ENGLISH IN CHINA

THE IMPACT OF THE GLOBAL LANGUAGE ON CHINA'S LANGUAGE SITUATION

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ABSTRACT

The language situation of today's world is drastically different from that which existed in the past. English has become the global language –it is used more and is more widespread than any other language has ever been. At the same time we are faced with large-scale language endangerment which could result in the extinction of half or more of the world's languages. While not the only reason for language endangerment, the status of English as the global language has important consequences for all other languages and therefore deserves to be studied carefully. However, exactly what English means for other languages and cultures is far from simple and there is no general agreement on this issue. English has been seen as a destructive language, a pluralistic language and as an irrelevant language.

This thesis explores the issue of global English as it applies to China. English language learning and teaching has been, and by all indications will continue to be, an important part of China's reform and modernisation. China is also an ethnically and linguistically diverse country with 55 minority nationalities and over 80 languages. What does the spread of English mean for China's language situation? Drawing on data gained through fieldwork and published sources, I argue that English in China is multifaceted, that is it has destructive, pluralistic and irrelevant elements. English is now used more and has higher status in China than at any time in the past and this has raised some concerns. However, English is not displacing Chinese language or culture. English is actually taking on Chinese features in both form and function. The Chinese language, far from being threatened, is currently expanding both in China and the world at large. Much effort has gone into promoting *putonghua* and there is great interest in learning Chinese in many parts of the world. China's minority languages,

like those elsewhere, are under varying degrees of threat. However, English is not the main reason for this situation. At the present time at least it has relatively little presence in minority areas.

Despite the fact that it is not destroying China's languages and cultures, English remains a significant issue for China and must be dealt with thoughtfully and carefully, especially among the minority nationalities. I argue that it is possible for China to acquire English without losing its linguistic diversity. Whether this can be achieved is a question of the resources and political will required to do so rather than any inherent difficulty with speaking two or more languages. To this end, the Context Approach is put forward as a possible way to improve English language teaching and learning among the minorities.

In light of the results of this study, I suggest new directions for research, both on language issues in China and in general. I also argue for a new approach to our study of English as a global language and language endangerment. We need to appreciate the complexities of English on a local level as well as a global level and focus our attention more on how English can be taught to speakers of endangered languages in such a way that does not lead to language loss.

STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.

Signed: Date:

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NOTE ON CHINESE NAMES

Throughout this thesis I refer to Chinese authors by their full names in order to avoid confusion. Following Chinese custom, the surname is first followed by the given name. This practice is used for works written in both Chinese and English. Where a Chinese author has an English given name, this name is put first followed by the author's surname. I use the pinyin system for spelling Chinese names unless the author spells his/her name using a different system.

NOTE ON SPELLING

I use Australian English spelling in this thesis. Where I quote directly from a source I use the spelling of the original. Therefore, words like 'globalisation' are spelt with an 's' where I use them but with a 'z' if they are spelt that way in the original.

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Jilin University gave me a job teaching English in the Foreign Language College which allowed me to stay in China for an extended period and conduct my research. I would like to thank the staff for giving me this opportunity and the students for participating in my classes, some of which are quoted in the thesis. Likewise, the members of minority nationalities I spoke to in various parts of China provided me with much useful information. Without their willingness to answer my questions this project would not have been possible.

During my activities in China, Lin Han helped me find Chinese language books and journals, acted as an interpreter in some interviews and helped me translate some Chinese language sources. Her help is much appreciated.

My family encouraged me and provided various kinds of support needed for writing a thesis such as a computer and printing. My friends and fellow students also supported and encouraged me throughout the writing of this thesis.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the example of Spider-Man. Peter Parker, Spider-Man's alter ego, once began postgraduate studies but had to give up on it because of the demands of being a super-hero. Even though I didn't have to cope with maniacal super-villains it's nice to know that even those with the proportionate strength, speed and agility of a spider have trouble writing a thesis.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

> *If things don't change, the ultimate end to the period of linguistic punctuation that we are in now will be a single world language – that with the greatest prestige. It will take a few hundred years to get there, but this is the ultimate situation we are moving towards (Dixon, 1997:148).*

> *The global spread of English has complex roots and is not a simple and unstoppable process that will lead ultimately to a single, homogeneous global culture (Graddol, 1996:182).*

1.1 Introduction

Language is a fundamental part of our lives. Without language much of what we do would be impossible. As such, language issues have always been important, weighing heavily on the minds of individuals, families, governments and nations. This is even more so in today's world where "global language patterns are changing radically" (Aitchison, 2000:219). Languages have always changed and even died out but today we face the prospect of dealing with this issue on a much larger scale than ever before. Whether in the United States, South America, Africa, Asia, Europe or Australia, minority languages are under enormous social, political and economic pressure that threatens their survival (Hornberger, 1998:439-41). This phenomenon is not only limited to minority languages, even some quite large languages may be under threat. According to some estimates, between 20% and 50% of the world's 6000 languages will no longer exist by the end of this century (Krauss, 1992; 1995 cited in May, 2000:367). A recent UNESCO report, which declared 3000 languages to be "endangered, seriously endangered or dying in

many parts of the world" (quoted in *Los Angeles Times*, 20/2/2002), adds credence to these claims. Despite the scale of language endangerment, linguists have only recently started to pay attention to this issue and the general public is still largely unaware that this problem even exists (Bradley and Bradley, 2002a:xi). One of the reasons for the current language situation is that a new factor has been added to the mix –a global language. There is understandably widespread enthusiasm for learning English, especially among those eager to have a greater role in the world and to take advantage of the many opportunities knowledge of English brings. However, the emergence of a global language with the power and influence of English also has significant implications for the ongoing use and survival of languages everywhere (Hornberger, 1998:439-41).

This is certainly the case in China. Beginning in 1978, China embarked upon a course of modernisation and reform that, while not without problems such as corruption, crime, inflation and unemployment, has been generally successful. China has one of the fastest growing economies in the world and was strong enough to withstand the recent Asian economic crisis (Overholt, 1993; Tipton, 1998; van Kemenade, 1997). The way China's reforms will ultimately pan out and what China will look like in the future is still open to debate[1], but one thing we can be reasonably sure about is that English has been and will likely continue to be an integral part of China's reform and modernisation process. Existing alongside efforts to acquire English is a large degree of ethnic and linguistic diversity – China is home to 55 minority nationalities and over 80 languages (Xiao Hong,

[1] Some forecast a bright future for China as a political and economic power (see Burstein and De Keijzer, 1998:311-48; Rohwer, 1995:115-66; Starr, 2001:318-23; van Kemenade, 1997:383-401and Wilson, 1997:461-74). Another argument sees China as a threat (Bernstein and Munro, 1997). Terril (2003)

1998:221). What effects will English have on China? What will happen to Chinese? What will happen to the many languages spoken by China's minority nationalities? This dissertation aims to provide a description of the language situation in China regarding the use of English, Chinese and minority languages and draw inferences about what this means for English as the global language and language endangerment.

1.2 The Research Problem

At the start of the 21st century, it is almost a cliché to say that English is the global or world language. The current spread, scope and scale of English is unprecedented, as McArthur (1998:30) aptly summarises:

> For good or ill, at the end of the second millennium AD and the fifth full millennium since recorded history began, English is unique. No language has ever before been put to so many uses so massively by so many people in so many places-on every continent and in every sea; in the air and in space; in thought, speech, and writing; in print on paper and screen; in sound on tape and film; by radio, television, and telephone; and via electronic networks and multimedia. It is also used as mother tongue or other tongue–fluently, adequately, or haltingly; constantly, intermittently, or seldom; happily, unhappily, or ambivalently–by over a billion people. Perhaps a fifth of the human race.

English is the main language of books, newspapers, international business, academic conferences, science, technology, medicine and diplomacy, to mention just a few examples (Crystal, 1987:358). In addition, English has official or special status in over 70 countries, covering Africa, Asia and the Pacific (Crystal, 1997:3). And, as McArthur's comments indicate, no other language is in a position to compete with English for global language status. French, the international language of diplomacy and commerce in the 18th and part of the 19th century, still has some influence but nowhere near that of English

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concluded that despite some significant problems China will eventually become a modern democratic state

(Crystal, 1988:262; Graddol, 1996:185). Spanish is used throughout South America and is currently gaining importance in the USA but its use does not extend much beyond that (Crystal, 1988:262 see also *The New York Times* 1/3/2002 for an example of the use of Spanish in the USA). In Europe, German is a powerful language of trade, yet as Graddol (1996:193) says, "even German companies have to do business with most of the world in English". Other widely used languages including Russian, Arabic, Hindi and Swahili have and still do influence culture and communication in various parts of the world but, despite being international languages in their own right, they fall well short of the scope of English (McArthur, 1998:38; McCrum et al, 1986:20). This is true even in the case of Chinese, which has the highest number of mother tongue speakers in the world. Yet, as Fischer (1999:218) points out, “the Chinese are presently learning English. Few English speakers are learning Chinese”. Attempts at creating artificial languages such as Esperanto for use throughout the world have also by and large failed (see Eco, 1995:317-36 for a review of such projects), leaving English alone “at the very centre of the global language system” (Held et al, 1999:346).

English can therefore be seen as “a globalizing medium in its own right” (Spybey, 1996:108), influencing language, communication and even culture all around the world. This has of course raised several issues and prompted a variety of responses, ranging from positive to hostile. One of the most prominent concerns is the impact of English on other languages, especially minority languages, as Yano (2001:120) points out:

> On the one hand, English has the essential value of being a means of global communication, that is an unprecedented resource for mutual understanding in this time when we live in multilateral rather than bilateral relations. On the other

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while Gordon Chang (2001) predicts China will be overwhelmed by its problems.

> hand, the global spread of such a powerful and convenient common language is driving minor languages to extinction, thus depriving us of the privilege to understand different beliefs, values, and views which help us to develop insight into the human mind and spirit, and the precious opportunities to liberate us from the monolingual and monocultural perspectives.

These issues are certainly relevant to China. Mandarin Chinese, the official language, coexists with a number of major regional dialects: Wu (spoken in Zhejiang and Jiangsu Province), Yue (known commonly as Cantonese and used in south China), Xiang (spoken in Hunan Province), Kejia (also called Hakka and spoken in the provinces of Guangdong, Guangxi and southern Fujian), Gan (spoken in Jiangxi Province) and Min, which is variously split into Northern and Southern or Eastern and Western and spoken in Fujian, parts of Guangdong, Hainan and Taiwan (Smith, 1994:102). On top of this there are numerous languages spoken by China's minority nationalities, covering a variety of language families such as Sino-Tibetan, Altaic and Indo-European (Heberer, 1989:13).

Added to this already complicated linguistic situation is English, the learning and teaching of which has been an integral part of China's reform and modernisation, as Wang Yinquan (1999:45) summarises:

> The last five decades have witnessed several rises and falls in the status of EFL teaching in the People's Republic of China (hereafter China). Except in the period from 1949 to 1957 when Russian was dominant under the influence of political bias towards learning from the Soviet Union and rejecting the "enemy" United States, English has been the most widespread foreign language in the past fifty years but only in the recent decade has its prominence reached its present high level. In the wake of the policy of reform and opening up to the outside world adopted by China since 1978, English has been widely accepted as a utilitarian tool for science, technology, national development and modernization, and the study of English is regarded as necessary for acquiring technological expertise from abroad and for fostering international trade.

Apart from benefiting the entire nation in terms of scientific, technological and economic development (Burnaby and Sun Yilin, 1989:221; Cortazzi and Jin Lixian, 1996a:64), English language proficiency also has benefits on an individual level. Knowledge of English makes it easier to enter and graduate from university, travel or work overseas and get a better job, especially in joint ventures and companies involved in international trade (Cortazzi and Jin Lixian, 1996a:61; Wang Yinquan, 1999:45). English is now the most widely taught foreign language in China and, not surprisingly, China has the largest English learning population in the world (Crystal, 1997:3; Li Xiaoju, 1984:2). The prominence of English has raised concerns about Chinese language and culture including the status of Chinese, standards of Chinese and English and the possible Westernisation of China (Jiang Yajun, 2003; Niu Qiang and Wolff, 2003).

It is not just Chinese that we should be concerned about. As we have already seen, the use and status of the world's minority languages is declining rapidly at the same time as English comes to be used more and more. Although legally guaranteed equality in the Chinese Constitution, which states that all nationalities are equal and have the right to use and develop their own languages, minority languages are in a subordinate position in comparison to Chinese (Dwyer, 1998:68; Zhou Yaowen, 1992:37). As Lin Jing (1997:196) points out, the Han Chinese are the power holders in society and therefore it is their language, Chinese, that is overwhelmingly used for important functions such as government and the media. Minority languages on the other hand "are limited in use and of low social status" (Lin Jing, 1997:196). Under such circumstances, it should come as no surprise that many members of minority groups neglect their own language in favour

of Chinese (Xiao Hong, 1998:232). On top of this there is English. As the vehicle for China's modernisation and integration with the rest of the world, and with China set to become a major player in international affairs, English language proficiency becomes increasingly necessary or at the very least desirable for everyone. In this situation, it is hard to see a place for minority languages in Chinese society or the world at large:

> In China, the language most likely to be useful and to bequeath a high social status is Chinese, and in the world at large the same benefits accrue most readily from English. In both cases, the languages of the minority nationalities are likely to be left out. A language like Kazak will remain in use in rural areas and among people wishing to accentuate their own nationality, but as modernization proceeds it is less likely to be used as a living vehicle of communication (Mackerras, 1994:270-1).

While there may be some genuine concerns, it is not a simple matter of English sweeping all before it. There is no doubt that English asserts enormous pressure on other languages but this may actually contribute to their survival rather than extinction. As English becomes dominant, people may well cling to their own languages and identities even more intensely. Movements to maintain, revive or expand small languages are taking place in many parts of the world such as Alaska, Spain, Mexico and Africa. Many such efforts take place simultaneously with efforts to acquire English (Fishman, 2000:439-40). Linked with this is the notion that English is simply a tool that facilitates communication among a diverse range of people, as Huntington (1996:61) describes:

> English is the world's way of communicating interculturally just as the Christian calendar is the world's way of tracking time, Arabic numbers are the world's way of counting, and the metric system is, for the most part, the world's way of measuring. The use of English in this way, however, is *intercultural* communication; it presupposes the existence of separate cultures. A lingua franca is a way of coping with linguistic and cultural differences, not a way to eliminate them. It is a tool for communication not a source of identity and community (italics original).

The phenomenon of global English then becomes a far more complicated issue than it appears to be. There are many views on what English means for other languages and English has a different influence in each context. To this end, the overarching question this dissertation seeks to answer is:

What does the spread of English mean for the language situation of China?

A number of areas will be investigated to answer this question, namely:

What is the use and status of English in China?

Is English displacing Chinese language and culture?

Is English displacing minority languages?

1.3 Central Argument

The core argument of this dissertation is that English is not steamrolling all other languages, peoples and cultures out of the way. To borrow Wiseman's (1998:2) term, English is not "an all-powerful Godzilla". Instead, English is 'out there' on a global scale but manifesting itself differently in different places. Widdowson (1997:139-40) provides a good summary of this idea:

> I would argue that English as an international language is not *distributed*, as a set of established encoded forms, unchanged into different domains of use, but it is *spread* as a virtual language… When we talk about the spread of English, then, it is not that the conventionally coded forms and meanings are transmitted into different environments and different surroundings, and taken up and used by different groups of people. It is not a matter of the actual language being distributed but of the virtual language being spread and in the process being variously actualized. The distribution of the actual language implies adoption and conformity. The spread of the virtual language implies adaptation and nonconformity. The two processes are quite different (italics original).

English has been seen as a destructive language, as a pluralistic language and as an irrelevant language. In what way can we expect English to manifest or be experienced in China? I argue that English in China is multifaceted. English is now used more and has higher status than ever before but it is not displacing Chinese or Chinese culture to any great extent. In fact, there are signs that English is taking on Chinese features. Furthermore, the Chinese language has spread both in China and outside China. There is increasing interest in learning Chinese in many countries, including the West. Minority languages are under varying degrees of threat but this threat comes mainly from Chinese. At this stage it seems English has relatively little presence in minority areas of China. The English language in China is somewhere between, or rather a combination of, the three views of English, displaying elements of all them.

1.4 Theory, Methodology and Sources

Broadly speaking, this thesis looks at globalisation through a linguistic lens. It is important to be clear about what this means. One way of doing this is to look at how globalisation is talked about. Steger (2002:40) describes this approach:

> The task can no longer be limited to an objective classification of the constitutive parts of the elephant called "globalization", but a critical assessment of the *language about globalization* that is constitutive of the phenomenon itself. Rather than being rejected as a confusing cacophony of subjective assertions, the exhibited normative preferences and the rhetorical and polemical maneuvers performed by the main participants in the public debate on globalisation become the researcher's critical task (italics original).

This is an important issue and deserves attention. However, it is not the topic of this thesis[2]. What we are concerned with here is the use and status of languages in a globalising world. Maurais (2003:13) calls this the study of "their relationships and their

competition on the world's checkerboard". The focus here is specifically on the implications of English for other languages and cultures. However, the issue of what English, the global language, means for China has a number of dimensions and does not fit precisely within the territory of any one academic discipline. Given this, the approach taken here was to draw on ideas from a variety of different fields and make use of them where appropriate. I see this dissertation as an investigation of a particular problem rather than as an example of work in a particular discipline. I hope it will be received as such by readers.

In terms of sources, the literature on globalisation in general offered a starting point for thinking about languages in today's world. The work of de Swaan (2001a) was particularly useful for conceptualising how languages operate in this context. Dalby (2002), Dixon (1997) and Nettle and Romaine (2000) also provided a useful theoretical framework for understanding changes in the use and status of languages throughout history. Certain works on world history were also useful for understanding how the world has changed and the implications this has for languages. Such works include Diamond (1991; 1997), Marks (2002), McNeill and McNeill (2003) and Simmons (1989). Scholars working on the current situation of English and its implications for other languages are too numerous to list. However, the work of Crystal (1997; 2000), Fishman (1991; 2000), Graddol (1996), Kachru (1983a; 1983b; 1988; 1990; 1992), Pennycook (1994; 2001a; 2001b) and Phillipson (1992a; 1992b; 2002; 2003) provided the main basis for investigating the role of English in the world.

[2] For a discussion of this issue see Fairclough (2001:203-17).

Prior to China's reform and opening up, it was virtually impossible to get hold of any information about China's economy, resources, development or population (Leeming, 1993:9). This situation has since changed and there is a vast amount of material written about languages in China. There is much activity surrounding English in China and a growing body of literature on the subject in both China and the West. The literature covers various aspects including policy towards foreign languages, teaching methods, curriculum, language tests, Western teachers in China and the use and status of English in China. This thesis draws on much of this work, both in English and Chinese, to describe and analyse China's language situation. Newspaper reports were also used to get up to date information on developments relevant to language and language education. *People's Daily Online*, *China Daily* and *South China Morning Post* were particularly useful for this purpose. When it comes to minority languages there is also a large body of literature. However, there are some important limitations to what is available. It can often be difficult to find detailed and accurate information relating to minority languages and their speakers. Magga and Skutnabb-Kangas (2003:36) sum up this point:

> Data on language are generally poor. In Denmark, a bacon-producing country with 5 million people and 24 million pigs, the age, weight-class and life span of each of the pigs is known at any one moment, but there is no idea of how many speakers of which languages there are. Languages spoken by non-Danes obviously do not have the same value on the linguistic market as bacon has on the economic market, and therefore they have not been counted nor the profiles of people speaking or signing them described.

A similar situation exists in China. The *China Statistical Yearbook* (2004:856) contains information about the number of athletes and referees for each grade in a number of sports and in another section there is statistics on the number of traffic accidents in each province (*China Statistical Yearbook*, 2004:883). However, it does not contain any

information about where minority languages are spoken, how many speakers of each language there are or how many minorities speak Chinese or other languages. There is very little written about the English language in minority areas of China. Most of the literature focuses on minority languages and Chinese or the minority languages themselves. Much Chinese writing about minority languages is descriptive rather than sociolinguistic. For example, Zhang Yanchang et al (1989a; 1989b) provide a descriptive grammar of Hezhen and Oroqen respectively. These works are useful and no doubt contribute in some way to the survival of minority languages but tell us very little about when, where and who speaks these languages and their interactions with other languages.

Although there is always the question of reliability of information no matter what sources are used, there are special problems associated with using Chinese sources. Chinese sources, especially the media, tend to focus on the positive aspects of government policy and current events while anything that paints an unfavourable picture of China is ignored or played down (Leeming, 1993:9-10). This is the case with minority languages and minority issues in general. Articles such as "Chinese Minorities Pen Their Own Languages" (*People's Daily Online*, 8/3/2002), "Ethnic Minority Languages Surviving in Modern World" (*People's Daily Online*, 8/2/2002), "Our Language Still Alive" (*People's Daily Online*, 28/2/2002), "China Salvages Dying Languages" (*People's Daily Online*, 24/6/2001), "Largest Tibetan Language Website Opens in China" (*People's Daily Online*, 12/9/2001), "Tibetan Language Enters Into Computer Era" (*People's Daily Online*, 7/6/2001) and "Tibetan Language in Wide Use" (*People's Daily Online*, 3/8/2000) are examples of what appears in the press. All of these articles contain examples of the

achievements made in the area of minority languages and praise the Chinese government for its efforts. As far as Chinese scholarship goes, there is a vast amount written about minority nationalities but it too must be approached with some caution. Much of it is descriptive rather than theoretical and in some cases the research is based on limited fieldwork (Mackerras, 1995:8). And, like the media, much Chinese scholarly writing is biased in favour of the government to the point of sometimes excluding other views (Mackerras, 1994:17-8). Despite these problems, Chinese statistics and media reports are often the only sources of information about much of what goes on in China and it is not possible or entirely desirable to avoid using them altogether.

These problems were partially alleviated by adopting an ethnographic approach to investigate the research questions. This approach was particularly useful regarding the influence of English in minority areas. In order to put this approach into practice, I spent almost a year teaching English in China with the idea of working "as a 'kitchen-sink' ethnographer, happy to incorporate any information that comes my way" (Miller, 1994:4). Most of my time in China was spent teaching English at Jilin University's Foreign Language College located in Changchun. This job was found over the internet and lasted from September 2002 to June 2003. My research interests and intentions to conduct research were made clear and for the most part were well received by staff and students of the university. In January and February 2004 I returned to China for another period of fieldwork. This trip included visits to the Northeast and Guizhou Province in China's southwest. In the Northeast I visited Changchun, Harbin, Yanji, Tumen, Jilin and

two small minority villages near Jilin City. In Guizhou I was able to visit the Miao villages of Xijiang, Leishan and Langde.

Many have argued that ethnographic methods are no longer relevant in today's world and/or cannot be used to investigate the sorts of issues we face in the era of globalisation (see for example the discussion in Ahmed and Shore, 1995; Evans, 1993). However, this approach can indeed be applied to issues of globalisation because it can:

- describe how a particular group or region is being affected by global processes
- show if, what, how and why traditions persist
- show how local, traditional identities interact with emerging global identities (Brewer, 2000:176).

The suitability of an ethnographic approach to investigating the English language in China is obvious[3]. During my time in China, I made use of two techniques for gathering information: participant observation and interviews.

Participant observation means gaining information through seeing and hearing what happens in naturally occurring situations (Wolcott, 1999:46). It entails being immersed in the setting in order to observe daily patterns of behaviour, basic beliefs, ideas and how people use their environment (Fetterman, 1998:35). There are many advantages to participant observation. It gives an overall grasp of what is happening in the setting under study, it provides the opportunity to form and later confirm hypotheses, it enables the community to become familiar with the researcher and gives the researcher the chance to

experience aspects of the setting which may not be available through other means (Schensul et al, 1999:91-2). Observation was focused on language and the following questions guided observation: *What language(s) is the most visible? What language(s) is heard most often? Where are languages seen and heard?*

Much of this participant observation was done in my role as an English teacher. This role allowed me to draw data from classroom activities. In addition, observations were also made while doing everyday activities like shopping or wandering around. Observations were written down immediately if there was a chance to do so or as soon as possible afterwards. I wrote observations in a journal then wrote up the data based on the journal entries.

Although participant observation has been used by numerous researchers investigating diverse topics, it is not without its problems. Firstly, there are the practical issues of the amount of time and commitment needed to use participant observation effectively. It is not something which can be done quickly and easily (Brewer, 2000:61). Beyond purely practical issues, participant observation raises the somewhat more difficult to deal with issues of the quality and representativeness of what is observed (Brewer, 2000:59-61). It is impossible to observe everything, even in a study such as this which focuses on one aspect of the setting, language use. In addition, what the researcher actually gets to observe may be heavily influenced by the culture, politics and customs of the people and setting one is attempting to observe (Schensul et al, 1999:92-4). Participant observation

[3] While I have used ethnographic methods, this dissertation makes no claim to being an ethnography. Here ethnographic approach refers to ethnography as a method rather than an orientation towards research or a

implies immersion in the setting but this is impossible to achieve in full. Researchers must eventually leave the setting and even in the fieldwork stage it is unlikely that researchers will be observing all the time. Breaks from involvement in the setting are common and could be due to a number of reasons, not the least of which is the need to write up what has already been observed (Schensul et al, 1999:92). Further complicating the use of participant observation is the very presence of the researcher. To begin with, the issue of how far one can get involved in the setting and how researchers should conduct themselves in the field is a thorny issue:

> How much participation is participation enough? If at one extreme a fieldworker can be too aloof, might one also become so involved as to make observation impossible? There is an inherent paradox in the role of participant observer. As a general guideline, it seems preferable to stay on the cautious side, becoming only as involved as necessary to obtain whatever information is sought (Wolcott, 1999:48).

Even this advice does not solve the problem entirely. The most commonly raised criticism of participant observation is that the way people act in the presence of a researcher may be different than the way they act normally. While this is a good point, it is questionable that people can act in a way different from normal over a long period of time. Eventually, "things will get back to normal, and the fieldworker will be able to observe the every day life of real people, not an individual or group putting on an act to win a favorable review" (Wolcott, 1995:83). It may also be possible to discuss this issue with one's subjects to gauge to what extent they believe the researcher's presence has influenced behaviour (Wolcott, 1999:49). Secondly, participant observation is a technique which uses the researcher as the primary instrument of data collection and as such what we observe is influenced by our own ideas, values and biases (Brewer,

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viewpoint on reality. For a discussion of this distinction, see Wolcott (1999:41-4).

2000:59; Schensul et al, 1999:95). Researchers are just as much a part of the world around them as the people and things they observe (Goodall, 2000; Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983), and this means that the data gathered through participant observation is not purely objective data about an external reality but is influenced by the researcher's attitudes, opinions, anxieties and reactions to what is happening around him or her (Brewer, 2000:59). In one sense then "participant observation can only be a partial portrait compiled from selective records, and is thus highly autobiographical" (Brewer, 2000:62). As Wolcott (1994:5) states:

> Never forget that in your reporting, regardless of how faithful you attempt to be in describing what you observed, you are creating something that has never existed before. At best it can be similar, never exactly the same as what you observed.

Despite problems of selectivity and representativeness involved in using participant observation "a view is sometimes better than no view, and there are occasions when there is no alternative to a period of participant observation" (Brewer, 2000:62-3). This is especially true in an under studied area such as the dynamics of the English language in China, particularly the minority areas. Useful as it is, participant observation is not a stand-alone research technique. As many scholars point out (see for example Brewer, 2000; Fetterman, 1998; Schensul et al, 1999; Wolcott, 1999), the key to making participant observation work is not to overstate the claims that can be made from its use and use it in conjunction with other techniques, as is done here.

Interviewing is a broad term and can cover anything from casual conversations to highly structured, formal interviews (Wolcott, 1999:52-8). For this research project, informal techniques were used extensively. Casual conversation and semi-structured interviews

with students, teachers and members of the general public were used to gather data about patterns of behaviour, social meanings and attitudes which may not or cannot be gathered through observation (Brewer, 2000:63; Wolcott, 1999:46-7). The "informal ethnographic interview" as Agar (1980:90) terms it, has the advantage of not having a strict, predetermined set of questions, nor does it rely on the researcher taking on the formal role of interviewer. And, it can be used virtually anywhere:

> You might ask informal questions while working with an informant on a harvest; you might ask during a group conversation over coffee; or you might ask while watching a ceremony. If used with tact, the strategies [….] can add to your ability to give accounts while doing minimal harm to the natural flow of events into which your questions intrude (Agar, 1980:90).

This kind of technique is particularly useful in China where there are limits on what information researchers can access. Once again, the questions asked for my purposes centred around the topic of language. They included (but were not limited to) the following: *What do people think of English and other languages? What language(s) do people most want to speak/want their children to speak? What do people think of the current language situation? What was the language situation like in the past?* All interviews were conducted in Chinese unless otherwise noted. Data from interviews were written down as soon as possible using a pen and paper I always carried. Later they were written up in a notebook along with the time and date they were conducted. For some of the interviews I was accompanied by my Han Chinese girlfriend. On those occasions when my Chinese was not good enough she acted as interpreter. Her presence greatly facilitated the interview process and resulted in better data.

Like participant observation, interviewing has its drawbacks too. As Wolcott (1999:54) points out, “interviewing seldom happens in quite the way we hope and intend or as glamorised in a few widely circulated photographs of ethnographers in action”. On a practical level, there are many problems that must be overcome for interviewing to be successful. The researcher must somehow gain access to the area being studied, understand the language and culture of the interviewees at least enough to make interviewing possible, locate willing participants, establish sufficient rapport to make interviewees comfortable, present him/herself in an appropriate way and somehow record the data gathered from the interview as accurately as possible (Fontana and Frey, 1994:366-8). These problems were solved to some extent by my status as an English teacher. Not only did this provide a way into the field but also helped to build up contacts and friendships with the local people and legitimated my presence. People expect a foreigner to be an English teacher so it was not out of the ordinary or culturally inappropriate. The English language also has the advantage of being something that the Chinese want to talk about and talk in. With the importance attached to it and growing awareness of English surrounding the Olympics and China's entry to the WTO, finding people willing to discuss language issues was not hard. It is also worth noting that other researchers working with minorities in China have found that this type of approach has proved successful. Schien (2000:28) says of the methods she used to investigate the Miao, “shopping, incidental conversations on trains and buses, the stares and queries my fieldworker mode elicited –these kinds of things became vital components of what I have called itinerant ethnography”.

However, once practical problems are dealt with, the researcher is then faced with determining the accuracy of interview data. In the course of an interview, whether it is formal or informal, people may lie, express only those opinions deemed socially acceptable or try to portray themselves as something they are not (Brewer, 2000:65). There is also the possibility that the data can be influenced by the characteristics of the interviewer, interviewee and the context of the interview (Brewer, 2000:65). Another issue involved with the use of interviews is the quality of data attained from them, something that is impossible to judge beforehand. Data may turn out to be either too little or too much even from seemingly suitable interviewees (Wolcott, 1999:54). In answer to these difficulties I can only say that the length of time spent in China was sufficient to talk to a variety of people and hear a variety of opinions in terms of quantity and quality. However, there were limits to what people were willing to discuss. I found that some members of minorities were unwillingly to go too far into issues such as the threat Chinese poses to minority languages. Minority issues are still sensitive in China and it is understandable that some people may be reluctant to say something that may be seen as a criticism of China. When an interviewee appeared uncomfortable I changed the topic or ended the interview.

There are, as always, problems with this methodology. Of course my data represents only a part of the whole but it nevertheless gives an impression of what is going on in an area in need of study. Where I cite data from observation and interviews, I have tried to be as explicit as possible about the methods used to obtain the data and the problems associated with it. While the analysis is mine, I have tried to present the data in such a way that the

reader can make his/her own decisions about it. At the end of the day, languages are spoken by people and it is people who ultimately decide the fate of a language. In the words of de Swaan (2001b:68), “language exists and endures in and through them; it is they who make, preserve and change it”. Keeping this in mind the approach outlined above is suitable for the purposes of this research.

1.5 Why is this Research Important?

There are many significant problems in the world today such as poverty, environmental degradation, disease, war and political, religious and cultural repression. Many people consider these problems to be more important than language issues (Fishman, 1991:2). A typical argument, Dixon (1997:117) informs us, is that minority languages “are insignificant languages spoken by insignificant peoples, odd tribes and minority groups that will disappear simply because of the relentless advancement of the great civilised nations of the world towards a global community”. So, why should we spend time and energy investigating how the English language is affecting the language situation of China?

1.5.1 Language as a Valuable Resource

To begin with, languages themselves are important in a number of ways. All languages, no matter how small, encapsulate knowledge about the world and everything in it. Language is the instrument through which we make sense of the world and communicate our knowledge of it. By looking at other languages we may discover something we did not know before –there are several examples of insights into botany, biology and

medicine coming from minority languages (Crystal, 2000:51-3). In fact, some of the most well-known and important drugs found their way into modern medicine via research into the ways in which various groups used plants used in traditional medicine. Aspirin comes from meadowsweet, codeine from the opium poppy, the nasal decongestant pseudoephedrine derived from *Ephedra sinica* and vinblastine, a drug used to treat leukaemia, came from rosy periwinkle (Dalby, 2002:212). The detailed environmental knowledge contained in languages may also be invaluable in designing appropriate development programs (Nettle and Romaine, 2000:166-7). If a language ceases to exist, we lose the knowledge it contained as well. As Magga and Skutnabb-Kangas (2003:49) point out, "with every last speaker of a language, a vast library dies –and it might have had in it solutions to some of the urgent problems for the survival of the planet". While language is not the only part of culture, it is a very important to culture. A language expresses the ideas, values and identity of its speakers. Through stories, songs and histories a language can tell us about the origins, ancestry and important events in the life of a group (Crystal, 2000:36-43). Furthermore, some aspects of culture are actually dependent on language. Songs, chants, stories and poems for example all depend on the phonological, morphological and syntactic aspects of language (Hale, 1998:204) and without it they could not exist. Translation into another language may mean that they survive but it is not the same: "jokes no longer have the same zip, stories no longer convey the same spirit or warmth" (Mithun, 1998:184)[4]. For those interested in the linguistic and psychological capabilities of human beings, much can be gained through the study of minority languages. In order to develop and refine theories about the

[4] For a detailed discussion of how language loss can affect individuals and communities, see Brody (2001:167-220). Several interesting personal accounts of language loss can also be found in Abley (2003).

structure and possibilities of languages it is necessary to study many different and diverse languages (Nettle and Romaine, 2000:10). Investigating the phonology, vocabulary, grammar and discourse structures of minority languages can help us "identify the range, complexity, and limitations of the human language faculty" (Crystal, 2000:63).

1.5.2 Minorities and their Languages in the Chinese Context

As is now clear, China has a high degree of ethnic and linguistic diversity which presents challenging and difficult issues for the Chinese authorities[5]. The prominence of English is not only a new issue that needs to be dealt with but also adds new dimensions to long standing concerns. For example, unity and stability have long been key concerns of the government and loss of minority languages and cultures, or at least the perception of such among minorities, could well lead to tensions and in extreme cases rebellions against the Chinese state. While this may seem unlikely, it should be remembered that protests have occurred over language issues in the past, the most notable being the reaction of Muslim minorities in Xinjiang Province to plans to replace Arabic writing scripts with Cyrillic and later Roman scripts (Zhou Minglang, 2003:299-310). English also represents access to information and links to different people, places and opinions, not all of them acceptable to the Chinese government. If minorities learn English it could well lead to them developing allegiances other than to the Chinese state, an equally worrying proposition for the government.

English therefore has some very significant political consequences for both the minorities themselves and the Chinese government. Exactly what these consequences are and how

they should be handled will only be revealed through studying the use and status of English in minority areas and the opinions of minorities about the global language.

1.5.3 Gaps in the Academic Literature

This research is also important on an academic level as it aims to address two gaps in the literature: lack of work on language and globalisation and the lack of a comprehensive overview of English in China. Although there is a large literature on the English language and a growing awareness of the state of minority languages, the globalisation literature rarely deals with language. Most works only mention language in passing or deal with it briefly and the major works are no exception to this rule. Held et al (1999) for example has five pages on language –and even that is shared with telecommunications –while Hirst and Thompson (1996) do not mention it at all despite a thorough discussion of other aspects of globalisation. The literature on the English language tends to describe the historical development of the language and the linguistic features of different varieties of English. English is acknowledged as the global language and there are certainly works that analyse how English obtained this position, Crystal (1997) and Blake (1996) being typical examples. However, few such works deal directly with the issue of globalisation and its implications for language. There is in fact "an alarming absence of literature that brings the two together" (Phillipson, 2002:10).

A similar story applies to the work done on English in China. As mentioned before, this work covers a wide range of areas and perhaps because of this there is a disparate quality about it. It is easy enough to find material on one area, say for example teaching methods,

[5] For details on China's minority and language policies, see Chapters Six and Seven.

but there are few works that bring it all together to give an overall view of English in China. More specifically, and related to the point above, there is currently no such work that sets China within the context of current trends in the world's language situation and analyses the role of English from the perspective of arguments about English as a global language. Following on from this, none of the current works include a section on the impact of English on the minorities and their languages. This topic has received very little attention from Chinese or Western scholars –despite its significance as explained above –and therefore constitutes another gap in the literature on English in China. Research that attempts to make such links is needed and this thesis will contribute to filling these gaps.

To sum up, this thesis aims to further our understanding of China's language situation and how it is being affected by the two most significant linguistic trends, the global spread of English and language loss. In doing so it will provide a comprehensive, up-to-date overview of the pertinent aspects of English in China and expand the current scope of research to include English and minorities. In addition, it will add language to the agenda of globalisation studies, thereby opening up new directions in the study of this significant topic.

1.6 Structure of the Thesis

To reiterate, my position on English as a global language is that it manifests itself differently in different places and I argue here that English in China is multifaceted; it does not fit neatly or precisely into any one of the three views but is rather a mixture of

all of them. To show this, I discuss three aspects of China's language situation: English, Chinese and minority languages.

Preceding the discussion of these languages, the theoretical framework is set out in Chapter Two. After a brief overview of the world's languages, Chapter Two discusses the trends and changes in the world's language situation up till the present, then looks at the global language system, focusing particularly on the role of English and the arguments surrounding its implications for other languages. This is done to show how the current language situation differs from the past, to evaluate various views on English and to put my research questions into context.

Chapter Three then explores the use and status of the English language in China, arguing that English now has a higher status and is used more than at any other time in the past. To substantiate my argument, this chapter first traces the history of the English language and English language teaching from it origins in the 17th century to the present and then, drawing extensively on newspaper articles and my fieldwork in China, gives a detailed account of when, where and for what purposes English is used and the issues this raises.

Following on from this, Chapter Four continues the discussion of English in China from a different angle. It looks at the influence of China and the Chinese people on the English language and how English is learnt and taught in order to show that although English is used extensively in China it is by no means displacing Chinese culture or turning the Chinese into blind followers of native English speaking norms and culture. In this chapter

I present substantial evidence that English is taking on Chinese characteristics in both form and function. I outline the features of the emerging variety of English known as China English, present examples of real life instances of the creative use of English by Chinese people drawn from my English language classes at Jilin University and other experiences in China and finally analyse how Chinese concepts of learning and teaching influence perceptions of Western teachers and Western teaching methodology. Once again I have incorporated my fieldwork data into this section.

The use and status of Chinese in China and the world is the subject of Chapter Five. This chapter argues that the Chinese language is not receding in the face of the spread of English but rather is expanding both within China and the world. After defining and briefly describing the varieties of Chinese, I analyse China's policies on *putonghua* promotion to show that much effort and many resources have been allocated to maintaining and promoting Chinese. I then argue that Chinese has considerable international standing and is currently experiencing an expansion. I show this through presenting an up-to-date account of Chinese language learning in Asia, the West and Africa based on primary sources such as newspaper articles and the websites of institutions involved with Chinese language learning. It reveals that in all of these regions Chinese is seen as a valuable resource and a way to advance one's career.

Chapter Six completes the survey of China's language situation by focusing on minority languages. After outlining the characteristics of China's minorities, it goes on to show that there are two trends regarding English in minority areas: Chinese is more of a threat

to minority languages than English because at present English has relatively little presence or influence in minority areas, and secondly, there is a strong desire to learn English among members of minority nationalities. This chapter draws extensively on my fieldwork and uses observational and interview data to substantiate my arguments.

In light of current trends and developments, Chapter Seven looks at the prospects for, and challenges of, maintaining linguistic diversity in China. In particular it expands on Chapter Six's conclusion that there is a strong desire to learn English among the minorities and takes the line that China can have the benefits of proficiency in English without destroying linguistic diversity. I argue that the two main obstacles to minorities acquiring English without losing their own languages are lack of educational resources and lack of minority cultural content in the curriculum and then go on to suggest the Context Approach as a way to improve English language teaching.

Finally, Chapter Eight discusses what the results of this study mean for English as a global language and the state of minority languages in the world. It also explains how my study has contributed to the field by putting language into globalisation studies, introducing new directions in the study of China's language situation and devising new analytical tools for the study of English as a global language and language endangerment. Of course, there is much work that still needs to be done and to this end Chapter Eight also contains suggestions for future research.

1.7 Conclusion

We have arrived at "a critical point in human linguistic history" (Crystal, 2000:ix). English has become the global language, and as is already obvious, this raises a number of issues. In the case of China, with its considerable linguistic diversity on the one hand and desire to integrate with the rest of the world on the other, these issues are particularly important and need urgent attention. We must endeavour to find appropriate and useful solutions to the many issues raised by the English language.

CHAPTER TWO

THE LANGUAGE SITUATION OF TODAY'S WORLD

> *It is not in fact difficult to understand the importance of foreign-language learning in today's world. As the planet becomes smaller, and the means for moving around it easier, so it has become more multicultural and multilingual. Not so long ago we used to be able to talk of nation states which could be associated with single languages – in France they spoke French, in Germany German, and so on. But it is no longer like that (Johnson, 2001:5).*
>
> *Though Earth's surviving languages will continue to change in familiar ways, a traditional linguistic dimension has been altered forever. Language throughout history has meant geographical territory-land. Now, the linguistic atlas has become all but meaningless. Language primarily means technology and wealth, a new borderless world with the only directions up and down, separating the haves and the have-nots. Proficiency in the planet's 'corporate language' – perhaps ultimately English –will soon define each person's place on Earth…and beyond (Fischer, 1999:205).*

2.1 Introduction

As Hopkins (2002:15) points out, most of the work on globalisation has focused on economic and political issues. Other topics have been either ignored or discussed only briefly. One perspective which has so far received comparatively little attention is the linguistic side of globalisation (de Swan, 2001a:2). Although linguistic aspects of globalisation have not received as much attention as other areas, language has been affected by globalisation in a profound way. As the above quotes indicate, we now have a language situation vastly different from that which existed in the past. As Leadbeater

(2002:304) puts it, “the world’s language system is in uncharted territory”. English has become the global language and there is large-scale language endangerment. This chapter will offer a way of conceptualising languages in the present day world. It begins with a brief overview of the world’s languages then discusses trends and changes in the language situation up till the present. We then move on to look at the global language system, focusing particularly on the role of English as the global language and arguments about its effects on other languages.

2.2 Overview of the World’s Languages

There are a vast number of languages in the world, more than most people, including some linguists, are aware of (Nettle and Romaine, 2000:27). Estimates of the number of languages there are range from 3000 to 10 000 (Crystal, 2000:3). It may seem somewhat strange that linguists are unsure about how many languages exist but there are good reasons why it is difficult to give a completely accurate figure. To begin with, it is not always clear what counts as a language and what counts as a dialect or variety of a language. In many cases what counts as a language is often decided by political or social factors rather than linguistic ones. Two well-known examples are the Scandinavian languages and Chinese. Although Danish, Swedish and Norwegian are mutually intelligible they are considered different languages rather than dialects of the same language. The reverse is true for Chinese. The various dialects of Chinese are quite different from each other and some are mutually unintelligible yet they are considered dialects of the same language (Comrie, 1990a:2-3). There is also the problem of names of languages. Some languages have no special name. For example, many Cantonese

speakers call their language *bundei-wa*, which means “local speech” (Matthews, 2003:23). Similarly, the Sare of Papua New Guinea refer to their language as Sare but this means “to speak or talk” (Nettle and Romaine, 2000:28). Alternatively, a language may have more than one name. Tapshin, a language spoken in the Kadun district of Plateau State in Nigeria is also called Tapshinawa, Suru and Myet. Another language spoken in the same area, Berom, has twelve alternative names (Crystal, 2000:5-6). This confusion of names often comes about because outsiders use different names for a language than the speakers of that language. For example, a particular Algonquian language was named Montagnais by French Canadians but its speakers call the language Innu-Aimun (Matthews, 2003:24). To further complicate matters there are also cases where the same name is used for two completely different languages (Nettle and Romaine, 2000:28). The potential for confusion is obvious.

The main reason for doubt over the number of languages is probably lack of research on particular languages and places. Prior to the second half of the 20th century, there were few large-scale linguistic surveys and estimates of the number of languages in the world were based more on guesswork than research (Crystal, 2000:3). While this situation has since improved, our knowledge of the world’s languages is still incomplete. Some parts of the world have not been studied and more work is needed in some of those that have (Crystal, 2000:5). This applies particularly to places such as New Guinea, Australia, Southeast Asia, much of Africa and the Amazon basin (Trask, 1999:211). There is also a tendency among linguists to study languages that are both familiar and easily accessible – they may study only one language or a few related languages in their own country or area

rather than venturing further afield (Nettle and Romaine, 2000:27-8). As we shall see later, many languages are also in danger of becoming extinct. In many cases there is not enough information to say whether a language is still spoken or not (Comrie, 1990a:4-5). Although an exact figure cannot be given, it is safe to say that there are between 4000 to 7000 languages in the world. A widely used and generally accepted figure is 6000 languages (Comrie, 1990a:2; Crystal, 2000:11; Nettle and Romaine, 2000:11).

The world's languages show great diversity. Nettle (1998:354-5) identifies three kinds of diversity: language diversity, phylogenetic diversity and structural diversity. Language diversity refers to the number of languages in a region. Phylogenetic diversity refers to how many different language families or branches of a family[1] there are in a region. These two types of diversity may overlap but it is not always the case that regions with high language diversity also have a large number of language families. In Central Africa there are hundreds of languages but the vast majority of these belong to the same family (Nettle, 1998:354). Structural diversity, as the term suggests, refers to how different languages are in terms of their structure. Languages may vary in a number of ways such as word order. Because languages that belong to different families often have different structures, structural diversity tends to go with phylogenetic diversity (Nettle, 1998:355). Table 2.1 gives some idea of the distribution and diversity of languages.

[1] The idea of a language family is not without its problems. Languages are assigned to families on the basis that they share enough features to be considered genetically related, i.e. they descend from a common ancestor. However, similarities between languages may be the result of chance, language universals, patterns of linguistic features that go together or borrowing rather than descent from a common ancestor (Comrie, 1990a:6-12).

As this table shows, languages are distributed unevenly across the world. According to Ethnologue (2000), Europe has only 3% of the world's languages, the Americas 15%, the Pacific 19%, Africa 30%, and Asia 33%. Papua New Guinea, with 862 languages or 13.2% of the world's total, has the most languages. At the other end of the scale, Russia has only 1.5% of the world's languages (Nettle, 1998:357).

Table 2.1 Distribution of the World's Languages

Geographical Region	**Language Families Represented**	**Percentage of Languages**
Africa	Afro-Asiatic, Nilo-Saharan, Niger-Congo, Khosian, Austronesian, Indo-European	30%
Asia	Altaic, Afro-Asiatic, Dravidian, Sino-Tibetan, Austro-Asiatic, Miao-Yao, Tai-Kadai, Austronesian, Indo-European, isolates Korean and Japanese	33%
Europe	Indo-European, Uralic, Altaic, a language isolate Basque	3%
Americas	Over 50 families in North America, 9 in Mesoamerica and over 100 in South America, Indo-European	15%
The Pacific	Austronesian, Papuan, Australian languages, Indo-European	19%

Source: compiled from data in Davis (1994:30-1), Ethnologue (2000) and Lyovin (1997)

In terms of phylogenetic diversity, the languages of Europe are almost all members of the Indo-European family. The non-Indo-European languages belong to the Uralic family which has around thirty members (Finegan et al, 1997:288). Members of this family in Europe include Estonian, Hungarian and Finnish. Turkish, spoken in Turkey and by minority populations in Cyprus, Greece, Bulgaria, parts of the former Yugoslavia and Macedonia, is the only major member of the Altaic family in Europe. There is also a language isolate, Basque (Comrie, 1987:13; Lyovin, 1997:61). Asia is diverse in terms of languages and language families. There are three main families in mainland Southeast Asia: Austro-Asiatic, Tai-Kadai and Sino-Tibetan. Languages belonging to the Tai-Kadai

family are spoken in Thailand, Laos, parts of Burma and Vietnam and southern China. Sino-Tibetan, a family with about 300 languages, covers China, Burma, Tibet, Bhutan and parts of India, Nepal, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Miao-Yao languages are spoken in the south of China and surrounding areas. Austronesian languages are spread out over one third of the Southern Hemisphere. They have some presence in mainland Asia but their main domain is the islands of Southeast Asia (Comrie, 1990b:12-3; Finegan et al, 1997:281; Katzner, 2002:22). Languages belonging to the various branches of the Altaic family are spoken in Mongolia, Central Asia, the Middle East, Russia, and parts of north China (Katzner, 2002:18). Where Korean and Japanese belong is the subject of debate. Some claim Japanese is related to Ainu and Korean. So far Korean has no established links to any other language (Finegan et al, 1997:288). Japanese and Korean are therefore generally regarded as language isolates. In South Asia there are languages belonging to the Afro-Asiatic, Dravidian, Sino-Tibetan, Austro-Asiatic, Sino-Tibetan, Austronesian and Indo-European families (Comrie, 1990a:12).

Africa, an almost equally diverse area, has Afro-Asiatic, Nilo-Saharan, Niger-Congo, Khosian, Austronesian and Indo-European languages. Afro-Asiatic languages occupy the northern part of Africa. The main representative of this family is Arabic. The Nilo-Saharan family has about 100 languages which are spoken in and around Chad and the Sudan. The Khosian family is best known for its click sounds, a feature no other languages possess. Khosian languages are spoken in southern Africa. The Niger-Congo family consists of many hundreds of languages and covers the area from Senegal to Kenya and South Africa (Finegan et al, 1997:283-6). Malagasy, spoken in Madagascar, is

the only Austronesian language in Africa. Indo-European languages such as French and English came to Africa via colonialism and still exert significant influence (Lyovin, 1997:200). The linguistic situation of the Americas is very complex, as shown by the huge number of language families present. Various suggestions have been put forward about the relationships of these languages but so far they remain unproven (Finegan et al, 1997:289). There are also Indo-European languages, most notably English, Spanish and Portuguese. The Pacific is an example of an area with many languages belonging to few families. In this area, we find Austronesian, Papuan and Australian languages (Comrie, 1987; Lyovin, 1997). Papuan is not actually a language family but rather a geographical grouping of languages not belonging to the Austronesian or Australian families (Lyovin, 1997:245). Papuan languages are spoken in Papua New Guinea and can probably be divided into many different language families although as yet little is known about these languages and their relationships (Finegan et al, 1997:291). At one stage there were over 200 Aboriginal languages in Australia. These languages fall into 27 groups, the largest being Pama-Nyungan. Languages in the north of Western Australia and the Northern Territory make up the other 26 groups (Finegan et al, 1997:289).

That is roughly how the world's languages are distributed. What about their size? According to number of native speakers, Chinese is the biggest language in the world with one billion speakers. English is second with 350 million and Spanish third with 250 million. Table 2.2 shows the top 20 languages.

Table 2.2 Top 20 Languages by Number of Mother Tongue Speakers

Language	**Ranking**	**Number of Mother Tongue Speakers (millions)**
Chinese	1	1000
English	2	350
Spanish	3	250
Hindi	4	200
Arabic	5	150
Bengali	6	150
Russian	7	150
Portuguese	8	135
Japanese	9	120
German	10	100
French	11	70
Punjabi	12	70
Javanese	13	65
Bihari	14	65
Italian	15	60
Korean	16	60
Telugu	17	55
Tamil	18	55
Marathi	19	50
Vietnamese	20	50

Source: Matthews (2003:19)

2.3 Changes in the World's Language Situation

As mentioned before, the world's language situation is undergoing some significant changes. To understand how the language situation has changed, we have to recognise that languages do not exist in isolation. Haugen (1972) coined the term ecology of language to describe the link between languages and the broader context that they operate within. Haugen (1972:325 cited in Muhlhausler, 2002:375) defines ecology of language as "the study of interactions between any given language and its environment". Muhlhausler (1997:5) expands on this definition, saying a language ecology

> is a dynamic system consisting of a number of inhabitants and meaningful interconnections between them. Students of linguistic ecologies will tend to focus on languages as the inhabitants, and other parameters such as the speaker's situation, and so on, as the supporting habitat. This view suggests a working

> definition of a linguistic ecology, as functionally structured linguistic diversity sustained by a multitude of environmental factors.

As this definition shows, the term ecology makes a metaphorical link with the environment. Just as changes in the ecosystem affect the survival of plants and animals, political, social, economic or environmental changes can have major implications for a language. Such changes may result in a language spreading, changing or even becoming extinct (Nettle and Romaine, 2000:79). Throughout history there have been many changes in the world's language ecology. Some of the world's languages have increased their use, status and number of speakers while smaller languages and even some not so small languages are in danger of dying out.

Dixon (1997) suggests the punctuated equilibrium model as a way of explaining changes in the language ecology. This idea is influenced by the punctuated equilibrium model from biology. Basically, equilibrium is a state of stability and relative harmony among people and languages. No one group of people or one language would be drastically bigger, stronger or more prestigious than the others. During periods of equilibrium, many languages coexist and through diffusion of linguistic features become similar to each other. Then there would be a drastic change, or punctuation, which disrupts the equilibrium. A punctuation can result in new languages being formed, languages dying out or a particular group and their language increasing their status and influence (Dixon, 1997:67). Some may say that Dixon's ideas about many different groups living in relative peace and being basically equal are too idealistic. However, the punctuated equilibrium model makes important links between languages and the broader context they are in,

making it useful for explaining changes in the world's language situation. We will now look at this model, beginning with the characteristics of equilibrium. In a state of equilibrium there would be:

- A number of groups who identify themselves as a group on the basis of having their own language or dialect, a name for the group and/or language, their own set of laws, traditions and beliefs and their own kinship system.
- Groups would be comparable in terms of population so that no group is dramatically larger than the others.
- Each group would be roughly similar in lifestyle and beliefs to the extent that they have a similar level of sophistication in tools, weapons, shelter, food resources and religious beliefs.
- No one group would have drastically more prestige or a greater share of resources. While there may be periods when one group has more prestige than the others this would not last for a long time nor spread widely.
- No one language or dialect would have an extended period of dominance or prestige (Dixon, 1997:68-9).

This does not mean that there was no change at all. Languages are always in a state of change but during equilibrium changes would be relatively small. There would not be large numbers of languages dying out or one language becoming dominant over a large area (Dixon, 1997:70). Major changes in the status of groups and changes in languages occur in periods of punctuation. Punctuation is an interruption to the state of equilibrium. There are two aspects to punctuation: its causes and geographical parameters. To begin with the causes of punctuation, almost every case of punctuation is caused by non-

linguistic factors (Dixon, 1997:74-5). Dixon (1997:74-5) identifies natural causes, material innovation, development of aggressive tendencies and writing and other forms of communication. Any of these can have major consequences for people and therefore languages. Each of these will be described briefly.

- Natural causes: a flood, drought, volcano, changes in the sea level and disease could all cause a reduction in population, changes to the living area or the merging or migration of people.
- Material innovation: tools and weapons can give one group an advantage over others. Transport means mobility is increased and it is possible for people to explore new areas and in the case of boats could mean an increase in food supply for the group who posses them.
- Aggressive tendencies: one group could decide it wants more power and conquer other groups. A religion may also spread. When one group has power its language also gains prestige. Other groups will learn the prestige language but the powerful group will not learn the non-prestige languages of other groups, at least not in large numbers.
- Writing and other forms of communication: writing generally happens in the prestige language with little published in other languages. Writing is also associated with the need to administer and control large groups of people. Radio and TV are also mostly in the prestige language and effectively swamp speakers of other languages with material in the prestige language (Dixon, 1997:76-82)

There are also three possible geographical parameters for punctuation:

- Expansion into uninhabited territory: a group moves to a new place for any number of reasons (changes in the environment, developments in transport etc) and has access to large amounts of resources which can lead to population growth then splitting of groups.
- Punctuation within a geographical area: this is punctuation within an area and the effects are confined to that area.
- Expansion into a previously occupied area: usually an invasion by a group with some material advantage such as guns and /or a sense of superiority. The invader takes over and their language becomes the prestige language while other languages decline. It is possible for the language of the invader to stay for longer than the invader (Dixon, 1997:84-5).

Dixon (1997) argues that for most of human history there was a state of equilibrium. Under such circumstances, "the rise of one language to global or even regional importance probably never happened" (Nettle and Romaine, 2000:103). This long-standing equilibrium has been disrupted, resulting in a very different language situation. It is interesting to note that 12 out of the top 20 languages listed in Table 2.2 belong to the Indo-European family (Matthews, 2003:19). Table 2.1 also shows that Indo-European languages are present in every region of the world. Beyond this, we now have a global language in the form of English. This is linked to increasing concern for the world's languages, particularly those with few speakers and low status. How did such a drastic change occur? Throughout history there would have been many periods of punctuation. It is not possible to describe them all. Here we will look at the main changes in the world's language situation to give an idea of how the present situation came about.

2.3.1 Development of Language and Long Standing Equilibrium

We cannot say for sure when or how language actually began. There are a number of theories about the origin of language, some of them quite strange (Aitchinson, 2000:4-6; Davis, 1994:22-3). Aitchison (2000:53) puts the emergence of language between 250 000 and 50 000 years ago. This is not to say that language emerged in the form we know today. The development of language is bound up with the physical and cognitive development of human beings. The kind of thought processes and language use we know today probably emerged about 35 000 years ago although it may have happened much earlier (Fischer, 1999:57). Table 2.3 below shows the possible development of language.

Table 2.3 Possible Evolution of Human Language

Species	**Time**	**Linguistic Capabilities**
Australopithecus	4.1 million years ago	Gestures, vocalisations in form of grunts, shrieks, sighs etc
Homo habilis	2.4 million years ago	Gestures, vocalisations in form of grunts, shrieks, sighs etc
Homo erectus	2 million years ago	May have been capable of short utterances including conditional propositions by 1 million years ago
Homo neanderthalensis	300 000 to 30 000 years ago	Complex thought processes are possibly being enabled by complex sentences allowing speech-based societies. This species cannot pronounce [i], [a] or [u].
Homo sapiens	300 000 years ago	Complex thought processes are being enabled by complex sentences allowing speech-based societies.
Modern humans	150 000 years ago	All physical features necessary for speech as we know it today are present by 150 000 years ago; language being used by about 35 000 years ago

Source: Fischer (1999:55)

By 10 000 years ago, modern humans and their languages had inhabited all major continents (Nettle and Romaine, 2000:101). Many consider this period to be the height of linguistic diversity. There were probably 10 000-15 000 languages (Fischer, 1999:84; Matthews, 2003:17). The linguistic situation was very different because of the way of life. At this stage, all of the world's population were hunter-gatherers (Diamond,

1997:104). Hunter-gatherer societies have certain characteristics that support linguistic equilibrium. They were nomadic, constantly moving around in search of food and not staying put after the resources in one area had been used up. Groups also tended to be small because larger groups use resources faster. The average group would have had 25-30 people and the largest groups would have had a maximum of a few hundred people (Lenski et al, 1995:52). Similarly, population density was low as resources could only support so many people (Nettle and Romaine, 2000:101-2).

What are the implications of this lifestyle for languages? Firstly, language groups would have been small with possibly no more than a few thousand speakers (Nettle and Romaine, 2000:102). Size of language groups alone does not mean much but what was important was that the hunter-gatherer lifestyle meant establishing dominance would have been hard because people were always moving around. Dominance would also require one group to be larger than the others, something the environment could not support. Another result of this lifestyle is that hunter-gatherers tend to be relatively egalitarian. They have to spend most of their time getting food and therefore do not have time to be full time chiefs or politicians (Diamond, 1997:89-90). Their interactions and organisation was limited to their own group and other small neighboring groups (Diamond, 1997:30). Another factor conspiring against one dominant language was lack of economic power. It was not practical to accumulate and build up a large amount of items as they would have to be carried around (Nettle and Romaine, 2000:101-3). The hunter-gatherer lifestyle lasted for a major portion of humanity's time on Earth (Diamond, 1991:172). The normal state of affairs was most likely linguistic equilibrium

with only small and gradual change (Fischer, 1999:84). The language situation would have been something like this:

> For most of the many millennia of human history, it seems likely that the world was close to linguistic equilibrium, with the number of languages being lost roughly equaling the new ones created. Indeed, there would have been periodic upsurges of diversity as new continents were settled. Locally dominant languages recruited new speakers, but the differences in size, organization, and technology between neighboring societies were never so great that the dominant relationships could not be reversed every few decades. The considerable benefits of autonomy and disaggregation kept at bay such incentives as there were for enlarging the market and crowding together, and therefore many small, culturally independent units thrived with their languages (Nettle and Romaine, 2000:98).

2.3.2 The First Big Punctuation: Agriculture and its Consequences

This equilibrium did not last forever. The hunter-gatherer lifestyle that supported equilibrium all but disappeared following the emergence of agriculture. After 9000 BC agriculture started to appear in various parts of the world. Agriculture developed first in Mesopotamia, Western Africa and China. The cultivation of bananas and sugar cane was happening in parts of New Guinea around 7000 BC and farming was being practiced in the south of the Sahara Desert by 5000 BC and other parts of Africa by 3000 BC. Farming had also developed independently in at least three places in the Americas – Amazonia, Mesoamerica and the eastern USA –after 4000 BC (Nettle and Romaine, 2000:104). Agriculture was not an invention or a discovery, nor did it happen all at once (Diamond, 1997:165-7). In fact, “the whole process would have been so gradual that the people involved may have been largely unaware of the significance and irreversibility of the changes that were occurring” (Lenski et al, 1995:136-7). Like the origins of language, exactly why and how agriculture developed is unknown. It is especially mysterious considering agriculture involves more work than hunter-gathering and initially made

people worse off rather than better off (Diamond, 1991:166; McNeill and McNeill, 2003:26). Agriculture is likely to have developed slowly in response to changes in the environment. According to Diamond (1997:110), wild food was becoming scarce and there was increased availability of plants and animals that could be domesticated. The hunter-gatherer lifestyle was becoming less rewarding and there were greater incentives to take up agriculture and/or herding. Under such circumstances, some people turned to growing various kinds of plants and domesticating animals. There were now groups of farmers as well as hunter-gathers.

This had significant consequences for people and languages, it represents the first big linguistic punctuation. Nettle and Romaine (2000:108) claim that "for perhaps the first time in history, there were now massive differences in the size and density of societies confronting each other over how resources were to be shared". In any such confrontations it was farmers who had the advantage. Firstly, farming led to growth in population. Farmers could choose to grow the kinds of plants that are most useful as food sources. In this way a given area of land produces much more food through farming than hunting and gathering. More food meant it was possible to support more people and the population increased. Animals also contributed to an increase in the population. Not only are they a source of food but they also helped to produce more food by tilling land that humans could not do on their own. Once again, more food meant more people (Diamond, 1997:88-9). Farming also meant an end to moving around. A sedentary lifestyle meant children could be born at shorter intervals. A hunter gatherer can only carry one child so must wait until that child can walk before having another. This is not the case for

sedentary farmers. It has been claimed that the birth interval for farmers is half that of hunter-gatherers (Diamond, 1997:89). Farmers were therefore numerically stronger than hunter-gatherers, in some cases many times bigger (Nettle and Romaine, 2000:108). Farmers had other advantages beyond weight of numbers. Staying in the one place meant food could be stored. This in turn frees some people from involvement in food production and allows them to specialise in other areas. In particular it meant some people could become full time chiefs or rulers as Diamond (1997:90) explains: "once food can be stockpiled, a political elite can gain control of food produced by others, assert the right of taxation, escape the need to feed itself, and engage full-time in political activities". Farmers were not only in numerically larger groups than hunter-gatherers but also better organised.

Farming also required more land meaning farmers spread, taking their languages with them. The spread of farming and by implication the languages associated with it, stopped only where the environment was not suitable or where natural barriers such as mountains prevented it going further (Nettle and Romaine, 2000:109). Hunter-gatherers were forced into marginal areas or had to take up farming and in this way the languages used by farmers spread over greater areas while those of hunter-gatherers declined and even died out. While agriculture represents a major change in the language situation, equilibrium soon returned:

> However, it was in one respect very different from the extinctions which have gone on in the last few hundred years. As farming groups spread, they broke up. They were economically simple, small-scale societies, and they soon fragmented into a local mosaic in which diversity immediately began to re-evolve in time-honored way (Nettle and Romaine, 2000:110).

2.3.3 The Punctuation Spreads: European Expansion

It is important to note that agriculture did not have the same effects everywhere. Some places did not experience the drastic increase in population and large-scale spread of farming. In the Americas and New Guinea this was due to the environment and geography not allowing spread. In the case of Australia, people did not convert to farming and remained hunter-gatherers into the 18th century. Once again, the environment was probably a major factor. On the other hand, Eurasia did experience the large-scale spread of farming and the population explosion. Eurasia had the right conditions for farming to take off because there were species of plants and animals that were suited to domestication (Nettle and Romaine, 2000:110-1). These different experiences ultimately resulted in a few languages spreading and becoming dominant.

Nettle and Romaine (2000:111-3) argue that Eurasia was in a superior position because of its population, technology and social organisation and disease. The population of Eurasia grew rapidly while the population in other continents stayed relatively stable. With a larger population, it was necessary to come up with technological and administrative innovations. All this meant that Eurasians were "better armed and more hierarchically controlled" than other people (Nettle and Romaine, 2000:113). There was also another factor that contributed to the unequal standing of continents, namely disease. Eurasians lived close together and also lived close to livestock which supported diseases. Diseases such as measles, smallpox, tuberculosis and influenza originated in Eurasia. It also gave Eurasians some resistance to these diseases, something that other people did not have. So, the situation was now that Eurasians outnumbered others, had better technology

and organisation and resistance to disease. These factors would have significant consequences for languages, especially when Europeans began to extend their influence outside of Europe.

Although there was some expansion in earlier times, the 15th and 16th century saw the beginnings of European voyages of exploration and the setting up of trading posts (Nettle and Romaine, 2000:114). In 1492 Columbus arrived in America, the Spanish set themselves up in the Caribbean and later in South America and the Portuguese discovered Brazil in 1500. Later on, Australia, New Zealand and parts of Africa were also colonised. The results of European colonisation were not the same everywhere but, as Karttunen and Crosby (1995:159) point out, " it is a good rule of thumb that the advance of civilization –that is the expansion of mobile, densely populated, technologically adept societies, often hierarchically organized –brings about a reduction in the number of languages". This certainly happened in the case of European expansion. In many places native traditions, cultures and lifestyles were displaced or almost totally destroyed. This of course had catastrophic effects for languages. For example, at least 100 of the 260 Aboriginal languages of Australia are already extinct, 100 are close to dying out and only 20 are still being learned by children (Nettle and Romaine, 2000:123). The indigenous languages of America are in a similar position. In California alone there was once around 98 separate languages. Today, 45 of them have no fluent speakers, 17 have one to five speakers left and 36 have only elderly speakers (Dalby, 2002:239). This punctuation had certain characteristics that the previous one did not:

> The difference between this wave and the earlier one was that the earlier one had at least created new diversity, as spreading farmers fragmented into local groups.

> The expanding Europeans, by contrast, were tied together by modern communication, writing, and states to such an extent that theirs was a wave which remained largely homogeneous (Nettle and Romaine, 2000:124-5).

Despite this, the European spread could only go as far as the environment and geography would allow. The climate had to suit European crops and animals and there had to be enough unused space to live in and set up farms. Tropical Africa, the Southeast Asian islands, New Guinea and some Pacific Islands remained relatively undisturbed by European expansion (Nettle and Romaine, 2000:125).

2.3.4 The Next Big Punctuation: Economic and Political Power

The type of language spread we have seen so far has two characteristics. Firstly it involved the movement of people –farmers taking more land and Europeans going to Africa, Asia, Australia etc. Secondly, the spread of languages was constrained by geography and the environment. Agriculture could not exist where the environment did not suit it and the European expansion was most successful where conditions were suited to the European way of doing things. The next big punctuation was different in that it did not involve the large-scale movement of people. It was instead "a subtle shift of language that happens while people remain constant, rather than an expansion of people spreading their language as they go" (Nettle and Romaine, 2000:127-8). Nevertheless, this punctuation was just as serious as the previous one. This punctuation worked on what benefits proficiency in a particular language could bring. Dalby (2002:219) describes what happens in this kind of punctuation:

> The speakers of a language find that their need to survive and prosper is better served by another language –so they learn that –and eventually find no residual

> use for their traditional language – so they cease to use it and do not teach it to their children.

What caused this punctuation and the resulting language shift? According to Nettle and Romaine (2000:131), the decisive factor was economic transformation. While there were important precedents, economic transformation culminated in the Industrial Revolution of the 18th century (Kottak, 1999:212; Nettle and Romaine, 2000:132). Prior to the Industrial Revolution, people were dependent on the land for food, clothing, shelter and fuel (Marks, 2002:95). Marks (2002:110) argues that "shortages of land to produce the necessities of life were putting limits on any further growth at all, let alone allowing a leap into a different kind of economic future". The Industrial Revolution bought about a change in the way the necessities of life were produced. It was essentially a shift to "the manufacture of goods in a factory and by a machine, for sale outside the neighbourhood concerned" (Simmons, 1989:196). The causes of the Industrial Revolution are complex and have been the subject of much debate. For our purposes it is sufficient to say that such a change was bought about by a growing population, the availability of resources such as coal and the availability of capital to invest in technological development (Kottak, 1999:212-4). Although there were certainly some negative consequences, the Industrial Revolution resulted in greater levels of production, new technologies, new opportunities and greater standards of living (Kottak, 1999:213-7; McNeill and McNeill, 2003:230-5). Certain languages came to be associated with this economic development and modernisation. The Industrial Revolution happened first in England and by the end of the 19th century the main industrialised areas were Europe, Russia, the USA and Japan (Simmons, 1989:206). Once again it was European languages that benefited most from

these new developments. The desire to obtain greater opportunities and wealth meant people were learning the prestige, powerful languages. This has been termed the "pull" factor of economic development. There is also another side of economic development, the "push" factor (Nettle and Romaine, 2000:132). With economic and technological development came power. Certain groups were now in a position to set up institutions like schools and governments that furthered their goals and their languages. On the world scale, countries were being drawn into relationships with industrialised countries. They were either brought under the influence of industrialised nations as they expanded or themselves attempted to adopt the new technologies (Kottak, 1999:219-22; McNeill and McNeill, 2003:235-64). Whether by push or pull, knowledge of certain languages was valuable as a result of economic changes. Wurm (1991:5) sums up this idea:

> Monetary benefits, access to coveted goods and services, employment and other economic advantages are the result of such a knowledge, and this makes it very clear to the speakers of the economically weaker group that their language is becoming useless in the changing economic situation in which they find themselves. This realisation makes them have less regard for it, and this tends to lead to a gradual increase by them in the use of the language of the economically stronger population, even in situations not directly connected with the economic advantages inherent in the mastery and use of that language.

As yet we have not returned to linguistic equilibrium. The punctuation is "still in mid-stream" (Dixon, 1997:67) and has perhaps expanded as the context in which languages operate continues to change. Today's world is often said to be chararcterised by globalisation. The process of globalisation is leading to even more changes in the world's language situation, but what exactly does globalisation mean and what are its implications for language?

2.3.5 Into Uncharted Territory: Languages in a Globalising World

Globalisation is a relatively new word. It only started to be used in the 1960s and it was not until the early or mid-1980s that it was commonly used in academic circles (Robertson, 1992:8; Waters, 2001:2). Today the situation is quite different. The word globalisaton is seen and heard almost everywhere; in everyday conversation, in the media and in academic discourse. Furthermore, almost all areas of life have been touched by globalisation in some way. However, globalisation is notoriously difficult to get a handle on. Despite its prevalence, there is still great confusion over exactly what globalisation means. Even the terminology used to talk about globalisation is not agreed upon. Some people use terms like 'global', 'international', 'transnational', 'multinational' and 'worldwide' interchangeably while for others each of these terms has a very different, very distinct meaning (Holton, 1998:10). It should therefore come as no surprise that there is a multitude of definitions of globalisation, each of which comes from a particular theoretical, political or ideological perspective (Scholte, 2000:41-2). Indeed, it is not hard to find examples of the term being used by both supporters and opponents of globalisation to promote certain ideas or even to further their own ends (see for example Holton, 1998:17-9; Shipman, 2002:15-21 and especially Steger, 2002). Further complicating the issue are the many differing views on the causes, timing and consequences of globalisation (Held et al, 1999:10; Wiseman, 1998:2). Even within a particular area such as the economic, political or cultural aspects of globalisation there are different arguments and camps of scholars. The same can be said for any position on globalisation. There are many who subscribe to the skeptical view of globalisation but they have very different reasons for doing so (Steger, 2002:19-38). Globalisation is, and

will probably remain for some time, one of "the most nebulous and misunderstood" concepts (Beck, 2000:19). However, there does seem to be some common ground amongst all the confusion. While no definition can be absolutely definitive, the common thread to many of the meanings ascribed to globalisation is the idea of connections and relationships that go beyond the immediate, local environment (Gray, 2002:57). Tomlinson (1999:2) refers to this situation as complex connectivity, the idea that there is a "rapidly developing and ever-densening network of interconnections and interdependencies that characterize modern social life". McGrew (1992:65-6) offers a good definition of globalisation along these lines:

> Globalization refers to the multiplicity of linkages and interconnections that transcend the nation-states (and by implication the societies) which make up the modern world system. It defines a process through which events, decisions and activities in one part of the world can come to have significant consequences for individuals and communities in quite distant parts of the globe. Nowadays, goods, capital, people, knowledge, images, communications, crime, culture, pollutants, drugs, fashions, and beliefs all readily flow across territorial boundaries. Transnational networks, social movements and relationships are extensive in virtually all areas of human activity from the academic to the sexual. Moreover, the existence of global systems of trade, finance, and production binds together in very complicated ways the fate of households, communities, and nations across the globe.

Much of what has been discussed so far is also a matter of increasing interconnectedness. In the period of the European voyages to Asia, America and India, there were certainly many features associated with globalisation. Companies set up operations in foreign countries, products such as tea and pepper flowed into Europe and religions spread. Diseases traveled around too. Syphilis arrived in Europe and smallpox, pleurisy and typhus were bought to America (Legrain, 2002:82-4). Developments in transport like steamships, canals and railways reduced travel time. Communications technology such as

the telegraph (1835), telephone (1877) and radio (1896) also joined together distant people and places (Legrain, 2002:82-4). And we have seen how languages have spread. Although globalisation is not entirely new, much of this early globalisation was limited in scope and intensity. It mainly involved western countries with Britain as the hegemonic power prior to 1914 and America filling the role after World War II (Gray, 2002:66). Today, with the participation of many countries in Asia and the former Soviet Union, as much as two thirds of the world's population is involved in globalisation in some way or another (Legrain, 2002:107). This expansion and acceleration of globalisation is relatively new. We will now look at how interconnectedness has changed things.

These interconnections imply a reorganisation of the world and the way we act in it. According to Waters (2001:5), globalisation can be thought of as "a social process in which the constraints of geography on economic, political, social and cultural arrangements recede, in which people become increasingly aware that they are receding and in which people act accordingly". There are two aspects to this: the speeding up and stretching of activities in almost all areas of life. Speeding up refers to the shrinking of the world. This does not mean the world is getting smaller in a geographical sense. The distance between Spain and Mexico City for example is still 5500 miles and the two places are still separated by a large stretch of ocean, just as they always were (Tomlinson, 1999:4). However, the relationship between time and space has changed so that we now experience the world as a smaller place (Knight, 2000:241). This is often termed time-space compression. Due to advances in technology and communication, distance is no longer a major obstacle. For example, a message can be sent to the other side of the world

via email in a matter of seconds whereas in 1800 it could have taken a year to arrive. People can also travel to almost anywhere in the world within twenty-four hours (Knight, 2000:241). These examples also hint at the sense of immediacy about social and economic life. The time it takes to get something done has dramatically decreased. We live in a world where "computer programmers in India now deliver services in real time to their employers in Europe and the USA" (Held et al, 1999:2). In short, globalisation has meant "the annihilation of space by time: the reorganization of time in such a way as to overcome the barriers of space" (Inda and Rosaldo, 2002:6).

Globalisation also means that our lives are connected to and influenced by distant people, places and events. In other words, there has also been a stretching of relations and activities. Giddens (1990:14) refers to this as "time-space distanciation". Basically this means that what happens in one place can have consequences for another very distant place. The jobs of factory workers in China could well have more to do with sales in America than the actions of local managers (Inda and Rosaldo, 2002:8-9). Or, one country's polluting of the environment could affect the whole world in terms of global warming (Hannerz, 1996:17). Globalisation "disembeds or lifts out social relations from local contexts of interaction and rearranges them across extensive spans of time-space" (Inda and Rosaldo, 2002:8).

It is important not to get over excited about globalisation. Much attention is given to developments in the direction of globalisation but its limits also need to be considered. It is easy to fall into the trap of thinking, as the term itself implies, that globalisation

involves everyone and everything. While "globalisation is more genuinely global than before" (Legrain, 2002:107), the extent of globalisation should not be over estimated. Indeed, not everyone experiences globalisation to the same extent or in the same way (Held, et al, 1999:28). Inda and Rosaldo (2002:4) succinctly demonstrate this:

> The experience of globalization is a rather uneven process. For instance, while some people may possess the political and economic resources to trot around the world, many more have little or no access to transport and means of communication: the price of an airplane ticket or a phone call is just too high for them. And more generally, there are large expanses of the planet only tangentially tied into the webs of interconnection that encompass the globe. […] Indeed, not everyone and everyplace participates equally in the circuits of interconnection that traverse the globe. And this, too, is the world of globalization.

Not only are the interconnections limited in extent but also in their effects. Scholte (2000:59-60) sounds a not of caution about globalisation:

> Globalization brings a *relative* rather than a complete deterritorialization of social life. Global relations have *substantially* rather than totally transcended territorial space. They are *partly* rather than wholly detached from territorial logics. Although territoriality places no *insurmountable* constraints on global circumstances, supraterritorial phenomena still have to engage at some level with territorial places, governments and territorial identities. Much more globalization –more than is prospect for a long time to come –would need to take place before territorial space became irrelevant (italics original).

A brief look at pertinent areas of life shows examples of globalisation. The political aspects of globalisation include international organisations such as the United Nations (UN) and the European Union (EU) and the multitude of international laws and agreements on the environment, human rights and trade. On the economic side of things, multinational companies spread their operations over several countries, products such as Coca-Cola are available in many parts of the world and huge amounts of capital move around the world on a daily basis. Cultural aspects of globalisation include the flow of images, ideas, symbols and people around the world (de Swan, 2001a; Held et al, 1999;

Legrain, 2002; Waters, 1995). Like almost everything else, languages have been affected by the increasing connectedness of today's world. Indeed, globalisation is a word on everyone's lips no matter what language they speak. In Italian they say *globalizzazione*, *globalizacion* in Spanish, *globalizacao* in Portuguese, *Globalisierung* in German, *mondialisation* in French, *mondializare* in Romanian and *mondialisering* in Dutch. The Chinese refer to globalisation as *quanqiuhua*, the Finish as *globalisaatio*, the Indonesians as *globalisasi*, the Koreans as *Gukje Hwa*. In Nepali the term is rendered *bishwavyapikaran*, in Sinhalese it is *jatyanthareekaranaya* and *globalisasyon* in Tagalog. Speakers of Thai say *lokanuvat*, Timorese speakers say *luan bo'ot* and Vietnamese speakers use *toan kou hoa* (Scholte, 2000:43). Languages have been affected by globalisation in more ways than the addition of new vocabulary.

As we saw, the constraints of geography and the environment have been further reduced. This means that the use and influence of a language is no longer described purely in terms of geographical territory –technology, global trade and communication present a linguistic landscape that did not exist previously (Fischer, 1999:205). Therefore, the usefulness of a language is not measured purely in terms of the physical territory it is spoken in but rather the linkages that can be made with it: who and what can a particular language link you up with? The nature of languages in the world today is summed up by de Swaan (2001a:1):

> The human species is divided into more than five thousand groups each of which speaks a different language and does not understand any of the others. With this multitude of languages, humankind has brought upon itself a great confusion of tongues. But nevertheless, the entire human species remains connected: the division is overcome by people who speak more than one language and thus ensure communication between different groups. It is multilingualism that has

> kept humanity, separated by so many languages, together. The multilingual connections between language groups do not occur haphazardly, but, on the contrary, they constitute a surprisingly strong and efficient network that ties together –directly or indirectly –the six billion inhabitants of earth. It is this ingenious pattern of connections between language groups that constitutes the global language system.

The global language system is made of four types of languages: peripheral languages, central languages, supercentral languages and one hypercentral language. Peripheral languages constitute 98% of the world's languages and are used by under 10% of the population of the world. Often these languages have no written script, they are passed on orally and rely on people remembering them rather than recording them. Connecting peripheral languages are central languages. There are about 100 central languages in the world and they are acquired as second languages by speakers of peripheral languages. This enables speakers of different peripheral languages to communicate with one another. Central languages are often national or official languages. Such languages are used in the education system, television, textbooks and newspapers. Around 95% of the world's population uses a central language. Supercentral languages serve as the vehicles of international communication. Arabic, Chinese, English, French, German, Hindi, Japanese, Malay, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish and Swahili are supercentral languages. This group of languages are among the most widely spoken languages in the world, some having over 100 million speakers. Supercentral languages allow communication over vast distances and connect the central languages to each other (de Swann, 2001a:4-6). At the centre of the system is English, the hypercentral language. English is the language that "connects the supercentral languages with one another and that therefore constitutes the

pivot of the world language system" (de Swann, 2001a:6). Nettle and Romaine (2000:31) provide an example of how this system works:

> Globalization has increasingly led to layers of diglossia on an international scale. Within Sweden, for instance, Swedish is in a diglossic relationship with a number of other languages such as Finnish, Saami, and the newer migrant communities such as the Greeks. While it is usually sufficient for a Swede to know Swedish and English, the Saami cannot afford the luxury of monolingualism, or even bilingualism in Saami and an international language. The Saami need to know the dominant language of the state in which they live –either Swedish, Norwegian or Finnish –as well as some language that allows them to communicate beyond national borders. Within Scandinavia, Swedish has a diaglossic relationship with other Scandinavian languages, with Swedish more often learned by others than Swedes learn other Scandinavian languages. Within the larger context of Europe and beyond, however, Swedish is on a par with other Scandinavian languages and continental European languages such as Dutch in relation to other European languages of wider currency such as English, French, and German.

English itself operates in a number of contexts. The current situation of English can be summarised by Kachru's (1988:5; 1992:356 see also Crystal, 1997:53–4) concept of 'three circles' to describe the functions and uses of English in the world today. The 'inner circle' includes countries such as England, the USA and Australia, where English is spoken natively and is the primary language of society. The 'outer or extended circle' encompasses countries where English is not spoken natively but was introduced via colonisation from inner circle countries. English has an important function in the chief institutions of such countries, often being an official language or the language of education. In such cases, where English is used for intranational as well as international purposes, it functions as a second language (Strevens, 1980:81). Countries which fall into the outer circle include Singapore and India. The 'expanding circle' consists of countries which were not colonised by the countries of the inner circle and have not given English any special status, but have come to recognize the importance of English as a world

language and desire to learn it. China, Japan, Greece and Russia are all examples of countries in the expanding circle. In such countries English is used for external or international purposes like communicating with the outside world and accessing scientific knowledge rather than intranational purposes. Used in such a way English is termed a foreign language[2]. Before discussing the implications of a global language for other languages, we will look briefly at how English obtained its current status.

2.4 The Making of a Global Language

As already mentioned, there has been a drastic change in the status and use of the English language. Cheshire (1991:1) aptly summarises this change:

> Only a few centuries ago, the English language consisted of a collection of dialects spoken mainly by monolinguals and only within the shores of a small island. Now it includes such typologically distinct varieties as pidgins and creoles, 'new' Englishes, and a range of differing standard and non-standard varieties that are spoken on a regular basis in more than 60 countries around the world. English is also, of course, the main language used for communication at an international level.

For hundreds of years, English speakers were small in number and the language's sphere of influence confined to the immediate area (Freeborn, 1998:1). Even at the time of Shakespeare's writings, considered a milestone in the development of the English language, English had little value outside of England and was unknown to the rest of the

[2] An alternative classification system uses English as a Native Language (ENL) for inner circle countries, English as a Second Language (ESL) for outer circle countries and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) for expanding circle countries. While this model is useful for thinking about the place of English in the world today, it is not perfect. Variation in varieties of inner circle English, pidgins and creoles, communities of native English speakers living in outer and expanding circle countries, nonnative speakers living in inner circle countries and the influence languages in contact have on each other makes seamless classification of countries into three circles or ENL, ESL and EFL rarely possible in real life (McArthur, 1998:43-5). See also McArthur (2002:429-32) for a discussion of these models.

world, not even having established itself fully in Ireland or Wales (Barber, 1993:234-5). Now, English is the global language.

How did English attain this position? Once again, it is important to keep in mind that the fortunes of a languages are not decided on purely linguistic terms but are linked with the power and influence of their speakers (Loveday, 1982:22). While English may well have been assisted by its large number of loan words, flexibility in coining new phrases and many monosyllabic words, "had Hitler won World War II and had the United States been reduced to a confederation of banana republics, we would probably use German as the universal language" (Eco, 1995:331). English did not become the global language because it is intrinsically better than any other language but rather due to cultural, political, economic and social factors (Crystal, 1997:7; McCrum et al, 1986:46). There is general agreement that the expansion of English across the world was due to "large scale migration and settlement of native language speakers, military imposition (colonialism), commercial or political power and prestige derived from scientific, cultural or other achievements" (Leitner, 1992:186). The story of English outlined below tracks the major developments in the life of the language from its origins to its eventual emergence as the global language[3].

Leith (1996:185) argues that "the global spread of English began within the British Isles". We therefore start our story in the Roman province of Britain where Latin was the

[3] At a purely linguistic level, the English language has gone through numerous changes in grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation and semantics throughout history (Barber, 1993:38 – 9). These are not dealt with here, interested readers are referred to Barber (1993; 2000), Blake (1996), Crystal (1988), Gorlach (1997) and Stockwell and Minkova (2001).

official language and the native population spoke the Celtic languages of British, Cornish, Irish and Scots Gaelic (Freeborn, 1998:9). As for English, it began its life in the form of dialects spoken by Germanic tribes, namely the Angles, the Saxons and the Jutes. These dialects came to England in the 5th century AD when, following the withdrawal of the Roman legions in AD 443, the Celts invited Germanic mercenaries to help protect them from Vikings and hostile Celtic tribes in northern England and Ireland (Freeborn, 1998:12). Rather than providing protection, these Germanic peoples took control of England and eventually divided it into seven kingdoms: Northumbria, Mercia, East Anglia, Essex, Kent, Sussex and Wessex. Three dialects of English were spoken within these kingdoms: Anglian, Kentish and West Saxon. Anglian was made up of Northumbrian and Mercian spoken by the Angles, and both Kentish and West Saxon came from the dialects of the Saxons and the Jutes. (Freeborn, 1998:35-8). With the Celts driven into marginal areas or forced into servitude, English became the dominant language and continued developing through a number of influences (Lieth, 1997:15-7; Stockwell and Minkova, 2001:29-30).

One such influence was conversion to Christianity. Roman missionaries led by Augustine arrived in Britain in AD 597 bringing not only their faith but also Latin, which became the language of religion and other important functions while English served as the language of everyday life. Latin influenced and elaborated English lexis, morphology and syntax, and a certain number of loan words from Greek and Hebrew also came into English through Christianity. The net effect of conversion to Christianity was that English became a fuller language (Crystal, 1988:153-4; Leitner, 1992:188). From AD

787 until the 11th century, Viking raids took place and at one stage Vikings controlled part of Britain, known as the Danelaw. The Danelaw incorporated Northumbria, southeast Scotland and some of eastern Mercia, bringing English into contact with Scandinavian languages. While these languages never displaced English, English was definitely influenced by them, most notably in terms of loan words pertaining to place names and surnames (Crystal, 1988:157-8; Leith, 1997:22-3).

The next significant event in the history of English was the Norman Conquest of 1066. This resulted in "the abolition of the entire political, economic, and cultural infrastructure of Anglo-Saxon England" (Leitner, 1992:189). A variety of French was imposed on England and, for the next three centuries French was to be the language of law, government, administration and to a lesser extent religion (Leith, 1997:26-7). At this time, English was spoken mainly by peasants and the lower classes. Due to the social inequalities between the French speaking nobility and the English speaking peasantry, a truly bilingual situation did not develop. However, due to the need to communicate, many French words found their way into English (Stockwell and Minkova, 2001:38). English did make a comeback when tensions between the French and English resulted in the Normans losing their holdings in Normandy and ultimately severing contacts with the French altogether. After a while the Normans assimilated to English society and English was re-established in the domains previously dominated by French (Leith, 1997:26-7; Stockwell and Minkova, 2001:38).

The reemergence of English overlaps roughly with the Renaissance, a time of new ideas, new inventions and exploration (Stockwell and Minkova, 2001:43-5). It was in this climate that English, particularly the London dialect, was gaining new respect among the educated and professionals, which "helped it to occupy all new domains, such as printing, official government communication, and mass communication" (Leitner, 1992:189). Eventually, as a result of English political and economic power, the policies of English governments and English attitudes, English was well established throughout the British Isles (Leith, 1997:150). As far as the outside world is concerned, English speakers were starting to travel to the New World, although much of the influence was on English rather than the other way around (Stockwell and Minkova, 2001:43-5). English lacked the vocabulary to discuss the new ideas of the time so borrowed from other languages. From Greek and Latin came words for scientific and medical terms and from Italian, Dutch, Spanish, Portugues, African, Asian and American Indian languages came words pertaining to everyday life, food, music, etc. (Stockwell and Minkova, 2001:43-5). Even among English speakers the language was considered inferior to other languages and the idea that it would have any international function "was regarded as absurd" (Bailey, 1992:96).

The decisive steps towards achieving global status came in the form of British colonialism and American political and economic power (Crystal, 1997:7–8). Motivated by the need to find new resources, political rivalries and the desire for wealth, England began to establish contact with and in many cases colonise different parts of the world (Leith, 1997:186). In the 17th and 18th centuries, for example, British settlements were

established in North America. Trading posts were established in India from the 17th century and eventually led to British control of the country. Settlements were also established in Australia in the 18th century (Barber, 1993:235). The 19th century saw the expansion of British power and influence increase dramatically. By this time Britain had already gained control over much of the Caribbean and went on to establish control of Singapore, New Zealand, Hong Kong, South Africa and other African nations (Barber, 1993:235). At its height the British Empire covered a huge area, a factor which was an important step in the making of a global language: " the sun never set on the British Empire, and the English language was naturally basking in the global sunshine" (Kachru, 1983a:5).

While imperialism and colonisation were responsible for spreading the English language around the world and entrenching it in several countries, geographical spread in and of itself is not sufficient to make a global language. For example, in the 15th and 16th centuries Portuguese was spread around the world via the trading, religious and colonising activities of Portugal. Today however, Portuguese has almost no standing as a language of international communication (Strevens, 1980:84). To become a global language, a language must, in some way, offer material rewards and opportunities to those who speak it. English served two useful functions in the time of imperialism, as a lingua franca and an avenue to progressing in the colonial administration. Leith (1997:200–1) outlines this situation:

> Like Latin during the Roman Empire, English was imposed over an enormous area as the language of law, administration, and commerce. English enjoyed the sanction of military superiority, but two other factors helped it to spread. Like the territories ruled by Rome, the colonies seized by Britain were areas of striking

> social, cultural, and linguistic diversity. Territorial boundaries imposed by European powers cut across tribes, polities, empires, culture-areas, and language-groups. In Nigeria alone, it has been estimated that over 200 languages are spoken. English therefore has often been invaluable as a lingua franca (although there were some local ones, too: Hausa in northern Nigeria, Swahili in much of East Africa, and Bazaar Malay in Malaysia). In addition, knowledge of English could lead to a prestigious job: there were clear economic advantages in learning it.

Outside the colonies English was useful in similar ways. By the beginning of the 19th century Britain had become the world's leading industrial and trading nation. As mentioned before, the Industrial Revolution, which had an enormous impact on the world, mainly took place in Britain. As far as the English language is concerned, this meant that anyone wanting to learn about the new developments and technology of the Industrial Revolution had to learn English (Crystal, 1997:71–2). Some of this new technology, such as the telegraph and telephone, further contributed to the spread of English by creating a far-reaching communications network largely dominated by English (Leith, 1996).

After gaining independence, many former colonies kept English as an official language for the very reason that it was useful to do so. As mentioned above, many colonies were ethnically and linguistically diverse. Choosing an indigenous language as the national language or medium of education could lead to tension and violence among different groups. English on the other hand has often been seen as neutral in that it did not favour one group's language over another (Blake, 1996:305-6). English also had another factor working in its favour. It may well have been the language of the colonial powers but it is also "the language of America, the most powerful nation in the world"(Leith, 1997:212).

It is the economic and political power of the USA that, perhaps even more so than the spread of English through British imperialism, accounts for the current position and status of English (Barber, 1993:236). In the aftermath of World War II, the USA and the USSR emerged as the world's superpowers. The USA was at the top of the Western world meaning that English was the dominant language of half the Cold War system (Blake, 1996:303). Following the end of the Cold War and the collapse of communism in much of the world, the USA was left as the sole superpower and many formerly communist countries attempted to introduce Western ideas, approaches and technologies. This necessitated the learning of English for anyone wanting to take part in the new world order and considerably extended its influence (Blake, 1996:304; Crystal, 1997:53; Leitner, 1992:210-1). America is also the world's leader in science and technology which has resulted in English being used extensively in many areas which have shaped modern society and popular culture. Just as English was the language behind the Industrial Revolution, it is also the language behind advances in the press, advertising, broadcasting, movies, sound recording, transport, communication and information technology, including the internet (Crystal, 1997:110–1). English is no longer carried by colonialism but is instead "barrelling forward on the shoulders of American capitalism: McDonald's and Coca-Cola, Rambo and MTV, munitions and computer technology" (Anthony, 2000 Associated Press website).

Whether or not English maintains its current position cannot be predicted with any certainty. After all, Latin and French were once world languages too, albeit on a smaller scale than English. It is possible that English could fragment or change; the many

different varieties of English could ultimately become entirely different languages in the same way that Italian, Spanish and French evolved from Latin (Barber, 1993:262). Changes in the global balance of power such as the forming of regional trading blocs or political alliances not involving English speaking countries are not out of the question, nor is a backlash against Western values or the development of important technologies in non-English speaking societies, all of which could impact on the status and usefulness of English (Wallraff, 2000). However, factors such as electronic communication and air travel mean contact between speakers of different varieties of English is easier and English is unlikely to change beyond recognition (Gorlach, 1995:vii cited in McArthur, 1998:183). We are, for the foreseeable future at least, stuck with English. As Honey (1997:249) puts it:

> English is the world language – at least for the next five hundred years, or until the Martians arrive. Something like a quarter of the total population of the globe now speak, or are trying to learn, English – a proportion without precedent in the history of the world.

2.5 Arguments About English and Other Languages

The context in which languages operate has changed so that it now has global proportions. English occupies a very important position as the global language and this could have far reaching consequences, as Tonkin (2003:324) describes:

> What makes the present and the future different from the past is that the ebb and flow of languages, accompanying shifting economic, political and military relationships, once a local and regional phenomenon, has now become more visibly (or audibly) global. Seismic shifts in the political and economic organisation of the world are producing seismic shifts in language use. Problems long recognised by epidemiologists of language decline as afflicting small languages are now increasingly besetting major languages like French, German and Russian as the cultural force of English erodes their position.

The exact scale of language endangerment is hard to determine. This is not surprising considering the difficulties involved in just determining the number of languages in the world. Deciding whether a language is endangered is fraught with similar difficulties. There are many classification systems in use and the criteria for describing a language as endangered or even dead vary greatly (Dalby, 2002:219-20; Sutherland, 2003:276-7). However, there is no doubt that languages are in serious danger. To put the issue into perspective, Sutherland (2003) compared language endangerment to the endangerment of birds and mammals. The results are shown in Table 2.4.

Table 2.4 Comparisons of the Threats to Languages, Birds and Mammals

Category	**Extinct**	**Critical**	**Endangered**	**Vulnerable**	**Data Deficient**	**Total Described Extant**
Languages	306 (4.5%)	438 (7.1%)	506 (8.2%)	732 (11.9%)	639	6809
Birds	125 (1.3%)	182 (1.9%)	321 (3.3%)	680 (7.0%)	79	9797
Mammals	87 (1.9%)	180 (4.1%)	340 (7.7%)	610 (13.9%)	240	4630

Source: Sutherland (2003:277)

Assuming a total of 6 809 languages and using criteria from biology to classify risk of extinction, Sutherland (2003:277) found that languages are in more danger than both birds and mammals. Because of lack of data these estimates are probably on the conservative side. In fact, estimates of the number of languages that will die out go as high as 90%. A generally accepted estimate is that 50% of the world's languages will not survive this century. If this estimate is right, we will loose around 3000 languages (Crystal, 2000; Dalby, 2002).

What exactly is the role of English in all of this? This issue is "one of the liveliest current debates" in linguistics (Seidlhofer, 2003:7). The role of English in the world, and its relationship with other languages and cultures, has been conceived of in three main ways: as a destructive language, as a pluralistic language and as an irrelevant language[4]. Each of these views will be examined with the idea of showing that the use and status of English and its implications for other languages is a complex issue involving not just English but also the contexts where English finds itself.

2.5.1 English as a Destructive Language

Many scholars have questioned the spread of English, raising theoretical, methodological, ethical and professional issues related to the existence of a global language (Chew, 1999:38). Graddol (1996:181) neatly sums up the points commonly raised about English:

[4] This is not the only possible set of categories of views of English. Pennycook (2001a:59) for example lists six views of the role of English in the world. I have used the terms destructive, pluralistic and irrelevant to describe the basic position on the role of English in the world and its influence on other languages and cultures. My discussion of these three views covers the same ground as any other categorisation that I am aware of.

> Some people say it is implicated in a major human disaster, involving the destruction of linguistic and cultural diversity on a scale far larger than the parallel ecological destruction of biodiversity. English is, according to such views, a language of economic opportunity only for a few: for the rest it creates a new global mechanism for structuring inequality both between 'the west' and 'the rest' and within the populations of nonwestern countries.

The strongest formulation of the negative influence of English is the concept of ‘linguistic imperialism’ and ‘linguicism’. Linguistic imperialism is the idea that the spread of English is actually a way for English speaking countries to establish and maintain dominance over other countries. Phillipson (1992a:47) argues that “the dominance of English is asserted and maintained by the establishment and continuous reconstruction of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages”. This is what is meant by linguistic imperialism. Similarly, linguicism is defined as “ideologies, structures, and practices which are used to legitimate, effectuate, and reproduce an unequal division of power and resources (both material and immaterial) between groups which are defined on the basis of language” (Phillipson, 1992a:47). Basically, the argument goes that proficiency in English makes it easier for English speaking countries to make inroads into and ultimately control various aspects of life in other countries. If for example, the workforce speaks English it is easier to control production and commercial activities (Clayton, 2000:34). It is also claimed that more resources –teachers, money, textbooks etc –go to the teaching of English than other languages and English is consistently portrayed as more valuable or useful than other languages. The use of English in a particular area of life then means that anyone wanting to participate in that area has to use English rather than their own language. And, with English being used in more and more domains, even in multilingual societies it can

displace one or more languages (Pennycook, 2001b:81). In this sense English has potentially dire consequences for other languages, particularly those which are already limited in use.

Critics of the spread of English also assert that English Language Teaching (ELT) is not a neutral activity (i.e. just teaching language) but pushes a certain set of values, ideas and a way of seeing the world that marginalises other languages and cultures. It is also claimed that ELT is based on Western ideas of what teaching should be and that Western teaching methods are portrayed as being the best. Essentially, the native speaker teacher and Western approaches to language teaching are portrayed as the ideal. This assumption, according to proponents of the English as a destructive language view, permeates much of ELT practice:

> The native-speaker-teacher ideal has remained as a central part of the conventional wisdom of the ELT profession. As with many hegemonic practices, there has been a tendency to accept it without question. The ideal can be seen in operation implicitly in the practices of the main ELT publishers, which for obvious reasons seek to market their products globally. The ideal can be seen explicitly in the reports of seminal conferences which nursed ELT into institutional existence and gave legitimation to a particular educational paradigm –for instance, the Makerere Conference on the Teaching of English as a Second Language, 1961, the key conference for 'Third World' ESL countries (Phillipson, 1992b:15).

All this then puts non-native speakers in a disadvantageous or even dependant position (Pennycook, 1994; Phillipson, 1992a). In addition to general concerns about cultural values, English is also said to perform a gatekeeper function. Particularly in outer circle/ESL territories proficiency in English can decide who gets access to education, employment and social prestige. In other cases English language proficiency can

determine whether or not immigrants are granted entry into another country (Pennycook, 2001b:81-2). But is English really "the *Tyrannosaurus rex* of the linguistic grazing ground" (Swales, 1997:376)?

2.5.2 English as a Pluralistic Language

Few would argue that there are some genuine concerns about the use and status of English. However, what we have seen so far is only part of the story. Just as television programs, advertisements and music are beamed around the world but are not interpreted in the same way everywhere (Featherstone, 1990:10), so too has English come under the influence of the local context. Honey (1997:256) poses the question: "Is cultural imperialism inevitable? Or is it possible that, globally, the more people speak English, the less it remains culturally the exclusive property of one group?" There is already ample evidence that English no longer 'belongs' to just one group. One of the most noticeable consequences of the spread of English around the world is that it has given rise to a myriad of local varieties, each with its own identifiable characteristics (Strevens, 1980:78-9). This has led many scholars to talk of "the English languages" or "Englishes" rather than seeing English as one single language (K. Brown, 1997; Kachru, 1983a; 1990; 1992; McArthur, 1998). These different varieties of English –Indian English, Pakistani English, Singaporean English, Hong Kong English and numerous others –all express the identity, culture and peculiarities of their speakers. Furthermore, Yano (2001:122-5) argues that the line between native and non-native speakers is beginning to blur. In places such as Singapore where English is well established, many people consider themselves to be functional (as opposed to genetic) native speakers of English. Meanwhile, countries

traditionally designated as part of the inner circle or English as a Native Language (ENL) territories have large numbers of immigrants living within their borders. According to one estimate, by the year 2050 one third of Americans will have Asian or Hispanic roots (Legrain, 2002:5). In Australia too there is a large population of immigrants from various ethnic and linguistic backgrounds (Clyne, 1991). This makes the concept of ENL somewhat questionable. It is also a distinct possibility that English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) territories may become economically and technologically more powerful than ENL territories, meaning that they will no longer look to Britain or America for models of correct English but will instead go their own way (Yano, 2001:124). In fact, nonnative speakers are gaining prominence in the ELT market. There is increasing demand for teachers, courses and materials from nonnative speaking backgrounds because nonnative speakers are perceived to have a better understanding of the needs and experience of those trying to learn English than monolingual native speakers (Graddol, 2001:29). Wallraff (2000:62) gives the example of a Chinese university who hired a Belgian company to develop lessons for teaching English to engineers. The reason for this decision was that the Belgians, themselves nonnative speakers, would have a better idea of what is involved in learning a second language and using it to communicate with nonnative speakers. In a study of ELT in Chile, McKay (2003) found that among teachers there was a preference for nonnative teachers and teaching material that included local content.

In addition, linguistic imperialism and linguicism do not give full credit to the choices made in ESL and EFL territories. As Davies (1996:488) points out, linguistic imperialism

assumes that people have been conned into wanting English and that they cannot have actually wanted it themselves. However, both governments and perhaps more importantly the general public, are capable of weighing up the options and making their own decisions. Chew (1999:41) uses Singapore as an example:

> While there have always been fears that the widespread adoption of English would lead to a loss of ethnic identity and more importantly, a loss of 'Asian values', yet the populace voted with their feet where choice of language-stream schools for their children [sic] education was concerned. When it came to the crunch, they valued a situation that left traditional values open to risk but with increasing material returns as preferable to the full retention of ethnic pride and culture but with diminishing material returns.

A similar situation exists in Pakistan where, according to Rahman (2001:243):

> English is still the key for a good future –a future with human dignity if not public deference; a future with material comfort if not prosperity; a future with that modicum of security, human rights and recognition which all human beings desire. So, irrespective of what the state provides, parents are willing to part with scarce cash to buy their children such a future.

Although these examples may in one sense appear to support the claims of linguistic imperialism and linguicism in that one needs English, not one's native language in order to enjoy a prosperous future, they also raise the important issue of access to English.

We cannot plausibly deny people access to English. Denying people access to the advantages of English is akin to keeping people poor and is anything but equitable (Chew, 1999; Honey, 1997).

Global language status is not a one-way street: "it may be that English is making the world a more homogenous place: it may also be that the world is making English more diverse in its forms, functions and cultural associations" (Graddol, 1996:216).

2.5.3 English as an Irrelevant Language

Just as there are limitations to globalisation, there are also limits to the scope of English. Just how relevant is English? Phillipson (2003:7) claims that "the vast majority of the world's population have no proficiency in English". This may well be true and leads to the third argument surrounding language issues in the world today: regional languages often have more of a part to play in the survival of minority languages than English. Despite being the global language, many people have very little contact or only superficial contact with English, as Fishman (2000:437) explains:

> Yet globalization has done little to change the reality that, regardless of location, the spread of English is closely linked to social class, age, gender, and profession. Just because a wide array of young people around the world may be able to sing along to a new Madonna song does not mean that they can hold a rudimentary conversation in English, or even understand what Madonna is saying. The brief contact that most learners have with English is too scant to produce lasting literacy, fluency, or even comprehension. Indeed, for all the enthusiasm and vitriol generated by grand-scale globalization, it is the growth in regional interactions –trade, travel, the spread of religions, interethnic marriages –that touches the widest array of local populations. These interactions promote the spread of regional languages.

It is often the case that in multilingual settings speakers of minority languages turn first to larger regional languages rather than languages with international standing such as English (Graddol, 1996:197-8). This is the case in Africa where many people are keen to learn the local lingua francas of Swahili or Hausa instead of English (Fishman, 2000:437). Similarly, in India speakers of small minority languages are learning not English but Bengali or Marathi, both of which have regional standing (Graddol, 1996:197-8). A further example is found in Papua New Guinea. While it is true that many people in Papua New Guinea want to learn English, among the Taiap speakers of Gapun "English plays almost no role in villagers' perception of development, and Tok Pisin is

the expanding language" (Nettle and Romaine, 2000:127). There are also examples from Europe where Provencal is being over come by French and Swabian by German (Legrain, 2002:306). In South America Spanish and Portuguese probably play more part in the loss of local languages than English (Legrain, 2002:313)[5]. Regional languages may also become more important in the future as business people, film makers and writers come to realise that the way to reach a greater proportion of the population is to use a regional lingua franca rather than a global one (Fishman, 2000:437-8).

2.6 Conclusion

We have seen how languages are organised in a world characterised by globalisation. English occupies a central place in the global language system making it a tremendously influential language. However, as the discussion of different views of English shows, the position of English does not mean that there is global linguistic uniformity or that all other languages and cultures are being swept aside. Indeed, to fully understand the way English works in the world we have to consider the interaction of English and the local context. With this in mind, the remainder of this dissertation explores how English, the global language, is interacting with China.

[5] China's minorities are in a similar situation to those described here. For a full discussion of this aspect of English in China, see Chapter Six.

CHAPTER THREE

THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN CHINA: A SOCIOLINGUISTIC PROFILE

Although it is far from a lingua franca even in urban China, English is the dominant staple in progressive education, a necessary qualification for many respectable jobs, a required skill for exposure to the influx of English audio and visual material, and a stepping-stone to an education abroad. For many people, proficiency in English is synonymous with the promise of well-being. A zealous public quest for the command of English has made the language so commercially viable that several Chinese media have recently launched English editions, supplements, or subsidiaries with an eye on competing for domestic audiences (Guo Zhongshi and Huang Yu, 2003:218-9).

Learning English through revolutionary parable has been replaced by learning English through business management (Saich, 2001:14).

3.1 Introduction

Before looking at the implications of the spread of English for the languages of China, we first have to establish the current use and status of the English language in China. As we enter the 21st century, English seems to be gaining importance in the Chinese context. In fact, it is argued here that English is now used more and has higher status than at any other time in its interaction with China. In order to show this, this chapter begins with a discussion of the presence of English in China from its beginnings in the 17th century through to the present. Following this, it goes into some detail about the current use and status of English in China. This section of the chapter aims to describe the scale and scope of the use of English in China by describing the users of English and the domains in which English is used. Finally, it looks at some of the concerns raised by the prominence of English in China.

3.2 The English Language in China: Historical Background

Like most things in China, foreign language learning and teaching are closely tied to political issues. The role and status of foreign languages has waxed and waned with the political tides, being particularly affected by China's relations with the outside world (Hertling, 1996:A49; Pride and Liu Ru-shan, 1988:42). Ross (1993:42) sums up the relationship between foreign language learning and the political climate in China:

> Support for foreign language training is high when sustained participation in the global community is deemed commensurate with China's political and economic interests and low when it is perceived as threatening to internal political and cultural integrity.

The history of English in China certainly follows this pattern. Throughout its time in China, English has been viewed in a number of ways and has experienced several changes in its role and status. In fact, the Chinese situation reflects many of the issues discussed previously in that there have been long standing concerns about the cultural impact of learning English on the one hand and a desire to learn English to gain access to the knowledge and opportunities it provides on the other. Adamson (2002:231) outlines this situation:

> The relationship between the English language and Chinese politics and society has historically been ambivalent. At different times, English has been associated in China with military aggressors, barbarians, and virulent anti-Communists. But English is also a principal language of trade partners, academics, technical experts, advisors, tourists and popular culture. At worst, the language has been perceived as a threat to national integrity. At best, it has been seen as a conduit for strengthening China's position in the world community. These tensions have manifested in policy swings that have far-reaching impacts, most notably for the educational system.

This section will explore the history of the English language and English Language Teaching (ELT) in China through a survey and analysis of the literature on this topic. Against the backdrop of major events in China's history, it traces the presence of

English in China and the role of ELT from its origins to the present day, arguing as outlined above, that English is used more and has a higher status than ever before. Before proceeding further a word of caution is needed. As Cortazzi and Jin Lixian (1996a:61) remind us:

> There are certain reservations to be made regarding generalizations about ELT in China. The Chinese context is almost impossible to describe; the scale of ELT is extensive and the circumstances are changing. This is a huge, rapidly developing country with an enormous population of over 1.2 billion. There are significant differences in language teaching developments between the major cities and small cities, between rural towns and countryside, between coastal and inland areas, between north and south, between key and non-key schools and universities. There is wide variation in teaching quality, though there have been marked improvements. We should not expect all classrooms to be the same; every generalization will have important exceptions and a number of innovative ELT projects are in progress. At the same time, there are clear centralizing tendencies of national syllabuses and exams, widely used textbooks, and clear perceptions of common practice among Chinese teachers. While recent economic development in China has been remarkable and there is much evidence of social change, the perceptions and expectations in the education system have been relatively slow to change. This is particularly reflected in the beliefs of teachers, students and their parents about how teaching and learning should be carried out and what they expect students to achieve in their education.

Given the complexity and contradictions of the Chinese context, the following description of ELT and for that matter the description of Chinese history should not be taken as definitive. Rather, this section aims to give an overall impression of the interaction between English and the Chinese context.

3.2.1 The Origins and Early History of ELT in China

According to Bolton (2002:182-3), the first contact between the Chinese and English speakers occurred in 1637 when four ships under the command of Captain John Weddell arrived in Macao and Guangzhou. This was a rather short-lived contact, as Weddell and his ships were expelled from China six months after arrival (Bolton, 2002:183). The English language arrived more permanently in 1664 when the British

established a trading port in Guangzhou (Pride and Liu Ru-shan, 1988:41). Although foreign language learning and teaching had been happening for centuries in China (Adamson, 2002:232; Ross, 1993:22), it is important to note that throughout its long history, China felt a sense of superiority towards all other countries and cultures. This meant the Chinese "never showed much interest in other languages and cultures" (Eva Hung, 2002:325). When knowledge of other languages was needed, the Chinese government often relied on non-Han people to provide translating and interpreting services (Eva Hung, 2002:325-6). This attitude was still held when the English language arrived in China. Neither the Chinese nor the English were willing to learn the other's language; the Chinese because they believed foreigners and their languages to be beneath them and the British because they saw Chinese as impossible to learn. These conditions gave rise to Chinese Pidgin English which was used for communication between the British and the Chinese for some time (Pride and Liu Ru-shan, 1988:41)[1]. At this stage, English was limited to this part of China and was used mainly by the compradores to communicate with foreigners (Adamson, 2002:232). For the rest of the Chinese, English was seen "as a barbaric tongue" (Adamson, 2002:233).

The formal teaching of English in China has its origins in schools set up by English speaking missionaries. These missionaries saw ELT as an important step in converting the Chinese to Christianity. At first, missionaries and their schools were confined to certain areas along the south coast of China. Following the Opium War, China was forced to sign a series of unequal treaties, which gave foreigners a number

[1] The use of Chinese Pidgin English lasted until the final decade of the 19th century. During the time it was used, Chinese Pidgin English influenced other English based pidgins in East Asia and the western Pacific and gave English the phrases "no can do" and "long time no see" (Wei Yun and Fei Jia, 2003:42-3).

of privileges including the opening of ports, extraterritoriality and the right to live in mainland China (Roberts, 1999:167-8). Under these circumstances, ELT began to grow. At this stage, however, foreign language teaching was still the almost exclusive domain of mission schools and the only other institutions offering foreign language instruction were a few military and technical government schools (Ross, 1993:19). The mission schools also operated on a small scale. In the 1870s, there were 20 mission schools with a total of about 230 students (Bolton, 2002:189).

In the following few years, China was forced to make further concessions to foreign powers and it was soon very clear that China faced a situation where foreigners and their languages could no longer be ignored. Foreign languages "became identified with a powerful but mistrusted package that bound together foreign interference and domination with techniques required for China's survival" (Ross, 1993:23). As fears for the fate of China increased, the situation regarding ELT began to change. While the Chinese rulers and elite still generally regarded the learning of foreign languages and cultures as below them, certain groups sought to use such knowledge for the benefit of China. Scholars and officials such as Wei Yuan, Li Hongzhang and Zhang Zhidong advocated the adoption of Western technology and expertise in order to drive foreigners out of China. This idea became the basis for the self-strengthening movements, which, far from demanding revolution, aimed to gain knowledge of foreign technology and expertise while at the same time preserving traditional Chinese culture and society (Roberts, 1999:184-5). Foreign language learning was at the forefront of the self-strengthening movements. The saying *zhong xue wei ti, xi xue wei yong* (Chinese learning for fundamental principles, Western learning for practical application) came out of this period and English began to be seen as a tool for

accessing Western technology and establishing links with the outside world (Adamson, 2002:233-4; Ross, 1992:241). On 13th January 1861 the Qing dynasty government approved calls from self-strengtheners to begin foreign language instruction (Ross, 1993:22) and in 1862 the first Chinese foreign languages school, the Tongwen Guan interpreters' college, was established in Beijing. The Tongwen Guan was part of the Zongli Yamen or Office of Foreign Affairs. English was the first language to be taught there and later Russian, French, German and Japanese were introduced (Eva Hung, 2002:332). Similar schools were set up in Shanghai, Guangzhou and Fuzhou later on (Pride and Liu Ru-shan, 1988:42; Roberts, 1999:185; Ross, 1992).

Following China's defeat in the Sino-Japanese War (1895) and the disastrous consequences of the Boxer Rebellion (1900), China realised that it had not gone far enough and, in order to save itself, would have to reform almost entirely (Gray, 1990:126; Mackerras, 1998:14-9; Ross, 1993:29). These reforms included changes to the education system and the replacement of the Tongwen Guan system for foreign language learning. In 1902 plans for a new education system based on the Japanese model were initiated and in 1903 foreign languages, Chinese and mathematics became essential subjects in the secondary school curriculum (Roberts, 1999:203; Ross, 1993:30-3).

3.2.2 ELT in the Republican Period (1911-49)

Throughout the existence of the Republic of China foreign languages retained their place in schools as essential subjects. The secondary school curriculum implemented between 1912-1923 in urban schools allocated more time to foreign language learning

than any other subject[2]. English was by far the most widely taught language and the idea of instruction was to produce students with practical ability in foreign languages and an understanding of the outside world. Mission schools also increased in number during this period as those turned away from government schools sought to learn English elsewhere (Ross, 1993:30-3). Foreign languages were caught up in the flow as China experienced a period of social change and upheaval in the form of the May Fourth Movement. Essentially an intellectual and cultural movement, it involved criticisms of Confucianism, a literary revolution and openness to new ideas, particularly those from the West (Roberts, 1999:220). Foreign languages attracted interest from diverse groups within Chinese society. Those who advocated the gradual reform of China saw ELT as part of broader educational reforms taking place in China at the time. Political activists from all sides of politics saw foreign languages as a tool for struggle and personal transformation. Under such conditions, teaching methods were experimented with and schools were set up by a diverse range of groups including the Communist Party, which set up a foreign language centre in Shanghai (Ross, 1993:34). This period has been termed "the era of eclectic experimentation in foreign language education" (Ross, 1992:242). This is not to say that attitudes towards English were totally positive. As Adamson (2002:235) points out, "the study of English was controversial because it acted as a conduit for the introduction of new philosophies, religious and social theories". As the 1920s came to a close, China began to encounter some problems. Economic and social reforms failed and Chiang Kaishek, China's new leader since the death of Sun Yatsen in 1925, was becoming

[2] According to Ross (1993:32), this four year curriculum allocated 1056 class periods to foreign languages. It should be remembered though that there is a difference between what is envisaged in the curriculum and what actually happens in the classroom (Nunan, 1992), and, far from being a break with the past, much foreign language teaching in this period was done via "traditional grammar-translational methods, intensive reading, writing from memory or models, and detailed grammatical analysis" (Ross, 1993:32). For more on teaching methods in China, see Chapter Four.

increasingly dictatorial and corrupt. Policy towards education was more tightly controlled as part of the Nationalists' efforts to unite China and foreign language learning and teaching came under criticism for impeding a sense of Chinese nationalism:

> English and Japanese language training in both foreign-managed and state-sponsored schools was denounced for "denationalizing" or "enslaving" Chinese students. […] While widespread foreign language expertise was still acknowledged as necessary for China's survival by both communists and nationalists, its consequences became increasingly ideologically suspect (Ross, 1992:242).

The late 1920s witnessed movements to keep ELT out of elementary schools but ELT remained popular, especially in urban areas where English was seen as a way to social, economic and geographical mobility (Ross, 1993:34-5).

After World War II, foreign language learning experienced a revival with both mission and state schools increasing in number. Schools and universities expanded their teaching of foreign languages including English and some offered programs for second language teacher training (Ross, 1993:33-5). More changes and upheavals were on the way for China and policy towards foreign language learning and ELT in particular continued to fluctuate.

3.2.3 ELT in Early Communist China (1949-66)

Soon after World War II, open conflict again broke out between the Nationalists and the Communists. The Civil War lasted from 1946-1949 and it was the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) which emerged victorious[3]. On 1st October 1949 a large rally

[3] There were several conflicts, including open fighting, between the Nationalists and Communists prior to this time. For a discussion of these events and their significance in Chinese history, see Mackerras (1998) and Gray (1990).

was held in Beijing where Mao Zedong declared the establishment of the People's Republic of China.

Perhaps the most significant issue for foreign language teaching in the early communist period was China's close relationship with the Soviet Union. As Lam (2002:246) points out, "because China's initial vision was alignment with the communist nations, the foreign language that received much attention in the 1950s was Russian". China borrowed much of the Soviet education model including textbooks, teaching techniques and examination methods (Fairbank, 1992:362). Russian language courses were also introduced into the syllabuses of secondary and higher education in 1952 (Yao Xiuqing, 1993:74). At the same time, English was condemned as the language of the enemy, namely the USA, and ELT experienced a decline. In fact, on 28th April 1954 the Ministry of Education ruled that only Russian would be taught in secondary schools in order to ease the demands of school on students (Adamson, 2002:237; Ross, 1993:37). English was removed from the secondary education syllabus and while ELT did not cease completely, it was rare to find English being taught anywhere (Cortazzi and Jin Lixian, 1996a:64; Ross, 1993:37; Wang Yinquan, 1999:45; Yao Xiuqing, 1993:74).

After the breakdown of Sino-Soviet relations, Russian lost its prestige and popularity and increasing attention was given to other foreign languages, most notably English, which became the favoured foreign language. There was of course a shortage of English teachers. In the Russian learning period, many English teachers had begun teaching Russian instead so that in 1957 there were only 450 secondary school teachers of English in China (Adamson, 2002:237). This meant that many Russian

teachers had to retrain as English teachers in order to keep their jobs. Many universities set up departments of English and institutes specialising in English were set up in major cities to meet the newfound demand for English language teachers (Cortazzi and Jin Lixian, 1996a:64; Yao Xiuqing, 1993:74). The Chinese Education Commission also began to recruit teachers from overseas, the first group arriving from Britain in the early 1960s, in an attempt to improve ELT (Yao Xiuqing, 1993:74). In 1963 the Beijing Institute of Foreign Languages put forward a proposal that was later ratified by the government which suggested that each year five more foreign languages should be added to teaching programs with the aim that within ten years foreign language programs should cater for all major languages of the world (Ross, 1993:46; Yao Xiuqing, 1993:74). This period was a high point for foreign language learning in China and one of the peaks for English. However, it was not to last much longer due to drastic political changes.

3.2.4 ELT in the Cultural Revolution Period (1966-76)

Despite the failure of radical policies such as the Great Leap Forward and people's communes, Mao Zedong remained committed to the idea of radical revolution. Prompted by what he perceived to be the development of a new ruling class, Soviet revisionism and criticism of his policies, Mao began the so-called Cultural Revolution in 1966 (Fairbank, 1992:384-5). As Gray (1990:335) points out, this era in Chinese history was characterised by so much turmoil and confusion that it is hard to say exactly what the Cultural Revolution was meant to accomplish. Broadly speaking, the aim of the Cultural Revolution was to establish a new society and change the Chinese people by destroying old culture. The methods used to accomplish this included public humiliation of people associated with old culture in any way, the banning and

destruction of traditional Chinese art and Western art, the suppression of religious practices and party purges of those deemed to be "taking the capitalist road" (Mackerras et al, 1998:7-8).

The Cultural Revolution was not only aimed at old culture but also all things foreign. During this period China was effectively shut off from the outside world, wanting nothing to do with either the West or the Soviet Union (Fairbank, 1992:395; Spence, 1990:627). Because of this foreign language learning was attacked during the Cultural Revolution. As Ross (1993:56) puts it:

> The Cultural Revolution was to eradicate the "four olds" –old ideas, old culture, old customs and old habits of exploitation. The historical connection in China between foreign interests and privilege linked foreign-language proficiency to exploitation.

Not only were foreign languages associated with exploitation but they were also seen as bourgeois. Foreign books, films and broadcasts were banned (Cortazzi and Jin Lixian, 1996a:64; Yao Xiuqing, 1993:74), foreign language teachers were considered "victims of the influence of the bourgeoisie" (Yao Xiuqing, 1993:74) and anyone who could speak a foreign language was considered a "foreign spy" (Zhang Ailing, 2000:54). Anti-foreign slogans used at the time included "I am Chinese. Why do I need foreign languages?" and "Don't learn ABC. Make revolution!" (Qun Yi and Li Qingting, 1991 cited in Adamson, 2002:238). Several foreign language teachers were sent to the countryside for re-education and schools and universities were closed (Cortazzi and Jin Lixian, 1996a:64). While some schools and universities began teaching English again in the early 1970s, foreign language teachers were made to use textbooks full of political slogans designed specifically for the Cultural Revolution rather than effective language learning (Adamson and Morris, 1997:12; Yao Xiuqing, 1993:74). According to a student studying English at the time, "in secondary school,

some passages in the English textbook were just newspaper articles on the Cultural Revolution; the speeches of Chairman Mao were translated into English. Of course, we learned some words from those passages but when you translate Chairman Mao's words into English, it is not everyday English" (cited in Lam, 2002:252). The following example is typical of the texts of this period:

> We must see to it that all our young people understand that ours is still a very poor country, that we cannot change the situation radically in a short time, and that only through the united efforts of our younger generation and all our people working with their own hands can our country be made strong and prosperous within a period of several decades. It is true that the establishment of our socialist system has opened the road to the ideal state of the future, but we must work very hard, very hard indeed, if we are to make the ideal a reality. Some of our young people think that everything ought to be perfect once a socialist society is established and that they should be able to enjoy a happy life, ready-made, without working for it. This is unrealistic (cited in Mackerras, 1968:63).

3.2.5 ELT and China's Open Door (1976-89)

Following Mao Zedong's death on 9th September 1976, China abandoned the ideals of the Cultural Revolution and instead embarked upon a new course of development and modernisation, championed by China's new leader Deng Xiaoping (Baum, 1994:4-5). This plan was termed the Four Modernisations and was aimed at agriculture, industry, national defence and science and technology (Mackerras et al, 1998:9-10). China was once again open to the outside world and keen to institute a variety of reforms. China's new direction became known as the 'open door policy'.

In this era of reform and the open door policy, foreign language learning was once again revitalised. In fact, as with education in general, foreign language learning became intimately associated with the concept of modernisation (Ross, 1992:1993). Proficiency in foreign languages, especially English, was seen as necessary for achieving the Four Modernisations. Soon English became a requirement for further

education, employment, promotion and overseas travel and training (Ross, 1993:38-40). ELT and foreign language education in general began to recover from the neglect of the Cultural Revolution so that by 1981, at the level of higher education, there were 445 departments and institutes of foreign languages with a teaching staff of 8 628 and 31 089 full time students, the majority majoring in English (Yao Xiuqing, 1993:75). There were also developments at lower levels too, for example, a new syllabus and textbooks for ELT at secondary schools were developed (Adamson and Morris, 1997:12-15) and foreign teachers began coming to China again in 1977 (Yao Xiuqing, 1993:75). At the academic level there was also a renewed interest in foreign languages and foreign language teaching. For example, the first ELT in China conference was held in Guangzhou in 1985 (Lam, 2002:247).

China's reforms were generally successful and resulted in spectacular economic growth and improvements in the standard of living for the majority of people. However, there were limits to how much reform China's leaders would allow. Far from abandoning communist ideology completely, the CCP insisted on 'socialism with Chinese characteristics' and the ongoing leadership of the Party (Meisner, 1999:518-36). Reforms were seen as having a potentially negative effect on China as well as a positive one. Concerns over the impact of reforms on China and the Chinese people came to the fore in the anti-spiritual pollution campaign in 1983. While not a full-scale campaign in the sense of those conducted in more radical times, it did result in the banning of certain films and works of art (Mackerras et al, 1998:23-4; Spence, 1990:699). Foreign languages also came under scrutiny. They may have been seen as essential for modernisation but this did not change the fact that "foreign languages remained symbols of nonindigenous modernity" (Ross, 1993: 41).

As the 1980s progressed, problems associated with reforms worsened. Coupled with increasing Western influence on students and intellectuals, student demonstrations took place around the country demanding more political reforms (Mackerras et al, 1998:30; Spence, 1990:696-7). The Chinese government had no intention of going any further in terms of political reforms and these tensions ultimately came to a head in the Tiananmen Square Massacre of June 1989.

3.2.6 ELT at Present and into the Future

The Tiananmen Square Massacre was certainly very tragic and earned worldwide condemnation. However, despite predictions to the contrary, China was not deterred from the path of reform and opening up. Things were quick to settle down and the rest of the 1990s saw a swing back to reform and modernisation with similarly successful results. In 1992 China's GDP increased by 12% and for the years 1991 to 1997 GDP grew by an average of 11% (Meisner, 1999:514-8). China's post-Deng leaders, first Jiang Zemin then Hu Jintao, have continued in the same direction and with the CCP having recently celebrated its eightieth anniversary, China looks set to continue on its course of modernisation and opening up into the foreseeable future. Not surprisingly, the demand for English language skills has intensified and enthusiasm for learning English also seems to be at an all time high. As Jiang Yajun (2003:6) says, "governments are encouraging their citizens to learn English, parents are persuading, even forcing, their children to speak it and college students are doing English at the expense of their majors". Some people are willing to go to extraordinary lengths to achieve proficiency in the language. According to a report in the *People's Daily*

Online (18/6/2002), some students in Shanghai went to the Ren-ai Hospital and asked for a tongue operation so they could have perfect English pronunciation[4].

Many new initiatives have been taken in order to promote English language proficiency. In September 2001, the Ministry of Education issued a circular instructing all universities and colleges to use English as the medium of instruction for certain subjects. These subjects include information technology, biotechnology, finance, foreign trade, economics and law. The Ministry aims to have 5-10% of university courses taught in English within two years (*South China Morning Post*, 25/9/2001). In Guangdong Province similar plans are underway for the use of English as the medium of instruction in senior secondary schools. The plan started with a trial in ten classes across five schools. The provincial Education Commission started this plan because it wants people in major cities and urban areas to have the same level of English language proficiency as people in Hong Kong and Southeast Asia by 2005 *South China Morning Post*, 20/10/2001; *People's Daily Online*, 10/10/2001). Plans are also underway to start English classes earlier in schools. In 2001, the education authorities in Beijing announced that English classes would begin in grade three of primary school with a view to starting classes from grade one in the future. This plan is set to be realised, with the Beijing Education Commission announcing that students beginning primary school in autumn 2004 will have English classes from grade one (*People's Daily Online*, 4/6/2001; 2/4/2004). New textbooks and internet facilities for learning English have also been developed (*People's Daily Online*, 12/4/2001; 22/6/2001; 11/3/2001), and new language testing centres are opening in China as well

[4] This procedure is called a frenectomy and involves cutting the tongue's membrane in order to lengthen it. In South Korea, where the procedure is particularly popular, many believe that it will enable one to distinguish between /l/ and /r/ (Abley, 2003:90). There are no linguistic grounds for this

(*People's Daily Online*, 19/2/2001). ELT delivery has also expanded. In addition to state run and semi-state run schools, private enterprise has emerged as a trend in ELT. Many privately run schools have sprung up across the country and use a variety of teaching methods. A common trend in many such schools is increased concentration on oral English (Eva Lai, 2001:32-6). Demand for Business English courses has also increased in recent years due to China's business dealings with the rest of the world (Huang Zhenhua, 1999:79).

English is still seen as important for modernisation but it has taken on another role as well. According to Lam (2002:246-7), since 1991 the role of English has been "English for international stature". Knowledge of English is certainly playing a part in China's attempt to take a greater part in world affairs. Beijing's successful bid for the 2008 Olympic Games and Shanghai's hosting of the 2001 APEC meeting have led to government sponsored short courses in English and new TV and radio programs aimed at teaching basic English. The aim of these classes and programs is to enable officials and ordinary people to communicate with the many foreigners who will come to China for both the APEC conference and the Olympics (*People's Daily Online*, 25/4/2000; 30/5/2000; 5/12/2000; *South China Morning Post*, 28/7/2001). Similar efforts took place in preparation for entry into the WTO (*South China Morning Post*, 27/10/2001) and Shanghai is currently recruiting English teachers to help boost English proficiency for World Expo, to be held in Shanghai in 2010 (*South China Morning Post*, 17/4/2004). At present, English is more widespread and more widely used than at any time in the past. The presence of English in China has reached the point where:

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belief and it should be noted that the doctors at Ren-ai Hospital refused to perform the operation because there was nothing wrong with the students' tongues (*People's Daily Online*, 18/6/2002).

> Nowadays Chinese people can hardly avoid seeing or hearing English in daily life. In most cities, when we take a bus or underground train we hear the stop announcement in both Chinese and English. While walking in the street, we see shop signs such as McDonalds, Tea House, Coffee Lounge, KFC, etc., and when stepping into some of the shops WELCOME can be found on the door mat or as the slogan in a position to catch the eye; while selecting articles we can sometimes read their instructions or directions in both Chinese and English. When we watch TV, we cannot avoid seeing such initials and names as CCTV, MTV, Sports News, and China Reports on the screen; when we start reading newspapers or magazines, English words and expressions appear in the headlines, in the contents, and sometimes in the articles proper (Kang Jianxiu, 1999:46-7).

Having seen how English arrived at its present high point, the next section will look in more detail at the users and uses of English in China.

3.3 The Current Use and Status of English in China

China was classified earlier as an expanding circle country where English is used as a foreign language. English has no official status nor is there a community of English speakers who use the language among themselves as there is in countries such as Argentina (Nielsen, 2003). However, this classification does not tell the whole story and the use of English within China should not be underestimated. Here I use newspaper articles and other primary sources such as the websites of TV and radio stations in addition to my own fieldwork data to give a detailed account of the users and uses of English. This survey shows that while English has no official or administrative function at this stage, it is used extensively in science and technology, the media, business, tourism and international connections and the formal and informal education systems. Every effort has been made to make this profile of English as up to date as possible. However, new developments are always underway and a language situation is never completely static in the first place. Therefore, as with the historical background of English in China, this survey is not exhaustive. It

does however give a sense of the dimensions and dynamics of the English language in China.

3.3.1 Users of English

It is always difficult to determine how many people use a particular language due to issues such as the definition of a user and the methods used to count users (Mackey, 2003:65-6). In the case of China, there are no statistics on the number of people who speak English. There are no questions in the Chinese census about language use or level of proficiency in English and statistical compilations such as the *China Statistical Yearbook* contain no data on language. Other less direct methods are usually used to estimate the number of English users in China. Zhao Yong and Campbell (1995) use the number of school and college graduates as an estimate because everyone studies English at some point in their education. They arrive at between 200-300 million users of English, a figure which seems to have gained some acceptance (Zhao Yong and Campbell, 1995:381-2).

This is not to say that all of these people speak English fluently or even at all. Zhao Yong and Campbell (1995) use level of education as an indicator of proficiency: the higher the level of education attained the higher the level of English language proficiency. However, even this may not be a good indicator as some studies have shown that despite years of study, some school leavers have very little or even no command of English (see for example Li Xiaoju, 1996). The type of proficiency also needs to be considered. One common observation in China is that students are often weak in communicative ability –they may know a lot about English but have difficulties using it in a real life situation. This is true for a fair amount of Chinese

students. However, one cannot deny that the Chinese system has turned out some proficient speakers of English (Brick, 1991:160-1)[5]. My personal experience attests to this. I have met people in China who have never been outside their hometown let alone to an English speaking country yet are very competent speakers of English. In commercial centres like Shanghai and Guangzhou, it is not uncommon to find people who speak English very well while in some of the more out of the way places people are more likely to have little or no knowledge of English. Suffice to say that there are varying levels of proficiency depending on factors such as education, experience and exposure to English (Zhao Yong and Campbell, 1995:378-9). Cheng Zhaoxiang (2002:259; 263-4) predicts that proficiency in English will increase with increasing exposure to English through various channels and ongoing developments in education. We now look at where and when English is used in China.

3.3.2 Uses of English

This section will discuss the uses of English by using a framework originally derived from Kachru (1983b) and used by linguists such as Nielsen (2003) and Velez-Rendon (2003) to describe the use of English in other countries. This framework consists of four categories of language use: the instrumental function, the interpersonal function, the regulative function and the imaginative/innovative function (Kachru, 1983b:42). Here only the first three categories are discussed. The imaginative/innovative function of English in China is treated separately in Chapter Four.

[5] According to a report in *China Daily* (12/11/2004), undergraduate law student Zhao Zheng of Shanghai University of Finance and Economics got the highest score in the world in the TOEFL exam

3.3.2.1 Interpersonal Function

There are two aspects of the interpersonal function. It acts as a link language between speakers of different languages and also acts as a language that symbolises modernity and prestige (Kachru, 1983b: 42; Velez-Rendon, 2003;192). In China, the interpersonal function includes science, technology and research, the media, business and tourism and international connections.

Science, Technology and Research

In science and technology English is sometimes used in research, at conferences and in joint projects with foreign scientists, reading technical manuals and journals and meeting or negotiating with foreign visitors (Pride and Liu Ru-shan, 1988:49-55; Zhao Yong and Campbell, 1995:385-8). In 2003 there were 23 862 academic meetings held in China, 2418 visits from foreign countries (including Hong Kong, Taiwan and Macao) and 1683 visits to foreign countries (including Hong Kong, Taiwan and Macao) for purposes related to science and technology (*China Statistical Yearbook*, 2004: 830). No data is available for language use at these meetings or during these visits but it is reasonable to assume that English was used at least some of the time. Recently the National Defence Industry Press published a Chinese-English Dictionary of Science and Technology. The dictionary has 20 million words in 80 000 entries. According to editor-in-chief Sun Fuchu, the dictionary will help learners of Chinese to learn the language as well as helping Chinese people "in writing academic books, research papers, technical manuals, trade contracts and other business documents in English or translating them into English" (*People's Daily Online*, 13/10/2003). Knowledge of English is also necessary for scientists and other professionals wishing to be promoted, as they must pass a proficiency test before they

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without any special training or preparation courses.

are promoted (Pride and Liu Ru-shan, 1988:49-55; Zhao Yong and Campbell, 1995385-8).

The use of English is not confined to the sciences. English is used in many fields although some use English more than others. Perhaps not surprisingly, English is used in research and other activities relating to linguistics and language teaching:

> For example, in 1992, *ELT in China*, a national conference of English teachers, was conducted in English; all presentations and discussions were made in English. English articles have appeared in some of the most prestigious journals, *Foreign Language Teaching and Research*, for instance (Zhao Yong and Campbell, 1995:386).

Some book length works in this field have also been written in English. The conference proceedings for *ELT in China* 1985 and 1992 are both in English. The conference proceedings of *China's 2nd Conference on Intercultural Communication* are also predominantly in English, with only three of the 31 papers in Chinese. Some academics have written books entirely in English such as *Language Contact and Lexical Borrowing of English and Chinese: A Comprehensive Study* (Hu Tiaoyun, 2001) and *Applied Linguistics: Language Learning and Teaching* (Yi Xiubo, 2004). The reading of technical literature in English is also common in this field. One of the main bookstores in Changchun stocked several books by well-known scholars in linguistics. These included the Oxford Introductions to Language Study (a nine book series) and the Cambridge Books for Language Teachers (a series of twenty books) as well as many others. These books are published in China by the Shanghai Foreign Language Teaching Press and the Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press for use by Chinese students, teachers and researchers.

Media

English also has an increasing presence in the media. In fact, it is now possible to find some English used in every kind of media format including daily, weekly, and semi-weekly newspapers, periodicals, radio broadcasts, television, wire service and internet sites (Guo Zhongshi and Huang Yu, 2002:219). There are 19 English language newspapers and magazines in China (Jiang Yajun, 2003:7). Some of the better known examples are: *China Daily*, *Beijing Review*, *Shanghai Star*, *Shanghai Daily*, *Beijing Weekend*, *21st Century English* and *The World of English*. Some of these newspapers have a large readership. The *China Daily* for example has a circulation of 350 000 covering over 150 countries and regions while the *Shanghai Daily* has a circulation of 40 000 (Guo Zhongshi and Huang Yu, 2002:221-2). As the circulation for *China Daily* shows, many English language publications are intended for use by foreigners. There is also a Chinese readership of such material but their reasons for reading English language publications may not be for their information value, as Guo Zhongshi and Huang Yu (2002:221) describe:

> domestic audience members tend to approach English media with the explicit purpose of improving their English. They view the media content as a product of trained professionals, offering handy English equivalents to prevailing Chinese concepts, a way of describing current events in English, and a collection of simple and straightforward English expressions.

Indeed, many schools subscribe to *China Daily* and *Beijing Review* for use by students and staff (Pride and Liu Ru-shan, 1988:49-55; Zhao Yong and Campbell, 1995:385-8). The paper *21st Century* is currently the most popular among college students. A new English language newspaper catering specifically to high school students called *21st Century School Edition* was launched in October 2001. The paper contains "reports on news, hot campus issues, entertainment and sport, as well as

culture and technology, all in simple but pure English" (*21st Century Online*, 1/11/2001)

In addition to printed material, there are also various radio and television programs in English. These are mainly of an educational nature although recently non-teaching English language programs have also started to appear on Chinese TV (Pride and Liu Ru-shan, 1988:49-55; Zhao Yong and Campbell, 1995:385-8). These programs are mainly on CCTV 9, China's all English television channel. CCTV 9 began broadcasting on 25th September 2000. It has a number of programs including documentaries, entertainment and news (CCTV 9 website). Here is a sample schedule for CCTV 9:

04:00 News Asia
04:15 Sports Scene
04:30 Centre Stage
05:00 CCTV News
05:30 Nature and Science
05:55 Chinese Civilization
06:00 Biz China
06:30 Around China
07:00 News Asia
07:15 Learning Chinese
07:30 Dialogue
08:00 CCTV News
08:30 Documentary
09:00 Culture Express
09:30 Rediscovering China
10:00 CCTV News
10:30 Centre Stage
11:00 Biz China
11:30 Nature and Science
11:55 Chinese Civilization
12:00 CCTV News
12:30 Around China
13:00 CCTV News
13:30 Dialogue
14:00 Biz China
14:30 Documentary
15:00 CCTV News
15:30 Rediscovering China

16:00 Culture Express
16:30 Centre Stage
17:00 CCTV News
17:30 Nature and Science
17:55 Chinese Civilization
18:00 Shanghai Today
18:15 Learning Chinese
18:30 Around China
19:00 Worldwide Watch
19:30 Dialogue
20:00 Culture Express
20:30 Documentary
21:00 Biz China
21:30 Rediscovering China
22:00 CCTV News
22:30 Centre Stage
23:00 Sports Scene
23:15 Learning Chinese
23:30 Nature and Science
23:55 Chinese Civilization
0:00 CCTV News
00:30 Around China
01:00 Biz China
01:30 Dialogue
02:00 Culture Express
02:30 Documentary
03:00 CCTV News
03:30 Rediscovering China
(CCTV 9 website, schedule for 7/4/2004).

The *People's Daily Online* (23/10/2003) reports that plans are also underway for an all English TV channel in Shanghai. A smattering of English language programs can also be found on other channels. For example, Lu You Wei Shi (Travel Satellite TV) played *Lonely Planet Pilot Guides* each afternoon and again at night for a period of time in 2003. There is also the occasional English movie, usually with Chinese subtitles.

China Radio International has "211 hours of broadcasting every day in 43 foreign languages and Chinese dialects" (China Radio International website, a). The English Service has more than 60 broadcast hours per day. There are overseas listeners in a

number of countries and a domestic audience in 20 cities (China Radio International website, a). There are a variety of programs on the English Service. There are music programs (for example *Easy FM*, *Joy FM*, *Hit FM*, *X FM* and *Afternoon Concert*), news (*CRI Headlines*, *News and Reports*, *Cutting Edge*) and documentary style programs such as *Real Time Beijing*, *Real Time China*, *Biz China*, *China Horizons* and *Life in China* that focus on various topics. And of course there are also English teaching programs (China Radio International website, b).

Business

The main domains in which English is used are international business and tourism. These areas involve direct communication with other speakers of English, whether they are native or non-native speakers. In international business, English is used in joint ventures and business communications between Chinese and foreign companies. The extent to which English is used, the number of people who use English and the purposes they use it for will of course vary from one place to another and one company to another. Pang Jixian et al (2002) conducted a survey of business people in Zhejiang province. They found that English was used for communication via fax and email and some contracts were written in English. However, in the companies surveyed, only a small number of people were involved in this sort of work while the majority used English for filling in forms and reading specialist literature (Pang Jixian et al, 2002:206-8). These uses are probably fairly typical of English in the business domain. Many businesses also have English names. The most notable examples are fast food restaurants such as *McDonalds*, *KFC*, *Pizza Hut* and *Cross Pizza*. Other businesses using English names include *China Telecom* and *China Mobile*. Banks

such as *Bank of China*, *Agricultural Bank of China* and *Commercial and Industrial Bank of China* also have English names displayed along with the Chinese.

Tourism and International Connections

Tourism is a growing industry in China, with visitors from many countries of the world coming to China. According to the *China Statistical Yearbook* (2004:749), 11 402 900 foreign tourists came to China in 2003. The use of English in hotels, tour groups and travel agencies is common. For example, at airports announcements about what flight is arriving, leaving and boarding are made first in Chinese then in English. On the plane various announcements (welcome aboard, time of arrival at destination, turbulence etc.) and the safety demonstration also follow this pattern. Signs in English are seen in places associated with tourism such as museums, parks and train stations. This is a sign in Guilin Zoo:

> Dear tourists:
> There are a group of Wild monkeys accounting about two hundred at large surrounding Putou Hill, Crescent Moon Hill and Fuxing Hill who frequently appear and disappear by the road and path or even the hillside of the park. Those lovely Wild monkeys have become a natural scene of the park and have attracted broad tourists very much. But among the monkeys, some of them are bad tempered, sometime they attack on tourists casually. Therefore please keep a certain distance whenever you meet and watch the monkeys and do not to play with them and irritate them, so as to prevent any accident events occurring.
> Thank you,
> Seven-star Park Administrative Office[6]

English also has a 'getting around function'. On some buses in Changchun next stop announcements were made first in Chinese then in English, "the next stop is coming. Guilin Road is coming". The light train also had this feature, the announcement given first in Chinese then in English as follows: "Hello passengers. The next stop is Jiefang

[6] The use of faulty or unintelligible English in China is discussed in Chapter Four. This sign is cited here purely as an example of the use of English in tourism.

Bridge. Please be ready to get off". Tourism has also given rise to what has been termed peddlers' English. Peddlers' English is the variety of English used by street vendors and peddlers across China to attract the attention of and bargain with foreign tourists (Pride and Liu Ru-shan, 1988:49-55; Zhao Yong and Campbell, 1995:385-8).

English is also used to convey information about and project an image of China to foreign audiences. Figures from the China Bibliographic Library indicate China published 28 500 translated works from 1978-1990 and between 1995-2003 94 400 works were published (*People's Daily Online*, 10/11/2004). No exact figures for translations into English were given but much Chinese literature and the works of important political leaders have been translated into English. According to Eva Hung (2002:330-1), "the literary translation work of the Foreign Languages Bureau and Foreign Languages Press have always shown a clear ideological orientation. Writers and work selected for translation all served to reinforce the government's world view, which had no room for those considered antagonistic to the regime". There is also a trend for English translations of Chinese texts being aimed at Chinese audiences. Similar to the situation with other English language media, these translations are primarily used as an aid to learn English (Eva Hung, 2002:331).

3.3.2.2 Instrumental Function

The instrumental function of language refers to "English as a medium of learning at various stages in the educational system of the country" (Kachru, 1983b: 42). As is already becoming obvious, the education system is an important aspect of English in China. In the education system, the primary place where Chinese learn and come into contact with English, the use of English ranges from a subject of study to a medium of

education depending on the course and the institution where it is studied. There are a number of avenues which those wishing to learn English can pursue. These include formal education at schools and universities, TV and radio classes and the uninstructed language learning that takes place in English corners. English in formal and informal education will be discussed below.

Formal Education

While formal schooling is not the only option for Chinese wishing to learn English, it is mainly through the education system that Chinese learn English. Children start their education early in China. Most children attend kindergarten from the ages of three to six. Between the ages of six and eleven children go to primary school. Junior secondary then takes up three years and senior secondary school also takes three years. Alternatively, students may go to vocational school after they complete primary school. After secondary school students have the opportunity to go to university. There are three types of university in China: normal university, where students undertake teacher training, specialist university, which focuses on a particular discipline such as commerce, engineering or foreign languages, and comprehensive or general university which, among other areas, covers social science, the humanities and natural sciences (Cortazzi and Jin Lixian, 1996a:63; Mackerras et al, 1998:167-8). ELT can start as early as kindergarten where children learn through songs, games and toys. The primary school curriculum includes study of a foreign language, English being the one most commonly studied. In secondary school, students continue their foreign language study in addition to other subjects such as Chinese, mathematics, science, geography and history. In junior secondary school foreign language study takes up 16% of students' time, English again being the most popular choice although

some students study Russian or Japanese. At this level the objectives of ELT are to provide basic training in the four skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing), develop a basic ability to communicate in English, encourage an interest in and build a foundation for further learning of English and develop good learning habits. Students who complete this stage are expected to learn 1000 vocabulary items (Cortazzi and Jin Lixian, 1996a:63; Mackerras et al, 1998:167).

In senior secondary school 30% of the time is devoted to Chinese and a foreign language. The vast majority of students select English as their foreign language and are expected to know a minimum of 1200 vocabulary items, have mastered basic English phonetics and grammar, have some proficiency in the four skills and be able to read material of a slightly easier level than their textbook with the help of a dictionary. Higher standards are expected of students attending key schools including a larger vocabulary, knowledge of commonly used idiomatic expressions, and higher standards of reading and speaking (Cortazzi and Jin Lixian, 1996:63; Mackerras et al, 1998:167).

At the university level, every student has to study a foreign language for at least two years. Foreign language programs are divided into two strands, one for foreign language majors and the other for non-foreign language majors. The first strand is handled by foreign language institutes and foreign language departments in universities while programs for non-majors are handled by language centres in universities (Cortazzi and Jin Lixian, 1996a:63; Yao Xiuqing, 1993:75). The National Curriculum for foreign language majors was put into effect in 1982. It aims to develop five language skills: listening, speaking, reading, writing and

translating/interpreting. The curriculum itself emphasizes the ability to use the target language to communicate, knowledge of the culture and the society of the target language country and also mentions learner autonomy (Yao Xiuqing, 1993:75). English majors study English throughout the four years of their degree. The English program is made up of eight bands taken in two stages. Stage one covers bands 1-4 and stage two covers the advanced levels, bands 5-8. English majors have around 20 teaching hours per week with intensive reading, extensive reading, listening, oral English, reading and writing and translating/interpreting as the main components of the program (Wang Yinquan, 1999:45; Yao Xiuqing, 1993:75). After two years students have to pass a national exam, called Examination Band 4, to be eligible to graduate (Cortazzi and Jin Lixian, 1996a:63; Yao Xiuqing, 1993:75). After two years English majors are expected to have "a vocabulary of 6000 words, a fairly good knowledge of phonetics and grammar, an ability to communicate in the target language fluently without serious grammatical mistakes both orally and in writing, as well as an awareness of the culture, economy and politics of the target language country" (Yao Xiuqing, 1993:75). Following the first two years of study additional courses are offered including drama, poetry and literature, and the above mentioned English courses continue at an advanced level (Yao Xiuqing, 1993:75).

The National Curriculum for non-foreign language majors is the product of conferences on foreign language teaching held between 1978 and 1980 (Yao Xiuqing, 1993:75). The majority of students studying a foreign language in China are non-foreign language majors. In the case of English, the course for non-majors is officially known as College English (Wang Yinquan, 1999:45). The requirements of College English are somewhat less stringent than those for English majors. Non-English

majors must study English for at least two years, at the end of which they must pass the College English Test 4 (CET-4) to get their degrees (Yao Xiuqing, 1993:75). CET-4 was introduced in 1986 by the Ministry of Education. It covers listening comprehension, reading comprehension, vocabulary and structure. These areas are tested in the form of multiple choice, cloze tests and writing. Since 1999, a CET oral test has been available in some places in China. However, the oral component is optional and only those who score above 80% can participate in this exam (Zhu Huimin, 2003:40). Students in the College English strand of ELT have four teaching hours per week and learn all their English through intensive reading. Contrary to what the name suggests, intensive reading is not a reading course but rather:

> a core foundation course in EFL which integrates all skills and emphasizes the reading and use of words and knowledge of grammar with some translation. Everything the teacher has to teach, be it grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation or reading aloud, be it listening, speaking, reading, writing or translation, is taught through a universally approved written text of no more than two or three pages (Wang Yinquan, 1999:46).

According to the National Curriculum, after two years students should have a 4000 word vocabulary, the ability to communicate in English and be able to do certain tasks such as filling in forms and writing business letters. Students can then choose to take up another foreign language or continue with English and sit for the advanced level exam, Examination Band 6 (Yao Xiuqing, 1993:75). This option is also available to English-majors and students are encouraged to do this as it will increase their chances of finding a well-paid job, especially in joint ventures and foreign owned enterprises (Wang Yinquan, 1999:48).

Informal Education

In addition to formal education, English language studies can also be pursued through less formal means. These include television and radio programs and, more recently, community schools. As mentioned in 3.3.2.1, there are a number of English language programs on national and provincial TV including news, films and English language lessons. English teaching programs show much variety in terms of format, teaching technique, content and target audience. There are quiz shows such as *SK Chuang Yuan Wan* in which high school students compete to earn money for their schools. In the English segment of the quiz a foreigner reads out clues such as "to choose, make a decision" and "a plan of action for a government or business" and contestants have to guess the word, in this case the answers were "select" and "policy". These words form part of a crossword and contestants have to guess the mystery word formed when all the answers are in place (viewed on Beijing TV 1, 1/9/2002). Other programs are aimed specifically at young children. *You and Me English Party* (viewed on Beijing TV 1, 13/9/2002) has a Chinese host who uses pictures to teach words and involves children in activities such as guessing games, role plays and songs. The grammar points are then explained by the host in Chinese. Another children's program, *Xiao Tai Yang Ju Le Bu Sun Club*, features a female host and a puppet. At the start of the program, the host and the puppet chat in Chinese, then move on to an English lesson. One particular program focused on vocabulary regarding exams. The host said words like test, quiz, examination, exam, term, mid, middle, midterm, midterm exam and final exam. Each of these words appears on screen in English with Chinese characters underneath. The host then gave an explanation of each of these terms in Chinese (viewed on Changchun TV 2, 5/11/2002). There are also some teaching programs that focus on a specific topic. As its name suggests, *Sports English* is devoted to sporting

terms and expressions. The program features a short documentary on a particular sport or athlete in English with Chinese subtitles. Then the hosts review and explain the new words that appeared in the documentary. Another segment of the show has a dialogue about sports which often features technical vocabulary pertaining to a particular sport. A dialogue about a ruby union match taught terms such as winger, scrum half, forward and back (viewed on CCTV 5, 4/3/2003). Many TV language lessons have been very successful. For example, the widely known English language series *Follow Me* was watched by 20 million people when it aired in China in the 1980s. Its follow up program, *Follow Me to Science*, also played to large audiences (Ross, 1992:243).

There are also a number of radio programs devoted to learning English. When I was teaching at Jilin University, the driver of the teachers' bus would sometimes listen to English language teaching programs on the radio. The following is one example:

1. Introduction in Chinese

Let's listen to a dialogue. It's quite long so we'll hear each sentence by itself after the dialogue

2. Dialogue between a Chinese cab driver (C) and a foreigner (F)

C: Good morning sir.
F: Good morning.
C: Where to?
F: The Lingfan Foreign Language School please.
C: I'm sorry, I don't know the location.
F: Go straight ahead…
C: Can you show me on the map?
F: Yes, I can. See, it's right there.

3. Explanation in Chinese of every sentence

4. In-depth explanation of the sentence "I'm sorry, I don't know the location"

For this sentence, the Chinese equivalent for each word was given and each word was spelt out in English. Then the dialogue and the explanation were repeated (name of program unknown, heard 16/10/2002).

On another occasion I was invited to participate in a local radio program by one of my students. The program was called *Education Online* and was broadcast by Changchun People's Broadcasting Station. The program consists of education news, a talk about education, a foreign language section and advertisements. With the exception of the foreign language section, the program was in Chinese. This particular program is aimed at high school and university students. The foreign language section lasts for about 20 minutes and went as follows:

1. Introduction of foreign language section and myself in Chinese by Chinese host

2. Self-Introduction in English

Hello. My name is Jeff Gil. I came from Australia. My hometown is Brisbane. I'm an English teacher at Jilin University. I have lived in Changchun for about six months.

3. An explanation of what would happen in this section of the program in Chinese by Chinese host

4. Reading a story

How Old is She?

A woman was having trouble with her heart so she went to see the doctor. He was a new doctor and didn't know her. He had many questions for her, one of them was how old are you? "Well, I don't remember doctor. When I got married I was 18. My husband was 30. Now my husband is 60, I know. That's twice 30. So I must be twice 18. That's 36, isn't it?

5. Explanation in English of the following phrases

Having trouble with my heart, one of them was, went to see the doctor, twice 30.

6. An explanation of what would happen next in Chinese by Chinese host

7. Second reading of the story with two questions

Where did the story take place?

How old was the woman?

8. Listeners call in to answer the questions in English

9. An explanation of the story and phrases in Chinese by Chinese host

10. Goodbye and thank you to end foreign language segment of the program

In the last ten years or so, community schools for adult education have also opened in China. These schools are run by non-governmental organisations such as democratic political parties, religious groups, academic associations and individuals (Xie Mian Mian and Derwing, 1996:385-6). These schools provide a range of English language

courses including listening and speaking skill development, examination preparation and general EFL. As these schools are not funded or controlled by the government, they have more freedom in course design, hiring practices and admission policy (Xie Mian Mian and Derwing, 1996:386-92). Even less formal than these options are the so-called English corners. English corners are places such as parks and squares where one can go to practice speaking English. English corners are common in cities across China and it is not hard to find talented language learners who have acquired all their English in English corners (Cortazzi and Jin Lixian, 1996a:63-4; Zhao Yong and Campbell, 1995:387).

3.3.2.3 Regulative Function

The regulative function, the "use of English in those contexts in which language is used to regulate conduct; for example, the legal system and administration" (Kachru, 1983b:42) does not exist as such in China. English has no status as a language of administration and is not used in domains such as the law courts (Pride and Liu Ru-shan, 1988:49). The use of English in regards to legal matters bears more resemblance to the interpersonal function. In 2000, judges in Beijing took part in a one year English course. Gao Xiaoling, the official in charge of education and training for judges, saw English as important because "with the increase in foreign related cases and international exchanges, we need more judges who know some English" (quoted in *People's Daily Online*, 20/4/2000). What the judges said they used English for is similar to the uses described in the section on business. A judge from the No. 1 Intermediate People's Court said "we often have to deal with business letters, faxes and other material written in English, so improving our English will help us do a better job". Another judge in the same course wanted to learn English so he could

learn about the legal systems of foreign countries (quoted in *People's Daily Online*, 20/4/2000). Later in the same year, an English language emergency line opened in the cities of Nanjing, Wuxi and Suzhou in Jiangsu Province. People in these cities can dial 110 to speak to an English speaking police officer. The service was aimed at catering for foreign investors and tourists (*People's Daily Online*, 5/7/2000). Police in Beijing are also being trained in foreign languages in the lead up to the Olympics. All police are expected to learn some basic English, Japanese, Russian and Arabic. According to the Beijing Public Security Bureau, these languages will be used for public service, traffic control, security checks, crime and accident investigations, interrogations and imposing penalties (*South China Morning Post*, 24/11/2001). At present it seems that English has the beginnings of a regulative function. If these trends continue, English may one day have a stronger function in this area of life.

3.4 A Critical Moment in the Interaction of English and China

The place of English will undoubtedly continue to change but the present time seems to be an important juncture for English in China. As we have seen, English has undergone an amazing transformation, as Adamson (2002:241) aptly sums up:

> At present, the role and status of English in China is higher than ever in history as evidenced by its position as a key subject in the curriculum, and as a crucial determinant for university entrance and procuring well-paid jobs in the commercial sector. CCP leaders generally value the contribution that English can make to the nation's modernisation programme (including entry to the World Trade Organisation), and, indeed, many politicians at the highest levels are competent in the language. The success of bids for prestigious international sporting events, such as the Olympic Games and football World Cup competition, is dependant upon China's ability to cater for the linguistic needs of the foreign mass media and tourists. Despite the occasional and generally ineffective campaigns to control the diffusion of Western thought, *mores* and cultural artefacts such as pop music, films and websites that are deemed unsuitable, English – once spoken only by the despised social outcasts of Chinese society –is now the main second language of the nation's political, academic, industrial and commercial communities.

However, as Zhao Yong and Campbell (1995:382) point out, despite China's acknowledgement of the importance of English and the concerted effort to learn it, it would be somewhat naïve to assume that "the Chinese government holds a positive or favourable attitude toward English, let alone its native speakers". Concerns over the spread and use of English in China have emerged again in recent times among academics, the government and the general public. These concerns are reflected in a number of developments. In fact, recent years have seen a backlash against English. For example, amidst Shanghai's rush to improve the English skills of its citizens for the APEC meeting, the Shanghai Culture Broadcasting Television and Film Management Bureau issued the city's two main radio stations with a new set of rules which ban foreigners and Chinese married to foreigners from broadcasting. While the rules are applied somewhat inconsistently they nevertheless represent concerns over the prevalence of English (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, 26/4/01). More recently, the Shanghai Education Commission has banned kindergartens from teaching in English only and ruled that children who have attended such kindergartens will not be admitted to local primary schools. The commission stated that Chinese should be the main focus of education at this level and only some kindergartens deemed by the authorities to be qualified to do so would be allowed to offer English courses as an extracurricular activity. The vice-director of the commission's elementary education department expressed concerns over the lack of qualified English teachers and appropriate teaching material as well as claiming that too much English at an early age could potentially have negative effects on the children's language learning in the future (*China Daily*, 16/3/2004). Similar concerns were expressed by some academics and teachers in a forum published in the *Beijing Review* (No. 49, 2001) discussing the

opening of bilingual schools in Shanghai. While these educational concerns are valid, there may also be an unwillingness to let English go too far.

As far as students go, there also seems to be mixed feelings about English. It is true that a lot of students are "learning English purely because they have to" (Zhao Yong and Campbell, 1995:383) but there is also the more serious concern among some that the importance placed on English is unfair. A letter to the editor of the *China Daily* (28/9/2000) exemplifies these concerns:

> Special talents should be given chance
>
> Editor: Please allow me to present an example at the beginning of this letter. There is a junior middle school student, who proves himself the best student in the maths course in his class, but he is poor at English. The maths teacher appreciates him most, and expects him to do something special in mathematics in the future. But this student was not admitted into senior middle school just because of his poor English score which made him fail the national college entrance examinations. He has no other way to continue studying his favourite course. Maybe a future mathematician has been strangled.
>
> It's true that not every student is doing well at all subjects set by the national educational department. There are some students who are excellent in some subjects but fail in others, even though they are considered important by the educational authorities. Should these students be turned down by higher learning institutions?
>
> These students with special capabilities should be given opportunities to continue their study by improving educational system [sic] and not forcing them to be proficient in particular subjects.
>
> Cao Liuji
> Henan

Similar concerns have been raised over foreign language tests for scientists and other professionals wanting a promotion. The importance of this test is such that "failing in this test, even a Nobel Prize winner will be rejected for promotion to professor, senior researcher, chief physician, or even class-I teacher in a school" (Jiang Yajun, 2003:4). According to a report in the *People's Daily Online* (12/4/2004), some Chinese

intellectuals are refusing to take part in such tests on the grounds that they are unfair because lack of foreign language ability does not indicate lack of ability in other areas. Indeed, there is a growing concern that knowledge of English is used to judge a person's talent and value. This concern is summed up as "at present, people who cannot speak English are considered second-class talents; people who cannot write in English are third-class talents; and those who know nothing about English are not talents at all. People who know neither English nor computer [sic] are simply blockheads" (*People's Daily Online*, 2/11/2003). According to Zhou Guoqing, the deputy dean of Shanghai Jiaotong University's foreign language college, China's foreign language learning campaign has "overheated and needs to be cooled" (*People's Daily Online*, 12/4/2004). Obviously, the prominence of English has serious implications for China which deserve immediate attention.

3.5 Conclusion

As this chapter shows, the use and status of English is inextricably linked to the broader social, cultural, economic and political situation of China. English has had a long and varied interaction with China throughout which there has been a love-hate relationship between China and the English language that continues to this day. The English language, once occupying an obscure, minor place in China has become a highly visible, salient issue, the significance of which continues to grow (Ross, 1993:19; Eva Lai, 2001:32). The current high use and status of English in China is going to have important and far reaching consequences, especially for the languages and cultures of China. Is English displacing Chinese language and culture? Is English displacing minority languages? The next three chapters of this dissertation deal with these questions.

CHAPTER FOUR

ENGLISH WITH CHINESE CHARACTERISTICS

> *The crucial factor in the development of English over the last few centuries is its role in the world. English has been brought into contact with new environments and languages, and as a result has developed in new directions, giving rise to different varieties of English (Culpeper, 1997:75).*

> *It is commonplace to think of foreign language teaching as bringing a target culture to learners. This is culture as content. The aim is that students should acquire knowledge of a target culture. The learning of intercultural skills in relation to target culture people is less often emphasised. It is less usual to consider the culture learners bring to the foreign language classroom and its relationship to the target culture. This is, we argue, more than simply a background influence. It has a deep effect on classroom processes because it is a significant factor in how teachers and students perceive language learning and how they evaluate each other's roles and classroom performance (Jin Lixian and Cortazzi, 1998:98).*

4.1 Introduction

There are some aspects of English in China that seem to fit with the idea of English as a destructive language (tests, resources allocated to learn the language for example) but there are strong trends in the opposite direction. This chapter focuses on the influence of China and the Chinese people on the English language. It shows that the Chinese are, to some extent at least, making English their own. There is evidence to suggest that the Chinese are appropriating English in terms of its form and functions. This chapter looks first at the emerging variety of English known as China English. It then draws on data gathered during my time as an English teacher and other fieldwork experiences to show

real life instances of creative uses of English by Chinese people who have or still are learning English. Chinese styles of learning and teaching will also be looked at as these too show the influence of China on English. Taken together, the data presented in this chapter shows that the Chinese are not being exploited by English and are certainly not becoming carbon copies of English native speakers.

4.2 Appropriation of Form: China English

In its spread around the world, English has taken on many different forms. Trudgill and Hannah (1994:122) explain what happens to English in new environments:

> In many of these areas, English has become or is becoming *indigenized*. This means that these second language varieties of English, as a result of widespread and frequent use, have acquired or are acquiring relatively consistent, fixed, local norms of usage which are adhered to by all speakers. These varieties of English may differ, often considerably, from the English of native speakers elsewhere in the world, mainly as a result of influence from local languages (italics original).

The process of indigenisation has been, and still is, occurring in China. China's interaction with English has resulted in a distinctly Chinese variety of English known as China English.

4.2.1 What is China English?

Before going any further, it is necessary to clear up some terminology. The kind of English used in China is often referred to as Chinglish or sometimes Chinese English. Chinglish is not the same thing as China English. As the term suggests, Chinglish is a blend of Chinese and English. It is an interlanguage or learner English part way between English and Chinese (Kirkpatrick and Xu Zhichang, 2002:270). Chinglish is so heavily

influenced by Chinese that it is often full of errors and even unintelligible (Jiang Yajun, 1995:51). Examples of Chinglish can be found all over China. While traveling in China I saw an example of Chinglish on a sign at Black Dragon Lake in Lijiang, Yunnan Province:

"You are in district of forbiden smoking, please smoke at the pointed area".

A road sign in downtown Beijing also features a message in Chinglish:

"To take notice of safe. The slippery are very crafty" (cited in *China Daily*, 11/7/2003).

According to a report in *China News Digest* (14/8/2001), authorities in Beijing are attempting to eliminate the use of Chinglish because of the confusion it causes. More recently, Shanghai has set up the 26 member Special Committee for English Translations of Chinese Names in Public Places. The task of this committee is to replace Chinglish on signs, street names and place names with correct English (*People's Daily Online*, 23/9/2004).

China English however is something quite different. Whereas Chinglish looks more like Chinese, China English is an actual variety of English. It has some Chinese characteristics but it is still English, in the same sense that Indian English is English, not some other language. As Jiang Yajun (1995:51) puts it, China English is "an English, a member of the big family of world Englishes". The first scholar to use the term China English was Ge Chuangui. Ge Chuangui (1980:91-2 cited in Jiang Yajun, 2003:6-7) gives the following explanation of China English:

> Every country is unique to some extent. In China, for example, we have China-specific things to express when we speak or write in English, such as *Four Books* (Si Shu), *eight-legged essay* (baguwen), *May Fourth Movement* (Wusi Yundong), *xiucai* (xiucai), *Mr. Science* (sai xiansheng), *baihua* (baihua), *ideological*

> *remoulding* (sixiang gaizao), and *four modernizations* (sige xiandaihua). All these translated terms are words of China English rather than Chinese English or Chinglish (italics original).

This definition was a starting point but Ge Chuangui's "research was mainly concerned with vocabularly from the perspective of translation, instead of studying China English as a language variety" (Wang Zhixin, 1999:607). Later other Chinese scholars further developed the definition of China English along the lines of a language variety. Wang Rongpei (1991 cited in Kirkpatrick and Xu Zhichang, 2002:269) defines China English as "the English used by the Chinese people in China, being based on standard English and having Chinese characteristics". Li Wenzhong (1993:19) clarified the definition of China English, showing where its special features lie:

> China English has normative English as its core but with Chinese characteristics in lexicon, syntax and discourse, and it is employed to express China-specific things through means of transliteration, borrowing and semantic regeneration but without interference from the Chinese language (translation cited in Jiang Yajun, 2003:7).

Wang Zhixin (1999:607) aptly summaries the key features and differences between Chinglish and China English in the following formula:

> China English= linguistic Englishness +cultural Chineseness
> Chinglish= linguistic Englishness +linguistic Chineseness +cultural Chineseness

Of course, there is no definite point where Chinglish stops and China English starts. They are probably best regarded as points on a continuum of English used in China (Hu Xiaoqiong, 2004:27). The important point is that there is an identifiable, emerging variety of English in China. China English is currently attracting much attention from both Chinese and Western scholars. Research has been conducted on many aspects of China English including its linguistic and sociolinguistic features, its use in intercultural

communication and its suitability for use in teaching (Jiang Yajun, 2003:7). Here we will look at some of the linguistic aspects of China English.

4.2.2 Characteristics of China English

This section uses both Chinese and English language sources and, where appropriate, my own examples, to argue that China English has its own special features in terms of pronunciation, vocabulary, syntax and discourse patterns. These features stem from the Chinese worldview and culture (Gu Guanjie and Xiang Mingyou, 1997:11) and give China English a Chinese character that makes it different from native varieties of English.

Pronunciation

Not surprisingly, the English spoken by Chinese people does not sound exactly the same as that spoken by native speakers of English. China English has what Jiang Yajun (1995:51) describes as "a near-native yet Chinese accent". This accent stems from differences between the sound systems of Chinese and English. For example, the sound /θ/ that occurs in words like 'thing' and the sound /∂/ that occurs at the start of 'this' do not exist in Chinese. Many Chinese pronounce these sounds as /s/ and /z/ respectively (Li Dong, 1995:54). The /v/ sound is also absent from the Chinese sound system, which can result in phrases like 'very well' being pronounced /weri wel/ (Yan Zhijiang, 2002:230-1). Another feature of China English is the pronunciation of vowels. Chinese does not distinguish between long and short vowels so all vowels are pronounced with the same length. English vowels like /i:/, /u:/, /a:/, / / and / / are not sufficiently long while other vowels such as /i/, /ə/, / /, /u/, / /, / / and /e/ are not made short enough (Li Dong,

1995:54-5). Another feature of China English pronunciation is the tendency to add a vowel to the end of a word. With the exception of 'n' and 'ng,' Chinese words do not end in consonants. This means that many Chinese speakers are not used to words that end in consonants and when speaking English often add /ə/ or /i/ to the end of a word (Gu Guanjie and Xiang Mingyou, 1997:11). For example, many Chinese pronounce 'student' as /studentə/. Even people who are familiar with the rules of English may still make mistakes. One English student said she often pronounces America as /əmerik/ because she is afraid of adding a vowel on the end of an English word in case it is wrong (Lin Han, personal communication).

Differences among Chinese dialects can also influence the pronunciation of English. Speakers of some varieties of Chinese, such as Southwestern Mandarin, replace the sound /l/ with /n/, which can also happen when speaking English (Yan Zhijiang, 2002:231). In other areas of China there is no distinction between /ʃ/ and /s/. This leads to 'she' being pronounced as 'see' (Li Dong, 1995:54). This may mean that it will take quite some time for a standard pronunciation of China English to develop (Kirkpatrick and Xu Zhichang, 2002:270). The point here is that there is a particular Chinese pronunciation of English that marks speech as Chinese but does not render it unintelligible.

Vocabulary

The most obvious example of the Chinese features of China English is in its vocabulary. Terms that refer to Chinese concepts, ideas and objects find their way into English. Sometimes this happens by transliterating Chinese words. Examples include *putonghua*,

taichi, *maotai*, *fengshui*, *kowtow*, *mahjong*, *yin and yang* and *falungong* (Kirkpatrick and Xu Zhichang, 2002:270; Wei Yun and Fei Jia, 2003:44). Other times Chinese terms are translated into English. Such words are most noticeable in the political domain. Terms like four modernisations, one country two systems, running dogs, May Fourth Movement, open door policy, three representatives and iron rice bowl are among the best known examples (Kirkpatrick and Xu Zhichang, 2002:271; Wei Yun and Fei Jia, 2003:44). Another well-known example from outside the field of politics is barefoot doctor, a term used to describe a doctor who works in the countryside (Li Dong, 1995:56). The China English words we have looked at so far are, as Li Wenzhong (1993:22) points out, the result of English entering a Chinese cultural environment. However, China English does not just have these kinds of words. It also has English words that have taken on a new meaning or connotation in China (Li Wenzhong, 1993:22; Gu Guanjie and Xiang Mingyou, 1997:11). For example, the words 'peasant' and 'propaganda' have a derogatory or negative connotation in English-speaking countries but in China they have a positive connotation. Similarly, the English word 'ambitious' carries a positive meaning but in China it is seen as an undesirable characteristic (Li Wenzhong, 1993:22). As Wei Yun and Fei Jia (2003:44) point out, these words "are manifestly used and understood in a different sense from native English". It is also interesting to note that many familiar words entered the English language through contact with China. China was the earliest producer of silk, porcelain and tea, so when English speakers encountered these items new words were coined. Examples of these words are China-crape, chinaware, china-blue, teaspoon, teacup,

teapot and tea table (Yan Zhijiang, 2002:231-2). Yan Zhijiang (2002:231) claims that to date over one thousand English words came about in this manner.

Syntax

China English also has a number of grammatical features that give it a Chinese style. These grammatical features are mainly due to differences between Chinese and English. For example, because Chinese does not have articles, Chinese people tend not to use articles when speaking English. The articles "the" and "a" are either absent from speech or used in ways that differ from native varieties of English (Yan Zhijiang, 2002:231). There is also a tendency to put 'very' in front of adjectives and adverbs (Yan Zhijiang, 2002:231). I have often heard Chinese people describe food as "very delicious". In addition, Chinese does not have any equivalent to the English auxiliary verb "do". When asking questions, Chinese may omit "do" altogether. A question such as "Do you like her?" may come out as "You like her?" or to indicate it really is a question, "You like her, yes?" (Li Dong, 1995:55). In a similar vein, Chinese speakers of English may also use only one form of the verb, regardless of person or number. This is perhaps most obvious with the present tense third person form of the verb. It is common to hear Chinese people, even those with high levels of proficiency in English, say sentences like "He eat in the cafeteria everyday" (Yan Zhijiang, 2002:231). Subjects are also used differently in China English. Whereas under most circumstances English must have a subject in every sentence, Chinese does not require one. Phrases such as "very glad to

write to you again" are therefore common in China English (Kirkpatrick and Xu Zhichang, 2002:271)[1].

Discourse Patterns

A language does not only consist of sounds, words and syntax. There are also rules for governing discourse. The Chinese have their own set of expectations, assumptions and practices for communication. This means that discourse works differently in Chinese than in English (Ge Gao and Ting-Toomey, 1998:70). The differences between Chinese and Western discourse patterns have been well documented (see for example Ge Gao and Ting-Toomey, 1998; Scollon and Scollon, 1995) and many Chinese discourse norms are used when Chinese people speak English. Here we will look at two examples of Chinese discourse patterns being transferred to English: giving an opinion and making a request. When giving an opinion in Chinese, the reasons for one's opinion are usually presented before stating the main point or message (Young, 1982:77). This is accomplished linguistically in Modern Standard Chinese by the sequencing of complex sentences. Complex sentences follow the sequence of subordinate clause to main clause, rather than the English pattern of main clause followed by subordinate clause (Kirkpatrick and Xu Zhichang, 2002:273). This means that words like 'because' and 'therefore' are used at the start of sentences to initiate, not sum up discussion (Young, 1982:75). There is evidence to suggest that this pattern is also used when Chinese people speak English. The following example is a brief conversation between an American and a visiting Chinese

[1] There are some cases where English does not require a subject, for example in informal situations and in imperative sentences. However, sentences without subjects are far more common in Chinese and therefore in China English. For an easy to follow explanation of imperative sentences and other points of English grammar, see Hurford (1994).

professor of nutrition. Following the conventions used by the author, the reasons for the opinion are capitalised and the main point is in italics:

> American: How does the Nutritional Institute decide what topics to do research on?
> Chinese: BECAUSE, NOW, PERIOD GET CHANGE. IT'S DIFFERENT FROM PAST TIME. IN PAST TIME, WE EMPHASIZE HOW TO SOLVE PRACTICAL PROBLEMS. NUTRITION MUST KNOW HOW TO SOLVE SOME DEFICIENCY DISEASES. IN OUR COUNTRY, WE HAVE SOME NUTRITIONAL DISEASES, SUCH AS X, Y, Z BUT, NOW IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE MUST DO SOME BASIC RESEARCH. *So, we must take into account fundamental problems. We must concentrate our research to study some fundamental research* (Young, 1982:76).

Young (1982:77) gives a further example from a simulated budget meeting, conducted in English, by five Chinese business people. The purpose of the meeting was to decide what should be done with a surplus of 180 000 pounds sterling. In this extract, one participant puts forward an idea of how the money should be spent:

> Theta: One thing I would like to ask. BECAUSE MOST OF OUR RAW MATERIALS ARE COMING FROM JAPAN AND ( ) THIS YEAR IS GOING UP AND UP AND UH IT'S NOT REALLY I THINK AN INCREASE IN PRICE BUT UH WE LOSE A LOT IN EXCHANGE RATE AND SECONDLY I UNDERSTAND WE'VE SPENT A LOT OF MONEY ON TV AD LAST YEAR. *So, in that case I would like to suggest here: chop half of the budget in TV ads and spend a little money on mad magazine*.

This pattern also appears in written discourse. The following is a short passage written by a Chinese university student:

> *Telephone: A Convenience or A nuisance?*
> Telephone was invented in the 19th century. With the development of science and technology, telephone can be found everywhere, especially in big cities. There are many people talk with their friends in USA directly. We can know what is happening at one place thousands miles away immediately. Can you imagine how long it would take to send a letter to USA? At least Two Weeks. So, it brings much convenience to us, particularly in communication (cited in Wei Yun and Fei Jia, 2003:45).

There are some obvious grammar and punctuation errors in this passage. Nevertheless, it shows the indirect style of China English discourse. It is only at the end of this passage that the student states his/her opinion that the telephone is beneficial while the preceding sentences give the reasons for this opinion (Wei Yun and Fei Jia, 2003:45). A similar pattern occurs in making requests. In Chinese culture, requests are often made indirectly rather than directly or explicitly (Ge Gao and Ting-Toomey, 1998:75). There is usually some lead up or framing before a request is made (Kirkpatrick and Xu Zhichang, 2002:274). In other words, the request is not made immediately but after the reasons for the request have been given. This is illustrated in another extract from the budget meeting where one participant asks for part of the surplus:

> Beta: AS YOU KNOW, I HAVE SPENT FIVE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY THOUSAND POUNDS LAST YEAR TO ON THE MACHINERY AND COMPONENTS AND AH IF AH IF MR. AH LINCOLN WOULD LIKE TO INCREASE THE AH PRODUCTION IN AH THROUGH THE COMING YEAR, I THINK WE HAVE TO MAKE OUR BUDGET TEN PERCENT ON TOP OF THE AMOUNT FIVE HUNDRED AND FIVE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY THOUSAND POUNDS BECAUSE THERE WILL BE A TEN PERCENT ON UH INCREASE IN PRICE ON AVERAGE. AND, UH, *in other words, I need another sixty thousand pounds to buy the same material and quality* (Young, 1982:78).

This request pattern also holds for written discourse. This email, sent from one Chinese person to another, illustrates a similar sequence to the previous examples:

> Xu Sir:
> How are you?
> Anything new?
> Very glad to write to you again.
> I want to imagine your life there. It must be full of challenges and opportunities, isn't it?
> Recently I have read a book named 'My experiences in west and east'. It was writed by Wang Yaohui, a diplomat and a successful businessman.
> The book descripted his exprences from a Zhiqing in China to a respectable man in Canada. It also told me the big differences between East and West, including

> the history, culture, government style. I learned a lot from it, and knew the hardships living in a west country for a Chinese. Wherever merges lots of cultures, It must be a developed country. For instance The U.S.A. Canada and Australia. It excites me to go abroad to adapt myself from receiving different cultures. But now I know I have not enough capacity to bring about my dreams. I have a lot of things to do in which there is something not important for me. I'd like to get some advice from you..
> You know, your ideas are very precious for me. How about the possibilities and What's the correct way for high efficient.
> That some ideas puzzled me these days.
> Good luck with you and please convey my best wishes for your family.
> Yours Johnny. (cited in Kirkpatrick and Xu Zhichang, 2002:271).

Although this example has some errors and perhaps even some Chinglish, it nevertheless shows the features of China English discourse. The writer does not immediately make the request for advice. This is done only after a greeting and explanation for the request has been given (Kirkpatrick and Xu Zhichang, 2002:274).

This section dealt with the linguistic aspects of China English and demonstrated the emergence of a Chinese variety of English. It is fair to say English has taken on Chinese characteristics in certain areas. We can therefore think of China English "as a 'nativization' of the normative English used by Chinese people mainly in China, for international and intranational purposes. It is self-justifying as an English" (Jiang Yajun, 1995:52).

4.3 Appropriation of Functions: What the Chinese Do With English

As well as taking on new forms, English is also used to express a variety of ideas, concepts and opinions. These often differ from the cultural norms of Western societies. Kachru and Nelson (2001:17) refer to this phenomenon as bilingual creativity. There is

already a considerable amount of fictional and autobiographical literature written in English by Chinese writers that documents Chinese experience and uses many of the linguistic features already discussed (Zhang Hang, 2002). This section will look at several examples of Chinese people using English creatively. These examples of spoken and written English were drawn from my period of time living and working in China. Examples include classroom activities, conversations and notices in public places. Data were organised around three themes: talking back, questioning the authority of native speakers and having fun with English. Although somewhat anecdotal, the data presented here still shows evidence of the appropriation of English by the Chinese. They are, to use Tudor's (2001:3) phrase, "slices of the complex, dynamic reality of language teaching as lived out by flesh and blood people working together in one particular setting". In all cases I have tried to be as explicit as possible about the context of the event described and how I gathered the data. All names used here are pseudonyms.

4.3.1 Talking Back

According to some linguists, native English speakers and inner circle countries are in a dominant position over non-native speakers. Non-native speakers have to learn the language and ways of native speakers rather than the other way around. Non-native speakers are made to conform to the norms, standards and beliefs of native speakers, or so the argument goes. However, what often happens is that in the process of learning English, non-native speakers make the language their own. Native speakers and inner circle countries cannot control what non-native speakers do with the language. These examples taken from English language classes show the Chinese 'talking back' in the

sense that English was used to tease and make fun of native speakers and inner circle countries.

Story

At the beginning of class, I would often use story writing as a warm up exercise. Students were given part of a story and had to fill in the blanks with their own ideas to complete it. In one class students had to complete the following story:

Yesterday was very cold. I wanted to …. Unfortunately, I had to….. When I finally arrived…. I hate cold days.

When students were finished writing I would ask for volunteers to read their story to the class. One student wrote this story:

> Yesterday was very cold. I wanted to stay in the dorm. Unfortunately, I had to borrow some readings from the library. On the way to the library I met our writing teacher Jeff. He said "It's so cold today" then he passed away[2]. When I finally arrived at class Jeff was there and he said, "it's so cold today". We always hear the same words. I hate cold days.

She stood up and read this story to the class, even imitating my voice to say, "It's so cold today". Her story was greeted by laughter from the whole class. Not only was the story amusing but she was also using English to make fun of the teacher, a native speaker of English. This does not sit comfortably with ideas that native speakers are in a superior position to non-native speakers when it comes to using English.

[2] During the time I taught her, this student systematically used 'passed away' to mean 'went away' or 'walked away', possibly because she confused it with 'passed by'. However, this usage of the term did not seem to cause any confusion for the other students and if 'passed away' was used in this sense by enough people it could become part of China English's vocabulary.

Description

When teaching the students how to write a description, I asked them to choose a member of the class and write a brief description of him or her. Then students were asked to read their descriptions to the class so everyone could guess who was being described. One student chose to describe me and wrote the following:

> He is the tallest in our class. His hair is quite short and a little curly. He has many beards but he has shaved them off. He wears sports jumper and trousers which look quite active. Sometimes I think he is a little shy maybe because there are so many beauties in our class. I most like to hear him say "OK let's have a break".

This was read to the class and got a few laughs. As in the example above, this is an example of a non-native speaker using English to tease a native speaker.

A Story About the Main English Speaking Countries

This example is the most striking instance of Chinese people using English to make fun of native speakers. It happened in March 2003 when the Iraq war had just begun. In the second half of class I gave the students a sheet with four pictures on it (taken from Tarone and Yule, 1989:173). The pictures showed an old woman entering a shop, meeting a younger woman with a child in her trolley, the child reaching out for a bottle from the shelves and putting the bottle into the old woman's handbag. I gave the students the following instructions: "For this next activity we're going to work in groups. I'll give you a sheet with pictures on it. Look at the pictures and decide what happens in each picture. Then make a story about what happened. When you talk to your partner try to speak English". When the students were talking I wrote the homework on the board then

checked what each group was doing. After about ten or fifteen minutes, I got the class back together to write a story together on the board. The story turned out like this:

> One day, Mrs. Bush went shopping because her fridge was empty and she wanted to buy something. She met Mrs. Blair who was shopping with her little daughter. The two of them began talking about the Iraq war. The little girl noticed a bottle of gunpowder and put it in Mrs. Bush's handbag. Mrs. Bush took it to the White House. Mr. Bush wanted a drink to celebrate the anniversary of their wedding. He mistook the gunpowder for wine. Then he lit a cigarette. Now Mr. Bush has no nose. The police discovered that the little girl was actually a spy from Iraq.

While it could be said that I may have had some influence on how the story turned out by letting students call the characters Bush and Blair, everything came from the students. The pictures were simple line drawings and bore no resemblance to either Mrs. Bush or Mrs. Blair. I certainly did not expect the students to write such a story. In this story, students not only commented on current affairs but also used English to make fun of the leaders of the two main English speaking powers. From this example it does not seem as though Chinese people are dominated by the opinions of Western powers. Furthermore, it shows that English speaking countries, even if they are the world's superpower, cannot control what is said or done in English.

4.3.2 Questioning the Authority of Native Speakers

In many parts of the world, native varieties of English are usually the target variety for teaching and learning. This is the case in China where either British or American English is the target variety. Xu Zhichang (2002:231-3) found that most textbooks used in Chinese universities are based on either American or British English with little or no material from non-native speaking countries. Many job advertisements for English teachers also explicitly ask for native English speakers (see for example *www.teach-in-*

china.com) and anyone who has taught in China and many who have just visited have been asked about the correctness of English sentences or for advice about grammar. There is certainly the perception that native speakers have better linguistic knowledge than the Chinese. However, there is also another side to the story. In the case of China, native English speakers are not always seen as the authority. Students would at times challenge my knowledge and native speaker intuitions about English, as the following example shows.

Grammar Debate

During a class about essay writing, students were given a pamphlet advertising language courses at a university. The students were asked to read the pamphlet then use the information in it to write an essay going from specific examples to the main idea following this structure:

Example of languages

Example of level of classes

Example of class times

Main idea

I asked students to call out examples of languages, level of classes and class times, then we used these examples to write an essay together on the board. The essay looked like this:

> You can study Arabic, AUSLAN, Portuguese or Chinese. You can study at beginner or advanced levels. You can choose between summer semester, year or night classes.

At this point a student sitting in the front row raised concerns about the essay:

> Student: It should be choose among.
> Jeff: We can say choose between as well, both are OK.
> Student: According to Chinese grammar book it's wrong.
> Jeff: OK, we'll put among as well. [amends the essay to read choose between/among].

There was an unsatisfied silence in the room and I responded by saying, "My whole life I've said choose between, it sounds right to me". This also seemed not to satisfy the students so I said, "I wouldn't make a good student in China". Some of the students laughed at this and we moved on and completed the essay. This exchange shows that the native speaker was not seen as authoritative. My native speaker intuitions about the acceptability of "choose between" were considered to be less reliable or truthful than a Chinese grammar book. Secondly, the students were acting according to Chinese culture. Chinese beliefs about learning and teaching will be discussed in more detail later on, for this example it should be mentioned that according to Chinese cultural beliefs books are to be respected and what is written in a book is taken as being true. The students therefore acted according to their own culture rather than English speaking or Western culture. So, how can English be imposing a culture on people when they do not appear to act according to English speaking culture? How can native speakers be dominant if students believe Chinese grammar books over what a native speaker of English says?

4.3.3 Having Fun with English

The use of English also has a lighter side. Quite often the Chinese would use English to tell jokes, tease each other or relieve tension. Such uses do not sit comfortably with the idea that English is dominating non-native speakers.

Lunch with Students

During the break in my postgraduate language testing class some students asked if I could finish class five minutes early so that we could have lunch together. I agreed and we went to a small restaurant just outside the university grounds. There were eight students and two other foreigners, both Americans, who were friends with one of my students. At the start of the meal one of the students made a toast in English: "Drink with men, make love with women, you'll have more fun". He then went on to tell a story about a Soviet diplomat who made a mistake while proposing a toast. Instead of saying "Bottoms up" he had said "Up your bottoms". The students were also very keen to learn Australian slang related to drinking such as "skull" and "alcho". By the end of lunch the students were calling each other alcho and challenging each other to skull drinks. This event demonstrates that the Chinese can and do have fun with the English language. They seemed to genuinely enjoy using English to make jokes and tease each other. In doing so they were using English to express their own ideas and feelings, not those imposed by someone else.

Turning a Mistake into a Joke

This example is similar to the one above in that it features a Chinese person using English for amusement. James, a fellow English teacher, introduced me to his Chinese friend Jiang Lei. Jiang Lei has a joke stemming from a mistake he made in English. At one point in the past, he mixed up the words kitchen and chicken, saying chicken when he actual meant kitchen. Now he makes the mistake on purpose for the fun of it. One Saturday he invited James and I to dinner at his house. As he was going into the kitchen to make dinner he said, "I'm going to the chicken to make dinner". The next week Jiang Lei and I were invited to dinner at James's house. James's wife put a chicken dish on the table and said, "This one is chicken". Jiang Lei replied "It's kitchen". Obviously Jiang Lei was aware of the difference between the two words. He continued to make the mistake purely for fun. Once again, this does not seem like someone who is dominated by English.

English Brightens the Mood

The major event of 2003 in China was the SARS epidemic. Although not as badly affected as Beijing or Guangzhou, there were SARS cases in Changchun and even a few at Jilin University. Internet cafes and bars were closed, we were not allowed to have visitors in our apartments, classes were reduced, students were confined to the university campus and identification checks were carried out at the entrance to the university. This resulted in a generally dreary and at times fearful mood among the students and teachers.

However, some students found a way to relieve their worries by using English. One morning I walked into class to find this written on the blackboard:

> SARS means
> Smile and Remain Smile

I also saw other versions of the meaning of SARS. On a blackboard in the lobby of the foreign languages building, students wrote jokes about SARS in both Chinese and English. One suggested that SARS was a computer term meaning Start Abort Reboot Start. Another claimed SARS was advice for those who were in trouble with their girlfriends, Sorry And Repeat Sorry. This play on the acronym SARS would admittedly not be possible with Chinese characters yet it is still a creative use of English arising from a situation in China.

4.4 Chinese Methods of Learning and Teaching English

As the quote at the start of this chapter shows, learning another language involves learning culture. As we saw in Chapter Two, some have claimed that the teaching of English also means the teaching of cultural values associated with native English speaking countries. A related claim is that Western teaching methods are seen as superior to all others. The teaching of English then is seen as a kind of imperialism, it imposes a culture on learners and pushes a certain set of pedagogic techniques and ideas. Phillipson (2002:7) claims that "the mythology of the native speaker of English has been exported worldwide, to the point where a blind faith in the supposed attributes of the native speaker teacher species permeates much of the ideology of English learning in Asia". However, there is growing awareness that different countries have features that influence language learning and teaching. This section will look at the Chinese context in some

detail. It begins with an overview of trends in teaching methodology then analyses the literature to discover what aspects of the Chinese context prevent Western style teaching methods being used extensively and effectively. Chinese students' perceptions of Western teachers and methods are also discussed. I use studies conducted by other scholars, particularly Cortazzi and Jin Lixian (1996b) and Jin Lixian and Cortazzi (1998), in combination with my own fieldwork data to show that Western methods and teachers are not seen as unconditionally better or more advanced than Chinese ones. Indeed, at this stage, Chinese ways of doing things seem to prevail and there does not seem to be any great degree of Westernisation in the learning and teaching of English.

4.4.1 Why Language Teaching in China is Not the Same as in the West

As with policy on foreign language learning, language teaching methodology has gone through various changes and developments over the years. These too have been influenced by China's political situation and contact with the outside world. Table 4.1 shows the main trends in teaching methodology in China. When talking about methods it is important to remember that they are not absolute. In Chinese schools and universities there is now a variety of different methods and versions of methods in use, meaning that ELT is characterised by eclecticism rather than one single method (Yao Xiuqing, 1993:76). The aim here is to give an overview of the main trends.

Table 4.1 Teaching Methods Used in China

Time	**Teaching Method**	**Feature of Method/Example of Classroom Activity**
1950s	Grammar Translation	Presentation and explanation of a text and grammar rules by the teacher; translation of texts and sentences from the native language into the target language and vice versa; all teaching was done through the students' native language.
Early 1960s	Direct Method	Focus is on oral skills; all teaching and presentation is done in the target language as translation is held to interfere with the learning process; students were to learn through listening to and talking with the teacher; use of posters, pictures and photos to help students.
Mid-1960s	Audiolingual Method	Sees second language learning as habit formation; classroom activities consist of memorising dialogues and performing pattern drills in the hope that correct language will become automatic in learners.
1970s onwards	Communicative Approach	Views language as a system of meaning and a way of communication rather than just grammar; aims to develop students' communicative competence.

Source: compiled from data in Yao Xiuqing (1993) and Richards and Rodgers (1986)

Influenced by the Soviet Union, the Chinese adopted the Grammar Translation Method which dominated language teaching in the 1950s. The Grammar Translation Method, as the name implies, focuses almost exclusively on the grammar rules of a language. It sees the object of language learning as attaining the ability to read the literature of the language in question and benefit from the mental exercise of the learning process. The majority of time is devoted to reading and writing while very little or no attention is paid to speaking and listening. Classroom activities associated with the method include presentation and explanation of a text and grammar rules by the teacher and translation of texts and sentences from the native language into the target language and vice versa. All teaching was done through the students' native language (Richards and Rodgers, 1986:3-4). In China the Grammar Translation Method was adapted to include oral drill work in

the late 1950s and early 1960s but the essence remained the same, as Yao Xiuqing (1993:75) describes:

> A typical language class at the time was usually conducted in Chinese. The teacher started a new lesson with an oral summary of the text, and then read the text two or three times while the students listened. After that (s)he would explain it word by word, phrase by phrase, sentence by sentence, and passage by passage, both semantically and grammatically, with a lot of oral and written translation shared between the teacher and the students. Students were taught to read rather than to speak the language, though the teacher did, from time to time, raise questions on language or grammar points for the students to respond to. Recitation and retelling of the text was regarded as a useful means for measuring the learner's fluency. Terminal assessment was carried out through a written examination –oral work was excluded.

In the early 1960s, with Western literature on foreign language teaching coming to China, the Direct Method was extensively used. The Direct Method is based on the assumption that people can learn a second language in the same way as they learn their first language. The focus is on oral skills and all teaching and presentation is done in the target language as translation is held to interfere with the learning process. Students were to learn through listening to and talking with the teacher (Brandle, 1993:44-5; Richards and Rodgers, 1986:9-10). Chinese language teachers took these principles to heart and taught exclusively through English while using posters, pictures and photos to help students learn vocabulary (Yao Xiuqing, 1993:75). However, the absence of the learners' native language can cause problems as adults especially need explanations of the grammatical structure of the target language (Brandle, 1993:44-5). In light of this and other difficulties teachers had with this method, some use of Chinese was permitted in the classroom (Yao Xiuqing, 1993:75).

Despite the problems associated with it, the Direct Method did represent a turnaround in approaches to language teaching. This trend continued when, beginning in the mid-1960s, teachers started to experiment with the Audiolingual Method which also emphasises speaking and listening. The Audiolingual Method is based on the theory of behaviourism and sees second language learning as habit formation. Classroom activities consist of memorising dialogues and performing pattern drills in the hope that correct language will become automatic in learners (Richards and Rodgers, 1986:50-2). In China the Audiolingual Method was implemented as follows:

> In the actual classroom, the teacher tried to help the learner develop the 'new system of habits' first by extensive pattern drills through which the new sound system was learned in standard grammatical structures, later by extensive manipulation of these patterns, with the hope that the learner would eventually think in the target language, understand the native speaker when being spoken to, use the language in the same way the native speaker would do, and produce speech fluently and naturally without serious grammatical mistakes (Yao Xiuqing, 1993:76).

While grammar was still a part of the Audiolingual Method, it was still different from other approaches as "oral-aural activity was emphasised, pronunciation was stressed, while theoretical study of grammar rules was avoided" (Yao Xiuqing, 1993:76). The Audiolingual Method enjoyed great popularity in the 1960s and 1970s.

By far the dominant teaching method in the West is Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). This is the methodology taught in teacher training programs and thought to be the most effective. This is not to say that every school and teacher uses this method but it is in theory at least the prevailing approach to language teaching. With China's opening up to the outside world and the resumption of recruiting Western teachers in the late 1970s, communicative approaches to language teaching started to become known. The

communicative approach is also known as the Situational or Functional Approach in China (Cortazzi and Jin Lixian, 1996:64-5; Yao Xiuqing, 1993:75-6). Unlike the other methods discussed here, the communicative approach is not so much a method but rather an approach to or position on the nature of language and language learning and teaching (H. Brown, 1994:244-5). As such, "there is no single text or authority on it, nor any single model that is universally accepted as authoritative" (Richards and Rodgers, 1986:66). The essence of communicative approaches to language teaching is a view of language as a system of meaning and a way of communication rather than just grammar. Practitioners of the communicative approach aim to develop their students' communicative competence (Larsen-Freeman, 1986:131). Teachers in China began to experiment with this new method. Textbooks, TV programs and some courses based on communicative principles appeared in the 1980s and 1990s (Cortazzi and Jin Lixian, 1996a:67) and the method has been much discussed and debated by Chinese scholars with an entire issue of *Foreign Language World* devoted to the topic (Yi Xiubo, 2004:194-7).

From this survey of teaching methods, we can see that Western teaching methods have some presence in China. Despite Chinese teachers' and researchers' awareness of the need for further change and innovation in language teaching, ELT in China has not developed along the lines of the communicative teaching methods so popular in the West. To begin with, there are certain "objectively observable pragmatic features" (Tudor, 2001:18) of the Chinese context that inhibit this kind of teaching. In contrast to language teaching in the West, ELT in China is treated as an academic subject, determined by

strict, top down educational policies, still largely based on grammar, reading and translation, is teacher centred, product oriented and suffers from a lack of resources (Liu Dilin, 1998:5). We have already seen in earlier sections how ELT is structured in the education system, and teachers are very much expected to cover the curriculum set out by the government (Burnaby and Sun Yilin, 1989:229). Perhaps the most significant element is the national exams. These exams, while important to students and teachers alike as they determine entrance to university, job opportunities, funding for schools and universities and salary increases for teachers (Campbell and ZhaoYong, 1993; Cortazzi and Jin Lixian, 1996; Wang Yinquan, 1999), have become so pervasive that "classroom procedures have focused more on test-taking tricks than on cultivating students' communicative competence" (Wang Yinquan, 1999:48). Using different techniques "can expose English teachers to the danger of disadvantaging their students in the examination" (Hird, 1995:24) so any teacher who wants to implement a different methodology must show the institution, students and parents that the method they wish to try will prepare students properly for the national exams (Campbell and Zhao Yong, 1993:5; Hertling, 1996:A50). Tied in with this is that in China those who teach formal aspects of English, i.e. grammar, linguistic analysis and literature, have more prestige than teachers who aim to teach English for communicative purposes (Burnaby and Sun Yilin, 1989:223; Wang Yinquan, 1999:46). There is also a belief among Chinese English teachers that communicative methods are useful for teaching students who want to go to English speaking countries but have limited application for teaching those who want to work in China (Burnaby and Sun Yilin, 1989:226-7).

Many schools in China simply do not have the resources or appropriately qualified staff to teach communicatively. Demand for learning English is high but lately there has been a shortage of qualified teachers as many talented students seek employment in areas more lucrative than teaching:

> For those Chinese with ability in English language there are exciting opportunities in business, trade, interpreting, law and tourism. On the other hand, English teaching offers few attractions or rewards even for well-qualified teachers. The promotion system is still heavily based on seniority, and staffing procedures make movement between schools –both within regions and between rural and urban areas –cumbersome and difficult (Hird, 1995:25).

Even those studying at teacher training colleges do not want to pursue a career in teaching. A friend of mine working at a teacher training college in Changchun asked his class "Who wants to become a teacher?" One student out of the whole class raised his hand. Teachers too want to use their English language skills in areas other than teaching. In 1993 a survey of 4000 teachers in Beijing showed that 96% would quit teaching if they had the chance. The fact that in 1993 some 2922 teachers in Shanghai did change jobs bears out the results of the survey (Cortazzi and Jin Lixian, 1996b:180). This has meant that novice teachers with little training and experience are sometimes recruited. For example, those teaching College English generally have only an undergraduate degree in English language and literature and a lot have not had any formal teacher training (Zhu Huimin, 2003:39). Even if teachers are not novices, many have limited proficiency in English, making the use of methods based on interaction and involvement very difficult and even threatening (Burnaby and Sun Yilin, 1989:229; Cortazzi and Jin Lixian, 1996a:70; Wang Yinquan, 1999:46-9). Classes are also often quite large, sometimes with fifty or more students crowded into a small classroom. These conditions make it hard to conduct activities commensurate with the communicative approach (Miller and Aldred,

2000:12; Liu Dilin, 1996:5). Large student numbers and heavy teaching loads also make it difficult for schools and universities to run in-service teacher training courses. This further contributes to the continued use of traditional teaching methods (Zhu Huimin, 2003:39).

Beyond practical concerns, there are "the attitudes, beliefs, and behavioural expectations which participants bring with them to the classroom" (Tudor, 2001:19). In China there are cultural barriers to the implementation of communicative teaching. There are long held beliefs in China that language learning can only be accomplished through rote learning of the content of the textbook and what the teacher says, and that grammar analysis is the only way to proficiency (Campbell and Zhao Yong, 1993:5; Wang Yinquan, 1999:49). As Li Xiaoju (1984:7) puts it:

> In China, when people say you have 'learnt' an English lesson, they generally mean you have looked up and memorized every single word, and translated and analysed grammatically every sentence in it. If you can't show them your notebook of new words and grammar items, they say you have learnt nothing.

Coupled with previously mentioned concerns about prestige, many activities associated with the communicative approach seem more "like games than serious learning", making both teachers and students reluctant to use them (Burnaby and Sun Yilin, 1989:229). Another difficulty with using the communicative approach in China is traditional notions of teacher and learner roles. Teachers are seen as authority figures and experts (Judy Ho and Crookall, 1995:237). As Roskams (1999:81) puts it, "In Asian cultures, the teacher is traditionally expected to take charge and is seen as providing the source of the "learning"". In addition, Chinese culture places much importance on the concept of face. This means that many Chinese students do not feel comfortable challenging the teacher's

opinion or making mistakes (Judy Ho and Crookall, 1995:237). Considering these factors, it is easy to see why in many cases "English language classrooms in China continue to be dominated by a blend of the audiolingual method of instruction with its mind-numbing receptive drills and the traditional teacher-centered grammar translation method" (Campbell and Zhao Yong, 1993:4). This is not to make value judgements about teaching methods or to say that one method is better than any other. Western teaching methods may well have something to offer to ELT in China. Indeed, there are a number of initiatives underway to reform ELT, many of which aim at making ELT more communicative. For example, a middle school in Beijing is experimenting with the use of laptop computers in English classes (*China Daily*, 18/9/2000), the primary school attached to Qinghua University has began using visual aids to teach English to children (*China Daily*, 23/6/2000; *People's Daily Online*, 23/6/2000) and plans are underway for China's primary and secondary schools to start using textbooks which focus on speaking and listening within five years (*People's Daily Online*, 7/8/2002). The point here is that rather than being taken over by Western teaching methods, certain factors actually limit their use in China.

4.4.2 Chinese Students' Perceptions of Western Teachers and Methods

There is growing awareness that the learner's expectations, perceptions and way of doing things influences the language learning process. Everyone has his or her own learning style. According to Kinsella (2002:171):

> A *learning style* refers to an individual's natural, habitual, and preferred ways of absorbing, processing, and retaining new information and skills which persist regardless of teaching methods or content area. Everyone has a learning style, but each person's is as unique as a signature. Each signature appears to be influenced

> by both nature and nurture; it is a biological and developmental set of characteristics (italics original).

Although learning styles are highly individual, they are also influenced by culture. Nelson (2002:15) says that "the assumptions we make about how learning occurs are a result of our cultural programming". Each culture is likely to have its own set of such assumptions or a particular way of learning, called a culture of learning. Cortazzi and Jin Lixian (1996b:169) outline what is meant by this term:

> By the term 'culture of learning' we mean that much behaviour in language classrooms is set within taken-for-granted frameworks of expectations, attitudes, values and beliefs about what constitutes good learning, about how to teach or learn, whether and how to ask questions, what textbooks are for, and how language teaching relates to broader issues of the nature and purpose of education. In many classrooms both teachers and learners are unaware that such a culture of learning may be influencing the processes of teaching and learning.

A culture of learning is based on and reinforced by the cultural and educational practices of the country or group in question (Cortazzi and Jin Lixian, 1996b:169). In China there appears to be a strong culture of learning stemming from Chinese culture and values. There is general agreement that the features of the Chinese learning style are: emphasis on mastery of knowledge, following models, memorisation, respect for teachers and books (Jin Lixian and Cortazzi, 1998; Nelson, 2002). The main features of the Chinese learning style are summarised in Table 4.2. Chinese are inducted into this culture of learning from a very early age. It begins in kindergarten and primary school and the learning of Chinese, particularly the written script, plays a major part in the development of learning habits (Cortazzi and Jin Lixian, 1996b; Jin Lixian and Cortazzi, 1998).

Table 4.2 Key Features of the Chinese Culture of Learning

Key Feature	**Comment**
Learning is valued	Students should love learning, be curious, expect to learn.
Learning is respect	Filial piety is extended to teachers. They are respected experts, parents, friends. Teachers give care, concern, help.
Learning involves reciprocal relationships	Teachers and students have duties and responsibilities to each other; both learn academically and morally.
Learning is social	Self-development occurs in a collective setting. Key relationships should achieve harmony, not disagreement.
Learning means thinking and doing	Learning is incomplete without deep reflection, practical application; therefore students focus on products and results.
Learning is an apprenticeship	Learning involves long-term strategies of hard work now for later rewards. It involves following a 'master' in word and deed.
Learning is enlightenment	Learning involves memorisation and accumulation of knowledge. What is memorised is later understood for further development and used for creation.
Learning is memorising	Memorising (even by rote) is a concession to the collected past experience and authority of others. Memorising is part of progress.

Source: Jin Lixian and Cortazzi (1998:113)

In the classroom, this culture of learning can manifest itself in the following way:

> From early childhood, they have been trained to be obedient and learn by rote. They seldom interrupt their teachers, even when they want to ask questions or disagree, because the belief in obedience and respect for teachers is deeply rooted in their minds. Voicing their opinions in class is not encouraged. So they are usually passive recipients of knowledge. In addition, most students are very conscious of making errors in front of their classmates and teachers for fear of being laughed at and loosing face (Zhu Huimin, 2003:38).

Some of the features of the Chinese culture of learning have been touched on in the previous section. This section looks in more detail at the Chinese culture of learning and how this influences Chinese students' perceptions of Western teaching methods.

Before going any further, a word of caution about describing Chinese ways of learning and teaching is needed:

> China is a huge country with an enormous population, its people are diverse in their languages and cultures, and there are important differences between north

> and south, and between urban and rural settings. We do not expect all Chinese learners or teachers to be the same. Nevertheless, a strongly centralised education system has been operating for some time; *Putonghua* (Mandarin) has long been taught as the unifying national form of speech and Chinese written characters are the same all over China whatever dialect is spoken. Further, when Chinese think of themselves they have in mind a number of fairly clear characteristics including conformity with a certain culture of learning. Then again, China is undergoing a period of rapid change and among young people greater individuality is becoming manifest. So, in any portrayal of a Chinese culture of learning –or of Western ones –we might expect a complex picture of many variables some of which may be in tension or even contradictory. This seems to be in the nature of a culture of learning (Cortazzi and Jin Lixian, 1996b:174).

The Chinese culture of learning refers to a general approach within which there could be individual variation for any number of reasons (Shi Ling, 2003:380-1). Neither is a culture of learning totally set in stone. There is evidence that perceptions of ways of teaching and learning can change (see for example Miller and Aldred, 2000), that characteristics ascribed to a group may be overstated (see for example Littlewood, 2000) and that methodological problems exist in measuring and describing learning styles (Eliason, 2002). However, this culture of learning does seem to have a basis in reality. In fact, several empirical studies into Chinese learning styles have found similar results to the characteristics described in Table 4.2 (see for example Zhou Rong, 1996 and Tan Zhi, 1996).

Just as Chinese discourse patterns transfer to English, the Chinese culture of learning is also applied to learning English. We have already seen how this influences Chinese approaches to teaching, but it also influences how Chinese students perceive Western ways of teaching. Cortazzi and Jin Lixian (1996b) and Jin Lixian and Cortazzi (1998) have conducted research into Chinese students' perceptions of Western teachers. They

asked 105 university students who had had Western teachers to write an essay on the topic "Western Ways of Teaching and Chinese Ways of Learning". This research shows some interesting results. Western teachers are seen to have some advantages but there are other areas where they are considered less capable than their Chinese counterparts, as Table 4.3 shows.

Table 4.3: Chinese Students' Views About Teachers in China

Students' Comments About:	**Western Teachers**	**Chinese Teachers**
Thinking	Students benefit and learn from different thinking	Students don't expect to learn about culture
Writing	Students puzzled: teachers don't understand Ss writing	Teachers' judgement matches student expectations
Vocabulary	Simplify vocabulary	Systematic, effective in teaching
Oral Language	Friendly, helps to practice; encourage Ss	Give knowledge of language
Grammar	Don't stress grammar, don't know grammar, don't correct errors	Good knowledge, correct errors

Source: Jin Lixian and Cortazzi (1998:105)

According to Chinese students, Western teachers' strengths were their knowledge of the culture, history and customs of Western countries. Western teachers were also valued as models of pronunciation and for the opportunities they gave students to practice speaking. On the other hand, students felt that Western teachers were not as good at teaching vocabulary as Chinese teachers. Western teachers were seen as simplifying vocabulary and not teaching the vocabulary that students wanted to know. A similar story applies to grammar where Western teachers were seen as ignoring or not knowing English grammar. Writing was another area where students were not completely satisfied with Western teachers. Some students found that Western teachers did not understand what they considered a well-written text but gave high marks to what they thought was

poor writing. Obviously there were different views of what constitutes good writing, and Western teachers may not have properly explained these differences (Cortazzi and Jin Lixian, 1996b:192-4; Jin Lixian and Cortazzi, 1998:103-5). Table 4.4 shows some of the students' comments[3].

[3] I am aware that there are some errors and awkward expressions here but it would be inappropriate to correct them as all comments are in the students' own words.

Table 4.4 Chinese Students' Comments about Western Teachers

Area	**Students' Comments**
Vocabulary	1.Western teachers give us simple English, simple stories. I don't think they are worth learning. 2. Sometimes their classes are too easy for us. It is perhaps because they are innocent about how well we grasped English and what kind of knowledge we have already learned. 3. Western teachers think, "Simple is best" but students always think, "I can't use such common words". 4. Western teachers use the most simple words to communicate with Chinese students but Chinese teachers prefer to use difficult ones to show their high level of teaching ability. 5. Students have the impression they can get much more knowledge from Chinese teachers than from foreign teachers. 6. Western teachers are very welcome for oral classes but not for Intensive Reading.
Grammar	1. Western teachers don't pay attention to grammar. They don't care about our mistakes. 2. Usually their knowledge of grammar is poorer than most Chinese teachers of English. 3. Some Western teachers don't mind students' grammar mistakes but Chinese teachers correct them. 4.Western teachers should point out errors when they appear because students think it has been reviewed by a native speaker and they accept it.
Writing	1. Sometimes in our writing class we prepared a lot before the writing and thought it was a good essay but the grade given by a foreign teacher was very low and sometime I thought my essay was not very well written but I got quite a high mark. This really puzzles us. Maybe there is some differences between our minds. 2. I write composition, I organize it carefully and logically but the foreign teacher comments that he can't understand it. Why? We have different ways of thinking. But an essay should be related to your own ideas and ways of thinking. 3. Especially in writing classes I really don't think a Western teacher is better than a Chinese teacher.

Source: compiled from data in Cortazzi and Jin Lixian (1996b:193-4)

The perception of Western teachers as good for oral classes and cultural knowledge is in line with my experience teaching English in China. Most foreign teachers at Jilin University were teaching oral classes rather than writing or reading. The Chinese teachers

also handled the important test preparation classes. I did teach writing classes, much to the surprise of some students. Having a foreign teacher for writing was out of the ordinary and some felt a Chinese teacher would be more suited to the job. After one class a student said to me:

> I didn't expect a foreigner to teach writing. I know foreigners can teach us speaking but I was surprised that the college hired a foreigner to teach writing.

Western teachers too felt that they were not always taken seriously as teachers. A British teacher I knew summed up his views on teaching in China:

> An Irish friend of mine put it really well. He said we're not teachers we're entertainers. They [Chinese students] don't want to learn from us, they just want us to play guitar and sing.

A Canadian teacher working at Jilin University conveyed similar sentiments:

> We're not seen as teachers. We're entertainers. The idea is that the college puts a Westerner in front of the class and hopefully the students pick up something from listening to us.

Once again, no one would claim that Western teachers have nothing to offer Chinese students or that ELT in China would not benefit from having Western teachers. The point has been to show that China is not at the mercy of Westerners. Although based on a fairly small amount of data, this section shows that Western teachers and their methods are not necessarily seen as superior.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has examined how the Chinese make use of English. It has shown a trend towards indigenisation in terms of form and function. China English has distinctly

Chinese features in pronunciation, vocabulary, syntax and discourse patterns. Furthermore, in the process of learning English the Chinese have to some extent made the language their own. Through English they expressed their hopes, told amusing stories and on occasions teased native speakers and English speaking countries. This chapter has also shown that English is taught and learnt within a Chinese cultural context. This context may not always be conducive to second language acquisition but it does not appear to be dominated by Western ways of doing things. "Cultural Chineseness" has found its way not just into the language itself but also into how it is learnt and used.

What does this mean for English in China? Most scholars agree that China English is still in the fairly early stages of development. In a survey of 1251 students at Three Gorges University, Hu Xiaoqiong (2004:30-1) found only 15.5% of students had heard of China English and only a slightly higher portion, 22.6%, thought China English and Chinglish were different. This suggests that the Chinese population may still be largely unaware of the emerging variety of English. At the same time, many have also predicted an increase in its use and status. The numbers alone are powerful evidence. The many millions of Chinese people learning English will presumably contribute to the development and use of China English. Many of these learners are likely to use English with other non-native speakers which would mean further development and reinforcement of China English rather than a native variety (Kirkpatrick, 2002:214; Kirkpatrick and Xu Zhichang, 2002:278). China's increasing presence and role in the world will also help China English, as Jiang Yajun (2003:7) states:

> The Chinese variety of English is no doubt becoming an important component of world Englishes as China gets more and more involved in the process of economic and cultural globalization.

Not only will China's role in the world help develop China English but it may also influence how English is used by others, including native speakers. Anyone wanting to have relations with China will have to take into account how the Chinese use English and at least to some extent accommodate this (Kirkpatrick and Xu Zhichang, 2002:278). Teaching methods are also likely to continue to develop. If English is going to continue to benefit China and if the Chinese are to play a role in the future of English, more work is needed to ensure that ELT is as successful as possible. This does not necessarily mean that Western approaches will take over. One of the more interesting new developments is *Crazy English*, started by Li Yang. According to a statement made on his website, Li Yang's personal goals are "stimulating patriotism, advocating national spirits, conquering English and revitalizing China" (Abley, 2003:91) and as this suggests, *Crazy English* is a particularly Chinese approach to teaching that does not seem to be derived from any Western approach. More of a performance than a language class, Li Yang lectures to large crowds of up to 5000 in a hall or stadium. He teaches pronunciation through the use of phonetic symbols and hand gestures and then has the audience shout phrases such as "I love losing face. I welcome failure" and "Make the voice of China be widely heard all over the world" (Abley, 2003:91; *Weekend Australian*, 2/6/01; see also Eva Lai, 2001 for an analysis of this and other new ELT trends in China).

From what we have seen in this chapter, it seems the Chinese have their own ideas about what methods work for them and are capable of evaluating and adapting Western

techniques. English may well be gaining ground in China –increasing its status, functions and attracting more learners –but the result is a uniquely Chinese form of English. English is most definitely in China but China is also in English.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE CHINESE LANGUAGE IN CHINA AND THE WORLD

> *Chinese is the native language of approximately a billion people distributed over vast geographical areas of the world. It is the official language of mainland China and Taiwan. It is one of the two official languages in Hong Kong, where ethnic Chinese constitute more than 95 per cent of the local population. It is one of the four official languages of Singapore where about 75 per cent of population [sic] are ethnic Chinese. It is also reasonably maintained by about 30 million Chinese scattered in other parts of the world (Chen Ping, 1999:1).*
>
> *With China's rapid development, huge market potential and increasing influence in the international community, Chinese language has become more and more popular and thus turned into a language with strong popularization momentum in the world. There are 30 million people learning Chinese worldwide and over 2,300 institutes of higher learning in 85 countries teaching Chinese. Chinese Proficiency Test for foreigners (HSK) has been taken 550,000 person-times and 80,000 people have come to China for Chinese learning (People's Daily Online, 24/12/2003).*

5.1 Introduction

Niu Qiang and Wolff (2003) see China's push to learn English as having disastrous consequences for the Chinese language and culture. According to them, Chinese language and culture are being neglected and China will be overrun by English with little chance of going back. They ask:

> Why has China apparently forsaken Mandarin for English when 25% of the world's population already speaks Mandarin, and Mandarin is one of the six working languages of the United Nations? Why does China so meekly submit to the English-based new world order emanating out of Washington, D.C., when

> 25% of the world's population looks to Beijing for its leadership? Does China not yet realize the reality that the emerging China has the immediate clout to demand that those desiring to do business in China or with China should learn Mandarin, rather than except 1.3 billion Chinese to learn English?
>
> If China is to maintain its national sovereignty, must it not also maintain the use of Mandarin as its vehicle of international communication with the rest of the world? (Niu Qiang and Wolff, 2003:11).

Similar sentiments were expressed by Chinese writers at a conference organised by Tongji University to discuss the topic "Literature and Humanistic Care". The common theme was that the Chinese people should not neglect their own language in favour of English. In the words of writer Kuang-Chung Yu, "English, after all, is only a tool to know the world…However, Chinese is the root where we grow from, and Chinese is the origin for our literature" (quoted in *People's Daily Online*, 27/5/2004). In a similar vein, a campaign to revive Chinese poetry was launched in July 2004 in Hubei's Zigui, the hometown of famous Chinese poet Qu Yuan. The campaign is funded by the local government and the China Poetry Society and aims to establish 10 poetry writing centers, 1000 county level poetry institutes and encourage the development of 10 000 young poets. Although there is no mention of English, the article does lament that "over the past two decades, literature, especially poetry, tended to fade away from Chinese people's cultural life" (*People's Daily Online*, 6/7/2004). This paints a rather gloomy picture of China and Chinese. The previous chapter has already shown how Chinese culture is not being lost in China's efforts to learn English. This chapter focuses on the Chinese language and argues that Chinese is not receding in the face of the spread of English. Instead, Chinese is expanding both within China and the world to the point where it may even challenge English for global language status in the long-term future. After some preliminary discussion of the Chinese language itself, this chapter looks at the use of

Chinese, particularly the spread of *putonghua*, inside China then looks at the international situation of Chinese. It describes where Chinese is used and the growing interest in learning the language in many parts of the world, including the West.

5.2 Defining Chinese

Over 1 billion people speak Chinese (Charles Li and Thompson, 1990:83; Lyovin, 1997:127). However, talking about Chinese is not as straightforward as one might expect. As Norman (1988:1) points out, "few language names are as all-encompassing as that of Chinese". The term Chinese is used to refer to not only the language but also the Chinese people and a great many other things (DeFrancis, 1984:38-9; McArthur, 2002:354-5). Even when the term is used in relation to the language only there may still be some confusion. Chinese refers to both the spoken and written language as well as all developmental stages of the language from earliest times through to the present and all of its stylistic variants such as the literary language or the language of poems (DeFrancis, 1984:39-40; Norman, 1988:1). In addition, the Chinese language is known by various names. Norman (1988:136-8) for example lists seven different names that have been or still are used to refer to Chinese.

From a linguistic point of view, Chinese belongs to the Sinitic branch of the Sino-Tibetan family. Chinese is very diverse and it has a number of varieties. The Chinese classification system has three levels: *yuyan*, *fangyan* and *tuyu*. The first of these levels, *yuyan*, means language in the sense of Chinese being a distinct language from English. The term *fangyan* is often translated as dialect. However, the term literally means

regional speech and is used to refer to the major subdivisions within a language. The last term literally means place language and refers to a local vernacular or form of speech (Bradley, 1992:305; DeFrancis, 1984:57). Finding English equivalents to these terms can cause confusion (DeFrancis, 1984:57). Here I follow the terminology used by Chen Ping (1999:3). According to this system, Chinese can be divided into dialect groups. Within each group there are subgroups or sub-dialects, vernaculars and accents. The Mandarin group for example has four subgroups. Each of these subgroups consists of a number of vernaculars and accents.

In 1937, Li Fangkuei put forward the first systematic classification of Chinese dialects. This classification was widely accepted and although it has since been modified it was very influential on dialect research in China (Norman, 1988:181)[1]. Today it is generally agreed that there are seven dialect groups: Mandarin, Wu, Xiang, Yue, Kejia, Gan and Min (Lyovin, 1997:126-30; Norman, 1988:181)[2]. Nearly all of these dialect groups descend from Middle Chinese (AD 420-900), the one exception is the Min group which has features from Old Chinese (Lin Hua, 2001:2-3). The seven dialect groups, along with their subgroups, distribution and approximate number of speakers are shown in Table 5.1. A description of the linguistic features of these dialects can be found in Norman (1988).

[1] Li Fangkuei divided the dialects into nine groups. Three of these groups were actually subgroups of Mandarin and one was a group of dialects that could not be assigned to other groups with any certainty (Norman, 1988:181).
[2] Although most linguists adhere to this classification, some see Xiang and Gan "as transitional from Mandarin" (Bradley, 1992:305).

Table 5.1 Classification and Distribution of Chinese Dialect Groups

Dialect Group	**Subgroups and Distribution**	**Approximate Number of Speakers**
Mandarin (*Guanhua*)	1. Northern Hebei, Henan, Shandong, Northern Anhui, Northeastern provinces, parts of Inner Mongolia 2. Northwestern Shanxi, Shaanxi, Gansu, Qinghai, Ningxia, parts of Inner Mongolia 3. Southwestern Sichuan, Yunnan, Guizhou, Northwest Guangxi, Hubei, Northwest Hunan 4. Eastern or Jiang-Huai Central Anhui, Jiangsu north of the Yangtze, Nanjing	70% of the population of China
Wu (*Wuyu*)	1. Northern Jiangsu south of the Yangtze 2. Southern Zhejiang	7.5% of the population of China
Xiang (*Xiangyu*)	Often divided into Old Xiang and New Xiang. Spoken in Hunan	3.5% of the population of China
Yue (*Yueyu*)	Spoken in Guangdong, Eastern Guangxi, along the southern coast (including Hong Kong and Macao) and parts of the interior	4.5% of the population of China
Kejia (*Kejiahua*)	Spoken in parts of south China including Guangdong, Fujian, Guangxi, Jiangxi and Taiwan	2.5% of the population of China
Gan (*Ganyu*)	Spoken in Jiangxi and southeast corner of Hubei	2% of the population of China
Min (*Minyu*)	1. Western Western Fujian 2. Eastern *1. Northern* Northeastern Fujian *2. Southern* Southern Fujian, parts of Guangdong, Taiwan, Hainan	Northern Min has 1.2% of the population of China, Southern Min has 2.5% of the population of China

Source: compiled from data in Lyovin (1997:127-30) and Norman (1988:190-239)

As can be seen from the Table, the Mandarin group is by far the largest in terms of number of speakers and area covered. This group derives its name from the English translation of the term *guanhua*, meaning language of the officials (Charles Li and Thompson, 1990:83). Within this group, Northern Mandarin has the most speakers and is the most widespread (Moser, 1985:55). The Northern Mandarin dialect is also the most important politically. China's official language, *putonghua*, is based on the Beijing dialect and is used for all official purposes. Southwestern Mandarin is the next most widely used form of Mandarin. This subgroup covers the southwestern provinces of Sichuan, Yunnan, Guizhou and part of Guangxi as well as some areas of Hubei and Hunan (Moser, 1985:86). Eastern Mandarin is sometimes referred to as Jiang-Huai. This term is used because most of the area in which Eastern Mandarin is spoken is between the Yangtze River, called Changjiang in Chinese, and the Huai River (Moser, 1985:102). Northwestern Mandarin has not been as thoroughly studied as the other subgroups of Mandarin. It does have its own distinctive features in terms of vocabulary and phonology but speakers of Northern Mandarin and Northwestern Mandarin generally have little difficulty understanding each other (Moser, 1989:72-4).

After Mandarin, Yue is the next most important group. This group is often referred to as Cantonese. Technically however, Cantonese should only be used as the name of the Guangzhou dialect rather than for this dialect group as a whole (Moser, 1985:204; Norman, 1988:214). Cantonese is particularly strong in the south where it has been gaining ground against other dialects in recent years. Cantonese is also the dialect spoken by many overseas Chinese (Chen Ping, 1999:51). The Wu dialects are spoken in eastern

China. The main difference between Northern and Southern Wu is that Southern Wu still has some of the uniquely Wu vocabulary. Northern Wu has largely lost this feature due to the influence of Mandarin dialects spoken in close proximity to Wu areas (Lyovin, 1997:128). A similar criteria is used for dividing the Xiang group. Old Xiang maintains special Xiang characteristics and New Xiang does not, once again due to the influence of Mandarin (Lyovin, 1997:128). Not surprisingly, those who speak New Xiang find it relatively easy to learn Standard Chinese (Moser, 1985:131). The word Xiang is the literary term for Hunan Province where the vast majority of Xiang speakers live (Moser, 1985:138). Kejia is also known as Hakka. This word derives from the Cantonese pronunciation of the word for guest or stranger (Norman, 1988:221). The Hakka people are descendants of people who migrated to southern China from the north. In the south these people usually lived in mountainous areas for protection and out of a desire to preserve their own culture (Lin Hua, 2001:17-8). Today, the Hakka live in various parts of south China and could well be classified as a separate nationality although no such recognition has been granted by the authorities (Mackerras, 2003a:2-3). The Gan dialects are spoken by a small percentage of the population in Jiangxi and Hubei Provinces. Dialects belonging to this group tend to have six or seven tones (Norman, 1988:205). Like Xiang, the name of this dialect group derives from the literary term for Jiangxi Province where most Gan speakers are found (Moser, 1985:120). The Min dialects are the most distinctive and recognisable group after Mandarin. Within the Min group there are substantial differences between the individual dialects (Norman, 1988:228). Min is often referred to as Fukienese or Hokkien in Western countries. The Min group is usually divided into two groups, Northern Min (Minbei) and Southern Min (Minnan). This

classification is by no means universal and some linguists have proposed the group should be divided into Eastern and Western Min (Lin Hua, 2001:14). As mentioned earlier, Min still retains some features from Old Chinese. This is because for a long period of time Min areas were isolated and had little contact with speakers of other Chinese varieties (Lin Hua, 2001:16). The Min dialects are spoken in the south, some parts of the east coast, in Taiwan and in Hainan Province (Lyovin, 1997:129).

While all of the varieties of Chinese are often described as dialects of the same language, the differences between them should not be underestimated. Differences exist both within and across dialect groups. The differences within the Mandarin group for example are similar to those between British and Australian English (DeFrancis, 1984:39) and Norman (1988:187) likens the differences between the dialect groups to the differences between the various Romance languages. The most significant differences are in phonology and lexicon. There are also some differences in grammar but these are not as great as the differences in the other two areas (Erbaugh, 1995:80). The biggest differences are between the Mandarin and Min dialects (Lyovin, 1997:129). Geographically, the areas of greatest diversity are along the coast and in southern China. On the other hand, in much of central and northern China where Mandarin dialects are spoken, the differences are not so great as to cause mutual unintelligibility (Lyovin, 1997:129-30). According to Norman (1988:187-8), “a person from Harbin in northern Manchuria has little difficulty understanding a native of Kunming some 3,200 kilometers away”. Chinese linguists have always viewed the different dialect groups as belonging to the same language. In other words, Chinese is thought of as a unified language (Lin Hua,

2001:5). Of course, many linguists, especially those outside of China, consider the dialect groups to be different languages. Suggestions that China does not have a unified language have been known to cause offense (Erbaugh, 1995:81) and the idea that the various dialect groups are actually different languages is rejected. There are certainly grounds for seeing Chinese as a unified language because, despite the significant differences between the dialects, there are some commonalities. First and foremost is the written script. The written script is the same all over China and no matter what dialect one speaks the written script can be understood. The importance of the writing system to seeing Chinese as a single language is well explained by Lin Hua (2001:6) who states "although it may be true that the unique non-phonetic, logographic nature of the Chinese writing system is somewhat responsible for the sharing capability, it would be unthinkable to have a text written in English in a logographic writing system and be readily read by a German". This leads on to another reason why Chinese is considered to be a single language: the belief among the Chinese that they have a common and unified culture (Norman, 1988:1-2). Zou Jiayan and You Rujie (2001:262) describe claims that the dialects are different languages as absurd. While acknowledging that there are significant differences on a linguistic level, they argue that Chinese is a unified language because China has a common script and a common culture. In addition, China is a united country, unlike Europe which is made up of several nation states. The various forms of Chinese therefore cannot be treated as separate languages. Even on a linguistic level there is a case for treating Chinese as one language. As Lin Hua (2001:6) points out, while there are significant phonological difference between the various groups "they share more or less the same word structures and fairly identical syntactic ones". There is

certainly much truth in this argument but it also presents a difficult situation for talking about Chinese, as DeFrancis (1984:56) explains:

> We are thus confronted by a terminological dilemma. To call Chinese a single language composed of dialects with varying degrees of difference is to mislead by minimizing disparities that […] are as great as those between English and Dutch. To call Chinese a family of languages is to suggest extralinguistic differences that in fact do not exist and to overlook the unique linguistic situation that exists in China.

The position taken here follows that of Lin Hua (2001) who states "it seems therefore that considering all the factors, the Chinese language is best left to be regarded as one with dialects rather than as several individual languages". In discussing the use of Chinese in China and the world, this chapter tries to give some sense of the diversity of Chinese. Sometimes the Chinese referred to is the standard and sometimes it is one of the dialects. The variety of Chinese being discussed is made clear where necessary. However, considering the difficulties discussed above, some of the complexities of the situation are inevitably lost.

5.3 Promotion and Spread of *Putonghua* Within China

China has seen some of the biggest language planning projects in the world. There are five main goals of language planning in China:

> 1. To standardize and popularize the lingua franca of China
> 2. To write in vernacular style instead of the traditional classical style
> 3. To design and promote a system of Chinese phonetic symbols
> 4. To simplify the Chinese characters
> 5. To design, and if needed, improve writing systems for minority nationalities (Zhou Youguang, 2001:9).

The first of these goals refers to the development and promotion of China's standard language, *putonghua*. There has been a major push to promote *putonghua* within China in the last 50 years or so (Barnes, 1983; Vivian Hsu, 1979). In its scale and scope the promotion of *putonghua* rivals the push to learn English. As Bradley (1992:311) puts it:

> The most major change since 1949, however, is the effective dissemination of *putonghua* and spread of literacy throughout the PRC since the late 1950s. All education for Han Chinese and most education for national minorities is in the standard language, using centrally-prepared textbooks. Adult literacy campaigns have also been widespread. Thus, nearly all people in China can now understand *putonghua*, and most actively speak it in at least some domains.

This section explores the promotion and use of *putonghua* in China in order to show that Chinese is not only safe within China but also that in its standard form it has actually spread. Drawing on the major works on the Chinese language, it describes the development of *putonghua*, how it has been promoted and the results of this promotion.

5.3.1 Definition and Background of *Putonghua*

As mentioned above much effort has gone into promoting *putonghua* within the last half century. Before looking at the promotion of *putonghua*, some background to the development of standard Chinese and specifically *putonghua* is necessary. *Putonghua* is China's standard language and the term literally means common speech. *Putonghua* is also sometimes referred to as Mandarin or Modern Standard Chinese. In its role as the standard language, *putonghua* is "the dialect designated by the government as the official language for all official media" (Gao Mobo, 2000:182). The existence of a standard Chinese is a fairly recent phenomenon. In imperial times, written communication was largely done in literary Chinese while officials communicated orally in *guanhua*. *Guanhua* was based on the Beijing dialect and was influenced by the native dialect of

individual speakers. *Guanhua* was never codified or formally adopted as the official language. It came about due to the necessity of communication (Norman, 1988:133). It was only in the 20th century that efforts were made to develop "a uniform and officially sanctioned national standard language, both as a tool of education and administration and as a symbol of national unity" (Norman, 1988:133)[3]. The development of a standard language has its roots in the mid-19th century. As with China's efforts to acquire foreign language skills, reform of the Chinese language was seen as part of the effort to modernise and develop the country in the face of defeats imposed by Western powers (Chen Ping, 1999:13-4). The first efforts at developing a standard happened in the early years of the 20th century. As Norman (1988:133) points out, at this time the vast majority of Chinese people were unable to read or write and could only use their native dialects. In response to this situation, the Ministry of Education launched a campaign to promote *guanhua* in schools in 1909. The following year the name was changed to *guoyu*, meaning national language. *Guoyu* was to be used for the purposes of education and administration while the traditional literary language known as *wenyan* was still to be used for literature (Norman, 1988:134). Later on, prominent writers such as Hu Shi and Chen Duxiu argued for *wenyan* to be replaced by *baihua*, a vernacular literary language. This soon happened and it was generally accepted that *guoyu* would be the standard form of the spoken language and *baihua* would be the basis for the literary language (Gao Mobo, 2000:34-5; Norman, 1988:134).

[3] While there was no standard as such before the 20th century, lingua francas existed throughout Chinese history as people speaking different dialects and languages came into contact with each other. See Chen Ping (1999:7-10) for details of these early lingua francas.

However, problems still remained. Although *guoyu* was to be the standard spoken language, no uniform pronunciation existed. The Ministry of Education set up the Commission for Unifying Reading Pronunciation, which met in 1913 to try to resolve this issue. At the conference it was decided that *guoyu* should have features from many dialects rather than being based on just one. In 1919 the *Guoyu zidian* or Dictionary of National Pronunciation was published to show how Chinese should be pronounced. This proposal was criticised on the basis that it was simply not practical and the standard it suggested was artificial (Chen Ping, 1999:16-9; Norman, 1988:134-5). It was, in the words of Zhou Youguang (2001:10), "different from all the dialects, not living on the lips of any person in China". In response, many suggested that standard Chinese should be based on Beijing pronunciation. This suggestion eventually won out with the publication of *Guoyu changyong zihui* (A Glossary of Frequently Used Characters in National Pronunciation), which used Beijing pronunciation (Chen Ping, 1999:20: Norman, 1988:135).

After the Communists came to power in 1949 the issue of standard Chinese again caused debate and controversy. In October 1955 two conferences were held in Beijing, the *Quanguo Wenzi Gaige Huiyi* or National Conference on Script Reform and *Xiandai Hanyu Guifanhua Xueshu Huiyi*, the Symposium on the Standardisation of Modern Chinese. The purpose of these conferences was to come up with a scheme for phonetic writing of Chinese, decide how characters should be simplified and decide on a standard form of both written and spoken Chinese (Chen Ping, 1999:23-4). There were different opinions on what standard Chinese should be but an agreement was eventually reached

that the standard would be based on the Beijing dialect. The standard language was to be called *putonghua* (Chen Ping, 1999:24). The term *putonghua* was used in the early 1930s by Qu Qiubai, the CCP's foremost literary theorist, who wanted to replace characters with Roman script. The standard he developed for this purpose was called *putonghua* because Qu thought that *guoyu* represented the upper class rather than the majority of Chinese people (Norman, 1988:135). The 1955 conferences decided to adopt the term *putonghua* because *guoyu* "sounds somewhat Han-chauvinistic in taking the language of one ethnic group, the Han, as the national language, ignoring the fact that there are more than fifty officially recognized ethnic groups in China, which speak over eighty different languages" (Chen Ping, 1999:25). In 1956 a definition of *putonghua* was set out by the government. This definition states that:

> *Putonghua* is the standard form of Modern Chinese with the Beijing phonological system as its norm of pronunciation, and Northern dialects as its base dialect, and looking to exemplary modern works in *baihua* 'vernacular literary language' for its grammatical norms (Chen Ping, 1999:24).

While it is based on the Beijing dialect, there is still a difference between *putonghua* and the Beijing dialect. The Beijing dialect has many local features, especially in pronunciation and vocabulary (Moser, 1985:54). With a definition of standard Chinese in place, the government set about promoting *putonghua*. The purposes, procedures and results of *putonghua* promotion are discussed in the following section.

5.3.2 Promotion of *Putonghua*

As we have seen, in comparison to earlier periods the current government has been far more involved with language issues (Norman, 1988:253). According to Chen Ping (1999:26):

> In many respects, the *putonghua* promotional campaign was not unlike other mass campaigns successfully launched in China since 1949. They typically started with considerable fanfare, with senior state leaders calling for popular support and participation, national conferences convened to address the main issues and set the agenda, and mass media and government bureaucracies all tuned up to promote the implementation of the agenda, etc. All these activities combined often led to a situation in which a message was quickly spread throughout the land, and a large portion of the population was mobilized into participation.

Putonghua has been promoted for two reasons. The first is to make communication between speakers of different dialects and different regions of China possible. *Putonghua* is also seen as an aid in the development and implementation of a phonetic writing system (Vivian Hsu, 1979:65) although nowadays the focus has shifted away from replacing characters with a phonetic script and the idea is no longer seriously pursued (Gao Mobo, 2000:42). Promotion of *putonghua* began in the 1950s. The Central Working Committee on Promotion of *Putonghua* was in charge of the campaign at the national level and there were also sub-committees in the provinces and major cities whose task was to implement the policies of the government (Chen Ping, 1999:25). Policy on the promotion of *putonghua* was set out in two documents, the Directives of the State Council Regarding the Promotion of the Common Language, issued on 6th February 1956 and the Directives of the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China Regarding the Promotion of the Common Language in Elementary, Middle and Normal Schools, issued on 17th November 1955 (Barnes, 1983:295). These policies both relate to

the promotion of *putonghua* but each has a different focus. The State Council Directives focused on the use of *putonghua* in society as a whole. This policy outlined the role various branches of the government would play in the promotion of *putonghua* and stipulated that certain groups devise plans for the use of *putonghua* in their activities. Some of the groups mentioned in the policy were the military, the youth corps, newspapers, news agencies, public health agencies and transport, communications and entertainment organisations. An exception was made for the minority nationalities who did not have to fulfil the requirements set out in this policy[4] (Barnes, 1983:295). The Ministry of Education Directives were more specific. They focused on the use of *putonghua* in the education system. The policy stipulated that from the beginning of the 1956 school year *putonghua* was to be the language of instruction in Chinese language and literature classes in grades one through seven. The policy also stated that all subjects were to use *putonghua* as the medium of instruction within two years (Barnes, 1983:296). According to Vivian Hsu (1979:67-8), Chinese linguists believe that the promotion of *putonghua* must proceed on the basis of three principles: *dali tichang*, meaning to promote with great effort, targets people who are able to speak *putonghua* but do not always do so, *zhongdian tuixing* or to promote in strategic areas, is the idea that *putonghua* should be used in areas such as education and communications, and finally the principle of *zhubu puji*, meaning to popularise step by step.

In the 1950s there was certainly much activity surrounding the promotion of *putonghua*. However, by the end of the decade attention had shifted to other issues and as a consequence in the 1960s and 1970s not much was done to promote *putonghua*. In the

[4] The use of Chinese among China's minority nationalities is discussed separately in Chapter Six.

1980s efforts to promote *putonghua* were renewed. The 1982 Constitution included a clause stipulating that *putonghua* be promoted throughout China (Chen Ping, 1999:26). Shortly afterwards, the National Conference on Language and Script, held in Beijing in 1986, set goals regarding the use of *putonghua*. These goals, which were supposed to be achieved by the end of the 20th century, are:

> 1. *putonghua* is to become the language of instruction in all schools
> 2. *putonghua* is to become the working language in government at all levels
> 3. *putonghua* is to be the language used in radio and television broadcasting and in cinemas and theatres
> 4. *putonghua* is to become the lingua franca among speakers of various local dialects (cited in Chen Ping, 1999:27).

The promotion of *putonghua* in China, despite its somewhat sporadic nature, has achieved some impressive results. The next section explores the outcomes of the *putonghua* promotion campaign.

5.3.3 Results of *Putonghua* Promotion

Overall, the promotion of *putonghua* has been successful. Much of the Chinese population can speak *putonghua* in addition to their native dialect. As Chen Ping (1999:53) points out, the ability to speak *putonghua* as well as another dialect of Chinese "has accelerated since the beginning of the twentieth century, in which time promotion of Modern Standard Chinese has spread the standard code to all corners of the land, in particular the Southern dialect areas, on a scale unparalleled in history". However, this does not mean that the results of *putonghua* promotion have been the same everywhere. The use of *putonghua* depends on a number of factors. Chen Ping (1999:28-30) lists four factors that determine the outcome of *putonghua* promotion: the presence of another

dialect with enough prestige to function as a lingua franca, degree of linguistic diversity, the local economy and levels of education. In some cases *putonghua* has not become the language of communication between speakers of different dialects because another dialect already fills that role. In Guangdong Province and surrounding areas, Cantonese has this function and the Shanghai and Suzhou dialects have a similar role in Wu speaking areas (Chen Ping, 1999:28-9). *Putonghua* has been most successful in areas of great linguistic diversity because in areas that lack many different mutually unintelligible dialects there is less need for people to acquire *putonghua* in order to communicate. Another factor that influences the use of *putonghua* is the local economy and degree of contact with people from outside the immediate area. *Putonghua* has done better in places with thriving economies and mobile populations than it is has in isolated areas. Since most people learn *putonghua* in schools, the higher the level of education in a particular area the more likely it is that *putonghua* will be used (Chen Ping, 1999:29-30). While there are differences and certainly some areas where little *putonghua* is spoken, the overall situation is an increase in the use of *putonghua*. It should be noted however that *putonghua* is rarely if ever spoken in its pure form. Usually there is some influence from the speaker's native dialect so that the *putonghua* actually spoken is somewhere between the codified version and the local dialect (Norman, 1988:247-8). Table 5.2 shows the increase in the percentage of China's population who were able to speak and understand *putonghua* in the mid 1980s.

Table 5.2 Percentage of Population Able to Speak and Understand *Putonghua*

Comprehension	**Early 1950s**	**1984**
Mandarin areas	54	91
Other dialect areas	11	71
Whole country	41	90
Speaking	**Early 1950s**	**1984**
Mandarin areas	No statistics available	54
Other dialect areas	No statistics available	40
Whole country	No statistics available	50

Source: figures from Wu Renyi and Yin Binyong (1984) cited in Chen Ping (1999:28)

These statistics need to be approached with some caution. Often definitions of proficiency in *putonghua* cover a range of ability. We also need to be aware that "estimates usually amount to nothing more than subjective impressions based largely on observations in urban centers rather than on scientific measurements that would include the large peasant population living in isolated villages" (DeFrancis, 1984:232). Nevertheless, figures show that the promotion of *putonghua* has been generally successful. As can be seem from the above table, in the early 1950s there was only a relatively small segment of the population who could speak or understand *putonghua*. In the 1950s just over half of those in Mandarin speaking areas and only 11% in other dialect areas were able to understand *putonghua*. As for the country as a whole, 41% of the population at that time could understand *putonghua*. While there are no statistics available for the 1950s it is safe to assume that the percentage of people able to speak *putonghua* was lower than that of those able to understand it, meaning that less than 41% of China was able to speak *putonghua*.

Since the 1950s however there has been a drastic increase in the number of people able to speak and understand *putonghua*. This is borne out by many studies and observations. Barnes (1983:297-300) reports on observations he made in the cities of Guangzhou,

Shanghai and Xian in 1979. *Putonghua* was used extensively in Xian, most probably because it is part of the Mandarin speaking area. In rural areas *putonghua* had not established much of a presence at that time. In the cities, *putonghua* was used to varying extents. Although *putonghua* promotion had met some resistance in Shanghai and Guangzhou, there were still people there who could speak and understand *putonghua*. Most of these people were young and had jobs that involved talking to people from other areas. These people included tour guides, flight attendants, police and shopkeepers. Vivian Hsu (1979) comes to a similar conclusion. In visits to Beijing, Shanghai, Nanjing, Guilin and Guangzhou, Hsu (1979:66) found that "all young people, including hotel personnel, store clerks, public transportation personnel, and so on are capable in *putonghua*, but they also speak their regional dialects, usually with greater ease than *putonghua*". She concludes that *putonghua* at that time was a lingua franca in China's cities. Soon after these studies were conducted, China began to experience considerable economic development as a result of reform and opening up. This has meant more widespread knowledge of *putonghua*. As Table 5.2 shows, by the mid-1980s some 90% of the population could understand *putonghua* and half could speak it. There were still some exceptions, mainly in areas where there was another strong dialect. According to Zhou Minglang (2001a:233), this was the case in Guangzhou and Shanghai:

> As late as the mid 1980s, there still appeared to be a lot of resistance to PTH promotion in Shanghai and Guangzhou. For example, each had two full-time radio/TV services, one in the local variety and one in PTH, whereas most cities in other Chinese variety communities had only a full-time radio/TV service in PTH. In communication between local variety speakers and PTH speakers in those two cities, the latter generally found the locals responding to them in local varieties, even if the conversation had been initiated in PTH and the locals were able to speak some PTH. The preference for local varieties by the local speakers represented their negative attitudes towards PTH.

The trends of the reform era continue today and it seems China is moving towards greater competence in and use of *putonghua*. To take advantage of the rapid developments within China and fully participate in the new society, knowledge of Chinese is a necessity as it is the language of business, economic development and social mobility (Bilik, 1998:50-1). Under these conditions *putonghua* has expanded, especially in certain domains. Even in places previously resistant to *putonghua* promotion things are beginning to change. Chu Xiao-quan (2001:20) explains this situation in Shanghai:

> Thirty years ago it was perfectly natural for a politician to deliver a speech in Shanghai dialect but that would sound quite out of place today. Moreover, a new linguistic phenomenon in Shanghai is that as a way to show their better educational background and also their non-local professional orientation, young employees in foreign firms and joint ventures make a point of speaking Putonghua in their offices, thus distinguishing themselves from their counterparts in the state-owned enterprises. All these changes resulted in a more prominent presence of Putonghua in daily life in Shanghai.

In recent years *putonghua* promotion has renewed with the focus on Hong Kong and southern China. *Putonghua* has made some inroads into Hong Kong, a traditionally Cantonese speaking area. This has been brought about mainly by the return of Hong Kong to China. The long-standing language situation of Hong Kong was one in which Cantonese was used for everyday purposes such as communication among friends and family and English was used in domains such as education, business, government and the law courts. *Putonghua* was hardly used at all (Lai Mee-ling, 2001:112-3). It was not the main variety of Chinese spoken by the majority of the population nor was it used in government or the education system. The only exception to this is a brief period in the early 1950s when many mainland Chinese migrated to Hong Kong as a result of World War II and the Chinese Civil War. During this period, *putonghua* songs and movies were

popular and *putonghua* became a school subject counting towards the HKCE exams. However, *putonghua* soon lost its influence as the children of these migrants grew up speaking Cantonese. *Putonghua* was also dropped from the exams (Pierson, 1992:186). Since Hong Kong's return to China in 1997, the use and status of *putonghua* has changed again. The issue of proficiency in *putonghua* has received much attention and official support. On 8th October 1997, Tung Chee-hwa, Chief Executive of Hong Kong, announced the Biliterate and Trilingual Policy. According to this policy, Hong Kong students must be able to write both Chinese and English and be proficient speakers of Cantonese, English and *putonghua*. *Putonghua* became a core subject in primary school beginning from Primary one and at the secondary level from Secondary one. *Putonghua* is also an elective subject for the HKCE exam (Lai Mee-ling, 2001:112). There have also been many activities and measures aimed at its promotion in recent times. In September 2001 Hong Kong held the first Putonghua Day organised by the Putonghua League of Hong Kong. At the opening ceremony to this function Tung Chee-hwa stated that *putonghua* was important for communications with the mainland, understanding of Chinese culture and economic development after China's entry to the WTO (*China Daily Hong Kong Edition*, 14/9/2001). Tung also announced that "we will continue to explore different means to create an environment conducive to language learning in school and enhance the training of our Putonghua teachers" (quoted in *China Daily Hong Kong Edition*, 14/9/2001). Later developments indicate that this is indeed happening. In February 2002 the Hong Kong Legislative Council held a meeting to decide how the learning and use of *putonghua* could be promoted. A number of measures are being considered. These include promotion of *putonghua* in the workplace, encouraging

professional bodies to train employees in *putonghua* relevant to their jobs and making *putonghua* a compulsory subject in schools. Fanny Law, the secretary for education and manpower said that "in order to capitalize on all the opportunities brought about by China's accession to the WTO, there is urgent need for Hong Kong people to upgrade the standard of *putonghua*" (quoted in *China Daily*, 4/2/2002). Similar sentiments were expressed by Zhang Shiping, an official from the Ministry of Education. At the Fifth Guangdong, Hong Kong SAR and Macao SAR Putonghua Competition, Zhang said that proficiency in *putonghua* is necessary for successful economic relations between mainland China, Hong Kong and Macao (*China News Digest*, 14/4/2002).

Putonghua certainly has official support but this does not mean that *putonghua* is taking over. Studies of attitudes towards *putonghua* reveal some interesting trends. According to a survey of 330 Hong Kong residents conducted by the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment of Hong Kong, almost 90% think that Hong Kong's competitiveness would increase with knowledge of *putonghua* and in excess of 85% of respondents think that the government should promote *putonghua* strongly. 60% said they would be willing to speak *putonghua* at work, school and with relatives if *putonghua* did become widespread in Hong Kong. However, the other 40% thought that there was no opportunities and no need to speak *putonghua*. 34% said they had little or no ability in *putonghua* (*China Daily Hong Kong Edition*, 23/1/2002). In a study of students' attitudes towards Cantonese, English and *putonghua*, Lai Mee-ling (2001) found that there was a generally positive attitude towards *putonghua* because of its value as a way of communicating with the mainland and making Hong Kong more prosperous. However, at the present time

putonghua has not impacted on the traditional language situation of English and Cantonese to any great extent:

> The increased popularity of Putonghua is largely a pragmatic response of Hong Kong people to its increasing instrumental value as a language for China trade and a means to communicate with people in the mainland and Taiwan. However, if Putonghua is used as a means to hasten national unity, the respondents in this survey, mainly the middle-class group, tend to reject the idea. Language is power, as long as Hong Kong people still believe that they are superior to the mainland Chinese, it is not likely that Putonghua will replace any of the roles that Cantonese and English are playing in society without much government imposition (Lai Mee-ling, 2001:129).

The point here is that *putonghua* has spread across most of China, including those areas where it previously had little if any influence. As a result of government policy and developments within China, the status of *putonghua* as the national standard language "is firmly established and irreversible" (Norman, 1988:263). It should be noted that *putonghua* has been promoted with a fairly high degree of tolerance towards others dialects. The approach taken by the authorities is to encourage the use of *putonghua* rather than punish the use of other dialects (Barnes, 1983:296; Erbaugh, 1995:82). Dialects are regarded as a sign of local culture and are a source of pride for many Chinese (Erbaugh, 1995:82; Vivian Hsu, 1979:66). It is expected that dialects will eventually disappear but this will happen naturally without the government needing to actively suppress them (Vivian Hsu, 1979:67). This is in sharp contrast to the situation in Taiwan where the Nationalist government adopted a very strict approach towards the promotion of standard Chinese. The use of dialects in the media was heavily restricted and until 1987 children were punished for using dialects at school (Chen Ping, 1999:32; Erbaugh, 1995:87-8)[5]. While dialects have lost some ground to *putonghua*, this does not mean that

[5] For a fuller discussion of Taiwan's language policy see Dreyer (2003b) and Sandal (2003).

dialects have disappeared. Not only has there been tolerance towards the dialects but some of them have actually gained ground. This is most obvious in the southern parts of China where economic development has increased the prestige of some local dialects. The best example is Cantonese. Cantonese is being used more in domains such as radio broadcasting in places like Guangzhou and Shenzhen (Chen Ping, 1999:58-9). Cantonese is also attracting interest from speakers of other dialects. As Gao Mobo (2000:183) explains:

> In recent years, as a result of economic reform, Cantonese has gained increasing prestige. In the north, for example, an area where people traditionally used to look down upon the southern dialects, many are now beginning to learn Cantonese. This is because Cantonese is spoken in areas where there is money: Hong Kong and the Pearl River Delta regions.

Advertisements for Cantonese lessons are common in many cities, including Beijing and Shanghai (Chen Ping, 1999:51). In Shenzhen, street vendors sell copies of *Guangzhouhua xuexi shouce*, A Study Guide for Guangzhouese. Some of the phrases included in the book are "Have a drink", "Is the boss in?", "Too expensive! Can you go a little cheaper?", "Do you play poker in the evenings?" and "Can you lend me some money?" This book is aimed at Mandarin speakers wanting to do business in Guangzhou. (Erbaugh, 1995:89). The situation prevailing in much of China now is bidialectism where people speak their native dialect and *putonghua*[6]. Dialects will continue to be used in domains such as the home and in many social situations. At the same time *putonghua* use

[6] In some cases Chinese speak more than two dialects. Taking Shanghai as an example, Chu Xiao-quan (2001:18) explains that because many Shanghai residents have a relative who came to Shanghai from somewhere else, the dialect of one's hometown is used among family members, the Shanghai dialect is used for communication outside of the family and *putonghua* is used for communication with people from other areas and official purposes.

will also increase (Norman, 1988:252). Chen Ping (1999:30) explains how this situation works and the likely outcomes for the future:

> It is becoming easier for people in geographically remote areas to have access to all types of electronic mass media, which predominantly use *putonghua*. While statistics are still lacking, it seems to be a safe assumption that the number of people who understand *putonghua* is steadily increasing as more and more people have easy access to television and radio broadcasts. On the other hand, greater social and geographic mobility is also leading to increasing use of *putonghua* as a lingua franca among speakers of mutually unintelligible dialects. All evidence indicates that mainland China is well on its way to bidialectalism where *putonghua* is used alongside the local dialects.

While the exact number of people who are now competent in *putonghua* is unknown, Wu Renyi and Yin Binyong (1984:38 cited in Chen Ping, 1999:30) predicted that by the year 2000 around 97% of the whole population would be able to understand *putonghua* and about 80% would be able to speak it. This estimate may not be correct but the percentage has definitely risen since 1984. It is safe to assume that between 90-97% of China's population understand *putonghua* and between 50-80% are able to speak *putonghua*. The promotion of *putonghua* shows that China has not only maintained its language in the face of the spread of English but has also been able to increase the number of people who can speak and understand *putonghua*, the standard language.

5.4 The Chinese Language Outside of China

The previous section showed that within China the Chinese language has been maintained and in its standard form has spread to most parts of the country. While Chinese is undoubtedly secure within China, some say that the scope of the Chinese language does not extend much beyond this point. McArthur (2002:414) for example states "the Chinese language complex is very much larger than the complex of native

users of English, but its members are in the main ethnically and culturally homogenous, and its worldwide distribution is limited". To a certain extent this is true as Chinese does not have the same transnational qualities as English. However, Chinese is not only expanding in China but it is also expanding its use and status in the world. Chinese, in various forms, has considerable international standing and, perhaps more importantly, with China's economic development and rising prominence in the world there has been an upsurge of interest in learning the language in many parts of the world. The rest of this chapter looks at the current situation of the Chinese language in the world.

5.4.1 The Current International Situation of Chinese

There are currently around 34 million overseas Chinese (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia website)[7] living in various parts of the world and, as one would expect, this means that Chinese is used widely outside of China. Of course, not all overseas Chinese can speak the language. While there are no exact figures and estimates of the number of speakers of Chinese outside of China vary considerably, it is possible to give some idea of the scope of the Chinese language outside of China, as shown in Table 5.3. According to Zou Jiayan and You Rujie (2001:58) there are between 8.65 million and 13.20 million people outside of China who speak Chinese as their mother tongue.

Table 5.3 Overseas Speakers of Chinese as a Mother Tongue

Number of Speakers (millions)	**Yue**	**Min**	**Kejia**	**Mandarin**	**Total**
Lowest Estimate	4.00	4.00	0.50	0.15	8.65
Highest Estimate	6.00	6.00	1.00	0.20	13.20
Average of Lowest and Highest Estimates	5.00	5.56	0.75	0.18	10.95

Source: adapted from Zou Jiayan and You Rujie (2001:57)

[7] 80% of overseas Chinese live in Asia, 11.63% in the Americas, 2.3% in Europe, 1.28% in Oceania and 0.3% in Africa (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia website).

Once all speakers, that is those whose mother tongue is not Chinese but who can speak Chinese are included, the number of Chinese speakers outside of China becomes even greater. Table 5.4 shows the varying estimates of the number of speakers of Chinese outside of China range from 19.5 million to 26 million.

Table 5.4 Total Overseas Speakers of Chinese (Mother tongue plus other)

Number of Speakers (millions)	**Yue**	**Min**	**Kejia**	**Mandarin**	**Total**
Lowest Estimate	10.10	6.00	0.50	3.00	19.50
Highest Estimate	12.00	11.00	1.00	4.00	26.00
Average of Lowest and Highest Estimates	11.05	8.56	0.75	3.50	23.81

Source: adapted from Zou Jiayan and You Rujie (2001:57)

The existence of large numbers of Chinese speakers outside of China is due to two reasons. Firstly, in ancient East Asia China was a powerful and influential country with a strong culture. This influence extended to language as well. Chinese was the language of communication among Asian scholars. In countries such as Korea and Vietnam Chinese was used for official purposes and influenced the writing system. The influence of Chinese on Japanese, Korean and Vietnamese can still be seen today. At this time, the role of Chinese in Asia was like that of Latin in Europe (Zou Jiayan and You Rujie, 2001:49-50). Secondly, as mentioned above, the Chinese language spread throughout the world due to migrations of Chinese people. Wang Gungwu (1991:3-4) defines Chinese migration as “the departure from Chinese soil for the purpose of living and working abroad”. Chinese migration to other countries occurred in four main periods: after the Opium War in the mid-19th century, in the period of foreign aggression against China at the end of the Qing dynasty, during the warlord period of the 1920s and 1930s and during the 1940s and 1950s (Zou Jiayan and You Rujie, 2001:50). This has resulted in the Chinese language being spread across a wide area of the world. Zou Jiayan and You

Rujie (2001:53) identify 164 Chinese speaking communities which can be found in all parts of the world including Asia, North and South America, Australia and Africa. Each of these communities has its own unique characteristics and the extent to which Chinese is used and the purposes it is used for will of course vary from one community to the next. Describing the characteristics of all Chinese speaking communities outside of China is obviously beyond the scope of this thesis and therefore this chapter concentrates on giving an overview of the use and status of Chinese in the world rather than an in depth description of one particular context[8].

The international situation of Chinese is somewhat different than that in China. The main dialects used overseas are Min, Yue and Kejia while there are relatively few speakers of Mandarin in the overseas Chinese speaking population (Zou Jiayan and You Rujie, 2001:50). Table 5.5 shows the approximate number of speakers of the main overseas dialects.

Table 5.5 Speakers of Yue, Min and Kejia Overseas

Area	**Yue**	**Min**	**Kejia**
Overseas Speakers (millions)	11.00	8.50	0.75
Total Speakers (millions)	54.75	60.85	10.50

Source: adapted from Zou Jiayan and You Rujie (2001:58)

Overseas speakers of Yue, excluding those in Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan, make up just over 20% of the total speakers. For Min the figure is almost 14% and about 7% of Kejia speakers are outside of China. If Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan are included in the figures, 30.54% of Yue speakers, 39.85% of Min speakers and 14.29% of Kejia

[8] Many excellent studies of language maintenance and shift in Chinese communities do exist. See for example Liang Chua Morita's (2003) study of the Thai Chinese community and Tannenbaum and Howie's (2002) investigation of language use among Chinese immigrant children in Australia.

speakers can be found outside of China (Zou Jiayan and You Rujie, 2001:58). Table 5.6 shows the main areas in which each of the dialect groups are spoken.

Table 5.6 Distribution of Chinese Outside of China

Dialect Group	**Areas where this Dialect Group is Spoken**
Mandarin	Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia (Java and Bali), Laos, Malaysia (Peninsular), Mauritius, Mongolia, Philippines, Russia (Asia), Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, United Kingdom, USA, Vietnam
Yue	Australia, Brunei, Canada, Costa Rica, Honduras, Indonesia (Java and Bali), Malaysia (Peninsular), Mauritius, Nauru, Netherlands, New Zealand, Panama, Philippines, Singapore, South Africa, Thailand, United Kingdom, USA, Vietnam
Min	Brunei, Indonesia (Java and Bali), Malaysia (Peninsular), Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, USA
Kejia	Brunei, French Guiana, French Polynesia, Indonesia (Java and Bali), Malaysia (Peninsular), Mauritius, New Zealand, Panama, Singapore, South Africa, Suriname, Taiwan, Thailand, United Kingdom, USA
Wu	Confined to PRC
Xiang	Confined to PRC
Gan	Confined to PRC

Source: compiled from data in Ethnologue (2000)

In terms of distribution, Cantonese is the most prominent variety of Chinese. It is spoken by the majority of the Chinese in Europe, the Pacific, the Western Hemisphere and parts of Southeast Asia. Dialects belonging to the Min group are spoken in Singapore, the Philippines and parts of Malaysia and Indonesia. In Thailand the main dialect is a member of the Min group called Chaozhou and also known as Teochiu. Kejia is spoken in Indonesia and some other places. Mandarin dialects, as mentioned above, are not the dominant group in the overseas Chinese community; only in Burma, Thailand and Laos do Mandarin speakers make up a significant portion of the Chinese population (Bradley, 1992:306). However, with China's economic development and especially since the 1980s, many Mandarin speakers have traveled overseas resulting in a greater role for Mandarin than in the past and in some cases Mandarin speakers are more numerous than

speakers of other dialects. Wu, Gan and Xiang all have a very limited presence overseas because these groups were not involved in migration (Moser, 1985:112).

Although Mandarin has relatively little presence and comparatively few speakers outside of China, it does have some official standing. Chinese is a pluricentric language which means it has "several interacting centers, each providing a national variety with at least some of its own (codified) norms" (Clyne, 1992:1). In the case of Chinese there are three such centers, each with its own version of standard Chinese based on Mandarin. One of these, *putonghua* in the PRC, has already been discussed. The other two centers are Taiwan where the standard is known as *guoyu* and Singapore whose standard Chinese is called *huayu* (Bradley, 1992:307). In Singapore, the Chinese community makes up 77% of the resident population and while the Hokkiens, Teochius (Min) and Cantonese are the main dialect groups within the Chinese population, Mandarin is also well represented and is in fact expanding (Statistics Singapore website, a)[9]. At the time of the 1990 census, 566 200 people or 30.1% of the Chinese resident population aged five years and over spoke Mandarin as their home language; this increased to 1 008 500 or 45.1% in 2000 (Statistics Singapore website, a). This was accompanied by a decrease in the use of other varieties of Chinese. In 1990, non-Mandarin dialects were spoken at home by 50.3% of Chinese but by 2000 only 30.7% spoke a non-Mandarin dialect at home (Statistics Singapore website, a). These trends are the result of the government's efforts to promote the use of *huayu* and with 60% of the Chinese population under the age of 25 and 45% aged 25-54 now using Mandarin as their home language, it seems Mandarin will become

[9] For further information on Singapore's Chinese speaking population including breakdowns by age, sex and birthplace, see Statistics Singapore website, a. For figures on literacy, see Statistics Singapore website, b.

the dominant variety of Chinese in Singapore (Statistics Singapore website, b). Taiwan has 4 323 000 speakers of *guoyu* or 20.1% of the population (Ethonologue, 2000). In both of these countries Chinese is used extensively in the education system and has official language status (Bradley, 1992:309-12). In addition, Mandarin Chinese is increasingly used for business in Asian countries such as Malaysia, Singapore and Hong Kong (Naisbitt, 1996:242-3). This shows that the Chinese language is well established in and plays an important role in certain countries. While Chinese may not match English in this respect it has certainly developed some of the characteristics of a world language.

5.4.2 Interest in Learning Chinese

As mentioned in Chapter Two when describing the rise of English as the global language, the size of the area in which a language is spoken and its number of speakers are not sufficient to make a language powerful. In the case of Chinese there are other factors which have increased its status. Not only has reform and opening up led to an increase in ELT but also to an upsurge of interest in learning the Chinese language. As a recent *People's Daily Online* (23/7/2002) article says, "an unprecedented upsurge of learning Chinese and Chinese culture has emerged in the world along with China's booming economy, WTO entry and successful bidding for 2008 Olympics". The Chinese government is in favour of this interest in Chinese language learning and sees it as a positive development. The National Office for Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language (NOTCFL) is the main organ for the promotion and spread of the Chinese language. According to the NOTCFL website, its purpose is "to promote the Chinese language throughout the world and help all countries acquire a better understanding of China," and

its working objective is “to help the Chinese language spread beyond its borders and throughout Asia and reach to the whole world”. Remarks made by officials also indicate a positive view of Chinese language learning. At the Seventh International Symposium on Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language, vice chairman of the standing committee of the National People’s Conference (NPC) Xu Jialu said that overcoming the language barrier is important for developing understanding between China and the rest of the world (*China Daily*, 3/8/2002). In January 2000, Li Daoyu, vice chairman of the Overseas Chinese Affairs Committee of the National People’s Congress, announced that China would give support to schools run by overseas Chinese. He said “spreading Chinese is a task of strategic significance” (quoted in *People’s Daily Online*, 19/1/2000).

China is the center of much of the activity surrounding Chinese language learning and has a large number of foreign students learning Chinese. In 1999 alone, over 250 000 foreign students went to China to study Chinese. This was 4.5 times more than in the 1980s (*People’s Daily Online*, 13/11/2000a). In the last ten years there have been about 410 000 foreigners taking Chinese language courses. According to Chinese authorities, the number of foreign students going to China has increased by an average of 35% per year in recent times (*People’s Daily Online*, 7/2/2003). Recent statistics indicate that there are currently over 60 000 foreign students studying in China. The majority of them, 45 000 or 75%, study the Chinese language (*China Daily*, 3/8/2002). At the beginning of the 1980s there were only 66 universities in China that were equipped to teach foreign students. Today, there are over 400 (CCTV9 website, 15/4/2003). According to a report in *People’s Daily Online* (30/9/2004), China expects some 86 000 foreign students to

attend universities over the next year and the Chinese government wants to have 120 000 foreign students studying in China by 2008. In response to this growing interest, many new developments are taking place. In 2001, the Beijing Language and Culture University launched China's first licensed internet school for teaching Chinese to foreigners. Courses are available in reading, listening and oral Chinese for business purposes and exam preparation. According to Zhang Pu, the school's director, the decision to start the course was made because "the small hotels around our school are crammed with foreign students because we don't have enough dormitories and other facilities, and we expect the number of students to grow even more as China's WTO entry approaches and because Beijing will be host to the 2008 Olympic Games" (*China News Digest*, 16/9/2001). The following year, Beijing University opened a new college for teaching Chinese to foreigners. The purpose of this college is to train students for positions in international politics, economics and cultural exchanges (*People's Daily Online*, 2/7/2002). More recently, the Chinese government has begun to recruit volunteers for Chinese language teaching positions overseas. According to NOTCFL, there are currently around 1000 teachers from China teaching the Chinese language overseas. This figure includes 100 teachers sent by the government, 300 sent by universities and over 600 overseas Chinese. However, some countries still find they lack qualified teachers and ask China for help (*People's Daily Online*, 16/19/2004). The volunteer teacher program is in response to such requests from the Republic of Korea, Thailand, the Philippines, Indonesia, South Africa and France to send more Chinese language teachers to their countries (*People's Daily Online*, 28/5/2004). The number of people taking the *Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi* (Chinese Proficiency Test or HSK as it is

commonly known) also shows the high level of interest in Chinese language learning. From 1990 to 2001, 400 000 people took the test in China and test centres had been set up in 24 countries (*People's Daily Online*, 17/12/2001). By the end of 2002, 540 000 people had taken the HSK and there were 55 testing centers in 27 countries. The number of testing centers has also increased so that there are currently 100 in 27 countries (*People's Daily Online*, 27/2/2002; 17/3/2004). This upsurge in Chinese language learning is happening in many parts of the world. Commonly cited statistics say that there are currently 25-30 million people from 85 countries and regions learning Chinese and that around 2300 universities teach Chinese (*People's Daily Online*, 23/7/2002; 9/8/2002; 7/2/2003; 24/12/2003). In terms of variety of Chinese, the vast majority of learners these days study *putonghua* and learn to write simplified characters. Some people learn Cantonese but the other varieties of Chinese are only learnt by scholars or specialists (Bradley, 1992:319).

The following discussion of Chinese language learning is not meant to be exhaustive. It is impossible to give a fully detailed account of Chinese language learning in every region and every country of the world. Instead, this section aims to show the recent expansion and current popularity of Chinese language learning in the world today. This section will look at Chinese language learning in various parts of the world, namely Asia, Europe and the West and Africa. This section is almost entirely based on reports from Chinese newspapers and websites. Some caution is needed when using these sources. Many of these reports have some political overtones. For example, at the time when the *People's Daily Online* was carrying stories about the popularity of Chinese language learning in

France, high level political meetings and visits were taking place between the leaders of China and France. There is also the usual positive portrayal of China and all things Chinese. One report states, “facing the irresistible charms of ancient and modern China, we might say more and more people in this Earth Village [sic] are making a wise choice in studying Chinese, a perfect decision for the future” (*People’s Daily Online*, 17/3/2004). Similarly, a report on foreigners learning Chinese found on the CCTV9 website (15/4/2003) states that “in recent years, numerous foreigners have stepped into this ancient, yet vigorous land, and the splendid civilization of China with a history of 5,000 years greatly inspires their enthusiasm for learning the Chinese language”. However, there is nothing to suggest that Chinese language learning is not as popular around the world as these articles suggest and the purpose here is to describe the international standing of the Chinese language, not to analyse the motives and actions of the Chinese media.

Chinese Language Learning in Asia

As mentioned in the previous section, Asia is the traditional sphere of influence for China and the Chinese language. It is not surprising therefore that Chinese language learning is popular in many Asian countries today. In fact, 75% of foreign students studying Chinese in China are Asian (Voice of China website). There is much activity and focus on Chinese language teaching throughout the region. In 2000, the Fifth Asia-Pacific Conference on New Trends of Chinese Education and School Management was held in Bangkok. This conference was attended by more than 100 educators from Thailand, Hong Kong, China, Malaysia and other Asian countries. The conference discussed issues

such as teacher training, teaching methods, school management and ways to improve the quality of education (*People's Daily Online*, 13/11/2000b). At the 2004 China Kunming Export Commodities Fair, a Vietnamese translator claimed that many Vietnamese are now learning Chinese (*People's Daily Online*, 11/6/2004). Chinese has become the second most popular foreign language in Vietnam. Currently, over 20 universities have Chinese language courses and many high schools also offer Chinese as a foreign language (Voice of China website). Anecdotal evidence also suggests that Chinese is increasingly popular throughout this region. A Burmese diplomat said that many people in Burma consider Chinese as a worthwhile language to learn (*People's Daily Online*, 11/6/2004). South Korea has a long tradition of teaching Chinese which continues to the present. South Koreans are currently the largest group of foreign students studying in China (*China Daily*, 15/9/2004) and recently Chinese language learning has expanded in South Korea. In the 1950s there were five universities with Chinese language departments. In the 1980s and 1990s, many universities established Chinese language departments and around 100 had Chinese language majors (He Yin and Xu Guanghua, 2000:651). Most of these universities have literature, speaking, writing and translation courses. There are currently more than 300 Chinese language teachers at the university level. If part-time teachers are counted, there are many more (He Yin and Xu Guanghua, 2000:651). The study of English is compulsory in South Korea but Chinese is gaining ground as the second foreign language. Traditionally, Japanese is the most frequently studied foreign language after English. Recently, the number of schools teaching Chinese has increased. According to *People's Daily Online* (30/6/2004), over half of South Korea's 1715 high schools teach Japanese as the second language and 631 teach Chinese.

While considerably smaller than the number of schools teaching Japanese, this still represents a big increase over the last few years. In 2002 there were 351 schools teaching Chinese and in 2003 there were 523. Figures for Seoul indicate that Japanese, taught at 46% of the city's 545 high schools, is the most popular second foreign language. The next most popular language is Chinese which is taught at 111 or 20% of high schools. Other languages are further behind with German at 17.2% then French at 13.8% (*People's Daily Online*, 30/6/2004). Language schools are also seeing a large increase in student numbers. According to the manager of one such school in Seoul, "student numbers at language institutes specializing in Chinese have risen 10-fold over the last two years" (quoted in *China Daily*, 15/9/2004).

Japan is an economically powerful country and there is certainly significant interest in learning Japanese. However, this does not mean that Chinese has been ignored. In fact, there are currently 1 million people studying Chinese in Japan (People's Daily Online, 19/1/2000; Voice of China website). In Indonesia, Chinese language learning was banned for 32 years under President Suharto (Voice of China website) but has since expanded considerably. Chinese has been added to the high school curriculum and it is even compulsory at some schools. One local educator has predicted that within five years there will be 5 million people studying Chinese in Indonesia (Voice of China website). According to an official from the Ministry of National Education, the increased interest in Chinese is the result of closer contacts between Indonesia and China in tourism, business and culture. Chinese language learning is seen as an important part of establishing and furthering such contacts, as one official said, "mastery of the Chinese language can be

utilized as the instrument to establish business contacts with China, because some major cities here have had close relationship with China since long time ago [sic]". Recently Indonesia has taken steps to try to improve Chinese language education. The Ministry of National Education recently held a 14 day program for improving the skills of Chinese language teachers (*People's Daily Online*, 16/7/2002). Chinese language learning is undergoing a similar expansion in Thailand with more and more courses being offered at both private and public institutions. The prestigious Institute for East Asian Studies, which previously offered courses only to academics, has started offering courses to students and businessmen. Once again, Chinese is seen as an important language in the world and as bringing opportunities. One student said "Chinese is already an international language". Another, a food science graduate, said he was learning Chinese because "China is growing and this will bring opportunities for my career" (*People's Daily Online*, 9/5/2001). Naisbitt (1996:253) predicts that "Mandarin will move to center stage as the language of Asia". Based on recent developments in the region, this seems like a reasonable prediction.

Chinese Language Learning in Europe and the West

Prior to the 16th century, Westerners did not pay much attention to Chinese or Chinese language learning. Little research was done and what there was tended to be rather superficial (He Yin and Xu Guanghua, 2000:87-8). During the 16th century, some Westerners become more seriously involved with the study of Chinese. The main group to do this was the missionaries. Missionaries began staying in China for extended periods and this meant Chinese language skills were necessary to preach to the Chinese. By the

17th century research had improved and by the 18th century research on Chinese was quite extensive. The research of this period focused on two aspects: the origins of Chinese characters and writing books in Chinese (He Yin and Xu Guanghua, 2000:88-9)[10]. However, Chinese language learning was not widespread and could hardly be described as popular. Today, the situation is very different. Although Chinese language learning is probably strongest in Asia, there has been a significant upsurge of interest in learning the Chinese language in the West.

Chinese language learning is becoming very popular in Europe. One country where this is particularly obvious is France. The recent Chinese Culture Year activities held in France are a sign of interest in China. This of course extends to the Chinese language. Student numbers have increased dramatically over the last 10 years. The number of students studying Chinese as their first foreign language increased by 75% and the number of students studying it as their second foreign language increased by an enormous 170%. Chinese also appears to be gaining ground against foreign languages that have been popular in France for some time. According to Jean-Paul de Gaudemar, the director of schools for the education ministry, there was a 30% increase in students studying Chinese from 2003-2004. On the other hand, those studying Russian dropped by 3.5% and numbers for German fell by 8.6% (*People's Daily Online*, 29/3/2004). In Paris there are 142 high schools with Chinese language courses (*People's Daily Online*, 29/3/2004). Chinese is also taught at 149 primary schools. Most of the students studying the language are French, only 10% are Chinese (*People's Daily Online*, 19/5/2004). In addition,

[10] For details of this early research and early Chinese language learning among Westerners, see He Yin and Xu Guanghua (2000:87-106).

Chinese language education has expanded considerably at the university level. In 1991, only 11 French universities had Chinese language courses. Now there are 27 (CCTV9 website, 15/4/2003). There has also been an increase in enrollments for Chinese language courses at this level. For example, the Chinese Department of the Paris Oriental Languages College this year had 400 more students than last year and for the first time ever this department had more students than the Japanese Department (*People's Daily Online*, 19/5/2004). The number of people sitting the HSK has also increased. In 1994, the first year the test was held in France, only 50 people participated. In 2001, over 400 people sat the test (*People's Daily Online*, 21/5/2001). In 2004, 600 people took the HSK at seven testing centers across France (*People's Daily Online*, 19/5/2004). The reasons for the popularity of Chinese language learning are summarised by Joel Bellassen, the inspector of Chinese language teaching from the Ministry of Education:

> More and more French are learning Chinese because as globalization is picking up speed and some minor types of languages are disappearing whilst the extent of internationalization and use value of Chinese is growing increasingly. Needless to say the all-round opening up of China makes Chinese language acquire a kind of fascination beyond the scope of language and culture. From now on, it represents the economic strength of the Chinese-speaking world and makes Chinese skill an employment trump card for the French youth as well as a "symbol of alienism" in the eyes of the French people (quoted in *People's Daily Online*, 19/5/2004).

Chinese language learning has also expanded in Italy. There are currently 20 universities with Chinese language departments whereas in the past there were only eight (Voice of China website). In the time of the Soviet Union, Soviet linguists conducted research on many aspects of the Chinese language such as grammar, script reform and dictionary compilation (He Yin and Xu Guanghua, 2000:440-1). This interest in Chinese continues today. China and Russia have also cooperated to teach each other's languages. In recent

years there have been agreements between China and Russia to set up language schools in each other's countries. To date, there are three such language schools in Russia, located in Moscow, St. Petersburg and Vladivostok. These schools will train students in the Chinese language and also provide testing services (*People's Daily Online*, 3/10/2001). Interest in learning Chinese has also spread to Luxembourg, one of Europe's smallest countries. At the moment, the Chinese language is not taught at institutes of higher learning. Those students who wish to study Chinese often do so in other European countries. However, when attending the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) Conference on Cultures and Civilizations the Minister of Culture, Higher Education and Scientific Research Erna Hennicot-Schoepges said that Luxembourg would take steps to develop Chinese language education (*People's Daily Online*, 4/12/2003).

Chinese language learning is also starting to take off in English speaking countries. In America, over 700 universities, or 20% of the total, have Chinese language courses and more than 80 universities offer degree programs in the language (*Beijing Review*, 13/2/2003; CCTV9 website, 15/4/2003). There are also 20 secondary and primary schools with Chinese language classes. In addition there are 800 weekend Chinese schools (*Beijing Review*, 13/2/2003). Other developments are also taking place in Chinese language learning. In October 2002, the education departments of China and America agreed to jointly develop an internet based language teaching project. The project is aimed at teaching Chinese to American high schools students and English to Chinese middle school students (*Beijing Review*, 13/2/2003). Chinese language learning is also developing in Britain. In 2001, 5600 students were studying Chinese at secondary

school, most of whom have Chinese family backgrounds. The government wants to increase the number of people studying Chinese and in 2001 outlined a plan to do so. The aim of this plan is to double the number of people studying Chinese within three years and increase the number of secondary schools teaching Chinese from 40 to over 200 in five years. 1 million pounds has been allocated to this project (*Beijing Review*, 13/2/2003; CCTV9 website).

Australia has a large community of Chinese speakers. According to the 1996 census, Chinese was the second most common language other than English spoken at home with 344 319 speakers. By the time of the 2001 census Chinese had taken over from Italian as the most common language other than English spoken at home with 401 357 speakers (ABS website). At one time, Australia was "a country in which most people might find strange, even faintly ridiculous, the suggestion that their children should learn Chinese at all, let alone as a matter of course" (Dunn and Mackerras, 1987:6). While this perception has not entirely changed, there has been increasing interest in learning Chinese within the last 10-20 years. According to a report titled *Maximizing Australia's Asia Knowledge* (Asian Studies Association of Australia, 2002:38), Chinese was taught at only 13 Australian universities in 1988. In 2001 it was taught at 29. Student numbers have also increased drastically. During the 1990s, the number of students studying Chinese at university increased by an average of close to 100% (Asian Studies Association of Australia, 2002:23). By 2001, there were 3900 students studying Chinese at university

(*Lingua Franca*, 11/5/2002)[11]. In 1994, the government launched the National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools (NALSAS) program. The basic idea of this program was to have all schools teach an Asian language and other subjects about Asia. Chinese was chosen as one of the priority languages along with Japanese, Korean and Indonesian (*Lingua Franca*, 11/5/2002). Although the federal government stopped funding the program in 2002, Chinese is now widespread in Australian schools. Out of the three quarters of schools teaching an Asian language, Chinese is taught at around one quarter of them (*Lingua Franca*, 11/5/2002). While the government has not always supported Chinese language learning as much as it could have, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that "there is widespread acceptance among Australians at all levels – governments, businesses and parents –that Australian interests are served by deepening and broadening knowledge of Chinese language and culture" (Asian Studies Association of Australia, 2002:23). Canada and the NOTCFL recently cooperated to produce a Chinese language textbook. The textbook will be used in three Canadian universities and plans are underway to develop a French version for use in French speaking areas. Similar projects to develop textbooks have been undertaken between NOTCFL and Britain, Spain and Latin American countries (*People's Daily Online*, 13/6/2002). The popularity of Chinese language learning in English speaking countries looks set to be maintained for some time.

[11] While numbers have increased, it should be noted that the proportion of students studying an Asian language remains low. In 2001 under 3% of university students were studying an Asian language (Asian Studies Association of Australia, 2002:29).

Chinese Language Learning in Africa

Due to its history, the most common foreign languages in Africa are European languages such as English and French. Chinese has by no means been ignored. In fact, a large portion of the first group of foreign students to go to China to study Chinese were Africans (Voice of China website). In recent years Chinese has attracted more attention and increased its standing as a foreign language in some African countries. As with the other regions already discussed, Chinese is seen as bringing opportunities and both students of the language and governments are keen to capitalise on China's economic success. One example of this is Egypt where Chinese language courses have been organised by the Chinese Embassy and the Egypt-China Friendship Association. Deputy Prime Minister Youssef Wali outlined the benefits of learning Chinese at the closing ceremony of one such course in 2002: "You can serve as tour guides for Chinese tourists, or work to promote economic and trade cooperation, especially following China's entry into the World Trade Organisation last year" (quoted in *People's Daily Online*, 30/6/2002). So far the number of Chinese language learners in Egypt is small, approximately 400 people have taken these Chinese language courses since 1996. In the future, the number of students learning Chinese will probably increase if recent developments are anything to go by. According to the Chinese Ambassador to Egypt, China plans to establish a Chinese language school in Cairo. This will be the first such school established in Africa and the Middle East region. In addition, more universities are starting to offer courses in Chinese. There are 400 undergraduates and 20 postgraduates studying the language in Ain Sham University's Chinese language department. Al-Azhar University has already set up a Chinese language department and in 2002 Cairo

University announced plans to do the same (*People's Daily Online*, 30/6/2002) which came to fruition in October 2004. The department received support from China in the form of Vice Minister for Education Yuan Guiren opening the department and the donation of 1000 Chinese books and magazines. Plans are underway for a Chinese teacher to go to Egypt and Egyptian students to study in China (*People's Daily Online*, 10/10/2004).

Similar developments are taking place in Kenya. In June 2004 Chinese and Kenyan officials reached an agreement to build a Chinese language learning centre known as the Confucius Institute in the University of Nairobi. According to Zhou Ji, China's Education Minister, "China will sponsor the establishment of the centre, building a multi-media lab, and training more local people to learn and teach Chinese". As far as the Kenyan government is concerned, learning Chinese will help improve relations with China and benefit the country in a number of ways. Kenyan Minister for Education, Science and Technology George Saitoti explained that "the agreement will enhance our collaboration in the teaching of Chinese language and strengthen our linkage in other areas like tourism, trade etc. In other words, our two peoples will be able to interact more freely and hence trade better and visit one another in our respective countries" (quoted in *People's Daily Online*, 23/6/2004). The island of Mauritius is also taking steps to further its Chinese language learning and teaching. There are already 10 schools which have been teaching Chinese for 20 years and currently have over 1200 students. Authorities decided this year to add Chinese to the primary school curriculum. In addition, five Chinese

teachers have been sent to Mauritius as part of NOTCFL's volunteer teacher program (*People's Daily Online*, 8/10/2004; *China Daily*, 24/10/2004).

China's economic development and rising prominence in the world have been accompanied by an upsurge of interest in Chinese language learning in many parts of the world. In all of the regions covered here, perceptions of Chinese are very similar. Chinese is seen as an important language in the world and knowledge of it is seen as advantageous because it will bring opportunities and benefits. Once again, the status of Chinese in this sense may not match that of English but it certainly has some similar qualities, at least in the eyes of those who learn it. As the above discussion shows, this includes native speakers of English, the global language.

5.5 Conclusion

As we saw in previous chapters, the English language has certainly established itself in China and looks to be increasing its use and status. However, despite some predictions to the contrary, Chinese is not losing ground to English nor has it been ignored by the Chinese authorities. Chinese, in its various forms, is safe within the borders of China. Furthermore, the Chinese language has considerable international standing. It is spoken by Chinese communities in almost every region of the world and also has some official status. With China's rise as an economic and political power, the status of Chinese has increased as shown by the interest in learning the language in many parts of the world. A language with this profile can hardly be considered under threat from English. A recent report in *China Daily* (3/9/2004) suggests that "there may even come a day when learning

Chinese, like present day English, becomes compulsory for business, politics and cultural exchanges –a trend that has become increasingly plausible as more foreign students enrol [sic] in Chinese courses and China as a nation takes a more prominent role on the international stage". Based on the data presented here, it seems this prediction is more likely to eventuate than the pessimistic view of the future of the Chinese language outlined at the beginning of this chapter.

While Chinese is in a healthy state and looks set to remain so, the same cannot be said about China's minority languages. These languages are in a subordinate position to Chinese and the rise of English as the global language undoubtedly presents new problems for minority languages and their speakers. Could English be contributing to the demise of minority languages in China? This is the topic of the next chapter.

CHAPTER SIX

THE IMPACT OF ENGLISH ON MINORITY LANGUAGES IN CHINA

> *All of China's minority nationalities, except the Hui and the Manchu, who use Chinese, have their own languages, some of them with their own writing systems. Multiple nationalities, languages, and writing systems are the distinguishing features of the sociolinguistic condition of China. These features are closely related to the development of Chinese politics, economy, and culture and should be carefully studied (White, 1992:47).*
>
> *An aspect of language closely related with the issue of globalisation is the spread of English. The fact is that English is a language useful for virtually all peoples in the contemporary world. Never in the past has any language achieved the dominant place in the world that characterises English today. A minority group in China which wishes to maintain its own language will need to be trilingual if it wants to adopt English, because any ethnic group which is part of China must know Chinese to get on in the world (Mackerras, 2003a:132).*

6.1 Introduction

The Han Chinese are by far the largest nationality in China and it is this group that comes to mind most often when people talk about the Chinese. Somewhat less known is the fact that "since time immemorial there have also been minorities living within China's borders" (Mackerras, 1994:3). In terms of population, the Han constitute 91.59% and the minorities make up the remaining 8.41% of the country's total (*China Statistical Yearbook*, 2004:97). While there are important exceptions, China's minorities are by and large worse off than the Han Chinese. Minority areas are often not as developed as other parts of the country and minorities are generally less politically powerful than the Han Chinese (Mackerras, 1995:8-15). In addition, levels of education are generally lower as

are levels of income. Nevertheless, minority nationalities present challenging and important issues for the Chinese government. Apart from their diverse nature and low standard of living, minorities are strategically and politically important. Many of them occupy China's border regions where members of the same ethnic group live across the border, sometimes in an independent country. The Mongols, Koreans, Kazhaks, Kirgiz, Tajiks and Uzbeks are examples of this situation (Gunde, 2002:11). Minority areas are also rich in resources, having the majority of the country's forest and mineral resources and in excess of 80% of meat, milk and wool producing livestock herds (Dreyer, 1976:4; Ramsey, 1987:158). Minority issues have also started to take on international significance in recent years and can therefore have an effect on China's political and economic goals. International attention on the treatment of Tibet and the Islamic world's reaction to Chinese policy towards Muslim minorities are the most prominent examples of this (Dreyer, 1993:258). Minorities therefore have potential propaganda value because "minorities happily and enthusiastically integrated into the life and functioning of the Chinese state are the best advertisement for a successful and benevolent government" (Ramsey, 1987:158). It is easy to understand why the ‘minority problem’ occupies a high place on the Chinese agenda.

The spread of the English language is another issue facing China’s minorities. This chapter will look at the presence of English in minority areas and the impact it is having on minority languages. Minorities have to deal with English in a different way than the Han Chinese. As the quote at the beginning of this chapter shows, minorities are already in a position where they have to know Chinese in order to be successful in Chinese

society. On top of this they also have to deal with English, the dominant language in the world outside of China. English may well contribute to a shift away from minority languages and therefore endanger them further. Despite this seemingly gloomy situation, this chapter argues that English most resembles an irrelevant language as far as minorities are concerned. Minority languages are of course under varying degrees of threat but as I argue here this threat comes mainly from Chinese and at this stage English seems to have relatively little presence in minority areas and therefore relatively little influence over the fate of minority languages. This argument is based on my fieldwork data which I have used to map out the use of English in minority areas (when, where and by whom it is used) and describe the opinions of members of minority nationalities about English, including their language learning goals and concerns. Where possible, I have also linked my data to that contained in other sources to show how it is similar or different.

6.2 Overview of Minorities in China

In China, the term *shaoshu minzu* is used to refer to ethnic minorities. This term literally means minority nationality. In the Chinese context, a minority nationality is basically "an ethnic group that is relatively small numerically compared with the largest nationality, and that is distinguished from society at large and from the Han by certain national characteristics" (Heberer, 1989:12). The Chinese Communist Party based its definition of a minority nationality on the Stalinist definition. According to this definition, a nationality is a group having a common language, common territory, common economic life and a common culture (Brugger and Reglar, 1994:309). This definition is the foundation of minority theory and policy in China (Mackerras, 1994:141). However, this

definition was somewhat problematic for the CCP. On the one hand, strict adherence to this definition would mean that very few minorities could be recognised (Zhou Minglang, 2003:10). Members of the same minority may speak different languages, for example the Jingpo who speak a number of languages, or speak Chinese as the Hui do. Some minorities are spread out over large areas such as the Hui and Mongols while others do not have a unique economic life. Proximity to the Han may also influence the culture of a minority making the criteria of common culture somewhat problematic (Heberer, 1989:31-2). On the other hand, not using Stalin's definition would be a contradiction of the Party's ideology (Zhou Minglang, 2003:10). Eventually, the Chinese decided that Stalin's definition was to be applied flexibly. It was also decided that a group's ethnic self-consciousness was to be taken into account. That is, decisions on minority nationality status are made on the basis of the objective characteristics of the group in question and the beliefs of the people (Heberer, 1989:32-3). It is nevertheless the government who has the final say in identification and recognition of minority nationalities.

When the government announced in the early 1950s that it planned to officially recognise minorities, 400 groups applied for recognition (Brugger and Reglar, 1994:310). Gaining recognition as a minority nationality was a complicated process. Local governments first told the population in their area about the recognition policy and any group that thought itself to be a nationality applied for recognition. Local governments passed on the applications to the provincial commission of nationalities affairs. The provincial commission would then work with anthropologists, ethnologists and linguists to classify the applicants. Sometimes fieldwork was conducted to help determine claims to being a

nationality. Then, with the help of experts from Beijing, a final list of applicants would be decided upon. Once again, fieldwork was conducted at this stage. The finalised list of applicants for recognition would then be submitted to the State Commission on Nationalities Affairs. The State Commission on Nationalities Affairs then made recommendations to the State Council about which groups should be recognised (Zhou Minglang, 2003:11). From 1949-1953, 39 groups were recognised. A further 15 groups were granted recognition between 1954 and 1964 after which the government considered the recognition process to be complete. Despite this, another two groups were granted recognition. In 1965 the Lhoba were recognised and the Jinuo were granted recognition in 1979 (Zhou Minglang, 2003:11-4). No further groups have been recognised to date. However, there are still a large number of people who belong to groups that are not officially recognised as minority nationalities by the authorities (Mackerras, 1994:143). At the time of the 2000 census, 734 400 people belonged to this category (*China's Ethnic Yearbook*, 2002:76). So far the government has shown little inclination to recognise more minority nationalities. For example, the Mosuo are a group numbering around 40 000 living on the border of Yunnan and Sichuan Province. There is a belief among many of these people that the Mosuo are a separate and distinct nationality. However, the government classifies them as a branch of the Naxi and all attempts to gain official recognition of the Mosuo as a nationality in its own right have been unsuccessful (Mackerras, 2003b:24; McKhann, 1995:48)[1]. This example is illustrative of the usual approach to dealing with this issue, namely to assign people to already recognised nationalities that are considered to have similar characteristics (Mackerras, 1994:143;

[1] The Mosuo in Sichuan did however successfully campaign to have themselves classified as Mongol (McKhann, 1995:61).

Zhou Minglang, 2003:14-5). This is what happened to a group known as the Kucong. The Kucong applied for recognition as a nationality but the government refused and instead added the Kucong to the Lahu nationality (Bradley, 1994:197). There have also been cases of misclassification. According to Tapp (1995:198), the people in Hainan that are officially classified as Miao are in fact Yao.

The minority population has increased over the last few decades. In 1953 minorities were 6.06% of the population, in 1964 they made up 5.76%, and 6.68% in 1982. At the time of the 1990 census, the minority population had increased to 8.04% of the population and reached 8.41% by 2000 (*China Statistical Yearbook*, 2004:97). One reason for this increase is that minorities are mainly exempt from China's one child policy. A second reason is that large numbers of people changed their nationality. Many of these cases are members of the majority Han reregistering as Manchu, Miao, Tujia and Dong. Some Zhuang, who are not exempt from the one child policy, have also reregistered as other minorities (Gabe Wang, 1999:174-8). Table 6.1 gives a list of all of China's officially recognised minorities, showing their population and distribution.

Table 6.1 China's Minority Nationalities

Minority Nationality	**Main Locations**	**Population According to 2000 Census**
Mongol	Inner Mongolia, Liaoning, Jilin, Hebei, Heilongjiang, Xinjiang	5813947
Hui	Ningxia, Gansu, Henan, Xinjiang, Qinghai, Yunnan, Hebei, Shandong, Anhui, Liaoning, Beijing, Inner Mongolia, Tianjin, Heilongjiang, Shaanxi, Guizhou, Jilin, Jiangsu, Sichuan	9816805
Tibetan	Tibet, Sichuan, Qinghai, Gansu, Yunnan	5416021
Uygur	Xinjiang	8399393
Miao	Guizhou, Hunan, Yunnan, Guangxi, Chongqing, Hubei, Sichuan	8940116
Yi	Yunnan, Sichuan, Guizhou	7762272
Zhuang	Guangxi, Yunnan, Guangdong	16178811
Bouyei	Guizhou	2971460
Korean	Jilin, Heilongjiang, Liaoning	1923842
Manchu	Liaoning, Hebei, Heilongjiang, Jilin, Inner Mongolia, Beijing	10682262
Dong	Guizhou, Hunan, Guangxi	2960293
Yao	Guangxi, Hunan, Yunnan, Guangdong	2637421
Bai	Yunnan, Guizhou, Hunan	18588063
Tujia	Hunan, Hubei, Chongqing, Guizhou	8028133
Hani	Yunnan	1439673
Kazak	Xinjiang	1250458
Dai	Yunnan	1158989
Li	Hainan	1247814
Lisu	Yunnan, Sichuan	634912
Va	Yunnan	396610
She	Fujian, Zhejiang, Guangxi, Guangdong	709592
Gaoshan	Taiwan, Fujian	4461
Lahu	Yunnan	453705
Shui	Guizhou, Guangxi	406902
Dongxiang	Gansu, Xinjiang	513805
Naxi	Yunnan	308839
Jingpo	Yunnan	132143
Kirgiz	Xinjiang	160823
Tu	Qinghai, Gansu	241198
Daur	Inner Mongolia, Heilongjiang	132394
Mulam	Guangxi	20735
Qiang	Sichuan	306072
Blang	Yunnan	91882
Salar	Qinghai	104503

Minority Nationality	Main Locations	Population According to 2000 Census
Maonan	Guangxi	107166
Gelao	Guizhou	579357
Xibe	Liaoning, Xinjiang	188824
Achang	Yunnan	33936
Pumi	Yunnan	33600
Tajik	Xinjiang	41028
Nu	Yunnan	28759
Uzbek	Xinjiang	12370
Russian	Xinjiang, Heilongjiang	15609
Ewenki	Inner Mongolia	30505
Deang	Yunnan	17935
Baoan	Gansu	16505
Yugur	Gansu	13719
Jing	Guangxi	22517
Tatar	Xinjiang	4890
Derung	Yunnan	7426
Oroqen	Heilongjiang, Inner Mongolia	8196
Hezhen	Heilongjiang	4640
Monba	Tibet	8923
Lhoba	Tibet	2965
Jinuo	Yunnan	20899

Source: *China's Ethnic Yearbook* (2002:446-7)

Among China's 55 minority nationalities there is great diversity in terms of living environment, language, culture, religion and economy[2]. The regions inhabited by minorities make up about five-eighths of China's area and, as one would expect from such a large amount of territory, the regions in which minorities live can be quite different from each other. Minorities can be found in the jungles of Yunnan, the tropical regions of Hainan, the cold climates of the north and the deserts of Xinjiang and Tibet (Mackerras, 1995:3-4). Most of the minority population can be found in autonomous places. China has five autonomous regions: the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region

(established May 1947), Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region (established in 1958), Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region (established 1955), Tibetan Autonomous Region (established in1965) and the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, set up in 1958. There are also 30 autonomous prefectures, 14 located in the northeast and northwest and 16 in the southeast and southwest. At the county level, there are 21 autonomous counties in the northeast, 20 in the northwest, 10 in the southeast and 69 in the southwest. In addition, there are 1252 minority *xiangs* (Zhou Minglang, 2003:16-9). The *xiang* level of administration was originally included under the auspices of autonomous governments for minorities but the 1984 Law on Regional Autonomy declared that *xiangs* are part of the local government and did not set out the nature or scope of autonomy for this level of administration. This puts minority *xiangs* in the interesting situation of having "more autonomy than an ordinary *xiang* but the least autonomy among minority autonomous governments" (Zhou Minglang, 2003:403). In terms of location, the vast majority of minority *xiangs* are in the southwest which has a total of 762. The northeast has 315, the northwest 120 and the southeast 55 (Zhou Minglang, 2003:16-9)[3]. However, just because a particular place is autonomous does not mean that only minorities live there. There are also substantial numbers of Han living in autonomous places (Gabe Wang, 1999:168-9).

Culturally, the minorities vary greatly in degree of similarity to the Han, making China a "patchwork of cultural landscapes" (Smith, 1991:11). Some minorities, such as the Zhuang, Manchus and Bai are quite similar to the Han while others, like the Tibetans,

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[2] The reader is again reminded that the Han are by no means a homogenous group. There are significant differences in dialect, customs, food, religion etc. among the Han of different regions of China (Moser, 1985).

Uygurs and Kazhaks are very different indeed (Mackerras, 1995:4). Among China's minorities there are herders, hunters, farmers and nomads (Brugger and Reglar, 1994:310). The traditional lifestyles of minorities are maintained to varying degrees. The minorities also practice a number of religions. Islam is practiced by ten minorities including the Huis, Uygurs and Tatars. Buddhism also has a strong following, most notably among the Tibetans. A range of shamanistic religions are also practiced by China's minorities including those of the Oroqens, the Miao and the Va. Christians can also be found within some minorities due to contact with Western missionaries (Brugger and Reglar, 1994:310; Fei Hsiao-tung, 1981:29).

The CCP started to develop its minority policy prior to coming to power in 1949 (see Dreyer, 1976:63-92). The essence and guiding principles of CCP minority policy were outlined in the interim Constitution known as the Common Program, adopted on 29th September 1949 (Mackerras, 2003b:21). Articles 9, 50, 51, 52 and 53 of the Common Program deal with minority issues. Article 9 states that no part of China is allowed to secede. Article 50 declared that both Han chauvinism and local chauvinism must be opposed. The establishment of autonomous governments in areas with a significant minority population was the subject of Article 51. Article 52 stated that all nationalities were equal and that everyone had the right to practice their traditional culture including religion and the use of minority languages and written scripts. Article 53 stated that the government would help minority areas develop in a number of ways (Benson and Svanberg, 1998:89). These ideas on minorities were later put into the constitution. In all

[3] For a full list of minority autonomous places see Mackerras (2001:254-6) and *China's Ethnic Yearbook* (2002:37-72).

of China's constitutions from 1954-1978 there are five principles regarding minorities which have formed the basis of policy towards the minorities throughout the history of the PRC:

> 1. China is a multinational and unitary state, and no area may secede
> 2. Regional autonomy is the basic form of government for all areas inhabited by national minorities
> 3. There is equality for all nationalities within China
> 4. There is freedom to believe and not believe in religion
> 5. National minority peoples have the right to use their national languages in written and spoken forms (Benson and Svanberg, 1998:93).

In reality however, minority policy has oscillated between tolerance and a desire for assimilation[4]. The present time is one of reasonable tolerance towards minorities. This more tolerant policy began in the 1980s.The 1982 Constitution put more emphasis on minority issues than previous versions. Among other things it contained a provision banning discrimination against minorities and more rights for minorities, including the right of authorities in autonomous areas to make their own laws (Mackerras, 2003a:26). In 1984 the Law of Regional Autonomy was put into effect. This law "expands considerably on the various specific aspects of autonomy, in such areas as administration, law, the economy, finance and budgeting, culture and education" (Mackerras, 2003a:26). A number of *youhui zhengce* or preferential policies were also implemented during this period. These policies entitled minorities to special treatment in a number of areas. For example, preference was given to members of a minority when applying for some jobs and in education where minorities require lower scores to enter university. More money was also allocated to minority areas and for the most part minorities were exempt from China's one child policy (Mackerras, 2003a:27). The tenor of these policies has been

carried through to the present day and recent years have seen increasing attention paid to minority issues. In 1999 for example, the Central Ethnic Work Conference was reconvened. Out of this meeting came the government's decision to adopt an amended version of the 1984 law on autonomy. While not significantly different, it did grant more rights to the minorities (Mackerras, 2003a:39). Despite this positive stance on minorities, significant problems remain. Relations between the Han and minorities have not always been smooth. Minorities still suffer from discrimination and some Han see them as backward or even inferior (McKhann, 1995:42-3; Tapp, 1995:217). Ethnic unrest in both Tibet and Xinjiang has by no means completely subsided and in light of the war on terror ethnic relations in Xinjiang have become increasingly tense, thus raising the possibility of secession, something the Chinese government desperately wants to avoid. While not nearly as volatile as secessionist movements, language is an important aspect of the minority issue in China. Indeed, the handling of minority languages has been a significant and challenging issue in itself.

6.3 Overview of Minority Languages

As with other characteristics of the minorities, there is amazing diversity among languages. Understanding the linguistic characteristics of the minorities was an important part of the CCP's minority work and beginning in the 1950s efforts were made to do just that. Determining the number and classification of minority languages was no easy task. While Altaic languages had been extensively studied by both Soviet and Western linguists, almost nothing had been done on the languages of south and southwest China.

[4] For a discussion of minority policy throughout the history of the PRC and how it differs from the minority policy of imperial and Republican governments, see Dreyer (1976) and Mackerras (1994).

Consequently, a large portion of minority languages were virtually unknown to the authorities (Zhou Minglang, 2003:21-2). Survey teams were sent out to investigate China's language situation. Seven survey teams were dispatched to Guizhou, Yunnan, Sichuan and Guangxi in 1951. In 1956, more than 700 linguists organised into seven survey teams were sent from Beijing to investigate minority languages. Six of these teams went to the south and southwest with the remaining team going to the northwest. Based on the work carried out by these teams, the Chinese government came up with a list of 60 officially recognised minority languages. Most of these languages were recognised and classified in the 1950s with a few additions in the 1980s (Zhou Minglang, 2003:22-3). The classification and distribution of the officially recognised minority languages will be discussed below. A description of the linguistic features such as the phonology, morphology and syntax of these languages can be found in Ramsey (1987).

China's minority languages belong to five families: Sino-Tibetan, Altaic, Austronesian, Austro-Asiatic and Indo-European[5] (Dai Qingxia, 1998:1; Teng Xing and Wang Jun, 2002:102; Zhou Minglang, 2003:23). Geographically, most minorities in southern and southwestern China speak languages belonging to the various branches of the Sino-Tibetan family. Sino-Tibetan languages can also be found to a lesser extent in the western

[5] The Chinese classification of languages is slightly different from generally accepted classifications. The Chinese refer to Tai-Kadai languages as Dong-Dai and consider them to be part of the Sino-Tibetan family rather than a language family in their own right. Also, Bai, Tujia, Derung, Pumi, Qiang and Nu are generally thought to be Tibeto-Burman languages but some Chinese linguists consider them to be either unidentified languages or independent subgroups of languages (Zhou Minglang, 2003:23). The affiliation of Miao-Yao is also uncertain, although it is generally thought to be a separate language family (Katzner, 2002:209). Here it is included in the Sino-Tibetan family following Zhou Minglang's (2003) presentation of minority languages. The classification given here differs from that in Chapter Two because in this chapter I present minority languages according to the Chinese classification in order to show the official classification/view of the PRC government. For more detail on varying classifications and their merits, see Katzner (2002).

regions of China (Mackerras, 1995:4; Zhou Minglang, 2003:23). The Sino-Tibetan family accounts for most of China's minority languages (Dai Qingxia, 1998:2). In all, there are 19 Tibeto-Burman languages, four Miao-Yao and ten Tai-Kadai languages (Zhou Minglang, 2003:26). The Sino-Tibetan languages are shown in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2 Minority Languages of the Sino-Tibetan Family

Branch/Group	**Language**	**Minority Using this Language**	**Main Area of Use**
Tibeto-Burman	Tibetan	Tibetan	Tibet, S. Qinghai, S.W. Gansu, N.W. Sichuan, N. Yunnan
Tibeto-Burman	Jiarong	Tibetan	N.W. Sichuan
Tibeto-Burman	Monba	Tibetan	S. E. Tibet
Tibeto-Burman	Jingpo	Jingpo	W. and N. W. Yunnan
Tibeto-Burman	Yi	Yi	Yunnan, Sichuan, Guizhou
Tibeto-Burman	Hani	Hani	S. Yunnan
Tibeto-Burman	Naxi	Naxi	N. E. Yunnan
Tibeto-Burman	Lisu	Lisu	N. Yunnan
Tibeto-Burman	Lahu	Lahu	S. W. Yunnan
Tibeto-Burman	Bai	Bai	Central N. Yunnan
Tibeto-Burman	Jinuo	Jinuo	S. W. Yunnan
Tibeto-Burman	Nu	Nu	N. W. Yunan
Tibeto-Burman	Zaiwa	Jingpo	W. Yunnan
Tibeto-Burman	Achang	Achang	W. Yunnan
Tibeto-Burman	Qiang	Qiang, Tibetan	W. Sichuan
Tibeto-Burman	Pumi	Pumi, Tibetan	W. Sichuan
Tibeto-Burman	Tujia	Tujia	S. W. Hubei, N. E. Guizhou, N. W. Hunan
Tibeto-Burman	Lhoba	Lhoba	S. E. Tibet
Tibeto-Burman	Derung	Derung, Nu, Tibetan, others	N. W. Yunan
Miao-Yao	Miao	Miao	W. Hunan, S. W. Hubei, N.W. Guangxi, Guizhou, S. W. Sichuan
Miao-Yao	She	She	Fujian, Guangdong, Jiangxi, Zhejiang, Anhui
Miao-Yao	Bunu	Yao	N. W. Guangxi, S. W. Hunan, S. Guizhou, E. Yunnan
Miao-Yao	Mien	Yao	N. W. Guangxi, S. W. Hunan, S. Guizhou, E. Yunnan
Tai-Kadai	Zhuang	Zhuang	Guangxi, S. E. Yunnan
Tai-Kadai	Bouyei	Bouyei	Guizhou
Tai-Kadai	Dai	Dai	Yunnan
Tai-Kadai	Dong	Dong	Guizhou, S. W. Hunan, N. W. Guangxi
Tai-Kadai	Mulam	Mulam	Guangxi, S. Guizhou
Tai-Kadai	Shui	Shui	Guizhou
Tai-Kadai	Lakia	Yao	Guangxi
Tai-Kadai	Maonan	Maonan	Guangxi
Tai-Kadai	Li	Li	Hainan
Tai-Kadai	Gelao	Gelao	Guizhou, N. Guangxi

Source: adapted from Zhou Minglang (2003:24-6)

In the north, minority languages belong to the various branches of the Altaic family. The five Tungusic languages used by the minorities can be found in the northeast. This group includes the language of one of China's smallest minorities, the Hezhen. Until relatively recently, the Hezhen language did not receive much attention from scholars (Ramsey, 1987:215)[6]. The Xibe language has a different distribution than the other Tungusic languages. The Xibes are originally from the northeast but in 1764 some Xibes were sent to the Ili River valley in Xinjiang to act as border guards and open up new land for farming (Chun Shizeng, 1989:82; Mackerras, 2001:265). Those Xibes who live in Xinjiang have maintained their own language and script. However, there are a substantial number of Chinese loanwords and some influence from Uygur and Kazak, both of which are spoken in the proximity of Xibe communities (Ramsey, 1987:216). The Xibes who still live in the northeast, however, are far more like the majority Han and do not use the Xibe language to the same extent (Chun Shizeng, 1989:82). Turkic languages such as Uygur and Kazak are spoken in the northwest and Xinjiang. This group has eight representatives in China. Mongolian languages are found primarily in Inner Mongolia. Mongol is the main representative of this group of languages and there are three dialects of Mongol spoken in China: the Inner Mongolian dialect, the Barag-Buriat dialect and the Uirad dialect (Du Ruofu and Vincent Yip, 1993:22). The Mongolian script is also used in China and its origins can be traced back to at least the 13th century (Mackerras, 2001:264). Other Mongolian languages such as Daur are also spoken in China.

[6] While there is more work done on Hezhen now than in the past, it is by no means abundant. For example, in my time in China I was only able to find one book (Zhang Yanchang et al, 1989a) and one journal article (He Junfang, 2002) on Hezhen. It should be noted however that there is a strong tradition of studying Hezhen (also known as Nanai or Goldi in Russia) among Soviet scholars, dating back to the 1920s.

Altogether there are six Mongolian languages spoken by the minorities (Zhou Minglang, 2003:26). A list of the Altaic languages is given in Table 6.3.

Table 6.3 Minority Languages of the Altaic Family

Branch/Group	**Language**	**Minority Using this Language**	**Main Area of Use**
Turkic	Uygur	Uygur	Xinjiang
Turkic	Kazak	Kazaks	Xinjiang, Gansu
Turkic	Kirgiz	Kirgiz	Xinjiang
Turkic	Uzbek	Uzbek	N. Xinjiang
Turkic	Tatar	Tatar	N. Xinjiang
Turkic	Salar	Salar	Qinghai, Gansu, Xinjiang
Turkic	Western Yugur	Yugur	Gansu
Turkic	Tuvin	Tuvin (officially categorised as Mongols)	N. Xinjiang
Mongolian	Mongol	Mongol	Inner Mongolia, Xinjiang, Gansu, Qinghai, other northern provinces
Mongolian	Daur	Daur	N.E. Inner Mongolia, N. W. Heilongjiang, Xinjiang
Mongolian	Tu	Tu	Qinghai, Gansu
Mongolian	Dongxiang	Dongxiang	Gansu, Xinjiang
Mongolian	Baoan	Baoan	Gansu
Mongolian	Eastern Yugur	Yugur	Gansu
Tungusic	Manchu	Manchu	Heilongjiang
Tungusic	Xibe	Xibe	Xinjiang, parts of the northeast
Tungusic	Hezhen	Hezhen	Heilongjiang
Tungusic	Ewenki	Ewenki	Heilongjiang, Inner Mongolia
Tungusic	Oroqen	Oroqen	Heilongjiang, Inner Mongolia

Source: adapted from Zhou Minglang (2003:24-6)

Only two minorities, the Russians and the Tajiks, speak Indo-European languages. Russian belongs to the Slavic branch and Tajik to the Indo-Iranian branch. Both languages are spoken primarily in Xinjiang although Russian also has some presence in the northeast, as shown in Table 6.4.

Table 6.4 Minority Languages of the Indo-European Family

Branch/Group	**Language**	**Minority Using this Language**	**Main Area of Use**
Indo-Iranian	Tajik	Tajik	S. Xinjiang
Slavic	Russian	Russians	Inner Mongolia, Xinjiang, Heilongjiang

Source: adapted from Zhou Minglang (2003:24-6)

An almost equally small number of minorities use Austro-Asiatic languages. These are the Va, Deang and Blang, all of whom live mainly in Yunnan Province. Details of the Austro-Asiatic languages are given in Table 6.5.

Table 6.5 Minority Languages of the Austro-Asiatic Family

Branch/Group	**Language**	**Minority Using this Language**	**Main Area of Use**
Mon-Khmer	Va	Va	S. W. Yunnan
Mon-Khmer	Blang	Blang	W. Yunnan
Mon-Khmer	Deang	Deang	W. Yunnan

Source: adapted from Zhou Minglang (2003:24-6)

The Austronesian languages spoken by China's minorities are a complicated case. The Gaoshan people of Taiwan speak 17 languages belonging to the Indonesian branch of Austronesian. However, because of the political situation, the Chinese government refuses to acknowledge the work of Taiwanese linguists and groups all of these languages into the category of *Gaoshanzu* languages (Zhou Minglang, 2003:404). Table 6.6 gives a very basic picture of the Austronesian languages. A more detailed discussion and classification of these languages can be found in Zeng Siqi (1998:484-9).

Table 6.6 Minority Languages of the Austronesian Family

Branch/Group	**Language**	**Minority Using this Language**	**Main Area of Use**
Indonesian	17 languages classified only as *Gaoshanzu* languages	Gaoshan	Taiwan

Source: adapted from Zhou Minglang (2003:24-6)

In addition to these languages, there are two minority languages whose classification is uncertain, as shown in Table 6.7. These are Korean and Jing. Korean is spoken in the northeast and is considered a language isolate, as discussed in Chapter Two. The Jing are a small group who live in Guangxi Province close to the Vietnamese border and are the descendents of the Vietnamese people who have been moving into China since the 15th century. They are sometimes referred to as Gin, which is the equivalent of the Vietnamese word for the majority population of Vietnam (Mackerras, 2003a:184-5; Ramsey, 1987:287; Teng Xing and Wang Jun, 2002:102-3). There are differing opinions on the classification of the Jing language and while many accept it is Austro-Asiatic this is by no means universal; some linguists for example classify it as a Sino-Tibetan language (Katzner, 2002:22;227; Ramsey, 1987:287; Teng Xing and Wang Jun, 2002:102-3). Jing is still spoken today although a lot of Jing have shifted to Cantonese (Mackerras, 2003a:184-5).

Table 6.7 Minority Languages of Uncertain Family

Possible Classification	**Language**	**Minority Using this Language**	**Main Area of Use**
Language isolate	Korean	Korean	Jilin, Heilongjiang, Liaoning
Sino-Tibetan or Austro-Asiatic	Jing	Jing	S. Guangxi

Source: adapted from Zhou Minglang (2003:24-6)

This official list does not adequately reflect the reality of China's language situation. There is much more diversity than the official list suggests. Estimates of the number of languages in China range anywhere from 80 to over 100 (Stites, 1999:99). According to Zhou Minglang (2003:23), in the early 1990s Chinese linguists generally put the number of languages at around 80. By the late 1990s many linguists believed there to be more

than 120 languages in China. Higher estimates can be found in Western sources. According to Ethnologue (2000), China has 201 living languages and one extinct language. Furthermore, “there is not a one-to-one correspondence between language and national identity in China” (Stites, 1999:99). As we have seen, there are more languages than minorities in China. Some minorities use two or more languages. The Yao speak three languages, Mien, Bunu and Lakia. The Yugurs speak Eastern Yugur, a Mongolian language, and Western Yugur, a Turkic language (Dai Qingxia, 1998:1). An example of a different kind of language use is found among the Ewenki nationality. The Ewenki have their own language but are also said to use Mongolian in pastoral areas and Chinese in agricultural areas (Chun Shizeng, 1989:40; Du Ruofu and Vincent Yip, 1993:33). On the other hand, there are also cases where different minorities use the same language (Teng Xing and Wang Jun, 2002:104). Further complicating the issue, there is often variation within the same minority language which can be very significant (Stites, 1999:98-9). The various dialects of Miao and Hani for example are mutually unintelligible (Teng Xing and Wang Jun, 2002:104). A more extreme case is the Yi. The Yi language is classified into a total of six dialects, Northern, Eastern, Southeastern, Southern, Central and Western. There is also considerable variation within each of these dialects (Bradley and Bradley, 2002b:81). At the same time, some languages are very close to each other. Ewenki and Oroqen are close enough that they could be considered dialects of the same language rather than different languages (Ramsey, 1987:214). However, this recognition of greater linguistic diversity is largely confined to academic circles and has little influence on the government’s policy making (Ramsey, 1987:169; Zhou Minglang, 2003:23).

6.4 The Current Use and Status of Minority Languages: Policy and Reality

As with policy towards minorities in general, policy towards minority languages has alternated between tolerance and repression. According to Dreyer (2003a:353), policy towards minority languages is repressive when ideology is deemed to be the most important issue and tolerant when such concerns are not the top priority. The early period of the PRC was quite tolerant towards minority languages and as discussed earlier the emphasis was on researching minority languages. This period of tolerance came to an end with the Hundred Flowers campaign of 1957 and the Great Leap Forward of 1958. Language was not a major aspect of these campaigns but "tremendous emphasis was placed on rapid growth and ideological purity, and government toleration for ethnic diversity consequently diminished drastically" (Dreyer, 2003a:363). The government wanted minorities to speak *putonghua* and many minority language activities ceased because they were deemed to be too expensive and a distraction from production. Research on minority languages was also scaled back or cancelled altogether and some scholars were accused of exaggerating the differences between *putonghua* and minority languages or not wanting to help the CCP achieve its goals (Dreyer, 2003a:363-4). A more tolerant approach was taken from the early to mid-1960s where most of the intolerant policies were reversed. However, with the onset of the Cultural Revolution, minority languages were again repressed, more so than at any other time. Although some political works were published in minority languages (Bradley, 1994:198), many publications in minority languages ceased and minority language broadcasts also stopped during this time (Dreyer, 2003a:365-6). After the Cultural Revolution, there was a swing back to tolerance in minority language policy. Broadcasts began again, minority

institutes were opened, operas were allowed to be performed in minority languages and research renewed (Dreyer, 2003a:369-72). Under Deng Xiaoping, minority language policy was even more positive and tolerant:

> Deng believed that encouraging minority languages and their cultures would stimulate production. His reasoning, which also applied to Han areas, was that repressive policies had led to economic stagnation. It followed that allowing more freedoms –which, in the case of minorities, would include greater freedom to use and develop their languages and literatures –would generate increased production. Deng further believed that economic backwardness rather than class friction was the main source of interethnic tensions in China (Dreyer, 2003a:372).

Research on minority languages boomed, education in minority languages was expanded and publishing also increased. Of course, things did not always go according to plan and some significant problems hindered the implementation of minority language policy, not the least of which was the generally poor conditions in minority areas (Dreyer, 2003b:372-9)[7]. However, this positive approach continues today and minority languages are certainly in a better position than when repressive policies were in force. To give some idea of the overall situation, by 2003 4787 books (amounting to a total of 50.34 million copies) in minority languages had been published and there were 205 magazines and 88 newspapers in minority languages. In the area of radio and television, there were 122 radio broadcasting organisations providing programming in 15 minority languages through 73 radio stations and 523 radio transmitting stations and 111 television broadcasting organisations providing programming in 11 minority languages via 94 television stations and 830 transmitting stations (*White Paper on Regional Autonomy for Ethnic Minorities in China*, February, 2005). In addition, steps have recently been taken to improve the lot of minority languages. In 2002 the 15th session of the Seventh

[7] This issue is taken up in Chapter Seven as it applies to English language learning among minorities.

Regional People's Congress of the Tibet Autonomous Region passed a law aimed at protecting the Tibetan language and increasing its use. The law has various provisions including compulsory study of Tibetan for the first nine years of schooling, the right to use either Tibetan or Chinese in court and government meetings, and Tibetan study for Han and other nationalities living in Tibet. The law also stipulates that the regional government must take steps to produce teachers and other professionals with Tibetan language skills (*People's Daily Online*, 22/5/2002). Also in Tibet, the Qamdo People's Radio Station began broadcasting a program in the Khamba dialect of Tibetan. There are 18 hours a day of broadcasting on topics such as news, agriculture and science and technology (*People's Daily Online*, 2/12/2001). Minority languages have also started to be used in information technology. According to a report in the *People's Daily Online* (31/7/2002), the official website of the Hohot Municipal People's Government is the first website to use a minority language. The purpose of the website is to provide local people with information in both Mongolian and Chinese. People can also contact the government via emails written in Mongolian or Chinese. Developments in information technology have also been made in Tibet. In 2001, researchers at Tibet University began working on a Windows platform that could handle Chinese, English and Tibetan (*People's Daily Online*, 7/6/2001). In the same year a Tibetan language version of the website www.tibetinfo.com was launched (*People's Daily Online*, 12/9/2001). Qinghua University and Xinjiang University have jointly developed technology that allows the Uygur, Kazak and Kirgiz languages to be scanned into a computer (*People's Daily Online*, 11/8/2004). One of China's largest appliance companies, Haier, decided to make television sets with instructions in minority languages. The first batch of televisions will

have Mongolian instructions and televisions with Uygur, Tibetan and Korean instructions are planned for sometime in the future (*Xinhua News Agency*, 23/6/2002).

Despite these positive policies and activities, minority languages by and large remain limited in their functions and use[8]. Teng Xing and Wang Jun (2002:104-5) estimate that around 38 million people use a minority language, which amounts to 34% of the total minority population. The use and status of each minority language varies considerably. At one end, there is Korean. The Korean language is used a lot in China, perhaps more so than any other minority language. In recent years there has also been some interest among the Han Chinese in learning Korean due to the rise of business with Korean companies. As Bilik (1998:57) explains:

> The successful South Korean economy and its gigantic companies like Samsung, which has made its way into China's market with large investments in metropolitan areas, have helped to raise the status of the Korean language. Free Korean classes are offered to urban people and many, […..], have attended. The motive is simple enough: proficiency in the Korean language will help get a job in a Sino-Korean joint-venture company where staff are better paid than at state enterprises.

At the other extreme is Manchu. Today, the Manchus are almost completely assimilated to the majority Han. This goes for the Manchu language as well, which is in a similar situation to Gaelic in the British Isles (Ramsey, 1987:217). Manchu is now spoken only by a few elderly Manchus in remote villages. The language does have a written script originally based on the Mongolian alphabet but, like the spoken language, it too is hardly

[8] Nonaka (2004) reminds us that it is not just spoken languages that are in danger of extinction but also sign languages used by minorities. According to a *People's Daily Online* (20/5/2004) report, China has developed a sign language for Tibetan. This is the first time a sign language has been developed for a minority nationality in China. The development, use and status of such languages in China would be worthy of its own research project.

ever used anymore except for a few places in Xibe territory (Du Ruofu and Vincent Yip, 1993:7). Most minority languages are somewhere between these two extremes.

Determining the number of speakers a language has is notoriously difficult as has already been discussed in relation to the number of English speakers in China. For minority languages the situation is no better. There is little agreement across sources and different sources sometimes give vastly different numbers. For example, Ethnologue (2000) says of Hezhen that there are "40 speakers out of 4 245 in the ethnic group in China (1990 census)". The *UNESCO Redbook on Endangered Languages: Northeast Asia* says the number is "unknown, but hardly more than 500, possibly much less". For Manchu, the *Redbook* states there are "probably less than 20" speakers and Ethnologue (2000) puts the number at "20-70 speakers". Zhou Minglang (2003:25) says there are "a few hundred out of 9 846 776 Manchus" who speak the language. This confusion is perhaps understandable for small languages that are close to extinction but similar disagreements are also found for larger languages. According to Zhou Minglang's (2003:24) calculations, "94% of 4 593 072 Tibetans" speak Tibetan. Ethnologue (2000) however puts the number at 1 066 200. In an attempt to avoid some of this confusion, I have avoided giving exact numbers of speakers for each minority language. Table 6.8 shows approximate numbers of speakers for each minority language. This table is based on figures given in Teng Xing and Wang Jun (2002:104). They list a total of 73 minority languages, the official 60 plus 13 more. Only the 60 officially recognised languages are included here. I have kept Teng Xing and Wang Jun's original categories but added one

more, the last, and reassigned some languages where there is enough agreement across sources to do so.

Table 6.8 Minority Languages by Approximate Number of Speakers

Number of Speakers	**Languages**	**Total**
Over 10 million	Zhuang	1
5-10 million	Uygur, Yi, Miao, Tibetan	4
1-5 million	Mongol, Bouyei, Korean, Dong, Hani, Bai, Kazak, Dai, Li, Mien	10
500 000 – 1 million	Lisu, Lahu	2
100 000 – 500 000	Bunu, Dongxiang, Shui, Va, Naxi, Tujia, Kirgiz, Qiang, Tu, Duar, Mulam, Zaiwa	12
50 000 – 100 000	Blang, Salar, Jiarong, Pumi	4
10 000 – 50 000	Maonan, Xibe, Jingpo, Tajik, Achang, Ewenki, Russian, Jinuo, Deang, Jing, Nu, Derung, Baoan, Lakia, Monba, Gaoshan	16
5000-10 000	Gelao, Western Yugur, Oroqen, Uzbeck	4
1000-5000	Eastern Yugur, Tuvin, Tatar, Lhoba	4
Less than 1000	She	1
Less than 100	Manchu, Hezhen	2

Source: compiled from data in Teng Xing and Wang Jun (2002:104)

One commonality among all minorities is the increasing use of Chinese. As we saw in Chapter Five, Chinese has increased its influence and scope in China considerably. Minorities have definitely been touched by this trend, especially in recent years. As Zhou Minglang (2003:27) points out, “the linguistic landscape has changed significantly in China in the last half century”. While there are no exact figures, the proportion of minorities who can speak Chinese has increased drastically. According to Teng Xing and Wang Jun (2002:104-5), over 23 million, or 21% of those who speak a minority language

are bilingual. In addition to this, there are some 50 million or 45% of the minority population who have shifted to another language and no longer use their minority language. They assume, almost certainly correctly, that the language most often used by bilinguals and those who have shifted to another language is Chinese. This then means that 65% of the minority population speaks Chinese. Zhou Minglang (2003:27) gives some idea of how this situation has changed over time, as shown in Table 6.9. When the Communist government first came to power in 1949, under 20% of the minorities were able to speak and understand Chinese. The percentage had increased by the late 1950s when around one quarter of the minority population could speak and understand Chinese. Towards the end of the 1980s the figure had increased to 50-60%. Based on these trends, Zhou estimates that at the start of the 21st century over 70% of China's minority population speak and understand Chinese. While there is a slight difference between the two sets of figures, the trend is clear.

Table 6.9 Percentage of the Minority Population that Speak and Understand Chinese

Time	**Percentage of Minority Population that Speak and Understand Chinese**
1949	Probably under 20%
Late 1950s	25% or more
Late 1980s	50-60%
Late 1990s – early 2000s	Probably 70% or more

Source: compiled from data in Zhou Minglang (2003:27)

While the government's policy has not shifted drastically away from supporting minority languages, there has been greater emphasis on promoting Chinese in recent years (Zhou Minglang, 2003:88-98). For example, in 2002 a campaign was launched to promote *putonghua* in China's western regions where many minorities live. According to officials and academics, good knowledge of *putonghua* is essential for attracting investment,

developing the region and communicating with other parts of China (*China Daily*, 23/9/2002). More recently, the government has taken steps to improve Chinese language ability in Xinjiang. The 76 million yuan project will train approximately 6000 teachers in Chinese. Around 2000 of these teachers will then be posted to schools around Xinjiang (*South China Morning Post*, 6/3/2004). A Chinese language test called the Chinese language proficiency test for ethnic minorities (MHK) has also been introduced. The first test was held in Jilin on 17th December 2003. The test will soon be used in Xinjiang, Qinghai, Gansu, Inner Mongolia, Liaoning, Heilongjiang, Tibet and Sichuan. The test can be used for purposes such as deciding how much Chinese training a minority student might need. It is also seen as part of the promotion of Chinese, it is supposed to "push forward the reform of Chinese language teaching and improve the ability in the use of Chinese language using [sic] for the ethnic minorities in their life, study, and social communications" (*People's Daily Online*, 20/12/2003). Zhou Minglang (2003:27) sums up the situation aptly when he states "as more and more minority people speak Chinese as a second language or shift to Chinese as the first language and Chinese occupies more and more domains of language use, minority languages in China become less and less vital". Considering their present use and status and the spread of English in China, some may say that English is an additional threat to minority languages and may contribute to their demise. The rest of this chapter examines the use and status of English in minority areas of China.

6.5 English and China's Minorities

The study of the influence of English in minority areas of China has been almost totally ignored by both Western and Chinese scholars. Of course, this does not mean that English is not having an influence on the minorities. According to the information available, the English language has indeed reached minority areas. A report in *People's Daily Online* (9/3/2000) tells of Yao women in Sishui village of Longsheng Multinational Autonomous County in Guangxi Province learning tourism English at the village school. English has also established some presence in Tibet, where increasing numbers of people are studying English at universities or in classes outside of school (*People's Daily Online*, 19/11/2001). However, the exact nature of the use and status of English in minority areas and the implications it may have for minority languages are far from fully understood. As outlined in Chapter One, most of the data for this section comes from fieldwork. The representativeness and generalisabilty of data were difficult issues to deal with. Choosing one minority to focus on would not have been appropriate because no one minority can possibly represent all of the minorities. On the other hand, treating the minorities as a whole runs the risk of ignoring the great diversity and differences among them. After going through the process of designing and conducting the research, I found that there was insufficient information to focus on one minority or even a specific area. The approach taken here was to get information where it was available and accessible, regardless of which minority nationality it applied to.

Nevertheless, I believe that the data do have some general applicability. I went to two very different areas to conduct fieldwork. The fieldwork sites are at opposite ends of

China, one in the northeast and one in the southwest. These regions have different characteristics and are home to different minorities who are integrated into China to different degrees. In the northeast, fieldwork was conducted primarily in Jilin Province. Historically, the northeast is considered part of the Frontier as opposed to China Proper (Sinclair, 1987:10; Toops, 1999:15-6). Reflecting this, the northeast was once almost entirely non-Han. As van Kemenade (1997:310) says, the northeast was "steppeland scantly populated by Manchus, Mongolian and Tungusic tribes". Today the northeast is firmly under Han control. It is not a minority region in the same sense as Tibet or Xinjiang and with the exception of the Koreans the minorities there are well integrated with the Han. The northeast is an important region for industry and agriculture. It is the most industrially developed part of China and the most productive agricultural region outside of China Proper (Crissman, 1992:19-20). Guizhou on the other hand is one of the poorest provinces in China. Guizhou Province is located in China's southwest and covers the northeast section of the Yungui or Yunnan and Guizhou Plateau. Much of its area is mountainous. Industry in the province did not advance in any meaningful way until the 1960s (Mackerras, 2001:248). In terms of minorities, Guizhou has many more than Jilin. In Jilin Province there is one autonomous prefecture, three autonomous counties and 32 minority *xiangs* (*China's Ethnic Yearbook*, 2002:39-40, 55). Guizhou has three autonomous prefectures, 11 autonomous counties and 253 minority *xiangs* (*China's Ethnic Yearbook*, 2002:63; Mackerras, 2001:254-5). In terms of population, 2 453 211 people or 9.51% of Jilin's population are members of minority nationalities. In Guizhou, 12 625 500 people or 35.81% of the total population are classified as minorities (*China Population Statistics Yearbook*, 2002:78-106)[9]. Guizhou's minorities are much less

[9] These figures exclude unidentified minorities and foreigners with Chinese citizenship.

integrated than those of the northeast in the degree to which they have maintained their traditions, cultures and languages. Despite these differences, there are some striking similarities between the two places in terms of the presence of English, as will be seen below. Therefore, the data presented here gives a reasonably accurate, if only partial, picture of English in minority areas of China. The following section will explore the uses and users of English in minority areas and the attitudes of the minorities towards English. At the present time, English has a fairly limited presence in minority areas. In terms of attitudes towards English, the minorities want to learn English for the benefits it can bring although some did express concerns about the potential impact of English on their own languages. All interviews were conducted in Chinese unless otherwise noted. The data is presented in English; all translations are mine and in some cases the translation was done with assistance from my Han Chinese girlfriend who accompanied me during my fieldwork.

6.6 The Uses and Users of English in Minority Areas

Compared with the widespread use of English in China as a whole that was outlined in Chapter Three, English has very little presence in minority areas. Furthermore, this presence is fairly superficial. It is possible to find English in minority areas but it is used in a limited number of domains that are for the most part not very meaningful.

6.6.1 Limited and Superficial Use of English

The main domain in which English is used is on signs. There are two types of signs: official and commercial. Official signs appear on government buildings while commercial signs appear on businesses, shops and in advertising.

Official Signs

Most of the official signs listed here were seen in Korean areas. In these areas, it is common for signs to have Korean on top followed by Chinese and then English on the bottom. In Tumen, a sign at the train station ticket office followed this pattern. The first line was Korean, followed by Chinese then the English words "Handicapped First". At the entrance of the customs building there were two signs, one either side of the gate. One was in Chinese and the other read:

> People's Republic of China
> Tumen Customs

An official sign featuring English was also displayed on the door of the local government offices in Aladi, a Korean village outside Jilin City. With Chinese characters on top and English underneath, it read:

> A MODEL UNIT JILIN BRANCH OF COMMUNIST PARTY

In the Miao areas of Guizhou there was an official sign that had Chinese characters on top and English underneath. It read:

> Leishan National Health Inspection

Commercial Signs

Commercial signs were much more numerous than official signs. English was featured in signs on banks, businesses and in advertising as the following examples show.

In the Korean village of Aladi, there was a sign for China Unicom, which read:

China Unicom A La Di Service Branch.

These signs listed below are from Yanji. All of them had Chinese and English with some also having Korean. The layout was the same as the official signs described above.

China Industrial and Commercial Bank
China Tobacco
Bank of China

A sign for China Mobile in Tumen also looked like this. Several signs of a similar type were seen in Leishan, a Miao village close to Xijiang. They too followed the pattern of Chinese on top and English underneath. Examples include:

China Post
China Unicom
China Life Insurance
Construction Bank of China

The following sign is from a banner atop a building in the main square of Xijiang village:

MIAO'S FOLK HANDICRAFT GALLERY

The same place also had a board of photos advertising various services. It read:

INTERPRETER ENGLISH
TAKE PHOTOS
SELL FILM
DEVELOP FILM

An advertising banner over the basketball court in Xijiang featured mainly Chinese characters but in one corner had the English words China Mobile.

Although in some cases the use of English on signs gives it "official" standing, the use of English on signs is hardly a significant intrusion of English into minority areas.

6.6.2 Limited Knowledge of English

There are members of minority nationalities who have knowledge of English. However, upon further investigation this knowledge turns out to be rather limited and confined to a certain section of the population. The English spoken by minorities is usually some simple greetings and attention getting phrases. While ability of this kind was found among a wide variety of people, proficiency in English beyond this basic level is largely confined to students and teachers.

Greetings and Attention Getting Phrases

There is certainly English spoken by minorities in minority areas, including some of the more out of the way places. As Mackerras (2003a:133) points out, "that most globalised of languages, English, is beginning to spread, even in the minority areas, and in Tibet ordinary people very frequently address tourists in broken English". This is certainly the case elsewhere. At a market in Yanji a Korean woman yelled out "okay" and there was the usual "hello" in Tumen, Xijiang and Langde. This came from a range of people including old women in Xijiang who frequently say "hello" or "hello *ni hao*". Some children in Xijiang approached me by saying "hello *gei wo shi kuai* (hello give me 10 kuai)". These kinds of greeting are fairly typical and can be heard throughout China. However, in minority areas knowledge of English does not seem to extend much past these simple greetings and exchanges. In interviews with members of minorities in both

the northeast and southwest this theme came through clearly. In Tumen a Korean shopkeeper called out to me in English: “Come into my shop”. When I asked if she could speak English she said she had learnt English at school and could say simple things such as “how much is it?” The shopkeeper upstairs also called out in English. However, she said she could not speak English although she studies it with her son. He can say simple things like “what’s your name?” and “how old are you?”

On the bus trip to Wuladi, a Manchu town near Jilin City, I asked a Manchu man if he could speak English. His response was:

> I can’t speak it. I can only say “okay”, “hello”. I didn’t study it. In the 70s I studied Russian at school because China had a close relationship with the Soviet Union. But I’ve forgotten it.

In Xijiang a waiter said, “okay” after we had ordered and after paying for the meal he said “thank you” but when asked if he spoke English he said no. At a store selling Miao handicrafts, I asked the shopkeeper how much something was. She replied “*Er shi wu*, okay”. The conversation then went as follows:

> Jeff: Do you speak English?
> Shopkeeper: Only a few simple words.
> Jeff: Are there many people here who can speak English?
> Shopkeeper: Very few. I can only say a few simple words. Hello, Okay.

Based on this data, the English used by minorities is what was described in Chapter Three as peddlers’ English. This is the kind of English used to attract the attention of foreign visitors and bargain with them (Pride and Liu Ru-shan, 1988:49-55; Zhao Yong and Campbell, 1995:385-8). However, knowledge of English did not extend much past this point.

Students and Teachers as the Main English Speaking Group

Not only is there limited knowledge of English but only a section of the population has such knowledge. In the areas I visited, only students and teachers had any regular contact with English and beyond basic proficiency in the language. This was the case in Hantun, a Manchu village near Jilin City. The village head, himself a Manchu, said that children in the village start to learn English in the fourth year of school. He had this to say:

> Jeff: Are there people here who can speak English?
> Village head: Very few. Only senior high school students and English teachers. One [English teacher] can speak English but the other can only say and understand simple things.

Unfortunately the English teacher was not at home on the day I visited so I was unable to check on this. However, in the village there was no English visible anywhere and not one person spoke English to me at all. The Miao waiter mentioned earlier expressed similar sentiments about the situation of English in Xijiang:

> Jeff: Are there people here who can speak English?
> Waiter: A lot. At least 100.
> Lin Han: Are they Miao?
> Waiter: Yes, most are. Few Han can speak English. The majority [of English speakers] are students and young people.
> Jeff: Where do they learn English?
> Waiter: Some of them go outside [the village] to work or study. Some people from Han areas come here to be teachers. They speak English.

Although there is no way to verify the number of English speakers, the waiter's comments bear out the argument that English is used mainly among students and teachers. It is also interesting to note that people from Han areas are coming to teach English. This seems to indicate that exposure to English is still largely confined to Han

areas. According to the hairdresser in the same village, “the middle school teacher can speak English” but “ordinary people can’t”.

In the minority areas visited, English is on the surface but it has not penetrated very deeply into these areas. With such limited presence and relatively few speakers, it is hard to see English as a destructive language or as a threat to minority languages. The fact that students are the main group of English speakers does have some important implications. These will be discussed more fully in Chapter Seven. For now, we turn to another aspect of language use among minorities.

6.6.3 Koreans Opting for Japanese

As mentioned before, the Koreans and their language are somewhat exceptional among China’s minorities. There are certain features of their interaction with English that may not be typical of the minorities but are still worth mentioning here. Interviewing conducted in Korean areas indicated that the foreign language of choice among some Koreans is not English but Japanese[10]. This first came to my attention in Tumen. When talking to the Korean shopkeeper mentioned earlier, she told me that more Hans than Koreans studied English and while there were some Koreans who could speak English most Koreans who studied a foreign language studied Japanese. A restaurant owner in Tumen said that her son was studying English at Harbin University but Japanese was the main focus of his studies. The same theme emerged from conversations with students. An English major student at the Economics and Information College of Jilin University told me that most of the Koreans at her college choose Japanese over English because

Japanese is more similar to Korean than English (Lin Han, personal communication). I interviewed a Korean student attending this college. He was an English major but also studied Japanese. Here is an extract from the interview, conducted in English:

> Student: The number of students studying Japanese is next to those studying English.
> Jeff: Why do so many students study Japanese?
> Student: Japan is a fast developing country.

A similar situation exists in Aladi, the Korean village outside Jilin City. This is an extract from an interview with a worker at the government offices that summarises the language situation there:

> Jeff: How many Koreans speak Korean and Chinese?
> Worker: Basically all of them speak Korean and Chinese.
> Jeff: Is there people here who speak English?
> Worker: Very few. Students at high school study it. Most of them study Japanese because it's similar to Korean. Japan is close [to China geographically].

In terms of the three views of English outlined in Chapter Two, English among the Koreans most resembles an irrelevant language. Japanese is more immediate and seems to have the preference of the Koreans.

6.7 Mixed Feelings About English

The data presented so far shows the limited presence and influence of English in minority areas. However, this is not to say that English has no influence at all on the minorities and their languages. In Yanji, I asked a Korean shopkeeper if she thought English was useful. She replied "*You yong. Zenme mei yong*?" or "of course English is useful, how couldn't it be?" This perception was common among the minorities I spoke to. At the same time, some minorities did express concerns about the potential effects of English.

[10] This is similar to the foreign language learning situation in South Korea, as discussed in Chapter Five.

This section looks at the reasons why minorities want to learn English and some of the concerns they raised.

6.7.1 Desire to Learn English

There is recognition of the importance of English among minorities and a perception of English as being associated with modern technology and prosperity. One of the Korean shopkeepers in Tumen thought that English was useful because Americans, Canadians and English people come to her store. Others have similar views of English.

This is an extract from the interview with the Korean worker at the government offices in Aladi:

> Jeff: Will English have an influence on the minorities one day?
> Worker: It will have a big influence. China has joined the WTO so we will use more and more English. We have to communicate with foreign countries. If you speak English it's easier to find a job.

One night in Xijiang I had dinner with a Miao family. This family made money by renting rooms, having tourists over for dinner and selling handicrafts afterwards. They said they communicated with guests in Chinese, although sometimes it was difficult. Then followed a discussion about English:

> Jeff: It seems there's very few people here who speak English.
> Wife: Very few. Students and teachers speak it. My son can.
> Jeff: Is English useful?
> Wife: Yes, it's useful.
> Husband: It's useful. To do anything you need English. It's useful for hi-tech things, they all use English. After joining the WTO we have to study many languages. We don't just have to study English but also German, Japanese and other languages. Like Zhou Enlai, he could speak many languages.

In Leishan I visited the Leishan Minzu Zhongxue (Leishan Nationalities Middle School). There I spoke to two English teachers, both of whom were Miao. All of the students at this school were minorities. Most were Miao with some Dong and Yi. Students have an English class everyday for a total of five classes per week. One of the teachers felt that English was useful "because English is used in medicine, advertisements, machinery and computers. If China wants to develop we have to learn English".

The commonly held view that English is useful came with the caveat that its usefulness applied more to the world outside than one's immediate surroundings. The first Korean shopkeeper in Tumen felt that English was useful but not in small places like Tumen, only in bigger places. The Manchu village head also told me that English was useful "but in small villages very few people speak it".

6.7.2 English as a Potential Threat to Minority Languages?

We have seen that minorities want to learn English for the benefits in can bring. This leads to the question: could English one day become a threat to minority languages? In Xinjiang's Qapqal Xibe Autonomous County, one of the editors of a Xibe language newspaper said, "although my job is to spread Xibe language, I only ask my child to learn to speak fluent Chinese and English. Xibe language is not a must" (quoted in *People's Daily Online*, 8/2/2002). There is certainly the possibility that English may contribute to a shift away from minority languages. However, when this question was put to the minorities I spoke to most thought English was not a threat. They did however express some concerns over its potential implications.

The Manchu village head felt that English was not a threat to Manchu because "English and Manchu are not in opposition to each other". The Korean worker at the government office in Aladi made the following comments about this issue:

> Jeff: Is English a threat to Korean?
> Worker: No it's not. Koreans can all speak Korean and Korean has a country. We have close contact with Korea. [showing a Korean language magazine] This is published in Yanbian. We have these kinds of things, Korean won't be like Manchu.

The Miao family did raise some concerns over English as illustrated by the extract below:

> Lin Han: Is English a threat to Chinese?
> Husband: No, the two languages will mutually influence and help each other.
> Jeff: Could Miao be replaced by Chinese and English?
> Husband: No, not now but there's a danger. Now few people speak Miao and it's not widely used. It's only spoken at home. English is used all over the world. You can't just study a bit. You have to learn it well. I told my son to learn it well. Chinese is also widely used. Mongolian, Tibetan and Miao people are in the same situation. These languages are only spoken in one place. If they want to develop they have to communicate with Han people. There will be more and more Chinese spoken. So there's a bit of a risk. Few people can write Miao. At school they don't teach it, they just learn themselves.

One of the teachers at the Leishan school expressed similar sentiments although seemed to think that the Miao language was in more danger from Chinese due to the difficulties students had with learning English:

> Jeff: If the children study Chinese and English everyday will Miao slowly disappear?
> Teacher: Yes, there's that risk. We have to speak to Han people. People don't neglect the language on purpose, they don't notice it happening.
> Jeff: If more and more people study English, is that a danger to Miao?
> Teacher: No. It's difficult for Miao children to study English. They speak Miao then when they go to school they slowly learn Chinese. At middle school they also study English. If they want to speak English they have to first think of how to say it in Miao, then translate it into Chinese then translate it into English. Vegetables in Miao is *cai bai*, in Chinese it's *bai cai*. It's hard for them to speak English. Their writing is OK but oral English is not. Teacher's English is also not good.

There are certainly some valid concerns about English among members of minority nationalities. For the most part however, they do not seem overly worried about what English might do to minority languages.

6.8 Conclusion

While there are some exceptions, minority languages in China are definitely under threat. Some of them are even on the verge of extinction. However, English is not the main reason for this threat. Based on my observational and interview data we can see two trends regarding English in minority areas. Firstly, English has only a limited presence in minority areas. It appears only on a few signs, in a kind of peddler's English, and in schools. Apart from students and teachers, not many members of minority communities have knowledge of English. Secondly, there is a strong desire among minorities to learn English for the benefits it brings. In terms of the three views of English, English in minority areas can best be described as an irrelevant language. However, the spread of English in minority areas is in its initial or beginning stages and will probably continue. What is likely to happen to China's many languages in the future? The next chapter looks at this very issue and makes some tentative suggestions on how linguistic diversity might be maintained while at the same time acquiring English.

CHAPTER SEVEN

PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES OF MAINTAINING LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY IN CHINA

> *On the other hand, many people want to know English and if given the choice of two out of three among Chinese, English and their own language, there are many minority people who would leave aside the third. Globalisation will more and more encourage such an attitude, because it promotes the influence of Western countries, most of which are either mainly English-speaking or with a citizenry that largely or even mostly knows English to a very high level (Mackerras, 2003a:132).*

> *Preserving linguistic diversity does not mean that language repertoires and cultures must remain unchanged. It is obvious that more and more people will require a knowledge of English and other world languages, as they seek to tap into the exciting and profitable services that the global economy offers. This need not necessarily conflict with the maintenance of diversity. Languages have coexisted in complementary functions since time immemorial. Furthermore, bi- or multilingualism supplies the advantages of a strong local identity and a global communication network at almost no cost, since children's capacity for spontaneous language learning is almost limitless (Nettle and Romaine, 2000:173).*

7.1 Introduction

Much of China's linguistic diversity is found among the minority nationalities. As the last chapter shows, this diversity is under threat mainly from Chinese rather than English. However, this does not mean that English can be ignored. Its presence and influence in minority areas will probably increase in the future, following the trends of China as a whole. More importantly, the main English learning group among the minorities is students. This group is important because they are the ones currently

using (or not using) minority languages and will one day pass on (or not pass on) minority languages to the next generation. The decisions they make will be affected by a number of factors. Although minority areas are still less developed than Han areas, the current crop of students is likely to have more opportunities, be economically better off and more mobile than previous generations. They are also likely to have the most exposure to developments that could result in English having a greater presence in minority areas. For example, a government project to give every village access to television and radio resulted in more than 70 million people in 117 345 villages having access to these services by the end of 2003. Some 54 365 of these villages were in regions with significant minority populations, namely Inner Mongolia, Xinjiang, Guangxi, Ningxia, Tibet, Qinghai, Gansu, Yunnan, Guizhou and Sichuan (*White Paper on Regional Autonomy for Ethnic Minorities in China*, February 2005). In 2004 a second project of this nature, with the aim of giving villages with electricity and over 50 households access to television and radio, was launched. Once again, the number of minority areas covered is significant: 59 000 of the 90 000 villages the government estimates will have television and radio within two years are located in minority areas of China (*White Paper on Regional Autonomy for Ethnic Minorities in China*, February 2005). As described in detail in Chapter Three, television and radio are among the domains in which English is used most. Changes in China's educational practices are also likely to influence decisions regarding language. One of the goals of China's minority education policy is to produce qualified and skilled people to work in minority areas and help them develop. However, university graduates are no longer assigned jobs by the government (Postiglione, 1999:11-2), which has led to "a recent trend for minority graduates to seek economic opportunities outside their relatively poor native regions" (Sautman, 1999:196). Many of the most

developed regions are where English has its greatest presence. This means that minorities may well get more exposure to English and see it as a way to advance further. It is therefore their decisions that will determine the fate of minority languages and the role English will play in this process.

The best possible outcome is for minorities to speak their own language, Chinese and English. This chapter argues that this is achievable as it is entirely possible to speak three languages. It begins by reviewing opinions that it would be difficult or impossible for minorities to acquire English then counters these by presenting the latest thinking on bi-/multilingualism, including examples from China, both my own and those of others. It then introduces the concept of additive bilingualism and argues that the two main obstacles to achieving it in China are the lack of educational resources and lack of minority cultural content on the curriculum rather than any inherent difficulty involved with knowing and using three languages. To bring about a situation where minorities are able to speak a minority language, Chinese and English, China needs to focus on improving education and the standard of living for minorities as more equality will increase the chances of language maintenance and also encourage the kind of attitudes required for acquiring English without the loss of the minority language. The final part of this chapter concentrates specifically on how English language learning and teaching among the minorities might be improved for two reasons. Firstly, the issue of Chinese language learning among the minorities has been discussed extensively by scholars both in China and in other countries. Likewise, much has already been written about the teaching and learning of English in China in general or as it applies to the Han majority. Here I discuss Chinese scholars' suggestions for improving ELT among minorities arguing that while they are useful

they do not fully address the obstacles described above. I then go on to suggest that the Context Approach should be used to help overcome these difficulties.

7.2 The Case for Minority Languages, Chinese and English

What languages should minority nationalities in China learn and use? As mentioned in Chapter One, minority languages should be maintained for linguistic (describing languages), ethical (giving future generations the opportunity to learn the language), scientific (preserving the knowledge contained in languages) and symbolic (language as a symbol of identity and culture) reasons (Bradley and Bradley, 2002a:xi-xii). If minorities were to cease using their own languages, much would be lost. However, just knowing the minority language is not enough for minorities living in China. No one would deny that the minorities must also know Chinese, at least to some degree. Not knowing Chinese would have very serious consequences because "if the members of the minority nationalities do not learn Modern Standard Chinese, they will find all the opportunities that society has to offer barred to them" (Mackerras, 1995:144). As Stites (1999:124) correctly points out:

> At this point in history, China has no choice but to make every effort to construct a viable bilingual educational system for its national minority students. Without mother tongue instruction, China cannot possibly enrol and keep monolingual linguistic minority children in school. Without providing minority children with instruction in *Putonghua*, the Chinese party/state cannot socialize these children into the political, cultural and economic mainstream of Chinese society, nor can it provide them with the skills and knowledge needed to support the development goals of the Four Modernizations. What the Chinese party/state wants and needs is a bilingual educational system capable of producing people who are both "ethnic and expert".

Obviously, minority nationalities have to know both Chinese and their own language. But what about English? A similar argument to the above applies to learning English. According to Zhou Minglang (2001b:147 cited in Geary and Pan Yongrong,

2003:279), a major issue for China will be "teaching its increasing number of minority children, as it embraces globalisation and enters the information economy in the 21st century". Part of this embracing of globalisation is learning English. As already discussed in previous sections of this thesis, knowledge of English brings many opportunities and advantages in today's world. English is also becoming increasingly important for success in China in terms of finding a good job, entering university, doing business etc. Based on the data presented here, the minorities are certainly aware of these issues and showed a desire to learn English. Given this, we cannot deny minorities access to English or stop them from learning it. To do so is akin to keeping people poor. Toynbee (2000:194-5) makes this point well:

> There is some ethnocentric disingenuousness about our concern for the preservation of traditional cultures and our disgust at the way Western culture invades the arts of other peoples. Western explorers and tourists to remote places are just visiting for a quick look before beating a retreat to London, Paris, or New York, so we want other people to stay just as they are, while having the newest things for ourselves.

Therefore, the best possible solution is for minorities to acquire English without losing either Chinese or the minority language. In the words of the Miao man quoted in Chapter Six, the minorities should try to be "like Zhou Enlai, he could speak many languages". What are the possibilities of doing this?

7.3 Multilingualism and China's Minorities

In relation to English among minorities in China, there seems to be a view that it is not possible for minorities to learn and successfully maintain their own language, Chinese and English. For example, Mackerras (1995:145) states that:

> If a minority wishes to maintain its own language, then it must either be trilingual or not learn any language of countries outside of China. This then puts them at a disadvantage as against the Han people. In Xinjiang, several Uygur teachers told me simply, 'For us Chinese is the foreign language. It's

> the national language, so our students must know it. But it means they can't learn English'. Only at university or specialised secondary level can Uygur students in Xinjiang learn English. It was not China which determined the value of English in the world of the late twentieth century, and there is merit in allocating such efforts to maintaining minority languages. Nevertheless, the problems created in terms of knowing an international language such as English are very real for China's minority nationalities.

Likewise, when discussing the situation in Inner Mongolia, Bilik (1998:51) writes:

> Many Mongolian intellectuals argue for trilingualism, that is, for learning English and Chinese without sacrificing Mongolian, but the feasibility of this idea still hangs in the balance, considering the tremendous workload that students have to deal with. Not everybody is a prodigy. School masters and teaching staff have to choose a pair from among Chinese, a foreign language and Mongolian. However, there is no denying that the use of one language implies the exclusion of others at various linguistic registers.

These quotes seem to indicate that there is something inherently difficult about acquiring English or that it would be too much for the minorities to cope with. While there are indeed some difficulties associated with learning English without losing the minority language or Chinese, it is by no means impossible and the difficulties that do exist are not of a linguistic or cognitive nature. This section will discuss the use of more than one language and show that in and of itself it is not problematic. Before proceeding further a word on terminology is needed. Several terms have been used to describe the ability to use more than one language including bilingualism, multilingualism and plurilingualism. Sometimes these terms are ascribed a specific meaning and sometimes they are used interchangeably. The term bilingualism is often taken to include the use of more than two languages. In the literature and research there are often "no clear delimitations between bilingualism and multilingualism" and this seems to be a generally accepted practice (Hoffman, 2001:2). Kaplan and Baldauf (1997:220) differentiate between bilingualism and multilingualism on the basis that the former applies to individuals while the latter applies to societies. Bilingualism is defined as "the achievement of a single person immersed simultaneously in two or

more language communities" (Kaplan and Balduaf, 1997:216). Multilingualism refers not to individuals but to societies. A multilingual society can be defined as "a society made up of many individuals some substantial number of whom command two or more languages to some degree" (Kaplan and Balduaf, 1997:217). Here I follow Romaine (2004:385) who states "I use the terms "bilingualism" and "multilingualism" interchangeably to refer to the routine use of two or more languages in a community". Therefore, the situation in which minorities speak their minority language, Chinese and English can be referred to as bilingualism even though three languages are involved[1].

Even when terminology is agreed upon, there is no generally accepted definition of bilingualism (Loveday, 1982:8-10). Definitions vary widely on aspects such as the degree and type of competence that counts as bilingualism. At one end of the scale is Weinreich's (1968:1 cited in Hoffman, 1991:15) definition of bilingualism as "the practice of alternately using two languages will be called bilingualism, and the person involved, bilingual". On the other hand Bloomfield (1933:55-6 cited in Hoffman, 1991:14) offers a very different definition requiring very high competence in two languages: "in cases where this perfect foreign-language learning is not accompanied by loss of the native language, it results in 'bilingualism', native-like control of two languages". The usual pattern, as demonstrated by these two definitions, is that earlier definitions see bilingualism strictly as equal ability in two languages whereas later definitions include a broader range of proficiency (Edwards, 2004:8). Further complicating the matter is that there are great differences in the nature of acquisition and social backgrounds of bilingual people (Loveday, 1982:10). In light of these

[1] According to Hoffman (2001), trilingualism is very similar to bilingualism. The main difference is quantitative rather than qualitative.

difficulties, Cunningham-Andersson and Andersson (1999:xi) do not use the term bilingual or multilingual but instead "prefer the more neutral expression, to live with two languages". The point here is not to arrive at a watertight definition of bilingualism or multilingualism but rather to show that it is possible and not harmful. Tokuhama-Espinosa (2003:2-10) lists 10 commonly held beliefs about multilingualism:

> 1. By learning more than one language, children can suffer from "brain overload"
> 2. Some languages are easier to learn than others
> 3. Multilingualism can cause language problems such as stuttering or dyslexia
> 4. It is impossible for an adult to learn a new language as fast as a child
> 5. Adults cannot learn to speak a foreign language without an accent
> 6. The ability to speak many languages is a type of intelligence
> 7. All people use the same area of their brains to speak different languages
> 8. A nine year old has the same brain size as an adult; therefore the two learn languages in the same way
> 9. Most of the world is monolingual
> 10. The more languages you know, the easier it gets to learn an additional one

For the most part, these beliefs are wrong. The first belief is quite widespread. In China the argument that it is too much work for children to learn more than one language is common (Shih Chih-yu, 2002:169). I have heard this argument from teachers and students at Jilin University. When discussing the situation of Korean minority students at Yanji University a Han Chinese English teacher whose friend works at Yanji University told me that it was very difficult for Koreans to learn English because they have to know too many languages and will get confused. However, this belief is wrong because languages are acquired naturally by children and the process is therefore not stressful. Some mixing of languages is normal but this stage soon passes. In fact, being bilingual or multilingual has been shown to increase creativity, metalinguistics awareness, problem solving skills and communication skills (Jeβner, 1997:19-23; Tokuhama-Espinosa, 2003:2-4). Similarly, the second belief is

also wrong on the grounds that for children there are no hard or easy languages. Any language can be acquired by children equally well. It is attitudes formed later in life that make one language seem harder than another (Tokuhama-Espinosa, 2003:4).

At one time, multilingualism was believed to cause a number of problems. This belief is still quite common and even some linguists think that multilingualism is harmful (Dorian, 1998:11). It has been suggested that multilingualism can lead to emotional difficulties, moral depravation, left-handedness, excessive materialism, laziness and low intelligence (Edwards, 2004:15). In the 1950s especially it was common to blame stuttering and dyslexia on multilingualism. However, it is not the ability to speak more than one language that caused these problems. Many of the studies that suggested a link between bilingualism and these or other problems had serious flaws. Once such flaws were fixed, studies no longer showed negative effects or actually showed that bilingualism can have positive effects (Edwards, 1994:68-71)[2]. It is true that having to read in two languages can compound problems for sufferers of dyslexia but this is because there is more reading, not because there are more languages. As Tokuhama-Espinosa (2003:5) points out, "since the majority of the world is bilingual, stuttering would be the norm worldwide, not the exception, if such a correlation existed". This applies equally to other problems attributed to multilingualism.

Point four is another very common belief. However, it is not entirely correct.

While children have remarkable language learning abilities, adults actually have an advantage over children in the early stages of learning another language. This is

[2] Scholars' views on bilingualism have gone through three stages: the first stage saw bilingualism as negative, the second stage regarded bilingualism as resoundingly positive and the third stage takes a more cautious approach –bilingualism is seen as positive but scholars are careful not to overstate the case (Jeβner, 1997:20).

because adults have more developed cognitive abilities which can be applied to the task of language learning. For example, adults can use such abilities to figure out grammar rules. Children do eventually attain higher levels of proficiency than adults but there is some suggestion that this may have more to do with a lack of motivation and/or insecurity on the part of adults than any deficiency in language learning ability (Tokuhama-Espinosa, 2003:6-7). As far as accents are concerned, children who learn a language from a very young age can speak that language with native pronunciation. Adults on the other hand generally speak a foreign language with an accent and have very little hope of acquiring native pronunciation. This appears to be a fact of language learning but once again it may have more to do with attitudes. Adults may not want to sound like native speakers of the second language or may like their accents and therefore do not make the effort to acquire native pronunciation (Tokuhama-Espinosa, 2003:7-8).

Point six is correct in that foreign language ability can be considered as a type of linguistic intelligence. However, intelligence and language learning ability are not related in a straightforward way (Tokuhama-Espinosa, 2003:8). The sort of intelligence that is measured by an IQ test is helpful for classroom language learning especially if the main focus is on learning the formal aspects of language such as grammar rules and vocabulary. However, intelligence is not as important when it comes to naturalistic language learning or even instructed learning where the main focus is on learning the language through using it in communicative activities. In these cases, "research has shown that learners with a wide variety of intellectual abilities can be successful language learners" (Lightbown and Spada, 1999:163). It is therefore possible to learn a second language well without extraordinary intelligence.

In regards to point seven, the area of the brain used for learning another language depends on age of acquisition. If a second language is learnt very early in life, both languages are stored in the same place –the left frontal and parietal lobes –as a monolingual. If on the other hand a second language is learnt after nine months of age the right hemisphere of the brain will be used more (Tokuhama-Espinosa, 2003:8-9). This does not appear to have any negative affects. In fact, there is some evidence to suggest that learning another language actually increases grey matter in the brain (see Mechelli et al, 2004). As is already becoming clear, adults and children do not learn in the same way. However, brain size is not the reason for differences between children and adults. Children and adults have different reasons for learning a language and these motivations will determine the way they learn and their success in language learning (Tokuhama-Espinosa, 2003:9-10).

Most of the world is not monolingual. Bilingualism is widespread; there are many more bilingual people in the world than monolingual people (Oksaar, 1989:33). This surprises many people but most estimates say that more than 70% of the world's population is bilingual or multilingual (Trask, 1999:30). This does not mean that all of these people speak two or more languages fluently or have competence in all four skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing. In fact, many bilingual people are literate in only one language (Tokuhama-Espinosa, 2003:10). There are also big differences between individuals and it is usually the case that "leaders, the educated, men, traders, those who travel, those in population centers, and people in certain age groups may be more bilingual than others" (Ethnologue, 2000). In addition, differences exist across regions of the world. Some places such as Papua New Guinea and India have high degrees of bilingualism whereas other countries such as Japan

have a largely monolingual population[3]. These caveats do not change the fact that "to be bilingual or multilingual is not the aberration supposed by many […]; it is rather, a normal and unremarkable necessity for the majority in the world today" (Edwards, 1994:1).

The last of these 10 beliefs is true. Studies show that bilingual and multilingual people are better at learning languages than monolingual people. Once someone has acquired a second language, this knowledge can be used to help learn additional languages. Such knowledge could be used to identify grammar structures for example (Tokuhama-Espinosa, 2003:10-11). This appears to be generaliseable across contexts, including China. Shih Chih-yu (2002:174) cites an experiment conducted in Fengping School, Luxi County, Yunnan Province. In this experiment, one class of Dai nationality students first learnt the Dai language then Mandarin while the second class began learning Mandarin straight away. After two years of instruction, the Mandarin ability of the first class was better than that of the second class. For example, 30% more students in the first class were able to write short passages in Mandarin. If learning the minority language can help in the acquisition of Chinese, it may also help in the acquisition of English. After all, minority students will have the experiences of learning both the minority language and Chinese to draw on when learning English. According to one Chinese author who has spent many years teaching English at universities for the minorities, members of minority nationalities have a natural ability for language learning and adapting to multilingual environments. Most minorities speak at least two languages, the language of their nationality and Chinese, and some of them speak even more. Most of them have also lived in environments where two or

[3] Contrary to popular belief, Japan is not a completely monolingual or moncultural country. However, minorities make up less than 2% of the population and most use Japanese, meaning Japan more closely resembles a monolingual country than almost any other country in the world (Coulmas, 1999:404-5).

more languages are used regularly. This experience is an advantage when it comes to learning English (Li Qiang, 2003:75-8). My personal experience confirms this view. I have met two members of minority nationalities who speak a number of languages. One is the Korean student quoted in Chapter Six. In addition to being an English major, he also studies Japanese and according to one of his classmates his Japanese is very good (Lin Han, personal communication). The other is a Mongolian postgraduate student. He spoke Mongolian, Chinese and English fluently. At the time I met him, he was also studying Japanese and French out of interest. There are also cases where the minority language itself can be a resource for English language learning. Depending on the language background of the student, there may be similarities between the minority language and English. Those minorities whose languages have an alphabetic writing system for example will find it easier to learn the English alphabet (Li Qiang, 1998:79). Wang Wangzhu (2000) argues that Zhuang and English have certain similarities in the areas of lively expressions, word building and word order. These similarities mean that Zhuang students can draw on the Zhuang language to help learn English, especially if teachers point out these similarities. Of course there are also cases where the minority language is quite different from English (see Li Qiang, 1998; 2003:79-84) but this should not be seen as an insurmountable problem.

To sum up, you do not have to be super-intelligent or extraordinarily gifted to speak more than one language. Acquiring another language(s) is especially easy for children and not impossible for adults. Nor will knowledge of more than one language cause any harm. In fact, as shown in the above discussion, being bilingual or multilingual actually has certain benefits. If there are any negative effects of bilingualism, they

"are almost always due to social, personal, cultural or other factors –and not to the bilingualism process itself" (Edwards, 2004:12).

In the case of China's minorities, the issue then is not whether it is possible to add English to their existing language repertoires but rather doing so in a way that does not result in the loss of either Chinese or the minority language. It is here that the distinction between additive and subtractive bilingualism is useful. As the term implies, additive bilingualism involves gaining competence in another language without loosing the language(s) already acquired. It "generally occurs where both languages continue to be useful and valued" (Edwards, 2004:10). In subtractive bilingualism, the second language is acquired at the expense of the first language. Subtractive bilingualism is often associated with "a society in which one language is valued more than the other, where one dominates the other, where one is on the ascendant and the other is waning" (Edwards, 2004:11). Lambert (1974 cited in Ellis, 1994:208) argues that the type of bilingualism attained depends on attitudes towards one's own language and culture and the language and culture of the target language group. These relationships are shown in Table 7.1 where a + symbol indicates positive attitudes and a – symbol indicates negative attitudes.

Table 7.1 Attitudes and Language Learning

Type of Bilingualism	**Attitudes towards Native Culture**	**Attitudes towards Target Language Culture**
Additive Bilingualism	+	+
Subtractive Bilingualism	-	+

Source: adapted from Ellis (1994:208)

When learners of another language have positive attitudes towards their own ethnic identity and the target language culture they are likely to maintain their first language

and add the second language to their linguistic repertoire, thus resulting in additive bilingualism. If on the other hand learners have negative attitudes towards their own ethnic identity and want to become part of the target language culture they are likely to replace their first language with the second language. Dorian (1998:3) gives a good explanation of how subtractive bilingualism comes about:

> it's fairly common for a language to become so exclusively associated with low-prestige people and their socially disfavored identities that its own potential speakers prefer to distance themselves from it and adopt some other language. Parents in these circumstances will make a conscious or unconscious decision not to transmit the ancestral language to their children, and yet another language will be lost.

The attainment of English language proficiency without the loss of competence in Chinese or the minority language therefore depends in large part on an educational system that encourages positive attitudes towards the minority culture and sees minority languages and cultures as valuable rather than inferior to Chinese or English. It also requires a significant amount of resources. Whether or not minority nationalities can achieve additive bilingualism is therefore a question of the educational policies and resources needed for doing so.

7.4 Education Policy and Reality Among China's Minorities

While acquiring another language "need not be some superhuman or unnatural feat" (Edwards, 1994:50), there are still some significant problems involved. This section discusses the educational situation of China's minorities and shows that the biggest obstacles in the way of successful additive bilingualism are lack of resources and the constraints on minority cultural content in the curriculum. An analysis of China's policies on minority education shows that although on paper such policies recognise that education has to cater for the needs of minorities and allow minority content in

the curriculum, the reality is somewhat different. Equally important is the issue of resources. There is no doubt that achieving additive bilingualism among the minorities requires a vast amount of money and other resources. Unfortunately, resources in minority areas are inadequate in a number of respects.

7.4.1 Minority Education Policy

China's minority education policy can be divided into three main periods: the early 1950s-1966, 1966-1976 and 1978 onwards (Postiglione, 1992a). Policy on minority education was first developed at the First National Conference on Educational Work among National Minorities in September 1951. This conference decided that minority education "must be in accordance with the CCP's ideology, scientific and mass based, and also foster the special features of the nationalities" (Mackerras, 1995:134). During this period, the focus of minority education was on training and development. The main goals were to train minority teachers and cadres and expand primary and adult education in minority areas (Postiglione, 1992a:27). During the Cultural Revolution years (1966-1976), the focus of education policy was on class struggle. Minorities were supposed to study Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought and education was supposed to encourage loyalty to China rather than a specific nationality (Mackerras, 1995:134). The number of schools teaching basic literacy actually increased during this time but the educational situation deteriorated in other ways. For example, the languages and cultures of the minorities were either ignored or criticised (Postiglione, 1992a:28). The de-emphasising of minority languages and cultures was such that "at no time in the twentieth century has the suppression of ethnic identities been sharper in education than during the Cultural Revolution" (Mackerras, 1995:134). The third period of minority education policy represents a

move away from radicalism and towards more freedom for the minorities. In February 1981 the Ministry of Education and the State Nationality Affairs Commission jointly sponsored the Third National Conference on Educational Work among National Minorities. The government now took the line that something must be done to improve education among the minorities. To help accomplish this aim, the Conference set out measures which resulted in the following:

> 1. The Department of Minority Education was set up under the State Ministry of Education. Corresponding organisations and appointments occurred at the provincial, prefecture and county levels
> 2. The minority autonomous regions were authorised to develop their own education. It was legislated that national minority areas could develop their own education programs, including levels and kinds of schools, curriculum content, language of instruction and enrolments
> 3. Special funds for minority education increased. A portion of the annual budget for minority areas could be used for education
> 4. Funds for teacher training have been increased and various types of in-service training have been set up
> 5. Schools have been established according to the characteristics of the national minorities and the regions as well. In pastoral areas, frontiers and cold mountainous regions, boarding schools were arranged and stipends were provided for these students
> 6. Special emphasis in education is placed on national minority language, culture and historical conditions
> 7. The expansion of higher education has been accelerated. Cooperation has been increased between frontier tertiary institutes and those in the interior
> 8. Major efforts have been devoted to conducting minority classes in key point universities and setting up preparatory classes for minority students
> 9. University admission standards for minority students have been lowered
> 10. Directional admission and directional work assignments have been arranged so as to build links between the national minority regions and the rest of the country (Postiglione, 1992a:28-9).

Although increased importance was placed on the role of education in bringing about national integration in light of minority students' participation in the Tiananmen Incident in 1989 and ethnic tensions in the former Soviet Union in the early 1990s (Postiglione, 1992a:29; Postiglione, 1992b:331), the ideas developed at the Third National Conference on Educational Work among National Minorities have remained the essence of minority education policy up to the present. In fact, further

developments along these lines occurred in the late 1980s and 1990s in the form of three government programs aimed at improving education among the minorities. Project Hope, launched in 1989, uses money donated by ordinary people to help poor children go to school. Many minority students have benefited from this program, for example the Tujia-Miao Autonomous Prefecture in Hunan has established 136 Hope primary schools (*White Paper on National Minorities Policy and its Practice in China*, June, 2000). Project Spring Bud is similar to Project Hope except that it specifically targets girls. The third project, started in 1993, sets up partnerships between well-developed and poor provinces. Under this program, the well-developed province provides economic and other aid to the poor province to help promote compulsory education (Mackerras, 2003a:127). More recently, the government enrolled 2500 students from minority areas in Masters and PhD programs for the 2005 academic year and will increase this number to 5000 in 2007. The idea of this plan is to "enhance training for high-level backbone personnel from ethnic minorities" (*White Paper on Regional Autonomy for Ethnic Minorities in China*, February 2005). The policies and measures taken by the government have certainly helped educate the minority population, as reflected by the number of minority students at all levels of education, shown in Table 7.2.

Table 7.2 Number of Minority Students Enrolled (thousands)

Type of Education	**1952**	**1965**	**1978**	**1985**	**1994**	**1997**	**1999**
Higher Education	2.9	21.9	36.03	94.1	177.9	217.0	247.7
Secondary School	73.0	371.8	268.0	2245.0	3242.0	4039.0	4632.9
Primary School	1474.0	5219.0	7686.0	9548.0	11492.0	12482.0	12142.0

Source: *China's Ethnic Statistical Yearbook* (2000:564 cited in Mackerras, 2003a:127)

These figures show a drastic increase in the number of minority students since the early years of the PRC. Between 1952 and 1985, the growth rate of minority students at all levels was faster than that of the Han, although this is partly because many

minorities did not have a school system prior to 1949 (Postiglione, 1992a:30). Since 1985 there have also been significant increases, especially at the tertiary level which became the focus of educational policy during the reform era (Mackerras, 1995:138). As of 2003, there was a total of 29.43 million students enrolled in all types and all levels of schools in autonomous places (*White Paper on Regional Autonomy for Ethnic Minorities in China*, February 2005) and according to *China's Ethnic Yearbook* (2002:448-52), 42 613 187 members of minority nationalities have completed primary school, 26 318 911 have completed junior secondary school, 5 355 968 have completed senior secondary school, 825 771 have completed an undergraduate degree and 36 338 have obtained a postgraduate education[4]. Despite these quite significant advances, minority education still lags behind that of the Han. Once again, it is important to note the differences between the minorities. There are cases where minority nationalities are successful in education. At least 15 minorities have higher literacy rates than the Han (Postiglione, 1992a:30)[5]. Some of the minorities have highly developed education systems, the most notable example among them is the Koreans. Education through the medium of the Korean language has taken place in Korean areas since 1952 and it is possible for students to receive a Korean language education from elementary school to senior secondary school (Shih Chih-yu, 2002:175). As of 1998, 96.8% of children in the Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture had graduated from junior middle school and the only illiterates were very elderly people (Mackerras, 2003a:129). In addition, according to Harrell and Ma Erzi (1999:215), there are some members of minority nationalities

[4] These figures are for people aged over six and exclude unidentified minorities and foreigners with Chinese citizenship.

[5] Literacy rates for minorities with written scripts refer to literacy in the minority language rather than in Chinese. Literacy rates for minorities without a written script refer to literacy in a widely used script which may or may not be Chinese. It is therefore possible for a member of a minority to be counted as literate despite not being able to read or write Chinese (Mackerras, 1995:140).

undertaking university studies overseas. These cases are the exception rather than the rule. Generally speaking, minorities are less likely than the Han to attend school, are not as successful in school and also drop out sooner (Harrell and Ma Erzi, 1999:220).

As we have seen, the various education policies of the Chinese government recognise minority languages and cultures and allow them to be used in education. However, the reality is somewhat different. China has a highly centralised education system and despite the vast differences in climate, geography, language and local customs, the curriculum is basically the same all over the country. Even the textbooks, known as *tongbian jiaocai* (literally uniformly written teaching materials), are produced by the central authorities and used everywhere (Harrell and Ma Erzi, 1999:218-9). This is especially true for subjects in which the government has its own position to push such as politics, Marxist-Leninist philosophy, character building, history and geography (Mackerras, 1995:135). The minorities are allowed some leeway in deciding what to teach but "most schools in minority areas or schools expressly for the minorities do not deviate from the unified national model in their basic philosophy, methods, or, except for classes in minority languages and literature, their content" (Harrell and Ma Erzi, 1999:220). In cases where subjects relating to the history, culture or other characteristics of the minority are taught, this is always done in addition to rather than instead of the standard curriculum (Mackerras, 1995:136). So, while there is some scope for the inclusion of minority cultures in education, maintaining and encouraging ethnic identity is a distant second to the goal of integrating and modernising the country in line with the CCP's ideology (Mackerras, 2003a:133).

7.4.2 Educational Resources Among the Minorities

In addition to lack of minority cultural content in the curriculum, there are other problems associated with minority education, the most important being lack of resources. This is a problem in minority areas generally and particularly in regards to education. As Postiglione (1992b:321-2) points out, minority areas are already behind the rest of China in terms of industrial development, urbanisation, health care, communications and transport infrastructure and living standards. This has some important implications for education:

> What all this has meant for education is less investment in building human resources, inadequate expenditure for teacher training and teacher retention, a lack of financial resources with which to build safe schools, and insufficient allocations from other sectors of the national minority regions that could be used to further vocational and technical education. Thus, there is insufficient expenditure that can be directed toward educational development, and in turn education has to struggle to make a visible contribution to economic development (Postiglione, 1992b:322).

While some significant advances have been made since the beginning of the PRC –as of 2003 there was a total of 83 726 schools in autonomous areas, which was five times the 1952 figure, 29.7% higher than in 1984 and 10.6% higher than in 1994 (*White Paper on Regional Autonomy for Ethnic Minorities in China*, February 2005) –the overall situation is still one where "especially in rural areas, there are shortages of teachers, schools, books and all other educational facilities" (Mackerras, 1995:139). It is not hard to find examples of extremely poor schools. As late as 1982 the Chengchu Primary School in Wuwu County, Guangxi Province had only one toilet to cater for its 2000 students, the school building was unsafe and teachers had to use their legs as desks. In Mashan county of the same province there is not even a classroom. Classes take place in a cattle pen and students must use umbrellas whenever it rains (Postiglione, 1992b:324). Perhaps the most important constraint on

minority education is lack of qualified teachers. Like the number of students, the number of minority teachers has also increased, as shown in Table 7.3. This increase is undoubtedly good for minority education but there are still shortcomings.

Table 7.3 Number of Minority Teachers

Year	Primary	Percentage of Total	Secondary	Percentage of Total
1965	133 200	3.5	14 635	3.2
1978	310 200	5.9	112 261	3.5
1985	397 800	7.4	125 560	4.7
1990	458 700	8.2	182 991	6.0
1997	527 900	9.1	246 900	6.9
1999	545 100	9.3	271 400	7.1

Sources: *China's Ethnic Statistical Yearbook* (1995:340), *China's Ethnic Statistical Yearbook* (2000:560-1), *China Statistical Yearbook* (1998:44) all cited in Mackerras (2003a:128)

Some teachers are unwilling to work in minority areas as they believe that working in such areas will be detrimental to their careers (Postiglione, 1992b:323-4). In cases where there are qualified teachers, they usually want to leave as soon as possible for a job in a more developed or urban area. Many schools in minority areas then have to cope with a high turn over rate of teachers (Shih Chih-yu, 2002:186). Living conditions are generally poor and in some cases teachers are not adequately provided for by the school (Postiglione, 1992b:323-4). Shih Chih-yu (2002:187) describes the situation of an 18-year-old female teacher in a mountain village in Xishuangbanna:

> With 130 renminbi a month and no rice, she has to carry bags of rice to the school every few months. Her students bring her some salted vegetables every morning. It is fortunate that her own village is not far away. Her room is made entirely of mud, with a weak light and one so-called bed. The classroom is next to it.

The English teacher at Jilin University mentioned earlier said of the English teaching situation at Yanji University, by no means a backward place, "few foreigners are willing to go there because of the conditions". Low wages and poor living conditions not only mean that teachers are not willing to work in minority areas but also that

fewer people want to become teachers in the first place. It is possible to earn many times more money for less work and less effort by being a taxi driver for example (Mackerras, 1995:150)[6]. This problem also affects the more educationally advanced minorities. At Xita School in Shenyang, Liaoning Province, many Korean teachers gave up teaching to pursue opportunities elsewhere. A teacher at this particular school earns 500-600 yuan per month. With the development of business links with South Korean companies, those with knowledge of the Korean language can find jobs in joint ventures. Such jobs usually pay 2000-3000 yuan per month, significantly more than a teacher's salary (Shih Chih-yu, 2002:176-7). The end result is that unqualified teachers teach in minority areas. According to Postiglione (1992b:323), many minority areas "have primary school graduates teaching primary school, lower secondary school graduates teaching lower secondary school, and upper secondary school graduates teaching upper secondary school".

There have also been cases of funds allocated to minority education being used inappropriately. For example, money is sometimes used to build administration offices instead of being spent on classroom facilities or teaching and learning materials (Postiglione, 1992b:320). In addition, what resources there are are not always used. Some minorities opt not to attend school or to drop out before completing their education for various reasons (Postiglione, 1992b:319-20). In some cases the school is simply too far away to get to. In Baiwu Town of the Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province, there is an elementary school capable of teaching from grades one to six. Schools in surrounding villages stop at grade three, four or five so students from these villages must come to Baiwu if they want to

[6] This problem is not confined to the minority areas but affects all of China, as discussed in Chapter Four.

continue their education. Depending on where one lives, it can take up to two hours each way to walk to the school (Harrell and Ma Erzi, 1999:224). One of the main reasons for low attendance is the introduction of school fees. Tuition fees were first introduced in the mid-1980s and have since become quite high. Fees are highest at tertiary level followed by senior secondary level. While there are no fees or only low tuition fees for primary and junior secondary school, other costs such as administration fees must be paid (Mackerras, 1995:138; 2003a:127). Even with various government subsidies, such fees put education, especially at higher levels, out of reach for some minority students. Officials in Xishuangbanna claim that high tuition fees for university mean that some minorities are reluctant to attend senior secondary school because a senior secondary school education is seen as useless if one cannot go on to university (Sautman, 1999:178-9). Lack of facilities also plays a part in low school attendance and completion but there are other reasons such as the perception of the curriculum as irrelevant to the minorities' lives, cultural traditions and religious beliefs and in some cases the view that education is a way of making minorities more like the Han (Postiglione, 1992b:320).

Authorities in minority areas are not happy with the state of education and have repeatedly asked for more to be done (Mackerras, 1995:135). Nevertheless, the situation faced by most of China's minority nationalities is inadequate resources and certain political constraints placed on what can be included in education and on the expression of ethnic identity in general. For minorities to gain the kind of language abilities argued for here would then require the allocation of an enormous amount of resources and significant changes in the government's attitudes towards minorities. This has some significant political implications as far as the position of minority

nationalities in Chinese society is concerned. As Nettle and Romaine (2000:179) put it, "the preservation of a language in its fullest sense ultimately entails the maintenance of the group who speaks it, and therefore the arguments in favour of doing something to reverse language death are ultimately about preserving cultures and habitats". A shift towards this kind of thinking about minority nationalities does not look like happening anytime soon.

This is not to criticise the Chinese government. Educating the minorities is a massive and extremely complicated task and faced with the same situation any government would experience difficulties[7]. The point here is to outline the problems involved with minority education in China. While a huge injection of resources and shift in government attitudes is probably unrealistic[8], something can still be done towards improving English language learning and teaching among the minorities. The next section discusses some of the suggestions made about ELT among the minorities and outlines an approach which is capable of taking into account the reality of the educational situation and developing appropriate solutions.

7.5 The Context Approach for the Improvement of English Language Teaching

Despite the fact that minorities are learning English and the importance this could have for the future of minority languages, there are few studies of English language learning and teaching among China's minorities. What studies there are recognise the

[7] Many governments arguably have a worse record on minority languages than China. See for example DeVotta's (2003) analysis of Sri Lanka's language policies, Ayres's (2003) analysis of language policies in Pakistan and Callahan's (2003) discussion of the handling of minority languages in Burma.
[8] Recently steps have been taken to develop minority areas. The most notable is the Great Western Development Strategy. Launched in February 2000, it aims to develop western China (comprised of all five autonomous regions, Shaanxi, Sichuan, Guizhou, Yunnan, Qinghai and Gansu Provinces) and reduce inequalities between these regions and the rich coastal areas. However, this project faces some serious problems and it remains to be seen what impact it will actually have (Mackerras, 2003a:70).

problems faced by ELT in minority areas and the need for something to be done to improve it. Some scholars concentrate almost exclusively on linguistic aspects of the learning process. For example, Lu Wanying's (1999) study of the difficulties faced by Zhuang students learning English focuses on linguistic difficulties and argues that pronunciation is the biggest obstacle in learning English. Lu Wanying (1999:121) goes on to say that the key to improving Zhuang students' English is to improve the pronunciation of high school English teachers. This is valid research and certainly helps further our understanding of language learning among the minorities. However, it does not really address the broader issues discussed above. Other scholars have called for English teaching to be adapted to suit the minorities and it is this approach that has the best chance of making a difference. As mentioned in Chapter Four, there is a growing awareness of the importance of context in language learning and teaching and how best to adapt language teaching to particular contexts (see for example Ellis, 1996; Holliday, 1994; Kramsch, 1993; Kramsch and Sullivan, 1996). This represents a shift away from research and thinking mostly or totally concerned with teaching methodology. This view has been referred to as the ecological perspective, the basic idea of which is that language teaching and learning is more complex than usually recognised and that it involves much more than just methodology, namely the features of the teaching context, the characteristics and beliefs of the teachers, students and others involved in the process of language learning and teaching. According to Tudor (2001:2):

> This perspective involves a fairly substantial shift in approach from that which has dominated (and in many ways still dominates) much thinking on language teaching. The ecological perspective offers an alternative to a positivistic and hierarchically based approach to the conceptualisation and planning of teaching programmes. It portrays language teaching as an emergent phenomenon, i.e. a reality which emerges dynamically from the actions and interactions of very many individuals working within specific contexts which operate according to rules that are proper to each as a reality in its own right.

> The ecological perspective on language teaching has parallels with the concept of sustainable development in economics, and with the call for more local forms of democracy and decision-making in the political field.

If language teaching is to be successful, "it has to work with people as they are in the context in which they find themselves at a given point in time" (Tudor, 2001:9). Suggestions along these lines have been made in China. Li Danhe (2002) argues that we cannot expect popular teaching methods to automatically work for English teaching among minority nationalities. Research into teaching English to minorities should start from the reality of the situation, identify the problems and then develop solutions. Similarly, Li Shiqiang (2000) argues for a graded system whereby the course content, textbook and expectations are catered to the knowledge and situation of minority students. This is a sound approach but it is faced with two problems. Firstly, there is the staggering diversity among minority nationalities in China. Even within one nationality there may be differences along class, gender and religious lines (Harrell and Ma Erzi, 1999:236) and this means that there is not going to be one generally applicable ELT methodology for all of China's minorities or all areas inhabited by minorities. Secondly, while many have argued for ELT to be adapted to the minorities, there are no guidelines for how this might be accomplished or what aspects of the situation should be looked at. An approach that takes account of China's diversity and offers a set of procedures for adapting ELT to minority areas is needed.

The Context Approach developed by Bax (2003) is in a sense an operationalisation of ideas about the importance of context in language teaching and learning and has the potential to improve English language education among the minorities. The Context Approach came out of what Bax (2003) sees as an overemphasis on teaching

methodology at the expense of paying attention to the context that language teaching takes place in. Bax (2003:280-1) argues that the dominant approach to language teaching in the West, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), focuses entirely on methodology and fosters the attitude that methodology is the most important factor in successful language learning. The Context Approach on the other hand holds "that methodology is *not* the magic solution, that there are many different ways to learn languages, that the context is a crucial determiner of success or failure of learners" (Bax, 2003:281 italics original). The differences between these two approaches are summarised in Table 7.4.

Table 7.4 Differences Between the CLT Approach and the Context Approach

CLT Approach	**Context Approach**
CLT is the complete answer	We must consider the whole context
If we don't have CLT, then we can't learn a language	Methodology (including CLT) is just one factor in learning a language
No other factors count in learning a language – only teaching methodology	Other factors are important
If you don't have CLT, then you are backward	Other methods and approaches may be equally valid

Source: Bax (2003:281)

Bax (2003:278) goes as far as to say that "it is time to replace CLT as the central paradigm in language teaching with a Context Approach which places context at the heart of the profession". It is not my aim to discuss whether or not this approach is better than CLT or should become the main paradigm in language teaching but rather to outline the potential usefulness of the Context Approach for English language teaching among China's minorities[9]. The way the Context Approach works is shown in Table 7.5.

[9]For a discussion of Bax's arguments about CLT and whether the Context Approach should replace it, see Harmer (2003).

Table 7.5 The Context Approach to Language Teaching: Priorities and Procedures

First Priority: Context

Step 1 Teacher will develop analytical tools for analysing and understanding the learning context

Step 2 Teacher will analyse the context carefully and systematically as far as possible. This includes enhanced awareness of these areas, for example:

Individuals	**Classroom Culture**	**Local Culture**	**National Culture**
Personal differences	Group dynamics	Regional differences	Political context
Learning styles	Group motivation	Status of teacher and students in community	Religious context
Learning strategies	Classroom environment	Attitude and behaviour of parents	Social context
Personal motivation	School environment	Local environment	National environment
Etc.	Etc.	Etc.	Etc.

The above analysis would have priority over the next two areas:

Second (or third priority): Teaching Approach. This may involve decisions related to methodological aims and means, including decisions relating to: syllabus, classroom seating, materials, methods, student groupings etc.

Third (or second priority): Language Focus. This will involve decisions related to the aspect of language to be focused on, such as lexis, for example, or phonology, or grammar.

Source: Bax (2003:287 with table section adapted from Holliday, 1994)

The Context Approach clearly acknowledges the complexity of language teaching and the range of factors that can influence it. It gives primary importance to the context or situation that language learning and teaching take place in while the teaching methodology and course content are only considered after the context. When used to develop language courses, the Context Approach would work in the following way. Firstly, information must be gathered about all aspects of the context. The Table includes most of the relevant features of any given context, including those that have been described here. It also allows for additional features that may be important. Once all of this information has been gathered and analysed, an appropriate method(s) and course content can be chosen. The aim here is not to restrict methodological choices – any methods that are likely to be useful can be chosen regardless of their origin or popularity. The same applies to course content. Depending on the needs of the

learners and other factors, the course could focus on grammar, vocabulary, speaking, reading etc. Finally, the decisions about methodology and content are put into action. Throughout the course the teacher monitors contextual factors. If there is a change in such factors a corresponding change in methodology may be required (Bax, 2003:285). In the form presented here, the Context Approach applies to teachers but this role could be filled by a researcher or a fieldworker. Where resources are adequate (or when they become so), minority teachers can become involved in this process.

The factors in the National Culture column are fairly well understood in the case of China. For information on the other factors, ethnographic research will be necessary. Ethnographic methods are well suited to research on minority education because they can show how education fits into the local context and how education is perceived by the minorities (Postiglione, 1999:12). This is all relevant to the areas identified in the Local Culture column. In order to get information on the factors relating to individuals and the classroom, we need to turn to those who know the situation best, the teachers and students themselves. There are two aspects to this. Firstly, information is needed on the "what is" of language teaching, that is what actually happens on a day-to-day basis in the language classroom (Nunan, 1992:230). This means classes should be observed as they happen, without placing any constraints on or attempting to control what happens (Bailey and Nunnan, 1996:1-9). Classroom observation of this kind is a useful tool for gaining information about teacher and learner behaviour, the learning and teaching process and the interaction between them (Allwright, 1988:256-8). Secondly, it is necessary to get the perspective of students and teachers. In other words, we have to listen to the voices (i.e. the concerns and

ideas) of those involved in the learning and teaching of English (Bailey and Nunnan, 1996:1-9). These people have experience of teaching English in minority areas and are likely to have developed ideas about what works and does not work in their classrooms. Freeman (1996) argues that teaching is in fact knowing what to do in a particular context and it is this knowledge which needs to be brought to light. Learners too have a part to play. Studies have shown that language learners can articulate their needs and desires about language learning more clearly than they are often given credit for (see for example Murray, 1996 and Snow et al, 1996). The experience, ideas and beliefs of teachers and students can be utilised as a basis for developing methods, a curriculum and materials for teaching English to minority nationalities, as suggested by the Context Approach. If the aim is to encourage additive bilingualism, minority content should be included. Lessons could be built around a particular aspect of the minority's culture and teaching methods should also focus on the characteristics of the minorities. For example, if singing is a significant part of a minority's culture then English could be taught through songs.

The main strength of the Context Approach as it applies to ELT among the minorities is that it is capable of taking into account the resources available in any given situation, the needs and desires of students in terms of content and methodology and perhaps most importantly the differences between each minority nationality and each area. However, while an emphasis on context means flexibility and the potential to develop locally based solutions, it also means that minorities have to be aware of the limits their situation places on them. As we have seen, questions remain over the political will of the Chinese government to let minorities maintain and develop their languages and cultural identity. The minorities then, while it is sad to say, need to be

aware of how far the government will let them go and be realistic about the chances of maintaining their particular identity and language. Even though any application of the Context Approach will have to take place within the parameters set out by the Chinese government, I believe that on a small scale positive results can be achieved. Small village schools for example can use this approach to make adjustments to teaching to make it more suited to the local situation without contradicting the directives of the central government. If this approach does prove to be successful, it will gain momentum and could then be used on a larger scale.

7.6 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the case for English language learning among China's minority nationalities. It has shown that learning English in addition to Chinese and a minority language is not problematic in and of itself. Because of the great diversity among the minorities, not all minorities will learn and teach English in the same way. By using the Context Approach, appropriate and realistic methods of teaching English to the minorities can be found. However, the Context Approach cannot make resources suddenly appear nor can it change government attitudes or policies. Changing China's stance on minorities and allocating more resources to minority education will have to be done by those with the authority to do so. Should this be done, it will benefit not only the minorities but may also help the government accomplish its goals, as Postiglione (1999:17) explains:

> As the market economy leads to more Han population floating into ethnic minority regions, the chances of cultural misunderstandings will grow unless schools do more to foster a sensitivity to minority cultures. School curricula that more accurately reflect the cultural diversity that characterizes China's ethnic minorities might not only increase understanding among ethnic groups and conserve their cultures within the process of economic modernization, but also make state schools more attractive to ethnic communities, thereby strengthening their identities within the national community.

For its part, the Context Approach has the potential to develop appropriate and realistic ways of teaching English by taking full account of the situation in any given locality. This kind of approach to English language teaching is therefore useful "not because it has the answers but because it understands what questions are important" (Richards, 2003:298).

If ELT is organised around the needs of the minorities and aims to encourage favourable attitudes towards minority languages and cultures, the experience of learning English will be more positive for the minorities and is much more likely to result in additive bilingualism. The aim of teaching English to China's minority nationalities is not to take away their own languages and cultures or turn them into carbon copies of native English speakers. Rather it is to prepare them to function in the emerging language situation of China and the world. Of course, this does not diminish the size of the task. There is much work to be done and the goal of successfully trilingual minorities will not be easily accomplished, involving as it does significant changes in attitudes and the allocation of resources. Nor will the same outcomes be reached everywhere. Nevertheless, it is a worthwhile goal that will benefit many people. Work towards this goal should begin as soon as possible, before it is too late to save China's linguistic and cultural diversity.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION

> *…the applied linguist has been accused of being seduced by power, of furthering the spread of dominant languages and not giving sufficient support to the declining languages of minority groups. That may or may not be the case: for many applied linguists it seems perfectly possible to support language spread as a means of furthering wider communication as much among the minorities as elsewhere and at the same time to offer support and expertise to the speakers of declining languages in their attempts to survive (Davies, 1999:112).*

> *We classify more than a billion of the people who live on this planet as Chinese. If our species is to live together harmoniously in the future, this large proportion of our total numbers must be better understood by the rest. One of the major shortcomings in understanding the Chinese has been the tendency of Western and other outsiders to overlook the ethnic and subethnic diversity among the teeming populations of China (Moser, 1985:xiii).*

8.1 Introduction

The world's language situation has changed drastically. The two most striking features of the current language situation are a global language, English, and large-scale language endangerment. There has been much debate about the role of English in the world and its effects on other languages. This dissertation looked at China from this perspective by detailing the use and status of English and the impact it is having on the Chinese language and culture and China's minority languages. This chapter will summarise the findings of the study and link them to the broader issues of English as a global language

and language endangerment. It also outlines what work still needs to be done and ways in which such work might be accomplished.

8.2 Summary of Findings

My basic position regarding languages in today's world is that English is not rampantly destroying all other languages and cultures. English is best thought of as being 'out there' on a global scale and manifesting itself differently in different places. In this sense, the English language is similar to other global phenomena–it exists everywhere but its meaning and peculiarities differ from place to place. In regards to what the global spread of English means for China, I have argued throughout this thesis that English is multifaceted and I believe the discussion of the impact of English on China's language situation in the body of this thesis showed my hypothesis to be correct. English does not conform simply or directly to any one of the three views of English. Rather, it is a combination of all three views –there are destructive, pluralistic and irrelevant aspects of English in China. Table 8.1 gives a summary of the English language in China, showing its multifaceted nature.

Table 8.1 Summary of English in China

View of English	**Rating**	**Characteristics of this View**
Destructive	Weak	Tests, required subject in schools, universities
Pluralistic	Strong	China English, creative use of English by Chinese people
Irrelevant	Medium	Little presence in minority areas, desire to learn English among minorities, Chinese is expanding

I have rated each characteristic according to its prominence in China. The destructive features are important on an individual level (for example a student who must study English) but overall there are relatively few such features of English so it was rated as

weak. On the other hand, there are many features that demonstrate the pluralistic view of English, namely the indigenisation of English in both form and function. These features are significant and were rated as strong. The irrelevant aspects of English are somewhere in between. For the minorities, English seems to be having little effect but this may change in the future, as outlined in Chapter Seven. The irrelevant view was therefore rated medium. The following section provides a detailed summary of the findings and the main points to emerge regarding the situation of English, Chinese and minority languages.

8.2.1 The Situation of English in China

In the Introduction I posed the question "what is the use and status of English in China?" The English language has a long history in China during which it has gone through many changes in use and status and therefore establishing its current use and status is vital to any discussion of its impact on China's language situation. I argued that at present English is used more and has higher status than at any other time in the past by showing that it is used extensively in the domains of science and technology, the media, business and tourism and international connections with its greatest presence in the education system, both formal and informal. The only area in which English does not have a significant presence is in official and administrative domains such as the law courts.

The current scope of English is certainly impressive considering only a few decades ago it was hardly used at all and there are some elements of the situation which cause concern, for example the requirement of passing an English test to obtain a university

degree and English language proficiency requirements for certain occupations such as scientist which are not directly related to foreign language proficiency. These characteristics could be described as destructive and if they are not carefully handled they could cause difficulties in the future. However, there are also important trends in the opposite direction. There is significant evidence to suggest that English is being indigenised in both form and function. China English has distinctly Chinese features in pronunciation, vocabulary, syntax and discourse patterns. English is also used by the Chinese to express their hopes, tell amusing stories and even tease native English speakers and English speaking countries. In addition, English is taught and learnt in a Chinese cultural context. The development of particularly Chinese ways of teaching is currently taking place and Western techniques of teaching have not been adopted wholesale or uncritically. Therefore, there is plenty of evidence that suggests English is a pluralistic language in China. If we look at the situation of Chinese, we find further reasons to suggest that while English may have some destructive features it is certainly not displacing the Chinese language.

8.2.2 The Situation of Chinese in China and the World

Despite the prominence of English in China and the world at large, the Chinese language is in no danger of losing ground. Chinese is certainly safe within China and considerable effort has been made to promote the standard language, *putonghua*, which much of the population now speaks and/or understands. Chinese also has significant standing in the world. In various forms, the Chinese language is spoken by Chinese communities in almost every region of the world and in some cases has official status. More importantly,

China's economic development and increasing prominence in the world have resulted in an upsurge of interest in Chinese language learning. Chinese is seen as an important language because knowledge of it can lead to a better job or bring economic benefits. Such perceptions are common in many parts of the world including native English speaking countries. Although the status of Chinese in this sense does not match that of English, it certainly has similar characteristics. Based on this evidence, Chinese can hardly be considered under threat from English. The answer to my question "is English displacing Chinese language and culture?" is therefore no.

8.2.3 The Situation of Minority Languages in China

The third of my questions, "is English displacing minority languages?", is somewhat more difficult to answer. No one would argue that China's minority languages are not in danger. Indeed, with few exceptions these languages are under considerable threat and some are close to extinction. However, at the present time at least English is not the main reason for this threat –Chinese has far more to do with the position of minority languages than English. This study shows two trends regarding the English language in minority areas of China. Firstly, English has a limited presence in these areas. It appears on a few signs, in a kind of peddlers' English and in schools. With the exception of teachers and students, few members of the minority nationalities know English. It should be kept in mind that the spread of English in minority areas is only beginning and in all likelihood it will continue as English expands its influence in China as a whole and as minority areas become more integrated with the rest of the country. Even so, it seems unlikely that minority languages will be swamped by English. This bears out my argument that

English is more like an irrelevant language than anything else in minority areas. However, there is another side to this story. It would be wrong to say that because English has a limited presence in minority areas it presents absolutely no threat to minority languages. The potential threat of English to minority languages is more subtle. The second trend to come out of this study is that there is a strong desire among the minorities (at least the ones I spoke to) to learn English for the benefits it brings. As mentioned above, the main participants in English language learning are students. As the younger generation, the future of minority languages is in their hands and the survival of these languages will depend on the decisions that they make. If learning conditions and society in general do not encourage additive bilingualism then minorities may opt for Chinese and English and minority languages may not be passed on to the next generation. So, while English does not appear to be displacing minority languages by taking over space/domains in which minority languages are used, the impact of English on minorities and their languages should not be ignored.

8.3 What do the Findings of this Study Tell Us?

The results of this study are not only relevant to China but also tell us something about English as a global language and language endangerment in general. The following section explains the implications of my study for these two areas, arguing that a change in our approach to the study of these areas is required.

8.3.1 English as a Global Language

This study shows that the situation of English is not only complicated on a global level but also in each individual context. As discussed above, English in China is multifaceted. It is not just destructive, pluralistic or irrelevant. It is all of these things, to varying degrees, at the same time. The meaning or manifestation of English varies from group to group. This probably holds true for every country in which English has a presence. Therefore, viewing English as destructive, pluralistic or irrelevant only gives a partial understanding of its role in the world and its influence on other languages. These views need to be brought together. That is, to fully understand English as a global language we have to look for its destructive, pluralistic and irrelevant qualities in each context.

This study also supports the argument that non-native speakers will play a significant role in the future of English as a global language. Based on current trends, China could well have a large influence on the form, functions and status of English. This is not to say that we will all end up speaking China English. However, if China does become as economically and politically powerful as some have predicted, it will have significant consequences for the English language at the global level. In addition, English is not the only influential language in the world and while it is presently firmly entrenched as the global language, it may not hold this position permanently. There is nothing new about this statement but the extent to which Chinese is expanding its influence may come as a surprise to some. Chinese is growing in status and already has considerable geographical spread and there is currently enormous interest in learning it. Some have predicted that in the future English will not be alone at the top of the world's language system but rather a small group of languages will occupy this position. These languages may include

Chinese, Hindi/Urdu, Spanish and Arabic (Graddol, 2001:28-32). Critics of English often argue that too much attention is given to English at the expense of other languages. Perhaps this has happened in research into the role of English in the world as well. The place of English as the global language will always be dependent on the state of other languages and these languages, particularly those at the top of the language system, should be researched more thoroughly. For the study of languages in a globalising world, this means that the current state of affairs may be best regarded as another stage in the development of the world's language situation rather than an end point.

8.3.2 Language Endangerment in the World

This thesis does not deny that minority languages are in danger or try to acquit English of any role in language loss. There are undoubtedly cases from around the world where English has contributed to the demise of minority languages. However, a more nuanced view of the role of English in language loss is required. The results of my study confirm that China's minority languages, like those in most parts of the world, are in danger and English complicates the situation faced by minorities. However, the relationship between English and language endangerment is not a simple or straightforward one. As mentioned above, among China's minorities English is closer to an irrelevant language than anything else, at least at the present time. This means that for minority languages, the local is just as important, if not more so, than the global. When considering the state of minority languages it is therefore not sufficient just to look at global trends. The local must be given full attention. Secondly, at least some minorities want to learn English. It will not help minorities to argue that they have been conned into believing that English is

beneficial or that they have internalised the views of powerful, exploitative linguistic imperialists. Even Phillipson (2002:12) says, “I would never suggest that anyone in the modern world should not be as optimally functional in English as possible, nor that education systems should not aim at this”. A change in focus is therefore needed. Instead of focusing on how harmful English can be we should focus on how English can be taught to speakers of endangered languages in such a way that does not lead to the loss of their own languages. Language endangerment is a serious issue and language loss a terrible tragedy but we will not succeed in making things better for minority groups if they are not offered the same opportunities as everyone else.

8.4 Contributions of the Thesis

This thesis has contributed to the field in a number of ways. Specifically, it has made language a topic in globalisation studies, outlined new directions in the study of China’s language situation and introduced new analytical tools in the study of English as a global language and language endangerment. This section explains each of these contributions and how it fits with or differs from work already done.

8.4.1 Language as a Topic in Globalisation Studies

Firstly, my thesis has put language into globalisation studies in a more explicit and central way than in most other studies. For a long time language was ignored in globalisation studies and despite some recent interest in the subject it remains secondary to the study of political and economic aspects of globalisation. In this study however language is the central theme and I have shown the implications of the world’s growing

interconnectedness for the way languages operate by describing where globalisation fits into linguistic history and how the conditions it has created differ from those of the past. This will offer a starting point for others wanting to work in the area and stimulate further interest in the topic. In this respect my focus on China is significant. Despite being the most populous nation on Earth and its growing economic and political importance, China has received little attention in books that focus on language and globalisation. To my knowledge there is no analysis of China from the perspective of language and globalisation. Block and Cameron's (2001) *Globalization and Language Teaching* has articles about Japan, England and Canada in addition to some on general topics. There is no chapter on China in *Languages in a Globalising World*, the only time it is mentioned in any depth is in a discussion of the use of character based scripts in technology (see Kaiser, 2003). Apart from this, China gets only a few brief mentions in other articles. de Swaan (2001a) outlines the global language system and describes the language systems of three individual countries –India, Indonesia, South Africa –and two areas, the European Union and Africa. Once again, China is notably absent. I am not criticising these scholars, their work is of high quality and without it my own work would have been much more difficult. However, this lack of focus on China does seem somewhat strange. My thesis has therefore contributed to the field by producing a description and analysis of China's language situation. It may be partial but it is still more informative than anything else currently available.

8.4.2 New Directions in the Study of China's Language Situation

Following from the above point, this dissertation has pointed to new directions in the study of China's language situation. Firstly, it provides an overview of English in China which draws together many aspects of and themes in the literature. There are few such overviews, especially book length works, and those that do exist are now somewhat out of date. As far as I know, the most recent such work is Ross (1993)[1]. Once again, this work is very useful but much has happened since it was written. This thesis synthesises much previous work and gives an up to date account of English in China in one place.

I have also added to the current overviews by discussing how the spread of English has affected Chinese and minority languages. Other works raise concerns about the possible future of Chinese, declining standards of Chinese, the Westernisation of China etc. but none of them actually analyses the use and status of Chinese in China and abroad and relates this to arguments about English as a global language. Most notably, I have explored the impact English is having on China's minorities and their languages. Very little is known about this topic and little research has been done on it either in China or elsewhere. It certainly is not dealt with in any of the existing overviews and very few works on minority nationalities discuss the influence of English in these communities. Here I have mapped out the use and status of English in minority areas and identified the significant trends. Therefore, my thesis brings attention to this topic and opens up the

[1] Bolton's (2003) *Chinese Englishes: A Sociolinguistic History* was only available to me in the final stages of writing this dissertation so I am not able to comment on it except to say that most of this book is about English in Hong Kong with only Chapter Five (Hong Kong, China and Chinese Englishes, Pp. 226-58) devoted to English in mainland China.

area for further investigation; some of the possible research questions are outlined in section 8.5.

8.4.3 New Analytical Tools for the Study of English as a Global Language and Language Endangerment

Finally, this thesis suggests new analytical tools which can be applied to the study of English as a global language and language endangerment. Firstly, I have developed a new perspective on English as a global language and language endangerment. As mentioned above, this perspective involves bringing together all three views of English and acknowledging that English can be taught without losing minority languages. Of course, this approach draws on work already done but to my knowledge it has not been applied explicitly in studies of English as a global language. Most works take one side or the other and therefore while they give a thorough account of the destructive/pluralistic/irrelevant aspects of English there is little if any discussion of the relative weighting of these aspects and their interactions. As I have shown, English is multifaceted and I believe that approaching the study of English in the world by looking for its destructive, pluralistic and irrelevant features in each context will result in a fuller understanding of language issues in today's world. I have also shown, albeit hypothetically, how minority nationalities in China could be taught English in such a way that does not result in the loss of Chinese or the minority language. While this idea is not entirely new, there has not been an explicit statement of guidelines for accomplishing this or identifying what aspects of the situation should be looked at. Approaching language

endangerment this way will hopefully allow speakers of endangered languages to maintain their own languages and function in today's linguistic environment.

The second of the new analytical tools to come out of this thesis is methodological. As outlined in the Introduction, I used a multidisciplinary approach in this study. The impact of English on China's language situation does not fit neatly into any one academic discipline and in light of this I drew on a number of areas, ideas and theories to complete this project. This means my thesis will appeal to a much wider audience and be useful to scholars working in a number of disciplines. It also points to a necessary change in methodology. Because of the changes brought about by globalisation, it is no longer possible to study language issues (or anything else) in isolation or from the perspective of a single discipline – we need to understand the connections and interactions between different people, places and forces. My thesis, through applying this methodology, has provided an example of what a multidisciplinary work looks like.

8.5 Suggestions for Further Research

More research needs to be done on language issues in China and in general. Some of these issues have been hinted at above. Here I suggest four areas where research could be carried out: in-depth fieldwork/sociolinguistic studies of particular minorities and areas of China, applying the Context Approach to ELT, research into foreign languages other than English in China and theoretical research on language and globalisation. The first three topics apply to advancing our knowledge of China's language situation while the fourth looks at how a theoretical framework within which research on language issues in

today's world could be developed. All of these topics have the potential for generating fruitful and beneficial research.

8.5.1 In-depth Fieldwork/Sociolinguistic Studies of Particular Minorities and Areas of China

As mentioned at the outset, there is very little work done on the impact of English on China's minorities and their languages. This thesis mentioned a number of minorities from different parts of the country but many were left out. In-depth studies of particular minorities or areas of China inhabited by minorities need to be carried out. How such research is done is a matter for the individual researcher to decide but out of necessity it will probably involve fieldwork. Such fieldwork should focus on collecting sociolinguistic information such as the number of speakers of Chinese, English and the minority language, when and where each language is used and collect actual examples of how English is used as well as language attitudes. This will flesh out the picture of English in minority areas.

8.5.2 Applying the Context Approach to ELT

Chapter Seven argued that the Context Approach can be used to improve ELT among China's minority nationalities. There are many advantages to this approach but at this stage they remain hypothetical. Research is needed to show whether the Context Approach can actually be used in China and whether it does produce the desired results. As the model implies, research into this area would require conducting ethnographic research into the characteristics of the community. It should also focus on the language

use and language attitudes of minority students and teachers, as they are the main English using group within the minority population. Related to this, classroom observation of English language classes should be conducted to draw on the experiences of minority teachers and students for the purpose of improving teaching methods and finding appropriate ways to teach English. Such research will also identify any problems involved with using the Context Approach and any refinements that may be necessary. For example, would teachers be willing to use this approach? What are the attitudes of local leaders, parents, students etc. towards the use of the Context Approach? Regardless of whether or not the Context Approach turns out to be useful, such research will hopefully result in a way of teaching English to the minorities that encourages additive bilingualism.

8.5.3 Research into Foreign Languages Other than English in China

Although English is the main foreign language in China it is by no means the only one. Several other foreign languages such as Japanese, Russian, Korean, French, German and Spanish are taught in Chinese schools and universities. Some of these languages have been mentioned in this thesis but at present there is very little written about them. In regards to this topic, I have only seen one article about German language teaching in China (see Wannagat, 2002). Just like English, these other foreign languages also have an influence on China's language situation. Research into these languages is not only interesting in itself but will also help give a fuller picture of the way languages operate in China. It would also contribute to a better understanding of the place of English compared to other foreign languages. My study points to some interesting developments

which are worth following up. For example, how will Japanese language learning influence China's Korean population? Could this have implications for China-Japan relations? Korean is not only a strong minority language but is also gaining status among the wider population, especially in the Northeast. What, if any, changes does this imply for foreign language learning in China? These are just a few suggestions, many more topics could be explored.

8.5.4 Theoretical Research on Language and Globalisation

Recently a whole issue of the *Journal of Sociolinguistics* (Vol. 7 No. 4) was devoted to language and globalisation. Increasing focus on this issue is due both to the prevalence of globalisation in general and growing awareness among linguists of globalisation's relevance to the discipline of linguistics (Coupland, 2003:465). Much work has been done on topics relating to languages in a globalising world but as we saw in Chapter One, there is still a lack of theoretical research into language and globalisation. The importance of developing theoretical frameworks for understanding language and globalisation is outlined by Coupland (2003:470):

> it would be naïve to assume that the linguascapes of globalised societies will be less unequal. We can be sure they will be more complex, and therefore that the critical capacity of sociolinguistics will be increasingly tested. But we can only critique what we can theorise, only theorise what we can understand, only understand what we see, and only see what we look at.

In other words, a theory of the language ecology of globalisation is still needed. There are some starting points –the punctuated equilibrium model sets globalisation within broader trends and events and the concept of the global language system outlines the structure that languages operate within. How might the theoretical study of language and

globalisation move forward? Hay and Marsh (2000) suggest a new way of looking at globalisation, what they call the third wave of globalisation studies. The first wave of writing on globalisation often exaggerated the extent of globalisation and painted a picture of rapid, unstoppable globalisation in almost every sphere of life. The second wave consisted of critiques of this idea. It challenged "the received wisdom that during the 1980s and 1990s (if not before) we have witnessed an inexorable, accelerated and homogenizing tide of globalization, leveling a once differentiated and contoured terrain to reveal the flat expanse of a 'borderless world' supported by a genuinely global market place" (Hay and Marsh, 2000:5). This wave was critical in that it questioned whether globalisation is a positive force and sought to show how it relates to particular power structures and ways of thinking (Kofman and Youngs, 1996:1). The third wave is based on the notion that globalisation is often talked about as a "process without a subject" (Hay and Marsh, 2000:5). Studies of globalisation in the future should therefore place subjects, or particular topics, at the centre of any analysis of globalisation. This implies:

> In this sense, then, we reverse the conventional direction of causality appealed to in the literate on globalization. *We ask not what globalization (as a process without a subject) might explain, but how the insertion of subjects into processes might help to explain the phenomena widely identified as 'globalization'*. Globalization (in so far as it can be identified as a tendency) becomes then for us not so much 'that doing the explaining' (the *explanans*) as 'that to be explained' (the *explanadum*) (Hay and Marsh, 2000:6 italics original).

This inversion is appropriate for our purposes because in developing a theory of language and globalisation we are trying to understand globalisation as the context for languages and the important factors that affect languages[2]. This does not mean that studies like this

[2] Karttunen and Crosby (1995) suggest a similar approach for writing world history through languages as a theme. I do not know if their suggestion has been taken up by historians but work in this vein would also be potentially useful for furthering our understanding of language and globalisation.

one which concentrate on describing the use and status of languages in the world will no longer have a place. In fact, this approach relies on this kind of work. What it implies is that more conscious effort should go into identifying the mechanics of globalisation that affect languages. Obviously, what I have outlined here is only a rough idea. It may not be the best way of developing a theory of language and globalisation but its usefulness or otherwise will only be revealed through trying it out. Such work will be necessary if we want to fully understand the linguistic aspects of globalisation.

8.6 Closing Comments

We are living through what may be the most important period in the world's linguistic history and therefore face many challenges. I have shown how China's ethnic and linguistic diversity is being affected by the global spread of English and I hope what I have done will somehow be useful.

To sum up, the implications of the spread of English for China's language situation are complex and varied. English has a high profile in China and the enthusiasm to learn it has raised some significant issues such as access to education and the ability to find work. On the other hand, the Chinese language and culture are not being overrun by English. In fact, Chinese is experiencing an expansion of its own –albeit on a smaller scale than English –and English has certainly taken on Chinese features in form and function. For the minorities, already struggling to maintain their languages and cultures, English is one more challenge they must deal with. Yet even here English is not the main factor in language loss and while there are considerable difficulties in adding English to the

linguistic repertoire of the minorities they are not insurmountable. English –both as the global language and as a language in China –is therefore multifaceted and must be studied with this in mind.

Finally, although this thesis approached the topic in an academic way, through all the theory, arguments and examples we should always keep in mind that language is a real life issue and has very real consequences for everyone.

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