chinese History in the 20th Century

Upon examining the three textbooks that were published in the Republican era, the Mao era, and the post Open-Door era, they all indicate some forms of similarities. Firstly, they all highlight that the overarching changes of the status of

the English language and its education in China happening within the 66 years of political and social turbulence are closely associated with the general political trends and movements. The status of the English language becomes higher when state policy weighs it with positive views; the status becomes 'lower' when people find that the cultural and political threats are greater than the technological benefits it brings (Adamson 2004). Secondly, the pedagogical strategy of grammar translation is used in all three textbooks. While grammar-translation emphasizes on reading, writing, and grammar, this strategy shows that the core purpose of English was not to be used for oral communication despite whichever governmental party was ruling the nation. Interestingly, this grammar-translation method was applied to both the traditional study of classical Chinese and the English language learning in the formal education system. This illustrates that Chinese people apply the method of how they learn the classical Chinese characters to learn a foreign language. Thirdly, throughout the three different textbooks that are examined on this paper, all of which employed only the Chinese contexts to deliver a foreign language in an attempt to absorb only the linguistic part, not the cultural part that English is associated with. Fourthly, this is closely related to the previous point, which is how the English language is perceived and performed in Chinese society as a whole have been following the theoretical approach of the *ti-yong relation*. This was a theory created during the late Qing period, where Chinese learning for *ti* (essence), and Western learning for *yong* (utility) in order to maintain the instrumental values of English and keep out its cultural values (Bianco 2009). This highlights the main issue of English in China, which is the factor of politicization. Due to the mechanism through which English is promoted, institutionalization, where students were taught to learn English a certain way, was forced on the English language learners. This ultimately limited their organic learning process. Chinese educators actively manipulated the English language in its forms, rather than being absorbed by its cultures.

However, while the textbook that was published in the Republican era and the one published in the post Open-Door era are relatively similar in terms of their pedagogical methods and contents, the one that was published in the Mao era is distinctively different from the rest mainly due to the influence of Mao's educational philosophy. Mao believed that education was a propaganda tool for the ruling class to serve its interests (Kwong 1979). Since during the imperial period, education was controlled by the landlords, and receiving education meant the ideology of becoming one (Kwong 1979). Mao thus attempted to gear the focus of education in the socialist society toward the interests of workers and peasants in order to create the "red and expert" individuals (44). Redness was the Communist outlook, and expertise was the possession of theoretical and practical

proficiency of Marxism, current events, and political issues (44). Mao stressed on the significance of holding the right political viewpoint, especially when it came to educating the younger generations. This resulted in this textbook being just another propaganda tool for the Communist spirit in China. In addition, because of Mao's emphasis on the practicality of knowledge, he found years of education should be cut short due to the fact that school curricula contained too many unnecessary courses which had no values for Chinese peasants (48). This explains the shortened span of knowledge in the English language textbook and the reason as to why it only contained 20 pages, while the ones published before and after Mao's time were approximately 100 pages each. The 1976 textbook also does not contain much useful linguistic information for students to incorporate with their process of learning. It aimed only for students to learn to criticize Lin Biao and Confucius, which was straightforward and short like Mao desired.

Theories of English Linguistic Imperialism in China

The English language is domestically and internationally seen as a symbol of imperialism. First of all, Robert Phillipson suggests his well-known theory of linguistic imperialism using English as its representative. He explains that the English language avowed its position of supremacy by being culturally regarded as the superior language when in comparison to its counterparts (Phillipson 1992, 42). This is proven to be an accurate phenomenon during the Republican era when English possessed a high status. The English language course at the time, was deemed more superior than the Chinese language course within the school system, which heightened the status of the imported goods that were in English, including foreign movies (Xi 1932). Furthermore, Phillipson continues to state that the language that colonizers use causes the colonized population to internally absorb their norms, which lead to "cultural deracination" (Phillipson 1992, 36). Phillipson's theory is supported when Chinese culture is shown to be undermined by the English language. In the late 20th century to the modern period in China, English deprivation is accompanied with the recurrence of poverty, famine, and disease in the general personal or social conception (5). This demonstrates that when a Chinese person does not have a good command of English, this person is commonly considered uncompetitive, 'illiterate,' or cannot commit to their own development. In this case, Bourdieu's sociopolitical theory is closely tied with Phillipson's approach in terms of English's personal and social values. According to Bourdieu, cultural capital is constituted of knowledge, competencies, and cultural resources that an individual possesses (Hu 2009). Using his theory, the knowledge of the English language becomes a type of cultural capital and it is one of the most powerful forms of symbolic capital in China. Third, Phillipson's theory is strengthened by the CCP, specifically during the Mao era, when they

downplayed the elements of exceptionalism, and eventually lowered the status of the English language in Chinese education system in order to achieve the ideology of a classless, socialist society. Fourth, with the large number of Chinese populations being uncertain of their Chinese or Western cultural identities, it led them to begin worship Western cultures and show neglect toward their own ethnic Chinese cultures. For example, the younger ELLs deliberately mix in some English phrases when conversing with their peers in public (Xu 1925). By doing so, they feel a sense of superiority in comparison to those that they are surrounded by (Xu 1925). It is phenomenon like this that increasingly encourages the Chinese government and population to continually perceive the English language as a form of imperialism and colonization. Worshipping Western culture by the ELLs has been prevented and suppressed by the government to a point where they explicitly make the English language a ‘tool’ rather than a form of communication. However, it was naturally due to this policy that most ELLs were never able to achieve a proficient level of English language skill that result in the increasing phenomenon of worshipping and aspiring Western cultures.

If one were to carefully examine it, one will be able to find that Robert Phillipson’s theory of linguistic imperialism is inaccurate when looking at the human history of language development. ELE cannot achieve its means of colonization, but rather, it will achieve the opposite outcome. English goes from being a minor language in 1600 to the leading language of the world not only from being the result of British colonization and trades, but also from the rise of the United States as the leader of international community (Phillipson 1992). This is due to the fact that linguistic imperialism appears in different time periods with different language domination. English is the imperialistic force of the modern century, while Chinese was the dominant force in the earlier time. Thus, only due to the changes of political dominance in the global community does a language gain international power. When Phillipson (1992) states the theory of the English linguistic imperialism as an invading force to other developing countries’ cultures, he overlooks the history behind the formation of linguistic power and its close relationship with political trends in the world. Moreover, Phillipson (1992) states the ideal of modernization where everyone could understand each other through speaking English. But even when an increasing part of the global population is learning English, it is unrealistic that every individual could properly use what they learn and employ it in conversations, let alone a larger number of the population that never receive ELE. As China rises to be a new power in the modern century, a constant negotiation is also emerged in questioning why people are not learning to speak Chinese instead. All of this is to say that for an individual to overtly value the study of the English language, they are really valuing Western culture as a whole. It is when they reach a certain proficiency in

English, that they ultimately can deepen their own understanding of the varying cultural identities.

For example, the First Lady in the Republican era, who was also wife to Chiang Kai-shek, Soong May-ling, was proficient in both English and Chinese due to her Americanized background. She, however, was one of the most patriotic historical figures in the Chinese modern history, as she continually, relentlessly advocated for the unification of China when she was in both mainland China and in Taiwan (He 2015). In the first few years when Soong arrived in the United States, she was more westernized than she ever was in her later life. She spelled her name as “May-ling” and dressed in westernized clothing. Later when she adapted her life in the United States and became proficient in English, she changed her name back to “Meiling,” and dressed in more Chinese styled clothing. This demonstrates that when Soong was learning English, she aspired Western culture, thus, attempted to be westernized and blended into the United States. As she came to be proficient in English, she identified herself more as Chinese than American. Unfortunately, the ELLs within Chinese education system can likely not be able to achieve a high level of English proficiency like Soong May-ling did, as Chinese government has been in extreme fear of colonization that it would be nearly impossible for one to be proficient at a language under a pedagogically and learning restricted circumstance.

English as Nationalism in China

Moreover, the perception of the English language has transformed from being purely a ‘tool’ for modernization to becoming a new form of nationalism. Nationalism in this case, is the flip side of the coin for imperialism. Rather than expanding one’s force with the power of its language and transmitting and linking ideas in all fields (Phillipson 1992), language becomes a promoting tool for a nation to spread awareness of its culture in the global context. Learning English is a way to communicate and convey one’s spirit of nationalism, which emerges a new theory called “linguistic nationalism.” The development of linguistic nationalism in modern China was reported during the 2008 Olympic Game and the 2010 Shanghai Expo. When although it seemed as if China was embracing an English fever, it was not English that the Chinese were passionate about, it was being able to convey in language and to share the 5000 years of Chinese civilizations and cultures with the outside world that excited them (Zhang 2008). The modern learning of the English language is shown through various interpersonal functions in China. This includes using English for academic research, publishing in English for media to increase presence, the increasing use of English in Chinese businesses for additional investments and communication

with foreign companies, and creating a sense of international connections (Gil and Adamson 2011). While both linguistic imperialism and linguistic nationalism spread national awareness to other countries, they initiate from different intentions. Linguistic imperialism deems the harm of absorbing other countries' linguistic cultures, and linguistic nationalism intends to spread its cultures for more international awareness. It is not the English language that is imperialist, but how different groups of people associate it with different meanings and theories.

Furthermore, the crucial link between English and the goal of further personal and national advancements continue to be strengthened in China. After enduring approximately one century of political turbulence accompanying with an inconstant history of ELE, the English language has climbed to an unprecedented high status along with more than 200 million ELLs in China, which makes it the largest English-learning society in the world (Bolton and Graddol 2012). Keeping in mind that China is the most populated country in the world, it goes without saying how important English has become for the current generation of Chinese youth. It is no longer a mere tool, but rather, it has become a shared belief in China that English is a measure of life's potential by all social classes (Osno 2008). As a result, Chinese parents intend to give their children a head start by arranging an early experience of ELE, which is bilingual kindergartens. They have become one of the fastest growing sectors in private education, as they claim to equip Children toddlers with English before attending formal schools (Bolton and Graddol 2012). This phenomenon is a feature of middle-class aspirations in the modern China, spreading first to major urban cities, then to tier two cities and beyond (Bolton and Graddol 2012). As for students in the higher education system in China, not only has English, along with Mathematics and Chinese, become one of the three mandatory subjects in the National University Entrance Qualifying Exam (*Gaokao*), university students are required to take English courses in disregard of their major area of study (5). Additionally, China in the past, performed sponsorships to encourage its graduates to go abroad for further education (Wang 1994). Whereas in the modern period, it has become a popular trend for the high educational achievers to study internationally in pursuit of Master's and PhD programs (Bolton and Graddol 2012). All in all, upon the idea of opening up to the world and nationalistic spirits, the younger Chinese generations are embracing to learning English within Chinese formal education system.

That being said, as China continues to implement a mono-cultural belief system, the increasing status of the English language and its education produces hybrid dynamics through the ideology of nationalism. While both the Chinese and Western linguistic cultures are distinct in each context, when the two interact, the

result is a new hybrid identity represented by contemporary youth. Although the older generations in China were also influenced by similar cultural clashes, they were intended to be sealed off from each other. Whereas since the Post Open-Door era, with the relationship between China and the English language as a symbol of China's relationships with the outside world (Gil and Adamson 2011), individuals occupy a hybrid society under the effects of globalization. This aids them to acquire a more progressive way of thinking, leading them to hold different cultural views. The English language has now become "a shared linguistic identity," being a new basic skill in diverse education systems (Bianco 2009, 192). Moreover, being a hybrid not only enables the ability to break through barriers of language, culture, and race (Smith 2008), it also helps to gear nations' focus, especially China, from the fear of colonization, to promoting national awareness. Still, due to various historical events during 20th century China, all of which strengthen backlashes against ELE, Chinese officials continue to withstand the force of linguistic and cultural imperialism (Gil and Adamson 2011). Therefore, even with the ever-expanding development of ELE under a globalized hybrid society in China, the two cultures, English and Chinese, are maintaining a carefully drawn outline. The English language continues to be used as part of a carefully crafted purpose by the CCP for its citizens in China.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper has discussed the history of English as a Foreign Language in Chinese education system from the late Qing to Post Open-Door era, demonstrating that learning English will help Chinese population come to develop a better sense of self-understanding with their linguistic, cultural, and ethnical identities. They are also further expanded through the examination of the three separate elementary school English textbooks published during the Republican era, the Mao era, and the Post Open-Door era, which were under the rule of three different political leaders. While the English language possessed different social statuses in each time period, the common perception that each government had toward English was the fear of its influence of imperialism and colonization. Moreover, by comparing and contrasting the contents and pedagogical methods within the three textbooks, one finds that the rise and fall of the status of the English language and its education within Chinese context are closely tied with China's political trends and movements. Since China has been suppressing English to only act as a 'tool' for modernization, and no proper organic learning process has been facilitated, most of the ELLs were unable to achieve a high level of proficiency, which resulted in their worship toward Western cultures. Due to most learners' low language levels and China's association with English and its means of colonization, it is relatively unrealistic for the current China to come to

understand that being proficient at English will only help the individuals reflect upon a greater sense of understanding of who they are, and where they belong culturally and ethnically. Lastly, the English language has transformed from Phillipson's theory of linguistic imperialism to become a form of nationalism, as its aim has changed to share one's national culture in the global context. When the historical elements of the pre-modern development, the education system in China, and the trend of imperialism are taken into consideration, it is easier to comprehend the English language's current superior status in the modern China. Perhaps when the craze for English in China slowly diminishes, that is when China could properly look at English not as a 'tool' or a 'symbol of imperialism,' but just as another language to study for the means of communication.

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