

# English in China: Foreignness, Consequences and Solutions

Ping Tang

China West Normal University, China

**Abstract**—English in mainland China is a foreign language, never a practical means of daily communication among the multi-ethnic Chinese public. Therefore, it differentiates itself from English as a second language or another language in those countries where it is a necessary instrument of daily communication. An embracing-renouncing paradox about English learning in China has thus been created. The many academic efforts to resolve this have met with little success. Considering the welfare of English learners, the author argues that to introduce critical discourse analysis into the Chinese English education, to establish cross-cultural competence as the ultimate goal of China's English education in the interactive and productive English virtual communities, and to construct a “unity in diversity” cross-cultural identity are the possible ways to resolve the inevitable paradox.

**Index Terms**—EFL, foreignness, consequences, critical discourse, virtuality, a “unity in diversity” cross-cultural identity

## I. INTRODUCTION

English in China has been a foreign language taught, learned and used in a social context where it is generally not a daily public communication tool. It was thus often *Mute English*, English learned but not spoken. This, however, has changed when the development of globalization and Internet increasingly brings more Chinese English learners into direct contact with native English speakers or speakers of English. It becomes outdated to see English as only a useful tool for access to English knowledge and technological advancements in the English communities but updated to regard it as an increasingly strategic vehicle for active cross-cultural communication with the English communities.

Yet how can Chinese English learners grow cross-culturally competent in a linguistically and culturally unsupportive Chinese environment? To answer this question, an enormous number of discussions have focused on pedagogical theories, models, policies and practices; but the ontological question addressing the foreignness of English in the Chinese context has seldom been asked. Why is the word *foreign* or its Chinese equivalent 外 (as an adjective) applied to English in China? What does this *foreignness* or its Chinese equivalent 外 (as a noun) mean to English education in mainland China? What are the particular consequences of this *foreignness*? Can the word *foreign* or 外 be changed or even removed from English? How are these issues related to English learning in mainland China?

## II. ENGLISH FOREIGNNESS

According to Merriam-Webster 11<sup>th</sup> Collegiate Dictionary, the word *foreign* means *outside, other than, alien, related to other nations, abnormal in the living body, not recognized as part of a self*, etc., while according to Xinhua Chinese Character Dictionary its Chinese equivalent 外 means 与内、里相对 [*outside*], 不是自己这方面的 [*un-belonging*], 关系疏远的 [*strange*], 非正式的 [*informal*], 外来的 [*foreign*], 佛教称其他宗教、思想为外 [*other*], etc. Obviously, the word *foreign* and the Chinese character 外 generally share most meanings and have both literal and figurative uses. Since English learners in China are exposed to both *foreign* and 外, language transfer happens; and it is probable that English in China is understood as a different territory, a language not just from the outside world, belonging to other nations, but informal, not so dear to the Chinese heart. Furthermore, the Chinese character 外 is also used as verb, meaning *distance, deviate, repel, abandon* etc., and thus baring its ideological nature.

The role of language in a certain community is actually determined by contested political/ideological considerations, either a democratic compromise or a dictated settlement between political groups of interests in the form of a legitimate language policy. As a result, English becomes foreign, native/first, second, third... in a certain country. In Britain or the United States, for example, only English has been authorised to be the nationally official language, not Celtic, nor Spanish, while in Canada both English and French are made official. Likewise, political powers in Asian countries like Singapore, Pakistan and India have designated English to be official, and have accepted it as a first, second or third language.

In mainland China, although there exists a certain tension or opposition between the Putonghua and Hanyu [Chinese] dialects, or between Hanyu and ethnic languages, or between official ethnic languages and their corresponding dialects, only the opposition between the languages in mainland China and foreign languages (including English) is noticed,

marked and proclaimed conspicuous. While English is mandatorily defined *foreign* and officially excluded from typical Chinese communal life, the languages contemporarily used by Han and ethnic minorities in mainland China are otherwise categorized as *native/home* languages and dialects, differences ulteriorly ignored or skilfully repudiated. Obviously, the language boundary is artificially drawn to best correspond with the territorial limits of China. English is politically dismissed as a competitor of the Chinese language for a complete domination in the Chinese ethnic communities; and therefore the polarity between Chinese and English is dictated by the government, out of the necessity of maintaining the integrity of the Chinese imagined community.

Seen from this perspective, the foreignness of English is essentially Otherness. The boundary conspicuity between English and the languages in mainland China divides them, makes the *inside* and *outside* difference, and labels them as different entities, or entities symbolic of different identities. English as language and culture is alien, something that should be closely watched—if not repelled—so that Chinese people can tell who are *us* and who are *them* or who belong to *our* community and who belong to *their* community, often at the expense of disregarding the marked cultural/ideological differences between the sovereignties of UK, USA, Australia, Canada, etc. Therefore, the relationship of Otherness between Chinese and English is symbolic in both the Chinese community and the whole English community of the other group's being outsiders, strangers or people that should be warily eyed.

A further understanding of English foreignness in China, however, needs to take into account the influence of the psychological complexity of foreign superiority. Since the end of the Qing dynasty, this foreign advancedness vs. domestic backwardness polarization has been introduced into the Chinese community, either as a subjugation myth or a reforming force, and has taken deep root with the spread of the Enlightenment ideas about nation, science, technology, and progress. It was then deliberately suppressed for a time. However, the contemporary reform and opening-up policies somehow has created another opportunity for this polarization to regain its influence (Pan, 2011). Even in the recent defence of Minister Yuan's talk on the ideological control in Chinese universities, China Youth (2015), the official organ of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Youth League, has elucidated that learning from the West is still a fundamental principle anchored in the political mainstream. This learning attitude can be easily confused with foreign superiority. Consequently, the strenuously-defended legitimacy of the Chinese self has been questioned; and the Otherness of English language and culture has been reduced, effectively easing the confrontation between Chinese and English communities and greatly facilitating the popular acceptance of English foreignness in mainland China.

### III. IMPLICATIONS OF ENGLISH FOREIGNNESS

What are the implications of English foreignness in mainland China? First, it implies the marginality of English in the Chinese socio-political context: never so endearing to the Chinese heart and never to be officially sanctioned for domestic use. Putonghua is the only nationally sanctioned language, although there are regionally sanctioned ethnic languages. The Chinese language policies of English education have avoided granting English an access to “non-pragmatic and social-cultural spheres” (as cited in Pan, 2011, p. 255). The omnipresence of English books, a few English newspapers and a few English TV channels in mainland China cannot challenge or change the political reality, for their primary readers or audience are not the ordinary Chinese public, but foreigners either within or outside China. At best, these English publications or media are used by English learners to prepare for their future careers. Therefore, English still remains on the periphery of the Chinese community.

Yet even without considering the influence of foreign superiority, English marginality has limits. The recognition of its presence, although seemingly decentred, has been officially understood as a strategic necessity to China, generating social and international benefits (Pan, 2011). Further, it has been instituted beyond every level of school and regarded by the nation as an exclusive access for opportunity, connectedness, creativity, and progress in the increasingly globalised world. The diligently deconstructed foreign superiority, regenerating a centripetal force, has thus been somewhat re-mystified by the English learning fever.

Second, English foreignness in China harbours subversiveness and repercussions. The learning or acquisition of English is a process of acculturation or enculturation, a process both actively sought and passively generated. English in China has been long regarded as a tool for social and technological improvement (Pan, 2015). During English learning, English ideas and practices considered beneficial to individuals or China will be inevitably adopted with or without much modification. Meanwhile, English learning is also more or less a process of socialization as it has been acknowledged that linguistic signs, syntactic and textual rules, and texts have meanings and therefore pass on cultural and ideological information (Mar-Molinero & Stevenson, 2006; Benesch, 1993; van Dijk, 2000). Resistance to the messages in English language is a betrayal to the cross-cultural purpose, and a suicidal plunge into Chinglish, an interlanguage poorly accepted both at home and abroad. Therefore, when the two forces in the learning process combined, English foreignness implies the probability of English promoting a partial or total conversion of its foreignness into near-nativeness or even full nativeness in China, possibly resulting in the replacement for Chinese culture.

Third, though haunted by the subversiveness of English foreignness, Chinese English learners are required to be faithful to their national/cultural identity and act responsibly as patriots. One's native language and culture—especially the core values and beliefs--determine the collective identity or one's national identity upon which political

administration and national security are founded (Wodak, de Cillia, Reisigl, & Liebhart, 2009). Without a matching national identity, the government cannot be justified and so will be seriously endangered. English education in China, as part of the ideological state apparatus (ISA) (Althusser, 1970), will always demand that an English identity be marked as the Other and that state loyalty be taught to and demonstrated in Chinese English learners.

Fourth, English learned as a foreign language in mainland China is both a border-crossing action and a privilege. It is a border-crossing action in that English learners move over the boundary of Chinese collective identity, interacting with the English Other, its groups and ideologies, and then possibly absorbing some Otherness here and there. It is a privilege in that the action has been politically recognized and financially supported by the government and opened to individuals who, in bridging the cultural space, may be capable of bringing back benefits to themselves and the Chinese community. However, such may in turn threaten the primary integrity of the Chinese collective identity, thus creating an ideological tension in English learners and a serious concern to the government. Consequently, the privilege may be immediately suspended or even vanish into thin air when the border-crossing action has fallen trapped in the imagined English ideological community and presented itself as a real political threat to the Chinese community.

English foreignness suggests the marginality of English in mainland China, a political product out of the government's concern for patriotism, political allegiance, national unity and security. Yet, the presence of English and its contact with the Chinese community can also be inferred from the recognition of English foreignness. Indeed, the boundary of the occupied marginality of English can be undesirably expanding in an infinite way, and new identities may be "shaped in the tensional interstices" (Kachru, Kachru & Nelson, 2006, p. 707), especially if the contact is inappropriately influenced by the psychological complex of foreign superiority. All this leads to the enduring paradox of English learning in mainland China to both embrace and renounce English language and culture.

#### IV. THE CONSEQUENCES OF ENGLISH FOREIGNNESS

Although English in the Chinese community, in the foreseeable future, has little possibility of either being officially recognized as a political communication vehicle or being readily adopted by the public as a daily communication tool, the implications of English foreignness seemed to have been adequately understood neither by the policy makers nor by the general public. Consequently, English has been widely introduced by the media, businesses and other institutions into *Chinese* life. Nationwide, a large number of commercial promotions, publications, programs and products targeting only Chinese customers—who probably do not know or use English at all—include some English, often English of dubious correctness. So far, this effort is probably made to shrewdly profit from Chinese people's complex of foreign superiority or their desire to get internationally connected. But English has been encroaching on Chinese space (Wang & Zhang, 2007), reportedly reducing the deserved attention of Chinese language or other languages in China and showing an initial development in the features of a social-cultural language in mainland China, a result quite contrary to the original stipulation of English foreignness.

The incongruous embracing-renouncing relationship between the Chinese self and the English Other has also provoked an incessant search for a certain philosophical consistency in English learning and teaching. Since rejecting English in China is metaphysically and practically impossible and, on the other hand, severing China from its past and replacing Chinese with English is a completely unreasonable suggestion, developing China English as a language variety seems to be a great temptation for some researchers to resolve the embracing-renouncing paradox. It has been argued that the localization of English can decentre the American or British standard, create a standard for China English, gain a discourse power and so re-empower China and Chinese English learners (Zhu & Zhang, 2014). However, this may be an illusion. The localization of English would be a domestication of English, a formal nationwide deconstruction of English foreignness, a redefinition of the Chinese self as an English variety. Moreover, the process would bring English and English standards to the centre instead of pushing it away, something that the China English supporters are vainly trying to avoid. After all, the localization of English would inevitably still need American, British or some other standards for reference so that recognition from the English world would be attained in cross-cultural communication. Otherwise, the creation of China English would be no more than some self-indulged wishful dream, a desperate waging of some fanciful discourse power, generating mountains of cross-cultural difficulties instead of solving any. Most important of all, the localization/nativization of English would not be a victory for Chinese, but a celebration of English. Although it has been argued that the messages or ideologies in a language system create real identities, the medium of Chinese characters is also the message but a total untranslatability (Kachru, Kachru, Nelson, 2006; McLuhan, 2013), hence causing an inevitable loss of part of the Chinese identity. Actually, this is not a localization of English but a colonization of Chinese, not a rediscovery of discourse power but a resigning of an exclusive discourse power. The paradox is unwanted, but the renouncement of the paradox may certainly not be desired.

Or rather, it is argued that there is already a China English that has been wilfully ignored by the Chinese government to avoid an ideological crisis (as cited in Pan, 2015, p. 88). However, this is probably a political narrative that attempts to bypass the preconditions of China English and materialise the imagined English community in mainland China. According to their favoured definition, China English is A developing variety of English, which is subject to ongoing codification and normalization processes. It is based largely on the two major varieties of English, namely British and American English. It is characterized by the transfer of Chinese linguistic and cultural norms at varying levels of language, and it is used primarily by Chinese for intra- and international communication (as cited in Pan, 2015, p. 117).

How has China English been codified and normalised in China? Is there any dictionary of China English? What about the literary works of China English? How many people are speaking and using English in China, regardless of the number of users following the so-called standard of China English? Since which time China English has been used in China to have a regular communication? None of these essential questions derived from their operational definition can be answered by the advocates of China English. The existence of China English is more suspicious of a political fraudulence.

English foreignness also has afflicted the Chinese government itself and forced it to engage in doublethink. On the one hand, the government supports the teaching of English and diligently introduces educational policies to encourage public enthusiasm for English learning, promising material and non-material advantages for successful English learners. English literally becomes a formal subject in most places as early as in the third year of primary school, and its study continues into PhD programs. Besides, thousands of training schools and classes are helping students with their English learning and often making a great deal of quick money. On the other hand, the government is carefully fending off the unwanted ideological influences that are probably inherent in the teaching and learning of English so that its governing can generally remain intact. First, it screens at least the explicit ideological contents and the political propaganda unfavourable to its intended citizenship. For instance, the Department of Education recently declared that it would tighten ideological censorship on the higher education textbooks imported from western countries. Second, it allows English to be learned, used and developed on limited social occasions, and leaves English graduates to perform only in the professional and social margin (Cui & Cui, 2010; Borg & Liu, 2013). Since English is learned for technological advancements and international relationship, the most important responsibility of English learners seems to be the secondary role of serving other majors, professions and researches.

Yet the worst experience of learning English in this paradoxical situation is probably identity management. Research has shown that an English identity is significantly related to English proficiency and crucial to successful cross-cultural communication (Lantolf, 2001; Cook, 2000). Therefore, a learner needs to diligently foster a real English identity, a daunting task indeed in the Chinese context where English socialization or enculturation is mostly abnormal in terms of traditional conceptualization of reality. The creation of such an identity can mainly obtain clues from the cultural generalities in English textbooks, which, however, may turn out later to be somehow unreliable or even totally unreliable in real cross-cultural communication. Even so, in constructing this English identity, one still has to be always conscious of one's Chinese personhood. He or she has to be able to manage their incompatibilities and act appropriately according to the contextual codes. Once off guard, he or she can end up in embarrassing or even disastrous interpersonal/intercultural situations. Worse still, one can become a cultural wonderer who cannot feel at home in either Chinese or English culture, or even a cultural traitor who totally gives up his/her Chinese self.

The paradox of embracing-renouncing English learning seems an inevitable reality that has yet to be carefully handled to avoid the consequences. When China English is not a reality or not a politically reasonable aim, how can English learning adjust to the paradox? How can an integrated identity be constructed that accommodates both cross-cultural communication and the national security? How can the efficiency and effectiveness of English learning and teaching be ensured if the seemingly contradictory aims are both to be fulfilled?

## V. POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

English is the most widely used lingua franca. To become a more globally connected China, English learning is highly necessary; but to maintain the nation-state framework of China, to remain independent in the global village, to refrain from the unsolicited English ideological influences, and to best protect the welfare of Chinese English learners, English learning in mainland China has to be politically conscious. A combination of cross-cultural competence, a "unity in diversity" intercultural identity and critical discourse analysis should suffice for these purposes.

The great necessity of critical practice, essential to the development of critical thinking, has been proposed (Browne, Freeman & Williamson, 2000; Wang & Wang 2013); van Dijk (2000), Wodak, de Cillia, Reisigl and Liebhart (2009) have demonstrated the effectiveness of critical discourse analysis in examining, exposing and problematizing social ideologies. By incorporating critical practice can the Chinese officially-sanctioned ideology be honestly defended, Chinese collective identity be developed, and the educational purpose of raising students' cultural awareness be enhanced. Yet this is never a proposal to blindly bow to the Chinese dominant ideology. Critical practice only confronts English learners and teachers with conscious choices in the global world, enables them to understand the consequences of their choices to the Chinese community, and prepares them to become more capable, flexible, constructive cross-cultural communicators. However, if such a change is to be effected, the current centeredness of English language skills in the national curriculums has to be redefined, making room for a more substantial cultural turn—language skills no longer stipulated as the ultimate goal of English learning but merely as part of critical success indicators that are developed from critical practice in and out of English classes.

Critical discourse analysis is introduced in English learning for the pragmatic purpose of properly preparing students for cross-cultural communication in a nation-state framework. Although cross-cultural competence should be treated as the ultimate goal of English learning, it has never been defined so in any of the existing Chinese national syllabuses (Pan, 2015). It is of great significance, however. First, it reaffirms English foreignness, and thus reminds English learners of their real subjectivity of Chinese identity. When Chinese is used to unite the inner community, English is

used to get connected with the outer but bigger community. Second, it dismisses the possibility of developing China English, and refuses an entanglement into the fruitless power struggle of determining English standards that has, despite scepticism, already showed some momentum (Zhu & Zhang, 2014). There is no need to pretend that Chinese culture can be better continued in English, or that Chinese culture can re-encode English and triumph over English. Most important of all, English will stop being just as a tool for technological gains but become a fully-fledged communication tool for global connectedness, not just as a political necessity but as a whole strategy to succeed in the global village, a strategy that aims for an all-aspects communication, political and non-political, official and unofficial, military and civil.

Yet, this change of the ultimate goal of English learning in China requires English learners to transform from English knowledge talkers to effective cross-cultural communicators capable of using English, and of participating in or facilitating cross-cultural communication. Is the transformation possible in the Chinese context? Global virtuality indeed has considerable promise for this change. The Internet penetration rates of Britain, the United States, Australia, Canada, etc., have been close to 90%; most of these networked English communities seem to have been more and more interactive and productive online. Meanwhile, the heavily invested information infrastructure in mainland China has been spreading nationwide. English learners, already immersed in the information age, so long as they are properly motivated and methodically guided, will have the opportunity to grow in the virtual English communities. Furthermore, the socialising effectiveness of virtual communities has been theorized and supported by a lot of literature (Chen, 2013; Castells, 2009; Ito, 2010; Boyd, 2014). In addition, second language acquisition studies confirmed that immersion in English—not necessarily English in English classes as many Chinese English teachers themselves are learners of *Mute English*—and interactions with native speakers are vital if students are to become successful English learners (Genesee, 1985; Wang, 2010). English learners can enter the different social spaces in the virtual English communities and directly interact with native speakers and their institutions, enjoying the exclusive privileges previously only accessible to ESL learners. As a result, Chinese English learners will have an opportunity to acquire English and its corresponding identity in a near-native natural way while living in mainland China. There is also a probability that the stigma of being English learners of *Mute English* will be generally removed.

However, English identities created in the socializing processes of the virtual English communities will redirect attention to the issue of national security. Critical discourse analysis can expose ideologies, but it cannot handle the multi-identity issue. Some theorists therefore have proposed a third space of intersubjectivity or international personhood to achieve one's intercultural identity integration or the switch between a host culture and a foreign culture (Dai & Kulich, 2010). Fei Xiaotong (2000), likewise, suggested that in cross-cultural communication participants should consciously cherish their own cultural merits, respect the merits of other cultures, share their own cultural merits and so maintain an intercultural harmony. However, such apolitical, idealistic or pacifistic intercultural attitudes may overemphasize harmony to the extent of ignoring the inconvenient reality of ideological competitions and sometimes conflicting national interests between nation-states.

Hence, the construction of a pragmatic intercultural identity need ensure that any English virtual or vicarious socialization or enculturation will not replace or overshadow the Chinese collective identity. English education in China—like English education in any other country—has to serve the Chinese political agenda and thus remain as part of its ideological apparatus. To handle the Chinese cultural pluralities, Fei Xiaotong (2000) proposed that all cultures should be united in the politically designated national culture, a unity in diversity. Although cross-cultural communication is not a first concern in this theoretical hypothesis, the concept of unity in diversity is inspiring in creating an integrated identity that accommodates both Chinese and English identities where the Chinese identities are forged by the Chinese institutional, local, regional and national contexts but the English identities are expected to be mostly formed in certain English-speaking virtual or vicarious contexts. In this paradigm, the English identities can fully function as cross-cultural communication requires until the moment when some national security is alarmed and the Chinese identity has to intervene.

Such a “unity in diversity” cross-cultural identity only affirms the roles of politics and ideology in cross-cultural communication and prioritizes the Chinese collective identity, allowing it to overshadow and monitor the performance of an English identity so that cross-cultural communication proceeds only within the parameters of Chinese national security. Such a complex paradoxical cross-cultural identity seems less ideal than the dynamic identity matrix theory of intercultural communication, basically free from the crest of explicit politics (Dai & Kulich, 2010); yet it is pragmatic, for the world is not ready for a politically, ideologically, or financially unbiased internationalist framework (Spellman, 2011). Actually, negligence to the nation-state framework will endanger the welfare of English learners, causing identity mismanagement, cultural maladjustment, cultural marginalization or even cultural exile. Meanwhile, neither unity in nor attention to the nation-state framework signifies a slavish submission to the Chinese self. First of all, culture changes, and the Chinese self cannot escape from the fates. As Kramsch (1994) argues, language learners will use their power to introduce a new culture into their native culture. Second, learning from the English Other is an integral purpose of cross-cultural communication. Like any other active cultural self, the Chinese self is not of dogmas but of pragmatic principles that are derived from the Chinese collective experiences.

However, can people manage various identities while staying mentally healthy? The complexities of a “unity in diversity” cross-cultural identity are manageable (Zhao, 2011), although probably greater efforts are required on the part of Chinese English learners and teachers. Anxiety will arise, and inner tension will be felt, especially when during

cross-cultural communication, the Chinese collective identity, which is psychologically summoned from a national level to an international level, stays invisible but actually overshadows a functioning English identity. Such may be one of the focuses in training English learners' cross-cultural competence and performance, besides language proficiency, communication strategies, etc. Although the idea of such an identity has not been formally introduced, ample evidences for its operability are available from the successful practices of diplomats and English learners engaging in cross-cultural communication.

To include critical discourse analysis, to recognize cross-cultural competence and performance as the ultimate goal of English education in mainland China and to build a "unity in diversity" intercultural identity may be proper responses to the conflicting issues of national development, national security and global connectedness in China. The cultivation of cross-cultural competence and performance is the core solution, with critical practice and a "unity in diversity" intercultural identity developed to satisfy the need for Chinese national security and the purpose for a possible co-existence with the English Other. By actualizing an interactive near-native learning environment of English, the global virtuality offers an unprecedented opportunity to test and upgrade the validity of such a complex cross-cultural identity.

## VI. CONCLUSION

English foreignness does not simply posit English as a foreign language that has no historical or cultural roots in mainland China; instead, it defines the Otherness of English, making English an opposition to languages that are used by Chinese ethnic groups for daily communication and political, military, economic, and cultural conversations in the Chinese community. To affirm the integrity of the Chinese languages and the dominance of Putonghua in the Chinese physical territory is an attempt to construct a narrative of the country's unity and sovereignty.

However, the Otherness of English is never a black and white matter. It tempts the Chinese self with irresistible innovations, gains and progress, and therefore begets an inevitable paradox of an embracing-renouncing mind. For many years, the policy of opening up the Chinese community has been confirmed necessary for the success of ongoing reforms, although some ensuing uncertainties or side effects are also expected. Still, especially under the lingering influence of foreign superiority, the confusion about how to relate the Chinese self to the English Other has continued posing important questions for the government, the academia, and the English teachers and learners in China.

A clear definition of developing cross-cultural competence in virtual English communities as the ultimate goal of English learning in mainland China, together with the inclusion of critical discourse analysis and a diligent construction of a "unity in diversity" intercultural identity, seems to be the appropriate set of solutions in the networked society to the necessary paradox of both embracing and renouncing English. As Chinese English learners can be globally connected, learning and socialising in the virtual English communities can satisfy the multiple purposes of developing their English proficiency, practical cross-cultural communicative skills and English identities. But all this needs to meet the Chinese political requirements, and the priority of the Chinese identity has to be ensured. Critical discourse analysis can help Chinese English learners to survive and succeed in the global ideological squabbles, and to develop the Chinese identity as time requires.

Despite the promise of this combined set of solutions to English learning and teaching in China, it cannot take any substantial effect without a preconditioned re-examination and a systematic reformation of the current educational policies and curriculums. When policy makers addressing global connectedness, different levels or fields of intercultural communication need to be acknowledged; informal study needs to be generally recognized, seriously considered and properly integrated with formal study, thus a blended learning style; the current reform of using technology in English education needs to be furthered; teachers and students are all to be re-educated and evaluated according as they are required.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This paper is funded by Sichuan Educational Department (13SB0022). However, the author would like to greatly thank Nancy V. Lee for her careful proofreading and constructive suggestions.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Benesch, S. (1993). ESL, ideology and the politics of pragmatism. *TESOL*, 27(4), 705-717.
- [2] Borg, S. & Liu., Y. (2013). Chinese College English Teachers' Research Engagement. *TESOL*, 47, 270-299.
- [3] Boyd, D. (2014). *It's complicated: The social lives of networked teens*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- [4] Browne, M. N., Freeman, K. E. & Williamson, C. L. (2000). The importance of critical thinking for student use of the Internet. *College Student Journal*, 34, 391-398.
- [5] Castells, M. (2010). *The rise of the network society* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Malden, Mass.: Blackwell.
- [6] Chen, L. (2013). Virtual space: A possible dimension to affect our identities in the age of computer use. *Academic Forum*, 266(3), 169-173.
- [7] China Youth Opinion. (2015, Feb. 2<sup>nd</sup>). "Three Questions for Shen Kui" What is your motivation? China Youth. Retrieved Feb. 20<sup>th</sup>, 2015, from [http://pinglun.youth.cn/ttst/201502/t20150202\\_6452132.htm](http://pinglun.youth.cn/ttst/201502/t20150202_6452132.htm).
- [8] Cook, V. (2000). *Second language learning and language teaching*. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press.
- [9] Cui, D. & Cui, Z. (2010). The professional development of college English teachers. *Heilongjiang Researches on Higher*

- Education*, 192(4), 73-75.
- [10] Dai, X. & Kulich, S. J. (Eds.). (2010). Identity and intercultural communication (I): Theoretical and contextual construction (Vol. 2). Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press.
- [11] Fei, X. (2000). The cultural awareness of harmonious co-existence with differences—A talk at the international symposium of cultural anthropology on the survival and development of human beings in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. *Folklore Studies*, 3: 5-14.
- [12] Flanagin, A. J. & Waldeck, J. H. (2004). Technology use and organizational newcomer socialization. *Journal of Business Communication*, 41(2), 137-165.
- [13] Genesee, F. (1985). Second language learning through immersion: A review of U.S. programs. *Review of Educational Research*, 55(4), 541-61.
- [14] Ito, M. (2010). *Hanging out, messing around, and geeking out: Kids living and learning with new media*. London: The MIT Press.
- [15] Kachru, B. B., Kachru, Y. & Nelson C. L. (Eds.). (2006). *The handbook of world Englishes*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- [16] Kramsch, C. (1994). *Context and culture in language teaching*. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press.
- [17] Lantolf, J. P. (2001). Second culture acquisition—Cognitive considerations. In Eli Hinkel (Ed.), *Culture in second language teaching and learning* (pp. 28-46). Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press.
- [18] Mar-Molinero, C. & Stevenson, P. (2006). *Language ideologies, policies and practices: Language and the future of Europe*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.
- [19] McLuhan, M. (2013). *Understanding media: The extensions of man*. Berkeley, California: Gingko Press.
- [20] Pan, L. (2011). English language ideologies in the Chinese foreign language education policies: a world-system perspective. *Language Policy*, 10, 245–263.
- [21] Pan, L. (2015). *English as a global language in China: Deconstructing the ideological discourses of English in language education*. London: Springer.
- [22] Spellman, M. W. (2011). *A short history of western political thought*. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.
- [23] van Dijk, T. A. (2000). *Ideology and discourse: A multidisciplinary introduction*. Retrieved Feb. 20<sup>th</sup>, 2015, from [www.discourses.org/OldBooks](http://www.discourses.org/OldBooks).
- [24] Wang, C. (2010). *How to become proficient in English*. Beijing, China: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press.
- [25] Wang, M. & Zhang, S. (2007). The Overuse of English under Chinese Context and its Effects on the Construction of China's Soft Power. *Journal of Hebei University of Economics and Trade*, 7(4), 71-76.
- [26] Wang, Y. & Wang, W. (2013). A critical discourse analysis of English textbooks. *Foreign Languages Research*, 141(5), 66-69.
- [27] Wodak, R., de Cillia, R., Reisigl, M., & Liebhart, K. (2009). *The discursive construction of national identity* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- [28] Zhao, Y. (2011). *Semiotics: Principles and problems*. Nanjing, China: Nanjing University Press.
- [29] Zhu, J. & Zhang, H. (2014). The paradigm shift in Asian English education: From EFL/ESL to EAL. *Foreign Language World*, 1, 19-27.

**Ping Tang** is a lecturer. She has taught various courses at the undergraduate level at China West Normal University in China, and published various articles in both Chinese and international journals. Her research interests include second language teaching in higher education and American literary study.