



## Resisting Linguistic Imperialism: a Response to the 'Chinese Dream'

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### ABSTRACT

China, one of the world's oldest civilisations and now routinely cited as the world's second largest economy, has declared its ambition to *rejuvenate* and prosper under the government of President Xi Jinping. Since the slogan 'Chinese Dream' was promulgated in 2012, Chinese scholars have been made aware of a new impetus in the promotion of Chinese language and culture. However, globalisation has evidently generated (or played a role in generating) the spread of English as global Lingua Franca (particularly for culture, business and academic research), and this too has exerted a significant impact on China's national policies. This research paper sets out to investigate the reactions of Chinese scholars to the tensions created by these two 'forces', particularly as registered in the classroom discourse of university-level teaching in English. The paper's central subject is the problem of *imperialism through culture* – in this case, the cultural orientation (to knowledge and development) embedded, expressed and communicated by language. My findings are concerned with what is promulgated and what is resisted in terms of Westernisation and the phenomenon of 'linguistic imperialism'. Through a scrutiny of a pedagogic context, the paper identifies a critical tension in China, central to the Chinese Dream, along the simultaneous rise of English and the return of Chinese history, philosophy and literature.

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### Introduction

The "Chinese Dream" is a term that has become globally renowned and frequently discussed since the President of People's Republic of China Xi Jinping came to power in March 2013. It is rightly and commonly understood as a politically engineered neologism that expresses China's national plan to rejuvenate the nation, improve living standards, construct a better society and build a strengthened military. Within this 'top-down' policy framework, there are countless supporting strategies being implemented, including the promotion of Chinese language and culture. One such strategic innovation has involved changes with regard to English language education in China. China's new found eagerness to promote its language and culture, not only within its own ethnically and culturally complex domestic territories, but also globally, can immediately be interpreted as a countermeasure to the worldwide spread of US popular culture as well as English as a Lingua Franca (henceforth ELF). The latter, of course, is commonly understood as a consequences of economic globalisation, or at least the economic interconnection of regional markets and concomitant flow of goods, services and capital. Recent decades have witnessed a tremendous transformation – often unnoticed – in how the languages of nations, tribes, and whole civilisations, have been undergoing, and the cultural implications of language. It is an assumption of this paper that language is not a 'neutral' media of communication, but embedded in the political economy of a country. By implication, culture itself is neither neutral nor insignificant with regard the economy of state politics and the orientation of national policy changes.

The central government of the People's Republic of China have indeed recognised that culture can no longer be taken for granted, or assumed to emerge from the routine social development and education of its people. Culture is a realm of values and beliefs, as well as aptitudes and capabilities, and these can change and will change. The question remains, under what conditions will cultural change ensue. China's government are providing for new policy conditions of cultural change, and these conditions are in relation to what is calls "core socialist values"

and the recognition of the creative and cultural industries as a central dimension of national economic policy. Resulting from this, (and other measures), is a renewed concern with heritage, identity, cultural production and cultural content – of which the Chinese language is one pervasive dimension. In the West, the production and function of language is rarely considered as a part of 'cultural production', and yet this is what I am assuming in this paper, largely by way of observation of such recent developments in China's policy frameworks. Given how the "creative and cultural industries" as an economic concept, along with its range of creative practices (in design, fashion, gaming, music and so on), are so heavily mediated by globally disseminated Western products, the role of language within the creative economy is also, I venture to say, one seriously ignored subject for research. My study will undertake a linguistic analysis – but one which I hope will demonstrate a relevance and viability for cultural economy research, (where cultural economy is subject to a 'politics' of government policy making).

The phenomenon of ELF has been warmly received in some quarters and criticized in others. Scholars in support believe that ELF is a natural pan-national social development and its priority of communication allows for new spaces of cultural variation and accommodation (Guido and Seidlhofer, 2014; Jenkins, 2012, 2013; Motschenbacher, 2013; Schneider, 2012). The opposing view would understand ELF as promoting a monolithic English dominance and is merely another form of linguistic imperialism – where, like all imperialisms, linguistic diversity and cultural identity will be potentially under threat (Pennycook, 1994, 1998; Phillipson, 1992, 2003; Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas, 1997, 1999; 2008). Evidence has shown that in the face of ELF expansion, certain kinds of negotiation and modification have taken place in professional and academic contexts so as to preserve local languages and cultures (Canagarajah, 2005, 2013, 2014). The current research in this paper aims to investigate to what extent the tension caused by ELF and China's national strategy has had an impact on the academics in China where English has been taught as a compulsory course for students of all levels.

In this paper I will approach the above tension from the perspective of teachers' classroom discourse, particularly the student's use of their mother tongue (Chinese) in an environment for second language (English) useage. Most previous studies exploring first language use in second language classrooms tend to focus on the metalinguistic or motivations and purposes of teachers' first language use in specific second language situations, so as to understand students' second language learning process (Barnard and McLellan, 2013; Brooks-Lewis, 2009; Carless, 2007; Copland and Neokleous, 2011; Macaro, 2000, 2001b, 2005; Moodley, 2007; Nakatsukasa and Loewen, 2014; Tian and Macaro, 2012). However, my intention here is to explore within a sociolinguistic framework the tension between first and second language use, using Phillipson's conception of linguistic imperialism theory, and in so doing I will assess the effectiveness of national language policy and the broader political landscape of cultural self-determination.

### The Chinese Dream and Its Linguistic Implications

The term "Chinese Dream" was firstly proposed by Chinese President Xi Jinping in 2012 during his talk at an exhibition named Road to Rejuvenate. The term was subsequently was popularised in 2013 and after, and is now routinely used by journalists and visible in official government documents. Since then, the term has been frequently interpreted by Xi himself, party media, and political researchers. Though the overarching policy implications of the Chinese Dream seem vague, Xi has referred to the dream as national rejuvenation, an improvement of people's livelihoods, economic prosperity, the construction of a better society and a strengthened military. The meaning of this term can be understood on three levels. It represents (i) an advancement of the harmonious society for individuals, (ii) of the rejuvenation of the Chinese civilisation for the country, and (iii) of national strength (primarily military) for security of the nation.

However, the Chinese Dream is not exclusive to China and its people living in the P.R. China. Inwardly, it does indeed emphasise the rejuvenation of the nation and the improvement of people's living standards. It also includes the expansion and impact of a renewed China worldwide, enhancing the Chinese image on the

world stage and in global markets ('soft power' policies). To this end, one key element that crosses both domestic and international or foreign policy-oriented concerns, is inevitably the promotion of Chinese language and culture. New strategies for promoting the Chinese language and culture is commonly considered a counter-strategy in the face of the evident development of English language education in China and, as noted, the rise of English as a global Lingua Franca. English is commonly learned as the preferred foreign language in China, although since colonial times has remained a second language for the majority of the language learners. Since the Reform and "Opening Up" policies (of Deng Xiaoping) of the late 1970s became effective, English language education has been developing rapidly, particularly in metropolises enjoying economic prosperity – such as Beijing and Shanghai. It is now taught as compulsory in most elementary schools, secondary schools and universities, and is included in all types of national and local students' attainment tests.

Nonetheless, subtle impacts on English language education in China could be witnessed in relation to the Chinese Dream. One such impact was the deliberate downgrading of the status of English in Chinese society, manifest, for example, by the reform of the English test in the national College Entrance Examination. Since the resumption of the traditional College Entrance Examination in 1977 after the Cultural Revolution, English has always been a compulsory test for secondary school students majoring in either science or arts for further education entrance. It has traditionally enjoyed a resulting performance equal to mathematics or Chinese itself. However, in 2014 the Ministry of Education announced that it was reviewing the necessity of English testing in the Entrance Examination, and one possibility was to outsource the English test to other types of organisations. Students would be able to choose the time and frequency of taking the test, and the test result would not be in the form of the actual score, as in the past, but rather of differing levels, where each university would simply determine their threshold level of English for recruitment (MoE, 2014).

The Ministry of Education did not call for an immediate implementation of this new policy and will wait until 2017 when a consultation with each municipality and province is complete. In fact,

demands for reforming the College Entrance Examination has been a topic in the media for decades, but this is the first time substantial changes are proposed. This Ministry of Education decision is suspected to have been made under the pressure of some local authorities; for instance, in 2013 the Beijing Municipal Government announced its decision to reform both the Secondary School Entrance Examination and College Entrance Examination taken in the city (CEE, 2013). This reform will take place in 2016, and the proportion of the English test in a student's general grade profile will be reduced whereas the proportion of Chinese will be raised. This, I suggest, is a symbolic action in the cultural politics of the Chinese Dream – delivering a fairly concerted message to Chinese citizens on the non-negotiable centrality of China's linguistic culture, particularly where education is a dominant mechanism of all forms of social mobility as well as economic prosperity.

Similar policy shifts can be witnessed in the reform on College English Test (Band Four and Band Six). These two national tests have existed since 1987 as a conventional practice to assess the English levels of non-English college majors. Students are required to take these tests during their four years of studies in colleges and the majority of Chinese universities use the results in relation to the final graduation certificate (though the Ministry of Education never specified that students had to pass these tests to successfully graduate: MoE, 2005). English was thus not only a criterion for students to graduate from college, but also a requirement set by most employers in China. However, in 2007 a number of universities declared that they would stop associating English tests with graduation certificates and the trend, among China's 2000 or more universities and colleges, has grown to the point where it is widely recognised that the test is not necessary ('Reform history of CET', 2014).

Apart from the sphere of education, the decline of the status of English can also be identified in everyday life. A most recent example was the new regulation issued by Shanghai Municipal Government in 2014 forbidding the use of a combination of both Chinese and English vocabulary in advertising slogans – stimulating that Chinese must be used alone ('No English-Chinese...', 2014). This act was widely understood as protecting the autonomy Chinese, but also

raised some suspicions of the motivations of the Chinese Dream. Theoretically, the deliberate efforts to slim down the influence of English can be interpreted as an unavoidable scheme to resist the development of linguistic imperialism – so it is to this subject we must turn.

### Linguistic Imperialism

The concept of 'linguistic imperialism' is related to historical conditions, particularly British colonisation, when English as the colonialist discourse was imposed across its colonies, facilitating the bureaucratic management of economic enslavement, among other things. The fear that with the advancement of globalisation, a cultural colonialism of Easternisation through English will bring about a manifest neo-colonialist order seems entirely reasonable. One of the crucial changes that globalisation has brought, together with the rapid development of information technology, is the necessity for English when engaging in negotiations and transactions internationally. English's dominance is also a pragmatic fact. The notion of ELF has thus been heatedly debated in the field of sociolinguistics, where researchers more positively inclined towards the development of ELF tend to believe that ELF's built-in negotiability and variability "involves a good deal of local variations as well as substantial potential for accommodation" (Jenkins, 2009: 201). In other words, English no longer being strictly tied to the colonial ambitions of one (English) nation, and no longer being as monolingual in character as it was, it can now be appropriated and developed for the welfare and capabilities of other cultures and countries. It can create space for its users to adjust their speech, expression and articulation, to an intelligible and appropriate degree (during conversation, or in cultural expression). However, a more cautious and often critical perspective is taken by those who argue that ELF promotes a monolithic form of English and will ultimately lead to greater overall homogeneity – from conversation and linguistic articulation, to culture. Among scholars who hold such perspective, Robert Phillipson and his theory of linguistic imperialism stands as a seminal example.

Phillipson regards the spread of ELF as essentially a form of linguistic imperialism (Phillipson, 1992, 2003, 2008; Phillipson and

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Skutnabb-Kangas 1997, 1999), and that ELF poses a serious threat to other national languages and multilingualism itself, generating a scenario whereby the linguistic heritage of many nations are, and will be, undervalued and marginalized. His definition of English linguistic imperialism is where "the dominance of English is asserted and maintained by the establishment and continuous reconstitution of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages" (Phillipson 1992: 347). He categorises English linguistic imperialism as one sub-type of linguicism, which affects educational language planning in two respects: one in language and culture, the other in pedagogy.

Linguistic imperialism is also a distinct type of imperialism. It permeates all types of imperialism, since language is obviously ubiquitous, pervasive and the means for transmitting all ideas, concepts and a carrier for meaning and content. Linguistic imperialism is therefore a primary component of cultural imperialism, and is also central to social imperialism. It provides a conceptual framework within which the dominance of English language and the efforts spent to promote it can be understood (Phillipson, 1992).

Both Britain and the USA have long since regarded the promotion of English as a national strategy of their own. The British Council has established itself as a key agency for the training of English language teachers worldwide, whereas America has also been aiming to advocate English language and American culture via a range of government funded education and development projects and private organisations. Language, in this context, is elevated to a significant status because it is implicit that a good knowledge of English language makes one favourably disposed to the country and its culture, which is conducive to country's cultural diplomacy or maintaining its interests through cultural bilateral relationships on the world stage. The spread of English as an international language becomes inevitably interconnected with the world economy, politics, military and so on. According to Phillipson, English linguistic imperialism both facilitated global imperialism and was a consequence of it.

The area of English Language Teaching (henceforth ELT) is where the advocates of ELF and linguistic imperialism theory holders diverge significantly. On the surface, it seems that both

parties are against adhering to the norm of standard British or American English, yet they possess rather different reasons. ELF encourages teaching varieties of English language for the purpose of facilitating communication, but recent discussions on this topic have not developed a consensus on the extent to which ELF could have an impact on ELT pedagogy (Kirkpatrick, 2010c, 2014; Sowden, 2012; Jenkins, 2012). However, linguistic imperialism tends to believe that the ELT has economic-reproductive, ideological and repressive function, and that aiming at a British or American set of global norms could lead to a value dependence in the ideological sphere and furthermore cause dependence in the technical, economic and political spheres. Such dependence is a form of domination, or at the least an homogenisation that limits self-determination and so suppresses differentiation in cultural identity.

Phillipson (2009) has further developed his theory, emphasizing the importance of using robust language policy to protect the diversity of all languages. He argues that in order to understand how ELT has been shaped by political and cultural forces, we need to 'decolonise our minds' (Phillipson, 2009: 17). English, in fact, is tied to market forces with regard to both process and product. What we can do in order to resist such linguistic hegemony includes campaigning and awareness rising, investing in learning other languages, moving away from a monolingual model in both personal and professional contexts.

Although linguistic imperialism seems to lack support from other major theorists, empirical evidence has consistently been available to prove that negotiation and even resistance to the hegemony of ELF and the western culture do exist. For instance, conflicts between globalization and nationalism have led to changes in language policies in many places so as to develop national identity (Canagarajah and Ashraf, 2013); increasing linguistic and social homogeneity in the representation of literacy and expertise has caused urgent local concerns (Canagarajah, 2005); immigrants to English-dominant countries have negotiated their language rights in order to facilitate communication or maintain or reconstruct ethnic identity (Canagarajah, 2012, 2013, 2014); and so on.

The influence of ELF is prominent in part because of the acceleration of the

internationalisation of higher education, particularly universities, worldwide. The mobility of young people in Higher Education has generated closer contact between people from various countries, resulting in a “new homogenizing discourses and activities across global Higher Education” (Jenkins, 2013: 5). The increasing use of international English language tests is a case in point, as is the escalating magnitude of English useage in universities where English is not even the native language (Jenkins, 2011). Under such circumstances, will Chinese universities, living in the irretrievably universal force of internationalisation, be pulled apart by the tension – of a top-down strategy of promoting national language and culture on the one side, and global trends in English and global mobility on the other? Has there been any form of resistance against the rising status of English language – without a consequent limitation of a student's intellectual range or mobility? If so, who proposes the resistance and what form does it take? This paper now sets out to respond to this by looking at teachers' language-use in Chinese university classrooms.

### Methodology

The context of an English department in a leading Chinese university is selected based on the hypothesis that the teachers' working language is English and that the changes of their language use, particularly their use of English, is indicative of the state of things generally for academics in China. They are all facing the pressure of linguistic imperialism in the face of a national strategy of assertively promoting Chinese language and culture. Therefore, this short empirical case serves to consider the following: (a) the general observable language behaviour of teachers in English departments; (b) the extent to which their language behaviour is affected by the tension of the national strategy and the global ELF trend respectively; and (c) their interpretation of linguistic imperialism. Do they agree that the development of ELF is a form of linguistic imperialism? Why or why not?

The participants of this case are three male teachers (Teachers A, B and C) from a Chinese university exemplary in its foreign language teaching and research. They comprise a typical group of competent and qualified cases in terms of

researching English language education at tertiary level in China, all receiving their Bachelor, Master and PhD education in prestigious universities in China along with experience as visiting scholars in English-speaking-countries. Their English language proficiency is necessarily at a high level (compared with other English teachers in Chinese universities as a whole). They have all been teaching for more than ten years (are all mid-career), that is, they are of a status where their professional self-understanding (of their jobs, students and curricula) have reached a stabilized and consolidated stage (Huberman, 1989).

I have employed classroom observation (lesson recording) and interviews as my two data collection methods. Classroom observation ran for eleven weeks of the summer term (from September to January). Classes of four subjects were observed: Advanced English, American Literature, Western Philosophy and British and American poetry.<sup>1</sup> A total of 31 lessons were recorded. Interviews were held with the three participants at the beginning and at the end of the study. A total of six interviews, varying in length from 30 to 60 minutes, were conducted. Interviews were undertaken in Chinese based on the preference of the participants. The first round of interviews aimed to obtain participants' general views on the term 'Chinese Dream' and its implications on the promotion of Chinese language and culture. Their opinions on the recent development of ELF were also asked. The second round intended to explore participants' language use behaviours, particularly their motivations of using either language. After data collection was completed, all lesson recordings and interviews were transcribed. Extracts of participants' use of Chinese in class were categorised based on their contents and time coding was applied to determine the amount of time participants spent on each category. Interviewing data were subject to thematic analysis.

### Findings and Discussion

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<sup>1</sup> Teacher A. taught English and American Literature; Teacher B. taught Western Philosophy; Teacher C. taught Advanced English. Advanced English is a comprehensive skill-based course, whereas the rest of the subjects are content-based.

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The results of my data analysis have shown a surprisingly significant time spent on the use of Chinese in class, compared to previous studies into teachers' language use in second language classrooms. See Table 1.

Participants	Teacher A	Teacher B	Teacher C
Average amount of Chinese spoken during a term	41.3%	50.8%	36.5%

Table 1: *Average Amount of Chinese Spoken for Each Participant.*

Considering that the classes observed were conducted in an English department for English majors, exposure of the target language is crucial for students' second language learning processes. The National Curriculum Guidance for English Majors also states that classes should be taught in English. To further explore their use of Chinese, each extract containing the use of Chinese in all the classes observed was categorised according to its content and purpose. Table 2. presents the ten categories generated from the current study.

1	Translating long, difficult and illustrative sentences
2	Explaining / paraphrasing / interpreting new vocabulary or difficult phrases
3	Giving procedural instructions
4	Explaining grammar
5	Providing background information
6	Lecturing on text-related culture/literature/philosophy
7	Asides/anecdotes/personal opinions embedded in interpretation/ lecturing on the text
8	Raising questions
9	Meta-textual comments concerned with interpretation, evaluation of the text, etc.
10	Emphasizing pronunciation

Table 2: *Categories of Participants' Use of Chinese in Classroom Observation.*

The category 'lecturing on text-related culture/literature/philosophy' was found to be the most prominent one both in terms of the amount of time and frequency. Time coding discovered that Teacher A., B. and C. on average spent 53.2%, 67.5% and 35.8% respectively on lecturing on text-related culture/literature/philosophy, even though such content was not part of the syllabus in some

courses. Moreover, a closer look at this particularly category revealed that the majority of the content in this category was about Chinese culture/literature/philosophy. Questions regarding this phenomenon were asked during the interviews. Response from participants indirectly answered the second research question which investigates the influence of national strategy and global ELF trend on their language behaviour. It is only possible here to offer extracts from the interviews; they are as follows.

"I feel a sense of responsibility for giving students a knowledge of Chinese culture, literature and philosophy, because such knowledge is missing in the curriculum and the students definitely need it. As English majors who learn English and American literature and culture everyday, they should also understand the great history of Chinese civilization...I am aware of the amount of Chinese I am using in class. I deliberately employ a lot of Chinese because it is natural to deliver Chinese culture and literature in Chinese. It will raise students' awareness of appreciating their own language and culture." (Teacher A.)

"In order to understand Eastern culture, we have to firstly understand our own culture. It is only through the culture of others that can we best confirm our own moral standards. Firstly of all, they are Chinese. If they don't have a good grasp of Chinese language and culture, how can they call themselves Chinese? Sometimes I use Chinese to teach because I intend to establish a comparative framework within which students can form a cross-cultural vision based on the knowledge they learn. Otherwise how are they supposed to promote our language and culture to foreigners in the future?... I am not worried about them having enough exposure to English, since they are English majors. They have their own means to improve their English skills. English is undoubtedly an international language now...but as Chinese nationals, Chinese is of the most importance to them." (Teacher B.)

"I fully support the national strategy of promoting Chinese language and culture. I feel we are almost drowning in an English learning environment these days. Everyone is learning English. Every employer requires English test certificates. It has sort of invaded our lives. Our children are sent to learn English at a very young

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age even before they can speak fluent Chinese! If we do nothing to control such situation, I am afraid that our nation will lose it to the ELF force... For instance, these English majors I am teaching now are immersed in English environment everyday. They listen to English songs, watch Hollywood films and American TV series. They chat to native speakers of English online. However how much do they know about their own language and culture? This is very worrying." (Teacher C.)

When asked for their interpretation of the term "linguistic imperialism", Teacher A. expressed that he was not entirely certain if his understanding was correct. He described it as "a new form of colonisation" and regarded it as detrimental to multilingualism and multiculturalism. He used the case of Hong Kong as an example where a fierce tension has existed within schools since the handover in 1997. Such instances can be seen in other ex-colonial countries, especially countries in Southeast Asia. Teacher A considered that ELF to a certain extent was a type of linguistic imperialism. Admittedly, English as an international language provides the means for people who share different mother tongues to communicate freely. Nonetheless the freedom and varieties of English that ELF encourages actually "blur the boundary of traditional ELT and pose more confusion instead of convenience".

Teacher B. was in total agreement with the opinion that the development of ELF is a form of linguistic imperialism. He believed that "ELF damaged the harmony of language diversity and caused countless challenges for local minority cultures". In his opinion, it was a joint effort made by Britain and America to culturally conquer the elsewhere of the world. He spoke with a low regard for exported American culture and its values in relation to the youth in China, defining American pop culture as "trash culture". In addition, he stated that language and culture were interconnected, and could not be possibly separated. Therefore linguistic imperialism is, in its essence, cultural imperialism. China's national strategy of promoting Chinese language and culture is indeed a positive move towards building a confident image worldwide but it lacks detailed steps and methods. According to Teacher B., promoting Chinese language and culture should be executed in two steps: first of all, raising Chinese

nationals' awareness of their own language and culture; secondly spreading Chinese language and culture to overseas countries. "Currently we seem eager to accomplish the second step, without knowing that we are far away from completing the first step". As an academic in an English department, what he could do was providing his students with as much knowledge about Chinese language and culture as possible, which was in fact very limited. Therefore, he suggested that there should be more tangible and feasible action plans developed.

Being a sociolinguist, Teacher C. had a firm understanding of linguistic imperialism of all the participants, but he did not perceive ELF as a form of linguistic imperialism. From his point of view, the expanding of ELF as an irretrievable global force brought both positive and negative impact to social development. However it would be extreme to label it as linguistic imperialism. Truly the English language education in China "is to a large extent excessive, manic and commercial, with the pressure of having to pass English tests being put on a large number of people who do not even need to use English in their daily lives and jobs". Meanwhile the time spent on learning English could have been used to learn more Chinese, considering that young people are often criticized for lacking understanding of their national language and culture. Teacher C. believes that for a traditional and vastly developing country like China, it is crucial to maintain the beauty of its distinct language, because losing one's language advantage leads to the loss of one's political, cultural, economic and military power.

This empirical study was deliberately conducted in relation to well-known previous studies focusing on teachers' language use from the perspective of second language acquisition. However, the emphasis of my approach was on teachers' motivations and purposes of their language behaviour in relation to their understanding of culture, and the very current global politics of culture. My study registers an understanding the impact of the national strategy and widespread ELF force on their use of language(s), whereas previous studies largely draw upon the effectiveness of classroom teaching aside of the broader political complexities that the results articulate. This study employs teachers' classroom discourse, considering it sociolinguistically, reveals much more than



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classroom behaviour. Even Guo (2007), which is probably the closest to the current study regarding the context and the level of participants, limits its discussion within the territory of language pedagogy.

There are, similarly, many studies available that touch on the affective functions of teachers' first language use in second language classes. An interesting line of inquiry is where the first language is used as a type of 'we-code', to build teacher-student rapport and raising student awareness of their own language and culture (Guthrie, 1984; Guthrie and Guthrie, 1987; Polio and Duff, 1994; Brice, 2000). The study was concerned mainly with the benefits of second language acquisition, identifying and analyzing the affective functions in order to what extent these functions could help students better acquire a second language. My study has no intention of providing insights for second language pedagogy, but rather teachers' classroom discourse offers us an insight into the tension between the global trend of ELF and current national policy shifts. On the one hand, we can find a certain level of negotiation or even resistance in the Chinese classroom, and Chinese teachers may employ their own modifications to preserve their native language and culture upon encountering accelerated westernization. On the other hand, it's possible that the teachers choose to comply with such global ELF forces and make adjustments to their teaching pedagogy. The findings from this study confirm in some small way that the participants are more inclined to follow national policy initiatives in taking an initiative to provide students with knowledge of Chinese culture/literature/philosophy even when it is not part of the lesson objectives.

Phillipson's theory of linguistic imperialism alerts us to how the global spread of English has generated significant shifts on educational language planning in many countries – concerning language and culture (anglocentricity) as well as pedagogy (professionalism). This has given rise to a contentious issue: what norms should learners be encouraged to follow when learning English? Should they aim at standard British English or a local variety, which permits more effective communication? If the former, will this entail a British linguistic imperialism, a threat to multilingualism and a process of cultural

homogenization – the outcome of, which is cultural imperialism? (Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas, 1997, 1999; Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas, 2008). In order to preserve multilingualism and multiculturalism, negotiation, modification and resistance against the hegemony of ELF and westernization can be observed, and many empirical studies have attempted to do so. Facing the powerful momentum of ELF, a resurgence of linguistic nationalism could still be witnessed in a number of countries such as India and Brazil (Ramanathan, 2004; Rajagopalan, 2005). In some places (e.g. India, Singapore and Hong Kong) the resistance against English is in fact a type of defiance against the elite group, as English is used to serve such group primarily (Annamalai, 2005; Rubdy, 2005; Lin, 2005). In addition, Canagarajah (1999) demonstrates how, within in a language ecology where English medium education is advocated, how local people in Sri Lanka negotiate and appropriate the international resources so as to reflect their own values. Canagarajah (2012, 2013) describes how immigrants negotiate between languages to construct their ethnic identities. Canagarajah and Ashraf (2013), discussing the conflicts between globalization and nationalism in India and Pakistan, observe how change of language policy quite deliberately aims at developing national identity.

This paper, to some extent, confirms Phillipson's theory on linguistic imperialism and its impact. Teacher B. specifically states that "we are now living in the hegemony of English language and the western culture", and the reason that he prefers to provide students with knowledge about Chinese philosophy and culture is that he does not want them to "forget that they are Chinese, no matter what subject they study and what language environment they choose to immerse themselves in". Similarly, Teacher C also criticizes the spread of English and ELT in China being "excessive". He speaks highly of the recent national strategy of 'Chinese Culture Going Abroad' and comments that "before going abroad, we firstly have to educate every Chinese person about our great history and culture and we should start with ourselves and everyone around us. I very much support the decision made by the Ministry of Education of eliminating English test from the College Entrance Examination. This decision should have been made a long time ago". During the interviews, Teacher B

mentioned the lack of detailed action plans to promote Chinese language and culture, echoing critics of the Chinese Dream. There is certainly a set of personal and national ideals that define the Chinese Dream, most of them seem hollow and unsubstantial ('Japanese media', 2014). In addition, the way the Chinese Dream has been promoted in China betrays traditional propaganda tactics, which could well lead to a decline in public confidence over time.

For a top-down policy requires multi-tiered schemes and corresponding assessment measures. 'Rejuvenating the Chinese nation' is probably the most frequently cited objective of the Chinese Dream, yet we hear little reference to how this could be achieved. Promoting national language and culture is certainly one way of revitalizing the nation, but the agenda built on this is not effective if it only relies on voluntary behaviour provoked largely by individual moral conscience, as my interviews suggest. The policy response to ELF has resulted in a fragmented range of efforts, witnessed in the abolition of English tests, or the recent calls for a cautious use of imported textbooks that contain western values (MoE, 2015). However, systematic strategies are required. The process of a politically motivated cultural promotion of national language and culture, needs to be objective and systematic if we are to avoid an indiscriminate resistance of western culture, which in turn can be used for political purposes.

### Conclusion

This research paper sets out to investigate the impact of the recent Chinese national strategy and the widespread ELF phenomenon on Chinese academics' classroom discourse. It aimed to explore to what extent teachers would modify or negotiate their use of language, while being pulled by the tension caused by the two forces of globalisation and nationalism. Three teachers from an English department in a Chinese university were selected on the assumption that their language behaviour can offer us an insight of a current pervasive dilemma facing many other Chinese academics.

The full analysis of classroom observation supplemented with in-depth interviews could not be represented in its entirety here, but even in short, has provided a vivid indication on how participants employed a significant amount of their

first language (Chinese) in classes where the target language (English) is expected to be the working language. They invested considerable effort in switching to Chinese, and did so intentionally to provide students with what they are currently thinking is their lack in knowledge of Chinese literature, culture, and philosophy and so on, even though the syllabus did not demand it. They attributed their language behaviour to the student's immersion in English and so Western culture. Facing the powerful ELF momentum, they all welcomed the government's policy in promoting Chinese language and culture and implement this policy in voluntary and improvised ways, even though the mandate of their class is only English language skills. Not all of them agreed that ELF is a form of linguistic imperialism, but they still recognised the danger in Chinese students losing interest in their own culture, and that this is directly owing to the process of Westernisation.

Of course, the findings in this paper have limitations due to the small sample size and single location. It is far from a holistic picture of the current state of national English language tuition across China. Yet, these teachers and this institutional location is prestigious and work under considerable pressure to attain the highest of competency in the English language. In doing so, they still registered and acted upon the imperative identified by the Chinese Dream national rejuvenation policy: China is losing its culture and identity in the face of globalisation and needs to devise and implement integrated cultural policies in response.

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