

Bridging Language Policy and English Language Teaching in the Chinese Context: Recent Developments and Future Path

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Abstract

With the increasing role of English as a global language, teaching and learning of that language have become a focal point of instruction around the world. Against this background, China has followed the global trend of implementing various language-related policies and practice decisions. This conceptual paper first provides a brief historical overview of language policy in the Chinese context. Given the importance of compulsory education and tertiary education in China, this article links the previous language policy to the recent development of the Double Reduction policy and English as a medium of instruction in relation to English language teaching (ELT). This paper also discusses the culture, ideology, and identity issues involved in ELT in China. It ends by arguing the importance of reflecting on the current situation of language policy and ELT in the Chinese context against the backdrop of globalization. It also suggests that foreign language policy and ELT practice decisions, in China and other countries, should be guided and informed by more robust empirical teaching and research results.

Keywords: language policy, English language teaching, double reduction policy, English as a medium of instruction

Introduction

Driven by globalization with various linguistic and cultural contacts, it has become common for people who do not share first languages (L1s) to become involved in transnational, cross-ethnic, and cross-cultural communication. Thus, it has become necessary for people to master a lingua franca for intercultural communication. The fact that English is a global language (Crystal, 2003) has been widely recognized and has become the main reason for people to learn it. English and the internationalization of education are closely intertwined in education policy and teaching practices across global contexts (Gu & Lee, 2019). According to Fang (2018a), English should not be seen as a language in a vacuum but as a social practice in different sociocultural and sociopolitical contexts permeated with various ideologies. China, as the largest developing country in the world, cannot be ignored when discussing the use of English in teaching in global contexts.

This paper provides a brief historical overview of Chinese language policy. As language policy and English language teaching (ELT) are recurrent themes in applied linguistics,



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this article discusses ELT under specific Chinese language policies in relation to foreign language education. Given the importance of compulsory education and tertiary education in China, this article also links the recent implementation of the Double Reduction policy¹ and English as a medium of instruction (EMI) policies in terms of ELT. Furthermore, this paper addresses various culture, ideology, and identity issues involved in ELT in China. It concludes by arguing about the importance of reflecting on the current situation of ELT in the Chinese context given the introduction of various language policies, and suggesting that more effort is needed to promote the development of language education research against the backdrop of globalization.

This article aims to provide a better understanding of the future direction of ELT in China, as well as suggestions for improving foreign language policy. However, the complexity of ELT as adopted and adapted in Chinese society cannot be neglected. Therefore, it should be noted that the findings and suggestions discussed in this paper are based on specific conditions in different areas of China, so further consideration is needed to apply the results in other contexts.

Chinese Language Policy: A Brief Historical Overview

In academia, there is still a debate about the phases of Chinese language policy. According to Li (2019), the study of Chinese language policy could be roughly divided into four stages: 1) the formative period (1949-1986), which implemented the policy of the reform of the written language; 2) the development period (1986-2000), which mainly discussed the policy of normalization, standardization, and informatization of the written and spoken languages; 3) the mature period (2000-2006), which mainly implemented the policy of language legislation policy; and 4) the expansion period (2006-present), where policies were implemented with attention to the ecological perspective of language, providing language services and improving citizens' language proficiency. The papers collected in the recent Chinese Language Policy Research Report (2021) have shown a trend of researching language civilization construction, new media language, language protection, and online language teaching under the recent development of the new liberal arts programs in higher education. Therefore, the following sections focus on the current stage of Chinese language policy, as well as some educational policies in relation to ELT with cultural, ideological, and identity issues related to English language education.

ELT Under Some of the Language Policies in China

Double Reduction Policy in Compulsory Education

China's Double Reduction policy was implemented to ease the burden of excessive homework and off-campus tutoring for students undergoing compulsory education. The primary objective of this policy was to improve the efficiency of classroom teaching rather than "weakening" the status of English education in the basic education curriculum. It aims to dilute long-term score-oriented ELT in China and to provide an opportunity for more effective ELT. Because the Double Reduction policy has recently been implemented

¹ According to the Chinese Ministry of Education, the Double Reduction policy refers to "a reduction in homework and in time spent in after-school private tutoring for children from kindergarten to 9th grade" (http://en.moe.gov.cn/news/press_releases/202201/t20220107_593036.html).

in 2021, very few studies have investigated its effectiveness and impact, or its effect on ELT.

It is worth noting that learning English is not about mastering a set of foreign language skills. Rather, it is about practicing a foreign language to achieve smooth, decent, pleasant, and effective cross-cultural communication (Lu, 2021). Here, we discuss some insights about how ELT has been impacted by the Double Reduction policy from our perspective to link it to some recent scholarly arguments. In a report published in *China Daily* (Zou, 2021), President Xi is quoted as saying: “schoolteachers should assume primary responsibility for students’ education” and “students should not learn less at schools and then focus most of their attention on after-school tutoring classes.” Therefore, further research must address the question of how educators can construct an effective learning system for students in and out of school. For English teachers in particular, this means reconciling the fact that ELT in classroom settings is more exam-oriented with the fact that after-school English focuses more on its use for various purposes in student daily lives in the future.

In traditional exam-oriented education in China, most children passively learn English based on the curriculum standards and lesson plans to pass exams rather than for the actual need to communicate or because they have a genuine interest in English. This goes against the essence of language learning (Lu, 2021). Under the Double Reduction policy, it is essential for both policymakers and language practitioners to investigate how the education system and evaluation standards can facilitate the smooth transition from exam-oriented education to quality-oriented education. An issue remains regarding the manner in which students can cultivate an innovative spirit, expand their capabilities to serve national strategies, and contribute to the country’s socialist modernization (Zou, 2021). The best way to foster the character and civic virtue of students in ELT is another issue that needs further exploration. This might increase the teaching difficulty for ELT lecturers. In this regard, future studies should focus on the development of personalized and diversified compulsory education English materials for education guided by quality development rather than knowledge learning.

It is also important to address the effective strategies that ELT instructors can apply to cultivate students’ interest in English and improve their language abilities when using English. For example, Lu (2021) suggests that in ELT classes, teachers should create an English learning environment in which they leave the initiative in the classroom to students, while the teacher plays a secondary role to offer the necessary guidance and feedback, which optimizes the classroom learning process. Indeed, such a proposal does not differ much from student-centered learning in ELT. According to Wang and Zhang (2019), student-centered teaching helps students’ increase their use of deep learning approaches and improves their cognitive and practical capabilities in the Chinese context. They suggested the provision of more practical cases and tasks related to real life and the formation of a supportive student-centered environment to engage students in active learning. However, Wang (2011) found that student-centered teaching might not be the teachers’ preferred pedagogical choice due to classroom time constraints, the need to achieve the requirements of the mandated national curriculum, and the inadequate

academic preparedness of students in rural classrooms in China. Questions remain about how such student-centered environments can be created in different English classroom settings and how the relationship between the leadership role of Chinese English teachers and students' subjectivity can be handled in the English learning environment.

The Double Reduction policy also affects private tutoring institutions that aim to enhance students' academic performance in school. According to Wu (2021), although private tutoring institutions can help students improve their academic performance, they cannot develop their self-discipline and enthusiasm for seeking knowledge, which are key factors that determine success in life. Thus, out-of-school private tutoring organizations only act as a supplement to in-school education. Students who participate in out-of-school private tutoring classes are either seeking extra help with schoolwork or wanting to improve their educational prospects. However, it gradually becomes more of a "tool" that some parents use to encourage their children to achieve high scores and achieve top rankings in school competitions. Under the Double Reduction policy, the power of such educational services is significantly weakened, while the burdens of schoolteachers are intensified. Inevitably, this means that many tutoring institutions need to understand the intention of the Double Reduction policy and comply with the development of the current era to identify ways to transform their approaches in order to survive. Therefore, in terms of ELT, future studies should investigate how innovative teaching modes and methods can be used to transform private English tutoring institutions or tutors.

It is also worth exploring the construction of school platforms for extracurricular activities related to English language practice for children that give them access to public language resources and services. More research can be conducted to explore the current situation faced by schoolteachers of English and the opinions they hold regarding ELT under the new policy. In all, this requires different stakeholders, including policymakers, foreign language teachers, and teaching and research departments, to collaborate to explore how ELT methods can be used to contextualize the situation under the Double Reduction policy.

College Foreign Language Education in the Backdrop of the New Liberal Arts

In 2017, the concept of the "new liberal arts" was born at Hiram College in Hiram, Ohio, USA (Zhang, 2020). Its essence lies in the reorganization of the traditional liberal arts, the intersection of liberal arts and sciences, and the integration of new technology into traditional humanities courses, such as philosophy, literature, and language, to provide comprehensive interdisciplinary learning and research opportunities for students (Cai, 2021; Zhang, 2020). Regarding the Chinese context, Wu (2019) delivered a keynote speech entitled, "New Missions, Greater Mindset, New Arts and Humanities Discipline," in which he reiterated the concept of the "new liberal arts" and discussed the reform and development of higher foreign language education in the new era – its overall needs, plans, measures, standards, and objectives. The Chinese Ministry of Education issued The Declaration on the Construction of New Liberal Arts in 2020, which promoted the construction of the new liberal arts. Since then, the "new liberal arts" has become a

hot topic that has been continuously discussed by foreign language scholars in China. In the past two years, related research (Fang, 2021; Wu, 2019; Zhang, 2020) has analyzed and interpreted the concept and characteristics of the new liberal arts. These studies have proposed the basic ideas of innovation and development of English language education. Issues, such as the interdisciplinary development of English language education, the education of English language talent, and the reform of college English teaching for non-English majors, have been explored against the background of the new liberal arts (Cai, 2021; Wen, 2021). It is suggested that doing so will break barriers and strengthen interdisciplinary fusion, form a new integrated professional direction on the basis of the English language, promote the stratified and classified training of English language talents, and highlight the interdisciplinary and multilingual characteristics of English language talent training (Cai, 2021; Shi & Jiang, 2020; Zhang, 2020).

Higher education institutions have to cultivate international interdisciplinary talent who specialize in one particular language and one particular discipline and, at the same time, master multilingual ability through college English teaching for non-English majors under the construction of the new liberal arts (Wu, 2019). Wen (2021) examined the domestic development of college English teaching materials for non-English majors and integrated the ideological empowerment model and the synergy model of “integration of specialty and innovation” into college English teaching materials for non-English majors against the background of the new liberal arts. She also proposed implementing the following: the organic combination of college English teaching materials for non-English majors with specialized English, the organic integration with mass entrepreneurship and innovation education, the organic coupling with specialty+ mode, and the organic integration with financial media teaching materials. Therefore, college English general education should advocate for interdisciplinary integration and adopt innovation and entrepreneurial education to keep pace with the times and cultivate international interdisciplinary talent.

According to Shi and Jiang (2020), ideas and reflection on English education in China’s academic circles have shifted from worrying about the status of English majors as students of the humanities to thinking about the cultivation of high-quality talent. After reviewing reflections and suggestions on English language education over the past 40 years, they made several major suggestions: training objectives, training modes, cultivation programs, and teaching staff construction on the formulation of English major curricula against the background of the new liberal arts. Fang (2021) also mentioned that ELT for English majors must adapt to the demands of the new era and handle the internal relationship between commonality and individuality, as well as between extensive learning and intensive learning. He also suggested adapting to the broader interdisciplinary development space and the characteristics of higher education in the new era and conforming to the national development strategic target based on the administrative characteristics of higher education institutions and the specific requirements of professional talent training. In recent years, the current situation of English majors has been discouraging, and the appeal of English majors has gradually declined. In aspects such as recruitment, training, and employment, unprecedented challenges have been encountered. Therefore, some colleges and universities

in China are actively exploring the transformation of English major talent training against the background of the new liberal arts (Chang, 2021; Zhang, 2020). According to Zhang (2020), with the promotion of the concept of holistic education and the practice of the concept of the new liberal arts, Guangdong University of Foreign Studies has launched a One Innovative + Four Professional + One Compound program scheme (through the experimental class of top student talent, the four disciplinary directions of English majors, and the interdisciplinary talent mode of English plus Information Management) to cultivate distinguished English majors and provide them with diverse opportunities for professional excellence.

In the reform of English majors in light of the proliferation of the new liberal arts, Shanghai Jiao Tong University also developed innovative mechanisms to train talented English majors and strengthened interdepartmental, interschool, and international training. The university also embodied the concept and characteristics of the return to the original disciplines, interdisciplinary integration, and the promotion of practical teaching, including making courses, such as “Innovative Practice Project for College Students” and “Reading Original English Works,” compulsory (Chang, 2021). Chang (2021) also mentioned that Shanghai Jiao Tong University formed three new major English disciplines characterized by linguistic intelligence and pathology, comparative literature, and intelligent and cross-cultural translation. We suggest that more interdepartmental and interdisciplinary majors within the humanities, such as “English + news,” “English + history,” and “English + law,” be established to create new ways to cultivate new interdisciplinary talent. More language courses, such as French, German, Spanish, or Japanese, can also be opened to college student English majors to facilitate their multilingual skills as another way to cultivate interdisciplinary talent within foreign languages as a first-level discipline.

The academic foreign language circle in China has always restricted itself to self-development and has long neglected technological and economic demands, believing that only by maintaining integrity and purity can it implement the new model (Cai, 2021). The nature of the humanities and the value orientation of humanistic education for English majors cannot be ignored. However, priority must be given to current national and social needs rather than the humanistic features of the ELT, and the expansion of English major courses should truly transcend the boundaries of existing disciplines to foster interdisciplinarity. In addition to interdisciplines within the humanities, Cai (2021) proposed a new foreign language education (NFLE), which he considered truly interdisciplinary, especially with the hard disciplines urgently needed in China, such as science, industry, agriculture, and medicine.

As a branch of the new liberal arts, NFLE pursues new concepts to facilitate a paradigm shift from discipline-oriented teaching to market-oriented instruction. Its new structure highlights interdisciplinarity, the shift from language studies to language services, and the construction of new disciplinary systems. NFLE also develops new programs stemming from the reconstruction of traditional translation majors, English majors, and college English, which consist of new college English, English majors for science and technology,

and translation majors for science and technology. These emerging majors have some similarities. They do not use EMI to acquire knowledge about another subject, but rather use it to study how the knowledge of the subject is constructed and spread in English for specific purposes. This might mean that ELT teachers need to establish and maintain their own disciplinary or interdisciplinary capital to cultivate international interdisciplinary talent. Cai (2021) also believes that English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is considered the most suitable foreign language discipline system for NFLE; it is the foundation of interdisciplinary studies of foreign languages. Therefore, more ESP courses can be designed to serve other disciplines and meet the need for international communication in higher education institutions. Again, this proposal requires further investigation because not many students need ESP for their subject studies. A large number of students cannot easily use English or express themselves using the language for general purposes after graduation, let alone for the adoption of ESP in various programs. In short, the new liberal arts concept endows ELT with interdisciplinary features. ELT must not restrict its development to English as a major; rather, it should cultivate interdisciplinary talent. With the development of the new liberal arts, more empirical studies rather than conceptual studies might be required to test its effectiveness in relation to ELT.

EMI in Tertiary Education

With the trend of internationalization in higher education, EMI is becoming a global phenomenon in higher education contexts (Graddol, 2006; Hu, Li, & Lei, 2014). Against this background, China has followed the global trend of adopting EMI in higher education institutions (Hu & McKay, 2012). However, doing so has posed several challenges (Chen & Peng, 2019; Fang, 2018b). While EMI programs are a strategy higher education institutions use to promote their educational internationalization in China, those programs are still underachieving in terms of teaching quality and learning achievements (Jiang, Zhang, & May, 2019). Until now, the investigation of EMI in the Chinese context has been insufficient. This section discusses some of the obstacles to the implementation of EMI based on previous empirical findings in the Chinese context.

Previous research has summarized the difficulties in EMI implementation. Inadequate English proficiency of both academic staff and students is one of the main obstacles to EMI implementation (Gu & Lee, 2018). Students' poor English proficiency may prove to be the primary reason for the inconsistency between policy and practice. Moreover, EMI teachers' perceptions of English teaching can be regarded as a contributing factor (Jiang et al., 2019). Students who participate in EMI courses often have difficulty comprehending content knowledge and engaging in EMI classroom activities due to their limited language proficiency (Chen & Peng, 2019), and non-native EMI teachers often lack expertise in ELT to actualize the integration of content and language teaching (Gu & Lee, 2018). EMI teachers also encounter difficulties in identifying the role of language in content learning and in creating appropriate instructional designs to promote integration between language and knowledge construction (Cao & Yuan, 2020; Maxwell-Reid, 2020). Thus, EMI lecturers and students should be given sustainable and significant language guidance and support (Fang, 2018b; Lei & Hu, 2014).

Previous research has shown that increasing attention is being paid to reconsidering the nature and role of language as a semiotic resource to mediate higher-level thinking and knowledge construction of students (Kress, 2010) and to construct EMI instructional settings as a space for multilingual and multimodal meaning making (Blair, Haneda, & Bose, 2018; Fang & Liu, 2020). From other studies of EMI policies in China (Chen, Han, & Wright, 2020; Zhang, 2017), it can be concluded that EMI policies help facilitate the internationalization of higher education, but traditional expanding circle contexts (Kachru, 1992) have to deal with EMI at both the policy and practice levels in relation to L1 instruction at higher education institutions. According to Maxwell-Reid (2020), the learning of content knowledge is inseparable from that of language as a symbolic resource for a particular domain. Therefore, in EMI classroom practices, it is important to capitalize on the instructors' and students' full repertoires, particularly through the use of multilingual, multimodal, and spatial resources for language learning and knowledge construction, to create a flexible and context-specific teaching and learning environment (Blair et al., 2018; Cao & Yuan, 2020; Gu, Li & Jiang, 2021).

The English proficiency of EMI teachers and students was found to lead to adjustments in EMI practices for bilingual teaching or to utilizing translanguaging between Chinese and English for teaching and learning (Fang & Liu, 2020; Gu & Lee, 2018). Previous studies (Hu & Lei, 2014; Chen, Han, & Wright, 2020) also detailed various strategies that academic staff and students use to compensate for inadequacies in adopting EMI, including resorting to translanguaging strategies in teaching. Considering the gap between institutional policy and classroom reality, EMI practices need to develop and embrace diverse ways of meaning making, such as translanguaging strategies in action (Chen, Han, & Wright, 2020; Fang & Liu, 2020), even though English still remains the overall medium of instruction. It is argued that EMI instructors should coordinate with language specialists to maximize the power of language in enhancing content learning through joint actions and reflections (Cao & Yuan, 2020). Moreover, collaboration between subject and language specialists is required, which would benefit students' ability to learn the subject knowledge and improve their language skills (Jiang et al., 2019).

Language, Culture, Ideology, and Identity

Numerous official discourses about Chinese foreign language education policies have demonstrated that “an adequate command of English by Chinese individuals is necessary and important for the sustained development of the country” (Pan, 2011, p. 250). English learning is no longer conducted to acquire merely native-like forms of English to become monolingual. Instead, it has become a multidimensional education involving socio-political orientation, linguistic capital, culture comprehension, and ideological positionality construction (Gao, 2021). With the popularity of English in China, there is a concern that learning the English language could lead to the loss of Chinese identity; there is also a fear that the English language may have a corrupting impact on Chinese language and culture (Fang, 2018a; Lo Bianco, Orton, & Gao, 2009). This refers to cultural imperialism in which linguistic imperialism is a constituent part (Phillipson, 1992). Some studies considered English language learning as a form of cultural invasion and examined

the extent to which English culture should be integrated into the ELT classroom (Niu & Wolff, 2007; Safari & Razmjoo, 2016). However, the cultural and linguistic influences of English are not the sole results of power exercised by external forces from the West; they also arise from domestic forces (Pan, 2011; Simpson, 2017).

Language as semiotics is neutral; it is only endowed with symbolic power by human beings (Bourdieu, 1991). This could suggest a greater role of individual agency in the adoption or rejection of culture, ideology, or identity rather than passive acceptance under external pressures. According to Gray (2002), ELT inevitably confronts and delivers ideological, cultural, and identity messages, despite its focus on linguistic issues. For instance, Wang, Jiang, Fang, and Elyas (2021) addressed the importance of critical pedagogy in teaching linguistic and cultural literacy and suggested that ELT be conducted from multilingual and multicultural perspectives rather than toward emulation of native speakerism. Therefore, re-examination and representation of the English language and an openness to “multiculture” in ELT in China in response to globalization are necessary. Furthermore, it is essential that more diverse variations in English be noticed and adopted rather than favored native-speaker English (Wang & Fang, 2020). More multicultural and multilingual courses should be designed to equip students with a broad international perspective on the language learning.

Foreign language policymakers often discuss the urgent need for pedagogical instruction to integrate local elements and home culture into existing curricula (Wen, 2016). According to the Chinese Ministry of Education (2017), English education in China should not reinforce the uneven power relationship between western and local countries, but instead should interpret the hidden Chinese ideology during English instruction. The requirement of infusing native cultural value education into English education epitomizes how English education is deeply influenced by the nation’s consciousness, as language education policy cannot exist in isolation from the overall political ecosystem (Gao, 2021). There is a need to further explore how students are expected to use English to convey local values and ideologies in a way that is comprehensible to the outside world through their language practices and identity construction. For example, Gu and Lee (2018) investigated how college students in China constructed identity and negotiated legitimacy in the interaction between Western and Eastern traditions in the internationalization of higher education. They pointed out that, although students experienced uncertainty and contradiction in the face of flexible bilingual teaching, their critical understanding of internationalization, globalization, and linguistic diversity was promoted in the heterogeneous contexts of cultures and values. Gao (2021) explored how Chinese English language learners negotiated linguistic ideology and constructed cultural identity while learning English; they also found that students who had experienced rich cultural capital were more capable of telling Chinese stories in English while also experiencing the conflict of ideological struggles and the construction of multilayered identities.

Therefore, we suggest that the proper niche for the intersection of native culture or diverse cultures and ELT is contextualized. Further research can also examine the extent to which

macro and micro-cultural factors and sociocultural forces of the West influence the ideological development and patriotism of students during ELT and how ELT can play a supporting role in improving the intercultural communication competence of students and their cultural and linguistic capital.

Chinese Language Policy and ELT: The Road Ahead

In this concluding section, we link the preceding discussion and findings, we also suggest further directions and identify implications for how Chinese language policy and ELT should be aligned, as well as how they can embrace a brighter and shared future together.

First, more time must be allowed to assess the feasibility and effectiveness of the double reduction policy, with more support from empirical studies. The Double Reduction policy can be used to improve the shortcomings of current ELT with the aim of reducing academic pressure, increasing interest in English learning, reducing exam-oriented content, and increasing practical content. Thus, it is suggested that ELT should focus on developing students' ability to critically and dialectically judge linguistic and pedagogical ideologies. Additionally, ELT should prioritize making students reconsider their future self-development through the process of English learning in and beyond the classroom instead of mastering the four basic English skills (Fang, 2018a). However, the inherent traditional exam-oriented education environment and the lack of better standard assessment modes of English in China make it difficult to implement the policy. Moreover, in view of different regional educational resources and educational environments, it is worth considering how the reform of exam-oriented environments should achieve a balanced relationship with educational fairness.

Second, the construction of the new liberal arts should consider the differences between arts and science in promoting interdisciplinarity and should foster the talents in academic researchers of ELT. The new liberal arts must be aware that the mindsets of science students and liberal arts students might differ, which might present more difficulties in ELT with the promotion of interdisciplinarity. Although the construction of the new liberal arts adequately meets the current demands of the nation and society to cultivate interdisciplinary talent, the cultivation of academic research talent for British and American literature, linguistics, and translation cannot be abandoned (Cai, 2021). The diffusion characteristics of humanistic knowledge and the perceptual characteristics of humanistic education require slight changes in the inheritance of disciplinary knowledge management and education methods (Wu, 2020). Therefore, viewing the English language as a component of the humanities does not lower it to the level of being a solely instrumental tool.

Third, EMI policies in China should recognize multiple resources, encourage bilingualism and multilingualism (Kirkpatrick, 2014), and revisit their language practices and their relationships with vernacular-medium instruction at higher education institutions (Zhang, 2017). With the use of English as a global language and the ever-increasing demand for English proficiency in the new era, there is a growing trend of EMI provision (Fang, 2018b; Galloway et al., 2020). Considering the obstacles mentioned above (see Chen & Peng, 2019; Gu & Lee, 2018; Jiang et al., 2019), more context-specific ways for compensation

should be explored. It is hoped that more empirical research will be conducted on language use and programs amid growing multilingualism in Chinese EMI classrooms by comparing observational data in English immersion education with those in L1 based instruction or vernacular-medium instruction (Chen et al., 2020; Galloway et al., 2020).

Fourth, ELT should not emulate native speakerism; instead, it should embrace flexibility, tolerance, and openness from a multilingual, multicultural, multi-ideological, and multi-identity perspective by embedding it into the multilingual paradigm. According to Gao (2021), it is worth noting that, as a Chinese person, one never learns English to become a native English speaker or construct an identity as one; rather, one learns English to showcase his/her sociopolitical orientation, linguistic repertoires, and ideological positionality construction in a globalized language to the globalized world. Therefore, Chinese teachers of English and students should increase their awareness of multilingualism (Wang & Fang, 2020) and critically employ their human agency and autonomy to embrace the essence and discard the dregs when confronted with intractable cultural, ideological, and identity issues in the process of ELT.

The aim of policy is to promote education; the aim of education is to implement policy. We conclude that if the current Chinese language policy is to be more effectively implemented in ELT, it should be contextualized with more effort from robust teaching and research results and be given time to develop.

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