

LANGUAGE POLICY AND PLANNING FOR THE 2008 BEIJING OLYMPICS:  
AN INVESTIGATION OF THE DISCURSIVE CONSTRUCTION OF  
AN OLYMPIC CITY AND A GLOBAL POPULATION

Jie Zhang

BA, Central China Normal University, 2001

MLitt, University of Sydney, 2004

Department of Linguistics

Faculty of Human Sciences

Macquarie University

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## Abstract

This study situates language practices and ideologies within China's broader social, economic and political changes, and in particular, the preparation and hosting of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games. In recent years increasing empirical evidence has been presented indicating the use of sport for creating a positive national and/or regional image. However, little research has been conducted to investigate the language policy and planning endeavors undergirding the construction of national identity in large-scale sporting events, including the Modern Olympic Games. In this study, I attempt to present a multi-dimensional critical perspective on the link between English language learning and identity politics in the context of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games. In doing so, the study aims to provide insights into the persistent identity dilemmas recurring throughout China's English education history and presents some broader implications for current and future Chinese language policy makers, educators and learners.

This study employs a multi-method qualitative methodology with constructionist epistemological orientations. It reports on a range of data collected through multi-site fieldwork before, during and after the Beijing Olympic Games. Specifically, the study is based on four sets of data to present a holistic picture of language practices and language ideologies observed in the context under investigation: language policy documents and reports on English learning and popularization, photographs of Beijing's linguistic landscape during the event, English teaching materials designed specifically for Olympic purposes, and interviews with Olympic volunteers, teachers and BOCOG staff about their attitudes toward English learning and the Olympiad.

The central argument of this study is that ideologies of English language learning and teaching need to be understood as local, social and political constructions in a particular society. The learning of English in China has been driven by a simplistic view of complementary language use: English for *yong* – modern uses and international communication; Chinese for *ti* – national cohesion and harmony. However, the internal



paradox of the *ti-yong* conceptualization has produced persistent identity dilemmas in China's English language education. In contrast to legitimized "benefits" of English in China's mainstream discourses, Chinese learners of English have complex, nuanced, and sometimes ambivalent reasons for participating in English language learning. Furthermore, the spread of English in China is inextricably linked with political decisions that benefit some groups at the expense of others, which has concomitantly contributed to various forms of social inequality. The findings of my study suggest that English is the symbolic capital for stakeholders who share a vested interest in the English training industry. At the same time, English may provide little practical application value for most Chinese EFL learners who learn English only for the sake of showing proof of possessing it rather than actual competence; and in some contexts, the need to learn English can even constitute a serious disadvantage for members of minority ethnic groups who may lack access to English teaching resources. Uncritically oversimplifying Chinese people's desire for English in terms of "inherent benefits" will not only mislead Chinese learners of English but also threaten the language and social rights of disadvantaged groups.

## Statement of Candidate

I certify that the work in this thesis entitled “Language Policy and Planning for The 2008 Beijing Olympics: An Investigation of the Discursive Construction of An Olympic City and A Global Population” has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree to any other university or institution other than Macquarie University.

I also certify that the thesis is an original piece of research and it has been written by me. Any help and assistance that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself have been appropriately acknowledged.

In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis. The research presented in this thesis was approved by Macquarie University Ethics Review Committee, reference number: HE27JUN2008-D05925L&P on 27 June 2008.

Zhang Jie (Student ID: 40370925)

10<sup>th</sup> June 2011

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In March 2008, when autumn had just arrived in the Southern hemisphere, I left my family, my social network and my position as a university English teacher in China and the spring of the Northern hemisphere and commenced my PhD study at Macquarie University, Australia. From there I embarked on a transition into new identities in a new environment. For about half a year after my arrival, I experienced a loss of identity in the Anglophone world. I felt perplexed that my years of study and work in the field of teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) had only served to turn me into a “deficient non-native speaker.” Three years later, as my PhD study is coming to an end, I owe my deepest gratitude to all of the people who not only supported and enlightened me in completing this dissertation but also reached out to me and helped me grow as a person and a scholar.

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## Glossary

*Daxue*: modern university

*Gaokao*: China's National College Entrance Examination

*Guangzhou*: Canton

*Hang shang*: merchants in Chinese open ports in the Qing dynasty

*Hua*: to impact on

*Huaru renxin*: the force of impacting the minds of people

*I-Ching*: Book of Changes

*Jingshi daxue tang*: Peking University

*Jingshi tongwen guan*: Peking interpreter training institution

*Junzi*: virtuous men

*Keju*: Chinese Imperial Examination System

*Kongzi*: Confucius

*Liangge quantou daren*: Mao Zedong's "fighting with two fists" strategy

*Mai ban*: compradors serving as commercial facilitators for foreign companies

*Neisheng*: inner self-realization and virtue through learning

*Putonghua*: Standard Spoken Mandarin Chinese

*Qingshang jianyi*: The Confucian tradition of despising commerce and labor

*Qinmei, chongmei, kongmei*: devotion to America, fear of America, worship of America

*Renzi-Kuichou xuezhi*: 1912-13 School System

*Rujia*: Confuciansim

*Shiyi changji yi zhiyi*: learning advanced technologies from Western barbarians in order to  
fight against them

*Shuangyu jiaoxue*: English-Chinese bilingual education

*Shuoyuan Zhiwu*: a book written by Liu Xiang, a famous scholar of the Western Han  
Dynasty (202 B.C. – 9 A.D.)

*Ti*: internal essence of learning

*Tian yuan de fang*: round heaven and square earth

*Tianxia*: zone beneath the heaven, political sovereignty

*Waiwang*: external utility of learning

*Wen*: classic works of literature, painting, music and philosophy

*Wenhua*: culture

*Wenzhi*: civil administration

*Wuzhi*: armed administration

*Xiao yuzhong*: “minor language” – conventionally refers to all foreign languages except English in Chinese discourses

*Xin-wenhua yundong*: the New Culture Movement between 1915 and 1921

*Xinyang weiji*: belief crisis

*Xinzheng*: the New Policy launched by Qing Emperor Guangxu

*Xuetang*: academy

*Yangwu yundong*: the Self-Strengthening Movement launched between 1861-1894

*Yi*: barbarian

*Yibiandao*: Mao Zedong’s “lean-to-one-side” policy

*Yong*: external utility of learning

*Zhongxue wei ti; xixue wei yong*: Chinese learning for essence; Western learning for utility

## List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

- Aifly: Aifly Education & Technology Co., Ltd.
- BBC: The British Broadcasting Corporation
- BETS: The Beijing English Testing System
- BOCOG: The Beijing Organizing Committee of Olympic Games
- BSFLP: The Beijing Speak Foreign Language Program
- CET-4: College English Test band four
- CET-6: College English Test band six
- CDA: Critical Discourse Analysis
- CPC: The Communist Party of China
- CPPCC: The Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference
- EF: The English First Co., Ltd.
- EFL: English as a Foreign Language
- ELLT: English Language Learning and Teaching
- ELT: English Language Teaching
- ESL: English as a Second Language
- FL: Foreign Language
- GDP: Gross Domestic Product
- IOC: International Olympic Committee
- LEP: Language Education Policy
- LL: Linguistic Landscape
- LP: Language policy
- NCEE: The National College Entrance Examination
- PLA: The Chinese People's Liberation Army
- PRC: The People's Republic of China
- SL: Second Language
- TESOL: Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
- The Advanced Reader: A Conversational English Reader (Advanced)*
- The Elementary Reader: A Conversational English Reader (Elementary)*



U.K.: The United Kingdom

U.S.: The United States

VOA: The Voice of America

WTO: The World Trade Organization

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## **Chapter One: Introduction**

### **1.1 The Beginning**

#### 1.1.1 “One billion dollar English”

One day in the run-up to the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, I happened to tune in to a talk show program on China’s state television. The program host was interviewing several English language teaching “big shots”: representatives of the most prestigious brands in the English training industry in China. There was also a live audience in the studio aspiring to receive advice on how to improve their English proficiency. In the China of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, especially before the 2008 Olympiad, there were plenty of programs featuring “success stories” of English language learning and teaching (ELLT) celebrities. Those celebrities always positioned themselves as empowered norm providers and their admirers and followers as passive norm receivers in ELLT discourses. When I was just about to switch the channel, a question put forward by the program host to the audience amused me: “What are you willing to exchange for high English proficiency?” A female college student in her early 20s replied earnestly in English: “One billion dollars.” The host smiled and repeated her answer in Chinese with the hypothetical question: “Would you?” “Yes, if I had it,” said the girl firmly. I was not shocked by the amount of money the young woman said she was willing to exchange for high English proficiency, for it is obvious that she did not actually have such a sum at her disposal. What startled me was the resolute look on the girl’s face as well as a round of wild applause signaling the approval of the other audience members. Obviously, if people dream of exchanging a fortune exceeding their wildest dreams for English proficiency, the “value” they ascribe to English cannot be measured as material gain but is imbued with a mythical quality. After this, a question lingered in my mind for a long time and formed the initial motivation for my PhD research: “Why does this young woman as well as many more Chinese people desire English so fervently?”

### 1.1.2 My English learning trajectory and English desire

Like the girl on the TV show program above, I grew up in a transitional China against the background of great social transformation, rapid economic growth and ever-increasing English fever. The earliest memory I have of English is being taught funny symbols from the international phonetic alphabet by my mother, a college English teacher wanting to give her daughter a head start in academic success. My formal English education started in the second year of junior high school, where English was one of the three compulsory subjects on a par with Chinese and Mathematics. As is well known, Chinese people set a high value on education. After I started school, I was constantly reminded that a degree from a prestigious university was the best guarantee for a better life. In my understanding at that time, failing the National College Entrance Examination (NCEE, *Gaokao* in Pinyin) would have meant failing my parents' expectations and facing an uncertain and harsh future. In the examination-oriented Chinese education system, English became one of the subjects that I needed to do well in to pass exams as a necessary part of my further education. I hardly had any chance to use English outside class, but I never questioned why I was toiling at English and firmly believed that English was one of the measures of my academic worth and held the key to my future life. As a result of my hard work and earnest efforts at English, I was admitted to the undergraduate program of English language and literature in a key normal university in 1997. In the English as a foreign language (EFL) program, I spent a lot of time acquiring the standards and norms of English grammar and skills in textual analysis, studying the culture, history and society of Britain and the United States, familiarizing myself with major authors, works, genres and movements in British and American literature, and listening to the British Broadcasting (BBC) and the Voice of America (VOA) English programs. Like other English majors, I took for granted that the ultimate goal of learning English was to develop a "native-like" proficiency which we considered "a magical means of self-transformation" (I. Piller *et al.*, 2010, p. 183). Several years later, I graduated as a top-ten candidate and became a college English teacher in China. Amid a shower of praises, I was aware that I had not achieved the so-called "native-like" English proficiency that I had so long desired. On one hand, the utilitarian roles of English in China directly translated my English proficiency into greater opportunities in education, employment and international mobility. On the other hand, the pedagogical aim of teaching English as a

foreign language (TEFL) in China made me perplexed and frustrated about my own identities in this language. Why do I need to learn English? Do English learners in China really benefit from the time, effort, and expense of learning English? Are the benefits of English equally assessable to everyone? Which variety of English is standard? Am I a legitimate speaker or a deficient learner? These are the questions I have asked myself many times ever since I started to learn English. None of these questions can be answered with a simple “yes” or “no.” For most Chinese English learners like myself, native-like English proficiency is “an unattainable goal” (I. Piller, *et al.*, 2010, p. 183), but its widely-publicized promises continue to attract millions of Chinese people investing heavily in learning the language.

### 1.1.3 English fever in China’s opening-up

Since the founding of the People’s Republic of China in 1949, the last half-century has witnessed tremendous changes in China’s foreign language policies. Since China implemented its open door policy in 1978, English has firmly established its supremacy as the main foreign language in the education policies of China (e.g., B. Adamson, 2002, 2004; J. Chang, 2006; G. Hu, 2005; Y. Hu, 2008; A. Lam, 2002; J. McGuire, 1997). It is in the broad context of globalization and China’s drive for modernization and internationalization that English fever has been spreading across the nation in the last three decades. “English fever” (cf., S. Krashen, 2003; C. Power, 2005; D. Shim & J. S.-Y. Park, 2008), as a social phenomenon, refers to an overwhelming collective passion for and a concomitant heavy investment into learning English. English fever is also a prominent phenomenon in many other Asian countries, most notably Japan (M. Oda, 2007; I. Piller & K. Takahashi, 2006; I. Piller, *et al.*, 2010) and South Korea (J. S.-Y. Park, 2009; I. Piller, *et al.*, 2010; D. Shim & J. S.-Y. Park, 2008). In the Chinese case, the status of English received a strong boost after China’s entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001 and when Beijing was awarded the 2008 Olympic Games, also in 2001 (K. Bolton, 2002).

As communicating with the outside world has become the key rationale for language teaching in China in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (“China Becomes Biggest Market”, 2002), English training has

become a huge industry that generated 20 billion Yuan (roughly 3 billion US dollars) market value in 2007 (H. Liu, 2008). In 2008, there were more than 350 million English learners in China (ibid.) and that number has been increasing by 20 million per year (W. Ping, 2008). In other words, one out of every five Chinese is studying English and one out of every four of the remainder is planning to do so in the future (ibid.). In order to gain an in-depth understanding of China's English fever, I decided to take the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, the world's most prestigious sporting event and the largest international event ever held in China, as the setting of my research to investigate why Chinese individuals and Chinese society invest so heavily in English language learning. This is where my initial research idea started. In the next section, I will go on to discuss the Modern Olympic Games as a cultural, economic and political phenomenon and then inquire into the historical significance of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, clarifying the rationale for the study setting.

## **1.2 The 2008 Beijing Olympic Games**

Within the social sciences, the socio-political significance of the Olympics as a premier sporting event for nation-states has been increasingly acknowledged in recent years (e.g., N. Blain *et al.*, 1993; G. Brown, 2000; S. Brownell, 2005; R. Burton, 2003; M. Dyreson, 2003; S. Essex & B. Chalkley, 1998; B. Houlihan, 1997; O. S. Ikhioya, 2001; E. D. Jaffe & I. D. Nebanzahl, 1993; A. Smith & D. Porter, 2004; K. Toohey & A. J. Veal, 2007). It is widely claimed by Olympic bid cities (in many cases, representing the national governments that back them) that this mega-event can bring about social and material change, such as sport infrastructure improvement, sustainable urban development, global media attention, booms in tourism, and most importantly the promise of long-term image enhancement for national pride and national identity. Due to the global significance of the Modern Olympic Games, to become an Olympic power has been "the persistent and ultimate dream of China" (J. Dong, 2005, p. 533).



### 1.2.1 The Modern Olympic Games

The Olympic Games is an international multi-sport event established for summer and winter games and organized every four years. The history of the Olympic Games goes back to Ancient Greece. After an interruption of more than 2,000 years, the Modern Olympic Games were revived in 1894 when Pierre Fredi Baron de Coubertin sought to promote international understanding through sport competition. From a 42-event competition with fewer than 250 male athletes representing 14 nations in 1896, the Modern Olympic Games have since grown to a 300-event sporting event with over 10,000 competitors of both sexes from 205 nations (R. Farrow & M. Farrow, 2007). The Ancient Olympic Games celebrated physical excellence and served a primarily religious purpose. In their modern form, while still ostensibly about physical excellence, the Games also play a cultural, economic and often political role (K. Toohey & A. J. Veal, 2007, p. 1). With its swift expansion in all dimensions, the Modern Olympic Games are no longer, if they ever were, just a sports event, but *de facto*, a cultural, economic, and political phenomenon.

The pursuit and sponsorship of mega-events such as the Olympiad has become an increasingly popular strategy of national and municipal governments worldwide. No other events can compete with the Modern Olympic Games in attracting such a large scale of global attention during two weeks. According to Toohey & Veal (2007, p. 1), every four years in recent decades, some 10,000 athletes from over 200 countries, accompanied by a similar number of coaches and officials, as many as 15,000 accredited media representatives, and hundreds of thousands of spectators have gathered for more than two weeks to participate in, report on and watch a sports event which is in turn viewed on television, listened to on radio, read about in the print media and browsed on the Internet by billions of people around the world. The Olympic Games are indeed a global media event. For an Olympic host country, global media exposure is a double-edge sword. The Olympic Games constitute a major opportunity for the host city and country to showcase its culture and project a positive national image through powerful print, broadcasting and electronic media. At the same time, however, the host city and country also open themselves up to intense international media scrutiny.

Hosting the Olympic Games is a mixed blessing commercially, too. On the one hand, the tourism benefits, corporate sponsorship and commercialization of the Games generate significant income. However, the state-of-the-art buildings and technology needed to attract the Games have rendered hosting both the summer and winter events a rather expensive and grand scale operation (K. B. Wamsley & M. K. Heine, 1996). Each host city and country, expecting great rewards from the Games, has to pour enormous material and human resources into its Games. The ever-growing scale of the Modern Olympic Games has actually made it more difficult for the Games to be held in developing non-Western countries. Under the leadership of Juan Antonio Samaranch, former President of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the Games began to shift toward international sponsors who sought to link their products to the Olympic brand. The sale of the Olympic brand has made the Games move away from the ideal of pure competition and sportsmanship and become indistinguishable from any other commercialized sporting spectacle. In recent decades, the tension between the rhetoric of amateurism and the realities of commercialism is a central contradiction of the Olympic Games (N. Blain, *et al.*, 1993, p. 186).

Since the world's nations started to come together in 1896 to compete, politics have never stayed out of the Olympic arena. Sport is often constructed as "the great equalizer" (J. Hogan, 2003, p. 100), and as such the Olympic Movement is assumed to foster international goodwill, peace, and equality through free and fair competition between the athletes of the world (International Olympic Committee, 2007). Some scholarly and popular discourses also identify sport as a 'universal language' that transcends not only national boundaries but also national identities. However, Dyreson (2003) argues that "sports have almost always been, in their modern form, an arena for the exhibition of tribal and especially national identities rather than an occasion for the celebration of universal human communities" (p. 92). Substantial research on the Olympics has shown that the reality of this sporting mega-event is much more complex and controversial than those rosy promises. The tension between the rhetoric of internationalism and national concern is another central contradiction of the Olympic Games (N. Blain, *et al.*, 1993, p. 186). Judging from the management and organization of the Olympic Games, the Olympic Movement is still Western-dominated and will continue to be

so in the foreseeable future (S. Brownell, 2007). As the capital of a non-European, developing and socialist country, Beijing's selection as the host city of the 2008 Olympic Games, therefore, carried profound sociopolitical significance in Olympic history.

### 1.2.2 The award of the 2008 Olympics to Beijing

When Beijing was elected as the host city on July 13, 2001, during the 112<sup>th</sup> IOC Session in Moscow, defeating Toronto, Paris, Istanbul, and Osaka, a public demonstration of national pride was witnessed on a scale rarely seen in Chinese history. From the early 1990s, the Chinese government had been heavily championing the idea of China's hosting the Olympics. Beijing's victory of hosting 2008 Olympic Games came seven years after it lost the 2000 Olympics to Sydney by two votes. The Chinese Government's enthusiasm and the 94.9% support rate for the Olympic bid by Beijing citizens were claimed officially as two of the key elements for the successful bid. The IOC Evaluation Commission concluded that "There is significant public support for the prospect of organizing the Olympic Games and a feeling that a successful bid would bring recognition to the nation" (International Olympic Committee, 2001, p. 75). The 2008 Beijing Olympics marked the first occasion that either the Summer or Winter Games were hosted in China, making it the 22<sup>nd</sup> nation to do so. Following the 1964 Tokyo Olympic Games and the 1988 Seoul Olympic Games, it was only the third time that the Olympic Summer Games were held in Asia. As a matter of fact, with the exception of Australia, all other Olympic Games were held in Europe or North America.

The Beijing Olympics made history in many areas. In 2008, Beijing became the focus of worldwide attention in the Olympic spotlight. During the intensive 16 days of sports competition (August 8 to 24, 2008), a total of 10,500 athletes competed in 302 events in 28 sports, which made the Olympiad the biggest ever. For the first time, the Olympic Games were produced and broadcast entirely in high definition television by the host broadcaster and broadcast extensively through live online video. According to the media report by Nielsen (W. Lu, 2009), the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games attracted the largest global TV audience of any Olympiad – 4.7 billion viewers worldwide, 70% of the world's population.

About 2 million domestic tourists and 450,000 overseas tourists were estimated to have visited Beijing during the Olympic Games period, according to the Beijing Municipal Tourism Bureau (T. Zhang & C. Zhang, 2008). A total of 280 billion Yuan (approximately 42 billion USD) were invested in the preparation for the Games in Beijing (S. Yao, 2008), making it the most expensive Olympic Games ever. The Chinese government committed to make all possible efforts to ensure that the Beijing Games would be the biggest of all time and “the best-ever Olympic Games in history” (BOCOG, 2002). Given all these efforts and superlatives, it is reasonable to ask why China went to such lengths to gain the Olympic Games. Or, to put it differently, what was the sociopolitical context in which China’s Olympic bids were embedded? I will explore what the Olympics meant to China in the next section.

### 1.2.3 Remaking China in the Olympic spotlight

The XXIX Olympiad came to Beijing at a critical juncture in world history, representing both increasing globalization and the recent Chinese history of great socio-economic transformation (X. Xu, 2006). The award to host the Olympiad created an additional impetus for China’s modernization drive and international integration. Both internally and externally, the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games were laden with the historical mission of remaking China, in terms of constructing national identity and pursuing international primacy (ibid.).

#### *1.2.3.1 Fading glory and lost identity*

China is one of the world’s oldest continuous civilizations, with its written history tracing back to the Shang Dynasty (ca. 1700 B.C. – ca. 1046 B.C.). For many centuries, China stood as a leading civilization, outpacing the rest of the world in the sciences and the arts. Economically, China had a self-reliant economy and self-sufficient domestic trade. Prior to the nineteenth century, China possessed one of the most advanced societies and economies in the world. Up until the Qianlong Period of the Qing Dynasty (1711 – 1799), China’s gross domestic product (GDP) still accounted for one third of that of the world (D. S. Niu, 2008, p. 40). Social stability and economic prosperity lulled the rulers of the Qing Dynasty (1644 –

1912) into a Sino-centric world view (B. Adamson, 2002) and this led to self-imposed isolation from the rest of the world. “天圆地方 *tian yuan di fang*” (Round Heaven – Square Earth) is an ancient and long-lasting cultural concept in China and the supreme expression of a Sino-centric worldview. Ancient Chinese people believed that the Heaven projected its circular shadow onto the center of the Earth (X. Tang, 2010). The area under the shadow, “天下 *tianxia*” (literally, zone beneath the Heaven), was divinely appointed to the Emperor of China (“中国” literally means the “Heavenly Middle Kingdom”) The corners of the square not under the celestial emanation were ruled by foreign “barbarians” (夷 *yi*). For thousands of years, this Sino-centric worldview had lain behind Chinese constructs of self-identity.

The 17<sup>th</sup> century witnessed revolutionary changes in Europe, which marked the dawn of a new age and the formation of a new world structure. An agrarian society guaranteed a continuous prosperity in ancient feudal China but, at the same time, seriously handicapped the development of socially productive forces similar to Europe’s rise and expansions in the 18<sup>th</sup> century after the European industrial revolution. The Opium War of 1840 marked a turning point away from China as the center of world civilization. From then on, China was reduced to a semi-colonial and semi-feudal country. During the following hundred years, economically backward China suffered from foreign aggression, civil war and various political conflicts until the founding of the People’s Republic of China in 1949. Political instability and a backward economy not only damaged Chinese people’s national pride but also dissolved their Sino-centric national identity. Since then and for over a century, an inferiority complex has been institutionalized in the Chinese mind (J. Dong, 2005). The shame and humiliation resulting from foreign invasion after 1840 made the Chinese under Communism obsessed with the desire to put behind them the image of the “sick man of East Asia” (ibid.). Beijing’s unsuccessful bid for the 2000 Olympic Games in 1993 further contributed to this national psyche of failure and defeat. Reviving a unified, cohesive, and powerful identity for “the Chinese nation” and regaining its national greatness became the underlying drive for pursuing the Beijing Olympic Games. It was widely claimed that the successful staging of the Games could bring an end to the century of humiliation by and subordination to Western powers and would be a milestone in the course of the great reinvigoration of “the Chinese nation.” Attending the Olympics and performing well carried

the symbolic means of catching up with and even beating the Western powers (H. Fan *et al.*, 2005).

#### *1.2.3.2 China's identity crisis in the modernization process*

China's reform and opening up started over 30 years ago after the 10-year Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), which left the country on the verge of economic breakdown. It was not until the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party in 1978, that the Chinese leadership concentrated on economic development. The Communist Party of China (CPC) shifted the focus of all its work from class struggle to the drive for socialist modernization (i.e. the modernization of agriculture, industry, science and technology, and the military). Since starting to open up and reform its economy in 1978, China has averaged 9.8 percent annual GDP growth for 30 years ("China's Tremendous Changes", 2008), and surpassed Japan as the world's second largest national economy in 2010 ("China Overtakes Japan", 2010).

It is the adoption of Capitalist market mechanism since 1978 that has been leading the once poverty-stricken China into becoming an ever-growing prosperous country. However, China came to recognize that its traditional cultural beliefs and socialist beliefs are often irreconcilable in the face of its modernization drive through decentralization and marketization (J. Wu, 2007). Consequently, economic success has come at the price of national identity. Since the 1980s, tremendous socio-economic transformations brought about by Western-oriented modernization has resulted in a series of identity crises such as the loss of national identity, and the decline of traditional and socialist values (Y. Zheng, 1999, p. 47). Consequently, China's identity crisis also had an impact on the attitude of the public towards the political legitimacy of the leadership of the CPC. Due to the gap between surging economic reform and lagging political reform, from the 1990s growing public concerns started to emerge about a "belief crisis" (信仰危机 *xinyang weiji*) among different social groups, especially among the young generation, who were described by the media as "a contemplative generation," "a wounded generation," "a wasted generation," "a lost generation," and "a fallen generation" (ibid., p. 48). It was reported that the public took an

indifferent attitude to the society they were part of. In a national survey, it was shown that individuals' loyalty to the socialist state had seriously weakened throughout the 1980s (ibid., p. 50). Through "opening wide" to the West, the possibility of the erosion of "Chinese" cultural values by a global culture dominated by American values began to alarm China's leaders and CPC theorists (N. Knight, 2006). Former CPC General Secretary (1989-2002) and President of PRC (1993-2003), Jiang Zemin, in his important speech to commemorate the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the CPC, called on the whole party to "advocate the ideology of patriotism, collectivism and socialism among all people" and "combat and resist money worship, hedonism, ultra-egoism and other decadent ideas" (ibid.). The Chinese government came to the realization that it had to rely more on patriotism for reinforcing its legitimacy, which has been weakened by de-ideologization and the market-oriented modernization drive (X. Xu, 2006). The successful hosting of sporting mega-events and international success of Chinese athletes were believed to bring to the nation pride and hope, which were much needed in the new era of transformation (H. Fan, *et al.*, 2005). In addition, sporting mega-events have been proven to be a major source of national cohesion in many different contexts. National cohesion is a multi-component conception with patriotism, sense of belonging and identity, self-consciousness and subject awareness as its main factors. Because of their manifold links with all these factors, sports are seen as effective in invigorating the national spirit, facilitating the forming of national identity and ultimately enhancing the cohesion of the nation-state. Consequently, the 2008 Olympic Games were assigned a set of Olympic objectives, as in this statement by Jiang Zemin: "the success of the bid will advance China's domestic stability and economic prosperity. The Olympics in China has the objectives of raising national morale and strengthening the unity of Chinese people both in the mainland and overseas (cited in H. Fan, *et al.*, 2005, p. 514). In another example, He Zhenliang, honorary president of the Chinese Olympic Committee, and advisor of the Beijing Organizing Committee for the Games of the XXIX Olympiad (BOCOG) pointed out that China should make the 2008 Olympics a success with national cohesion and self-confidence (F. Kong, 2006).

Indeed, it can be considered that the 2008 Beijing Olympics achieved the goal of furthering national cohesion and unity. In preparation for the Games, Chinese national cohesion was

manifested in the forms of “voluntary service” and “public participation.” With a 94.9% support rate and 1.5 million Olympic volunteers, the Chinese people impressed the world with their immense enthusiasm and support for the Games. Never before had Chinese people concerned themselves so much with the Olympic Games. The sentiments the Olympic Games inspired and prompted Chinese people to seize every opportunity to participate in this biggest-ever sports event and in turn reinforced the cohesiveness of the Chinese people. On the eve of the Games, several surveys (Ogilvy Group & Millward Brown ACSR, 2008; Pew Research Center, 2008) found high excitement for the Beijing Olympic Games with national pride a key driver of China’s euphoria. While the Games were largely held in Beijing, the Olympics were not only about Beijing, but rather, the entire nation.

#### *1.2.3.3 China’s image crisis in a globalizing world*

In addition to overcoming China’s inferiority complex and to enhancing national identity and unity, a third objective of the Olympics was to project a new image of China to the world. China, as a communist state in the Far East, has long had an image as the ultimate Other (J. Wu, 2007). China’s ever-growing economic power has attracted worldwide attention and also excessive concerns in a globalizing world. The implications of various aspects of China’s rise have been heatedly debated in the international community as well as within China. The rapid economic growth over the past three decades has improved China’s international status; however China’s national image and cross-cultural communication competence greatly lag behind its economic development (J. C. Ramo, 2007). Confronted with the complexities of rapid changes in China since the reform and opening-up in 1978, China’s image in the international community has failed to keep up with these ceaseless changes. Due to complicated political, historical and cultural reasons, China’s image in international society is rather complex, contradictory and mysterious. The 2007 Pew Global Attitudes Survey (Pew Research Center, 2008) showed that attitudes toward China had grown more negative in recent years in most countries. Based on the 2004/05 survey conducted by Y&R’s Brand Asset® Valuator Group which involved more than 500,000 respondents in 45 countries, Ramo (2007) pointed out that China was among the most poorly understood countries on



earth. General knowledge of China remains quite low: “People know China is different but have little understanding of either the roots or implications of that difference” (J. C. Ramo, 2007, p. 26). He further argued that China’s image misalignment at home and abroad has become a strategic threat in its efforts to better integrate with the international community.

Due to China’s image crisis in the international sphere, the bidding road of Beijing was full of troubles and trials before attaining success. Editorials in Western newspapers during Beijing’s Olympic bid in 2001 revealed a high level of hostility: “China Doesn’t Deserve the Olympics”; “Unwelcome Bid from Beijing”; “Olympics Tied Up in Chinese Puzzle”; and others (S. Brownell, 2007, p. 4). The Beijing Olympics have been viewed by many people in the developed Western countries as “the harbinger of a new age of Eastern imperialism and the rise of the ‘China threat’” (ibid.). In the lead-up to the Games, Western politicians, human rights groups, and media commentators frequently used the Olympic Games as a platform for their own political agendas. For instance, in March 2007, actress Mia Farrow spearheaded an attack on China’s support of the government of Sudan in which she labeled the Beijing Olympics as the “genocide games” (R. Farrow & M. Farrow, 2007). Before Beijing’s successful bid for the Olympics in 2001, there was increasing awareness in China of its national image crisis and the urgency to build international trust and understanding for further development in the globalizing world. The bidding slogan “New Beijing, New Olympics” for the 29<sup>th</sup> Olympiad unveiled in 2001 best demonstrated China’s determination to present a new image in the Olympic spotlight. For China, the Olympic Games offered legitimate way to present and promote its national identity and seek a greater role on the global stage.

The pursuit and sponsorship of the Olympiad was an important strategy for China to enhance its international image and to seek greater power on the global stage. This strategy is closely related to the “soft power” that China has long sought. In 2007, “soft power,” a term developed by Harvard professor Joseph Nye (1990), emerged as a hot topic at that year’s annual sessions of China’s parliament and top political advisory body (B. Li *et al.*, 2007). Although its usefulness as a descriptive theory has often been challenged, soft power is still being used as a term that distinguishes the subtle effects of culture, values, and ideas on others’ behavior from more direct coercive measures called “hard power” such as military

action or economic incentives. For instance, Peng Fuchun, the deputy of the National People's Congress, the highest law-making body in the PRC, expressed this idea as follows: "We should never underestimate the importance of building soft power as the economic miracle is only one side of China's rise in the world arena" ("Soft Power", 2007). In light of this, China has been striving to achieve "the other side," namely exerting more international influence through diplomacy and national image building. Fan (2010) stressed national image as the core component of a country's soft power. Thus, the creation and promotion of a favorable national image is an inseparable part of the strategic plan for China's development. There is little dispute that power in the international arena is derived, in part, from a country's ability to project an image that presents its military, economic, political, or cultural importance in a favorable and powerful light. In turn, recognition from the international community of the projected national image is an important assurance for the legitimacy and power of the present government.

In sum, the *Beijing Olympic Action Plan* (BOCOG, 2002), which was released as the general guideline for preparing the Beijing Olympic Games, set one of its main strategic objective as "creating a new image for Beijing." The 17-day sporting extravaganza represented the culmination of three decades of Chinese efforts to reconnect with the world. The Project 2008 Poll, a joint initiative of the Ogilvy Group in China and Millward Brown ACSR, probed Chinese residents in locations along the torch relay route in China for their attitudes and opinions regarding the upcoming Olympic Games. The study found the fervor with which China had embraced the Olympics supported the notion that China used the Games as a catalyst in its ambition to show the world a new national image and gain respect while doing so (Ogilvy Group & Millward Brown ACSR, 2008). Soon after, the Pew Research Center (2008) demonstrated in its Global Attitudes Project that the Chinese were confident that the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing would change the way their country was viewed. Chinese respondents said their country would be a successful host and that the Olympic Games would help China's image around the world. In addition to seeing the Beijing Olympics as good for their country, the Project also found that an overwhelming majority of Chinese across all demographic groups said the event was important to them personally. Beijing citizens were especially likely to say that was the case.

### 1.3 The Sociolinguistics of the Olympic Games

This section identifies the lack of sociolinguistic/language policy studies of the Olympic Games and presents the rationale for a sociolinguistic perspective to language policy, language ideologies, language practices and identity construction in the Beijing Olympic context.

#### 1.3.1 Social sciences perspectives on the Olympics

The academic literature on the Modern Olympic Games is massive and growing. Most social science disciplines and sub-disciplines (primarily, history, economics, politics and sociology) have contributed to the study of the Olympic Games (K. Toohey & A. J. Veal, 2007, p. 2). Above all, the Games have become an intriguing locus for the study of the discursive construction of national, regional, and civic identity. Although existing scholarly publications (e.g., N. Blain, *et al.*, 1993; G. Brown, 2000; S. Brownell, 2005; R. Burton, 2003; M. Dyreson, 2003; S. Essex & B. Chalkley, 1998; B. Houlihan, 1997; O. S. Ikhioya, 2001; E. D. Jaffe & I. D. Nebanzahl, 1993; A. Smith & D. Porter, 2004; K. Toohey & A. J. Veal, 2007) have examined a number of significant and contested issues pertaining to the social construction of identity through the experience of hosting the Olympic Games, there is an absence of literature in Olympic studies exploring the role of language policy and planning in the Games.

The Olympic Games constitute a fruitful context for the study of questions related to language policy and planning. Due to the grand scale of the Modern Olympic Games and the diversity of cultural and linguistic backgrounds of all the competing nations, it was anticipated that communication would present many difficulties. For host countries, especially non-European developing countries where neither English nor French is their national/official language, language policy and planning is considered as an important aspect of work for the successful operation of the Games. For an example, in the preparation of the 1988 Olympics, the Seoul Olympic Organizing Committee (1989)

conducted a language education plan and developed diverse training methods to improve foreign language proficiency for Games operation personnel. The language policy and planning for the Olympics usually involves a projection of language service requirements, the establishment of language proficiency evaluation criteria, a recruitment and allocation of language service personnel, an implementation of a language training plan, a compilation of materials relating to language services, and the formulation of language regulations. Twenty years after the Seoul Olympics, Beijing's commitment to the biggest of all time and "a best-ever Olympic Games in history" (BOCOG, 2002) meant that language policy and planning would become even more important for achieving the strategic objectives of the Games. In the social sciences, many Chinese and international scholars (e.g., S. Brownell, 2005, 2008; J. Dong, 2005; H. Fan, 2010; H. Fan, *et al.*, 2005; F. Kong, 2006; X. Lu *et al.*, 2005; C. Zhou & L. Chen, 2003) have shown the strategic use of the 2008 Games for increasing the prestige of the Chinese government while concurrently arousing the national consciousness and identity of the Chinese population. However, few studies situate the discussion of language policies, language ideologies, language practices and identity construction in the context of the Olympic Games. In contrast to existing literature that has been primarily concerned with socio-historical or political economic aspects of the Games, this study takes a language policy/sociolinguistic perspective to identity construction in the preparation and hosting of the Olympic Games. Of particular interest to this study is the relationship between language policies, language ideologies, language practices and identity construction in the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games.

In the past three decades, there has been an increasing focus on the link between globalization and language in the fields of applied linguistics and sociolinguistics (e.g., D. Block & D. Cameron, 2002; D. Crystal, 1997; N. Fairclough, 2006a; D. Graddol, 1997, 2006; B. B. Kachru, 1982, 1986; B. Kumaravadivelu, 2008; A. Pennycook, 1994; R. Phillipson, 1992). Numerous studies (e.g., N. Coupland, 2010; D. Crystal, 1997; N. Fairclough, 2006b; D. Graddol, 2006; S. K. Sonntag, 2003) have demonstrated that linguistic globalization is an important dimension of globalization, and the global spread of English is a defining characteristic of linguistic globalization. Even though there is a wide range of literature and research published on the global spread of English, few studies have

explored the intersection of the global spread of English and the Modern Olympic Games as two globalization phenomena. Therefore, this study aims to bridge the gap between Olympic studies and studies on the global spread of English by investigating how China as one particular community in the so-called “Expanding Circle” (B. B. Kachru, 1986) has used both sport and English as “universal language” to reposition itself on the world stage.

### 1.3.2 The role of English in the Beijing Olympic Games

It has been China’s national ambition to catch up with the Western capitalist world through modernization and the Olympics played an important part in stimulating the nation’s enthusiasm and drive for modernization (H. Fan, *et al.*, 2005). The forces that propelled China towards its biggest international event in history have also driven the Chinese people to embrace English. Under the changing social, economic and political conditions both at home and abroad, the Beijing Olympics marked a pivotal period of identity construction at national, regional and individual levels. These different levels of identity construction were all somehow related to the learning and teaching of English, the default international language and an official language of the Olympic Movement. English proficiency became an important component of desirable identities for China in its modernization and internationalization drive, and also for both Beijing as Olympic city and Chinese citizens of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

In the host city and across the country, the Beijing Olympics spurred an English learning frenzy. After Beijing’s successful Olympic bid in 2001, the Beijing Organizing Committee of Olympic Games (BOCOG) formulated a comprehensive *Olympic Action Plan* in order to construct a new identity for Beijing as well as the whole nation on the Olympic platform. This *Olympic Action Plan* infiltrated every aspect from infrastructure construction to environmental protection to technical innovation and to Olympic education and promotion. Noticeably, English popularization was a top priority in creating a favorable language environment for the Beijing Olympics. In the first phase (2003-2008), the English popularization campaign involved over 4,000 athletes, judges, BOCOG staff, 1.5 million Olympic volunteers and several million Beijing residents as learners of English. The

Olympic Games had given English language learning in China added urgency. In a similar vein to Korea's approach in the 1986 Asian Games and the 1988 Seoul Olympic Games, the Chinese government promoted the 2008 Olympiad as "a call for citizens to gain a global mindset and to be equipped with important characteristics of globality, one of which is the ability to speak English" (D. Shim & J. S.-Y. Park, 2008, p. 144). As a result, Beijing citizens were encouraged to express their patriotism and glorify the whole nation by learning English. Before the Olympics, the domestic press had been packed with stories about patriotic senior citizens, chefs and police officers learning their ABCs in an effort to do their bit for the games. For Beijing citizens, learning English was not only highly fashionable but also a national service. A 2008 survey in Beijing showed 86.39 percent participants planned to take part in English training (H. Liu, 2008). The growing popularity of English training was found across all age groups. The Olympics became the powerful driving force for the spread of English in the host city and the rest of China.

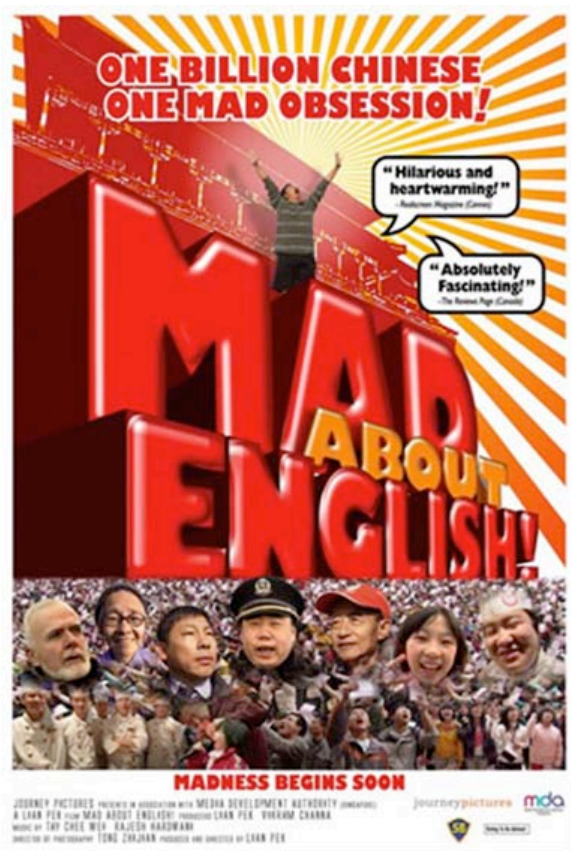


Figure 1: Trailer of *Mad About English*. Retrieved March 31, 2011 from <http://www.madaboutenglish.com>

The intersection between English language learning and Olympic passion was well-captured in a 60 minutes documentary, *Mad About English*, which was released shortly before the Olympics (see Figure 1). Directed by Singaporean Lian Pek, this documentary well captured the historical moment of China's Olympic English fever by faithfully recording how English impacted on five real-life characters in various stages of their lives. One of the most memorable images of this movie is tens of thousands of Chinese Olympic volunteers at the National Stadium yelling out all at the same time after Li Yang – the general coach of Olympic volunteers, "I can't stand my poor English! I want to

change my life!" This intriguing documentary not only presents a vivid picture of China's

Olympic English fever but also leaves us, once again, with the thought-provoking question: Why did the Chinese government and Chinese people promote English so fervently in the context of the Beijing Olympic Games?

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

In contrast to the widely publicized Olympic English fever, there is a lack of rigorous research that attempts to make sense of this frenzy around English in China and Beijing particularly. Following the recurring question above, I formulated the following three main research questions for my project.

- 1) Which kinds of language policies, language practices and language ideologies were in evidence in the Beijing Olympic context?

To understand the desire for English among the Chinese, I consider it important to explore language policies and measures driving the spread of English in the Olympic host city, and language ideologies that support or counter such spread. Specifically, I will address the following:

- a) What specific measures had been taken by the Chinese government to improve Beijing's overall foreign language level?
  - b) Which languages were given visibility in Beijing's linguistic landscape (LL) and what were their specific functions and symbolism?
  - c) Which kinds of language ideologies can be discerned from four dimensions: language policies, language textbooks, linguistic landscape and individual's learning experiences?
  - d) What were the outcomes of English learning campaigns and activities in the preparation for the Beijing Olympics?
- 
- 2) In which ways are these language policies, practices and ideologies tied to the identities of
    - a) China in the drive for modernization and internationalization;
    - b) Beijing as Olympic host city;

c) Chinese citizens of the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

This study situates English learning practices and ideologies within China's broader social, economic and political changes, and in particular, the preparation and hosting of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games. I was particularly interested in exploring three types of identity construction, and their intersection: China's national identity, Beijing's regional identity, and Chinese citizens' individual identity. Based on the analysis of public discourses and Olympic English textbooks, I aim to probe into how and why certain English language learning practices and ideologies were adopted, and how they served to construct certain identities for China, Beijing and Chinese citizens.

3) How did Chinese English learners take up, adjust to, or resist those ideologies?

Olympic English learning activities had involved several million Beijing residents, Olympic volunteers and BOCOG officials. These Olympic English learners and users have diverse social, cultural and ethnic identities. I attempt to investigate how the dominance of English in China, established by language policies, impacted on individual Chinese English learners, especially those with limited access to English language resources. With perceptions of different group affiliations, English learners have the agency to negotiate with society at large regarding the meaning of his or her identity in English learning. Therefore, I will look into the personal experiences of Chinese English learners with distinct group identities.

Specifically, I will address the following:

- a) Did the millions of English learners in China, and Beijing in particular, really benefit from the time, effort, and expense of learning English?
- b) Which groups among them benefited most? Which did not?
- c) How did members of disadvantaged groups in China's English craze resist English domination?

These are the questions that I set out to answer for this PhD project. In a qualitative study with an open and emerging design, according to Creswell (2003, p. 105), the inquirer states research questions, not objectives (i.e. specific goals for the research) or hypotheses (i.e., predictions that involve variables and statistical tests). The central and sub-questions posed by the inquirer are "working guidelines" rather than "truths" to be proven (J. Thomas, 1993,



p. 35). The inquirer expects the research questions “to evolve and to change during the study in a manner consistent with the assumptions of an emerging design” (J. W. Creswell, 2003, p. 107). The research questions listed above were used as a general guide to direct my research. The answers to the three questions will contribute to an in-depth picture of China’s English fever in the Beijing Olympic context and the impact of this phenomenon on Chinese English learners.

## **1.5 Overview of the Thesis**

In this chapter I have discussed my rationale for researching China’s desire for English in the Beijing Olympic context and outlined the major themes of this research. After a review of the socio-political context of the Olympic Games, I have argued that the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games constitute a fruitful context for the study of questions related to language policy and planning in China and the global spread of English. This work is primarily a multi-dimensional investigation into the spread and use of English in China as one particular community responding to contemporary societal developments, whose combined effects are often labeled globalization.

Overall, this thesis consists of eight chapters. Following this introductory chapter, Chapter Two describes the historical and social contexts of English language learning and teaching in China. I will begin this chapter by addressing the persistent identity dilemma in Chinese English education by examining the Confucian tradition of separating internal and external functions of learning. After this, I present a historical review of the shifting role and status of the English language and embedded language ideologies within changing Chinese social, economic and political contexts. The chapter concludes by revisiting the theme of cultural conflicts and identity dilemmas recurring throughout China’s English education history.

Chapter Three outlines the overall research design of this study. The dissertation seeks to address the complex relationship between language, ideology and identity in the Beijing Olympic context. In order to capture the complexity of the research topic and to provide insights into this multi-faceted context, a multi-method qualitative research design with

constructionist epistemological orientations was identified as the most suitable approach. In the following sections, I provide descriptions of data sources, data collection methods, and methods of analysis. Ethical considerations and limitations of the approach are also discussed.

Chapter Four provides an in-depth analysis of the Olympic English popularization campaign in the Beijing Olympic context. The chapter first introduces Beijing's language environment construction plan with English popularization as its foremost strategic target. Next, it presents an overview of how the Olympic English popularization campaign was carried out and how it has affected Beijing and its citizens. Following this, it probes into some official discourses prevailing in the campaign and argues that the English language ideologies embedded in these discourses can be fiercely contested.

Chapter Five provides a new perspective to understanding the relationship between language ideologies and the identity of Beijing as an Olympic city by conducting a multimodal discourse analysis of two Olympic English training materials: *the Conversational English Reader* (Elementary & Advanced). In this chapter, three imagined communities (targeted learners, imagined interlocutors, and Beijing as the Olympic city) are examined. I argue that the two textbooks offer biased, stereotyped and oversimplified identity options to targeted Chinese learners and construct a harmonious imagined community without even hinting at the possibility that cross-cultural communication might fail, which may impact students' language learning trajectories and negatively affect language-learning outcomes.

Chapter Six investigates the relative power and status of languages in the linguistic landscape (LL) of Beijing and their implications in Beijing's identity construction in the context of the 2008 Olympic Games. A reconceptualization of Beijing's identity in the spotlight of the 2008 Olympic Games had led to a massive urban transformation project, with a priority on guiding signs. In this chapter, I report on the wide-ranging impact of a city-wide Olympic English signage standardization campaign and examine the language

ideologies which underlay the English signage standardization campaign, these include: standard language ideology and native speaker fallacy.

Chapter Seven addresses the issue of educational disparities and inequalities embedded in nationwide English popularization policies and practices. In the analysis, I inquire into how China's English education policy plays out in the lives of disadvantaged groups through a case study of Wei Ru, who was previously a learner of Russian in a frontier county in Heilongjiang Province and now an ethnic minority college student in Beijing. Based on the case study of Wei Ru, I further my discussion in two aspects in the following sections: the decline of Russian language education in Heilongjiang Province along with nationwide English popularization programs, the challenges of learning English among ethnic minorities in China and its contributing factors.

Chapter Eight first gives a brief summary of my findings and conclusions with regard to my research questions from four aspects: language policies, language textbooks, linguistic landscape, and language learner experiences. I argue that the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games constitute a rich context for the study of questions related to language policy and planning. After the summary, I outline the implications and limitations of my research and suggest future research directions. In the implication section, I discuss four overarching issues in the study: the *ti-yong* tension in English learning, the spread of English and development, English and inequality and an expanded view of language policy. I conclude the thesis by suggesting that more research is needed to investigate the role and status of English in post-Olympic Beijing as well as the rest of China. I also call for more transnational studies of LPP in global sporting events and suggest that reader-response and ethnographic studies will profit the research tradition on ELT in China.

## **Chapter Two: Identity Dilemmas and English Language Education in China**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides a cultural-historical and socio-political explanation of the drives and dilemmas in China's English language education within changing Chinese social, economic and political contexts. I begin with a literature review of ELT in China. Next, I give a brief description of Chinese cultural conceptualizations of learning and then cast light on the persistent identity dilemma in English language education by examining the Confucian tradition of separating internal and external functions of learning. I then move on to probe the shifting role and status of English and the different objectives of ELT in four historical periods from China's semi-colonization in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to its internationalization drive at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Finally, I revisit the ideological underpinnings and identity dilemmas of English language learning in China.

### **2.2 ELT in China as an Object of Academic Inquiry**

English as an object of academic inquiry in the Chinese context has a wide range of applications and connotations, cultural, educational, historical, linguistic, and literary (B. Adamson *et al.*, 2002). Since the publication of Zhao & Campbell (1995) and Cortazzi & Jin's (1996b) works in international English-language journals, increasing academic attention has been paid to English language teaching (ELT) in China which has the largest number of English learners in the so-called "Expanding Circle." Currently, there is immense scope in the literature of ELT in China, ranging from education policy to learner experience, from teaching methodology to assessment strategies, from early education to adult education and from Chinese-English bilingual education to teaching English as a third or fourth language to ethnic minorities. Notably, there are a relatively small number of studies among them which take a critical perspective towards the issues of ideology of Chinese

foreign language education policies and explore how these policies are used to sustain existing power relations, exert cultural hegemony and accordingly reproduce various forms of inequality.

### 2.2.1 Language education policy and language ideologies

Language policies (LP) are “deliberate choices made by governments or other authorities with regard to the relationship between language and social life” (P. Djité, 1994, p. 63). These decisions are made especially in relation to “the legitimacy of using and learning certain language(s) (e.g., the right to speak and to learn) in given contexts and societies (status) and their forms (corpus)” (E. G. Shohamy, 2006, p. 45). When central authorities use LP to manipulate language behaviors in society, these policies are especially manifested through language education. Language policies and planning in the area of education is conventionally known as language-in-education policy (R. B. Kaplan & R. B. Baldauf, 2003; A. Lin & P. W. Martin, 2005), language policy in education (J. W. Tollefson, 2002), or language education policy (E. G. Shohamy, 2006). In this study, I follow Shohamy (2006) in considering language education policy (LEP) as “a mechanism used to create de facto language practices in educational institutions, especially in centralized educational systems” (p. 76). In countries with centralized educational systems such as China, decisions regarding LEP are made by central authorities and imposed by political entities in a top-down manner, usually with limited resistance as most schools and teachers comply (E. G. Shohamy, 2006, p. 76). These policies are then reinforced by teaching practices and testing systems. In the enactment and implementation of LEP, individuals or groups are subordinate to national interests and their linguistic choices are not free, but rather made available between predefined alternatives and their rights are, in fact, constrained (J. W. Tollefson, 1991).

As Blommaert (2006) indicates, “language policy is invariably based on linguistic ideologies, on images of societally desirable forms of language usage and of the ideal linguistic landscape of society” (p. 244). Language ideology, as succinctly defined by Errington (2001), refers to “the situated, partial, and interested character of conceptions and uses of language” (p. 110).

While neutral ideological analysis focuses on “culturally shared” beliefs and practices, critical ideological analysis often emphasizes “the political use of language as a particular group’s instrument of symbolic domination” (P. V. Kroskrity, 2005, p. 501). My view on language ideologies draws upon that of Gramsci and Bourdieu. Gramsci uses the term “hegemony” to describe the way a dominant class, the bourgeoisie, makes their ideologies the “norm” (i.e. ideas regarded as the most “natural” and “inevitable” and perceived to “benefit” everyone in society) and thereby forms consent among the population at large (M. Freeden, 2003, p. 20). For Gramsci, ideological hegemony can be exercised by the ruling class not only through exerting state force but also through various cultural means such as education and common sense (ibid.). Bourdieu’s notion (1991, p. 23) of “symbolic power” and “misrecognition” further elaborates on Gramsci’s “hegemony.” For Bourdieu, power is transmuted into symbolic form rather than exercised as overt physical force in the routine of daily life. Symbolic power is an invisible power which is “misrecognized” as such and thereby “recognized” as legitimate in the eyes of those subject to the power (ibid.). Bourdieu (1977) conceives the education function of the state as the quintessential form of symbolic violence, as compulsory education and the force of pedagogical authority obliges students to conceive their own social situation according to the interpretations of them inculcated by their schooling. Following Gramsci and Bourdieu, I argue that ideologies embedded in LEP must not be perceived as “natural,” “neutral,” or “beneficial” to all members of a society, rather they reflect and serve the interests of the dominant class in that society. As education is a primary mechanism of “ideological hegemony” and “symbolic violence,” LEP is considered a powerful tool for the state to exercise its political and cultural governance as it can enforce various political and social ideologies through language education.

The discussion in this chapter will be centered on Chinese foreign language education policies in different historical contexts. While language policies are concerned with decisions made about languages and their uses in society (E. G. Shohamy, 2006, p. 77), foreign language education policies refer to decisions in relation to the teaching and learning of foreign language(s) in educational settings (for example, schools and universities). These decisions are stated explicitly through official documents such as curricula and syllabus and they often include issues such as: Which foreign language(s)

is/are granted special priority status in teaching and learning? At what age shall the learning of these languages begin? For how long (number of years and hours of study) should these languages be taught? Who is entitled or obligated to learn? And which methods, materials and tests should be adopted? Drawing on Shohamy's conception of LEP, I see Chinese foreign language education policies as "a form of imposition and manipulation of language policy" and they are used by those in authority to turn their ideologies towards foreign languages (English in particular) into language practices through imposing principles and regulations on language teaching, learning and use (ibid., p. 76). Therefore, English education policies in China are the outcome of the state's allocation of the status and functions of English in accordance with its political and economic interests and the standard and purpose of ELT is also manipulated by the state and its agencies to meet the need of national development.

### 2.2.2 The history of Chinese English language education

Blommaert (1999, p. 73) argues that if we want to make sense of a language ideology which is a set of communally shared beliefs about language, we have to establish its historicity. This chapter attempts to provide a cultural-historical explanation of the ideological drives and identity dilemmas throughout China's English language education history. Due to the diversity of language learning situations and the multifacetedness of the policy process in China (A. Feng & M. Sunuodula, 2009), this chapter is not intended to be exhaustive in the discussion of English education policies and their implementation in China's diverse regions in different historical contexts, but rather to serve as a background for understanding the intrinsic relationship between English language policies and sociopolitical agendas in the Beijing Olympic context. In this chapter, I consider English education policy for mainstream Chinese society as a whole. Issues concerning English language provision for minority groups in China are discussed in Chapter Seven.

Many previous studies (e.g., B. Adamson, 2002, 2004; J. Boyle, 2000; Y. Gao, 2009b; A. Lam, 2002, 2005; A. Lam & K. Chow, 2004; D. S. Niu, 2008) have attempted to describe and analyze the history of English education in China. One group of studies focuses on the

changes of English education policies after the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC). These studies usually examine social political background of English education policy and recognize three historical periods, with the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) dividing the first period (1949-1965) and the third period (from 1977 onwards). On the basis of survey and interview data, Lam (2002, 2005), for example, examines language education policy implementation since 1949 and its relation to the experiences of different age cohorts of learners. Her works indicate the growing importance of English in terms of policy emphasis and in learners' experience. The other group of studies traces English education history back to the late Qing dynasty and attempt to shed light on the ideologies and practices of English language learning and teaching within the Chinese culture of learning. Cortazzi and Jin (1996a, 1996b) argue that there are culturally rooted assumptions of educational practice in Chinese society and these taken-for-granted assumptions may be a determining factor of behaviors in language classrooms. G. Hu (2002) discusses Confucian conceptions of education, including views on the nature of teaching and learning, roles of teachers and students in the classroom, the ways of learning, and the qualities that are appreciated in the educators and learners. He argues that these cultural conceptions are the most important potential constraints on the adoption of communicative language teaching (CLT) in the Chinese classroom. Gao (2009b) probes into the Confucian tradition of learning and how it was applied in promoting foreign language education as part of China's modernization process in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Drawing on Bourdieu's notion of habitus, Gao (2009b) argues that the learning of a foreign language involves acquiring a habitus that may be perceived to clash with the learners' first language habitus, and this has generated prolonged identity anxiety among Chinese involved in learning English. In this chapter, I contend that both socio-political and cultural-historical factors play a crucial role in the emergence of dominant ideologies of English language education in China. Integrating a cultural-historical perspective with a socio-political perspective, I first look into the Confucian idea of internal and external learning functions that is crucial to understand China's English education policies and their embedded ideologies. In line with the changes of sociopolitical agendas and language policies in China, I identify four major periods of China's English language education history (see appendix 1, pp.252-253): the colonization era, the Nationalist era, the Communist era, and the present period of market reforms. After



the cultural-historical review, I will return to the ideological underpinnings and identity dilemmas of ELT in China.

### 2.3 ELT and the Confucian Education Tradition

China has a long tradition of high regard for education, which is perceived as the means and process of forming, transmitting and transforming “文化 *wenhua*.” Since the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, “*wenhua*” has been used as the counterpart of “culture” in English despite cultural differences in the conceptualization of the two terms. The Chinese term “*wenhua*” was first put forward as a compound word by Liu Xiang, a famous scholar of the Western Han Dynasty (202 B.C. – 9 A.D.), in his book *说苑.志武 Shuoyuan Zhiwu* (W. Yan, 2002, p. 5). But centuries before, *易经 I-Ching* (also known as *Book of Changes*), one of the oldest Chinese classic texts, had connected “文 *wen*” with “化 *hua*” to constitute a notion which is similar to the concept of “cultural soft power,” a popular concept in the field of international politics in the last decade (see Section 1.2.3.3, Chapter One). In pre-Qin Chinese literature (2100 – 221 B.C.), “*wen*” refers both to human relations and social institutions grounded in feudal morality and political ideologies and to thoughts and ideas represented in the classic works of literature, painting, music and philosophy (T. Feng *et al.*, 1990, p. 13). First, literacy, as the basic form of “*wen*,” was perceived as important for its instrumental function in comprehending the classics, harmonizing human relationships, moulding adherence to social institutions and ultimately advancing moral cultivation. “*hua*” is a verb, which indicates the powerful force of “化入人心 *huaru renxin*” (impacting the minds of people) (*ibid.*). When “*wen*” and “*hua*” are used together as a single concept, it means to enlighten and affect people by means of learning ethical and moral principles and thoughts from classic works (W. Yan, 2002, p. 5). In contrast to military power, “*wenhua*,” in Chinese discourses, has the spiritual force to affect and influence people so as to achieve “文治 *wenzhi*” (civil administration) as opposed to “武治 *wuzhi*” (armed administration) (*ibid.*). Thus, Chinese conceptualizations of “*wenhua*” have four main aspects: 1) *wenhua* is the reflection of the politics and economics of a given society. 2) *wenhua* is learned by people as members of a society. 3) *wenhua* influences and acts on members of a society as internal and external power. 4) Language education, essentially learning how to read and write in

Chinese, has an instrumental function in rendering the internal and external power to *wenhua*.

The defining significance of learning in Chinese culture originates historically from Confucianism. Confucianism (儒家 *rujia*) is a complex system of moral, social, political and educational thought which developed from the teachings of the Chinese philosopher Confucius (孔子 *kongzi*, 551- 479 B.C.) and had tremendous influence on the history of Chinese civilization down to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In Confucian thought, human beings are “teachable, improvable and perfectible through personal and communal endeavour” (P. S. Ropp & T. H. Barrett, 1990, p. 113). Confucianism encourages the idea of self-perfectibility as the internal purpose through individuals’ lifelong dedication to learning (Lee 1996; Tu 1979; Yu 1996, cited in J. Li, 2001). The idea of lifelong learning refers not only to functional learning but also to moral education. For Confucius, the primary function of education is to provide the proper way of training virtuous men (君子 *junzi*) and learning is a ceaseless process of self-realization. Although Confucius emphatically noted that “learning is for the sake of the self,” he found “public service a natural consequence of true education” (P. S. Ropp & T. H. Barrett, 1990, p. 114). Accordingly, learners are not only to seek inner self-realization and virtue (内圣 *neisheng*) — the internal essence of *wenhua*, but also to contribute their learning back to society (外王 *waiwang*) — the external utility of *wenhua* (J. Li, 2001). In this sense, Confucianism proposes “a natural predisposition towards both internal and external learning functions or drives” (Y. Gao, 2009b, p. 58). The Confucian model of learning assumed such central importance that it became institutionalized as the Civil Service Examination system during the 7th century which lasted for 1,300 years before its abolition in 1905. Success in this matriculation examination system was the basis of people’s social status. Education became highly regarded as the key to upward social mobility by means of examination, which in turn strengthened the external utility value of learning.

The Confucian idea of internal and external learning functions is crucial to understanding China’s English education policies and their embedded language ideologies in different historical periods. In the past century and a half since the decline of imperial China, English

has quickly spread to China and taken an increasingly important role in Chinese educational policies. From the very beginning, Chinese attitudes towards learning English has been divided into two main camps, between the proponents who promote the instrumental value of English and the opponents who view English as a threat to the integrity of Chinese *wenhua*. The Confucian tradition of separating “internal essence” (体 *ti*) and “external utility” (用 *yong*) in learning was sought as the solution to ease the identity anxiety among Chinese involved in learning English (Y. Gao, 2009b). The principle of “Chinese learning for essence; Western learning for utility” (中学为体; 西学为用 *zhongxue wei ti; xixue wei yong*) was based on the belief that Western learning (this, of course, includes foreign languages) could be imported for practical purposes without their cultural essence being involved, hence Chinese cultural essence could be kept intact by Chinese learning (Y. Gao, 2009b, p. 63). However, Chinese identity anxiety in English language learning has not been relieved. Ever since the West began to exert its influence on China in the 1800s, the *ti-yong* tension has formed a recurring theme in China’s English language learning (Y. Gao, 2009b).

## **2.4 ELT and Colonization**

In the late Qing Dynasty (1757 – 1911), imperial China began to decline both economically and politically. In stark contrast, the 17<sup>th</sup> through 19<sup>th</sup> centuries witnessed revolutionary changes in Europe, which marked the dawn of a new age and the formation of a new world structure. Colonial expansion, bourgeois revolutions, and the industrial revolution contributed to the rise of Europe in general and Britain in particular. When the British Empire was at the peak of its power in 1922, it ruled over 458 million people (one-quarter of the world’s population at the time), and occupied 34 million square kilometers (one-quarter of the world’s total land area) (Wikipedia, 2011). As a result, English started to spread to China with the arrival of British traders, missionaries, and troops. Within the colonial era, it is possible to identify two different phases of English language and teaching policy in China.

#### 2.4.1 Phase one: The closed-door policy (1757-1839)

During the entire 18<sup>th</sup> century and the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, while Great Britain rose to become a superpower, the Qing government still held a Sino-centric worldview and adopted a virtual closed-door policy toward the Western world. In order to expand global trade and enter into China's market, a number of European countries, including Britain, took the initiative in the 17<sup>th</sup> century (D. S. Niu, 2008, p. 16). Official contacts between China and foreign governments were organized through the tributary system. In the Sino-centric world view, this tributary system affirmed the Chinese Emperor as the "son of Heaven" with a mandate to rule all mankind, Chinese and non-Chinese alike (J. Fairbank, 1964, p. 23). Thus, foreign emissaries were required to present tribute and acknowledge the superiority of the imperial court (J. Fairbank, 1964, pp. 27-29). This treatment became increasingly unacceptable to European nations which were in the rising period of capitalism, in particular Great Britain (J. D. Spence, 1990, p. 120). An even bigger issue in Anglo-Chinese relations was a significant trade imbalance in China's favor. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Britain had a large demand for Chinese goods, including tea, silk, and porcelain, while there was little Chinese interest in British goods. Because silver was the only commodity the Chinese would accept, this trade imbalance was a drain on the British economy (J. Grasso *et al.*, 2009, p. 27). In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, British traders began importing opium from India into China in an attempt to shake up bilateral commercial relations. An instant consumer market for opium was secured as addiction spread rapidly throughout China, and the flow of silver was reversed. Recognizing the growing number of addicts, the Yongzheng Emperor prohibited the sale and smoking of opium in 1729 (J. L. Hevia, 2003, p. 51). However, this ban proved unenforceable. In an attempt to keep control over local markets, the Qianlong Emperor issued a decree in 1757 to confine all foreign trade to the only open port city, Canton (广州 *Guangzhou*). Foreign merchants were only allowed to do business with a group of government appointed *Hong merchants* (行商 *hang shang*). Commercial contacts between foreign and Chinese merchants at that time were largely conducted in a pidgin variety of English, with *compradors* (买办 *mai ban*) acting as translators and interpreters (B. Adamson, 2002). These compradors were local business agents who were registered with the Qing government authorities and served as commercial facilitators for foreign companies. Holding a Sino-centric worldview toward the Western "barbarians," the Qing government prohibited local Chinese in the open port from

learning foreign languages (D. S. Niu, 2008, p. 34). Like all languages other than Chinese, English was perceived as “a barbarian tongue” (B. Adamson, 2002) and Chinese speakers of English (mainly compradors) were therefore ascribed a very low social status.

Christian missions played a part in the spread of English in this period. Regardless of the Qing government’s prohibition against missionary activities, English began to be taught to a small number of Chinese people by British missionaries in Canton and Macao in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century (E. A. Morrison, 1839, pp. 285, 288). Robert Morrison (1782-1834), the first Protestant missionary sent from England to China by the London Missionary Society, was one of the pioneers of Sino-Anglo cultural exchanges, although his efforts to spread Christianity and English to the Chinese were not very successful in his lifetime (D. S. Niu, 2008, pp. 53-58). The low status and undesirability of English among Chinese people is self-evident in Morrison’s letter to a correspondent in New York in 1809:

I was also mistaken in my idea of professing to teach the English language. None wish to learn it, but a few merchants, who acquire from each other the names of commodities, with which acquirement they are perfectly contented. (E. A. Morrison, 1839, p. 282)

Over the 25 years of his work as a translator in the East India Company, Morrison translated the entire Bible into Chinese and compiled the first Chinese-English dictionary. In 1835, the Morrison Education Society was founded in Canton to commemorate Robert Morrison. One major objective of this society was to promote recognition of the “equal or greater advantage” of English among the people of the Qing dynasty through formal education (Chinese Repository 1836: 375, cited in S. Evans, 1998). The society established the Morrison school in Macao in 1839 and English was part of its curriculum. The school aimed to teach English in connection with Christianity, but the effect is limited.

The original object of the Morrison School was to teach Chinese boys the English language in connection with Christianity; but after an experiment of several years, it was found that the boys had so universally perverted their knowledge of English, by becoming, for the sake of gain, interpreters for opium-traders, sailors, and others — generally for wicked purposes — making, to say the least, but very poor use of their English, and none at all of their Christianity, that the benevolent supporters of the school became discouraged, and I think it has now been for some time entirely discontinued. Full experience has therefore shown that it is a pernicious labor to teach English to the Chinese, and that the only safe method is to teach them Christianity through the medium of their own native tongue. (C. Taylor, 1860, p. 50)

Although ELT in the Morrison school was far from successful, the school had turned out the first group of Chinese students studying abroad, who made significant contributions to the process of China's modernization. Rong Hong was the first of this group. After seven years of study at Yale University in the United States, he returned to Qing Dynasty China in 1854, and worked with Western missionaries as an interpreter. It was under his advocacy, and with the strong support from senior government officials, that the Qing Government launched a government-sponsored pilot scheme known as the Chinese Educational Mission to send 120 young Chinese students to the United States to study Western science and engineering (Z. Wang, 2007). The Educational Mission was disbanded in 1881, but many of the students later returned to China and made significant contributions to China's civil services, engineering, and the sciences. In 1849, the Morrison School was forced to close as a result of financial difficulties. Soon afterwards, the initial impetus for China's learning of foreign languages came from "the military, political and economic domination by foreign powers" (Y. Gao, 2009b, p. 59).

#### 2.4.2 Phase two: Semi-feudal and semi-colonial state (1840-1911)

China's English language education began with the nation's semi-colonization after the Opium Wars. The Opium Wars (1840-1842, 1856-1860), also known as the Anglo-Chinese Wars, were the climax of trade disputes and diplomatic tensions between China under the Qing Dynasty and the British Empire after China sought to stamp out illegal British opium trafficking. The Wars not only forced China to open up its markets but also awoke the late Qing government to China's technological inferiority to the West and the necessity of Western learning. The defeat of China in the Wars resulted in humiliating unequal treaties (the Treaty of Nanjing and the Treaty of Tianjin), which marked the beginning of a long period of internal disturbance and foreign aggression for China. Signing the Treaty of Nanjing (August, 1842) ended the first Opium War, but reduced China to a semi-feudal semi-colonial state.

Soon after the first Opium War, Wei Yuan (1794 – 1857), a Chinese scholar, first proposed in 1842 the idea of “师夷长技以制夷 *shiyi changji yi zhiyi*” (learning advanced technologies from Western barbarians in order to fight against them)” in his book 海国图志 (*Illustrated Treatise on the Maritime Kingdoms*). The idea became the major source of the campaign of learning from the West. Faced with overwhelming problems from both within and without, the Self-Strengthening Movement (洋务运动 *yangwu yundong*) had been gradually launched between 1861 to 1894. This Movement was a two-fold reform program. On the one hand, Chinese scholars tried to revive and stress traditional Confucian virtues. On the other hand, they also sought to adapt Western science and technology in order to strengthen China against the West. It was believed among reformists represented by Feng Guifen (1809-1874) that the intelligence and wisdom of the Chinese was superior to those of Western “barbarians” and thus China would first learn from foreigners, then equal them, and finally surpass them (J. D. Spence, 1990). Although English was still perceived as a language of “Western barbarians” by Qing reformists, its external utilitarian function for the transfer of Western science and technology was recognized.

Since the 1860s, the Qing Dynasty began to import Western military technologies and set up armories. For importing Western science and technology, however, training foreign language professionals became an urgent task for the Qing government. In 1862, the government established the first foreign language school in China, the Peking Interpreter Training Institution (京师同文馆 *jingshi tongwen guan*), and started to send students abroad to study science, technology and diplomacy from 1872 (Y. Gao, 2009b, p. 60). Although the Peking Interpreter Training Institution was a secondary school, it signaled the beginning of formal English education in China. With the increasing demand for English language professionals in the Self-Strengthening Movement, the utility value of English was gaining recognition among Chinese and the status of English rose accordingly. However, the positive view of English as a useful instrument for national development held among reformists and citizens in port cities was not shared by all Chinese (B. Adamson, 2002). Conservatives showed overt hostility towards the English language, which sparked serious debates about how feasible it was for China to be able to adapt Western science and technology while maintaining the integrity of Chinese culture. Their strong anti-foreign

sentiments led to the outbreak of the Boxer Rebellion (1898-1900). In order to implement reform initiatives, the Qing government adopted the principle proposed by the official Zhang Zhidong (1837 – 1909) in 1898, “中学为体；西学为用 *zhongxue wei ti; xixue wei yong*” (Chinese learning for essence; Western learning for utility), following the Confucian tradition of separating internal essence and external utility (Y. Gao, 2009b, p. 60).

Advocates of this principle held a simplistic view of complementary language use. This was that it supported the usefulness of English as a “neutral” instrument of adopting Western advanced technology and stressed the importance of Chinese language for maintaining the integrity of Chinese culture and national cohesion. Under this instrumentalist principle, the Hundred Days’ Reform (11 June to 21 September 1898) was undertaken by the Guangxu Emperor (1875–1908) and his reform-minded supporters, aiming at making sweeping social, institutional and educational changes.

1902 saw the start of the New Policy (新政 *xinzheng*) reform which lasted until the collapse of the Qing dynasty. The reform made education a central concern. Traditional provincial academies (学堂 *xuetang*) were transformed into modern universities (大学 *daxue*). In the reform, the Peking Interpreter Training Institution was merged into Peking University (京师大学堂 *jingshi daxue tang*). In this first modern higher institution in China, applied disciplines such as foreign languages (predominantly English), natural sciences and international law started to take precedence over basic disciplines of “Chinese learning” (Y. Gao, 2009b, p. 60). This marked the beginning of college English education in China. In 1902 and 1904, the government of the late Qing Dynasty issued two official documents entitled *Ren-Yin School System* (壬寅学制) and *Gui-Mao School System* (癸卯学制) on the establishment of China’s first modern education system. In both systems, foreign language (which de facto meant English) was included on the curricula of secondary and tertiary institutions (D. S. Niu, 2008, p. 225). Among twelve compulsory subjects at secondary level, English was allocated one quarter of the total class time (ibid.). This marked the beginning of public English education in China’s secondary and tertiary institutions although the quality of formal English education was severely limited by the lack of qualified teachers and teaching materials. In 1905, the 1,300-year Chinese imperial civil examination system that tested knowledge of Confucian classics was abolished, as it was regarded as outdated



and inadequate for training officials who faced the task of modernizing China. Despite efforts to keep the *yong* (utility) of foreign languages subordinate to Chinese *ti* (essence), there is today a widespread perception that the first 50 years of modernization (1861-1911) ended with *ti* being overtaken by *yong* (Cheng, 2008: 8, cited in Y. Gao, 2009b, p. 60).

Formal English education of this period also expanded through schools and universities set up by British and American missionary organizations after the Opium Wars (D. S. Niu, 2008, pp. 103-127). Protected by unequal treaties and warships, Protestant missionaries established 50 missionary schools with nearly one thousand students in Hong Kong and five open port cities (namely, Canton, Xiamen, Fuzhou, Ningbo and Shanghai) between 1840 and 1860 (M. Cheng, 2010). With the rise of the Self-Strengthening Movement after the 1860s, the influx of foreign capital into China brought about the need for qualified Chinese personnel with a good command of English. The age-old Confucian tradition of despising commerce and labor (轻商贱役 *qingshang jianyi*) began to waver. Against this historical background, the traditional teaching system began to decline and missionary schools increased considerably. The total number of Chinese missionary schools (mostly primary schools) increased to 800 with a total of twenty thousand students in the mid-1870s (M. Cheng, 2010). By the late 19<sup>th</sup> and the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, there had been two thousand missionary schools with over forty thousand students established. In this period, missionary institutions of higher learning also began to emerge. From 1890 to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, most missionary schools and universities offered English courses and adopted English as the medium of instruction of Western learning. The purpose of teaching English in these schools was not to facilitate the transfer of technology but to propagate Western knowledge and values (D. S. Niu, 2008, pp. 113, 127). The principle of “Chinese learning for essence (*ti*); Western learning for utility (*yong*)” was virtually reversed in the curricula of missionary schools. In the first 50 years of Chinese modernization, the *ti-yong* conceptualization proved to be ineffective in preserving the traditional education system based primarily on Confucianism. Moreover, it generated persistent ambivalence in attitudes towards English language learning in China that can be felt to this day.

## 2.5 ELT and Nationalism

The weakness of the late Qing government and the failure of their reforms helped to strengthen the revolutionary forces within China. Changes within the feudal system were seen to be largely useless, and the overthrow of the Qing government increasingly appeared to be the only viable way to save China. Such sentiments directly contributed to the outbreak of the 1911 Revolution and the establishment of a Republic in 1912. The following 40 years of the new Republic saw a fragmented nation embroiled in two world wars, warlordism, the Japanese invasion, civil war, and revolutions. In this turbulent historical period, English continued to spread in China at accelerated speed through educational reform, the New Culture Movement, missionary school education, and studying abroad programs. Within the Republican era, two important phases can be distinguished.

### 2.5.1 Phase three: The New Cultural Movement (1912-1921)

The founding of the Republic in early 1912 brought a series of educational reforms geared to the needs of the Chinese bourgeoisie. In the eyes of the Republicans who were more exposed than their predecessors to Western learning, education was “the instrument for nation-building, the key to wealth and power for a new China” (M. W. Charney *et al.*, 2003, p. 118). One salient achievement of the early Republican era was the promulgation of the “1912-13 School System” (壬子—癸丑学制 *renzi-kuichou xuezhi*). The new school system formalized the “7-4-7” educational system: 7 years of primary education, 4 years of secondary education, and 7 years of tertiary education (M. W. Charney, *et al.*, 2003, p. 120). Even more significant was the reform of school curricula. Confucian classics were removed from both primary and secondary education to free young minds from the influence of feudal values. Foreign languages (predominately English, but also French, German and Russian were taught as the preferred FL in some areas depending on local conditions) in addition to natural science and technical subjects that were included in the curriculum of secondary schools to prepare students to accept new Republican values in order to build a modernized China. 1912 also saw the promulgation of the “Primary School Act” which encouraged English to be offered in some qualified primary schools wherever conditions

permitted (D. S. Niu, 2008, pp. 236-237). This was the first time in the history of Chinese education that a foreign language was promoted at the primary level.

The New Culture Movement (新文化运动 *xin-wenhua yundong*, 1915-1921) which sprang from the disillusionment with Confucian culture and the rise of nationalism among the emerging educated middle class and cultural leaders, marked an intellectual turning point in early modern China. Leaders of the New Culture Movement believed that traditional Confucian values which stressed hierarchy and obedience in relationships were responsible for the political weakness of the nation. This created a rather peculiar situation, in which Chinese nationalists called for a rejection of traditional values and the selective adoption of Western ideals of science and democracy. In the New Culture Movement, the Chinese *ti* which had long been based on Confucius values was replaced by the Western *ti* that English conveyed. With the popularizing and deepening of the intellectual transformations, there appeared an upsurge of Western learning in the field of education. This Western learning movement envisaged the US as the model, and consequently, the importance of English gained widespread recognition in Chinese educational circles (D. S. Niu, 2008, p. 238). It was against this background that missionary school education entered its golden age. Statistics show that the total number of full-time students in missionary schools and universities rose to 245,049 in 1920 from 138,937 in 1912 (S. Yang, 2010). By the 1920s, missionary school education had established an independent teaching system, covering all forms of education at all levels, with 4%, 11% and 8% of all primary, secondary and tertiary students respectively enrolled in missionary schools (D. Lu, 1987). Although these were only a relatively small percentage of the total enrollment at that time, the influence of these students on the diffusion of Western science and technology and foreign languages should not be underestimated because graduates from missionary schools and universities contributed significantly to the development of modern higher institutions in China.

In the early days of the Republic, studying abroad, most notably in the US, grew in popularity (Keenan, 1977, cited in B. Adamson, 2002). The 18 years between 1911 and 1929 witnessed the first upsurge of Chinese students studying in the US and Europe (D. S. Niu, 2008, p. 233). One major reason behind this upsurge in overseas study was associated

with government support. In 1908, the US parliament approved a decree to refund part of the Boxer Rebellion Indemnity to China. The remission was used to fund Chinese students to study in the U.S. Consequently, approximately 1,300 Chinese students obtained bachelor and other higher-education degrees and 110 were granted doctoral degrees in American universities through the Boxer Rebellion Indemnity Scholarship Program from 1909 to 1929 (W. Ye, 2001, p. 51). Together with the Chinese trained in Japan and Europe, these America-trained returned students constituted the backbone of an emerging new professional and political force in the next phase of the Republican Era.

#### 2.5.2 Phase four: Seeking support from the West (1922-1949)

A decade after the first Republican educational reform, the Beijing government which was under the control of the Beiyang warlords decided to adopt the American “6-3-3” educational system and promulgated the “1922 School Reform Decree.” The warlord regime in Beijing also shared with the Republicans the idea of using education to strengthen the nation (M. W. Charney, *et al.*, 2003, p. 121). The motivation for the reform was also partly due to the social and economic needs of China after the First World War that saw the return of Western economic influence and the rise of Chinese modern industry. The 1922 school system (任成学制 *renxu xuezhi*) became the cornerstone of the modern Chinese education system. The main thrust of the reform was in the structure of education. The length of overall education was shortened from 18 to 16 years. Primary education was reduced from seven to six years. Secondary education was increased from four to six years. Tertiary education was restricted to four years for liberal arts and teachers’ training degrees, and five years for professional degree such as law and medicine. The 1922 school system, through regulation, ensured that ELT would start from the first grade in junior schools. English teaching at the elementary level was brought to halt.

During the three decades from 1912 to 1945, the Kuomintang (KMT) government frequently changed school systems and reformed school curricula. Practically, schools at different levels failed to enforce those educational decrees. Nevertheless, English as a school subject in secondary education was widely held in high regard, and by virtue of

being allocated four to six periods each week took up 15-20 percent of total class time. Notably, the ELT teaching force in secondary and tertiary institutions was greatly improved due to the return of overseas Chinese students from the U.S. and Europe. Yao (2004) estimates that about a hundred thousand Chinese went abroad to study during that period, mainly in America, Japan, Russia and England.

The Chinese civil war began in 1927 between the Kuomintang (KMT), the governing party of the Republic of China and the Communist Party of China (CPC). The war represented an ideological split between the US-supported Nationalist KMT and the Soviet-supported Communist CPC. As a branch of the Communist International, the CPC from its beginning stood on the side of the international Communist movement led by the Soviet Union and received support and assistance from the Soviet Union. However, during WWII (1939-1945), the CPC-Soviet relationship weakened substantially due to policy differences (O. A. Westad, 1998, p. 48). After the Japanese surrendered, China's full-scale civil war resumed in 1946. Both the CPC and the KMT sought support from the US – the CPC for international legitimacy and KMT for military assistance (B. Adamson, 2002). However, from 1945, the CPC's relationship with the US sharply deteriorated due to the latter's policy of assisting the KMT. The US policy to back the KMT engendered an ambivalent attitude on behalf of the CPC towards the US which set the tone for foreign language education policy in the early decades of the PRC (B. Adamson, 2002).

## **2.6 ELT and Communism**

Since the founding of the PRC, domestic and international environments have changed considerably. The first three decades of the PRC were a period when language education became a terrain for foreign policy and English language teaching was fiercely contested. Foreign language education policy was directed towards the service to socialism and the role and status of English emerged deeply mired in politic ideologies. Three distinct phases can be distinguished.

### 2.6.1 Phase five: The Sino-Soviet Alliance (1949-1956)

In the early days of the PRC, pro-USSR and anti-American political ideology had a significantly negative impact on English language education in China. Pro-USSR tendencies were an essential feature of China's foreign policy during the early cold war. The Chinese Civil War ended in 1949 with the CPC taking control of mainland China, and the KMT retreating to Taiwan. On 30 June 1949, Mao Zedong, chairman of the CPC Central Committee, issued his famous "lean-to-one-side" (一边倒 *yibiandao*) statement, openly allying the new China with the Soviet Union to struggle against the US. On 1 October 1949, Mao Zedong proclaimed the People's Republic of China. As the United States had supported the KMT during the Chinese civil war, and refused to recognize the PRC, the CPC regarded the US as a serious threat. The Sino-Soviet alliance was strengthened when Chinese and Soviet leaders signed the Treaty of Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Assistance on February 14, 1950, committing the two sides to come to each other's aid if either were to be attacked by Japan or the United States. After China entered the Korea War (1950-1953), the US perceived the PRC as a major threat to its interests in Asia. In the 1950s, The PRC's hostility towards the US intensified as the US government imposed an economic embargo against the PRC, blocked the PRC's entry into the UN and further isolated the PRC politically from the international community (Y. Xia, 2008). In 1952, the PRC government launched a series of mass movements against the ideology of "亲美、崇美、恐美 *qinmei, chongmei, kongmei*" (devotion to America, fear of America, and worship of America). These movements overshadowed China's English language education in early communist China.

Because of China's political inclinations in this period, the social status and function of English was severely weakened. The anti-US sentiment sweeping across the country made it become "somehow unpatriotic to study the language of our enemies" (Tang, 1983, p. 41, cited in B. Adamson, 2002). Russian was promoted as the most important foreign language in the early years of the PRC (A. Lam, 2005, p. 72). The PRC government under leadership of the CPC implemented entirely different policies for studying abroad from the KMT government. Because the capitalist countries were China's enemies at that time, the destinations of Chinese overseas students were socialist countries, mainly Soviet Russia and Eastern Europe (L. Yao, 2004). Nevertheless, the government did not completely lose sight of the practical value of

English as a means of accessing science and technology. In 1950, the Education Ministry of the PRC issued the first national document on English language education – “Secondary School English Curriculum Standards,” requiring three English lessons per week at the junior secondary level and four English lessons per week at the senior secondary level (B. Adamson, 2002). But soon ELT gave way to Russian language education, as Soviet Russia became China’s closest ally in the immediate years after the PRC was proclaimed. From 1951, the Russian language began to receive growing attention from the government and was required as the main foreign language for undergraduates; consequently, the scope of English education was greatly reduced (A. Lam, 2005, p. 74). In the 1952 nation-wide college adjustment, most English departments were dissolved or merged with only eight remaining (D. S. Niu, 2008, p. 254). In the autumn of 1954, a notice from the Education Ministry discontinued all foreign language teaching in junior secondary schools. English language teaching in senior secondary schools was required to be replaced by Russian language teaching. By the end of 1956, there were only 23 English departments in China with a total of 545 English teachers and 2,500 English majors (L. Li *et al.*, 1988). English was rarely found in the school curriculum in this period. The changing status and function of Russian and English in the early communist China was a direct result of the pro-USSR and anti-American political ideology. The *ti-yong* conceptualization failed to uphold the legitimacy of English language education in the anti-American political climate. The *ti-yong* tension in this period is characterized by the suppression of English *yong* in the overwhelming communist *ti*.

#### 2.6.2 Phase six: Reviving English education (1956-1966)

However, English was soon to make a comeback. When Sino-Soviet relations began to become tense, the popularity of English re-emerged. In the second half of the 1950s, when the Chinese leadership started to oppose the Soviet’s stand on how to evaluate Stalin and its attempt to reach an accommodation with the US, Moscow took a number of measures to threaten China politically, economically and militarily, including the abrupt withdrawal of all Soviet specialists and technical personnel from China (Y. Xia, 2008). By the early 1960s, Sino-Soviet relations had deteriorated dramatically. The Sino-Soviet alliance collapsed. The Sino-Soviet split and the Sino-US confrontation led to the adoption of an anti-imperialist

(US) and anti-revisionist (USSR) international united front strategy which was known domestically as the strategy of “两个拳头打人 *liangge quantou daren*” (fighting with two fists) (J. Y.-S. Cheng & F. W. Zhan, 1999, p. 96). As foreign policy continued to be played out on the terrain of foreign language teaching and learning, the status and function of the Russian language in China declined.

Simultaneously, the official interest in English received a boost as the PRC began to dedicate itself to industrial expansion and established diplomatic relations with more foreign countries. In 1956, the Education Ministry issued a notice to expand English education at senior secondary level and resume junior secondary English language teaching (four lessons per week) in some localities where qualified teachers were available (D. S. Niu, 2008, p. 254). In the same year, this first draft syllabus for teaching English in senior secondary schools was distributed. In 1959, the Education Ministry announced that better junior secondary schools in large or medium-sized cities should commence foreign language teaching with one-third of them teaching Russian and two-thirds teaching English and other languages (D. S. Niu, 2008, p. 257). From 1960, foreign language schools were established in a few major cities where English teaching began in the third year of primary school (A. Lam, 2005, p. 76). The Education Ministry took a significant step in 1962 to extend English teaching to non-English majors<sup>1</sup>. The Chinese government’s assiduous attention to English in this period can be seen in the 1963 *English Language Syllabus for Full-time Secondary School* which formulated the highest English teaching objectives since 1949 (J. Tang & Y. Gao, 2001, p. 105). In this Syllabus, the external utility of English was highlighted, as:

A good mastery of English can help China learn science and technology for our socialist construction; can help share our experience with friendly nations and help strengthen the relationship between peoples in the combat against imperialism. (Translated from Ministry of Education of PRC, 1963, p. 1)

The century-old idea of “learning advanced technologies from Western barbarians in order to fight against them (*shiyi changji yi zhiyi*)” was restated in the 1963 Syllabus. The *ti-yong* conceptualization was renewed in accordance with socialist political and economic agendas.

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<sup>1</sup> The English major is a term for an [undergraduate university](#) degree which focuses on the analysis, production, and consumption of texts in the [English language](#) (the term may also be used to describe a student who is majoring in English). Therefore, a non-English major refers to a university student whose principal field of study is not English.



Clearly, English *yong* was seen as beneficial as it could be separated from its imperialist connotations and subordinated to socialist cultural *ti*. It was believed that the function of ELT could be neutralized to meet the need of socialist construction and state-consolidation so as to check imperialism. The changed socialist political and economic agendas eased the *ti-yong* tension seen in the early communist period. However, this instrumentalist ideology of ELT was discarded soon afterwards because the political climate in China suddenly changed with the advent of the Cultural Revolution. English language education was discontinued as English was considered as bearing “imperialist” values entirely antithetical to the ideology of the CPC.

### 2.5.3 Phase seven: The Cultural Revolution (1966-1976)

During the ten years of the Cultural Revolution, English education received a severe setback. On May 16, 1966, Mao Zedong launched the “Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution” to remove what he considered “liberal bourgeoisie elements” through revolutionary class struggle. As a result, foreign language education in the PRC was on the verge of collapse between 1966 and 1970 because schools at all levels across the country suspended their regular classroom instruction in order to fully participate in revolutionary activities (L. Mao & Y. Min, 2004, p. 323); and the learning of foreign ideas was condemned as unpatriotic (A. Lam, 2002, p. 246). English, the language of capitalist countries, became a key target of the fight against foreign ideas. Popular slogans at that time included: “I am Chinese. Why do I need foreign languages?” and “Don’t learn ABC. Make revolution!” (B. Adamson, 2002, p. 238). English was politically undesirable and propagated as useless. Even though Premier Zhou Enlai managed to save a remnant of the foreign language majors (A. Lam, 2005, p. 77), English language education was significantly demoted. The English *yong* was suppressed again in the rising *ti-yong* tension.

Starting from 1971, following the directives from the CPC Central Committee, foreign language education changed yet again and began to take a turn for the better as China began to resume ties with the West. In 1972, at the peak of the Sino-Soviet split, China established diplomatic relations with the United States, resulting in the beginning of a new Sino-

American commercial, cultural and educational exchange (A. Lam, 2002, p. 246). In the same year, the PRC was admitted to the United Nations in place of the Republic of China for China's membership of the United Nations and permanent membership of the Security Council. In order to meet the urgent need of foreign language professionals, a few foreign language institutes began to enroll new students in 1971. In order to solve the shortage of qualified teachers, the government invited a number of foreign language experts to teach their respective native languages to Chinese students (D. S. Niu, 2008, p. 263). Because there was no syllabus authorized by the Education Ministry, each province issued its own syllabus and textbooks (B. Adamson, 2004, p. 127). Most English textbooks were loaded with messages of service to the people and the motherland (J. Boyle, 2000). In the later period of the Cultural Revolution, ELT was slowly revived, even though the assumed cultural value embedded in English (i.e. negative connotations of imperialism and capitalism) was deliberately avoided to a great extent and English was used as a vehicle for government propaganda.

## **2.7 ELT and Market Reform**

Over the past three decades, English education has advanced at an unprecedented speed due to the nation's modernization and internationalization drive. The value of English as a form of economic capital has been highlighted as China has shifted its focus to economic development. However, the *ti-yong* dilemma continues to persist and intensify as English has acquired an expanded role in school and university curricula and become the gatekeeper for upward social mobility. Again, it is possible to distinguish two phases.

### **2.7.1 Phase eight: The modernization drive (1977-2000)**

The ten-year Cultural Revolution finally came to an end after Mao's death in 1976. In the winter of 1977, the Ministry of Education reinstated national college entrance examination. In the following year, university recruitment resumed. Different from Mao Zedong, who insisted on self-reliance and independence, the new party leader Deng Xiaoping was more of a pragmatist. In 1978, the CPC Central Committee shifted the focus of all its work from class struggle to the drive for socialist modernization. Economic development was the focus

of the socialist modernization drive. The resolution of socialist modernization soon evolved into the Reform and Opening-up Policy, which opened China's door to foreign economic investment, technology transfer and trade, as well as academic and cultural exchanges with the West. With the shift from the primacy of politics to that of economics, the year 1978 also marked a turning point for China's English language education.

China's education system, too, has become geared toward economic modernization. Since the late 1980s, China has sustained an average of 9% GDP growth annually, achieving one of the world's highest rates of per capita economic growth, and became the world's fastest growing major economy (M. Sepehri & H. Pordeli, 2009). Science and technology education were considered paramount for meeting China's modernization goals and became an important focus of education policy. Renewed emphasis on modern science and technology, coupled with the recognition of the relative scientific superiority of the West, led to the adoption of an "outward-looking policy" (C.-H. Chen, 1992, p. 58) that encouraged learning from the West in a wide range of scientific fields. Despite the temporary political and economic setback after the 1989 Tiananmen Square disturbance, China's outward-looking orientation has not changed (K. Fukasaku & H.-B. S. Lecomte, 1998, p. 64). As the international medium of science and technology, English became firmly established as China's predominant foreign language at both the state and regional level. The governmental emphasis on English in education continued unabated. Since 1978, English in secondary education and English education for non-English majors has received more attention. In 1982, English was announced as the main foreign language in secondary education. In 1983, English had been restored as a compulsory subject in the college entrance examination. Since then, proficiency in English became crucial for accessing higher education. In 1985, the first international conference on English Language Teaching (ELT) was held in Guangzhou. ELT started to develop into a professional discipline during this period (A. Lam, 2005, p. 78).

The market-oriented economic reforms gave great impetus to reforms in education. In 1985, the Education Ministry (1985) started a nationwide education reform, aiming at ceding administrative and financial responsibility for basic education to local governments. In

unveiling the reform plan, the authority called for nine years of compulsory education for national economic and social development. Following its enactment in 1986, the compulsory education law entitles all primary and junior middle school students to a waiver of tuition fees. English became a required component of compulsory education for all students (under 16 years old in general). Between 1986 and 2000, the Education Ministry formulated and distributed seven ELT syllabuses for secondary education, showing its determination to develop Basic English education (involves pre-school, nine-year compulsory education from elementary to junior high school, and senior high school education). Notably, the 1986 ELT Syllabus exemplifies a shift from an emphasis on the political and ideological functions of English education to a more explicit focus on its role in facilitating economic development and national modernization (G. Hu, 2005; W. Wang & A. Lam, 2009). This change was incorporated more fully in the 1990 ELT Syllabus:

For the purpose of meeting the needs of our Open Door Policy and speeding up the socialist modernizations, and meeting the call of “Education should face modernization, the world and future,” efforts should be made to enable as many people as possible with ideals, morality, knowledge and self-discipline to acquire certain competence in one or more foreign languages. (Translated from Ministry of Education of PRC, 1990, p. 1)

As the policy statement above suggest, English was seen as a language that served a “purely instrumental” function. The policy was based on the assumption that English can be learnt in separation from cultural and ideological complications. This is in contrast to previous eras when English was culturally and ideologically associated with imperialism, capitalism and even barbarianism. It was held officially that an adequate command of English by Chinese individuals is necessary and important for the opening-up and economic development of the country. This instrumental view of ELT was more explicitly announced in the 1993 ELT Syllabus for full-time senior secondary school. As the role and function of English had been reconfigured, the Communicative Approach was adopted for the first time in the history of English language education in China (Adamson 2001; Liao 2001, cited in W. Wang & A. Lam, 2009). The 1993 ELT Syllabus was the last most widely implemented syllabus at the secondary level in China before the 2003 curriculum was piloted in the year 2004 (G. Hu, 2002; W. Wang & A. Lam, 2009). Unlike in the late 1970s and early 1980s when English was taught strictly as a subject of study rather than a means of communication, the emphasis of the

1993 Syllabus was put more on the communicative purpose of language learning, that is, on oral and written communicative competence, independent learning ability and the use of English, as stated in the course objectives below:

The English course aims to consolidate and enrich students' basic linguistic knowledge, and develop basic skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing); to develop students' elementary competence in oral and written communication with English, with a focus on reading ability; to help students develop independent learning ability and lay a solid foundation for further learning and use of English. (Ministry of Education of PRC, 1993, p. 1)

The government's focus on economic development and Chinese people's desire for improving their lives spurred a nationwide English language fever, especially among urban Chinese people living along the eastern coast. The popularity of *Follow Me*, a BBC English television program, is a good example of this emerging fever. *Follow me* was the first introduction of an English program to Chinese people in the late 1970s and attracted one hundred million viewers in 1983 alone (Wikipedia, 2010c). Over 200 million children and adults were studying English through different channels in the 1980s and 1990s, which made China the world's largest market for language-study programs (Y. Zhao & K. P. Campbell, 1995). In addition to the enhanced status of English at all levels of education, the Chinese government has been supporting study abroad for students since 1993. Even prior to explicit government support, Chinese students had started to head abroad since 1978. From 1978 to 2000, about half a million Chinese people went abroad to study, the majority of them to the U.S. (G. Jiang, 2001). More and more educational, occupational and economic utility values have become attached to learning English.

The growing importance of English witnessed in the era of reform and opening up was not without queries and opposition. The neutral, instrumental view of English *yong* did not eliminate the perceived threat of the spread of English to Chinese *ti*. The *ti-yong* tension persisted and polarized attitudes toward English as a school subject. For CPC leaders supporting opening-up and modernization policies, the study of English was regarded as necessary for acquiring technological expertise and for fostering international trade (B. Adamson & P. Morris, 1997, p. 3). However, for the conservative faction of the CPC who were keenly aware of the country's semi-colonial past, the English language bore

uncomfortable connotations of capitalism, imperialism, or even barbarianism, and was perceived to embody values undesirable and antithetical to Chinese culture and socialist ideology (ibid.). However, the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991 has broken the balance of power in the global arena, making China adopt an increasingly “international stance” (A. Lam, 2002, p. 246; 2005) and thus vigorously conduct multilateral diplomacy for closer international cooperation. This “international stance” pushed China to further embrace English as the default international language in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

#### 2.7.2 Phase nine: The internationalization drive (2000 onwards)

The beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century marked the arrival of the globalization era in China. The power of global and national changes has touched all aspects of human life, including China’s foreign language education policy. The success of the 2008 Olympic bid and admission to the World Trade Organization (WTO) both in 2001 promised China a larger role in the global community. Accompanying China’s rise on the world stage in recent years are growing connections between developing opportunities and the English language. In order for China to develop in this increasingly interrelated and interdependent global community, English education has been assigned a high priority due to the ideological link established between English proficiency and international competitiveness at both the national and the individual level.

While the expansion of English in Chinese education has been continuous since the 1980s, the country’s admission to the WTO in 2001 and Beijing’s hosting of the Olympic Games in 2008 have meant that the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century has seen a major acceleration of provisions and planning on behalf of foreign languages in general and English in particular (J. Lo Bianco, 2009). A series of policies have been introduced to expand English language education throughout the nation and to improve the quality of ELT through reforming curricula, textbooks, teaching methods, and assessment procedures. The collective effect of English language education policies in the 21<sup>st</sup> century has been to shift English from being an object of instruction to becoming the medium of instruction (although admittedly still at low levels); to widen the purposes from strictly utilitarian to officially “humanistic”; and to

expand sectors from high school down to elementary school and up to undergraduate and post-graduate provision (ibid., p. 4).

The importance of English has been repeatedly asserted, in various forms, in China's school and university syllabi and curriculum guidelines, as well as in numerous official discourses. With the growth of international exchanges and cooperation, the instrumental role of English in importing advanced technology, attracting foreign investment, and adopting international practices has been further consolidated. Moreover, the use of English is also somewhat more visible, than in the previous phases, in the everyday life of more Chinese people, especially those in economically and educationally advanced cities and open ports. A closer link between communicative competence in English and personal development in the globalization era has been set up and institutionalized. The contribution of English learning in the development of Chinese learners into world citizens in the 21<sup>st</sup> century was made explicit in the 2000 ELT Syllabus and the more fully developed 2003 Curriculum for senior secondary schools (W. Wang & A. Lam, 2009):

The learning and mastery of a foreign language for international communication is a basic requirement for citizens in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. (Translated from Ministry of Education of PRC, 2000, p. 1)

The advent of the information age and the increase of intercultural communication have ascribed English a role of global lingua franca. As the UN documents indicate, the basic survival and developing skills for citizens of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century are literacy, foreign language proficiency and computer skills. Due to historical reasons and the extensive use of the Internet, English has become the dominant working language in various international occasions. It has also become the dominant medium of international scientific communication (Statistics show that 85% of research articles in the world were written and presented in English and English is also the dominant language of key academic journals in various disciplines.) Meanwhile, English is also the dominant language used on the Internet. Accordingly, with the advent of knowledge economy, all the countries in the world are attaching more importance to and reforming foreign language teaching in Basic Education, particularly English language teaching. (Translated from Ministry of Education of PRC, 2003, p. 1)

It should be noted that the above excerpt from the 2003 Curriculum first points out the backdrop of the policy; that is, the informatization of social life and the advent of the knowledge economy. In such an information age the supremacy of English as a dominant medium of international communication is unquestioned, taken to be an obvious matter of

common sense. Through granting legitimacy to the dominance of English as a “natural” condition, the policy maker renders English education with undisputed significances for the development of Chinese society and people. These significances are more explicitly articulated in the following excerpt:

At the moment, our social development and economic development have higher requirement for our people. English education at senior high level is an important process for developing students’ foreign language ability. It should satisfy students’ intellectual and emotional needs, meet the requirements for employment, further education and future development. At the same time, it should satisfy the nation’s need for economic and technological development. Therefore, foreign language education at senior high level has multiple social and cultural significances. English is a major subject in the senior high school education period. Learning English, on the one hand, can help students’ intellectual development, form positive emotions and values and improve their overall quality; on the other hand, a command of an international language creates good conditions for learning foreign culture, science and technology, etc. and facilitates international exchange. English courses can help improve the nation’s quality, help promote the country’s opening up and international exchange and help improve the overall power of the nation. Therefore, on the basis of compulsory education, senior high education courses should help students lay a solid foundation in their language competence for their further study, employment and lifelong study, so that they have the basic command of English to meet the requirement for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. (Translated from Ministry of Education of PRC, 2003, p. 6)

This excerpt legitimizes a list of proclaimed significances of English in Chinese society. In sum, English is endowed with instrumental value and English education bears two layers of significance: that is, for national development and for individual development. The role accorded to English now is that it is a modern language with significant social, economic and political value for the Chinese nation and at an individual level it is a symbolic capital to attain further education, career prospects, and a better life style. It should be noted that the government’s effort to neutralize English in the curricula and promote English as a useful instrument for individual and national development exactly indicates that Chinese English education policies are ideological and that the state is maintaining governance by practicing ideological hegemony. What’s more, requiring all Chinese students to learn English for education and employment and for national development often helps to sustain existing power relations, and at the same time, contributes to reproducing various forms of inequalities. However, as LEP serves as a powerful instrument of turning dominant ideologies into practices and exerting ideological control by consent (E. G. Shohamy, 2006), individuals tend to accept these dominant ideologies as non-ideologies, and misrecognize it as a normal state



of affairs (P. Bourdieu & J. B. Thompson, 1991). Therefore, it is not surprising to find Chinese people accept English as a neutral tool for their own benefits.

A fundamental change of English language education policies in the current phase lies in the pedagogical objectives of ELT. Compared with the 1993 Syllabus which emphasized the instrumental value of English for “acquiring cultural and scientific knowledge, gathering information, and conducting communication with the world” (Ministry of Education of PRC, 1993, p. 1), the 2003 curriculum goes beyond the instrumental value and recognizes the humanistic value of the language in the development of the learners’ “intelligence, affect, attitudes, values, and character.”

Language is the most important tool for thinking, communication and social activities. It plays a significant role in the all-round development of human beings. Through English language learning, students can develop their intelligence, affect, attitudes, and values and shape their character...The English course can help enhance our national standards, meet the needs for the Open Door Policy, for communication with the world, and for the growth of national strength. (Translated from Ministry of Education of PRC, 2003, pp. 1-2)

In order to meet the demand of more qualified personnel with a good command of communicative English, the Ministry of Education is starting to accelerate their English education system towards a communicative pedagogy (D. Nunan, 2003). The 2000 ELT Syllabus for senior school replaced the general focus of the previous English syllabuses on receptive language skills (i.e., listening, reading) with a new emphasis on the productive use of English (i.e. writing and speaking). At university level, the 2007 English curriculum requirements for non-English majors also put more emphasis on developing university students’ listening and speaking competences:

The objective of College English is to develop students’ ability to use English in a well-rounded way, especially in listening and speaking, so that in their future studies and careers as well as social interactions they will be able to communicate effectively, and at the same time enhance their ability to study independently and improve their general cultural awareness so as to meet the needs of China’s social development and international exchanges. (Translated from Ministry of Education of PRC, 2007)

The government’s desire for China to play a much bigger role in the global economy has resulted in a grand expansion of English language education in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. In January 2001, the Ministry of Education (2001b) issued a policy statement

entitled “The Ministry of Education Guidelines for Vigorously Promoting the Teaching of English in Primary Schools,” requiring a lowering of the threshold of compulsory English education from the first year of junior high school to Grade 3 in elementary school. According to G. Hu (2005, p. 11), the policy initiative was formulated in the hope of addressing the gap between the increasing demand for English boosted by the prospects of China’s accession to WTO and the 2008 Olympic Games and the unsatisfactory outcome of ELT reforms at the secondary school level in the 1990s. The policy maker believed that an early instruction of English can facilitate younger learners to achieve better English proficiency, even though uncorroborated by any empirical data. English is now offered at all levels of education in most areas of China, making it the only compulsory subject for most Chinese students during their 20-year-long schooling process from primary school through to graduate school. Given that China has the world’s largest number of primary school students – estimated at 130 million in 2001 (Y. Hu, 2007), the policy has had, and continues to have, a tremendous impact on the global status of English.

English is also officially promoted through content-based English language teaching, widely known in China as “Chinese–English bilingual education” (双语教学 *Shuangyu jiaoxue*). As science and technology education is attached more importance for national development and English is the dominant language in scientific research, English is increasingly used as the medium of instruction in higher education to teach various subjects, mostly in the sciences. In 2001, the Education Ministry (2001a) issued an official guideline on enhancing the quality of college education, requiring that at least 5–10% of all the courses on a university curriculum should be taught in English within three years. According to G. Hu (2008, p. 195), even though Chinese-English bilingual instruction only started to be officially promoted at the turn of the century, it has earned great momentum in recent years and is now “rattling across the country like a juggernaut.” In the official document, Chinese–English bilingual education is seen as an important and effective measure to improve the overall quality of China’s higher education and integrate Chinese educational institutions into the international community (L. Yu, 2008). The prevalent academic discourse on bilingual education in China has constructed an assumed relationship

between national/personal development and mastery of English, in which the importance of English has been taken to extremes (G. Hu, 2008, p. 218).

With a growing importance ascribed to English and the development of the living standards of the Chinese people, study overseas has become a popular choice in improving English. There appeared a trend that more Chinese people study abroad at a younger age. In 2008, China had 179,800 students studying abroad with the U.S., Britain and Australia as the three most desired destinations (Ministry of Education of PRC, 2009b). The recent trends for studying abroad, immigration and postgraduate study further link English with better education, higher income, and improved social status. As a result, China's English education market has been booming. In 2008, Chinese learners of English totaled 350 million (H. Liu, 2008), and that number has been raised to 400 million in July 2010, accounting for about one-third of China's population (N. He, 2010). According to sources from the National Education Development Statistical Bulletin (Ministry of Education of PRC, 2011), China's training market had an estimated market value of 300 billion yuan (\$44 billion) in 2010. Of that total, the English training market was estimated to reach 30 billion yuan (\$4.4 billion). Statistics show that there were more than 50,000 organizations or companies that offered English lessons outside school in China, competing for a share of the lucrative English cake before the Beijing Olympiad (Research in China, 2008).

In today's China, English is ascribed multiple economic, political, social, and cultural significances. In national language policies, English is assumed to be the most modern language and most useful tool for the sustained social and economic development of the country in the age of globalization. At the individual level, English is perceived as the converging point of material gain, elevated social status, broadened opportunity, and a stepping-stone for intellectual pursuit, career advancement, and personal fulfillment. The language has also become an identity marker. Many Chinese people, especially youngsters, deliberately use English words in daily conversation to show they are fashionable and modern (N. He, 2010). For some Chinese learners, English is not only associated with the target language culture, but an imagined community of "Chinese elites" (B. Norton & Y. Gao, 2008, p. 111). However, the *ti-yong* tension and accompanying identity dilemma

among Chinese learners has not been resolved. The successive upsurges of English fever in this era are accompanied by the fear of cultural threat posed by the language. Gao (2009b, p. 75) contends that the clash in *ti* between China and the West has been painfully felt by the Chinese government, teachers and learners alike and has become a haunting issue in the field of foreign language education. I will further explore the widespread public concerns about, and strong resistance to, the current English fever phenomenon in Chapter Four (covering the period in preparation for the Beijing Olympic Games) and Chapter Eight (covering the post-Olympic era).

## 2.8 Summary

In sum, English language education in China has been influenced by Chinese cultural traditions, the semi-colonial history, changing political and economic situations, and international relations. Accordingly, Chinese English language education policies are not neutral but rather embedded in “a whole set of political, ideological, social and economical agendas,” and these policies, in turn, serve as “the vehicles for promoting and perpetuating such agendas” (E. G. Shohamy, 2006, p. 78). In the late Qing dynasty when the principle of “Chinese learning for essence (*ti*); Western learning for utility (*yong*)” was proposed, the learning of foreign languages in China was driven by the ideology of using these languages as a “neutral” instrument to “serve national ends” (A. Lam & K. Chow, 2004, p. 234). This principle and the associated neutrality and usefulness of English learning have been kept in China since then though the cultural value embedded in the language has been persistently challenged throughout various historical periods of English language education.

By adhering to the *ti-yong* conceptualization, Qing reformists and citizens in port cities believed that the external utility of English could be kept subordinate to the internal essence of Chinese language and culture. However, as the Chinese imperial civil examination system was abolished and English was incorporated into school and university curricula, China’s early modernization was seen with Chinese *ti* being overtaken by English *yong*. In the Republican era under the rule of the KMT government, English continued to spread through educational reform, the New Culture Movement, missionary school education, and study

abroad programs. It was in this turbulent period that ELT contributed to the emergence of a new professional and political force in modern China. This new force promoted a rejection of Confucian values and the selective adoption of Western ideals of science and democracy. Both English and Western science and democracy were recognized among the middle class and cultural leaders as effective measures for saving the nation. During the first three decades after the founding of the PRC, political contestation was played out on the terrain of language education and foreign language education policy became directed towards service to socialism. English was condemned as the language of “the American enemies” and thus English language teaching was fiercely contested. In this political climate, especially during the Cultural Revolution, both the external utility of English and the “essence” of English culture were denied. Since China adopted its market reforms, the role ascribed to English has no longer adhered to communist ideology and has had a more explicit focus on economic development. More educational, occupational and economic utility values have become attached to English proficiency with the rising status of English in China’s modernization drive. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, English has been allocated an unprecedented prominent role in Chinese foreign education as can be demonstrated not only by the extensive access to English throughout Chinese education but also by the inclusion of English proficiency into the development of Chinese national and individual identities in English language education policies. English language education policies in the past three decades have attempted to maintain an instrumentalist perspective, which stresses the usefulness of English, and seems to present ELT in a natural (unrelated to imperialism and colonialism), neutral (unconnected to cultural values and political ideologies), and beneficial (to national and personal development) manner. As a result, the neutrality and usefulness of English are turned into everyday taken for granted practices in Chinese society.

Looking back at the spread of English in China we find that the tensions between the cultural threat and the benefits that English learning is perceived to bring has long been a persistent theme in China’s ELT history (B. Adamson, 2002; Y. Gao, 2009b). It is noteworthy that what are embedded in the Chinese *ti-yong* conceptualization are a structuralist view of language and an essentialist position of culture (Y. Gao, 2009a, p. 114) and this structuralist-essentialist position underlies the persistent ambivalent attitudes towards English language learning in

China (Y. Gao, 2009b). In the rapidly changing sociocultural, economic, and political context of China in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, English learning entails complex and often contradictory relationships that are challenging the conventional *ti-yong* conceptualization. The *ti-yong* tension will be discussed with interview data and media discourses in Chapter Four, Chapter Seven and Chapter Eight.

This chapter has served as a background for understanding and analyzing the language policy and planning for the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, and I will now move on to the overall research design of the present study in the next chapter.

## **Chapter Three: Methodology**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter outlines the overall research design of this study and its justification. First I will situate my research in the qualitative research paradigm, and discuss the rationale for adopting constructionist epistemological orientations. Following this discussion, I will move on to describe the data collection and data analysis used in this study. The data collection section reports on the macro- and micro-domain data collected from the field and their respective data collection procedures. The data analysis section expatiates on the triangulation of discourse and multimodal analysis methods for the four sets of data under study. I close with a review of the ethical considerations and limitations of the study.

### **3.2 Rationale for a Qualitative Approach**

As Bell (2005, p. 8) points out, “each research approach has its strengths and weaknesses and each is particularly suitable for a particular context.” Therefore, the guide rule of selecting a research approach/methodology rests on the appropriateness of the approach/methodology to the research questions to be addressed, or, “the nature of the inquiry and the type of information required” (ibid., p. 8). As set out in Chapter One, this study pursues three research questions:

- 1) Which kinds of language policies, language practices and language ideologies were in evidence in the Beijing Olympic context?
- 2) In which ways are these language policies, practices and ideologies tied to the identities of China, Beijing and Chinese citizens?
- 3) How did Chinese English learners take up, adjust to, or resist those ideologies?

I have taken a qualitative approach to exploring these questions, and social constructionist orientations towards understanding identity, ideology and language learning. Below I will elaborate my approach and orientations, and provide the rationale for adopting them.

As a form of inquiry, the importance of qualitative research was established by the work of the “Chicago school” in sociology and the discipline-defining studies of Boas, Mead, Benedict, Bateson, Evans-Pritchard, Radcliffe-Brown, and Malinowski in anthropology in the 1920s and 1930s (N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln, 2005, p. 1). With much development in the last thirty years, *qualitative research* has now evolved into a field of inquiry that crosscuts disciplines, fields, and subject matters and has become a complex, interconnected family of terms, concepts, and assumptions. In spite of the diversity of qualitative research practices, Denzin & Lincoln (2008) succinctly summarize its basic features and offer us an initial, generic definition which defines the approach of the present study:

Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos of the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. (p. 4)

Here I will discuss five aspects of the qualitative approach relevant to my study. Firstly, qualitative research studies “real-world situations as they unfold naturally” (M. Q. Patton, 2002, p. 40). Thus, it is ideally suited to exploring language practices and ideologies in the real-world context of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games. Moreover, the qualitative researcher is the key instrument for data collection and analysis. In my fieldwork, I visited multiple research sites and conducted interviews and observations. Both micro-domain (interview transcripts and field notes) and macro-domain (policy documents, media texts, signage, teaching materials) data were collected by myself.

Secondly, qualitative research is “inherently multi-method in focus” (U. Flick, 2002, pp. 226-227). Qualitative researchers try to understand people through “multiple interactive and



humanistic methods primarily known as interviewing, observing, gathering documents, and examining material culture” (G. B. Rossman & S. F. Rallis, 2003, p. 9). Qualitative data now increasingly include “a vast array of materials, such as photographs, sounds, videos, e-mails, and other emerging forms” (J. W. Creswell, 2003, p. 181). The current study crosscuts multiple fields between sport, language learning and identity politics, investigating the complicated phenomenon of the citywide foreign language learning and popularization campaign geared to the needs of the Beijing Olympics, and therefore the use of multiple methods and data was inevitable.

Thirdly, qualitative research is “emergent and evolving” (C. Marshall & G. B. Rossman, 2006, p. 2). Qualitative researchers assume that “assumptions change as ongoing whether focus is on an individual, an organization, a community, or an entire culture” (M. Q. Patton, 2002, p. 40), thus “research questions, methods, and other elements of design are altered as studies unfold” (J. A. Hatch, 2002, p. 10). While I had originally assumed that I would be able to best answer my research questions by interviewing participants and Beijingers before, during and after the games, as I conducted my fieldwork, it became obvious that I also needed to systematically explore the linguistic landscape of Beijing as well as conduct a discourse analysis of teaching materials and media discourses.

Fourthly, qualitative research is fundamentally interpretive and holistic. Qualitative researchers regard “social settings as unique, dynamic, and complex” (J. A. Hatch, 2002, p. 9). The current study aims to provide a critical holistic perspective to the complex ongoing phenomenon of the spread of English in China in the specific historical conditions of the Beijing Olympic Games. In this qualitative research, I utilize multiple methods (largely inductive) to make personal interpretations of social contexts as a complex system rather than the sum of its parts. In another words, I focus on complex interdependencies and system dynamics that cannot meaningfully be reduced to a few discrete variables and linear, cause-effect relationships.

Last but not least, as a qualitative researcher, I am self-reflexive and politically aware. Being reflexive places qualitative researchers in a distinctly different position than that of

positivists who pursue “value-free objective truth.” Given the fundamentally political nature of language-in-education policy and planning, complex reasoning in order to provide a rich, multi-faceted, and in-depth description of the social world is necessary. Qualitative researchers commit to “understand and interpret the world authentically in all its complexity while being self-analytical, politically aware, and reflexive in consciousness” (M. Q. Patton, 2002, p. 41).

### **3.3 Rationale for a Social Constructionist Epistemology**

Social constructionism is not an explanatory theory, but an epistemological position that considers how social phenomena or objects of consciousness develop in social contexts, and emphasizes “the socially created nature of social life” (G. Marshall, 1998). Within a social constructionist thought, a social construction is the process of creating perceived social reality by individuals, groups, or organizations in interaction with social structure (“Social Constructionism”, 2008). With a focus on processes rather than structures, social constructionist approaches “move away from questions about the nature of people or society and towards a consideration of how certain phenomena or forms of knowledge are achieved by people in interaction” (V. Burr, 1995, pp. 5-6). As such, social constructionism rejects structuralist concepts such as objectivity, reality and truth, and instead, it questions the social and historical roots of phenomena. According to Burr (1995, pp. 2-4), a social constructionist approach usually has as its foundation one or more of the following positions: 1) a critical stance toward taken-for-granted knowledge, 2) historical and cultural specificity, 3) knowledge as sustained by social processes, 4) knowledge and social action as interrelated.

Identity is one of the most controversial issues in debates between structuralists and constructionists. Structuralist approaches regard identity as “an entity with a definite, stable and inherent structure” (Y. Gao, 2009a, p. 110) independent of human agency. For social constructionists (e.g., B. Norton, 1995, 2000; B. Norton & K. Toohey, 2002), however, identity is never singular, but rather multiple and multi-faceted depending on various sites

in which people mediate their relations with the social world. Moreover, identity is not static, but rather dynamic and fluid constructed and reconstructed across time and place in language practices. Last but not least, identity is not a closed group of universal attributes ascribed to all members of a community, but a site of struggle, which can be not only conflicting between different persons but also ambivalent within a same person. In this perspective, the construction of identity is “a process never completed, always in process” (S. Hall & P. Du Gay, 1996, p. 16). Taking a social constructionist approach, this study considers English language learning as part of an identity construction process in the Beijing Olympic context. Of particular importance to this work is the social constructionist (or interchangeably, poststructuralist, with reference to their commonalities) focus on language learning as the site of identity construction and negotiation. In this way, I see the social construction of identities in language learning as an ongoing, dynamic process that is reproduced by people acting on their interpretations and their knowledge of it. In addition, I examine English learning practices and ideologies of ELLT as socially constructed. The purpose of the current study is not simply to describe certain language practices and linguistic ideologies in relation to the Beijing Olympic Games, but rather to uncover the ways in which individuals, groups and organizations participate in the construction of their perceived reality pertaining to English learning and identity in the Beijing Olympic context.

As recently as a decade ago, the issue of identity in SLA, according to Firth and Wagner’s (1997) observation, was no more than a structuralist-positivist dichotomy of the native speaker (NS) and nonnative speaker (NNS). Since Norton’s (1995) call for “a comprehensive theory of social identity that integrates the language learner and the language learning context” (p. 12), there has been an increasing research interest in identity and language learning within the frameworks of social constructionism and poststructuralism. Even though an increasing number of empirical studies have been conducted in naturalistic SL settings, it is noticeable that there have, in fact, been a lack of study of language learning and identity construction in foreign language settings (D. Block, 2007). Gao (2009a) points out that studies on EFL learning and identity development have not attracted a great deal of academic attention in China. The research pertaining to English language learning and teaching in the Chinese context has largely followed the social

psychological paradigm of Gardner (1985) and its expansions (e.g., Z. Dornyei, 1994), which focus on individual learner factors influencing English proficiency such as motivation, personality and cognitive styles (Y. Gao, 2009a, p. 101). Inspired by social constructionism and poststructuralism, there is a radical call for a reconceptualization of English language learning and identity construction in the Chinese context. The present study is a response to that call.

### **3.4 Rationale for a Multi-Method Approach**

In this section, I justify the use of a multi-method approach from three aspects: 1) the new and expanded view of language policy as the framework for the current study; 2) the appropriateness of triangulation for the analysis of multiple sets of data; and 3) multiple methods used in data collection.

#### **3.4.1 An expanded view of language policy**

In this study, my view on language policy (LP) draws upon that of Shohamy. In *Language Policy: Hidden Agendas and New Approaches*, Shohamy (2006) proposes an expanded view of language and language policy. For Shohamy (ibid.), language is not a closed and finite system, the kind of concept used by linguists; rather it is “open, dynamic, energetic, constantly evolving and personal” (p. 5). This implies that language itself is free from any strict or prescribed rules of correctness. Viewing language in an expanded way also implies that it is not limited to words or other linguistic markers but incorporates multi-modal forms of expression and use: visuals, graphics, images, gesture, clothes, architecture, etc. (ibid., pp. 14-16). In addition, people seem to, on the surface, enjoy a large degree of freedom of expression as they can make decisions about their language use in everyday life. However, more often than not, people’s use of language is regulated, both overtly and covertly. Language is not empty of ideology; rather it is a symbolic tool for the manipulation of the state’s political, social, economic and educational agendas by the imposition of specific linguistic behaviors, and at the same time a tool of control that creates and perpetuates

group membership, identities, hierarchies and a variety of other forms of imposition (ibid., p. 1).

Based on this broad view of language, Shohamy makes a distinction between overt LPs and covert LPs. She (ibid., p. xvi) argues that an in-depth understanding of the LPs of a political and social entity should not be observed only through explicitly declared, formalized and codified policy documents such as laws, curricula and tests, but rather through a variety of covert and implicit mechanisms used mostly (but not exclusively) by those in authority to affect, create and perpetuate language practices, “de facto LP,” which are not conventionally viewed as policy devices.

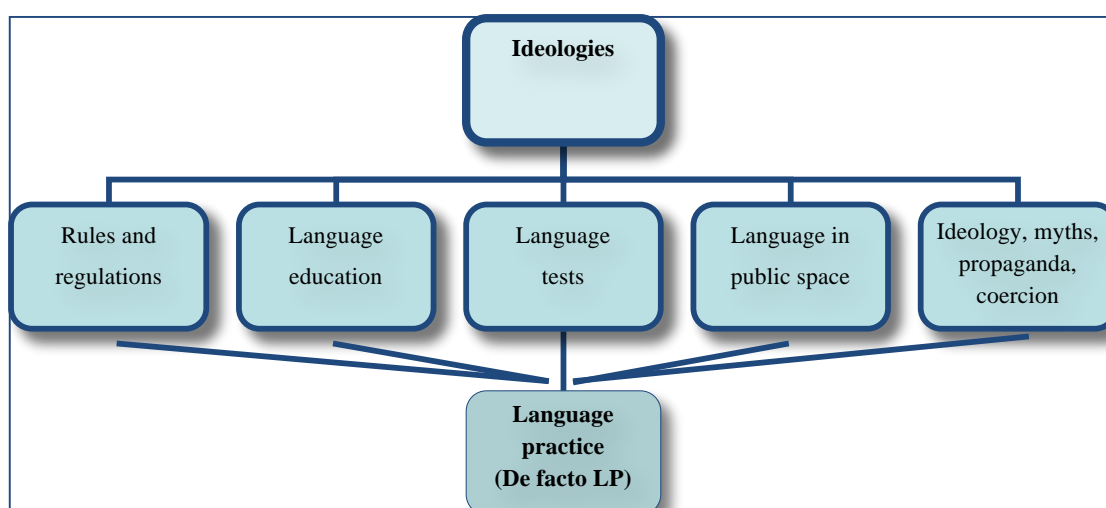


Figure 2: List of mechanisms between ideology and practice (E. G. Shohamy, 2006, p. 58)

According to Shohamy (ibid.), LP plays a key role in manipulating language behaviors and ensuring that ideologies turn into practice. There are a variety of overt and covert mechanisms of LP that fall between language ideology and practice. Figure 2 provides a graphic representation of these mechanisms, or policy devices, within the framework of ideology and practice. In order to understand real LPs and their “hidden agendas,” Shohamy argues that it is not enough to study overt and declared policies but rather that there is a need to study covert and de facto policies. Adopting the expanded view of LP, this study explores language policy and planning for the Beijing Olympic Games through a variety of overt and covert LP mechanisms. The specific mechanisms discussed in this study fall into four categories: policy documents, language textbooks, linguistic landscape and language

learner experiences. An examination of these overt and covert mechanisms requires the adoption of triangulation as a multi-method approach.

### 3.4.2 Triangulation as a multi-method qualitative approach

To address the three research questions of the study, a multi-method triangulation approach was undertaken to examine policy documents, language textbooks, linguistic landscape and language learning trajectories. The idea of employing triangulation as a multi-method approach to this current study is based on the belief that “particular techniques developed originally to fulfill the requirements of particular paradigms can often be used for other purposes and from within other paradigms if need be” (C. Seale, 1999a, p. 465). The idea of triangulation derives from the discussions of measurement validity by quantitative methodologists working with positivist/empiricist paradigm. The term “methodological triangulation” has been first used by Campbell & Fiske (1959) to advocate the convergent and discriminant validation of measurement instruments in contrast with the *single operationalism* dominant at that time in the field of psychology. Its use in qualitative research was first advocated and popularized by Denzin (1970) in his textbook on qualitative methods. In his early conception, triangulation was defined as “the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon” (N. K. Denzin, 1970, p. 291). Critiques (see, e.g., M. Bloor, 1997; N. Fielding & J. L. Fielding, 1986; D. Silverman, 1985) point out Denzin’s early conception of triangulation-as-validation assumes a single conception of the subject under study and a single objective reality behind “the same phenomenon” (N. K. Denzin, 1970, p. 291). In response to the critiques, Denzin & Lincoln (2005) followed Flick (2002) and revised his conception of multiple triangulation as follows:

...the use of multiple methods, or triangulation, reflects an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question. Objective reality can never be captured. We know a thing only through its representations. Triangulation is not a tool or strategy of validation, but an alternative to validation. The combination of multiple methodological practices, empirical materials, perspectives, and observers in a single study is best understood, then, as a strategy that adds rigor, breadth, complexity, richness, and depth to any inquiry. ( N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln, 2005, p. 5)

Critics of triangulation who restrict its use to the positivist/empiricist paradigm essentialize an intrinsic logical connection between paradigm positions and techniques. Seale (1999a, p. 472) rejects this supposedly inevitable philosophical connection of triangulation and contends researchers should take triangulation as “a valuable craft skill relatively autonomous from any paradigm position.” Larsen-Freeman & Long (1991) also argue that researchers should choose a research method or approach based on their study rather than a priori paradigm:

What is important for researchers is not the choice of *priori* paradigms, or methodologies, but rather to be clear about what the purpose of the study is and to match that purpose with the attributes most likely to accomplish it. Put another way, the methodological design should be determined by the research question. (p. 14)

Even though criticisms of triangulation-as-validation have been noted by a number of researchers (e.g., M. Bloor, 1997; N. Fielding & J. L. Fielding, 1986; C. Seale, 1999a, 1999b; D. Silverman, 1985), it is not to say that the comparison of data derived from different methods is futile. On the contrary, Bloor and Wood (2006) believe “such comparisons may serve to deepen and extend the analysis” (p. 172). Altrichter et al. (1993) contend that triangulation “gives a more detailed and balanced picture of the situation” (p. 117). Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) explain the purpose of applying triangulation in social sciences more clearly:

Triangular techniques in the social sciences attempt to map out, or explain more fully, the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint and, in so doing, by making use of both quantitative and qualitative data. (p. 141)

Rather than seeing triangulation as a method for corroborating findings and a test for validity, qualitative researchers generally use this technique to ensure that an account is rich, robust, comprehensive and well developed. Social constructivists believe social reality is constructed in different ways in different contexts. Acknowledging that there isn't an objective reality outside the observer's (i.e. no observations or interpretations are perfectly repeatable), triangulation serves as “the simultaneous display of multiple, refracted realities” (N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln, 2005, p. 6). In this study, triangulation is adopted as a multi-method strategy to project a multi-facet, nuanced, complex picture and produce

in-depth, rich, reflexive understanding rather than to arrive at an objective “truth” or reveal “the whole picture”

Both Denzin (2006, p. 472) and Patton (1999, p. 1193) identify four types of triangulation: “data/source triangulation” (using different data sources to examine the topic under study); “investigator/analyst triangulation” (using different investigators to review findings or using multiple observers and analysts in the same study); “theoretical/theory triangulation” (using multiple theoretical theories or perspectives to examine and interpret the data in the same study); and “methodological/methods triangulation” (using different methods to study the data and checking out the consistency of findings generated by different data collection methods). The current study draws on multiple triangulation methods. By multiple triangulation, I mean not only the combination of traditional qualitative methods and data (interview and observation, field notes and written documents), but also the triangulation of qualitative and quantitative methods and data in my study. Data/source triangulation and methodological/methods triangulation are discussed respectively in the sections on data collection (see Section 3.5.1, Chapter Three) and data analysis (see Section 3.5.2, Chapter Three) in greater detail.

### 3.4.3 Multiple methods of data collection

Gathering documents is the basic data collection method in qualitative research. What I mean by “documents” here are “naturally occurring data,” in Silverman’s term, which “derive from situations which exist independently of the researcher’s intervention” such as narratives, emails, websites, textbooks, newspapers, websites, government reports, photographs, videos and film (D. Silverman, 2006, p. 403). A real strength of qualitative research lies in that “it can use naturally occurring data to find the sequences (“how”) in which participants’ meanings (“what”) are deployed and thereby establish the character of some phenomenon” (D. Silverman, 2006, p. 44). Besides texts, visual materials are significant data to investigate the visual representation of a research topic. Today, there is increasing use of photography, motion pictures, the World Wide Web, interactive CDs and CD-ROMs as ways of investigating connections between social reality and visual



representation. Photography “takes the researcher into the everyday world” (N. K. Denzin, 2008, p. 50); thus it is instrumental in capturing the visual representation of the English fever phenomenon in the real-life context of the Beijing Olympic Games for this research.

Interviewing is one of the most commonly used qualitative methods. Different from a traditional structured interview which has a limited set of formalized questions, a semi-structured interview is flexible, allowing new questions to be brought up during the interview as a result of what the interviewee says. The interviewer in a semi-structured interview generally has a framework of themes to be explored. However, the specific topics that the interviewer wants to explore during the interview should usually be thought about well in advance. While conducting interviews, the researcher used “a conversational or dialogic style of interviewing” (D. Foley & A. Valenzuela, 2008, p. 223) in order to encourage participants to share more of their insights and experiences. The researcher also shares more personal information than do traditional interviewers.

In qualitative research, observation has been widely used as an important research method in combination with interviewing. Qualitative researchers observe actions/interactions and behavior, and listen to conversations while simultaneously observing the context (particularly the time and location) in which these actions are undertaken (M. Bloor & F. Wood, 2006, p. 71). Observation enables qualitative researchers to access their participants’ “more chaotic, non-rational behavior that may be less likely to be disclosed in an interview” (M. Bloor & F. Wood, 2006, p. 71). Qualitative observers vary considerably to the extent of participation from a non-participant to a complete participant.

### **3.5 Research Design**

A research design is the logic that links the initial questions of a study to the data to be collected and the methods of analysis to be adopted. The current study combines multiple data collection and analytical methods in accordance with data types in the investigation.

### 3.5.1 Data collection methods

This study triangulates data by combining different types of qualitative approaches: semi-structured interviews, participant observations and on-site observations, gathering texts and audiovisual materials. Both micro-domain (interview transcripts and field notes) and macro-domain (policy documents, media texts, signage, teaching materials) data were collected. Due to the evolving nature of qualitative study and the on-going process of the spread of English in China, the collection of policy documents and media texts ran through the entire course of this present study. In order to contextualize the discourse analysis of macro-domain data, I conducted a three-month multi-site intensive fieldwork in Beijing (July – October, 2008). All these research practices provide important insights into the research questions under study.

#### *3.5.1.1 Naturally-occurring data*

##### POLICY DOCUMENTS

English language syllabi and curricula for schools and universities published by the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China (MOE) from 1963-2004 were collected for analysis. These policy documents prescribe the content of ELT to be covered, recommend teaching methods and assessment measures, and outline the outcomes to be achieved for English in public education. Official policies, guidelines, and regulations on the planning and implementation of foreign language learning and popularization in preparation for the 2008 Olympic Games were gathered from the official websites of the Beijing Organizing Committee for the Games of the XXIX Olympiad (<http://www.beijing2008.cn/>), the Beijing Government (<http://www.ebeijing.gov.cn/>), the Foreign Affairs Office of the Beijing Municipal Government (<http://www.bjfa.gov.cn/>), the Organizing Ministry of The Beijing Speaks Foreign Languages Program (<http://www.bjenglish.com.cn/>), Beijing Education Examinations Authority (<http://www.bjeea.cn/>), Beijing 2008 Olympic Games Language Training Services Suppliers: Aifly Education & Technology Co., Ltd ([www.aiflyworld.cn](http://www.aiflyworld.cn)) and EF English First Co., Ltd (<http://www.englishfirst.com/index.html>). Besides, IOC evaluation reports for

the Games of the XXIX Olympiad in 2008 and previous Games were accessed from the online database of the International Olympic Committee (<http://www.olympic.org/>).

## MEDIA TEXTS

Domestic media reports relating to the preparation and hosting of the Beijing Olympic Games and the spread of English before, during and after the Games were gathered from 1) the official websites of the Beijing Organizing Committee for the Games of the XXIX Olympiad (<http://www.beijing2008.cn/>) and the Beijing Government (<http://www.ebeijing.gov.cn/>), 2) several major newspapers such as: Xinhua (<http://www.xinhuanet.com/>), People's Daily (<http://www.people.com.cn/>), Global Times (<http://www.huanqiu.com/>), 3) and blogs hosted by Phoenix New Media (<http://blog.ifeng.com/>), People's Daily (<http://blog.people.com.cn/blog/>). These media texts provide a multidimensional perspective on the specific socio-historical context that the Beijing Olympic Games were situated within and the controversy over the "English fever" surrounding the phenomenon in China.

## SIGNAGE

For an understanding of the linguistic landscape of Beijing as Olympic city, a range of photographs of bilingual/multilingual guiding signs and other linguistic objects were taken and collected at key Olympic venues, tourist sites, commercial areas, and transportation hubs (discussed in Section 3.5.1.2). These naturally occurring observational data include: photographs and videos sampled at Beijing Railway Station (01-08-2008), at Wangfujing Street (04-08-2008), at the Olympic Green (05-08-2008), at Tiananmen Square (06-08-2008), at Beijing Black Bamboo Park (07-08-2008), at the Forbidden City (08-08-2008), at Qianmen Street, at Beijing West Railway Station (09-08-2008), at Beijing Capital International Airport (09-08-2008), at Peking University, and at Beijing Sport University (20-09-2008). The sampled photographs and videos in this study were recorded by digital camera. These photographs comprise both official/noncommercial (traffic signs, direction signs, information signs, caution and warning signs, tourist map, placards, etc.) and nonofficial/commercial signs (advertising billboard, notice signs, etc.). The texts on these sampled signs could be monolingual, bilingual or multilingual. A bilingual sign is

considered in this study to be a sign containing at least one language other than Chinese. Thus a sign could contain just one language and still be categorized as bilingual provided that language is not Chinese. Likewise, a multilingual sign is one containing at least two languages other than Mandarin Chinese. There are three types of signs that can be distinguished in Beijing's linguistic landscape (LL): monolingual signs (Chinese), bilingual signs (Chinese and English), and multilingual signs (Chinese, English and French). In Chapter Five, I purposefully select and analyze some photographs depending on whether or not they typify linguistic characteristics of contextual locations.

## TEACHING MATERIALS

Three sets of English teaching materials for the specific purposes of serving the Beijing Olympic Games were purchased for the current study from Wangfujing Xinhua Bookstore and Xidan Bookstore (Beijing Books Building) in Beijing: 1) BOCOG publications (*A Conversational English Reader* (Elementary & Advanced), 2) BSFLP publications (*One World English* 100, 300, 600, 1000), 3) BSFLP & BEST publications (*Olympic English: Book 1, 2, 3*). Shardakova and Pavlenko (2004) stress that language textbooks play a “unique role in the process of potential empowerment or disempowerment of language learners” (p. 28). In Chapter Six, I conduct a multimodal discourse analysis of texts and visual images in *A Conversational English Reader* (Elementary & Advanced). The rationale for selecting the two *Readers* as my data is presented in Chapter Six.

### 3.5.1.2 Fieldwork

Patton (2002) points out that “the documentation would not have made sense without the interviews, and the focus of the interviews came from the field observation” (p. 307). In order to achieve an in-depth understanding of “a fuller, more meaningful context” (B. Tedlock, 2000, p. 455) in which the Beijing Olympic events were situated, I combined observation, interviewing and document collection during three months of fieldwork in Beijing (July-October, 2008). The fieldwork serves to contextualize the discourse analysis.

## RESEARCH SITES

In order to capture the range of language practices across the city before, during and after the Beijing Olympics, initially I immersed myself in various places such as Olympic venues, the BOCOG building, the Olympic Youth camp, tourist sites, universities, English schools, central business districts, the airport, train stations, subways, bus dispatching centers, shopping centers, bookshops. From the initial immersion to more focused research sites, I gradually discovered emerging themes, narrowed down research questions and gained access to the focused subjects and events. The main research sites where I conducted on-site observations ranged from key Olympic venues (i.e., the Olympic Green), tourist sites (i.e., Forbidden City, Tiananmen Square), to commercial areas (i.e., Qianmen Street, Wangfujing Street), and transportation hubs (i.e., Beijing West Railway Station, Beijing Capital International Airport). Most of these research sites are concentrated in the inner city of Beijing (appendix 2: Data collection sites, p.254). These data collection sites were popular or public locations frequented by tourists and chose purposefully in this study for their respective significance in sports competing, sightseeing, shopping and commuting experiences that Beijing offered to Olympic visitors. In the above fields I took notes and photographs, audio and/or video recorded interesting and salient artifacts, activities, and phenomena relevant to the research questions. I attempted to be observant and self-reflective on English learning practices, English-mediated intercultural encounters, and foreign language services and facilities. Below are the rationales for respective research sites.

*The Olympic Green* is an Olympic Park which Beijing constructed for the 2008 Summer Olympics. The park houses main Olympic venues such as Beijing National Stadium and Beijing National Aquatics Center. At the time of the Games, the Olympic Green was the key site where important sporting competitions and cultural events (the closing and opening ceremonies) were held and generated worldwide media attention. Undoubtedly, the Olympic Green was a window to showcase the host city's image. On-site observation at the Olympic Green allowed me to inspect the city's foreign language services and facilities specific for the Games.

Being the landmarks and most important tourist sites of Beijing, both the *Forbidden City* and *Tiananmen Square* are located in the heart of the city. Tiananmen Square is the largest open square in the world and has great cultural and political significance, as it was the site of several key events in Chinese history. Directly north of Tiananmen Square, the Forbidden City houses the world's largest imperial palace which was the home of 25 emperors of the Ming and Qing dynasties (from 1421 to 1924). Every year, the two tourist sites attract millions of visitors from home and abroad. In preparation for the 2008 Olympic Games, the Beijing Municipal Government listed the enhancement of multilingual services at these two sites in its overall plan for the promotion of the historical and cultural image of Beijing. Observations at the two sites provided a perspective on the carefully planned linguistic landscape of the Olympic host city.

*Wangfujing Street* and *Qianmen Street* are the most famous shopping streets in the Chinese capital. Wangfujing Street is a downtown shopping pedestrian thoroughfare located in the Dongcheng District of Beijing, east of Tiananmen Square, which attracted nearly 100,000 visitors daily in August 2008 (Wikipedia, 2010a). Qianmen Street is one of Beijing's oldest commercial areas and the second pedestrian thoroughfare after Wangfujing Street. The street was reopened to the public on August 7, 2008 after a massive one-year refurbishment. Visiting the two business areas was an important part of the experiences of most Olympic visitors. Observations at these two sites allowed me to investigate local language practices and grass roots linguistic identities co-constructed by individual, associative or corporative actors in the host city.

*Beijing West Railway Station* and *Beijing Capital International Airport* constitute the most important gateway to Beijing for domestic and international visitors. Opened in early 1996, Beijing West Railway Station is currently the largest railway station in Asia with a maximum of 400,000 passengers per day (Wikipedia, 2010b). Beijing Capital International Airport is the main international airport of Beijing and also the third busiest airport in the world. To accommodate the growing traffic volume, Beijing Capital International Airport added the enormous Terminal 3 in 2008, the second largest airport terminal in the world and the third largest building in the world by area (English First, 2010b). For most Olympic

visitors, their experience of the host city started from and ended at one of the two transportation hubs, which were attached great importance in the city's urban construction. Observations at these two sites provided an insight into language services and facilities geared toward the special logistic demands raised by the Olympic Games.

## INTERVIEWEES

There are two main categories of participants in this study: individual participants and institutional participants. The first category of individual participants consists of Olympic volunteers who are college students (aged 18 years old and over) living and studying in Beijing. Olympic volunteers are "accredited personnel, recruited and managed by the Beijing Olympic Organizing Committee for the Games of the XXIX Olympiad," who "shoulder critical Games-time responsibilities, work at times and in positions assigned to them by BOCOG during the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games and the Paralympic Games of 2008 without compensation" (A. Liu, 2008). The Games organizer recruited three categories of Olympic volunteers: Games-time volunteers, urban volunteers, and social volunteers. Games-time volunteers are those who received the most intensive training and were assigned to provide services at Olympic venues (including competition venues, training venues and non-competition venues). Games-time volunteers provided services in designated areas as diverse as guest reception, language translation, transportation, security, medical service, spectator guiding, communication organization support, venue operation support, media operation support, cultural activity support and other aspects (Nidemike, 2008). Urban volunteers are those responsible for providing information, emergency aid and translation services in urban volunteer service stations set up across Beijing. Social volunteers were extensively recruited and assigned to help with keeping traffic and maintaining social order in the communities and townships of Beijing before and during the Beijing Olympics and Paralympics. At the time of the Games, Beijing university students were one of the major sources for the three categories of Olympic volunteers.

Overall, I interviewed and shadowed 35 participants (appendix 3: List of interview participants, pp.255-256). 28 of these were volunteers (26 Games-time volunteers and two urban volunteers) for the Beijing Olympic Games. The remaining seven institutional

participants had been, more or less, involved in Olympic English training before the Beijing Olympics. They included three English teachers, two BOCOG administrative staff, one local government official and one local taxi driver. All the institutional interviewees are highly educated and hold a bachelor degree or above. 31 out of the 35 interviewees are Han Chinese. The other four are ethnic minority students who were doing their undergraduate study in Beijing. Two of these were of Manchu and Hezhe ethnicity and their ethnic languages have died out or faded from everyday usage in their cultures. The other three were of She and Yao backgrounds. They speak Putonghua and at least one ethnic language, and thus are learning English as a third or even fourth language.

## RECRUITMENT

To identify and recruit participants for this study, non-probability sampling techniques were used: purposive and snowball sampling. Non-probability means sampling without using random selection methods, and therefore non-probability samples are not necessarily representative of the population under study. Burns (2000) points out that the usual form of non-probability sampling is “purposive, purposeful or criterion-based sampling” (p. 178). Purposive sampling is a method where the participants are selected by the researcher subjectively in accordance with his or her criteria for inclusion in the study. The researcher chooses the sample based on whom they think would be appropriate for the study. Snowball sampling is a technique for developing a research sample where existing study participants recruit future participants from among their acquaintances who also meet the criteria. The recruiting technique is especially useful when the researchers are trying to reach populations that are inaccessible or hard to find (W. M. K. Trochim, 2006).

The current study started with purposive sampling. I began by contacting several individuals from my existing social network in Beijing. Through my network, I first located information-rich key informants and then clarified to them the characteristics of my targeted participants. As soon as my potential participants were identified, I asked for their initial permission, through my key informants, to accept my interviews. In regards to university students who were sampled through their institutions (e.g., through the teacher of a class or the dean of a faculty), letters of introduction were sent to them in advance to establish initial



cooperation and rapport. Having been given initial permission, I made contact with these potential participants through telephone and let them nominate their most suitable interview time and place. After I established rapport with my existing participants, I used snowball sampling to reach out to more potential participants. I politely requested them to introduce me to their acquaintances who also met my criteria and ask for interview permission.

## INTERVIEWS

For an understanding of participants' experiences and perceptions of English learning and use before and during the Beijing Olympics, I set six main themes as an interview guide. The six themes include: participant's English learning experiences; participants' English practice at home and in work places; participants' attitudes to English language learning and teaching in China; participants' understanding of the role of English in their respective future lives; participants' opinions on the role of English in relation to Beijing as an Olympic city; participants' personal experiences of using English during the Beijing Olympic events. The framework of the six themes is an informal "grouping of topics and questions that the interviewer can ask in different ways for different participants" (T. R. Lindlof & B. C. Taylor, 2002, p. 195). In participant interviews, I focused on the topics at hand without being constrained to a particular format.

In the process, I conducted 27 face-to-face interviews and one telephone interview between July 10 to September 27, 2008. 22 of these were one-on-one interviews and 5 were group interviews (see appendix 3, pp.255-256, for details). I accommodated participants' schedules as much as possible and let them choose convenient locations, and they nominated universities, parks, cafés, restaurants and their homes as interview locations. Interviews were recorded with an audio-recorder for the purpose of preparing transcripts for data analysis. During group interviewing, conversations among participants and their interactions with other individuals were recorded. All interviews were conducted in Mandarin Chinese (or Putonghua).

## PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

Due to the sensitivity of most participants' work places (they were working at various Olympics-related venues) and the availability of participants (all participants were heavily involved in their work at the time of the Games, in most cases I was not able to get access to their work places and conduct participant observations. On August 7, 2008, I conducted a participant observation with two urban volunteers who were assigned to provide services in their designated urban volunteer service station at the entrance of Beijing Black Bamboo Park for their half-day volunteer service. The aim of my observation was to learn about the two participants' English-mediated intercultural communicative practices in their work place. Having been given permission, I video-recorded and took field notes on participants' practices in their work places and the context they were working in. During and after the observation, I made self-reflective field notes on: 1) descriptions of participants and people they interacted in with English, 2) descriptions of context (time, location), 3) descriptions of participants' work schedule and their practices, 4) descriptions of incidents of English-mediated intercultural communication, 5) reflections on emerging themes relevant to the research questions.

### 3.5.2 Data analysis methods

#### 3.5.2.1 *A critical discourse analysis perspective*

Data analysis means making sense of, or interpreting the data. This study aims to interpret the data from a critical discourse analysis (CDA) perspective. CDA is neither a homogeneous nor necessarily united theoretical approach or research method, rather it is "a shared perspective on doing linguistic, semiotic or discourse analysis" (T. A. van Dijk, 1993, p. 253). Four concepts figure indispensably in all CDA researches: "discourse," "critical," "ideology," and "power." It is generally agreed that CDA conceives "discourse" as a form of "social practice" (N. Fairclough & R. Wodak, 1997) and consider the "context of language use" to be crucial (R. Wodak, 2001a). Describing discourse as social practice implied "a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation(s), institutions(s) and social structure(s) which frame it" (N. Fairclough & R. Wodak, 1997, p. 258). In other words,

discourse is both socially constitutive and socially conditioned – “it constitutes situations, objects of knowledge, and the social identities of and relationships between people and groups of people” (N. Fairclough & R. Wodak, 1997, p. 258). Ideology is a topic of considerable importance in CDA. In the social-cognitive theory of van Dijk (1998), “ideologies” are viewed as “interpretation frameworks” which “organize sets of attitudes” about other elements of modern society. Fairclough, et al. (2011) propose to understand ideology not just as “a matter of representing social reality” but also as “a process which articulates together particular representations of reality, and particular constructions of identity” (p. 372). Ideology is produced and reproduced through discourse and serves as an important means of “establishing and maintaining unequal power relations” (R. Wodak, 2001b, p. 10). A study of ideology requires analysts to go beyond textual analysis and consider “how the texts are interpreted and received and what social effects they have” (N. Fairclough, *et al.*, 2011, p. 371). In addition, interpretations from a CDA perspective are dynamic and open, and may be affected by new readings and new contextual information. CDA takes a particular interest in the relation between language and power. Power is about relations of difference, and particularly about the effects of differences in social structures (R. Wodak, 2001b, p. 11). For CDA, language “is not powerful on its own, rather it gains power by the use powerful people make of it” (R. Wodak, 2001b, p. 10). In contrast to non-critical theories and methodologies in discourse analysis, CDA is characterized by “the common interests in demystifying ideologies and power through the systematic investigation of semiotic data, be they written, spoken or visual” (R. Wodak, 2007, pp. 185-186). Adopting a “critical” goal signals the need for critical discourse analysts not only to describe discursive practices but also to unpack “the ideological underpinnings of discourse that have become so naturalized over time that we begin to treat them as common, acceptable and natural features of discourse” (M. Talbot *et al.*, 2003, p. 36) and to make visible inequities in relations of power. The central concerns of researchers working in the critical field, such as the dialectal relationship between language and the social; the construction and maintenance of power relations through language; the role played by language in structuring human experience and world-view; language and social change. CDA researchers, as Fairclough, are enthusiastically concerning with discourse as an element in contemporary social changes which are widely referred to as “globalization.” The cultural diversity, contest and transformation of human discourses and the appropriate and

helpful approaches to them are a vast but new field in discourse studies. It is believed that awareness of the ideological effects of discourse can lead to changes in discourse practice that will result in greater social equality and justice (N. Fairclough, 1992).

A critical approach to discourse analysis typically concentrates on data like government documents, news reports, political interviews, schoolbooks, and advertising that construct and convey ideology and power relation that have been entrenched and naturalized over time and seem as common beliefs or even “common sense” in a society. Drawing a critical approach to discourse analysis this study explores issues such as ideology, power, identity, class, gender, ethnicity, and how they are manifested in texts or talks.

#### *3.5.2.2 Data analysis procedure*

As explained in Section 3.5.1, the data for analysis in this study fell into six categories. The following is an outline of my data analysis procedure:

- 1) Policy documents
- 2) Media texts
- 3) Signage
- 4) ELT textbooks
- 5) Interviews
- 6) Field notes

Before the fieldwork, my initial analysis began with a cultural-historical review of the changing role and status of English through a literature review and a content analysis of language policy and social history documents (see Chapter Two). Patton (2002, p. 307) suggests that document analysis can provide “a behind-the-scenes look at the program that may not be directly observable and about which the interviewer might not ask appropriate questions without the leads provided through documents.” At the exploratory stage, the document analysis helped me develop an understanding of the social and cultural roots of ideological underpinnings and identity conflicts of the spread of English in China. Following Shohamy’s expanded view of LP (2006), I set up an analytical framework that

addresses language policy and planning issues on the basis of a comparative analysis of language policy documents, language teaching materials, the linguistic landscape, and language learner experiences. These understandings and the framework informed the directions for subsequent data collection and analysis.

With the progress of fieldwork, I collected policy documents, media texts, ELT textbooks, sampled photographs, and conducted interviews and observations. Patton (2002) emphasizes that the challenge for qualitative analysts lies in making sense of massive amounts of data, which involves “reducing the volume of raw information, sifting trivia from significance, identifying significant patterns, and constructing a framework for communicating the essence of what the data reveal” (p. 432). The multi-site observation provided me a general understanding of foreign language popularization policies and practices and pervasive discourses in the field and thus contributed to the focus of my interviews. In the course of interviewing and initial analysis, more focused patterns and themes gradually emerged. At this stage, four major themes are established to explore language policy and planning for the Beijing Olympic Games through a variety of overt and covert LP mechanisms: 1) language policies and practices in the Olympic English popularization campaign; 2) imagined communities and identity options in Beijing Olympic English textbooks; 3) signage in the linguistic landscape of the Olympic city; 4) development, equality and English learning trajectories.

After the fieldwork, the transcription of interviews and field notes were thoroughly pursued in an attempt to recheck the analytic insights and interpretations that emerged during data collection and triangulation with macro-domain data. The interview transcripts were first translated into English from Chinese by myself and then edited for clarity and grammar by a proofreader (see Appendix 8: Key to transcription conventions, p.267). In order to make the translation maximally transparent, I provide all Chinese-language data in the original and in translation in the thesis (see Appendix 9 for the translation procedures, p.268). In accordance with the four established themes, both macro-domain data (policy documents, media texts, signage, and ELT textbooks) and micro-domain data (interview transcripts and field notes) were selected from the data pool and categorized for analysis.

The study employs content analysis for the interpretation of the collected textual and narrative data. Content analysis is one of today's most extensively used analytical methods in the social sciences for categorizing emerging themes from textual and narrative data. The choice of the content from textual and narrative data is justified by their relevance to the research questions of the study. For each of the four established themes, a coding scheme is developed inductively from the data. After data coding, I uncover categories and patterns, make inferences and present my interpretations derived from the coded data. A few typical quotations from participants were selected purposefully and provided to reinforce my abstraction of information. Figures and tables were used to facilitate the description.

The data for analysis in Chapter Four include language policies, media texts, interview transcripts and field notes relating to Olympic English popularization campaign. The coded data are classified into four categories: 1) language policy making and enforcing mechanism; 2) language testing mechanism 3) language training mechanism), and 4) role model and identification mechanism. Content analysis is applied to analyze each set of the data. In Chapters Five and Six, both content analysis and multimodal discourse analysis methods are employed to examine the linguistic landscape of Beijing as an Olympic city and two official English textbooks for specific purposes of the Beijing Olympic Games. Specific data analysis methods are discussed respectively in Chapter Five (see, pp. 128-132) and Chapter Six (see, pp. 158-161). In Chapter Seven, individual case studies and cross-case analyses are included to provide a thick description of my participants' English language trajectories and their identity dilemmas. A few information-rich cases are purposefully selected as key cases from my interview data to yield in-depth, nuanced understanding of the relations between development, equality and English language learning rather than to produce empirical generalizations from a sample to a large population. The English learning trajectory of Wei Ru, a Hezhe ethnic student, is explored in great detail as a deviant case to demonstrate how the hegemonic spread of English in China may prevent people from obtaining equitable development opportunities. Case studies in the research are based essentially on semi-structured interviews using the actual words of the subject and my field notes. Findings and conclusions of individual case studies

are triangulated with government documents and media texts to investigate each English learning trajectory within its real-life context.

In order to enhance the credibility of qualitative content analysis, two techniques are used: member checking and triangulation. First, member checks have been done both during the interview process and at the conclusion of the study. While conducting an interview, I summarized information and then question the participant to determine accuracy. After the interview, participants were given opportunities to review the raw data, the analyzed data, and reports to ensure that the research adequately and accurately represents their perspectives and experiences. Triangulation involves the use of multiple and different sources, methods and perspectives to illuminate the research problem and its outcomes. This study undertakes a multiple triangulation approach to examine policy documents, language textbooks, linguistic landscape and language learning trajectories relating to LLP for the Beijing Olympic Games. The technique enables to project a multi-facet, complex picture and produce in-depth, rich understanding of the phenomenon under study.

Both text and talk are subject to multiple interpretations. Shardakova and Pavlenko (2004) point out that “different interpretations of texts come from different combinations of the properties of the text and the social positioning and knowledge of its interpreters” (p. 30). Qualitative researchers, particularly CDA analysts, aim to be self-reflexive and politically aware. Nightingale & Cromby (1999, p. 228) suggest that “reflexivity requires an awareness of the researcher’s contribution to the construction of meanings throughout the research process, and an acknowledgment of the impossibility of remaining ‘outside of’ one’s subject matter while conducting research.” In analyzing data, I reflect upon the ways in which my own values, experiences, interests, beliefs, political commitments, and social identities have shaped the research. As the investigator of the research, I have multiple identities as a Chinese EFL learner, an English educator, an international student and a global citizen (See Section 1.1.2 for an account of my English learning trajectory and desire) which have informed the current research. As a Chinese EFL learner, I share the same experience of most English learners in China who has invested heavily in this language aspiring to native-like fluency and upward social mobility so that I am able to

understand the desire for English among the Chinese and their dilemmas in English language learning. As a university English teacher in China who had been involved with teaching English as a foreign language for several years, I know the current situation and potential problems of English language education and the linguistic market in China. As a sociolinguistic researcher working for a doctorate degree in Australia within a multilingual society, I intend to raise a critical awareness of the spread of English among Chinese English learners, educators and policy makers and suggest what lessons other countries can learn from China's experience. While conducting the research, I'm aware that the field of the current study is "inherently political and shaped by multiple ethical and political positions" (C. Nelson *et al.*, 1992, p. 2). Meanwhile, I acknowledge that my own critical interpretation is not free from political and ethical value and is also subject to critical scrutiny.

Overall, this thesis adopts a context-sensitive critical approach to English language learning and teaching practices and ideologies embedded in the massive identity construction project of the Beijing Olympics. By taking this approach, I hope to contribute to a richer understanding of identity studies in ELT and Olympic studies.

### **3.6 Ethical Considerations**

As a qualitative researcher with human participants, I gave serious thoughts to ethical issues. In order to ensure an ethically responsible qualitative research process, three ethical principles are crucial to the conduct of human research: "Beneficence," "Respect," and "Justice" (J. E. Sieber, 1988, p. 53). The study involved four categories of participants: university students as Olympic volunteers, taxi driver, English teachers, and BOCOG administrative staff who were involved in official Olympic English training. Four strategies were used to safeguard the informants' rights through processes of data collection, analysis and presentation in this study: informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, and non-traceability.



While conducting interviews and observations, informed consent was continuously sought. All participants received an information and consent form in their first language (see appendices 4-7, pp. 257-266) prior to interviewing or observation. Acknowledging that the informed consent process is “dynamic and continuous” (D. S. Madison, 2005, p. 114), I asked participants each time for their permission to conduct interviews or to make observations.. At the beginning of interviews or observations, participants were fully informed of the aims of the current research, the purpose of the recording, how the data is processed, stored, and deleted, and who has access to the data. Most importantly, participants were made aware that their participation was voluntary and that they had the right to withdraw at any time during the study.

The confidentiality, anonymity, and non-traceability of the participants will be protected before, during and after the research. Confidentiality refers to “control of access to information that has already been acquired” (D. S. Madison, 2005, p. 114). In order to ensure the confidentiality of data, any information concerning participants (interview and observation recordings, field notes, photography) can only be accessed by my supervisors and me as the researcher for the purpose of research. While the study was being conducted in Beijing, the data were securely stored in a locked briefcase with me. After the fieldwork was completed, the data were securely stored in a locked filing cabinet in my office at Macquarie University. All electronically stored data have been stored on a password-protected computer and back-up server. In order to protect the anonymity and non-traceability of participants in the study, pseudonyms were assigned to all participating individuals and institutions. Aspects of interviewees’ identities such as institutional affiliation, gender, age, residence, employment, and education background that could identify them, are not being disclosed in any written reports of the research and other forms of dissemination.

There is a particular ethical issue with regard to the political sensitivity of the Beijing Olympiad and BOCOG’s confidentiality policy. Some participants as Olympic volunteers and BOCOG staff were required to sign confidentiality agreements with BOCOG and thus could not accept interviews and observations before and at the time of the Games. In keeping with the spirit of “Beneficence,” “Respect,” and “Justice” (J. E. Sieber, 1988, p.

53), participants were approached with full understanding and respect. I always made adjustments according to participants' availability and avoided unnecessary risk or harm to them. Besides, the study was mutually beneficial to participants. I offered participants my personal English learning experience and advice for studying abroad, and I also assisted some participants with English translation.

### **3.7 Limitations of the Study**

Although multiple triangulation (multiple sources of data, multiple methods of data collection and analysis) was employed in order to capture multiple perspectives, several limitations of this study need to be addressed. To begin with, the sensitivity and confidentiality of information related to the Olympic Games is a special ethical issue for data collection in the current study. It was particularly difficult for me as an individual researcher to gain access to official or governmental organizations involved in English language training practices in the preparation of the Beijing Olympics. Thus, I was unable to conduct interviews with officials and policy makers in charge of the Beijing Olympic popularization campaign. Instead, publicly accessible government documents and media discourses were collected. Future research on policy-makers' ideologies of ELLT will shed light on the on-going social construction of English and identity in Chinese society.

Another limitation of the study lies in the sample size. As one of my data sources, interviews were conducted on 35 participants. Clearly, these interviewees in this study are unlikely to represent millions of Chinese people who have been devoting themselves to English language learning and teaching. However, as a form of qualitative research based on social constructionism, the study aims to capture multiple nuanced perspectives and voices and produce multiple interpretations from the field under study rather than provide a whole picture of a single phenomenon. In addition to my interview data, I also collected policy documents, media texts, signage, teaching materials and field notes for triangulation.

Thirdly, ethnography involves a long term investigation of a group or a culture that is based on immersion and participation in that group (J. E. Sieber, 1992, p. 18). Traditionally, the period of observation for a qualitative observational study has been from six months to two years or more (R. Constable *et al.*, 2005). For this study, I was not able to conduct a long-term ethnography in which wider observation and more intensive contact with participants could have been achieved. However, it is generally acceptable today to study groups for less than six months, provided that the researcher triangulates the research methods (D. M. Fetterman, 1989). Future longitudinal ethnographic study research based on long-term immersion and participation in various groups of Chinese EFL learners will profit the research tradition on English language teaching in China.

In the next chapter, I will look at the Beijing Olympic Games as language policy and planning context and discuss in detail the process and outcome of the Beijing Olympic English Popularization Campaign.

## **Chapter Four: The Olympic English Popularization Campaign**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter examines China's desire for English in the context of the Olympic English popularization campaign. The first section introduces Beijing's commitment to creating an ideal linguistic environment for the Games and its focus on English. In the next section, I explore the ways in which the Olympic English popularization campaign was carried out. Four aspects of the campaign are highlighted: the Beijing Speaks Foreign Languages Program (BSFLP); the Beijing English Testing System (BETS); the Official Language Training Services Suppliers of the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games, and English learning celebrities. The direct effects and outcomes of the campaign are discussed in the fourth section. Finally, I summarize the chapter by revisiting contested ideologies embedded in the campaign.

### **4.2 Beijing's Commitment: International Language Environment**

Beijing's successful bid for the 2008 Olympic Games gave the host city an opportunity for development with the preparations for the Olympics as its main content and characteristic. As it was only the third time that the Olympic Summer Games had been held in Asia, an early focus emerged on whether the "language environment" of the Olympic host city could stand the test of the Olympics and both local Olympic organizers and the IOC paid close attention.

The Beijing Organizing Committee of the Olympic Games (BOCOG) was charged with the planning and administration of the 2008 Games. In 2002, BOCOG released the *Beijing Olympic Action Plan* as "an overall guideline and general plan for the preparations of the 2008 Olympic Games" (BOCOG, 2002). As part of its overall strategic objectives, BOCOG pledged to stage "a best-ever Olympic Games in history" and hoped to run the 2008

Olympics in a manner that would not only promote “the modernization of Beijing as well as the rest of the country” but also create “a new image for Beijing” (BOCOG, 2002). This new image would position Beijing as an “international city” which is “developing rapidly and opening wider to the outside world” (BOCOG, 2002). Ji Lin (2009, p. 5), Executive Deputy Mayor of the Beijing Municipal Government, believed “a city’s international language environment reflects its levels of modernization and internationalization ... Persistent work at improving Beijing’s international language environment can contribute to the success of the Olympics and advance Beijing’s modernization.” With regard to the construction of Beijing’s “international language environment,” the *Beijing Olympic Action Plan* (BOCOG, 2002) stipulated three aspects as tasks of top priority: 1) the learning and popularization of foreign languages; 2) the promotion of the proper use of Putonghua and Standard Chinese characters; and, 3) the standardization of bilingual/multilingual guiding signs. Foreign language learning and popularization was seen as an essential element to create a language environment conducive to constructing the identity of Beijing as a successful Olympic host city by 2008, and a modernized international city in the long run. A comprehensive plan as below was formulated to promote the learning of foreign languages, predominantly English.

#### Foreign Language Learning and Popularization

The Organizing Committee of the “Beijing Speaks to the World” Program [The name of this program was changed to “the Beijing Speaks Foreign Languages Program” in 2002] will develop and implement the “Overall Plan for Citizens Speaking Foreign Languages (2003-2008)” before the end of 2002. The objective is to make most citizens capable of speaking one hundred sentences for everyday use in at least one foreign language by the end of 2007. Employees working in “window” industries, particularly those that may serve foreigners shall be more vigorously trained in foreign languages. Over a period time, rules shall be developed that will require employees to have a proficiency certificate before they can take up a job in certain industries or professions. Importance shall be attached to foreign language education in all schools, and measures shall be taken to improve the foreign language proficiency of all students. Programs that teach the relatively rare foreign languages should also be organized and given due emphasis.

The promotion and popularization of foreign languages will be strengthened. Newspapers, magazines, radio stations, TV stations and websites are all to increase foreign language programs or columns. The English-language paper Beijing Today, now a weekly publication, shall be published three times a week, starting from 2003, and it shall be made into a daily newspaper in 2005. The bilingual and multi-lingual programming capabilities at Beijing Radio and TV stations will be augmented. Beijing

Telecom will set up a telephone translation number to serve foreign language learners and people relying on foreign languages for most of their communications. (BOCOG, 2002)

Even though the Beijing Olympic organizers had made strong commitments to raise Beijing's overall foreign language level, the international community still held serious doubts about the 2008 Olympics being hosted by an Asian socialist country. A Xinhua Agency research project (Chinese international communication research center, 2006) revealed 47 percent of surveyed foreign journalists worried that the foreign language level of Beijing would be an obstacle for their work in the host city. IOC president Jacques Rogge was reported as saying that while he was confident that Beijing would stage a distinctive and best-ever Olympic Games in history, he expressed concern about the issues of qualified personnel and the language environment (Q. Hu, 2007). The concerns about providing an "international language environment" both at home and abroad gave foreign language learning and popularization in Beijing added urgency. In the following section I will explore the attempts to achieve such an "international language environment."

### **4.3 The Olympic English Popularization Campaign**

Creating an "international language environment" by improving the English level of citizens, establishing media coverage in English, and extending foreign-language services is obviously a complex and hugely challenging undertaking. In order to meet the challenge, BOCOG and the Beijing Municipal Government took four main measures, all of which can be described as top-down English popularization: first, the founding of the Beijing Speaks Foreign Languages Program (BSFLP); second, the launch of the Beijing English Testing System (BETS); third, the initiation of the Official Language Training Services Suppliers of the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games; and, fourth, the promotion of ELLT celebrities. I will describe each of these measures in detail in the following.

One characteristic that all of these measures shared is that they were part of a centralized administrative and management structure. The Olympic English popularization campaign

was organized in a hierarchical system with power flowing down from the top. To begin with, the Organizing Committee of the BSFLP is a quasi-governmental organization directly under the leadership of the Beijing Municipal Government. Since the launch of the BSFLP in 2002, the Organizing Committee have been in charge of formulating and imposing foreign language policies in various sectors and the administration of foreign language learning activities in various regions of Beijing (The Organizing Committee of the BSFLP, 2003). The Organizing Committee of the BSFLP liaised closely with other government departments, including the Beijing Education Examination Authority, in imposing English language testing in various trades and professions. BOCOG was responsible for the selection and appointment of the Official Language Training Services Suppliers. It also determined which ELLT celebrities could be enlisted as role models for Chinese learning English and command high media exposure. This governmental Olympic English popularization campaign was carried out on a scale never seen before in China. Ultimately, the campaign involved over 4,000 athletes, judges, BOCOG staff, 1.5 million Olympic volunteers, and several million Beijing residents in English language learning activities.

#### 4.3.1 The Beijing Speaks Foreign Languages Program (2002 onwards)

The Beijing Speaks Foreign Languages Program (BSFLP) was launched in 2002 as per *the Beijing Olympic Action Plan* and was one of the contractually agreed projects the Beijing Municipal Government had committed to. The BSFLP grew out of “the Citizens’ English-speaking program” which was initiated in 2000 as part of the bidding effort for the 2008 Olympic Games and the Program is still in process in the post-Olympic period with a renewed action plan. With the deputy mayor in charge of foreign affairs as the director and 18 districts and counties as members of the Organizing Committee, the BSFLP began in Beijing. The BSFLP Organizing Committee enlisted 35 domestic and foreign specialists from the United States, Britain and Singapore to form the consulting group. The aim of the BSFLP, as stated by Liu Yang, deputy director of the BSFLP Organizing Committee Office, was to “encourage Beijing inhabitants to learn and speak English and turn Beijing into the international city it was always supposed to be” (D. Stanway, 2008).

In 2003, the Organizing Committee of the BSFLP (2003) published its first five-year *Action Plan* (2003-2008) and determined comprehensive aims: the number of Beijing residents speaking foreign languages would rise to 5 million or 35 percent of the city's total population by 2008; bilingual signs would be standardized; the foreign language capabilities of key service industries would be upgraded significantly; foreign language service facilities would be systematized; foreign language service volunteers would be institutionalized, and thus a favorable international environment would be created for the Beijing 2008 Olympics. As I will discuss further below, the Organizing Committee set strict English language training and testing requirements for Beijing residents from different walks of life. Ordinary citizens<sup>2</sup>, service industry staff, and public servants were major target groups to be taught English and take English proficiency tests.

Achieving a foreign-language-speaking population of 5 million in Beijing was the focus of the work of the BSFLP by 2008. Although there was increased attention to teaching languages other than English in this program, the emphasis on teaching English to Beijing citizens had been intensified. It was held officially that to have a significant number of competent users of English in a whole range of professions, businesses, workplaces and enterprises was necessary for the success of the Beijing Olympic Games and the sustained development of the country in this age of globalization. As an active organizer and participant in the Olympic English popularization campaign, Sun Lin<sup>3</sup>, manager of language services for the marathon contest, confirmed in my interview that the Chinese government had made the largest investment into popularizing English rather than any other language. According to Sun, English enjoyed such a high status in China that the term “foreign language” had been usually equated with “English” in public discourses:

**Sun Lin:** (...) 嗯，大部分 [情况下] 比如说，我说的就是提高公众的外语水平，基本上就是指英语。在社区里头也是，然后包括我们的服务人员，比如说交通服务人员啊、银行服务人员啊，基本上都是 [学习] 英语的。其他的语种的比较少。像我吧，因为外语吧，英语大家还有一些底子，要是说法语呀、西班牙语呀用的机会不是特别多，而且底子也不好。

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<sup>2</sup> Ordinary citizens in Beijing refers to Beijing community residents in general.

<sup>3</sup> Pseudonyms are used for all participating individuals and institutions throughout this dissertation.



Sun Lin: (...) In most cases, for example, erm, when I say “improve public foreign language level”, I refer to English. It’s the same when I talk about foreign language learning of community residents and people in service sectors, erm, such as personnel in transportation sectors and banks, I mean learning English most of the time. In terms of foreign language, many Chinese learners like me have certain grounding in English. We don’t have many opportunities of using [other foreign languages such as] French and Spanish. In addition, we have poor knowledge about those languages. (19-09-2008)

The BSFLP Organizing Committee and relevant departments had made concerted efforts to raise English proficiency of Beijing citizens. Both school education and adult education were given equal stress. In the *Action Plan* the Organizing Committee (2003) proposed to implement Chinese-English bilingual teaching from early preschool education to tertiary education in Beijing. Since 2001, the teaching of English has been promoted nationwide to Grade 3 in primary schools in cities and townships in response to a policy statement issued by the Ministry of Education. In 2004, the Beijing Municipal Education Commission (2004) issued a work plan to further lower the threshold of Beijing’s compulsory English education to Grade 1 in primary schools. English has been adopted as a compulsory school subject at all levels of education in Beijing. In addition to school education, the Organizing Committee integrated various social resources in popularizing English. They encouraged collaborations between tertiary institutions, language training institutions, translation companies and foreign organizations to conduct various forms of foreign language training for Beijing citizens. According to official statistics (The Official Website of the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games, 2007c), the BSFLP involved more than one million Beijingers in various English language learning activities before the 2008 Olympic Games, including free community lectures, training courses, TV contests, park festivals, foreign film screenings, and computer-assisted autonomous study. By the end of 2007, the Organizing Committee of BSFLP had established a volunteer team and organized six English language park festivals, 701 community-level English training centers and 433 community English corners where local residents practiced English with one another (S. Deng, 2009; D. Stanway, 2008). Many TV contests of the BSFLP including “Contest on Residents’ Daily English,” “Chinese Sing Foreign Songs Contest” and “Business English Contest” were held between 2002 and 2008 (L. Zhang, 2009). Foreign language learning books including *Beijing Residents English Speaking Handbook*, *100 English Sentences for Beijingers* and *300*

*English Sentences for Beijingers* were published during this preparation period. The Organizing Committee also made concerted efforts with Beijing universities and the media to expand the circulation of English newspapers and periodicals.

Another focus of the BSFLP work was on improving general English proficiency of public servants and service sector employees in Beijing. Respective plans and objectives were formulated in various government departments and service industries to ensure “obstacle-free” English language services for the Beijing Olympics. For examples, local civil servants were requested to take the lead in grasping common conversational English and basic business English within three years (2003-2006). According to related regulations of the BSFLP (S. Deng, 2009; The Organizing Committee of the BSFLP, 2003), civil servants under 40 years old with bachelors’ degrees or higher education backgrounds should be able to speak at least 300 English sentences, and were expected to be able to basically communicate and work in English by 2008. Other officials with lower educational degrees were required to be able to speak 100 commonly used English sentences. The BSFLP Organizing Committee claimed this objective was achieved and more than 60,000 civil servants had passed relative English proficiency tests by 2006 (The Official Website of the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games, 2007c). In service industries, great importance was accorded to “employees working in “window industries” (those that may serve foreigners)”, such as policemen, taxi drivers, bus drivers and attendants, subway staff, hotel workers, and employees in commerce sectors (The Organizing Committee of the BSFLP, 2003). For instance, *the Action Plan for the BSFLP* (2003-2008) aimed to train 80 percent of Beijing’s 90,000 taxi drivers to pass the test of “100 English Sentences for Beijing Taxi Drivers;” all bus drivers and attendants to pass the test of “100 English Sentences for Bus attendants;” and 80 percent of subway employees to pass the test of “300 English Sentences for Passenger Service Workers” before the Beijing Olympics. According to *Beijing Daily* (X. Jia, 2007), a more stringent policy was to require over 90,000 Beijing taxi drivers to pass an English proficiency test to keep their driver’s license. Those who didn’t pass the English examination at the end of their training might not be allowed to work during the Games. Learning English became part of the daily routine for Beijing public servants and service sector employees in their preparation for the 2008 Olympic Games, and more importantly,

became a central aspect of their job security. English proficiency thus emerged as being closely tied to occupational and economic utility in the Beijing Olympic context.

In addition to improving English proficiency, English standardization was another important theme of the BSFLP. Beijing took the lead nationwide in standardizing English-language traffic signs and tourism and commercial notices, as well as signs at cultural sites, medical treatment facilities, stadiums and other public places, creating local standards for English translations of public signs, organization names, professional titles, restaurant menus, service facilities, and more. A system to report “Chinglish” was developed under the leadership of the BSFLP Organizing Committee. Bilingual/multilingual tourist websites and information hotlines were all required to be improved to service foreign visitors. At least 830,000 non-standard English signs in public sites were replaced with standardized ones as part of the city’s preparations and English menus in 1,300 restaurants and catering enterprises located on main roads were standardized (The Foreign Affairs Office of the Beijing Municipal Government, 2008b). As I will elaborate in greater detail in Chapter Five, the bilingual signage standardization campaign sought to eliminate “Chinglish.”

Rules and regulations are the most commonly used devices by those in authority that directly affect and create de facto language practices and thereby turn ideology into practice, in private as well as in public domains (E. G. Shohamy, 2006, p. 59). In the Olympic English campaign, the BSFLP was the language policy making and enforcing mechanism used by the authority to maximize its control over language behaviors by enforcing rules and regulations on language learning and use. I argue that by imposing strict English training and testing requirements on Beijing residents, especially personnel in service sectors, the BSFLP perpetuated the supremacy and power of English and consequently served to excluding those who do not have a required English proficiency in accessing equal social rights.

#### 4.3.2 The Beijing English Testing System (2006 onwards)

Beijing’s Olympic English popularization campaign was pushed even further by the launch of the Beijing English Testing System (BETS) in 2006. The BETS was cooperatively launched

by the Organizing Committee of BSFLP, the Foreign Affairs Office of the Beijing Municipal People's Government and Cambridge ESOL, and practically organized by the Beijing Education Examination Authority. The administrative department of the BETS, the Beijing Education Examination Authority, stated that the exam was a major measure of the Beijing Municipal Government to "prompt local residents to learn and speak English and improve Beijing's image as an international metropolis in preparation for the upcoming 29th Olympic Games in Beijing" (Z. Yan, 2006). All Beijing residents who live and work in Beijing, regardless of their age, gender, profession, schooling background, nationality and residence, were called on to enroll in this examination (ibid.).

The BETS is divided into three levels, namely BETS-1, BETS-2 and BETS-3 to test local residents' abilities to listen, speak, read and write in English. The test has been conducted twice a year in Beijing since 2006 and continues to be offered in the post-Olympic period. Beijing residents passing the BETS can obtain two certificates per level jointly issued by the Organizing Committee of the BSFLP, the Foreign Affairs Office, the ESOL Examinations of Cambridge Assessment and Beijing Education Examinations Authority and a badge saying "I can speak English" (L. Zhang, 2009). The Organizing Committee of the BSFLP encouraged Beijing citizens to wear this badge so as to serve foreign visitors better. The Beijing Education Examination Authority asserts that the two certificates can be used as internationally recognized references both for Chinese government departments and businesses to recruit employees and for Beijingers to prove their English proficiency when they apply to study abroad (Z. Yan, 2006).

The BETS certificate has in fact not been as internationally recognized as the Chinese authority initially asserted. However, it has become the key to a host of opportunities in Beijing, such as Olympic volunteer recruitment, career opportunities in public or private sectors, eligibility for professional promotion, and government-sponsored studying abroad programs. The BETS is popular with Beijing English learners, especially those who work in the service sector including the public security, transportation, sanitation, postal, local taxation and banking industries. Foreign affairs offices of districts and counties promote the BETS on governmental websites and posters. In preparation for the Olympics, the Beijing

Municipal Government (2007a) required 2 percent of service sector personnel to pass BETS-1 in 2007. Approved by the Beijing Municipal Government (The Foreign Affairs Office of the Beijing Municipal Government, 2007c), the BETS has been incorporated into Beijing's existing vocational qualification system serving as a gatekeeper of professional accession and promotion. Major local government departments and enterprises such as the Beijing Health Bureau, Beijing Post Office, China National Offshore Oil Corp., have all adopted the BETS into their human resource training system (Cambridge ESOL, 2010). In these departments and enterprises, employees who hold a BETS certificate will be enlisted into a talent pool of personnel given priority in professional promotion and studying abroad programs. The BETS has also been incorporated into the curriculum system of Beijing Olympic model schools such as Beijing No. 65 Middle School and Beijing No. 25 Middle School (Cambridge ESOL, 2010). By the end of 2009, the BETS had been held eight times and 42,851 people had taken the test (L. Zhang, 2009, p. 21).

Shohamy (2006, p. 93) contends that language tests are a powerful mechanism of manipulating language and creating de facto language policies, especially in terms of deciding the priority of specific languages in society and education. The testing in specific languages contains a direct message from policy makers about "language priorities and the marginalization of other languages" (ibid., p. 106). Test takers are usually not aware of the effects of tests in imposing de facto language policies and perpetuating ideological agendas of those in power and therefore tend to comply with decisions made through the tests (ibid., pp. 93, 106). Hence, I argue that by incorporating the BETS into Beijing's existing vocational qualification system and school curricula the Beijing Municipal Government intentionally used this language test as a powerful language policy device to manipulate language realities by diverting the focus of learning to English and perpetuating the power of English while homogenizing and suppressing language diversity. After the Games, as a continuing government project, the BETS is being pushed further into more fields to involve more Beijing citizens in learning English. Given the power of the BETS and other English proficiency tests, the supremacy of English over other foreign languages in Beijing is to be maintained.

### 4.3.3 Official Language Training Services Suppliers

The initiation of the Official Language Training Services Suppliers of the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games was another important part of the Olympic English popularization campaign and aimed at the provision of specialized English training for professionals directly involved in the 2008 Olympics. In March 2007, the last year running up to the Beijing Olympics, EF English First Co., Ltd. (EF) and Aifly Education & Technology Co., Ltd. (Aifly) were selected as Official Language Training Services Suppliers of the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games. EF has sponsored several major international sporting events in the past including the Seoul 1988 Olympic Games (English First, 2011a). However, the Beijing 2008 Olympics marked the first time that “language training services supplier” was officially considered as an independent sponsorship category in the Olympic history. The Beijing Olympic Committee proclaimed that the initiation of the new sponsorship category was “one of the most important decisions in ensuring the success of the Beijing Olympics” (Aifly Education Technology Company, 2008). Bill Fisher, CEO of EF, asserted “[t]he Olympics are a great chance for China to start talking to the world, and English is the tool for making it” (The Official Website of the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games, 2007b). In language training services, English was given added utility and symbolic value as it was tied to the Olympic success.

From a business perspective, the introduction of the “language training services supplier” category was a win-win strategy for both BOCOG and the successful bidders. By selling the sponsorship right of the Beijing Olympic Games, BOCOG was able to not only appoint professional English training institutions to deliver its massive English training campaign but also earn an entry price of 16 million yuan from each language services supplier (The Official Website of the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games, 2005a). Actual bidding prices were much higher. In return, EF and Aifly received benefits such as the right to use the emblem and logo of the Beijing Olympics and BOCOG in their advertising and marketing, priority in advertising on TV and outdoors at the time of the Games, and priority in sponsoring Olympics-themed cultural activities and the torch relay. Both EF and Aifly used a series of marketing techniques to maximize their sponsorship. Although it is difficult to make a quantitative analysis of the benefits that the Olympics brought to suppliers, the enhancement of brand image and reputation of suppliers is immeasurable. Obviously, for EF and Aifly,

winning the sponsorship gave them a substantial edge in competing with their 50,000 counterparts in the English language teaching business for a larger share of the multi-billion dollar English training industry in China. I will now describe these two official language services suppliers in more detail.

#### *4.3.3.1 EF English First: “Native speaker superiority”*

Founded by Bertil Hult in 1965 in Switzerland, EF Education First is currently the largest private education company in the world (English First, 2010a). EF English First is a subsidiary of EF Education First that specializes in English language training, educational travel, and cultural exchange. EF English First (EF) entered China in 1994 as the first foreign private language school. In the 1990s, the English training market in China was monopolized by domestic English language schools led by big names such as *New Oriental* and Li Yang’s *Crazy English*. Targeting high-end clients, EF didn’t achieve significant market penetration in China when it first entered the market. Nonetheless, with an influx of foreign language schools spearheaded by EF since the 1990s, “native teacher” has quickly become the buzzword for the English training market in China. With the continuous growth of foreign language schools, the ideology of “native speaker superiority” has been explicitly stated and extensively publicized by foreign language schools on their websites, advertisements and promotional materials (See Section 5.4.3 for further details). Meanwhile, Kirkpatrick (2000) additionally observed a strong preference for “native speaker standard” held by the Chinese Ministry of Education and Chinese professionals in ELT.

In 2007, English First (2007) was entrusted with the task of providing English training services to 100 athletes, 120 Chinese competition judges, 250 translators and interpreters, 300 venue staff, and over 4,000 BOCOG staff. English First (ibid.) asserted that the aim of its Olympic English training program was to prepare their clients with “adequate English skills to act more effectively as Olympic hosts.” Because EF targeted high-end clients involved with the management of the Beijing Olympics, my interviewees as Olympic volunteers didn’t get access to EF English training.

EF's successful bid for its role as official language training services supplier of the Beijing Olympic Games demonstrates the acceptance of the idea of "native speaker superiority" by the Chinese government and professionals in reference to English language teaching. In the bid, EF defeated major competitors including China's largest private English education provider, *New Oriental*, and another well-known foreign private English education provider, *Wall Street English School*. English First (2007) claimed that its competitive advantages over other language training providers in the bid for the Olympic language training services supplier role relied on its past experience as the sponsor of several major international sporting events and customized training programs built based on its "EnglishTown system," which has "differentiated EF from other language training providers and has made EF the industry leader. In EF's advertising discourses, the ideologies of internationalism, professionalism and native speaker superiority were used by EF as their unique selling proposition.



Figure 3: EF's EnglishTown System. Retrieved March 31, 2011 from <http://www.ef.com.cn/englishfirst/englishstudy/olympics.aspx?lng=en3>

"The EnglishTown System" combines teacher-led classes with online "iLab" sessions and the chance to practice English socially in its "Life Club" (English First, 2007). Based on this system, English First (2008a) carried out its Olympic English training programs, including a 3-month intensive training camp, 3,000 online training courses, 200 English learning workshops, and other interactive activities such as a speech competition and the "Life Club" during the year after its successful bid. What

"the EnglishTown system" vigorously promotes, as the slogans and images in an illustration on EF's website (see Figure 3) clearly show, is an English immersion program enabling Chinese learners to learn and practice communication with, chiefly, if not exclusively, White "native teachers." Furthermore, English First (2011c)



asserts on its website: “All our native teachers are qualified to teach English...With weekly training we believe our teachers are the best in China.” The assumed “superiority” of “native-speaker” over “non-native speaker” in EF’s discourse reinforces a narrow definition of pedagogical expertise, one in which a great deal of prestige is given to native-like pronunciation and fluency. In this way, “native speakers” are discursively constructed as “best English teachers” who hold the position of authority. Clamorously advocating the “native speaker superiority,” English First (2010b) advertises itself as “the world’s leading English expert.”

In addition to “native speaker superiority,” EF vigorously promotes “the alchemy of English” (B. B. Kachru, 1986) in its advertising discourses. The term “alchemy” captures the attitudes to the status and functions of English in EF’s discourses well. In EF’s official self-introductory film, competence in English signifies “an added potential for material and social gain and advantage” (ibid., p. 1).

英语打开机会的大门，提供交际的机会，带你走向成功。全球有超过 20 亿的人正在应用英语进行交际。决胜职场、留学海外、轻松开拓新生活。

English is the key to the door of opportunities. English proficiency offers opportunity for intercultural exchanges and leads you to success. There are 2 billion people communicating in English. English helps you win in the job market, study abroad, and create a new life easily. (English First, 2008b [my translation])

The brand effect of the Olympics helped EF rapidly occupy the high-end market and to develop into one of the largest and most recognized English training brands in China. Since EF’s cooperation with BOCOG, many major companies such as Beijing Daily, Lenovo, CNOOC, Huatai Insurance, Huawei, FedEx, and McDonalds also selected EF as their preferred English training service provider (English First, 2010c). In the year of 2007, EF opened 20 new schools across China at the speed of one school every three weeks. By 2008, EF had established 100 English training schools in more than 50 cities throughout mainland China with over 1,000 English teachers and 1,000 administrative personnel (English First, 2007). The 2008 Beijing Olympic sponsorship became a touchstone for EF’s booming business in the highly competitive English training market in China.

After the Beijing Olympics, EF has more proactively participated in its sport sponsorship. In 2009, EF was appointed as the only official language services supplier for the 2010 Guangzhou Asian Games and assisted the Organizing Committee (GAGOC) in training over 60,000 volunteers and GAGOC staff in the run-up to that sport event (English First, 2009b). In the same year, the Brazilian government announced that EF was selected as the official provider of language courses for the “Olá, Turista” (*Hello, Tourist*) project to train approximately 80,000 tourism trade professionals for the 2014 World Cup to be hosted in Brazil (English First, 2009a). Most recently, EF has been appointed as Official Supplier to the XXII Olympic and XI Paralympic Winter Games in Sochi, Russia, in 2014, in the category of “Language Training Services” (English First, 2011b). The company’s role as Olympic language training services supplier has quickly expanded. Almost 1,000 days before the opening of the Sochi 2014 Olympic Winter Games, EF’s English training will begin for almost 70,000 participants, including volunteers and employees of the Sochi 2014 Organizing Committee and professionals such as clerks, receptionists, waiters, tour guides, cabdrivers and phone operators (ibid.). This massive English training program demonstrates “an enormous desire in Russia to learn English—the global lingua franca” (ibid.), as Philip Hult, EF CEO, stated. Just like China as an Olympic host country in the so-called “Expanding Circle,” Russia also desires the Olympic Games and English for the same reason: as an expression of development, modernity, internationalization, progress, prestige, etc. EF’s sponsorship history has deepened the connection between English and sport. In the globalization era, through sponsorship of English training institutions, international sporting events of ever-increasing size and participants have greatly accelerated the global spread of English and further strengthened the dominance of English.

#### *4.3.3.2 Aifly: the Crazy English method*

In contrast to EF, Aifly is a domestic English training provider. Aifly Education & Technology Co. (Aifly) was co-founded in 1997 by Huaqi Information Digital Technology Co., Ltd., a leading Chinese digital product group company, and Li Yang Culture & Education Development Co., Ltd., one of China’s most well-known private English training

providers. In contrast to EF which uses the ideologies of internationalism, professionalism and native speaker superiority as their unique selling proposition, Aifly draws on Li Yang's Crazy English teaching methods and teaching force. University students who constituted the main body of Olympic volunteers were the most important potential clients for many private language schools. Consequently, the realm of official language training sponsorship became a battlefield for Aifly and other bidders. The founding of Aifly itself was directly related to the Beijing Olympic Games. The past experience of Li Yang Crazy English School in delivering mass English lectures helped Aifly stand successful in the bid for the official Olympic language services supplier. In March 2007, Aifly was entrusted by BOCOG with providing English training for 100,000 Olympic volunteers in Beijing and co-host cities at the time of the Games. It wasn't until the Olympic volunteer recruitment plan was finalized by BOCOG at the end of 2007 that Aifly was able to launch its English training program. Given the limited time, scale, and complexity of the training program, Aifly created a multimodal library to support traditional one-on-one interaction, small group classes, intensive Crazy English training camps, online Aiflyworld programs, television learning programs, and exchange programs (Aifly Education Technology Company, 2008). Although providing English language training to an enormous number of Olympic volunteers within a year seemed mission impossible for all English education providers, Aifly claimed they fulfilled this mission successfully (Aifly Education Technology Company, 2008).



Figure 4: Crazy English mass lecture in the Forbidden City. Retrieved March 31, 2011 from <http://www.ywenglish.com/disnews.asp?id=17>

Aifly's language training services are based on Li Yang's Crazy English method.

Significantly, the patriotic theme runs through the Crazy English method (see Section

4.3.4.1 for a detailed discussion on the patriotic theme in the Crazy English method). Such patriotism was in total conformity with the socio-politics of the Beijing Olympics: to foster patriotism among Chinese citizens and promote Chinese culture through English. With proactive support from the Chinese government, Aifly was granted the permission to teach English to gatherings as large as 30,000 at historically and politically significant locations such as the National Stadium, the Forbidden City (see Figure 4, p. 103), the Marco Polo Bridge, and the Great Wall (A. R. Woodward, 2008, p. 54). The government also permitted Aifly to broadcast and publish the Crazy English method and its theories in lectures, in books, and online. Aifly's clients include officials in government departments and sport associations, soldiers of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA), and Olympic volunteers and employers in enterprises and companies, as well as school and university students. Before the Beijing Olympics, Aifly had been invited to give mass English lectures to 78 government departments, committees, bureaus and offices including the Ministry of Water Resources of the People's Republic of China, *China Daily*, Lenovo, Bank of China, China Mobile, China Airline, Beijing Capital International Airport, General Administration of Sport of China, national sports teams and the volunteers of the Eleventh World Championship of Woman's Softball (Aifly Education Technology Company, 2007a).

Ideologically, English was equated with “*the international language*” and always associated with “the power of alchemy” (B. B. Kachru, 1986) in Aifly's discourses. A good example can be found in the speech of Nathaniel Jones, CEO of Aifly, given at the press conference announcing the language training services suppliers of the Beijing Olympic Games:

The Olympic Games are a chance for China to communicate the friendliness and hospitality of Chinese people to the world and learning to communicate that message in *a visitor's native language* will make all the difference. For Aifly this is an unparalleled opportunity and responsibility for us to achieve our goal – *Making English language training accessible, enjoyable, and life changing for everyone in China*. (The Official Website of the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games, 2007a [italics added])

The speech makes a number of assumptions, including that China's communication “to the world” takes place with visitors whose “native language” is English, and if Chinese learners grasp the visitors' “native language” they obtain “life changing” capital equally accessible for everyone. In addition, the speech implies that English learning experience with Aifly is

not a story of hardship but enjoyment. It is not difficult to imagine how such a remark could whip up intense desire for English competence among many Olympic volunteers who aspired to a better life while serving their country. The intersection between patriotism, the acquisition of symbolic capital, and English learning did not only play out in the discourses of official language training services supplier *Aifly* but also in the use of ELLT celebrities in the Olympic English popularization campaign. In the following section, I will examine two of those ELLT celebrities, *Aifly* founder and guru Li Yang and Policeman Liu Wenli.

#### 4.3.4 ELLT celebrities: Patriotism and symbolic capital

In addition to the official English popularization campaign, the celebrity effects of officially-endorsed model English learners was another important and influential factor in the spread of English in Beijing and the rest of the country. The way in which people acquire social values and behaviors from celebrities is a concern of mass media research. As a mass-media phenomenon, celebrities are created by the media and dependent on public attention (B. P. Fraser & W. J. Brown, 2002). On the other hand, celebrities have enormous social influence. In media-saturated countries “celebrity” and “success” have become virtually synonymous; and thus celebrities often become role models “whose values, beliefs, and behavior are likely to be adopted by others within their sphere of influence” (ibid.). Previous studies (e.g., A. Bandura, 1986; M. D. Basil, 1996; B. P. Fraser & W. J. Brown, 2002) have suggested that identification is a mediator of celebrity effects.

Identification is the process of social influence by which individuals adopt the values and behaviors of a celebrity (B. P. Fraser & W. J. Brown, 2002, p. 187). Bandura (1986) found that a person who identifies with a celebrity is more likely to adopt behaviors that are displayed by the celebrity. In this section, I’d like to borrow the concept of “celebrity” to explain how celebrity identification has led Chinese people to identify with a celebrity’s perceived values and copy his/her language learning behaviors.

Just as proficiency in English is perceived as a cornerstone of further development for the nation, so it is seen as a valuable asset to individuals. The English fever phenomenon in China gave rise to many celebrities who played an exemplary role in English language

learning and teaching (ELLT). In this research, “ELLT celebrities” refers to ordinary Chinese citizens who were made famous because of their English language learning achievements and who became widely-recognized English language learning role-models through high exposure in the mass media. When the preparation for the Beijing Olympics was fully under way, two Chinese English learners were accorded the role of official English language learning role models and given celebrity status by extensive media attention: the founder of *Crazy English* Li Yang and multilingual policeman Liu Wenli. Through the ubiquitous reach of radio, television, print media, and the Internet, both of the two have gained legions of followers. Their “success stories” were widely publicized in the media, and were used as a tool to further motivate the Chinese people to learn English. As I will discuss below, both Li Yang and Liu Wenli also benefited from the Olympic English popularization campaign, successfully converting the symbolic capital of English into social and economic capitals in their lives.

#### 4.3.4.1 *Crazy English* founder Li Yang

Li Yang, founder of *Crazy English*, a popular but highly controversial English learning method in China (and also one of the two Official Language Training Services Suppliers; see Section 4.3.3 above), had been an ELLT celebrity long before the Beijing Olympic Games. As a successful English learner and English training magnate in China, he probably tops the list of Chinese English language learning celebrities and has exerted tremendous influence on Chinese English language learning practices and desires. Born in 1969, Li Yang studied for a mechanical engineering major in Lanzhou University when he was confronted with the need to pass college English tests. That motivated him to develop what he called “a language cracking system” – *Crazy English* (“Li Yang”, 2007). It took Li Yang only a few years to give up mechanical engineering and turn his radical method into one of China’s most well-known brands of English training and a multi-million Yuan business. The Crazy English method relies on three core principles: “speak as loudly as possible,” “speak as quickly as possible” and “speak as clearly as possible” (K. Bolton, 2002, p. 195). In Crazy English lectures, Li Yang encourages students to shout out motivational English expressions loudly, quickly and repeatedly with hand gestures that are supposed to stress the

pronunciation. Central to the Crazy English method is the belief that these practices are instrumental in breaking down a common barrier faced by Chinese learners of English, namely, their fear of “losing face,” a self-perceived obstacle of Chinese EFL learners in communication with “native English speakers” (A. R. Woodward, 2008, p. 28). “This is a new method for Asian people, who are shy and introverted,” Li Yang proclaimed, “my method can give people confidence very quickly. I try to simplify English for common people. I became an idol and a celebrity for Chinese young people because of this content” (S. Gallagher, 2009). In many of his public appearances, Li Yang speaks about his own earlier difficulties in mastering English, urging his devotees to follow his example of self-improvement, and exhorting his audiences to engage in mass recitations of English slogans such as “I enjoy losing face!”, “Welcome setbacks!”, “Relish suffering!” and “Seek success!” (K. Bolton, 2002, p. 195). In a radio broadcast that occurs at the beginning of a Chinese documentary film about *Crazy English* produced and directed by Zhang Yuan, Li Yang explains his theories of success as follows:

Hello everybody! My name is Li Yang. This probably sounds strange. People have asked if I’ve fabricated my hardships. My parents, classmates and teacher will testify that I lacked confidence. I didn’t know where to end up. I had an inferiority complex, felt ignorant. I didn’t feel capable of anything. I was always telling myself to be determined: I’ll start tomorrow! I’ll start tomorrow! Everyone wants to succeed, I want to serve as an example. My Crazy English consists of many philosophies of life and success... Money is no longer a problem. In one day, I could make 20 to 30 grand, 30 to 40 grand. That time is past. I’ve moved onto another stage. Once I’ve accomplished something, it becomes dull. I think I’ve found a bigger goal. To tell thousands of people about my process of struggle. Everyone needs to do his work well. Because Chinese people lack confidence. Chinese people need to put their noses to the grindstone. (Excerpt of Li Yang's self-introduction in English as cited in K. Bolton, 2002, p. 195).

Styling himself as a conqueror, Li Yang tries to create a connection between his own success story and his audience’s desires and ambitions. In this archetypal story of personal achievement he transformed himself from a nobody who “lacked confidence,” “had an inferiority complex” and “didn’t feel capable of anything” to a somebody for whom “money is no longer a problem” and, indeed, no longer even of significance as he is now pursuing “a bigger goal” beyond monetary gain. In his message, the value of English as an inherent aspect of success and self-transformation is highlighted and taken for granted. In Li Yang’s lectures English becomes some sort of magic wand that will allow devotees to achieve

successes that would normally be considered out of the reach of average Chinese people, such as “making money internationally.” In a lecture to Tsinghua University students, for instance, he told the audience that it is possible to earn USD 30,000 per hour teaching English in Japan in companies such as Sony (K. Bolton, 2002). In Li’s discourse, English proficiency is always tied up with accomplishment, self-confidence, self-value, pleasure, money, and success. Through encouraging self-confidence and promising material rewards through its rags-to-riches narrative, the Crazy English method aroused intense English desire among millions of Chinese learners. Despite the rhetoric, the pedagogical success of the method has been questioned as discussed in Section 4.3.3.2 (see also Woodward, 2008).



Figure 5: Poster for Li Yang Crazy English. Retrieved on March 31, 2011 from <http://www.bjcrazyenglish.com/>

Compared with other ELLT celebrities, Li Yang claims that he has “moved to another stage” with regard to the promotion of English learning where English language learning has become not only a means of self-transformation but also a facet of Chinese patriotism. The *Crazy English* philosophy contains “a sharp and focused nationalism” (K. Bolton, 2002, p. 196), which can be captured in Li Yang’s personal motto: “激发爱国主义热情，弘扬民族精神；攻克英语，振兴中华 (stimulating patriotism, advocating national spirits, conquering English, revitalizing China)” (Wikipedia, 2009). Li Yang believes that English learning is a most important step to raise China to the position of a global power. Li’s books, which sell in the millions across China, always contain patriotic slogans (see Figure 5 above) such as “Conquer English to make China stronger!” “Help 300 million Chinese



speak good English” and “Make the voice of China be widely heard throughout the world” (S. Gallagher, 2009). “I want [the Chinese] to use English and spread Chinese as a world language.... Mastering English and therefore enriching our country is an act of patriotism” (Yamane, 2005 cited in A. R. Woodward, 2008, p. 34).

The ideology of the Crazy English philosophy that advocates learning English for national benefits is rooted in the slogan of the Self Strengthening Movement (1860s to 1890s): “师夷长技以制夷 *Shiyi changji yi zhiyi* (learning advanced technologies from Western barbarians in order to fight against them)” (see Section 2.4.2, Chapter Two). Li alludes to this slogan in his own lectures, in which he often urges students to go abroad to learn from America and the West and bring that knowledge and experience back to serve China. As such Li Yang’s *Crazy English* philosophy fits in neatly with a dichotomy that has long undergirded English language learning and teaching in China, as pointed out in Chapter Two: English for *yong* (external utility) and Chinese for *ti* (internal essence).

Li Yang’s *Crazy English* philosophy fits well with the socio-politics of the Beijing Olympics and propelled him to enormous prominence in the Games. In 2005, the General Administration of Sport of China appointed Li Yang as “General Coach of National Team Athletes”. In the next year, he was appointed as “Olympic Ambassador” as well as the “General Coach of 1.5 million Olympics Volunteers” by BOCOG and as an expert consultant by the Olympic training working group of the Beijing Municipal Government. As the general coach of Olympic volunteers and founder of the *Crazy English* movement, Li Yang was described as a patriotic teacher. In one of Li’s mass English lectures before the Olympics, over 20,000 college students were exhilarated in reciting repeatedly after him, “I will make my country proud!” (Aifly Education Technology Company, 2007b). Through active cooperation with the Beijing Olympic organizers, Li Yang’s status as an ELLT celebrity was increasingly elevated, and his philosophy in English language teaching gained legitimacy. Rising from ordinary person to social hero, he became the fulfillment of his story of personal self-transformation through English. For millions of Beijingers and Chinese who identified with Li Yang, learning English was as an act of patriotism for the success of the 2008 Olympics and the development of the Chinese nation. Li Yang’s

celebrity effect not only contributed to the swift expansion of his own English teaching business, but also heightened the symbolic meaning of the English language in China as a valuable asset, which consequently aroused a growing desire for English.

#### *4.3.4.2 Multilingual policeman Liu Wenli*

In contrast to Li Yang, who had long been a celebrity in China before the Beijing Olympics, police officer Liu Wenli who taught himself 13 foreign languages in preparation for the Games, was more of an instant English learning celebrity whose fame was directly embedded in China's Olympic English fever. Born in 1967, Liu Wenli, a policeman in Beijing, started to learn English in the 1990s when he was a support service worker in a Beijing suburban police office. In 1995, the United Nations convened the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. Liu Wenli worked at the forefront of public security during the conference. A failed cross-cultural encounter motivated him to learn English and become "the first English-speaking policeman" (X. Li, 2008). As an adult English learner with only high-school education, Liu Wenli taught himself English through rote-memorizing English words and expressions, practicing English with other Chinese learners in English corners<sup>4</sup>, and striking up conversations with every foreigner he met on the streets (ibid.). Liu believes that "repetition" is best method of foreign language learning: "There is no smarter way than repetition in language study. I've been doing just that for the past 13 years" (J. Cao, 2008).

Beijing's successful Olympic bid in 2001 set off an upsurge of English learning in various sectors in the capital city of China. After 6 years of assiduous study, Liu's English proficiency was greatly improved. In 2001, Beijing Municipal Public Security Bureau held an oral English contest to promote English learning. Liu Wenli, who was still a support service worker in a Beijing suburban police office at that time, won the contest. Soon after this, Liu was set up as an official model of English learning (see Figure 6) and was

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<sup>4</sup> The phrase "English corner" commonly refers to a public location in China where Chinese English learners regularly gather together to improve their oral English skills. On the English corner day, some popular English corners are often visited by hundreds of students and professionals. Some people can be seen giving speeches in English or leading open discussions.



Figure 6: The banner reads: Be devoted to public welfare and the Olympics; Set up a fine model of learning English. Retrieved on March 20, 2010 from <http://bjliuwenli.blog.sohu.com>

dispatched to an important tourist destination in downtown Beijing in 2002. Liu described himself in a television interview as a “窗口岗位的窗口警察 (a model policeman at a model service post)” whose duty was to present Beijing’s new image rather than catching criminals (BTV, 2008).

The promotion made Liu Wenli realize the material and symbolic value of foreign language learning in China in the context of the Beijing Olympics. Hence, Liu continued to learn French, German and another ten foreign languages at various levels. Famous for his language abilities, Policeman Liu was selected by BOCOG as a two-time Olympic torchbearer in the 2004 Athens Olympic torch relay and the 2008 Beijing Olympic torch relay. The success story of Policeman Liu was widely publicized by many foreign and domestic media on TV, radio and newspaper, including the BBC, CNN, Reuters, NHK, CCTV, BTV, China Radio International, China Daily and the People’s Daily. Many mainstream Internet media like Sina, Sohu, 163.com and CCTV.com all created official blogs for Policeman Liu. In some media reports, Liu was discursively constructed as a civilian hero, someone known for great acts of courage or outstanding accomplishments with great moral virtue: for example, “Linguist police officer,” “English expert,” “a man of Self-discipline and perseverance.”

Although Policeman Liu had not accumulated wealth in the form of an English teaching empire as Li Yang had, he was very conscious of the symbolic capital of English and his own celebrity status in China’s English training market. In an interview, Liu told *Wuhan Evening Newspaper* (X. Li, 2008) that there were enormous business opportunities available to him.

记者：会 13 国外语，有没有给您带来什么物质上的收益？

Reporter: Has grasping 13 foreign languages brought you any material benefits?

刘文立：目前还没有。我出名以后，曾经有一个英语学习机厂家找我，要我给他们代言，我只要对着镜头说一句：“我刘文立英语这么好，多亏了某某学习机。”十几万就到手了，不过我拒绝了，因为我现在还是警察，不能做这事。可是再过6年，我就可以搞商业开发了。

Liu Wenli: No, it hasn't. After I became famous, I was invited to be the spokesman of an English-learning electronic product. All that I was required to say for the payment of tens of thousand yuan was one line: "Thanks to xxx English-learning machine, I, Liu Wenli, am excellent in English." Even so, I declined the invitation, because I am a police officer at present. I am not allowed to do so. But 6 years later, I will be able to do business in English.

记者：为什么？

Reporter: Why?

刘文立：6年后我48岁，工龄满30年，可以退休。那时，我可以搞英语俱乐部、办培训班，当代言人、写书，一句话，我身上有巨大商机！

Liu Wenli: I will turn 48 in 6 years. By that time, I may retire after 30 years of service. At that time, I will open English clubs and English training classes and be a celebrity spokesman. In a word, there are enormous business opportunities in me!

Propelled by the unprecedented Olympic English fever, policeman Liu successfully transferred the linguistic capital of English into social, economic and other symbolic capital against the backdrop of the Beijing Olympic Games. In Liu's words, English and the Olympics have changed his life (X. Li, 2008). After Beijing won its bid to host the Olympics, he began to teach English to residents in his community. Liu Shuying is one of them: "He is a model for us to follow. To better help foreign guests, everybody is trying to learn English. Liu's diligence has inspired us. Everybody is working hard now" (J. Cao, 2008). Chen Guoying ran a bicycle shop in Liu Wenli's community: "Liu helped me make a bilingual signboard. That is the first one in the community. Of course, more shops have followed suit for Olympic guests' convenience" (ibid.). Through extensive media publicity, Liu now has a legion of followers and fans in China. Many Chinese adult EFL learners who had never received higher education and desired for a better life closely identified with him and regarded him as a role model who should be followed and emulated.

## 4.4 Outcomes

In this section, I will evaluate the success of the Olympic English popularization campaign. Three aspects will be discussed: foreign language speaking population; Olympic English training; and the prolonged ti-yong tension.

### 4.4.1 Foreign language speaking population

By 2008, the Organizing Committee of BSFLP asserted that the number of people capable of speaking a foreign language had risen from 3.12 million in 2002 to 5.5 million in 2008 (S. Deng, 2009), accomplishing the target with regard to the construction of the capital's "international language environment" in the 2003-2008 BSFLP Action Plan. Among Beijing's officially identified foreign language speaking population in 2005, 92.3 percent was composed of people who could only speak English as a foreign language at various levels ("Beijing Foreign Language", 2006). The Organizing Committee of BSFLP divided Beijing's English-speaking population into low, intermediate and advanced levels (2007c). When challenged by a local reporter from Central China Television (CCTV) on the huge number of foreign language speakers, Liu, deputy director of the BSFLP, stood by the figure, but acknowledged the vast majority of the Chinese English speakers fell into a category he labeled "low level" who knew only a few English phrases (The Official Website of the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games, 2007c). The Certificate of College English Test Band Six (CET-6), a national EFL test usually for non-English major postgraduates in China, was used by the Organizing Committee of BSFLP as a criterion for assessing "advanced" English speakers in Beijing (ibid.). However, certificates of English proficiency tests such as CET-6 are not a guarantee of English communicative competence and thus a sufficient proof of "advanced" English speakers. Some of my interviewees who hold CET-6 certificate, like Lu Xin, manager assistant of the International Youth Camp, still claimed that their communicative competence in English was "fairly limited" (2008-09-23). Therefore, the officially identified foreign-language speaking population in Beijing simply tells the story of a high quantity of English language speakers but remains silent about the quality of that proficiency, which is likely to be very limited.

Furthermore, this officially identified foreign language speaking population is not enough to prove that Beijing has achieved an “international language environment.” An adequate explanation of the “international language environment” which the Beijing authority claimed they had successfully constructed for the 2008 Olympic Games should take into consideration the sociolinguistic structure of long-term foreign residents and the Olympic visitors. In 2008, the number of foreigners staying in Beijing for longer than six months was 110,000 and most of those did not hail from an English-speaking country but from South Korea (F. Xu, 2009). This number of long-term foreign residents represents 0.6% of Beijing’s total population. Ren Yuan, a professor at the school of social development and public policy of Fudan University, argued that the number of foreigners residing in a city is an important index when judging the international level of a city (ibid.). Compared to other major metropolitan cities such as London and New York, where foreigners accounted for 30% and 15.6% of the population respectively (ibid.), the international level of Beijing’s population is low. The *Beijing Statistical Yearbook 2009* (Beijing Municipal Bureau of Statistics, 2009) shows that there were 31,712 registered international students living in Beijing in 2008. Their major source countries were Japan and South Korea followed by the United States.

Table 1: Top ten tourist source countries to Beijing in August 2008 (Beijing Municipal Tourism Bureau, 2008)

Country of Origin	National Language	Number	Increased by %
Total foreigner tourists		356,000	-4.1
<b>1. United States</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>68,304</b>	<b>37.76</b>
2. Japan	Japanese	40,652	-27.28
<b>3. United Kingdom</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>25,015</b>	<b>44.93</b>
4. South Korea	Korean	18,941	-58.92
5. Russia	Russian	17,067	-25.00
6. Germany	German	15,532	-5.56
7. France	French	14,216	-17.20
<b>8. Australia</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>14,912</b>	<b>37.68</b>
<b>9. Canada</b>	<b>English, French</b>	<b>11,324</b>	<b>19.10</b>
10. Spain	Spanish	6,837	-48.32

International tourists to Beijing also affect the “international language environment” of the city. According to Beijing Municipal Bureau of Statistics (2008), more than 3.8 million foreign tourists visited Beijing in 2007. These tourists came from diverse linguistic backgrounds, among which two Asian neighboring countries, Japan and Korea, accounted for one fourth of the total number. In 2008, the Beijing Olympics did not benefit the host

city's tourism economy. According to the statistics released by Beijing Municipal Tourism Bureau (2008), Beijing had received 356,000 overseas tourists in August 2008, a drop of 4.1 % compared with the same period last year. During the month (July) prior to the Games' commencement, international travel to Beijing plummeted to 30% less than the previous year. In the month (September) after the Games, the tourism slump continued with international travel over 20% down. Table 1 shows the top ten tourist source countries to Beijing in August 2008. Compared with the same period in the previous year the number of tourists from four inner-circle English-speaking countries (i.e., US, UK, Australia and Canada) showed a significant increase in August 2008, accounting for 33.58% of the total number of inbound tourists. In contrast, the number of tourists from the 6 top non-English-speaking tourist source countries (i.e., Japan, South Korea, Russia, Germany, France, and Spain) dropped at varying degrees. In addition to the issue of visa restrictions during the Games, one possible explanation is that the non-English-speakers might have stayed away because they felt they were excluded from the Olympics. Even though the total number of non-English speaking tourists declined during the Games, it cannot be ignored that the Olympic visitors still came from diverse linguistic backgrounds. Ignoring this linguistically diverse background of international visitors in the foreign language popularization campaign and granting English a superior status over other languages might have caused various linguistic barriers. In fact, the Beijing Olympic organizers confirmed that Beijing was short of advanced English speakers, multilingual speakers and speakers of foreign languages other than English during the Games (2007c).

The conception that equates "English" with "foreign language" or "international language" in Chinese discourses, as Sun Lin stated in Section 4.3.1, underlies the official definition of Beijing's foreign language speaking population and its international language environment. The conception also explains the supremacy of English in China's foreign language education policy and in the Olympic popularization campaign. Accordingly, Beijing's international language environment was one only favorable to English speakers but not speakers of other languages than English. In Kubota's (2002) study on the impact of globalization on foreign language education in Japan, she points out that the equation of "foreign language" with "English" reflects "a discourse that legitimates the global spread of

English as natural, neutral and beneficial (A. Pennycook, 1994) and a discourse of colonialism that elevates English into the status of a “marvelous tongue” (A. Pennycook, 1998)” (p. 20). The equation of English with foreign language assumes English as the only viable language of choice for “Expanding Circle” countries like China to communicate to the linguistically and culturally diverse global community helps to sustain the continued dominance of English in the world today. Moreover, ascribing English the superiority over other languages may make people lose sight of the linguistic and cultural diversity in local and global communities. Even though English is the dominant language of international tourism and communication, a favorable international language environment should accommodate the cultural and linguistic diversity that characterizes the local and global context China is situated within.

#### 4.4.2 Olympic English training

Participating in the Olympics gave many Chinese people, especially those who had enthusiastically taken part in the preparation and holding of the Olympic Games, a real experience of using English in real intercultural interactions. Olympic volunteer driver Hua Shuo admitted in my interview that his desire of practicing English with foreigners was his main motivation to serve as an Olympic volunteer. However, for many Beijing citizens in the preparation for the Olympic Games, having received official English training did not guarantee their much desired English proficiency and intercultural communicative competence. Taking English training of Olympic volunteers for example, despite Aifly’s assertion of having fulfilled the job to train 100,000 Olympic volunteers, the actual participation rate and results were not as good as declared. In many cases, certificates of College English Test band four (CET-4) and College English Test band six (CET-6) were considered as sufficient evidence of one’s English proficiency while recruiting Olympic volunteers and consequently only those who held key management positions were assigned to participate in official English training. Of the 28 interview participants as Olympic volunteers, only two attended English training from Aifly for the Olympic Games. Neither of the two interviewees considered Aifly’s English training effective.



Zhao Chan, a media service volunteer from Tsinghua University, expressed his dissatisfaction with the outcomes of Aifly's training. Based on his own experience, Zhao found that his English proficiency had not improved by taking a Crazy English mass lecture of a few hours, the kind of teaching method that Aifly had adopted for training Olympic volunteers and personnel in service sectors. A similar sense of dissatisfaction was expressed by Chen Zheng, one of the Olympic volunteers. During our interview, Chen Zheng, a coordinating assistant of outdoor cultural and artistic activities in the big event group of the International Youth Camp, attended a 7-day Aifly immersion training camp with another 1,000 volunteers mainly selected from various Beijing universities before the Games. During the seven days of intensive English training, Chen Zheng and other camp members were required to undertake a great deal of English pronunciation (with gestures) and reciting drills. She said that the training made her aware of her "shortcomings" in English pronunciation and lack of reciting practice, but she denied that her English had truly improved after the training.

Zhang Jie: 你觉得参加这个英语培训营对你的英语有很大提高吗?

Zhang Jie: Do you think your English proficiency has been greatly improved after attending this English training camp?

Chen Zheng: 显然没有。但是就是 [通过此次培训] 确实能让自己认识到我们在学英语的时候有什么样的不足, 以后注意。但是说在七天里面有很大的提高也不太现实。

Chen Zheng: Certainly not. [Through the training] I did recognize my shortcomings in learning English. [I will] pay attention to them afterwards. However, it is not realistic to say my English has been greatly improved within seven days.

Zhang Jie: 你通过培训看到了哪些学习方面的不足?

Zhang Jie: What are the shortcomings that you recognize through the training?

Chen Zheng: 主要就是发音上的一些问题。还有就是以前我在学英语的过程中不太背东西。然后他就每天让我们背、背、背, 每天背完这个背那个, 一天到晚就是背, 他认为你背下来了自然就会说了。

Chen Zheng: Primarily, I have some problems with [English] pronunciation. And...I seldom recited when I was studying English. And then...he (the class lecturer) asked us to recite and recite and recite everyday. We recited one thing after another. We've been

reciting all day long. He believes that the more we recite the more naturally we can speak [in English] (21-09-2008)

As requested by the BSFLP Organizing Committee (see Section 4.3.1 for details), voluntary English classes and proficiency tests were arranged for 90,000 Beijing taxi drivers. The authority required Beijing taxi drivers to pass an English proficiency test to keep their driver's license. Some statistics show that an average of 52 periods of English training were provided to Beijing taxi drivers by the time the Olympic Games opened in 2008 (X. Jia, 2007). However, since most of Beijing taxi drivers speak little English and many skipped English classes, the taxi driver training courses did not work effectively ("Bad English Added", 2007). Despite that, almost all Beijing taxi drivers passed designated English tests after training courses. In reality, it was reported that the majority of them could not use English ("Beijing Taxi Drivers", 2008). Zhang Yonghui, a local taxi driver, told me that his taxi company had organized English training for two years and held regular English tests once every 2 weeks before the Beijing Olympics. In spite of his effort to learn English in his spare time, he said helplessly, “我英语不管用，记不住，和年纪有关。(My English does not work. I cannot remember English words due to my old age)” (08-08-2008). Now in his 50s, Wang is a member of the lost generation who missed out on learning English during the Cultural Revolution, a historical period when English was politically undesired and English classes were cancelled (cf. Section 2.5.3 for further details). Similarly in a news report (A. Pallavi, 2007), Zhao, a 47-year-old taxi driver, moaned about how after having spent almost two years memorizing his English-phrase book most foreigners didn't understand his accent. “No one understands me when I speak English,” he confessed mournfully, “After a while I just stopped trying and then I forgot everything I had learnt.” Beijingers such as taxi drivers Wang and Zhao who were forced to “learn” English but failed to reach any significant English proficiency are certainly not in the minority. As is typical of rapidly expanding education systems, quantity came at the expense of quality in the massive English popularization campaign in preparation for the Beijing Olympic Games. Passing proficiency tests turned Beijingers into officially endorsed English speakers on paper but did not actually bestow communicative competence on them.

#### 4.4.3 The *ti-yong* tension

One significant consequence of the widespread English fever boosted by the Olympic drive is an intensified *ti-yong* tension in Chinese society. In the rapidly changing economic, sociocultural and political contexts of China in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, English language learning entails complex and often contradictory relationships that challenge the conventional *ti-yong* conceptualization, which I discussed in Chapter Two. The *ti-yong* tension and identity dilemma did not diminish in China during the Olympic English popularization campaign. The overwhelming “English fever” against the historical background of the Beijing Olympics were not without fervent criticisms. Eminent Professor To Cho-yea insisted that “the widespread study of English is a waste of valuable resources to the detriment of the study of Mandarin” (Shanghai Star, 2002). Many academics, such as Liang Xiaosheng, professor in Chinese at Beijing Language and Culture University, condemned the hegemony of English in Chinese society and worried that too much emphasis on English language study would hold back the development of the national language (G. Chen & M. Sun, 2004). Zhu Luzi, an associate professor at the renowned Nankai University based in Tianjin, posted an essay entitled “英语已成为一个巨大的考试毒瘤 (English has become a huge malignant testing tumor)” on the Internet questioning the use of national English tests and the nationwide fever for English language study (L. Zhu, 2003). In his suggestions to the Chinese government, Zhu (*ibid.*) actively opposed the governmental program to promote Beijing citizens to speak English for the Beijing Olympic Games and questioned the perceptiveness of the policy makers. In addition, he contends that ELT has turned into a form of “linguistic imperialism” because it is a soft form of hegemony through which the “Centre” imposes its own cultural political and economic power and values upon the “Periphery.” This essay gave rise to intense repercussions and widespread debates over the instrumentality and the cultural threat of the English language. Over 400 websites published it and 10 million or so netizens replied to it (“is Chinese drowned”, 2004). In Zhu’s co-authored book, *走火入魔的英语 (Wicked English)* (L. Zhu & A. Yang, 2004), he warns that the current English fever will have devastating consequences for the country: “The invasion of language is even more powerful than weapons, and will not take our nation anywhere as far as development goes.” Although some scholars were at the alarmist end of the spectrum, many other were suggesting China take measures to safeguard the healthy development of its own language and culture. A few

scholars have become openly critical about the effect of “Chinglish” on the development of the Chinese language. They said the reappearance of “Chinglish” as a new colonial language showed a lack of self-confidence in China during its current reforms and opening up to the outside world (“is Chinese drowned”, 2004). As hundreds of millions of Chinese were studying English against the backdrop of the Beijing Olympics, there was a counter-trend emerging, with parents sending children to study traditional Chinese culture and literature (ibid.).

Some of my interviewees also questioned and criticized the nationwide English frenzy across the country with regard to the salient conflict between large investment in English language learning and the low practicability of English in Chinese society. Sun Lin worked as the manager of the language service for the marathon contest in BOCOG. Her language service group mainly provided a foreign language translation and interpretation service as well as an English language training service for the marathon team. Even though Sun Lin held optimistic attitudes towards English language learning and use in post-Olympics China, she doubted a majority of Chinese learners, even those living in big cities such as Beijing, had a favorable environment to use English.

Sun Lin: 中国你说用英语其实机会不算特别多，说实在话。而且它没有一个氛围。可能 [北京] 比国内别的城市要好一些，但是这氛围还不是很浓厚毕竟。你看像新加坡啊这种城市一直都是用英语。像咱们虽然说是从小培养，但是用的机会是比较少的。所以说你说@以后要形成一个 [英语] 环境的话，我个人还是觉得不太可能@。

Sun Lin: Frankly speaking, there are not many chances to use English in China. There is not such an environment [to use English] in China. [Beijing] may have a better English environment than other Chinese cities, but it is still not as favorable as countries like Singapore where English has been long used. Even though we Chinese are taught [English] from childhood, we seldom have opportunities to use it. Therefore, in terms of a real [English] @ environment, in my opinion, it is unlikely to achieve @. (19-09-2008)

Yun Mao, an advanced English learner and a famous English teacher with New Oriental English School, underscored that learning English without making practical use of it is “a costly waste of social resources.”

Yun Mao: (...)就跟我们每天背新华字典是没有用一样。我要学英语就一定要有才才行。 (...)比如说我们以前这个中国的学习者十年的时间从小学六年级开始学习起，或者还有的从小学四、五年级开始学习起，学到高三毕业，是吧。然后呢，还是不

能开口说英语，这就是巨大的失败。这个失败证明了什么，你的生命价值被无情地浪费，社会的大量的时间被浪费。你比如说我能用英语说话就能拉到一个生意，不会用英语就拉不到，是吧。我会用英语的话呢，这个业务就能拓展到别的国家去了。我不会说英语，我看不懂外国人网页或者是外国的这个...我就做不了生意，这才是我们学英语的主要的目的。这种情况下面哪，对教育界来说，提高教育水平；对学习者来说，指导他的学习目的，没有目的都是在浪费宝贵的生命。

Yun Mao: (...) Just like reciting Xinhua Dictionary is useless, we must learn English to make practical use of it. (...) For an instance, our Chinese learners in the past spent ten years to learn English from the sixth grade, in some cases from the fourth or fifth grade in the primary school till graduation from senior high school. Right? Then what? [They] still cannot speak English. This is a complete failure. What does the failure prove? The value of your life was relentlessly wasted; a large amount of time in the society was wasted. In terms of the learner, he must know his own practical purpose of learning [English]. Learning [English] without purpose (=use) is wasting precious life and time. (10-09-2008)

#### 4.5 Summary

China has been in the grip of English fever, a phenomenon that took root and spread out in the country three decades ago and became white-hot in the process of the identity construction of Beijing as the host city of the 2008 Olympics. The Beijing Olympic Games became a powerful driving force for the spread of English in Beijing and the rest of China through an Olympic English popularization program. The Chinese government and the Olympic authority had taken four major measures to implement the top-down campaign: first, the founding of the BSFLP (language policy making and enforcing mechanism); second, the launch of the BETS (language testing mechanism); third, the initiation of the Official Language Training Services Suppliers (language training mechanism), and, fourth, the promotion of ELLT celebrities (role model and identification mechanism). Foreign language policies (with English popularization at the center) in service to the Beijing Olympic Games were formulated in a top-down manner in a centralized system. That is, the authority organized relevant government agencies (e.g., the Foreign Affairs Office of the Beijing Municipal People's Government) and "a consulting group" (composed of 35 domestic and international foreign language educationists) in policy making but did not take into account the opinions and needs of grass-root sectors of the society, especially companies, organizations and institutions with foreign language requirement on their employees.

Consequently, the outcome of the program was only a huge number of foreign language speakers but with low proficiency. As a direct result, Beijing was short of advanced English speakers, multilingual speakers and speakers of foreign languages other than English at the time of the Games. Most significantly, regulations such as the requirement for employees in service sectors in Beijing to pass English tests for employment have maintained the hegemony of English and perpetuated the differentiation of the “haves” from the “have-nots.”

As discussed in Chapter Two, Chinese foreign language policies are enacted principally out of the central government’s construction of national self-interest and thus are a product of state ideologies. The Olympic English popularization program situated in China’s internationalization drive started at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The status and value ascribed to English in the Olympic English popularization campaign reflect the general trend of English language education policies in this phase. ELT was promoted in a natural, neutral, and beneficial manner, with the purpose of sustaining economic development and enhancing international competitiveness. In official discourses, English proficiency had been described as a catalyst for processes of modernization, a supposed vehicle of internationalization, and an effective guarantee for a successful Olympic Games, which eventually would benefit all levels of Chinese society. Chinese people, especially Beijing citizens, were urged to achieve personal success and contribute to the development of the host city as well as the country by learning English. Besides the existing educational, occupational, economic and symbolic values attached to English, learning English became virtually an act of patriotism in the Beijing Olympic context. In the official discourses, English had been used as a key in constructing the identity of China as a harmoniously developing modern nation-state, Beijing as an international Olympic city, and Chinese learners as patriotic global citizens. By underscoring the necessity of English education for cultivating patriotism and promoting Chinese culture, the Chinese government hoped to maintain a neutral and instrumentalist perspective in relation to English and took the learning and teaching of English as opportunities for Chinese learners to consolidate their native cultural identity. It can be argued that propaganda and ideologies about loyalty, patriotism, group membership and collective identity are strategies used by the state to maintain their control and promote its social, political and economic agendas.

However, these official discourses prevailing in the Olympic English popularization campaign need to be critically examined and not assumed to be absolute truths. Fairclough (1989) asserts that discourse plays a particularly important role in exercising ideological control by consent. It is crucial to note that the value and meaning of English in linguistic markets worldwide is not fixed and universal. The English ideologies embedded in these discourses should be best understood as a local, social and political construction in the Beijing Olympic context. In Chapter Seven I will discuss how and why English learning may not be rewarding to all Chinese learners.

In addition to the official English popularization campaign, the effect of officially-endorsed ELLT celebrities was another important and influential factor in the spread of English in Beijing and the rest of the country. Two ELLT celebrities, the founder of *Crazy English* Li Yang and multilingual policeman Liu Wenli were accorded the role of official English language learning role models and given celebrity status by extensive media attention. Through identification, they exerted great influence on Chinese learning English as an act of patriotism and self-transformation. Bourdieu (1991, p. 19) contends that the distribution of linguistic capital is related in specific ways to the distribution of other forms of capital (social, economic, cultural, and symbolic) which define the location of an individual within the social space. The highly regarded symbolic value of English is not purely imposed from the outside but, more often than not, constructed, reinforced and circulated internally in modern Chinese society. ELLT celebrities like Li Yang and Liu Wenli are all products of the Chinese society in which English is highly valued and capitalized. ELLT celebrities, who have vested interest in China's English training market, are powerful in magnifying the linguistic capital of English and the spread of English desire in Chinese society. To date very little research has explored the role of celebrities in promoting language ideologies among mass audiences, which ultimately shape behavior (B. P. Fraser & W. J. Brown, 2002). Braudy (1986) suggested that we have ignored the importance of celebrities in shaping the values of society. In researching the prominent phenomenon of English fever in Expanding Circle countries such as China, we need a better understanding of how those

marginalized economically or socially, and those who feel powerless, identify with ELLT celebrities and whether they model their English learning values and behaviors on them.

After six years of preparation, the Beijing Municipal Government claimed that the host city's "international language environment" had been "dramatically improved" through the city's English learning programs and activities (L. Zhang, 2009). What underlay the Chinese government's intensified emphasis on learning English was a conception which equates "English" with "foreign language." Consequently, the 5 million foreign-language speaking population in Beijing was just a huge number with low proficiency. This officially identified foreign language speaking population does not seem to justify the claim that the Olympic host city has high overall foreign language proficiency and accordingly an "international language environment."

Language policy informs practical language teaching and language use in education and other crucial spheres of public life and involves the choice of what languages are to be used and how they are made legitimate by the state. In Shohamy's (2006, p. xvi) expanded view of LP, the language textbook is in fact an effective "language policy tool" or "mechanism" which is created as a consequence of overt policy statements and used to perpetuate language practices. Given the direct effects of textbooks on language practice, in the next chapter, I will examine two official Olympic English textbooks as a different perspective to language policy and planning for the 2008 Beijing Olympics.



## **Chapter Five: Imagined Communities and Identity Options in Beijing Olympic English Textbooks**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter is intended to examine the discursive construction of identity for Beijing's Olympic language learners from yet another perspective: I will now explore the imagined communities and identity options constructed in two Olympic English training materials by conducting linguistic and semiotic analyses of the multimodal meaning-making resources in the textbooks. The chapter is organized as follows: I first introduce the theoretical rationale underpinning the identity research in language textbooks with reference to feminism, poststructuralism, critical discourse analysis and critical pedagogy. After this, I elaborate on the respective content, form, and pedagogical goals of the two sampled English textbooks and the rationale for selecting them as my data. In the following sections, three imagined communities (targeted learners, imagined interlocutors, and Beijing as an Olympic city) are examined. Overall, I will show that the two textbooks offer biased, stereotyped and oversimplified identity options to targeted Chinese learners and attempt to construct a harmonious imagined community without even suggesting that cross-cultural communication might also fail. These discursive constructions have the potential to negatively impact learners' language learning trajectories

### **5.2 Identity Options in Language Textbooks**

The study of identity constructions in foreign and second language (FL/SL) textbooks is emerging as a new research direction, informed and prompted by feminist and poststructuralist reconceptualization of language education (A. Blackledge & A. Pavlenko, 2004; D. Block, 2003, 2007; J. Cummins, 1994a; B. Norton, 2000; B. Norton & K. Toohey, 2002; A. Pavlenko, 2001, 2002) and new developments in critical pedagogy (M. W. Apple, 1990, 1992, 1996; H. A. Giroux, 1988, 1989). In response to second-wave feminism, the

1970s and 1980s witnessed a flurry of content (i.e. portrayal of the two genders with respect to their visibility, occupation, personality, relations and roles they play) and linguistic (i.e. grammatical features which denote discrimination against one of the two genders) analyses of gender representation in language textbooks. These textbook analyses found abundant evidence of gender bias against women in general in terms of “exclusion,” “subordination,” “distortion,” and “degradation” (Sunderland et al, 2000). In the early 1990s, third-wave feminism arose as a challenge to the essentialist definition of gender and the over-emphasis on the experiences of upper middle class White women. Under the drive of the third wave of feminist movement, a poststructuralist interpretation of gender and sexuality has gradually been embraced by educational theorists and practitioners. In the field of second language acquisition (SLA), Norton’s call for “a comprehensive theory of social identity” (1995, p. 12) triggered a far-reaching re-conceptualization of identity. As a result, the last decade has seen an increasing research interest in identity and language learning from a poststructuralist perspective. The research of identity and language learning is also informed by critical pedagogy. Critical pedagogy takes as a central concern the issue of power in the teaching and learning context. It is widely acknowledged that textbooks play a vital role in defining what and whose knowledge is valued and taught. Being the most common pedagogic device of formal education, textbooks are never neutral knowledge but rather “embodiments of a larger process of cultural politics” (M. W. Apple, 1992, p. 1). According to Apple (1992), textbooks signify particular constructions of reality and embody legitimate knowledge and culture by enfranchising one group’s cultural capital and disenfranchising another’s. That is to say what counts as “legitimate” or “truthful” knowledge — what is included in textbooks, is the result of complex power relations and struggles among identifiable class, race, gender, and religious groups (M. W. Apple, 1992, 1996).

Grounded in feminist and poststructuralist theory and critical pedagogy, several researchers (see M. Shardakova & A. Pavlenko, 2004, for an overview) have expanded the focus of inquiry in language textbook research by considering a range of social identities and students’ perceptions of identity options offered to them. An extension of interest in identity and investment in language learning concerns the imagined communities that language learners aspire to when they learn an additional language (B. Norton & Y. Gao, 2008). In particular,

Shardakova & Pavlenko (2004), introduced a new analytical approach to identity options in language textbooks. In their study of two popular beginning Russian textbooks, two sets of identity options were examined: imagined learners (targeted implicitly by the texts) and imagined interlocutors (invoked explicitly). In doing so, they ask a wide range of identity questions encompassing those of gender, race, class, ethnicity, religious affiliation, (dis)ability, sexuality, and other identities. Their study elaborated how the main characters of the two Russian textbooks were portrayed as able-bodied White middle-class educated young men and members of the international elite, while Russian interlocutors were typically depicted as White middle-class speakers of standard Russian. Such identity options are not useful for Russian Jews, Black Russians, and other Russian-speaking ethnic minorities. This previous study suggests that language textbooks may offer oversimplified, stereotyped and biased identity options to targeted FL/SL learners. The oversimplifications, stereotypes and biases in language textbooks may deprive the learners of important means of self-representation and at times even self-defense. They may also negatively affect the learners' degree of engagement with the target language and culture, and the development of their intercultural competence (M. Shardakova & A. Pavlenko, 2004).

Adopting Shardakova & Pavlenko's (2004) analytical approach, the current chapter aims to investigate how language textbooks, through their content and form, legitimize particular knowledge about the world and validate certain identity repertoires and how such identity repertoires in turn structure learners' access to linguistic resources and interactional opportunities in the target language. Specifically, I will ask the following research questions:

- 1) Which learners are targeted implicitly as Chinese interlocutors in the multimodal texts and who are not excluded?
- 2) What types of interlocutors are made salient and who are left out in the multimodal texts?
- 3) How is the interaction between Chinese and foreign interlocutors depicted?
- 4) Which kinds of English varieties are promoted?
- 5) What linguistic and cultural ideologies underlie the production of the texts?

As language textbooks are direct consequences of overt language policies, they not only

reflect language ideologies embedded in explicit language policies but also serve as an effective mechanism of manipulating language behaviors and ensuring that language ideologies are turned into practices. In the implementation of the LPP for the Beijing Olympic Games, language textbooks serve as an important language policy device. By answering the above questions, I try to add a new dimension that is different from the one in previous data analysis chapter to the global research question about the ways language policies, language practices and language ideologies are tied to the identities of Beijing as Olympic city and Chinese people as English learners.

### ***5.3 A Conversational English Reader***

By the time the bell sounded to the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, China's Olympic English popularization campaign had been in full swing for 6 years (see Chapter Four). The campaign not only boosted the multi-billion dollar English training industry but also gave a great impetus to the flourishing of ELT publications. Various domestic and overseas ELT materials had flooded the Chinese book market by the Olympic year ("2008 Book Exhibition", 2008). On August 4 2008, I visited Wangfujing Bookstore, one of the biggest bookstores in Beijing. This 6-floor bookstore had a wide variety of EFL teaching materials, English simulated test papers, reference books, and a special collection of Olympic English training materials. These Olympic English training materials fell into two general categories: (1) English textbooks for general communicative purposes targeting Beijing residents, such as *Beijing Residents English Speaking Handbook*, *100 English Sentences for Beijingers*, *300 English Sentences for Beijingers* and *1,000 Olympic English Sentences*; and (2) English textbooks for specific purposes targeting professionals in various sectors, such as, *English for civil servants*, *Olympic security English*, *Police English*, *tourist English*, *hotel English*.

I purchased a selection of the plethora of English training materials available in the Wangfujing bookstore and later selected two titles from the *Beijing Olympic Games Training Series* for further analysis: *A Conversational English Reader Elementary* (J. H.

Wang, 2007b) and *A Conversational English Reader Advanced* (J. H. Wang, 2007a). These two textbooks were selected based on three criteria.

Firstly, *A Conversational English Reader* is the first official English-language training material regarding Olympic services in China (The Official Website of the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games, 2008). This volume was compiled and published under the direction and auspices of the Beijing Municipal Education Commission and BOCOG. It was used as a manual to teach targeted Chinese learners how to react to possible situations that may arise during the Olympic Games, with an additional focus on the Paralympics. In this sense, it represents officially authorized knowledge about the Olympics and English, especially how the image of Beijing as the Olympic city should be projected in English. Therefore, it was interesting to examine what is considered “appropriate” and “correct” English language practices in the Beijing Olympic context.

Secondly, the volume had a wider readership than others of its kind. The *Beijing Olympic Games Training Series* was a non-profit publication and consisted of a total of 13 books serving as essential training manuals for BOCOG staff, volunteers, contractors, domestic technical officers, personnel in the service sectors, students at primary, secondary and tertiary levels, Beijing citizens and Chinese spectators (J. H. Wang, 2007b). Over 155,000 copies of each of the various training manuals had been distributed by 2008 (The Official Website of the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games, 2008). In addition, statistics from the *China Press and Publishing Journal* (2008) shows that 2,064 copies of *A Conversational English Reader Elementary* (*The Elementary Reader*) and 1,725 copies of *A Conversational English Reader Advanced* (*The Advanced Reader*) were sold in the Beijing Books Building, the biggest bookstore in Beijing, within the two months of the Games (July-August, 2008). Additionally, the two *Readers* were widely distributed, especially to people who would likely come into contact with foreigners during the Games. Overall, *A Conversational English Reader* provides a particularly intriguing locus of inquiry, as the volume represents the governmental guidelines pertaining to linguistic recourses and communicative strategies that Chinese learners needed to deal with English-speaking visitors during the Games.

Last but not least, the volume represents the shift of the pedagogical objective of ELT since the beginning of this new era. In order to meet the escalating demand of qualified personnel with a good command of communicative English boosted by the prospects of further integration into the world system in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, the Education Ministry has accelerated the Chinese English education system towards a communicative stance (D. Nunan, 2003). Both *Readers* under study are composed of multimodal situational dialogs, with a clear emphasis on the productive use of English, especially speaking competence.

According to the editor of *The Elementary Reader*, the textbook targets personnel in service sectors and ordinary Beijing citizens who received secondary education. In contrast, *The Advanced Reader* targets Olympic volunteers who are college students with a College English Test band four (CET-4) certificate as well as BOCOG staff and contractors whose English level are equivalent to CET-4. Table 2 provides an overview of the content and structure of the two *Readers*.

Table 2: Content and structure of the two *Readers*

Textbook	Table of Contents	Features
<i>The Elementary Reader</i>	Unit 1 Being a Taxi Driver Unit 2 Serving at a Hotel Unit 3 Working in a Restaurant Unit 4 Giving Directions Unit 5 Talking to a Patient Unit 6 Selling at a Store Unit 7 Working for Public Transport Unit 8 Taking a Walk Downtown Unit 9 Meeting at a Competition Venue Unit 10 Serving as a Tour Guide Unit 11 Hosting at a High School Unit 12 Parting at a Farewell Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Targeted learners:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Personnel in service sectors</li> <li>○ Beijing citizens</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Each unit contains:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 4 dialogs (each is supplemented by a glossary and language tips)</li> <li>○ A list of related words and phrases</li> <li>○ An English passage of “Olympic tidbits”</li> </ul> </li> <li>• 83 visual images in total:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 48 cartoons</li> <li>○ 26 photos</li> <li>○ 8 illustrations</li> <li>○ 1 map</li> </ul> </li> <li>• 96 primary interlocutors in dialogs:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 48 Chinese characters</li> <li>○ 48 foreign characters</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<i>The Advanced Reader</i>	Unit 1 Reception Services Unit 2 Resident Services Unit 3 Competition Venue Services Unit 4 Spectator Services Unit 5 Media Services Unit 6 Leisure Time Services Unit 7 Gathering and Parting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Targeted learners:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Olympic volunteers</li> <li>○ BOCOG staff</li> <li>○ Contractors</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Each unit contains:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 4 dialogs (each is supplemented by a glossary and language tips)</li> <li>○ A list of related words and phrases</li> <li>○ An English essay of “culture notes”</li> </ul> </li> <li>• 101 visual images in total:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 28 cartoons</li> <li>○ 56 photos</li> <li>○ 15 illustrations</li> <li>○ 2 maps</li> </ul> </li> <li>• 74 primary interlocutors in dialogs:</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 34 Chinese characters</li> <li>○ 40 foreign characters</li> </ul>
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Given the different target groups, conversational topics in *The Elementary Reader* mainly concern public services for foreign visitors, whereas *The Advanced Reader* mainly involves Olympic volunteering work at various venues. *The Elementary Reader* contains 12 units and *The Advanced Reader* has 7 units. Each unit consists of four independent situational dialogs on the same theme (supplemented by a glossary and language tips), as well as a list of related expressions and a supplementary reading attached at the end of each unit. The two *Readers* consist of multimodal meaning-making resources, combining verbal text, visual images and audio recordings. Both of the two readers have a range of characters and mixed-gender dialogs. Mixed-gender dialogs allow me to examine which identity options are offered for dominant roles and which are subordinated and devalued. My summary shows that 184 visual images of four different types (i.e. cartoon, photograph, illustration, and map) are employed in the two textbooks. The cartoon presented before the verbal texts depicts the scene and main characters of each situational dialog. The large number of images indicates the complementary language-image relation and the need to interpret the meanings construed through the co-deployment of textual and visual resources in the two *Readers*.

Multimodality is an evolving feature in ELT pedagogical contexts that has drawn substantial attention from educators and teachers. Given the common adoption of multimodal resources in EFL textbooks, few studies, however, are found at the in-depth discursive level (Zhang, 2005, p.11, cited in Y. Chen, 2010). In my analysis of verbal texts and visual images, I draw on CDA as an interpretive approach to link decisions of language choice and visual design to underlying ideologies, power relations and identity options. This chapter analyzes three imagined communities: Chinese characters as targeted learners, foreign characters as imagined visitors, and Beijing as an Olympic city. Following Shardakova & Pavlenko (2004), my critical examination and interpretation of the two sets of identity options offered in the two *Readers* for Chinese and foreign characters was based on a numerical analysis of the occurrences of each identity category, including gender, professional occupation, socioeconomic class, race, citizenship, and ethnicity and a content analysis of texts as cross-cultural encounters between Chinese and foreign interlocutors in

each category. The visual analysis for group identities only considers the visual presentation of characters involved in situational dialogs and portrayed in cartoons before verbal texts. Audio presentations of main characters are also examined in order to identify which variety of English is valued and promoted in the two Readers. In conducting my analysis, I take an intersectional approach (I. Piller & K. Takahashi, 2010) to examine how various categories, such as gender, race, class and other axes of identity, might intersect in contributing to social inequality. In doing so, I seek to illuminate which group of Chinese learners may be marginalized and disempowered in the process of learning English, and which group of foreign interlocutors become “unimaginable” as native speakers of English. In analyzing the imagined community of Beijing constructed in the two *Readers*, I examine both the linguistic and visual representation of the host city through a content analysis of texts and photographs.

#### 5.4 Imbalanced Gender Distribution

My analysis starts with the discursive construction of gender identities in the two *Readers*. Gender is one of the most salient identity options offered to characters in language textbooks. In the two *Readers*, gender intersects with other social identities such as professional occupation, socioeconomic class, race, and ethnicity in empowering some groups but at the same time marginalizing others in the imagined community of the Olympic city. Based on the analysis of gender representation (and under-representation), I am able to reveal the ways that gender ideologies are tied to English language practices in the imagined community of the Olympic host city Beijing. The gender distribution of primary characters in the two *Readers* are summarized in Table 3 and Table 4 as follows:

Table 3: Gender distribution in *The Elementary Reader*

Gender	Chinese Male	Chinese Female	Foreign Male	Foreign Female
Number	27	21	43	5
Percentage (/96)	28%	22%	45%	5%

Table 4: Gender distribution in *The Advanced Reader*

Gender	Chinese Male	Chinese Female	Foreign Male	Foreign Female
Number	28	6	37	3
Percentage (/74)	38%	8%	50%	4%



*The Elementary Reader* contains 96 primary characters, including 48 Chinese and 48 foreigners. *The Advanced Reader* presents 74 primary characters, including 34 Chinese and 40 foreigners. The statistics in Table 3 and Table 4 show both *Readers* are severely imbalanced in terms of gender distribution. In *The Elementary Reader*, 70 out of 96 primary characters (72%) are male. More noticeably, men are represented in disproportionately large percentage (88%) of primary characters in *The Advanced Reader*. Foreign women are largely invisible in cross-cultural encounters in the two *Readers*: only 5 female foreign characters are represented pictorially in *the Elementary Reader* and 3 in the advanced one. The average ratio of males to females is approximately 4:1 in the two *Readers*. This under-representation of female characters may be interpreted by the preconceived idea that women, especially foreign women, would be less socially engaged than men in the Olympic events.

Table 5: Occupational identities of primary characters in *The Elementary Reader*

Chinese Characters			Foreign Characters		
Occupational Identity	Male: 27	Female: 21	Occupational Identity	Male: 43	Female: 5
Taxi driver	4	-	Journalist	2	-
Tour guide	6	1	Photographer	1	-
Physician	1	1	Professor	1	-
School master	1	-	Teacher	3	4
Teacher	1	1	Student	3	-
Athlete	1	-	Athlete	1	-
Student	3	2	Undefined (i.e. generic foreign visitor)	32	1
Volunteer	2	-			
Hotel reservationist	-	2			
Hotel receptionist	-	1			
Room attendant	-	1			
Waitress/waiter	-	3			
Cashier	-	1			
Nurse	-	1			
Store assistant	-	3			
Store manager	-	1			
Bus conductor	-	2			
Undefined (i.e. generic Beijing resident)	8	1			

Table 6: Occupational identities of primary characters in *The Advanced Reader*

Chinese Characters			Foreign Characters		
Occupational Identity	Male: 28	Female: 6	Occupational Identity	Male: 37	Female: 3
BOCOG staff	7	-	Athlete (1 disabled)	12	-
Bar owner	1	-	Team leader	3	-
Student/Volunteer	20	1	Official	2	-
Laundry worker	-	1	Journalist	11	2
Waitress	-	4	Undefined (i.e., generic foreign visitor)	9	1

Tables 5 and Table 6 summarize occupational identities of primary characters of both genders in the two *Readers*. Clearly, primary characters in the two *Readers* are assigned gendered occupational roles. The majority of Chinese female characters (16 out of 21 in *The Elementary Reader*; 5 out of 6 in *The Advanced Reader*) are engaged in service trades in the working class, taking stereotypical female jobs such as waitress, receptionist, and shop assistant. In sharp contrast, Chinese male characters are more involved in the administration work of the Olympic Games (such as BOCOG staff and volunteers) and enjoy higher socioeconomic status (such as school master or bar owner). Both of the two *Readers* seldom assign an important and active role to foreign female characters. Teacher and journalist are the only occupational identity options that are offered to foreign female characters in the textbooks. Foreign athletes, team leaders and officials participating in the Beijing Olympics are imagined as exclusively masculine. In general, female characters (both Chinese and foreign) are not only marginalized in numbers but also disadvantaged in occupational identity and socioeconomic class. This gender distribution rests on a notion of male superiority and female subservience, as well as a belief that the male is radically distinct from the female.

The marginalization of female characters can be observed from the exclusion of female characters in the conversational topics of the two *Readers* (see Table 2 for further details). *The Elementary Reader*, for instance, rather than integrating Chinese female characters fully throughout the textbook, confines more than half of them (57% — 12 out of 21) within three units: Unit 2 “Serving at a Hotel,” Unit 3 “Working in a Restaurant,” and Unit 6 “Selling at a Store.” A complete exclusion of female characters can be observed in Unit 1 “Being a Taxi Driver,” Unit 9 “Meeting at a Competition Venue” and Unit 10 “Serving as a Tour Guide.” The exclusion of women is even more striking in *The Advanced Reader*: only 6 out of 28 situational dialogs give voice to Chinese female characters and 3 to foreign female characters. Some situational dialogs depict female characters in the cartoons but do not assign communicative roles to them in the text. For example, in *The Elementary Reader* Unit 8, Dialog 2 is a short conversation between a local tour guide and a foreign tourist in an antique shop in Beijing. Both of the two main characters are male. In the cartoon illustrating the text (see Figure 7, p.150), a female shop assistant is positioned in the right

corner of the picture, standing with hands folded in front. Her voiceless role in the text and submissive posture clearly show her humbleness and inferior status.

Another good example of the exclusion of women can be found in *The Advanced Reader* in Unit 7. This unit comprises four dialogs describing parting scenes at the approaching end of the Olympic Games respectively at a local Chinese restaurant, in a bar at Beijing's Shichahai Street, at the international zone of the Olympic village, and at the News Plaza hotel. It is worthwhile to note that the characters who are represented in both text and cartoon as BOCOG staff, Olympic volunteers, local bar owner, foreign athletes, journalist, and visitors are all male. The only female character in this unit is present in Dialog 1 "Dining out at a Restaurant." This dialog depicts the scene where a local restaurant waitress helps a group of foreign male athletes make their order. Even though the Chinese waitress plays a prominent communicative role in the verbal text, she is not represented pictorially in the complementary cartoon to the text (see Figure 8, p.150).

In sum, both of the two *Readers* are characterized by imbalanced gender distribution. Specifically, female characters (both Chinese and foreign) are marginalized in numbers and professional identities. Furthermore, female images as members of the upper-middle class are largely, if not completely, absent in the two textbooks. Such underrepresentation serves to reproduce the existing social hierarchical order within China. The imbalanced gender distribution of main characters in various identity categories of *The Readers* reflects the intersection of multiple forms of discrimination and oppression against women. In the next section, I will explore in more detail how the two *Readers* validate certain identity repertoires and construct imagined communities for targeted learners.

## **5.5 Imagined Communities**

Textbooks contribute to creating what a society has recognized as legitimate and truthful through imagination. Imagination is a social and discursive process, and those in power oftentimes do the imaging for the rest of their fellow citizens, offering them certain identity options and leaving other options "unimaginable" (M. Shardakova & A. Pavlenko, 2004, p.

29). In this section, I will discuss three imagined communities respectively in relation to Chinese characters, foreign characters, and Beijing as the Olympic host city by examining various identity options and their intersections.

#### 5.5.1 Chinese characters as targeted learners

Linguistically and visually, the two *Readers* construct a male-dominated community in which Chinese are seen as always accessible, polite, and happy to service foreigners. As discussed in the preceding section, Chinese male characters in the two textbooks are invariably superior to female characters both in numbers and socioeconomic status. In effect, both *Readers* offer stereotyped gender identities to targeted learners. In *The Elementary Reader* (see Table 5, p. 133), Chinese female characters are mostly depicted as engaged in service trades, working as hotel reservationists, hotel receptionists, room attendants, waitresses, cashiers, nurses, bus conductors (bus conductors are stereotypically female jobs in Chinese context), and store assistants or store managers. In contrast, the typical occupations assigned to Chinese male characters are taxi drivers, athletes and schoolmasters. *The Advanced Reader* (see Table 6, p.133) also tends to stereotype gender roles. Though most Chinese characters of both genders are Olympic volunteers, this textbook assigned the roles of BOCOG staff (government official) and bar owner (businessman) to Chinese males and the roles of laundry worker and waitress to Chinese females. In general, Chinese males enjoy superior socio-economic status to that of Chinese females.

Homogeneity is another distinguishing feature of Chinese characters present in both *Readers*. In terms of occupations and social status, most strikingly, the textbooks present a complete eradication of the masculine imagery of the working class and the stereotyping of female service personnel. Moreover, the verbal texts of the two *Readers* provide no information on Chinese characters' ethnic backgrounds. Visually, ethnicities of Chinese characters portrayed in the two textbooks are not distinguishable in terms of dress and physical appearance. In *The Elementary Reader*, Chinese female characters working in various service trades are noticeably dressed in work uniforms, whereas Chinese male

characters always wear shirts and ties. Chinese characters of both genders that appear in *The Advanced Reader* are all uniformly dressed: Olympic volunteers in green uniforms and BOCOG staff wearing business suits and ties. More strikingly, the cartoon characters in the two textbooks are westernized in that they have big eyes with double eyelids and big noses. In effect, both *Readers* present a socially and ethnically homogeneous Chinese society. This homogeneity can be explained by the integration policy China has applied to its socially, linguistically and culturally diverse population and the political conception of constructing China as a “harmonious” society proposed before the Olympic Games. Both policies aim at strengthening a unified Chinese identity among its population, developing shared values, building a sense of national pride in being the country’s citizen. Considering this, the focus of the two *Readers* is therefore to present a unified harmonious nation-state rather than reflect the social and ethnic diversity of China.

In both *Readers*, Chinese characters are portrayed as accessible, polite, helpful and trustworthy people who speak fluent English. On every occasion, they are able to avoid misunderstandings. Judging from the content, the two *Readers* are primarily concerned with various services and courtesies for foreign visitors, from giving foreign tourists directions to accompanying foreign Olympic officials on a visit to the exhibition about the preparatory work for the Beijing Olympic Games. Excessive selflessness of Chinese characters and dedication to foreigners can be seen in examples such as the following: In *The Elementary Reader*, Unit 4, Dialog 3 describes a cross-cultural encounter in which a senior Beijing resident offers his private toilet to a young White male tourist. Unit 7, Dialog 3 is about how a local passenger finds a seat for a sick young White male passenger in a crowded bus. In Unit 9, Dialog 3, a local college student meets a foreign student outside a venue ticket center and offers a ride to him. In Unit 10, Dialog 3, a local resident provides his foreign friend with a free-of-charge tour guide in a tourist site. In addition to their selflessness and courteousness, the Chinese characters are described as law-abiding and trustworthy people. In a restaurant conversation (*The Elementary Reader*, Unit 3 Dialog 4), a local waitress declines a foreign customer’s tip and kindly informs him “no tips in Beijing.” In another dialog (*The Elementary Reader*, Unit 10, Dialog 1), a local tour guide tells a foreign tourist that he adheres to the standard rate for the guide fee. The two *Readers* were designed in a

way that they are not only about teaching English, but promoting exemplary courtesies and ethical practices.

Being an important supplement to verbal texts, visual meaning-making resources play an important role in the realization of the attitudinal orientation of the main characters. The cartoons in the two *Readers* are mostly inscribed with positive affection, which can be observed from the perpetual smile on main characters' faces. The Olympic volunteers and BOCOG staff in particular, even when they are discussing difficult problems with foreign interlocutors, always look as if they were grinning with delight. In *The Advanced Reader*, Unit 5, Dialog 4, two Ethiopian journalists complain to a BOCOG staff member that their media commentator has been arranged too far away from the competition site and their cameras have been moved by other media staff. In addition, they request the BOCOG staff member to move their seats forward in the press conference room to make up for their loss in the interview after competition. Although the BOCOG staff member verbally declines their requests in a polite but resolute manner, a mood of happiness is added to the multimodal text via visual affective inscriptions. The BOCOG staff member listens with a friendly and courteous attitude, which can be observed from the character's facial expression of smiling with his eyes closed (see Figure 9, p.150). Interestingly, while making a complaint, the Ethiopian journalists also look quite happy. In addition, they do not argue on their grounds but readily accept the refusal of their request. In this example cross-cultural misunderstandings and conflicts are not imaged by the textbook producers. Actually, misunderstanding and conflicts seldom occur in the imagined international community of English and thus skills to handle cross-cultural misunderstanding and conflicts are not attached due importance in the textbooks. Smiling was considered especially important to and expected of volunteers. This message is revealed through a foreign character in a conversation at an Olympic Stadium (*The Advanced Reader*, Unit 3, Dialog 2). While this foreign character is going through a security checkpoint with the help of a local volunteer, she comments: "You volunteers are always friendly and helpful here in Beijing. I love your smiling faces." The generic politeness, friendliness, helpfulness, and professionalism of Chinese characters are co-initiated by the linguistic and visual meaning-making resources of the two *Readers*. Overall, the two *Readers* function as an official guide

to teach targeted Chinese learners civilized behaviors, common courtesies, professional morality, and even subservience in English.

Stipulated by BOCOG in the *Beijing Olympic Action Plan* (2002), Beijing was also committed to all-out efforts to “upgrade the moral standards for its citizens and thereby raise the level of the city’s urban civilization in preparation for the Olympics.” The basic ethical standards to be promoted were “patriotism, law-abiding behavior, politeness, integrity, friendliness, diligence and industry, professionalism and dedication.” The Beijing Olympic authority believed volunteers to be an important force to stimulate the enthusiasm of Beijing residents for foreign language learning, call for the public to participate in social welfare activities, and enhance the socio-cultural level to establish the image of a civilized city around the world. Following the motto that “the smile of a volunteer is the best name-card of Beijing” (BOCOG, 2002), the Beijing Olympic authority urged 400,000 volunteers to engage in urban services and more than 70,000 volunteers were providing services for Olympic competitions to give the best image of Beijing with their smiles (L. Zhang, 2009, p. 22). Priority was also given to those working at the airports, train stations, customs offices, and hotels, or in the subways and buses, and for the industries of food, recreation, culture, retail, medical services, banking, and taxi driving (BOCOG, 2002). Steps had been taken to help service industries to improve the attitude, expertise, discipline and performance of their staff. In addition, uniforms were introduced in these service industries. As part of the governmental efforts, Beijing strongly promoted such moral principles as social courtesy, helpfulness, care for public property, environmental protection, and law-abiding among Beijing citizens. Before the 2008 Olympics, Beijing was blanketed with billboards, posters, and TV commercials advocating *wenming* (civility) and advising citizens on behavior that was deemed socially unacceptable. In the buses and subways, LCD monitors endlessly played promotional films geared towards creating “a harmonious society.” The pedagogic goal of promoting civilized behaviors, common courtesies and professional morality in the two official English training textbooks embodies such governmental emphasis on “urban civility.”

### 5.5.2 Foreign characters as represented visitors

Overall, the foreign characters in the two textbooks share much in common – both are predominantly White male, middle-to-upper class, well-cared for by local residents and volunteers, and show a tireless interest in traditional Chinese culture. We first take a look at the gender distribution and occupational identities of foreign characters. In marked similarity to my analysis of targeted learners in Section 6.5.1, the foreign characters in the two *Readers* constitute a pronounced male-dominated imagined community. In both *Readers*, English-speaking characters are predominantly male, and foreign women are marginalized in terms of professional occupation. As analyzed earlier in Tables 5 and Table 6 (see p. 133), most foreign male interlocutors have occupational identities as journalists, photographers, professors, teachers, athlete team leaders and government officials. In sharp contrast, only one foreign woman appears as a teacher in *The Elementary Reader*, Dialog 3, Unit 11. Most foreign female characters are depicted as anonymous visitors/spectators without being given any occupational identity in the texts. In *The Advanced Reader*, foreign characters are, similarly, predominantly males, representing athletes, journalists, spectators, team leaders and government officials. Noticeably, none of the only three female characters are depicted as athletes, team leaders, or government officials who are directly involved in the Beijing Olympic Games. Commensurate with the findings from *The Elementary Reader*, foreign females are not only underrepresented in numbers but also devalued in terms of occupational identities. One possible effect of this underrepresentation and devaluation of foreign women is that targeted Chinese learners were likely to be under-prepared with useful linguistic recourses and communicative strategies to deal with professional female English-speaking interlocutors. Moreover, such underrepresentation may further reinforce the idea of male superiority in the minds of Chinese learners of English.



Table 7: Race and citizenship of foreign characters

<i>The Elementary Reader</i>				<i>The Advanced Reader</i>			
Race	Citizenship	Male 43	Female 5	Race	Citizenship	Male 37	Female 3
White	U.S.	6	-	White	U.S.	2	-
	Undefined	33	5		Argentina	1	-
			Australia		1	-	
			Czech Republic		1	-	
			Denmark		1	-	
			UK		2	-	
			Pakistan		1	-	
			New Zealand		1	-	
			Switzerland		2	-	
			Sweden		2	1	
			South Africa		1	-	
			Turkey		2	2	
			Undefined		17	-	
Black	South Africa	1	-	Black	Ethiopia	2	-
	Undefined	3	-		South Africa	1	-
Asian	-	-	-	Asian	-	-	-

Table 7 presents a summary of the racial and citizenship identities of foreign characters in the two *Readers*. The racial identity of foreign characters is not indicated in the language, but in the skin color and physical countenance depicted in the pictures. As shown in Table 7, interlocutors from non-White backgrounds are largely invisible in both *Readers*. The virtual absence of Asian-looking characters is particularly striking. In *both Readers* Asians do not take any communicative role in the multimodal texts. Even though *The Elementary Reader* has four English-speaking black interlocutors, three of them are in one Unit “Talking to a Patient,” appearing as patients or a friend of a patient. This racial composition of imagined foreign interlocutors may contribute to prejudice against non-White people as legitimate speakers of English and discourage Chinese learners from engaging with diverse English speakers. *The Advanced Reader* shows an attempt to raise the awareness of internal diversity among English-speaking foreign interlocutors. Table 7 shows that a much wider range of imagined characters with diverse citizenships are included into this *Reader*. However, foreign characters are still predominantly fire-haired White males. Moreover, it is assumed that citizens of multilingual and multicultural countries such as the USA, UK, Australia, and New Zealand are exclusively White. Visually, the cover pages of both *Readers* (see Figures 10 and Figure 11, p.151) explicitly depict an imagined English-speaking community dominated by White people, mostly youngsters. Again, the assumption which associates English with the White race has the potential to impair targeted learners’ understanding of multiethnic communities of the target language and their intercultural competence in English.

In terms of variety of English, the two *Readers* show a special preference for American English. American English is assumed to be the default language of the imagined English-speaking community. The situational dialogs between Chinese and foreign interlocutors in both *Readers* were pre-recorded exclusively in “Standard American English” voices. Besides, both *Readers* used American English spellings, pronunciations and idiomatic expressions. For example, in a restaurant conversation in Unit 3, Dialog 4, a White male foreign customer comments that one appetizer he had in a local restaurant tastes like “Buffalo wings” and then asks for a “doggy bag” to take away his leftovers. In language tips after the text, the targeted learners are given explanations on the meaning and etymology of the two expressions in American English. In addition, the “proper” way of tipping in North America is also briefly introduced in language tips: tip is generally 20 percent of the bill. Text notes which attach importance to American ways of speaking English may serve to set up the American variety of English as standard reference among targeted Chinese learners and, again, leave them underprepared for other varieties and cultures, including English as a lingua franca, which was the more likely function of English in the context of the Beijing Olympics (see Section 5.4.4.2, Chapter Five, for an overview of foreign language communities in Beijing during the 2008 Olympics).

A decade before the Beijing Olympics, Kirkpatrick (2000) observed the fact that the Chinese Ministry of Education and Chinese professionals argued strenuously for a native variety standard in ELT: For the government, British English represents the standard, although younger people are leaning towards an American standard. In my analysis of the official Olympic English popularization campaign in Beijing in Chapter Four and Chapter Five, the government still showed a strong preference for native speaker varieties. The strong sense of native variety standard has a great influence on ELT textbooks in China. Xu (2002) examined 40 focus texts of *College English*, the designated ELT textbooks for non-English majors in China. He found that the popular textbooks used across China since 1980s exclusively contain texts by British or American authors or from British or American sources. The two *Readers* in this study, though not from British or American sources, also exhibit a strong preference for American English. In addition to five Chinese reviewers, an

American scholar (John A. Gordan) was also enlisted in the review committee of the textbooks. The native standard in Chinese ELT textbooks evidently affected Chinese learners' English learning practices. My interviewees' understanding of correct English use is reflected in their strong sense of British and American English as "Standard English." Du Jie, an English teacher at Wuhan New Oriental School, for instance, asserted that it was of primary importance to teach "Standard English" to Chinese learners. Zhao Chan, a postgraduate in a leading Chinese university, said with certainty that his sense of "Standard English" is British or American English. Their remarks are highly representative among ELT practitioners and learners in China. This exclusive focus on American English and the promotion of an American-centric view is unhelpful for Chinese English learners, obscuring the reality of the world's linguistic and cultural diversity for them.

Going hand in hand with the selflessness, dedication and courteousness of the Chinese characters described above, foreign characters in the two *Readers* are always well cared-for, highly satisfied, and show tireless interest in both traditional and modern aspects of Beijing. In *The Elementary Reader*, Unit 8, "Taking a walk downtown," all the foreign tourists show great interest in discovering Beijing's "traditional culture" (e.g., antique shops, ancient architecture, calligraphy, tea houses, etc.) and express amazement at the city's modernity (e.g., Wangfujing shopping area, cafes, the Bar Street, Chinese hip hop, Chang'an Street, the National Theatre). In *The Advanced Reader* Unit 6 Dialogue 1, an American athlete is sightseeing at the Summer Palace in the company of a local volunteer. After seeing the Tower of Buddhist Incense, a landmark building in the Summer Palace, the American athlete is filled with wonder at the sight and says to the Chinese volunteer that his friends in the United States are "all crazy about China." In the texts, foreign characters openly express their high levels of satisfaction with the successful hosting of the Beijing Olympics. In the concluding unit of *The Advanced Reader*, a foreign journalist comments on his experience in Beijing: "I thought I'd get homesick, but it has been so pleasant here in Beijing that I'm none the happier knowing that I would be home this time tomorrow" (Unit 7, Dialog 4, page 221). Positive appraisals of Beijing and its people by foreign characters feature prominently throughout *The Readers*. All the examples above show how the textbook authors expect Westerners to be interested in the Chinese culture.

Being the first English-language training material regarding Paralympic services in China (The Official Website of the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games, 2008), surprisingly, *The Readers* give little attention to foreign interlocutors with a disability. Among the 76 situational dialogs of the two *Readers*, only one contributes to the discussion of Paralympic services. The only disabled foreign character is a White male athlete in *The Advanced Reader*, Unit 3, Dialog 4, who is being taken on a tour to the competition venue with the help of a Chinese volunteer. Again, the text serves as a guide for a civilized behavior: providing assistance to people with disabilities. In sum, the official textbooks project an American-centric, White male dominated, middle-class utopian community. White males speaking American English were imagined as the most desirable English-speaking foreign interlocutors.

### 5.5.3 Beijing as a harmonious Olympic city

The two *Readers* present Beijing as a mixture of tradition and modernity. On one hand, Beijing can offer foreign visitors an ancient and rich cultural heritage. On the other hand, the city can provide foreign visitors with modern infrastructure and efficient services. The most frequently mentioned locations in *The Readers* include both tourist sites with a long history (e.g., the Great Wall, the Forbidden city, the Summer Palace, Tiananmen Square, *hutongs*) and newly constructed venues with modern design (e.g., the Olympic Green, the National Stadium, the Olympic village, the Media village, National theatre, the Capital International Airport). In the interactions, foreign characters are told that they can either visit antique shops or enjoy live Chinese hip pop music at local cafes. In *The Advanced Reader*, Unit 1, Dialog 2, a foreign journalist says he is quite amazed at the “modern and glamorous” capital international airport compared to how it looked eight years ago. The modern side of Beijing is sometimes compared to American cities by foreign visitors, including New York (*The Elementary Reader*, Unit 8, Dialog 1) and Washington, DC (*The Elementary Reader*, Unit 8, Dialog 4). This comparison demonstrates the Chinese government’s firm commitment to establish Beijing as a “world city” and build “a spectacular image of urban modernity through a massive urban transformation project” (S. Yao, 2008). At the same time, however, *The Readers* express the government’s concern that

Beijing would lose its appeal for foreign visitors after the urban transformation project. In *The Elementary Reader*, a foreign tourist says he prefers “culturally refined” tea houses to Westernized cafes in Beijing (Unit 8, Dialog 3). Another foreign tourist states that he is not an admirer of the modern design of the National Theatre and prefers “Chinese ones” (Unit 8, Dialog 4). An Orientalist interpretation of “Chineseness” is generated here through the gaze of imagined foreign visitors.

“Building a harmonious society” was placed at the top of CPC’s agenda in 2006 and is an important theme of *The Readers*. As discussed previously, in the imagined harmonious community of Beijing, local residents are portrayed as accessible, polite, helpful, and law-abiding, and foreign visitors are taken care of, satisfied and cheerful. It is also worth noting that the two *Readers* avoid any reference to failed cross-cultural communication. Chinese characters all speak fluent English and seldom encounter any misunderstanding in English with foreign characters in the imagined community of Beijing. In doing so, the targeted learners may lose their opportunity of learning the skill of negotiating misunderstanding, which is crucial for intercultural competence. Visually, the harmonious image of Beijing can be best demonstrated by the visual display of the cover page of *The Elementary Reader* (see Figure 10, p.151). The cover page is a synthesized photograph that contains three separate images. The background image is the grand red wall of the Forbidden City, representing the political and cultural center of China – Beijing. Standing out against the red background, an elderly Chinese citizen is helping an elderly White tourist to read a map of Beijing. Both of them are smiling with delight. In the foreground, a group of White youngsters are enthusiastically cheering with their mouths open and waving their hands. All the youngsters are looking at the front horizontally, and as such their eyelines directly meet those of the viewers. The visual display, together with the inscribed happiness, present to the viewers the scenes of a “harmonious” Beijing society in which local residents are helpful and foreign visitors are cheerful. Below the image of the White youngsters is the slogan of the Beijing Olympics – “One World One Dream (同一个世界, 同一个梦想 *tongyige shijie, tongyige mengxiang*).” The slogan had actually given rise to much controversy since its official announcement on June 26, 2005. According to the Beijing

Olympic Organizing Committee (2005b), the English slogan highlights the theme that “the whole of mankind lives in the same world and seeks the same dream and ideal” and reflects the Confucian philosophy of “harmony of man with nature” and “peace enjoys priority.” Whereas, some critics argued “‘One World One Dream’ is a fallacy” (Y. Miao, 2009), which understated the diversity of the world as well as existing differences and contradictions. Applying the Olympic slogan of “One World One Dream” on the cover page of *The Readers* may imply to targeted learners the idea of “one world one language”: a monolingual international community with English as *the* uniting language.

The prominent social phenomenon of English fever among Chinese people in their preparation for the Beijing Olympics is also featured in the two *Readers*. In *The Advanced Reader*, Unit 5, Dialogue 4, two Ethiopian journalists say they’ve long heard about the *English learning program* for Beijing citizens, especially for the volunteers. In the same text, a BOCOG staff member claims that all the volunteers have received systematic language training before the Games. A picture entitled “a foreign language training class in Beijing” is attached to the text which features a group of Beijing community residents from children to elderly citizens enthusiastically learning *English 100 for Beijing Citizens*, an ELT material which contains 100 commonly used English sentences and was widely distributed to English language beginners in Beijing. In *The Elementary Reader*, Unit 11, Dialog 3, a local high school teacher explains the reasons for Chinese learning English when asked why school students in Beijing are crazy to be learning English (see Figure 12, p.152, for the situational dialog). These reasons are: (1) “It’s a useful tool”; (2) “China needs bilingual citizens”; (3) “For college education”; (4) “It’s a research language.” The four arguments for Chinese learning English manifest the government’s decisions to promote English at all levels of education and the inclusion of English proficiency in the development of citizenship in the school curriculum in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (see Chapter Two for discussions about FLEP). However, the assumption that English is a useful tool for education, research and it is required for fostering a bilingual Chinese society is exactly an exemplification of ideological hegemony. I would argue by neutralizing English and granting the usefulness of English a status of common sense the government is actually exercising control by consent. As a result, individuals may accept this dominant ideology

and misrecognize it as non-ideology and take the usefulness of English for granted even in the absence of proof in their own life trajectories. Noticeably, some Chinese characters in *The Readers* exhibit intense desire for English and the West (US and UK). A good example can be found in *The Elementary Reader*, Dialog 4, Unit 11 (see Figure 13, p.153, for the situational dialog). In this situational dialog, a foreign teacher is surrounded by a group of Chinese high school students who are aspiring to receive his advice on their future studies. All Chinese students express their longing for going abroad (more precisely the UK and US) after college. The most desirable plan suggested in the text for high school students is to go to Peking University first, and then further their study in “Oxford” or “Harvard” afterwards and finally become a professor of English. It also projects the West as the most desirable overseas study destination.

## **5.6 Summary**

The two *Readers*, though different from each other in terms of targeted learners and pedagogical contents, both feature similar identity constructions. To begin with, female characters are marginalized in numbers and professional identities. Under the current patriarchal ideologies dominant in Chinese society, it might not be surprising to see that most female characters are positioned as inferior to male characters in professional occupations and social class. However, the biased portrayals of women in the two *Readers* are inconsistent with the fact that women are consistently found in prestigious occupations in higher career ladders in China and beyond. Gender bias in language textbooks can not only negatively affect the pedagogical value and goals of textbooks but also be a factor in constructing and sustaining gender inequality in Chinese society. Previous research has shown that the non-inclusion of women and girls in language teaching materials seriously impairs learners’ understanding of the target language and its culture(s) (B. Rifkin, 1998).

Targeted Chinese learners are afforded the opportunity to imagine themselves having an engaged role in the Olympic host city, interacting in English with a set of native and other speakers who are predominantly White middle-class males. In cross-cultural encounters,

Chinese characters are portrayed as accessible, polite, helpful and trustworthy people who speak fluent English and are able to avoid misunderstandings on every occasion. Foreign visitors are imagined as predominantly White male, middle-to-upper class, well-cared for by local residents and volunteers, and showing tireless interest in Chinese traditional culture. Moreover, the two *Readers* present a native speaker ideology and an essentialist link between English and the White race. In line with Cummins (1994b, p. 34), I argue that curriculum and textbooks that reflect mainly the experiences and values of the middle-class White male native-English-speaking population effectively suppress the experiences and values of targeted Chinese students.

Beijing is discursively constructed as a harmonious society with a good mixture of both tradition and modernity, where Chinese are earnestly going about learning English as the international language while preserving cultural traditions. Under the Olympic theme of “One World One Dream,” the international community is imagined as a monolingual space with English as *the* international language. In the imagined harmonious community of Beijing, Chinese and foreign characters seldom encounter any misunderstanding. The imagined harmonious community of Beijing in the two *Readers* is exactly an manifestation of the state’s determination to “turn this sporting mega-event into the celebration of a Chinese renaissance and the harmonization of world civilizations” (X. Xu, 2006, p. 90). Consequently, social contradictions and conflicts are completely avoided in the texts.

On the basis of these findings, I argue that by imaging Beijing as a harmonious community free of misunderstandings and conflicts and recognizing this imagination as legitimate knowledge, the state is maintaining governance by practicing ideological hegemony. As language textbooks are a powerful instrument for turning ideologies into practices, learners may accept the embedded ideology in the two *Readers* as a non-ideology, and misrecognize it as a normal state of affairs (P. Bourdieu & J. B. Thompson, 1991). Moreover, it is my contention that misrepresenting, stereotyping, and oversimplifying identity repertoires in language textbooks may leave learners without important linguistic means of self-representation and lead to cross-cultural misunderstandings, frustration, offence, and



conflict, as well as to resistance from students in cases where their own linguistic and cultural values come into conflict with those imposed on them by the texts.

Shohamy (2006, p. 133) suggests that language policy manifests itself not only through such overt items as policy documents and test materials but also through linguistic landscape (LL) – language objects that mark the public space. In the next chapter, I will enquire into how public signs as language objects were used as a symbol of constructing identities and turning language ideologies into practices.

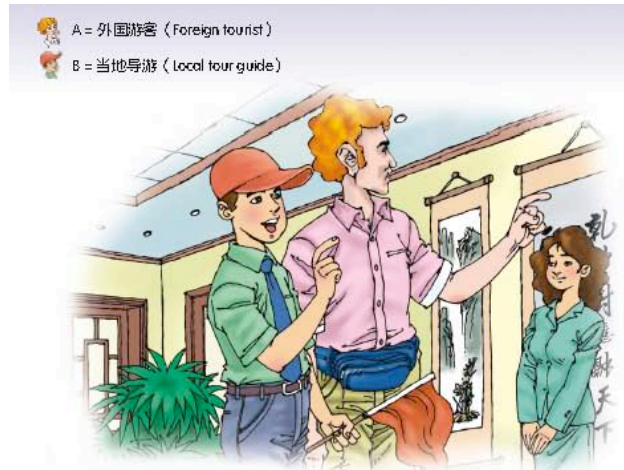


Figure 7: *The Elementary Reader*, Unit 9 Dialog 2 Taking a Walk Downtown

**Dialog 1: Dining out at a Restaurant**  
(实景对话 1: 在餐馆用餐)

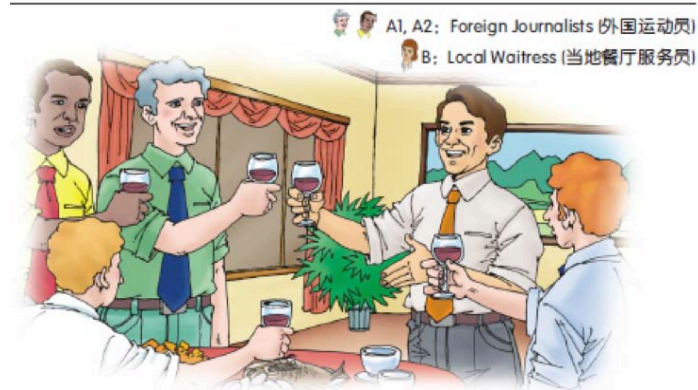


Figure 8: *The Advanced Reader*, Unit 7 Gathering and Parting, Dialog 1 Dining out at a Restaurant. Note: The English identifier for A1 and A2 should be “Foreign Athletes”

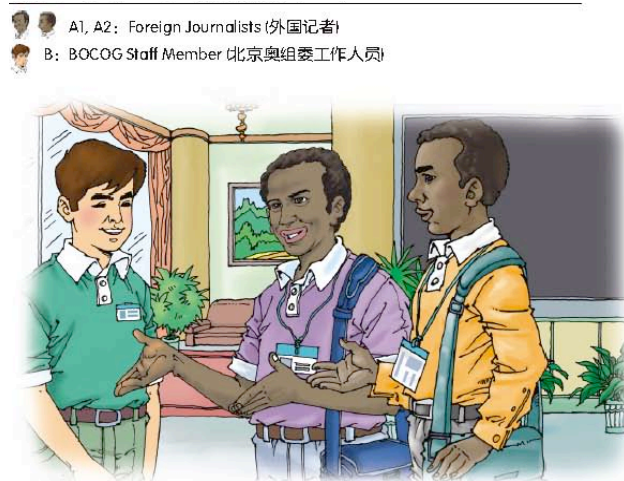


Figure 9: *The Advanced Reader*, Unit 5 Media Services, Dialog 4 At the Venue Media Centre



Figure 10: Cover page of *A Conversational English Reader (Elementary)*



Figure 11: Cover page for *A Conversational English Reader (Advanced)*

Figure 12: *The Elementary Reader*, Unit 11 Dialog 4 In a high-school classroom



### Unit 11, Dialog 4

(In a high-school classroom)

A: Hope you are back soon.

B: I will, kid. Plan to go abroad?

A: Oh yeah. After college.

B: Where to?

A: Europe. Maybe the States.

B: How to choose a college?

A: It all depends.

B: I see. What do you plan to do?

A: I'll be a professor. Probably in English.

B: Great. PKU may be a choice.

A: Yes, Oxford afterwards.

B: Harvard may also be good.

A: Yes. In the meantime. I should study hard.

B: You are a volunteer, aren't you?

A: No. But I would like to work for the Games. Why ask?

B: Just curious. A waste of time?

A: Oh no! I need the experience.

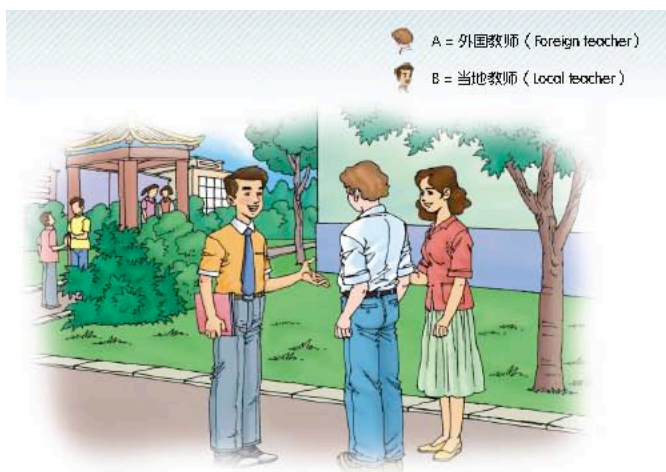
B: For what?

A: For the Olympic Spirit. For my own future.

B: I am proud of you.

Note: PKU is the abbreviation for Peking University

Figure 13: *The Elementary Reader*, Unit 11 Dialog 3 On a high-school campus



### Unit 11, Dialog 3

(On a high-school campus)

A: So many English speakers!

B: They study English every day.

A: Where do they practice it?

B: In class, in the lab.

A: I heard of the English Corner.

B: Yes. They go there very often.

A: How often?

B: Every other night.

A: They are crazy for it. How come?

B: Why, it's a useful tool.

A: For communication?

B: Yes. China needs bilingual citizens.

A: For college education, too?

B: That's right. It's a research language.

A: Any other foreign languages?

B: Japanese is also their favorite.

A: At the college level?

B: Oh, yeah. Russian and French, too.

A: Good for them.

B: You foreign friends are popular here.

## **Chapter Six: The Linguistic Landscape of the Olympic City**

### **6.1 Introduction**

The aim of this chapter is to investigate: 1) the relative power and status of visible languages in the linguistic landscape of Beijing during the 2008 Olympic Games, and 2) how those languages were used as a symbol for constructing identities. The reconceptualization of Beijing's identity in the spotlight of the 2008 Olympic Games led to a massive urban transformation project, with a priority on public signage. To begin with, I introduce the governmental guidelines for upgrading public signage in the preparation for the Beijing Olympics, and then report on the wide-ranging impact of the city-wide Olympic English signage standardization campaign. In the following section, I will then present an overview of the documentation of the signage I collected in order to compare and contrast it with the official directives for the standardization of public signage. Based on these, I will then present the results of an in-depth analysis of the language choices in Beijing's LL.

### **6.2 The Language Policy Environment**

As discussed in Section 4.2, in the preparation for the Beijing Olympiad, the municipal and central governments made a firm commitment to turn Beijing into an "international city" and to invest a total of 280 billion Yuan (approximately 40 billion USD) in urban infrastructure to build a spectacular image of urban modernity (S. Yao, 2008). Within this massive urban infrastructure construction, a priority had been given to public signs, which constituted part of the LL of the Olympic host city Beijing. In this section, I will discuss governmental policy and planning for public signs in Beijing and the outcome of the Olympic English signage standardization campaign.

#### **6.2.1 Governmental planning for public signs**

Beijing started using bilingual signs (in both Chinese and English) as a concrete measure to indicate its opening up in the late 1980s, especially in preparation for the 1990 Asian Games

("English Signs", 2005). After Beijing's successful bid for the 2008 Olympic Games, bilingual signage became increasingly visible at tourist attractions, major hotels, street crossings, transportation hubs, and other major public locations. The Beijing Olympic Organizing Committee and the Beijing Municipal Government considered the provision of bilingual signs as an important measure to promote the image of Beijing as an international city. The focus of the work of updating Beijing's public signs was on standardizing bilingual/multilingual tourist information visible in public places frequented by Olympic visitors. Tasks and targets were set forth in the *Action Plan* for Beijing Olympic Games 2008 (BOCOG, 2002) as follows:

Experts will be organized to conduct comprehensive research and systematic analysis in order to develop a set of standardized tourist guide systems for Beijing. The municipal Tourism Bureau shall examine the existing tourist guides, tourist maps, signs, pamphlets and their locations at various streets, key tourist sites and key tourist service facilities. The standardization of tourist information services shall be achieved by the end of 2005. Touch-screen e-guide facilities shall be made available at public locations frequented by tourists, and mobile information tellers shall be made available during the Olympic Games to provide tourist information and guide services. Major roads, stations and stops, tourist sites and key cultural sites in Beijing shall have bilingual directional signs in both Chinese and English, and multi-lingual signs shall be available in certain special premises and stadiums. Before 2006, a system to examine foreign language signs shall be developed under leadership of the "Beijing Speaks to the World" Program Organizing Committee [The name of this program was changed to "the Beijing Speaks Foreign Languages Program" in 2002]. (BOCOG, 2002)

In implementing these guidelines, in practice, English standardization turned out to be the main objective. Before the Games, there had been much publicity surrounding Beijing's determination to eradicate "Chinglish" and replace it with "Standard English." Chinglish refers to speech or writing in English that shows the interference of Chinese language or the influence of Chinese culture. Liu Yang, the Deputy Director of the BSFLP Organizing Committee accused Chinglish of mistakes in English translation, ranging from careless spelling and bad grammar to cultural misinterpretation ("Beijing Understood", 2004). Some of the most popularly discussed Chinglish examples taken from the official website of BSFLP include: a directional sign reading "Export (Exit)," a sign saying "Guest Go No Further (Staff Only/Authorized Personnel Only)," a sign reading "Careful Landslip Attention Security (Wet Floor)" at Beijing Capital International Airport, and a street sign

pointing the way to “Racist Park (Chinese Ethnic Culture Park). In Chinese public and academic discourses, the “correctness” and “accuracy” in the learning and use of English are always measured against a native speaker standard (A. Kirkpatrick, 2000; Z. Xu, 2002). The term “Chinglish” has been used with inferior and deficient implications in contrast to “Standard English,” which is symbolically associated with authority, prestige, modernity and globalization (ibid.). This dominant language ideology connects “Standard English” with the image of Beijing as an Olympic and global City; and relates “Chinglish” to the early days of the opening up and the unregulated market economy.

As early as 2005, the *China Daily* Website, the largest English-language portal in China, launched a campaign entitled “Use Accurate English to Welcome the Olympics – Public Bilingual Sign Standardization Drive” in major Chinese cities, such as Beijing, Shanghai, Xi’an and Guangzhou (“Standard English”, 2005). This activity was supported by the Cultural and Education Section of the British Council and the Public Affairs Section of the Canadian Embassy (ibid.). A number of renowned Chinese universities, including the University of International Business and Economics also supported the campaign. The organizer said the campaign aimed to “prepare for the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games by creating a better language learning environment, and more importantly, enhancing the nation’s international image” (ibid.). Their joint efforts to promote “accurate English” which took the “native-speaker” as a point of reference soon turned into a governmental campaign. In 2006, the foreign affairs office of the Beijing Municipal Government established an advisory council and an office dedicated to launching a citywide English signage standardization campaign in collaboration with the BSFLP Organizing Committee (see also Section 4.3.1, Chapter Four). The aim of this campaign was to ensure that all public signage in Beijing was “grammatically correct and free of ‘Chinglish’” (“Work Begins”, 2007). Two initiatives were undertaken to achieve this aim: one was the proactive formulation of English translation standards and the other was the reactive establishment of a Chinglish-reporting system.



### 6.2.2 Olympic English signage standardization campaign

From 2006 to 2008 the Beijing Municipal Government enlisted the help of the consulting group of the BSFLP (see also Section 4.3.1, Chapter Four) and progressively launched a series of local standards for the English translations. Liu Yang, who headed the BSFLP and the English signage standardization campaign, insisted: “If English translation is needed it must be subject to the standards set forth in the regulations” (“Bad English Added”, 2007). These standards were modeled on native speaker varieties.

The promulgation of local English translation standards exerted a wide-ranging influence on the linguistic landscape of Beijing. On December 1<sup>st</sup> 2006, the *Beijing Municipal Local Standards on English Translations of Public Signs* (The Foreign Affairs Office of the Beijing Municipal Government, 2006) came into force, making Beijing the first city in China to implement local standards on English signage translations. These standards cover nine areas including road traffic, tourist attractions, museums, commercial establishments, cultural facilities, bus and metro systems, health and medicine, sports venues, and sanitation facilities. A total of 5,398 pieces of standard English translations and a set of translation principles had been worked out from 2006 to 2008 (The Foreign Affairs Office of the Beijing Municipal Government, 2008b). According to the foreign affairs office of the Beijing Municipal Government (2008b), the official standards had been put into practice in all kinds of road traffic facilities, over 60 scenic spots, 11 municipal parks, 22 museums, 927 cultural sites, 152 sports venues, 320 key commercial enterprises, 3,600 medical institutions, 641 bus lines, 16,000 buses, 37 subway trains, 66,000 taxis and 34,000 public toilets which led to the update and replacement of 825,700 existing signs. The next move was to update English menus used by private businesses in Beijing’s catering and hotel industry. In December 2007, the Beijing Municipal Government issued *Beijing Municipal Standards on English Translations of Chinese Menus* (2007b), specifying 2,862 standard English translations of Chinese dishes and general translation principles. The official standards were distributed to and implemented in more than 1,300 enterprises including restaurants around commercial districts and Olympic venues, top restaurants and 119 contracted hotels in Beijing. The adoption of the *Beijing Municipal Local Standards on English Translations of Beijing Organization's Names and Administrative and Professional Titles* (2008a) was another

important measure to carry forward the English signage standardization campaign. These standards regulate the English names of the municipal Party committee and government, people's congresses, CPPCC committees, courts and procuratorates, mass organizations and municipal enterprises, as well as the English titles of related personnel and professional and technical qualifications.

After the promulgation of these local standards, a long-term mechanism to strictly enforce the standardization system of English translations was developed. First, extensive publicity was given to the glossary regulations on English translations through the official website of the Beijing government (<http://www.beijing.gov.cn/>), the official website of The BSFLP (<http://www.bjenglish.com.cn/>) and other mainstream media. In order to step up the efforts to promote "Standard English," the BSFLP Organizing Committee set up a "Chinglish" sign reporting system on its website and carried out a citywide "Chinglish correction" campaign to mobilize local citizens and student volunteers to help remove Chinglish from English signs in Beijing ("Work Begins", 2007). Chinglish was added to the list of things Olympic organizers sought to ban, along with spitting, run-down housing and bad manners. All of these were seen as disgraceful and harmful to the official image Beijing strived to create through the Olympic Games. The Beijing Municipal Government asserted that the mechanism was "a driving force for the development of Beijing into a modern international metropolis" (The Foreign Affairs Office of the Beijing Municipal Government, 2008b). Ideologically, the English signage standardization campaign was guided by the assumptions that "Standard English" is beneficial to societal development and "Standard" American or British English is the proper reference point for all varieties of English (see Section 6.4.2 for further discussion). I will now move on to the general reflections on LL research and then explore how signage standardization policies were actually implemented in the LL of the Olympic city.

### **6.3 General Reflections on LL Research**

LL refers to the visibility of languages as objects that mark the public space in a given territory (R. Landry & R. Y. Bourhis, 1997). LL is a relatively new area of attention in

language policy and language use research, as most research tends to focus primarily on overt mechanisms of language policy such as policy documents or on language user experience and not on language objects in the public space. Shohamy (2006) points out that the presence (or absence) of language in public space transmits “symbolic messages as to the legitimacy, relevance, priority and standards of languages and the people and groups they represent” (p. 111). Therefore, LL serves as a mechanism to “affect, manipulate and impose de facto language policy and practice in hidden and covert ways” (E. G. Shohamy, 2006, p. 111). Similarly, Cenoz & Gorter (2006, p. 67) argue that the relationship between LL and sociolinguistic context is “bidirectional”: On the one hand, LL reflects the relative power and status of the different languages in a specific sociolinguistic context. On the other hand, because the language(s) in which signs are written can influence people’s perception of the status of the different languages, LL can thus affect language practices and contributes to the construction of the sociolinguistic context. LL, then, is a battlefield between different languages and a field of identity construction and negotiation between different groups. The present study examines the patterns and functions of the linguistic landscape as a mechanism of language policy as well as a symbol for constructing identities.

In the Olympic host city Beijing, urban dwellers and visitors alike were immersed in various forms of linguistic objects, the whole of which constitute the city’s linguistic landscape “where society’s public life takes place” (E. Ben-Rafael *et al.*, 2006, p. 8). In this study, I focus on signs in the public places frequented by Olympic visitors in Beijing. Kress (1993) maintains that “all signs are equally subject to critical reading, for no sign is innocent” (p. 174). van Leeuwen (1993) also cautions that no matter how “ideologically innocent” signs (and the social practices of which they are a part) may seem, they may in fact be powerful instruments in the (re)production of the social world in which they form part of the landscape. The public signs surrounding Beijing residents and Olympic visitors might be taken for granted as “given” settings and thus their embedded language ideologies readily accepted. Therefore, this chapter aims to reveal how the LL of Beijing served as a covert mechanism of language policy that turned language ideologies into language practices.

The first thing that needs clarification in LL research, as Gorter (2006) suggests, is to determine what belongs to the linguistic landscape. There have been different views on what constitutes a “linguistic object”, or in other words, the unit of analysis for LL research. Most researchers, following Landry & Bourhis (1997, p. 25), mainly consider language texts on relatively “fixed” signs such as “public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings” which have some degree of stability regarding their spatial position. Also, there are other researchers who add “mobile” forms of signs to this list of objects. Such mobile signs could be “leaflets and flyers being distributed (and perhaps discarded) in the street, advertising on vans, buses and other vehicles that pass through the streets of the area under study, free tourist maps and other publications available on counters and desks of hotels and tourist information centres” (K. Torkington, 2009, p. 124), or even “personal visiting cards” (E. Ben-Rafael, *et al.*, 2006, p. 8) and “business cards” (C. Thurlow & A. Jaworski, 2010).

An important characteristic of LL, as identified by Ben-Rafael, *et al.* (2006, p. 8) is that it is comprised of both “top-down/official” signs issued by public authorities (for example governments, municipalities or public agencies) and “bottom-up/nonofficial” signs issued by autonomous individuals, associations or firms acting in the limits authorized by official regulations. Backhaus (2006) notes that the two types of signs make different contributions to the LL of a given place. Applying this distinction may provide different pictures of a specific LL and thus reveal underlying ideological orientations and power relations behind language choice. Generally speaking, official signs are linguistic artifacts of a central or local government, which may reflect the overt language policies of a given state or region. In this sense they may be symbolic markers of status and power. Non-official signs, by contrast, may manifest local language practices and grass roots cultural identities. Together, they contribute to the symbolic construction of public space (E. Ben-Rafael, *et al.*, 2006, p. 10).

Studies of the LL are mainly concerned with the visibility and salience of language codes on signs in a specific territory or region. These LL studies hitherto have been largely driven

by quantitative research methods, usually by counting the occurrence of different languages contained on sampled signs in a specific geographic space, as Huebner (2006) and Backhaus (2006) do in their study of the LL of Bangkok and Tokyo respectively. In contrast, a few studies employ a qualitative approach to LL. For example, Piller (2007), utilizing a sociolinguistic ethnography, discussed language choice in multilingual texts of a Swiss tourist portal at three levels: linguistic choice, content available in a given language, and relative positioning of available languages. Her study found that language choice as a market-driven choice favors English as “the international default language” and “a ‘cheap’ resource” in the context of Swiss tourism. In another LL study, Puzey (2007) conducted a qualitative survey of the use of minority languages in road signage in public places in Norway, Scotland and Italy, and examined the formats of sampled signs with reference to legislation and reactions from the public and the media. This study shed light on the symbolic importance of place-names on signs for identity. The current study takes a CDA-informed qualitative approach to the examination of the LL of Beijing during the Olympic Games for three main reasons. In the first place, a qualitative approach allows me to investigate the *why* and *how* of decision making, not just *what*, *where*, and *when*. In this way, it is more effective to reveal why a specific LL in Beijing was shaped in a certain way. In addition, in qualitative-driven LL research, sampled linguistic objects are studied holistically and contextually, rather than in a reductionistic and isolationist manner. Although quantitative analysis of language texts on signs can tell us how frequently a particular language appears in a given place, it often overlooks the sociolinguistic context and dominating ideologies that govern language practices. Last but not least, a qualitative approach has the advantage of allowing for diverse and multiple interpretations.

On the basis of these general considerations, in the following section I will examine public signs sampled in my multi-site fieldwork in Beijing and look at how the LL of Beijing served as a mechanism for creating language policy, reproducing language ideologies, and constructing identities. For details of the ways in which I sampled signage in selected sites in Beijing that were likely to be visited by Olympic visitors, see Section 3.5.1.2, Chapter Three.

## **6.4 Language Choice, Ideology, and Identity**

A linguistic landscape entails countless language choices, and as Piller (2007) points out, not a single language choice is neutral or arbitrary, but fundamentally linked to specific contexts, ideologies and practices. Similarly, both Spolsky & Cooper (1991) and Landry & Bourhis (1997) suggest that language choices in the LL may serve as important informational markers on the one hand, as well as symbolic markers of the relative power and status of the linguistic communities inhabiting the place on the other. Following Piller (2007), I will investigate language choices on sampled signage at three levels (i.e. linguistic choice, content and position) and then address which languages were given visibility in Beijing's LL and what were their specific functions and symbolism.

### **6.4.1 Mandarin Chinese and Beijing as the capital of the harmonious nation**

My fieldwork in various key Olympic venues, tourist sites, commercial areas and transportation hubs across Beijing shows that, unsurprisingly, Simplified Chinese was the most visible and salient language in the LL of the city. The national language was not only presented on monolingual signs but also in the foreground position of bilingual and multilingual signs. Simplified Chinese always came first on bi/multilingual signs, and its font size was usually larger than that of other languages. Though a great number of bilingual and multilingual signs were set up or updated at Beijing's major roads, stations and stops, tourist sites and key cultural sites, there were a lot more official and non-official monolingual signs all over the city. The linguistic landscape of Tiananmen Square provides a good example.

On August 6, 2008, two days before the opening ceremony of the Beijing Olympics, I visited Tiananmen Square, where an Olympic flower show was being staged. Parterres in the show combined auspicious Chinese cultural elements and Olympic symbols to build a cordial festive atmosphere. Tiananmen Square is one of the key cultural sites where bilingual signs were highly visible. However, the fenced exhibition space for the flower show presented a salient monolingual space. Textual information relating to the flower

show was mostly presented in Simplified Chinese characters, except for a few directional bilingual signs which were considered necessary to guide foreign visitors and media professionals around the place.



Figure 14: The official emblem of the 2008 Summer Olympics stands between two huge placards in the flower show. Tiananmen Square, August 8, 2008.

One of the most eye-catching signs was a 16.9-meter-high official emblem of the 2008 Summer Olympics – “Chinese Seal, Dancing Beijing” (see Figure 14 above), standing in the center of a flower bed. The emblem draws on various elements of Chinese culture, depicting a traditional red Chinese seal above the phrase “Beijing 2008” and the Olympic rings. According to the Beijing Olympic Organizing Committee (2003), the seal is engraved with a calligraphic character 京 (*Jing*, meaning “capital,” from the name of the host city 北京) in the form of a dancing figure. The curving strokes suggest a wriggling Chinese dragon, a traditional symbol of power, strength, and good luck in China. The figure resembles a runner crossing the finish line. The open arms of the figure symbolize the invitation of China to the world to share its culture. On both sides of the emblem were two giant red placards inscribed with slogans (see Figure 14 above): “五湖四海喜庆奥运盛会 *Wuhu sihai qing aoyun shenghui* (Warmly welcome friends from all over the world to the Beijing Olympic Games)” and “改革开放共谱和谐篇章 *Gaige gaifang gongpu hexie pianzhang* (Write a new chapter of harmonious development in the reform and opening-up).” The theme of “和谐” (*hexie*, translated literally as “harmony”) presented in

Simplified Chinese characters in writing highlighted the political and economic agendas of the Beijing Olympics. The two giant red monolingual placards in the flower show responded to the other two placards hanging on the western and eastern walls of Tiananmen gate (conventionally translated as “Gate of Heavenly Peace”), reading “中华人民共和国万岁 *Zhonghua renmin gongheguo wansu* (Long live the People’s Republic of China)” and “世界人民大团结万岁 *Shijie renmin datuanjie wansu* (Long live the great union of the peoples of the world)” in Simplified Chinese characters. The two monolingual slogans together with the portrait of Mao Zedong between them symbolize the legitimacy of the Communist Party of China and, once again, the philosophy of “harmony” as quintessence of Chinese culture. Given the monolingual language choice evident, the messages both in the flower show and on the Tiananmen rostrum were clearly directed at a national audience. The monolingual language choice was based on the notion of nation-state. In nation-states, the ideology of “one nation one language,” which associates a national identity with a particular language, usually the language of the dominant group, is a common strategy for social and cultural governance (I. Piller, 2007; E. G. Shohamy, 2006).

In the carefully planned LL of Tiananmen Square, Mandarin Chinese (in its standard spoken and written form: *Putonghua* and Simplified Chinese characters) was used as a prominent identity marker of Beijing as the capital of a united harmonious Chinese nation. China, the world’s most populous country, has 1.321 billion people in the mainland, and recognizes 56 ethnically and sociolinguistically diverse “nationalities” (L. Tsung, 2009, p. 1). Han people are the largest ethnic group who constitute 91.59 percent of the total population of the PRC (Mainland China) (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2001) and 95.69 percent of Beijing’s registered population (Beijing Municipal Bureau of Statistics, 2009). Residing in 60 percent of the land, 52 ethnic minority groups, with the exception of the Hui, the Manchu and the She, have their own native languages, sometimes more than one, amounting to a total of more than 100 languages from five language families (L. Tsung, 2009, pp. 11-12). Despite the fact that China is a multilingual and multiethnic country, Han language, the language of the largest Chinese ethnic group, is easily equated with “the Chinese language” in public discourses. Due to thousands of years of immigration and assimilation of various regional ethnicities and tribes within China, Han people are



characterized by considerable internal genetic, linguistic, cultural, and social diversity (B. Wen *et al.*, 2004). Therefore, what is customarily referred to as “Chinese/the Chinese language” is a language family consisting of various spoken varieties of Han Chinese language, mostly mutually unintelligible to varying degrees. Despite the existence of many unintelligible spoken varieties, one factor in Han ethnic unity are Chinese characters (汉字 *Hanzi*), that possess a unified standard form. This unity is credited to the Qin dynasty which unified the various forms of writing that existed in China at that time. For thousands of years regardless of dynastic changes, *Hanzi* was used as the unified writing system between speakers of all Chinese varieties, and as a written lingua franca between Han Chinese and other ethnic groups in China. In contemporary China, Simplified Chinese characters (简体汉字 *Jianti hanzi*) are the uncontested written language for inter-ethnic communication, and the language of government, of law, of formal education in Beijing as well as the whole nation, even though despite the fact that it is technically the language of only one ethnic group, the dominant Han people. In this way, a unified Chinese language in its standardized form (Putonghua and Simplified Chinese) is regarded as the foundation of the Chinese national identity.

The use of Simplified Chinese characters together with the theme of “harmony” highlighted in the texts on sampled signs conveyed the government’s desire for promoting the nation’s “harmonious development” through holding the Olympics. The Confucian philosophy of “harmony” advocates “和而不同 *he er butong*” ( meaning literally “harmony with differences”), emphasizing the importance of both diversity and balance (Z. J. Feng, 2005). The philosophy of “harmony” gave birth to most traditional Chinese cosmological beliefs and encourages values such as tolerance, compatibility, conformity, peace, unity, integrity, and stability. In 2006, at the Central Committee meeting, the Communist Party of China put forward the “Harmonious Society” doctrines as a response to the numerous socio-economic problems faced by the nation in the structural transformation period. Building China as a harmonious socialist society was seen as an important strategy for carrying out a scientific concept of development. Before the Beijing Olympics, “harmony” had become the major theme in Chinese political discourses as the Chinese central government rediscovered “harmony” as a useful tool to regulate social contradictions and assure stability (Z. J. Feng,

2005). It was in such a socio-political environment that the Chinese government stepped up its efforts to promote the standard use of Mandarin Chinese (in its spoken and written form) and gave it the highest visibility in the LL of Beijing as an Olympic city. What is more, the Chinese government recognized that promoting Standard Mandarin Chinese was an important strategy for China to attain soft power, and the Olympics presented an ideal opportunity. *The Olympic Action Plan* (BOCOG, 2002) states that the world's attention that the Olympics would attract to China in general and to Beijing in particular could be used as an opportunity to "teach and promote the Chinese language to the world, and to demonstrate that Chinese is in fact a language used worldwide." The hope to promote "the Chinese language" to the world and thus enhance the country's soft power resources also underlay the highest visibility of Mandarin Chinese in the LL of Beijing.

#### 6.4.2 English and Beijing as a global city

It is evidenced in a growing body of empirical studies that English has been rapidly infiltrating the public spaces of non-Anglophone modern metropolises and regions in Asia (P. Backhaus, 2006, 2007; T. Huebner, 2006; L. MacGregor, 2003) and Europe (J. L. Griffin, 2004; F. Hult, 2003; M. Schlick, 2003; K. Torkington, 2009). My study of the LL of Beijing confirms the high visibility of English in such spaces. In addition to Simplified Chinese, English, of course, was given considerable prominence in the LL of Beijing, too. Although not as omnipresent as Mandarin, English could be seen on traffic signs, at bus and subway stations, on store fronts, in shop windows, inside and outside Olympic venues, tourist sites and public buildings, on billboards and other street advertisements, on brochures and maps, and in leaflets and menus. The high concentration of English signs often marks a tourist site or a public location frequented by an imagined English-speaking community. In my fieldwork at major transportation hubs like Beijing Railway Station, Beijing West Railway Station, and Beijing Capital International Airport as well as subway stations across the city, English was the only language along with Simplified Chinese that could be seen on guiding signs, commercial billboards, Olympic billboards, tourist maps, signboards and signposts, and electronic stop reporting systems. Inside the Forbidden City, the top tourist attraction in Beijing, English was the only language other than Mandarin Chinese used on various

bilingual signs from notice boards outside the ticket office, via warning signs at the security check point, to touch screen e-guide facilities in the Palace Museum. If the identity of Beijing as the capital of the harmonious Chinese nation is linked with Mandarin Chinese as the uniting language, then the identity of Beijing as a global city was symbolically linked with English as “the international default language” that promises the widest reach.



Figure 15: Prohibition sign. Tiananmen subway station, August 6, 2008



Figure 16: Instructive sign. Tiananmen subway station, August 6, 2008.

As discussed in Section 5.2, English translations of public signs were a high priority of the governmental English signage standardization campaign. Ostensibly, this was to improve the quality of the communication of vital information to foreign visitors. But a close examination of Beijing’s bilingual public signs suggests that many English signs carry more symbolic than informative functions. In my fieldwork at Tiananmen subway station, for instance, I found two bilingual public signs: one prohibition signboard hanging on the wall of the passageway (see Figure 15 above) and one instructive signboard placed in front of an escalator (see Figure 16 above). The prohibition signboard contains four drawings together with four phrases in both Mandarin and English: “禁止吸烟 *Jinzhi xiyan* (No Smoking),” “请勿坐卧停留 *Qingwu zuowo tingliu* (No Loitering),” “禁止摆卖 *Jinzhi baimai* (No Vendors),” and “禁止乱扔废弃物 *Jinzhi luanreng feiqiwu* (No Littering).” Interestingly, there were policemen and volunteers on guard at a security check point which was not far

from the prohibition signboard. According to my on-site observation, it is very unlikely that any English-speaking foreign vendors would appear in Beijing's public locations, especially under such close surveillance before and during the Beijing Olympic Games. As a matter of fact, English-speaking street vendors are unlikely to be a frequent enough problem in Beijing to warrant a prohibition sign dedicated to them. The presence of English on this prohibition signboard is thus more for its symbolic meaning of international cosmopolitanism rather than for its informational and instructional content.

The symbolic function of the English sign is even more obvious in an instructive signboard placed in front of an escalator at Tiananmen subway station (see Figure 16, p.167).

Compared to the Mandarin text, the English translation is minimized both in content and font size. The eight regulations in the notice to passengers foregrounded on the upper half of the signboard do not have an English translation. Inscribed at the peripheral position, the only English translations include "Take Care of Your Children," "No Cargo," "Stand on Right," "Watch Your Foot" and "Stand on Right; Pass on Left." The salience of Mandarin on this signboard suggests the relative importance of Mandarin in informing public audience and regulating their elevator-taking behaviors. It can be argued that English texts on these two signboards had little to no practical informational significance but served predominantly an indexical function as identity markers for Beijing as an imagined global city.

#### 6.4.3 English for sale

Studying language policy through LL can also be viewed through advertising (E. G. Shohamy, 2006, p. 133). In the LL of Beijing, English was not only present as medium, as discussed in the previous section, but also as content. By "present as content" I mean non-official signs which were mainly presented in Simplified Chinese but which had the aim to promote the "consumption" of English: billboards advertising English training institutions. The Chinese texts on these advertising billboards directly address a national audience. In many cases, images of White people were an inseparable part of advertisements promoting the sale of English training products. As the commodity value of English has been ever

increasing in the Chinese context and English training institutions have been springing up all over Beijing in recent years, these billboards have increasingly become part of the linguistic landscape of the city. English First (EF), one of the Beijing Olympic official language services suppliers (see Section 4.3.3.1, Chapter Four), was the one that, through my fieldwork observations, appeared to most vigorously promote its services through outdoor advertising. In the busy passageway of the Wangfujing subway station, for instance, I found a row of neon signs, promoting the Beijing Olympic Games. Beside them, an advertising billboard for EF was at the center of attention (see Figure 17 below). In the picture, a pretty young Chinese woman is tied to a professional-looking White man with a rope, in a striking manner, presenting the selling point of the advertisement: “24 小时‘私人英语教练’ (24-hour ‘private English instructor’).”



Figure 17: Advertising billboard of *English First*. Wangfujing subway station, August 4, 2008

This EF advertisement promotes highly gendered and sexualized discourses. The choice of language code and the woman’s image clearly position young Chinese women as potential targeted consumers. The juxtaposition between the White man and the Chinese woman in this advertisement constructs two discourses that has been discussed in K. Takahashi’s (2006) study on Japanese Women Learning English: handsome Western men dressed in suits and ties as “desirable and effective English teachers” on the one hand and young Chinese women as “desirous consumers of Western masculinity and of English as an international language” on

the other (p. 125). The tied-up arms symbolize EF's personalized one-on-one English lessons, suggesting that everyone can possess English and an "intimate" experience with an ideal native English teacher. The physical "intimacy" between the White man as an ideal "native teacher" and the young woman as a desirous "client" is intensified by the sexually-charged advertising slogan, implying "private" and "intimate" times with White men. In terms of body position, the White man is standing slightly in front, leading the Chinese woman with his tied arm. The dark suit and blue tie image of the man symbolizes the quality and professionalism of EF "native teachers." Additionally, the raised arm and fist is a gesture of fight and triumph. Though led by the Western man, a smile of triumph lights up the young woman's face, showing her complete control of and great satisfaction with the "private English teacher." The EF commercial advertisement suggests to potential customers that their value-added English teaching service offers every Chinese learner an identity-transforming opportunity, and possibly interracial romance. On the right top corner, the Olympic logo was used to indicate EF's official status as the language service supplier for the Beijing Olympics that provided official assurance for its personalized English lessons.

This kind of sexually-charged advertisement by English language schools is not a singular instance. In Takahashi's study of Gaba (2006), one of the most rapidly expanding *eikaiwa* (English conversation) schools in Japan, she dissected a similar advertisement in which a Japanese woman was handcuffed to a White man. According to Takahashi (2006), advertisements for Gaba's *mantsuman* (individual) lessons are designed to appeal to Japanese women's desire for "private" and "intimate" times with White men in a fashionable space. Different from the Chinese woman in EF's advertisement who is led by the White "native teacher," the Japanese woman in Gaba's advertisement is positioned as the holder of power, by her "knowing smile" and her "pull on the handcuffs" (K. Takahashi, 2006, p. 126). For Japanese women, English is presented as the means of obtaining what they passionately desire – the West and Western men. English language learning in Japan has become conflated with romantic desire for Western men (I. Piller & K. Takahashi, 2010). Their Japanese example as well as my analysis above demonstrates that advertisements for language schools are areas where English is gendered, sexualized and racialized to sell English language learning and teaching. Bringing the Olympic brand into full play, EF promoted its featured personalized

English lessons as gendered and romanticized products.

In the previous section, I demonstrated how English was promoted as the language of the imagined international metropolis through two instructive signs and served predominantly as an identity marker for Beijing as a global city. In contrast, this EF advertisement promotes a native speaker ideology in which English is not an international language but the property of White native speakers. The ideology of “native speaker superiority” has been taken for granted as natural and common sense in foreign private language schools in China such as EF (see Section 4.3.3.1, Chapter Four). This ideology legitimizes native speakers of English as ideal English teachers and as the ideal model for non-native speakers in English language learning. In recent decades, an increasing number of researchers (e.g., J. Brutt-Griffler & K. K. Samimy, 1999; A. S. Canagarajah, 1999; V. Cook, 1999; R. B. Kaplan, 1999; A. Kirkpatrick, 1997; S. L. McKay, 2003; A. Pennycook, 1998; R. Phillipson, 1992; I. Piller, 2001; B. Rampton, 1990) have demonstrated that the “native speaker” is not an empirical fact but rather a social construct. In many cases, the nature of “nativeness” has more to do with the ideology and identity of a dominant group than with linguistic competence. For example, Piller (2001, p. 14) insists that the “native speaker” ideology should be discarded because linguistically it is a useless, idealized concept, and socially the “birthright mentality” attached to it is debilitating and unfair. Even though a “native speaker” does exist, Piller (*ibid.*) argues that their early acquisition of a language does not guarantee them as the sole arbiters of correct language practices in various contexts. Phillipson (1992, p. 195) claims that non-native speakers possess certain qualifications which native speakers may not have, such as the experience of acquiring English as a second (foreign) language and insights into the linguistic and cultural needs of their learners. Rampton (1990, p. 97) has outlined five features of expertise regarding native speakers and demonstrated that it is special education or training that makes one an expert in one field or another. A native speaker is not necessarily qualified and has not necessarily acquired the “expertise” required in the language classroom. In other words, training and experience play a greater role in defining a teacher’s success in a language classroom.

#### 6.4.4 French and Beijing as Olympic city

According to the Olympic Charter (International Olympic Committee, 2007, p. 53), both French and English are the official languages of the IOC. In addition to the two languages, the language of the host country also serves as an official language of the Olympic Movement during the Games. This means that all announcements, services and facilities relating to the 2008 Olympic Games should be available in the three languages. In Beijing's LL, the presence of French was much stronger in the official/top-down signage issued by the public authorities than the unofficial/bottom-up signage issued by autonomous social actors. Specifically, French, in the Beijing Olympic context, appeared mostly on only a few official/top-down multilingual signs set up in certain special premises and stadiums closely related to the Games. These multilingual signs mainly included signboards for Olympic special buses (see Figure 18), directional signs outside Olympic venues (see Figure 19) and name signs of workstations at the entrance to Olympic venues (see Figure 20). The presence of French on guiding signs is closely linked with Beijing's identity as the Olympic host city.



Figure 18: Stop sign for the Olympic special bus. Tiananmen Square, August 6,



Figure 19: Direction board. Entrance to the Olympic venue in Peking University, August 7, 2008.





Figure 20: Spectator security checkpoint. Shunyi Olympic Rowing-Canoeing Park, August 18, 2008.

Moreover, most of these French signs were temporarily set up for the purposes of the Games, which means that these signs were much less “fixed” and subject to removal after the Olympics. In terms of salience, though the size of the font used for French was the same as that of English on multilingual signs, French always appeared last after Chinese and English in order of importance. French was virtually absent on non-official signs produced by local individual, associative or corporative actors. The under-representation and temporality of French in Beijing’s LL is evidence that the municipal government did not accord French a position of equal importance to that of English in Beijing’s urban planning. It is also evidence that French, its official Olympic status notwithstanding, has much less popularity and symbolic capital than English in local language practices and ideologies.

#### 6.4.5 Other languages and the invisible city



Figure 21: *Beijing Olympic Accommodation Service Guide*. Qianmen Street, August 8, 2008.

As discussed in previous sections, the officially planned LL of Beijing gave the highest visibility to three languages: Mandarin Chinese (for Beijing as a the capital of a harmonious society), English (for Beijing as a global city) and French (for Beijing as an Olympic city). Compared with these three languages, other languages were attached less importance and had limited visibility. On August 7, 2008, one day before the opening ceremony of the Beijing Olympic Games, Qianmen Street re-opened after

a year of renovations. The renovated historical commercial street drew a mass of tourists on the re-opening day. Standardized bilingual signs in Mandarin and English were set up along the street. On the southern end of the street, several student volunteers were providing information to tourists at an urban volunteer service station. I noticed that a number of copies of the *Beijing Olympic Accommodation Service Guide* were lying on the reception desk (see Figure 21 above). This guide was issued on April 24, 2008 and available in eight languages: Chinese, English, Japanese, Korean, Russian, German, Spanish, and Arabic (Beijing Evening Newspaper, 2008). However, because none of the volunteers at this service station could speak any of the eight foreign languages except English, the publications turned out to be a mere formality. The prominence of English in Beijing's LL remained unchallenged.



Figure 22: Signboard for multilingual automatic guide service. Entrance to the Forbidden City, August 8, 2008.

Multilingual facilities and services were available in premier tourist sites in Beijing. On August 8 2008, I visited the Forbidden City to investigate the language service situation there. I noticed that a multilingual audio guide service was available at the Meridian Gate (*Wu men*) and the Gate of Divine Prowess (*Shenwu men*). The audio guide is an electronic device that can automatically respond and offer on-the-spot instructions in 20 languages (including *Putonghua* and Cantonese) as tourists go along a tour route. At the entrance, a large signboard at the ticket office displayed languages available for this audio guide service (see Figure 22). Icons of national flags were used together with language names in their respective

scripts to indicate the kinds of available audio guides. The national flags represented the ownership of a particular language. Clearly, what underlay this practice is the ideology of “one nation one language,” which links a national identity with a particular language. Furthermore, “nativeness” in language is connected with a certain nation-state or region by

virtue of birth. In the signboard, English, following two Chinese languages – Mandarin and Cantonese, precedes all the other languages in sequence and comes on top of other languages, suggesting differences of importance and status. The Union Jack, the national flag of the United Kingdom, was used as a symbolic marker for the English language. This signboard is not a singular instance in Beijing's LL. On the official website of Beijing Tourism Administration (<http://english.visitbeijing.com.cn>), the British flag was also used as the symbolic marker for English. The assumption that the UK, as the birth land of English, holds the ownership of the language is self-evident. This ideology privileges British English (and/or American English in some other cases) above all others varieties, implying it to be intrinsically authoritative and better for some or all purposes. In a study on English in Swiss tourism marketing, Piller (2007) observed a similar practice. She argues that the practice of associating language with the (largest or original) nation where it is spoken renders small nations or non-national language use invisible (ibid.). This also explains why Chinese ethnic minority communities and communities of "minor" foreign languages had no or limited presence in Beijing's LL.

In Chapter Four I elaborated the sociolinguistic context of Beijing. In fact, the city has a multiethnic and multilingual Chinese population, and many of the long-term foreign residents and the Olympic visitors came from diverse linguistic backgrounds. In ethnic minority communities in Beijing, multilingual practices are common. Ethnic minority community languages were basically invisible in Beijing's LL, which reflects the central-peripheral relations between Mandarin Chinese and ethnic minority languages. In the Chinese context, it was assumed that international communication mainly took place with people from the economically and technologically developed English-speaking countries, particularly the US and the UK. In fact, more than half of foreign residents and tourists in Beijing are from a non-English background, and are mainly drawn from two neighboring Asian countries: South Korea and Japan. However, the planning of Beijing's LL in the Olympic context showed a strong preference for English over Korean and Japanese, the languages of neighbors; two major groups of foreign residents and tourists, and in the case of Koreans also an ethnic minority. It is highly debatable to claim that English is extensively used as lingua franca among various foreign groups or between local Chinese

and foreign residents. Despite the internal diversity of foreign resident and tourist populations in Beijing during the Olympics, foreign languages other than English and French were found to be practically absent on official signs at key public and cultural spaces. The dominance of Mandarin Chinese and English and the near-invisibility of other languages reflect unequal language and power relations in the Chinese context.

## **6.5 Summary**

LL provides a new perspective on language policy and language use research. Given LL as a mechanism of language policy, the consequence of using LL in public space is that it reaffirms the languages and groups in power while marginalizing other languages and groups that are not (E. G. Shohamy, 2006, p. 124). Beijing is an ethnically and linguistically heterogeneous city, however not all languages and groups were equally presented in the Olympic context. The LL of Beijing was an arena for power struggles among diverse languages. The outcome of these struggles is a mixture of three language ideologies and identities: Mandarin Chinese to symbolize Beijing as the capital of a harmonious society, English for Beijing as a global city and French for Beijing as an Olympic city. As examples in this chapter demonstrate, these language choices further reinforce existing power inequalities between languages and groups. The on-going Olympic English signage standardization campaign has been driven by the “Standard English” ideology. The relevant departments and professionals involved in this campaign had a strong preference for native speaker varieties (especially British English and American English) over English varieties in the Outer and Expanding Circles. The Chinese government’s strong sense of a native variety standard led to a citywide crack down on “Chinglish” as an “inferior” and “deficient” variety of English. Rules and regulations were formulated to standardize English translations of public signs, menus, and professional titles. The official attitudes about “Standard English” that defined what was perceived as the “correct” way to speak English could also be inferred from the practice of associating a particular language with a national flag. In this practice, a close connection was made between the ownership of English and the UK (and less frequently the US) as the place of origin. The commodity value of English in the Beijing Olympic context resulted in a high visibility of English as “content” in

advertising. Advertisements for English language schools were, as also discussed in Takahashi's study (2006), gendered and racialized discourses in which White male "native speakers" were imagined as "ideal English teachers" All of these language practices and ideologies evidenced in the LL of Beijing contributed to reproducing a narrow understanding of what English is and to whom English belongs and hindered a full understanding of the cultural and linguistic diversity in the Chinese and global communities.

In Chapter Two, I have discussed that how Chinese foreign language education policies in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century have favored English and taken a neutral instrumental view of English education. In spite of the powerful role of language education policy (LEP) in determining language practices and the role it plays in manipulating language and ideologies, Shohamy (2006, p. 91) points out that there is very little research on the actual effect and consequences of LEPs. In the next chapter, I will look into my interview participants' English learning experiences and perceptions as consequences of Chinese English education policies formulated and implemented in response to the political agenda of the state in the new domestic and global situations. Through case studies, I intend to shed light on how English education policies serve as means of reproducing educational inequalities and identity dilemmas in contemporary Chinese society.

## **Chapter Seven: English, Development and Equality**

### **7.1 Introduction**

This chapter is intended to revisit the overwhelming English fever observed in Beijing as the Olympic host city by addressing the issue of educational disparities and inequalities in nationwide English popularization policies and practices that were intended to modernize, develop and internationalize the nation. I start by examining disparities and inequalities in higher educational opportunities in China. After this background section, I will examine my interview participants' English learning experiences and perceptions. Following this, I will inquire into how China's push for English over the past decade plays out in the lives of ethnic minority members through a case study of Wei Ru, who used to be a learner of Russian in a frontier county in Heilongjiang Province and was an ethnic minority college student in Beijing during the Olympics. Based on the case study of Wei Ru, I will further my discussion in two aspects in the following sections: the decline of Russian language education in Heilongjiang Province that went in tandem with nationwide English popularization programs, and the challenges the spread of English presents for ethnic minorities in China. I will conclude by suggesting that more attention should be paid by the government and academia to the ways in which English popularization policies contribute to the reproduction of inequality among China's socially, ethnically and linguistically diverse EFL population.

### **7.2 Disparities and Inequalities in Higher Education Opportunities**

In China, education has long been the primary path to social and economic advancement (J. Knight & S. Li, 1996; S. Melvin, 2006). English education, particularly, has been inextricably linked to the processes of modernization and economic globalization. The Olympics was but one point in the promotion of English and needs to be placed in its wider context of China's economic reforms and opening-up. Admittedly, China wanted the Olympics and English for the same reason: as an expression of development, modernity,

internationalization, progress and prestige (discussed in Chapters 4-6). However, the Chinese government failed to account for the power of English, and thus the role it may play in the reproduction of inequality. Given the gate-keeping role of English in higher educational opportunities, unequal access to English provision not only perpetuates, but exacerbates, educational disparities and inequalities in China.

### 7.2.1 Competitive college entrance examination

For 1300 years until its abolishment at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Chinese imperial examination system (*keju*) determined admission to the state bureaucracy (see B. He, 1962 for further details). In other words, meritocratic values based on academic performance are deeply ingrained in Chinese society. In China's modern education system, promotion to higher educational levels still depends upon success in competitive examination systems, among which the National College Entrance Examination (NCEE, *Gaokao*) is the most important national exam (R. Zheng, 2008). *Gaokao*, which has been held annually in Mainland China since 1952, is an academic test undertaken at the completion of secondary schooling for admission to higher education. A poor performance on this decisive test almost inevitably means forfeiting the opportunity to go to university and climb the social ladder. Prior to the examination, candidates are allowed to list their preferences of universities and undergraduate programs, and final selection and admission are made by the universities based primarily on academic scores in the examination. Although the *Gaokao* system has undergone many changes since the Cultural Revolution, it remains essentially the only criterion to assess a student's academic ability for university entrance.

Table 8: Gross enrolment rate of schools by level (Ministry of Education of PRC, 2009c)

Gross Enrolment Rate of Schools by Level (Unit: percent)				
	Primary <sup>5</sup>	Junior High	Senior High	<b>Higher Education</b>
Schools years	the age of 7-12	the age of 12-14	the age of 15-17	<b>the age of 18-22</b>
1991	109.5	69.7	23.9	<b>3.5</b>
1992	109.4	71.8	26.0	<b>3.9</b>
1993	107.3	73.1	28.4	<b>5.0</b>
1994	108.7	73.8	30.7	<b>6.0</b>

<sup>5</sup> The calculation method of GER is to divide the number of pupils (or students) enrolled in a given level of education regardless of age by the population of the age group that officially corresponds to the given level of education, and multiply the result by 100. In some situations, GER can be over 100% due to the inclusion of over-aged and under-aged pupils/students because of early or late entrants, and grade repetition.

1995	106.6	78.4	33.6	<b>7.2</b>
1996	105.7	82.4	38.0	<b>8.3</b>
1997	104.9	87.1	40.6	<b>9.1</b>
1998	104.3	87.3	40.7	<b>9.8</b>
1999	104.3	88.6	41.0	<b>10.5</b>
2000	104.6	88.6	42.8	<b>12.5</b>
2001	104.5	88.7	42.8	<b>13.3</b>
2002	107.5	90.0	42.8	<b>15.0</b>
2003	107.2	92.7	43.8	<b>17.0</b>
2004	106.6	94.1	48.1	<b>19.0</b>
2005	106.4	95.0	52.7	<b>21.0</b>
2006	106.3	97.0	59.8	<b>22.0</b>
2007	106.2	98.0	66.0	<b>23.0</b>
2008	105.7	98.5	74.0	<b>23.3</b>

Access to education in China represents a pyramid, as indicated by gross enrollment ratio in Table 8. The gross enrollment ratio is calculated by expressing the number of students enrolled in tertiary education, regardless of age, as a percentage of the population of official school age for the level (18-22 for tertiary education). The gross enrollment ratio is widely used to indicate the capacity of the education system to enroll students of a particular age-group (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2010). According to the statistics of China's Ministry of Education (2009d), the gross enrolment ratio of China's higher education was no more than 10 percent before 1999. Because of the scarcity of resources allotted to higher education, student numbers decreased sharply at the higher levels. Although China's college admission rate today has risen considerably as a result of college enrolment expansion between 1999 and 2003, it is still fairly low compared to the availability of higher education in most developed countries and regions (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2006). When higher education is still a relatively scarce resource of a society, academic performance in the entrance examination makes a great difference in candidates' life chances (R. Zheng, 2008). In 2008, 10.5 million senior secondary school graduates sat the *Gaokao*, seeking to be accepted into 5.99 million places available in China's universities. In other words, roughly 50 percent of the *Gaokao* candidates would not make it to any institution of higher education. Among the successful candidates, 20 percent with outstanding *Gaokao* results can expect admission to China's Tier One institutions that are taking part in Projects 211<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Project 211 is the Chinese government's new endeavor aimed at strengthening about 100 higher education institutions and key disciplinary areas as a national priority for the 21st century. Up to 2010, 112 higher education institutions have been included in project 211. For further information, please refer to

[http://www.edu.cn/211\\_1415/20060323/t20060323\\_3971.shtml](http://www.edu.cn/211_1415/20060323/t20060323_3971.shtml)



and 985<sup>7</sup> (usually located in urban areas). About 40 percent of the examinees find places in three and four-year Tier two universities and colleges, while another 40 percent enroll into private colleges, vocational schools or technical educations (Australian Education International, 2009). The Projects 211 and 985 institutions account for 80 percent of doctoral students, 66 percent of all graduate students, house 96 percent of the key laboratories and receive 70 percent of scientific research funding (Australian Education International, 2009). Therefore, high school graduates who make it to Tier One universities can get better access to qualified teachers, advanced equipment, abundant study resources, and priority in the allocation of funds for exchange and research programs, which ultimately facilitate their social and economic mobility. Not surprisingly, the competition for higher education opportunities, especially for places in popular undergraduate programs of Tier One universities, is extremely fierce.

### 7.2.2 Educational disparities and inequalities

In recent years, the issue of educational disparities and inequity in China has become an issue of public concern. A growing body of theoretical and empirical research (e.g., E. Hannum, 2002; E. Hannum & M. Wang, 2006; J. Knight & S. Li, 1996; G. A. Postiglione, 1992, 1999; X. L. Rong & T. Shi, 2001; D. Yang, 2006, 2007) has found significant region/ethnicity/gender-based disparities in education provision and attainment in China. A host of factors contribute to these gaps: insufficient educational funding, poor facilities, shortage of qualified teachers, irrelevant curriculum, low family socioeconomic background, cultural traditions, religious beliefs, and/or a resistance to being assimilated into the mainstream Han culture. The expansion of education may not necessarily lead to a more equal distribution of educational opportunities (X. Wu, 2007). Although college enrolment expansion has brought about a definite increase in educational opportunities by embracing more marginal students into the less prestigious higher education institutions, students from higher socio-economic status backgrounds have benefited disproportionately from the expansion in elite universities (X. Ding, 2004; D. Yang, 2006). Yang's study (2006) indicates

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<sup>7</sup> Project 985 is a constructive project for founding world-class universities in the 21st century conducted by the government of the People's Republic of China. Up to 2010, 39 higher education institutions have been included in the project 985. For further information, please refer to [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Project\\_985](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Project_985)

that the chance of a rural child making it to college could be less than a third of that of his or her urban peers, as the best teachers and resources in China's basic education are concentrated in the cities. The gap between minority and Han attainment in education has been especially apparent in higher education, though members of minority groups are given some preferential treatment to expand higher education opportunities (G. A. Postiglione, 1999, p. 11).

Geography is a significant educational stratifier in China (E. Hannum & M. Wang, 2006). The nationwide educational reform that started in 1985 propelled decentralization of administration and finance. Many researchers (L. N. Lo, 1994; G. A. Postiglione, 1992; M. C. Tsang, 1994, 1996) have shown concerns that China's educational reform – aimed at achieving efficiency – has come at the expense of equity. The educational reforms have mobilized new resources in support of education, but they have also exacerbated regional disparities in funding for schools which have led to further educational inequalities (E. Hannum & M. Wang, 2006). As the unbalanced economic and social development among different regions since the 1980s has widened the gap in financial resources between the minority regions and the Han regions, many minority localities have been left struggling with their educational financial responsibility (G. A. Postiglione, 1992, 1999, 2000; M. C. Tsang, 1996). The students in these minority localities certainly are at a severe educational disadvantage. Insufficient educational funding in minority regions can be easily discerned in teaching facilities and instructional equipment, teacher training, and teaching materials (J. Yang, 2005). The most critical of these is a severe shortage of qualified English teachers among minority communities. For an example, in Yunnan Province, where minorities account for 33.4 percent of the total population, only 11.6 percent of the English teachers at more than half of the minority junior high schools have a bachelor's degree (J. Yang, 2005). Most of the teachers have fairly limited proficiency in English themselves. In primary and secondary schools in ethnic minority regions of Gansu Province, only 36 percent of English teachers hold a bachelor's degree (L. Qiao & X. Yang, 2007). By contrast, 90 percent of secondary school teachers in Beijing hold a Bachelor's degree or above. For many students, especially those who come from economically underdeveloped areas and have ethnic minority backgrounds, the college entrance examination might be the best chance to climb the social ladder in an increasingly stratified country with widening rich-poor and urban-rural gaps.

However, given the pre-eminent role of English in college entrance examination (see the discussion in the section which follows), unequal access to English learning resources seems set to continue to reproduce educational inequalities and to lead to the social exclusion of disadvantaged students.

### 7.2.3 English dominance in college entrance examination

The *Gaokao* system itself, to some extent, reinforces the Han vs. minority and regional disparities in higher education opportunities. Before 2000, the examination had long been uniformly designed by the Ministry of Education, and high school graduates across the country took the exact same examination simultaneously over a three-day period. In recent years, 16 out of 31 provinces have been given autonomy to develop the senior secondary curriculum and design their own *Gaokao* following the requirements set by MOE, yet three subjects are mandatory everywhere: Chinese language, Mathematics and a foreign language – usually English, but can be substituted by one of the three *xiao yuzhong* (minor language – conventionally refers to all foreign languages except English in Chinese discourses), namely, Japanese, Russian or French (Australian Education International, 2009). Needless to say, performance in the foreign language component of the examination is of pivotal importance to every candidate. Many popular undergraduate programs, particularly those in prestigious universities, are exclusive to high school graduates with English as their test subject in the college entrance examination. These programs usually involve a wide range of specialized fields in academic disciplines, such as information technology, bio-technology, new material technology, software engineering, national defense, economics, finance, electronic commerce, law, medicine, teaching Chinese as a foreign language, English linguistics and literature. Some prestigious universities explicitly discourage learners of *xiao yuzhong* from applying in their enrollment regulations, for the reason that English is a required subject for non-English majors and *shuangyu jiaoxue* (Chinese-English bilingual instruction) is part of their curriculum requirements. Based on the statistics released by the Ministry of Education (2009a), there were more than 100 million full-time secondary students learning a foreign language nationwide in 2008. Of these students, more than 95 percent were studying English as a compulsory school subject. The spread of English in China has never been a result of natural “individual choice” as widely advocated in the explanations of the spread of English

based in laissez-faire liberalism (A. Pennycook, 2000). In fact, the favoring of English over other foreign languages among Chinese students is sustained by the education system that legitimizes the superiority of English, for which College entrance examination is a determining factor.

### **7.3 Participants' Experiences of English Language Learning**

How have national policies of English language education been experienced by learners in China? This question is answered below with reference to participants' biographies of their English learning trajectories in interviews. These biographies illustrate prolonged *ti-yong* tensions and identity dilemmas among Chinese learners of English.

#### 7.3.1 English as a "neutral and beneficial" instrument

In China's official discourses, especially those that accelerated the spread of English in the context of the Olympics, English is portrayed primarily as a necessary instrument which can facilitate access to modern scientific and technological advances as well as economic development, and secondarily as a vehicle to promote international communication both for the society and the individual. These discourses intend to legitimize the "neutrality" and "utility value" of English and put an emphasis upon "personal choice" as paramount in the "decision-making process." A typical representation of this view can be found in the *Report of the English 2000 Conference* sponsored jointly by the British Council and Chinese Ministry of Education:

They [=the Chinese people] learn English because it is the language of science, specifically perhaps of the majority of research journals. They learn it because it is the neutral language of commerce, the standard currency of international travel and communication. They learn it because you find more software in English than in all other languages put together (as cited in J. Boyle, 2000, p. 14).

This instrumentalist view of English circulated and naturalized in official discourses is a recurrent theme amongst my interviewees. The Beijing Olympics not only gave many Chinese people a strong incentive to learn English but also an optimistic prospect of English language use in post-Olympics China. The instrumentalist view of English reinforced by the

Beijing Olympic English popularization campaign gave rise to the “need” for English for personal advancement amongst many of my interview participants. Piller (2007) points out that an argument that is often cited in discussions around English in the curriculum is the one that students will “need” English to be successful in the labor market and that English has a high use value in the workplace.

For many interview participants in this study, what “drives” them to learn English is primarily a view of their job prospects. The belief that learning English can help people gain advantages in employment was taken by many as a matter of course. Kong Pei, for instance, was a senior undergraduate student in tourist management from a third-tier university in Wuhan. At the time of the Games, he was recruited as an Olympic volunteer driver at Table Tennis Stadium of Peking University. Before his participation in the Beijing Olympics, Kong Pei admitted that he didn’t realize “the real importance of English” due to lack of exposure to the language and occasions to use it outside the classroom. The Olympic experience changed his understanding of his employment prospects after his graduation.

Kong Pei: 我有几个姐姐他们现在已经参加工作了嘛，我也马上要找工作了。她们就跟我讲说，如果你的外语水平好的话，首先这是一个门槛。即使以后你讲外语—讲英语的机会很少，但是确实这就是一种优势。特别是一些好的工作，还有一些层次比较高的工作比如说经理啊，他们可能就会用英语来跟你面试。如果你连这一关你都过不了的话，那对于工作来说就不用谈可以找到一个岗位了。

Kong Pei: I have several elder sisters who have already taken up jobs. And I’m also going to look for a job soon. They told me...high foreign language proficiency, in the first place, plays a gate-keeping role in seeking a job. Even if later on probably you have very little chance of speaking a foreign language – speaking English, high English proficiency is indeed an advantage. While applying for good jobs, especially those senior positions such as manager, well, candidates will be interviewed by employers in English. If you cannot even pass it, getting a job will be out of the question. (27-09-2008)

The successful staging of the Beijing Olympics impacted on how many Chinese people understand the future of China and their own possibilities in that future China. For Olympic volunteer driver Chao Feixiang, English was an “absolute essential” not only for an “increasingly open China” but more importantly for his own desired identity as “a successful manager or director” after his graduation from university.

Chao Feixiang: (...)现在就是说我们国家越来越开放。很多外资企业、外国人都进到我们国家。我觉得在一个公司或者一个企业里面，比如说一个成功的经理人或者一个主管，他所涉及到的不仅仅是他的专业领域，文化、政治、经济、甚至语言这一块他都要涉及到。因为你所接触的人群可能是外国人，而且英语作为国际上的通用语言，所以我觉得英语是非常有必要的。尽管在平时工作当中没有可能用到，但是对于一个主管或者是一个经理人的话，在以后绝对是有机会用到的。因为你熟悉了语言，你就可以跟别人沟通，然后可以学些别人的一些先进思想或者方法什么的。对以后的话，我觉得是非常有必要的。

Chao Feixiang: (...) Nowadays, just like...our country is becoming increasingly open. A large number of foreign enterprises and foreigners have entered into China. And I think- In my opinion, in a company or an enterprise, take a successful manager or director for instance, what he may be involved with is not only professional knowledge but also cultural, political, economic and even linguistic knowledge. Because who he will come into contact with may be foreigners, and English is said to be a common language in the international community. In this regard, I think English is an absolute essential. >> ... >> Even though [English] may be << ... << of no use in daily work, for a director or manager, [English] will definitely be useful in the future. (...) I think [English] is an absolute essential for the FUTURE. (27-09-2008)

With a more optimistic view of international mobility in post-Olympic China, some of my interview participants, especially those who are educationally more advanced and enjoy better social resources, came to believe in English as a defining measure of life's potential in Chinese society and beyond. In 2008, Zhao Chan was a second year student in a successive postgraduate and doctoral program at a leading Chinese university located in Beijing. During the Olympics, he worked with a group of "native English speakers" from Australia and America as Olympic volunteers of media operation at the Main Press Centre. Zhao Chan's Olympic volunteering experience confirmed his belief in the instrumentality of English for "highly educated people" like himself.

Zhao Chan: (...) 毕竟现在这个世界是一个西方价值观主导的世界。你要融入这个世界中，就必须学习英语，因为英语是一个世界性的语言 (...) 特别是我的同学英语好的人有很多，他们会有很好的机会，不管是工作的机会还是交流的机会。英语好的人会获得更多的信息，或者是你出国发展你的国际事业，针对你个人的发展都有好处。我现在做的这个科研，绝大多数文献都是英语的，所以我觉得英语对一些文化水平高的人，还有那些科研人员和高级商务人员，包括像政府部门他们需要交流的时候，都是非常重要的。

Zhao Chan: (...) After all, this is a world dominated by Western values. If you want to integrate into the world, you have to learn English, as English is a world language (...) Particularly, many of my fellow students have high English proficiency. They have better access to information. Alternatively, if you want to go abroad and develop your

international career, [English] is beneficial for your personal advancement. In my case, most of the literatures for my current research project are in English. So I think English is critically important for highly educated people like research fellows and senior business personnel, as well as [civil servants working with] government departments involved with international communication. (22-09-2008)

The need for English for employment opportunities and career advancement was also deeply felt by Chinese learners of foreign languages other than English. Qin Si was an Olympic volunteer with the VIP accompanying and Spanish language service. However, she didn't start to learn Spanish, a minor foreign language (*xiao yuzhong*) in China, until she was admitted to the Spanish program in her present university. From primary Grade 3, she had been a learner of English for ten years. Even though Spanish majors in her university usually have good job prospects, Qin Si continued to study English. In four years of college, she regularly attended College English classes and passed CET band 4. In the interview, Qin Si said she still could barely speak English, and thus expressed her concerns given the need for English for job applications.

Qin Si: 我听以前找工作的人说，作为XX高校的，用人单位不太怀疑你的专业能力。而且他们有的人，是一个上上届的学生自己说，他说他已经是系里面最差的了，他虽然最差可是他出去找工作，还是要比其他学校的要好 (...) 但是他说用人单位会考一下你的英语，他们也会考英语，找工作面试的时候，他们会组织讨论什么的，最后他们让你用英语总结你的表现，或者说用英语做一些自我介绍啊什么的。

Qin Si: I heard from those job seekers that...as graduates from XX University, employers wouldn't doubt your academic capability. And there is someone, a student graduated the year before last year; he said he was academically the poorest student in the department. Even though, he could get better job offers than those graduated from other universities (...) But he said employers might test your English proficiency, they would test English proficiency. While interviewing job applicants, they would organize a discussion or something else. Finally, they would let you summarize your performance in English, or let you, say, do a self-introduction in English. (22-09-2008)

For many Chinese learners of English such as Kong Pei, Chao Feixiang, Zhao Chan and Qin Si, mastering English is a central part of their seemingly boundless aspirations, a path to a more interesting and lucrative career and a tool to engage with the rest of the world in a way that their parents could never imagine. However, these language ideologies are too often assumed to be without critical examination of the facts. Takahashi (forthcoming 2011)

stresses that the ideology of English should be best understood as “a local, social and political construction in a given country and community.” What has not been realized is that individual learners of English themselves participate in the construction of their perceived social reality of English. Worldwide researchers have long recognized that the spread of English manifests itself differently in different contexts. Even though it is generally believed that English proficiency gives better access to symbolic resources (e.g., education, social status) and material resources (e.g., economic enhancement, career advancement), the value and power of English is by no means fixed and universal.

In contrast to this pervasive argument of the need for English, emerging research evidence shows that English as linguistic capital may not be all that rewarding in terms of career or educational advancement (I. Piller, *et al.*, 2010). Chinese learners of English have always been struggling with low exposure and practicability of English outside the classroom relative to their heavy investment in English language learning. Over a decade ago, Garrott’s study (cited in Y. Zhao & K. P. Campbell, 1995) based on his survey among 511 Chinese college students (English majors and non-majors) found that many students were learning English only because they believed English secured opportunities of going to colleges and consequently finding a job, which may or may not require the use of English. This phenomenon still exists extensively among Chinese students. A newspaper survey (A. Yang, 2003) conducted in ten Chinese major cities including Beijing, Shanghai and Chongqing in 2003 reveals that 46 percent of respondents spent half of their study time on learning English. With regard to the expenses of English study, 43 percent of the respondents found learning English expensive. Another 16 percent even said they could not afford learning English. When asked about their reasons for learning English, 74 percent of the respondents said they were forced to learn English because English is a required course at school. However, paradoxically, 75 percent of the survey’s student respondents believed learning English is good for employment. However, 65 percent also claimed their future jobs might not involve English. Even though 70 percent of the survey’s employed respondents held College English Test Band four (CET-4) certificates, only 10 percent of them were doing English-related work such as translators, teachers, and secretaries. What is more notable is that 74 percent of employed participants who were not involved with



English-related work said English was of no use to them at all. 13 percent of the remainder needs only a little English occasionally for surfing the Internet instead of work. Another study points out that 90 percent of occupations in China's job market have nothing to do with English (L. X. Zhang, 2005). That is to say no more than 20 percent of university graduates need English to different levels in their workplaces. Due to the low practicability of English in Chinese society especially in the job market, what seems to really matter is not actual English competence but the proof of possessing it, mostly by university degrees and English test certificates.

In sum, English seems to provide little practical application value for many Chinese EFL learners who learn English only for the proof of possessing it rather than as an actual competence. Given an average of twelve years of compulsory English education from primary grade 3 to undergraduate programs, all these figures indicate that the waste of human resources, material and financial resources is startling.

### 7.3.2 Problems and dilemmas of English language learning

Although my interview participants generally held positive views of English as a “neutral and beneficial” instrument for personal advancement, the mandatory learning of English could pose serious problems of educational equity and dilemmas of learner identity for them.

#### 7.3.2.1 *Absence of spontaneous motivation*

All the Olympic volunteers I interviewed were university students of the same age cohort (20-25 year-old in 2008) (see Section 3.5.1.2, Chapter Three, for further details). Except for a minority student who didn't start learning English until university (see Section 7.5, Chapter Seven), most of the respondents started their English learning from Junior Secondary Grade 1, whereas a few who had better access to ELT resources in their home cities started at primary level. As English is part of compulsory education and *Gaokao* for most participants, they reported that they did not have the choice and could not afford the

time to study a preferable additional language other than English. In actual practice, it is most likely that parents made decisions for their children regarding the study of English. The “educational orientation” which favors English over other foreign languages and the need of English proficiency test certificates in the job market both constitute a socialized and institutionalized motivation but not a spontaneous motivation to study English among Chinese learners.

Zhang Jie: 你是否是有意识地主动选择学习英语？

Zhang Jie: Did you consciously choose to learn English as a foreign language?

Chen Zheng: (...)我家里人比较倾向于让我出国。其实算是父母的选择吧，不是我自己选的。那时候我也不知道为什么要学英语。(...)这也是一个教育导向问题。因为高考啊、报考学校啊，像现在一些高校啊包括研究生招生，小语种 [考生] 都会有限制。(...)然后你找工作的时候，(...)你像在我们北方，我家在辽宁，我们那日的日企、韩企，也有一些德国来的企业比较多。像德国来的企业，你不会德语可以但是你要会英语。但是像日韩的那种企业，他们就会喜欢要日语生和韩语生这样。也会有一些不同的选择方向吧。但是现在就是越来越多的考试它没事考你一下英语，它就限制在英语上。我觉得这是一个教育导向问题。

Chen Zheng: (...) My parents were inclined to send me abroad. Actually, it was my parents' choice instead of my own. At that time I didn't know why I should study English. (...) This is also a matter of educational orientation. Because like *Gaokao* and university application...like when some universities and graduate schools recruit applicants, there are restrictions for those who learn foreign languages other than English. (...) Then, when you are job searching (...) like in the north, my hometown is in Liaoning Province, there are many Japanese, Korean enterprises and also a few German enterprises. In German enterprises, it's OK not to speak German as long as you speak English. But Japanese and Korean enterprises prefer to recruit Japanese and Korean speakers. There are also different choices. But there are more and more occasions where English is tested. English is the restriction. I think this is a problem of educational orientation. (21-09-2008)

In the interviews, I asked my participants whether they would have chosen to study English as an additional language if other choices had been provided. Wu Linna, a local Beijing university student, guessed that, given a choice, one third of her classmates, including herself, would not have chosen to study English. Whereas some other participants, such as You Qingchuan, strongly opposed the proposal of making English an elective school and university subject. For them, losing English proficiency (or proof of possession of English proficiency) means reduced employment opportunities and uncertain job prospects.

Zhang Jie: 你赞不赞成将英语设置为选修课而非必修课？

Zhang Jie: Do you support the proposal of changing English from a compulsory subject to an elective subject?

You Qiangchuan: 我不赞成，因为英语的作用现在还是很大。XX 大学有很多别的语种。我认识的很多同学他们有的学荷兰语啊，学别的亚非语、缅语、柬语、印地语什么的。他们在本专业学好的前提下，英语是绝对不敢丢的，因为他们班有三分之一是靠英语就业的。

You Qiangchuan: I don't, because English is still very useful. University XX offers many non-English foreign language programs. I know many fellow students who are learning the Dutch language, and other African-Asian languages such as Burmese, the Cambodian language and Hindi. While studying hard on their own majors, they dared not to chuck in [their English studies], because one third of them will rely on English to obtain employment. (22-09-2008)

#### 7.3.2.2 *"Too much time, too low efficiency"*

English language learning is mostly presented as a story of hardship. In a speech addressing the 1996 conference on foreign language education, Vice Premier of the State Council, Li Lanqing, stated that the most serious and pervasive problem with English language teaching in China was that it took too much time but achieved fairly low efficiency (L. Q. Li, 1997). The English learning trajectory of Ji Haiqiang, a senior university student in Beijing and Olympic volunteer of hotel service, speaks for itself. Ji Haiqiang grew up in an intellectual family in Guilin, a prefecture-level city situated in southern China. Having started learning English since primary grade 3, he had a head start in academic success over most of his peers who only started learning English at secondary schools. After primary school, Ji Haiqiang was admitted to a highly competitive local foreign language school, whose curriculum placed a particular emphasis on foreign language training. Compared to regular secondary schools, English education was more intensive in this foreign language school and English classes were conducted by local and foreign teachers with overseas language textbooks and a variety of creative programs. However, things were completely different when Ji was promoted to senior secondary grade 2. The English education in his grade became examination-oriented. According to him, all training for fostering English communicative capability halted and all they had to do in English classes were to take

simulated tests. English learning was no longer enjoyable for him, but became a great pressure with the sole aim of doing well in the *gaokao*. After Ji was admitted to an undergraduate program in sociology in a Beijing university, he continued to spend most of his time learning English, however the quality of college English teaching was a huge disappointment to him. After years of continuous and heavy investment in the language, Ji's self-assessment was that he had only acquired the ability to pass exams instead of a communicative competence in English.

Zhang Jie: 你怎么评价你的英语能力?

Zhang Jie: How do you evaluate your proficiency in English?

Ji Haiqiang: 我觉得考试能力有, 但是真正的实际应用能力...我觉得, 就我们班来说, 怎么说呢, 举个例子吧, 老师上英语课时(...)他点的是 [成绩] 比较好的人, 我看, 在我心目中是英语不错的人。站起来一句话都说不完整(...)叙述一件事情, 一件简单的事情都叙述不出来。但是你让他考试, 他肯定能考挺高的分。但是真的要他说, 他说不出来, 一句话都说不出来。

Ji Haiqiang: I think I have the ability to pass examinations, but in terms of a true applicable capability to use [English]...I think, as far as my class is concerned, how can I put it, let me give you an example. When in English class (...), the teacher always pitches on academically better students [to answer questions]. In my view, these students are good at English. [However], [they] can't even finish a complete sentence [in English] after they got up. [They] can't give an account of a thing...a simple thing. But if you test them, they can surly get a fairly high score. But really, [they] can't speak [English], even a sentence. (03-08-2008)

### 7.3.2.3 *Negative consequences of learning English*

Despite the official emphases on personal choice, benefits, neutrality and complementarity of English language learning, some interview participants reported that English learning had negatively affected their L1 competence and their cultural identities. In 2008, Xu Jian was a senior student in an undergraduate program in English interpreting at a leading foreign language university in Beijing. At the time of the Olympics, she was recruited by BOCOG as an Olympic volunteer with VIP accompanying and (English) language services after screening and training. Xu Jian grew up in Changchun, a capital city of the northeast of China. After she finished her secondary education in a foreign language school, she was

exempted from *Gaokao* and recommended for admission to her present university.

Although Xu Jian has achieved relatively high English proficiency after more than ten years of toiling on the language, her narrative reveals a sense of identity crisis: “除了英语我没有任何专业，就是没有英语的话我就什么也不是 (I don't have any other expertise except English; I'm nobody without English.)” (22-09-2008). While Xu Jian was visibly proud of her English proficiency, she considered it “a sad fact” that her competence in Chinese had been negatively affected.

Xu Jian: (...)前段时间不是要求大学开语文课吗，我就特别赞同这种事情。就是现在我在跟你说话的时候，我就感觉我的表达不是很清楚，但是我在跟别人英语辩论的时候，我就说得非常地清楚。所以就这个思维非常的有问题，尤其是在说自己母语的时候。英语说多了，有的时候 [中文] 说不明白了，就会很着急，用英文去解释你 [我] 的母语，这件事在我看来是很可悲的。而且是我现在学口译，我需要在英语和汉语之间来回转换。如果我的汉语表达不清楚的话，就会直接影响到我的口译的质量，就是说像一个东西少了一半，然后就很不平衡。所以我就挺赞同中国的年轻人，也不是传统文化文言文，但是你要把你的母语学得很好。

Xu Jian: (...) Recently, it is said that universities were required to offer Chinese classes. I'm all for that. I'm aware that my Chinese expression is not very clear. But while I'm debating with others in English, I can express myself very clearly. So...it is a problem arising from the mode of thinking, especially while [I] am speaking my mother tongue. The more English I speak, the less fluent my Chinese is. When I'm anxious, I will interpret my L1 in English. To me, this is a sad fact. Also, I'm majoring in interpreting. I need to code switch between English and Chinese. If I can't express myself clearly in Chinese, the quality of my interpretation will be directly affected. It's like I lost half of the thing [linguistic competence], and it is not balanced. Therefore, I quite agree that Chinese youngsters should learn, not necessarily traditional Chinese culture and classical Chinese texts, but should learn your [their] mother tongue well. (22-09-2008)

#### 7.3.2.4 Summary

Viewing China's widely-publicized English desire in the run up to the Olympics makes it too easy to assume that Chinese learners of English are all motivated to learn English for instrumental or integrative purposes, regardless of their diverse socio-economic, ethnic and linguistic backgrounds. However, the reality is that not all Chinese students are motivated to learn English for a real application of the language or integrating into Western culture. English learning trajectories discussed above show that English language learning is a complex, contextualized and fluid experience, which is embedded in the institutionalized

discourses about English, and is closely linked with the learner's sense of who they are and who they want to be in the future. The spread of English in China has been neither a purely neutral nor universally beneficial process; rather, it has resulted in unequal resource allocation between mainstream society and disadvantaged groups. After a review of the empirical evidence of the benefits of English for individuals internationally, Tollefson (2000) argues that the spread of English is intimately linked with political decisions that benefit some groups at the expense of others. Xu Jian, an interview participant commented on the status quo of English language education in China: “在我理解中英语在中国就像贫富两级分化一样。(In my view English language education in China is the same as the polarization between the poor and the wealthy.)” (22-09-2008). English resources are not equally accessible and beneficial for all Chinese people as portrayed in advertisements of English language schools such as Aifly and EF. In the Beijing Olympic context, English proficiency is advantageous for stakeholders who share a vested interest in the English training industry. While benefiting a few, the analysis of an ethnic minority learner's English learning trajectory in the next section finds that the “need” to learn English may result in serious disadvantages to those who lack equal access to English teaching resources, including members of minority ethnic groups whose cultural and personal dispositions favor languages other than English and who had the need to learn English imposed on them.

#### **7.4 Negotiating Ethnic Identities in ELL: The Case of Wei Ru**

China's ethnic minorities differ considerably from the Han majority, especially those who live in modernizing major cities, whose growing use of and ever-increasing passion for English have been well publicized and researched (J. Yang, 2005). The English learning trajectory of Wei Ru, one of my interview participants, uncovers an entirely different story.

##### **7.4.1 Wei Ru as an ethnic minority student**

When I met Wei Ru in Beijing in August 2008, Wei Ru was a senior undergraduate student majoring in ethnology. Located in an urban district of Beijing, the university that Wei Ru attended is a prestigious national-level university directly under the administration of the

Ministry of Education and designated mainly for ethnic minorities in China. During the Beijing Olympics, BOCOG entrusted her university with voluntary work for the International Youth Camp. Hence, Wei Ru was recruited as a coordinating assistant for outdoor cultural and artistic activities in the big event group of the International Youth Camp. It was her responsibility to assist with outdoor transportation services for members of the international youth camp. This mainly involved arranging designated buses for camp members, informing them of activity routes and ensuring their safety in outdoor activities. As she had the help of Chinese interpreters, her responsibility didn't place a high demand on her English proficiency. In my interview, Wei Ru shared with me the challenges she faced learning English as an ethnic minority student in China.

Wei Ru is a member of Chinese Nanais. Owing to historical reasons, the Nanai people are a cross-national ethnic group with populations both in China and Russia. China has a rigid classification of ethnic groups: the Han Chinese majority and 55 national minorities mostly speaking an array of first languages other than Mandarin (D. Bradley, 2007, p. 278). After the founding of the People's Republic of China, Chinese Nanais were officially recognized as "Hezhe nationality" (*Hezhe-zu*), one of the smallest ethnic minority groups in China. According to the census of 2000 (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2008), the Hezhe ethnic minority numbered 4,640 people, mostly dwelling in Heilongjiang Province of northeast China. The Hezhe people have their own language which belongs to the Manchu-Tungusic Austronesian group of the Altaic language family ("Hezhe Ethnic Minority", 2008). Since the 1950s, the Hezhes have been quickly losing their native language to the dominant majority language, owing to a host of socio-cultural factors: the small population base, living in scattered communities, ethnic intermarriage, changes in way of life and production, lack of a writing system, and changing language attitudes (J. He, 2002). Currently, the Hezhe language has been identified as a "critically endangered" language on the brink of extinction (D. Bradley, 2005, 2007). Mandarin is now widely used among the Hezhe people. The Hezhe language is now reported to have less than 20 speakers most of whom are aged above 60 (Y. Ding & L. Wang, 2004; T. Tsumagari *et al.*, 2007, p. 391). Like other Hezhe people of the younger generation, Wei Ru has adopted Putonghua as L1 because her own ethnic language has faded from use. Despite the loss of practical daily communicative use of the ethnic

language, Wei Ru still nominates the Hezhe language as her mother tongue and holds on to her Hezhe ethnic identity. Because of her ethnic affinity with the Russian Nanais, Wei Ru also strongly identified with the Russian language.

#### 7.4.2 Foreign language teaching in Wei Rui's hometown



Figure 23: Map of Heilongjiang Province. Retrieved July 25, 2010, from <http://www.map-of-china.co.uk/map-of-heilongjiang.htm>

Wei Rui's hometown is in a small county in Heilongjiang Province that borders Russia (see Figure 23 above). Since the re-opening of economic ties between China and Russia in the mid-1980s, border trade has been developing rapidly in the frontier regions of Heilongjiang Province. Benefiting from its geographic advantage, Wei Ru's hometown draws an influx of Russian visitors each year. Because of links forged by geographical proximity, shared history and opportunities brought about by the booming tourism and border trade with Russia, local students used to learn Russian as a compulsory subject from grade one in junior high schools before the 21<sup>st</sup> century. For Wei Ru, Russian had been one of her favorite subjects since junior high school. In class, Wei Ru achieved excellent academic results in most subjects, including Russian. With a very high standard of Russian language



teaching and abundant exposure to the Russian language, many local high school graduates acquired high levels of proficiency in Russian.

Despite the fact that students in Wei Ru's hometown had not only favorable conditions but also actual need, including frequent interactional opportunities, for Russian language education, unexpectedly, the local education department began to promote English as the primary foreign language amongst primary and secondary schools from 2000 onwards. This was a direct consequence of the MoE's resolution to actively promote English language teaching in primary schools throughout the country to address the increasing demand for English raised by the prospects of winning the bid to host the 2008 Olympic Games and joining the WTO in 2001 (G. Hu, 2005). The Ministry of Education (2001b) provided a schedule of implementation in the guidelines, requiring primary schools located in cities and counties to "gradually" offer English programs starting from the fall of 2001, and those located in towns and townships from the fall of 2002. Education departments at all levels were demanded to "fully realize the importance of English language teaching at primary level" (Ministry of Education of PRC, 2001b). Immediately after the 2001 policy, the State Council issued a directive on minority language education with a statement that implicitly excluded minority groups from the promotion of English language education. The directive (State Council, 2002) states that "the relationship between minority languages and Mandarin Chinese should be correctly managed...English should be offered in regions where favorable conditions exist." However, the directive gives no explanation of how "correct management" is defined and what "favorable conditions" are. In actual practice, the minorities have to learn English if they wish to succeed in education (A. Lam, 2007). Consequently, Russian language teaching has been fast losing ground to English language teaching in Heilongjiang Province over the last decade (N. Qi & J. Xue, 2005; Y. Wang, 2006). The top-down promotion of English in Heilongjiang Province turned local schools' previous advantages in foreign language education into disadvantages. In 2003, when Wei Ru was in the last year of senior high school, her school began to offer an English course on a par with Russian to students of lower grades. Unprepared for a smooth startup in English language teaching, the school was faced with a series of difficulties: a severe shortage of qualified English teachers, insufficient educational funding, lack of teaching resources and

facilities, insufficient teaching hours and the daunting task of teaching L3 English to beginners.

Wei Ru: 我们那边的英语基础特别差。因为你想县城嘛本来就是好的老师不愿意来。然后我们很多俄语老师被送去培训两年学英语然后再回来教。你想他明明是学俄语的，你让他去学两年英语回来就马上教学生，你想会是多差吧。

The English language teaching conditions in our hometown are extremely poor. You can imagine qualified English teachers were not willing to come to our small county. Consequently, we had to send many Russian teachers out for two-year professional English training and then have them back to teach English. As you can see, obviously they were Russian learners. You can well imagine HOW POORLY English was taught by those Russian teachers who have only received two years of English language training. (21-09-2008)

#### 7.4.3 A disadvantaged group in college entrance examination

Before sitting the national college entrance examination in 2004, Wei Ru and other students in the same grade were required to list their university program preferences, as a prerequisite for admission to higher education. It was not until then that Wei Ru and her fellow students, learners of Russian, realized their dilemma in the forthcoming national college entrance examination. The predicament facing learners of Russian was that there was only a limited range of undergraduate programs available for them to apply to. Many undergraduate programs only admit high school graduates with English as their test subject in the college entrance examination (Y. Huang, 2009). Facing the same dilemma, Wei Ru and her fellow students had to make the same painful choices between Russian and English. In order to make it to a prestigious college and a preferred major, many students chose to repeat a year to cram English for college entrance examination. It is not difficult to conceive how disadvantageous it was for those students from a frontier county to learn English from scratch within one year in order to compete with their counterparts living in economically and socio-culturally developed major cities who had been learning English from junior high school or even earlier, and who usually enjoy more favorable conditions for English language learning.

Wei Ru: 现在 [学俄语] 就成劣势了。现在完全是劣势了。本来我们高考可以打 130 / 140 分嘛，120 多分其实 [在我们那] 完全就是中等水平了。然后结果如果是英语的话也就 50 多分吧，就那样。

It [Learning Russian] has become such a DISADVANTAGE now! An ABSOLUTE disadvantage! We could have scored 130 or 140 [out of the full mark of 150] in the

Russian subject test in national college entrance exam. Actually, 120 was indeed a mere average test score for us. But if English was the test subject, we would only be able to get a score of 50. That is the fact. (21-09-2008)

Unlike some of her classmates, Wei Ru didn't repeat a year for the English component of the national college entrance examination. Compared to the English mania witnessed in most Han regions, Wei Ru was mostly exposed to the Russian language and culture. For her, obtaining a good command of Russian was more rewarding and brings more tangible benefits than being able to speak English in the locality. Understandably, Wei Ru didn't share the widespread sense of the importance and utility of English and was poorly motivated to study English.

Wei Ru: (...) 当时我们班有很多同学为了学英语，就蹲了一年。但是我们家就考虑 [我] 学习挺好的，没必要为了一个语言，就是没有意识到这个语言—因为我们家是县城嘛，就比较偏远，就没有想过英语—因为我们那儿打交道的都是俄罗斯人，俄罗斯人特别多，就根本没有想过什么 [学] 英语。走出来才发现英语这么重要。从来没有想过，也根本没有意识到。所以我当时也没有蹲级啊怎么样，就一直学着俄语。

...Many fellow students in my class repeated a grade for studying English. But my family thought there was no point in [repeating a grade] solely for learning a language, since I was doing very well at school. I was just not aware that this language [is so predominant elsewhere] - because my hometown is in a remote county, and we dealt with Russian people all the time. There were a great number of Russian people in our county, thus I had never thought of learning English. I've never thought about and didn't realize English is so important elsewhere until I left [my hometown]. So, I didn't repeat a grade and went on learning Russian. (21-09-2008)

#### 7.4.4 A marginal student in college English education

In September 2004, Wei Ru was finally admitted to a preparatory program in a university for nationalities in Beijing due to the restrictions for Gaokao candidate of Russian. At that time, Beijing was the spearhead of China's modernization and internationalization drive and the Olympic host city where various English popularization campaigns were in full swing. For over 20 million students enrolled in over 2,236 colleges and universities in China by the end of 2004, English was the compulsory foreign language for most (Ministry of Education of PRC, 2004a). In the wake of China's accession to the WTO and winning the right to host the Olympic Games at the turn of the century, the Chinese Ministry of Education (2001a) issued

an important document to advocate the use of English as the medium of instruction in non-English university programs. In the official document, “*Shuangyu jiaoxue*” (English–Chinese bilingual instruction) was listed as one of the 12 recommendations for the purpose of improving the overall quality of universities and colleges.

In order to gear education to the needs of modernization, the world, and the future, and meet the challenge of economic globalization and technological revolution, conditions should be created for English instruction in undergraduate education. Undergraduate programs in the high-tech fields such as biotechnology and information technology, as well as those programs in the demand of China’s accession to the WTO such as economics and law, should take the lead in promoting English instruction. Within 3 years, at least 5–10 percent of all the courses on a university curriculum should be taught in English. For universities and institutes that temporarily do not have the conditions to practice English instruction, English textbooks can be first adopted for Chinese-instructed courses. English instruction in these universities can be implemented in phases. (Ministry of Education of PRC, 2001a)

In 2004, the Ministry of Education issued the “University undergraduate education evaluation program” (2004b), attempting to ensure that the percentage of English-Chinese medium courses should be no less than 10 percent of a university curriculum, especially in undergraduate programs of biotechnology, information technology, economics and law. The document also stipulates that English textbooks should be adopted in English-Chinese bilingual classes and the percentage of the time allocated to teaching in English should be no less than 50 percent of the total classroom hours. Although this document is concerned with higher education, it also brought about an upsurge of “English–Chinese bilingual instruction” in secondary and primary schools (L. Yu, 2008). Although Wei Ru’s university was designated mainly for ethnic minorities, English was made a compulsory part of the university curriculum for all non-English majors, regardless of their diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. The undergraduate program that Wei Ru studied in adopted many original editions of textbooks from English-speaking countries and English had become the medium of instruction for several courses. Given her background in Russian and not having started learning English until she went to college, Wei Ru was painfully struggling with English language education which she felt conflicted with her ethnic identity. As an English beginner and a marginalized student in English-medium classes, Wei Ru could not compete on the same footing with other students who had started learning English from junior high or even

earlier. Wei Ru told me about her great frustration in an English-medium class under the direction of a foreign teacher.

Wei Ru: 你像我们，究其是学这个专业的，它有很多东西都是从西方过来的，有很多书都是英文书嘛。老师上课讲话的时候也会讲英语。特别是大二那年我们开了一门外教的课，这个外教几乎全部是英文授课，我就根本听不懂。你想在那儿坐两个小时的时间，你一句话都听不懂，你想那个是个什么样的心情！当老师讲到幽默的话，大家在笑的时候，我也不明白为什么会笑，就是那种感觉特别难受。

Many things [knowledge and theories] taught in our program, in particular, are imported from the West; therefore we have lots of original textbooks in English, and lecturers may occasionally speak English in class. When I was a sophomore, we were offered a course given by a foreign teacher. The foreign teacher instructed the course entirely in English. I could BARELY understand a word of the foreign teacher. Imagine you sat in the class for two hours and you could HARDLY understand anything, how would you feel? When the foreign teacher said something humorous, everyone in the class laughed, but I didn't EVEN understand why they laughed. That is a REALLY terrible feeling. (21-09-2008)

Language learning is the site of identity construction and negotiation (B. Norton, 2000).

Language learner's understanding of their identities in the target language affect their agency, motivation, investment, and resistance in the learning of the language. Desirable identities may motivate the learners, whereas undesirable and powerless identities may hamper their learning and even result in resistance. Using English as the medium of instruction in non-English classes put Wei Ru and those who only begin to learn English in college at a severe disadvantage. It was extremely difficult for Wei Ru, who had little English proficiency, to keep up with her classmates. When students like Wei Ru have to learn in four years what takes most Han students 14 years, it should come as no surprise that many minority students may never catch up. In fact, English language education did not empower Wei Ru but presented her a formidable obstacle to education, employment, and other activities requiring English proficiency. Furthermore, for Wei Ru, the English culture was represented by the Anglo-American culture and thus the English language was perceived to embody values undesirable and antithetical to her native culture and her affiliation to Russian. Therefore, the undesirable and powerless identities in English severely affected Wei Ru's agency and investment in English language learning. She responded to the learning of English with resistance.

Wei Ru: (...)我就觉得中国人常说学了外语是为了能和别的国家的交流，但是我觉得现在英语对我来说，其实不太愿意学，心理 [动机] 比较弱。如果想学早就有条

件，早就可以去报班啊去学，但是我心里特别地犯抵触。可能因为从小一直受俄罗斯影响吧，我特别 — 你像有些同学特别想出国嘛，我不是因为 — 对外我总是说因为语言嘛，但是我心里边特别排斥，就是英美那些国家的人，我特别不喜欢外国人，我真的特别不喜欢。可能从小受环境影响吧，就是对中国人和俄罗斯人感觉都比较亲切，但就对那种美国啊、英国啊，大家都比较喜欢去的那些国家，我特别不喜欢。我想给我多少钱让我去我也不会去。

(...) Chinese people always say we should study foreign languages to communicate with other countries, but personally, I'm RELUCTANT to study English. Psychologically, I have no desire to learn English. I've LONG had the conditions to learn it if I really wanted to. I could have attended English classes. But I have a VERY strong resistance to studying English, probably because I have been influenced by Russia since childhood. I particularly - Some of my classmates desire to go abroad, but I don't – When asked, I always say I don't want to go abroad because of my poor English, but in fact I particularly resist those English-speaking people such as Americans and Britons. I really dislike them very much. Probably, due to the influence from my childhood environment, I feel a special affinity for both Chinese and Russians. However, speaking of USA, UK and those English-speaking countries which others desire to go to, I dislike them very much. I think I'll never go to those countries, NO MATTER HOW MUCH MONEY I would be given. (21-09-2008)

After the Beijing Olympics, Wei Ru proceeded to her university's postgraduate program. Since English was compulsory in her postgraduate program, too, she still had to learn English despite her extreme reluctance. The need for English imposed by China's education system once again overwhelmed Wei Ru's resistance.

Wei Ru: (...)如果上了研究生的话还要上英语课嘛，就是我没有办法，我必须得去面对。虽然我万分地不情愿，特别不愿意学这种东西，但是为了我的前途也好，还是为了将来生存也好，我还是必须要去接触必须要去学它。我就觉得特别得无奈，就是没有办法，这个事情我左右不了。你说我现在如果走上工作岗位的话，我可以放弃这东西也可以，但是我要继续学业嘛，就要积蓄学英语。所以就不想学...不想学也没办法还是得学。

(...) I still have to learn English if I am admitted to the postgraduate program. I can do nothing but face the reality. I am extremely reluctant and hate learning it [English]. However either for my future or my living, I have to get to know it and learn it. I feel extremely helpless. I have no way out. This is not something I am able to control. If now I had a job, I would quit learning English. But because I'm going to further my study, I have to continue learning English. So it's just like...I DON'T want to learn English! But in the end I can do nothing but learn it. (21-09-2008)

Wei Ru was not giving up her resistance to English. When asked about her plan after her postgraduate study, Wei Ru told me she would return to her hometown and attend local

officeholder recruitment examinations instead of getting a job in Beijing. She said with certainty that she would not apply for any English-related job. This is Wei Ru's "way out." Unfortunately, English proficiency which is now taking on an ever-expanding gate-keeping role in Chinese society might still be impacting on her future life trajectory.

Obviously, Wei Ru was not motivated to learn English for communicating with native speakers or integrating into English-speaking cultures. The need to learn English had been largely imposed on her by various governmental, institutional and societal forces. It also became an imposition when she left her hometown for Beijing, when she studied for a higher education degree, and will probably arise again when she sits for the local officeholder recruitment examinations in the future. Compared with many Han Chinese learners of English living in economically developed areas where English is increasingly valued and used, Wei Ru might be a mere "minority." However, among 200,000 college entrance examination candidates in Heilongjiang Province each year who aspire to an opportunity to go to university, and among China's ethnic minorities who have a combined population of more than 100 million and reside in approximately 60 percent of the country's land, Wei Ru's story of struggle and resistance is definitely not unfamiliar.

## **7.5 Russian Language Education and English Fever**

In the past decade, the strategic cooperation partnership between China and Russia has created huge market demand for professionals with a good command of Russian. Despite this escalating demand, Russian language education in Heilongjiang Province declined significantly under the influence of national English popularization policies, as exemplified in Wei Ru's account above. The shortage of qualified personnel with Russian proficiency poses serious problems for the sustainable development of Heilongjiang Province.

### **7.5.1 Rising demand for Russian proficient personnel in Heilongjiang Province**

Heilongjiang (see Figure 23, p. 196) is China's northernmost province, which borders Russia to the north. With an adjoining border of over 3,000 kilometers, Heilongjiang

Province is China's most important gateway to Russia. Since the signing of the Treaty of Good-Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation between China and Russia in 2001, bilateral trade in Heilongjiang Province has increased continuously (People's Government of Heilongjiang Province, 2005). In recent years, plans have been underway to improve the infrastructure for border trade as Heilongjiang's importance is set to increase as the Sino-Russian relationship and cooperation strengthen (Hong Kong Trade Development Council, 2008). Economic and trade cooperation with Russia holds an important place in Heilongjiang Province's foreign trade collaboration and has a strong influence on the development of Heilongjiang's export-oriented economy (L. Zhou, 2002). In 2004, Heilongjiang Province's trade volume with Russia accounted for 55.2 percent of the total imports and exports of the province, and 18 percent of China's total trade with Russia (People's Government of Heilongjiang Province, 2005). In 2005, this province's trade with Russia added up to 5.68 billion U.S. dollars to the Chinese economy, including 3.84 billion U.S. dollars of exports and 1.84 billion U.S. dollars of imports, up 78.1 percent and 10.2 percent respectively (L. Pan, 2006). In the same year, the provincial government issued an important document to upgrade the area's scientific and technological cooperation with Russia, further strengthening Russia's status as the premier trading partner of Heilongjiang Province. In the official document (People's Government of Heilongjiang Province, 2005), Heilongjiang provincial government urged the training of qualified personnel of Russian language capability to meet the needs of scientific and technological cooperation with Russia. Guidelines were laid down to expand college recruitment in Russian language programs; encourage institutions of higher education to admit more postgraduate students in Russian and carry out more Sino-Russian cooperative academic programs; and encourage joint programs between universities and enterprises to train professionals with a good command of Russian. In the case of Wei Ru and many more students in Heilongjiang Province, proficiency in Russian may be more highly rewarded than proficiency in English, particularly when they don't have equal access to English teaching resources compared with their peers in major cities along the east coast. However, against the broad prospects for cooperation with Russia in economic, trade, scientific, technological, cultural and educational areas, the outlook for the development of Russian language education in Heilongjiang Province is far from positive.



### 7.5.2 How English won and Russian lost

Because of its geographical location, Heilongjiang Province has long been the base of Russian language education in China. Despite an escalating demand for professionals with a good command of Russian, Russian language education has been shrinking significantly over the last decade. The number of examinees with Russian as the foreign language subject in national college entrance examinations has dropped considerably from 20,000 in 1997 to 3,397 in 2009, even though, starting from 2008, the local government formulated a preferential policy to give 20 extra points to students of this kind in college entrance examination ("225000 Students", 2009). Furthermore, places where most students of Russian are concentrated have shifted from being previously centered in the major cities of Heilongjiang Province such as Harbin and Daqing to a few port cities, counties and townships (Y. Huang, 2009). The decline of Russian language education in Heilongjiang Province is directly linked to China's English fever in recent years.

As described in Section 2.7.2, in 2001, China's Ministry of Education formulated a policy, mandating primary school students to start learning English as a compulsory subject in the third grade. Several scholars have expressed concerns about this compulsory education policy. Hu (2005) and Lu (2003) argue that China lacks overall favorable conditions essential to the success of a primary school foreign language program. They both conclude that the policy has created educational inequality in that schools in rural areas are struggling with various constraints to implement the policy. Similarly, Y. Hu (2008), based on his case studies of four public schools of different types, argues that the policy was issued prematurely, which could have undesirable impacts on educationally disadvantaged students, less privileged schools, ELT at the junior secondary school level, and social stratification. Hence, Y. Hu (2007) contends that "the feasibility of the policies has been questioned as it was inferred that the policy might have been imposed on schools and students without any grass-roots consideration of its impact on them" (p. 370). Given the fact that approximately 60 percent of China's population resides in rural areas where English teaching resources are scarce, it is certain that a proportion of students have been and will be disadvantaged by the policy (Y. Hu,

2007).

Under the influence of this nationwide top-down English popularization policy, primary schools in Heilongjiang Province all started to teach English to students after 2001. English became a compulsory component of primary education, while the subject of Russian was no longer offered before junior high school. The overwhelming majority of these primary school students, understandably, chose to continue learning English in high schools due to the gate-keeping role of English in higher educational opportunities. Not having enough students, many secondary schools in Heilongjiang Province switched from Russian language teaching to English language teaching. In the case of Wei Ru, when the English course was first offered in her high school, students were allowed to select their preferred foreign language. But now, there are few students learning Russian in her school as English has become one of the subjects that they need to do well in for their further education. Another consequence of the shortage of students is the brain drain with one third of Russian teachers changing their profession to support services and logistics at schools (N. Qi & J. Xue, 2005). Facing an insecure future, Russian teachers couldn't give themselves over to their teaching work which led to the decline of Russian language teaching quality (Y. Huang, 2009). According to the statistics of the local education department, there were 13,000 foreign language teachers in the province in 2005. Among them, only 500 or so were Russian teachers, accounting for no more than 4 percent (N. Qi & J. Xue, 2005).

The English-only policy of many Chinese universities in enrollment and curriculum is another primary contributing factor to the decline of Russian language education (N. Qi & J. Xue, 2005). Some parents worry that learning Russian will severely restrict their children's opportunities of getting access to higher education and employment (Y. Huang, 2009). Given the fact that English is the dominant language on the Internet, many students believe that English has a higher utility value than Russian in modern societies, and are thus not interested in learning Russian. Outdated Russian teaching materials and scarce resources on the internet that can be mobilized for Russian language education have also resulted in unfavorable conditions for Russian language education in Heilongjiang Province (Y. Huang, 2009). Most recently, China's Ministry of Education and the Heilongjiang provincial education department

have recognized the gap between the rising demand for Russian and a severe shortage of various professionals with good command of Russian. Currently, some initial measures are being taken to restore basic Russian education at the primary and secondary levels in Heilongjiang Province and expand the college recruitment of students of Russian. At present, there are 103 universities offering undergraduate programs in Russian language, with 46 of these offering masters and PhD programs (ibid.). At present, the effectiveness of these measures remains to be seen.

## **7.6 Summary**

In the analysis of interview participants' perception of English, the most common theme was a "neutral" and "beneficial" view of acquiring English. The view was first proposed by Qing reformists in the Self-Strengthening Movement and has been established through a system both of educational and institutional structures and ideological positions in the market reform. The overwhelming English fever observed in education, employment and other social activities in China has constructed English into a key to expanded utilitarian roles, a mechanism of social stratification, a symbolic capital to power, reputation, social status and other socio-economic recourses by which social inequalities are reinforced. Tollefson (2000) points out the observed fact that the benefits of English are not distributed equally:

For those who already speak English, the economic value of the language translates directly into greater opportunities in education, business and employment. For those who must learn English, however, particularly those who do not have access to high-quality English language education, the spread of English presents a formidable obstacle to education, employment, and other activities requiring English proficiency. (p. 9)

My research has found that the hegemonic spread of English across China has caused the contraction of Russian language education in Heilongjiang Province, despite huge demand for personnel with Russian proficiency. Although foreign language education policies in the past decade have secured the dominance of English in China, Chinese learners from socio-economically, ethnically and linguistically diverse backgrounds may have contradictory attitudes towards English language learning. English is perceived, learned, and used

differently among China's socially, ethnically and linguistically diverse English learners. Wei Ru's English learning trajectory tells us that the need to learn English was imposed on her by various governmental, institutional and societal forces. English language education was experienced by her as a tremendous academic burden and disadvantage. For Wei Ru, the English language bore uncomfortable connotations and was perceived to embody values undesirable and antithetical to her native culture and thus threatened her ethnic cultural identities. Feeling the education system stripping her of freedom to choose her preferred foreign language without giving her equal opportunities in the wider society, Wei Ru had resisted the hegemonic spread of English in China in her own way. As educational resources are distributed very unevenly across China, students in economically and educationally disadvantaged minority localities are usually confronted with more challenges in learning English than their Han peers living in westernized coastal cities (G. Hu, 2003; J. Yang, 2005). Those who find English language learning in conflict with their identities and have not equal access to qualified English teaching resources can be put at a severe disadvantage in today's Chinese society where English serves as an instrument of social stratification. It is my contention that ideologies of English learning should be viewed as social, cultural, and political constructs. Uncritically oversimplifying Chinese people's desire for English in terms of supposed "benefits", "value" and "power" might not only mislead Chinese learners of English but also threaten the social rights of disadvantaged groups and the language ecology of minority languages.

In Chapters 4-7, I have explored language policy and planning for the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games from four different perspectives: the language policy process, the linguistic landscape, ELT textbooks, and the language learner experience. In the next chapter, I will conclude the thesis by summarizing the findings with regard to my research questions and outlining the implications of my research.

## **Chapter Eight: Conclusion**

### **8.1 Summary**

In this thesis I followed Shohamy's (2006) call for a "broader" and "more valid" view of language policy: one that emphasizes the observation and interpretation of a variety of overt and covert policy devices beyond explicitly declared language policy documents so as to understand how language policies turn language ideologies into language practices, which then become de facto language policies. Specifically, I have applied an analytical framework that addresses language policy and planning issues on the basis of a comparative analysis of language policy documents (Chapter Two and Chapter Four), language teaching materials (Chapter Five), the linguistic landscape (Chapter Six), and language learner experiences (Chapter Seven). Based on the triangulation of the four sets of data and methods, I have presented a multi-dimensional critical perspective to LPP for the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games. In the following I give a brief summary of my findings and conclusions with regard to my research questions:

- 1) Which kinds of language policies, language practices and language ideologies were in evidence in the Beijing Olympic context?
- 2) How are these policies, ideologies and practices linked with the various levels of identity construction carried out in the preparation for the Olympic Games?
- 3) How did Chinese English learners take up, adjust to or resist those ideologies?

#### **8.1.1 Language policies and language practices in the Olympic drive**

As I have shown in Chapter One, for China and its people, the significance and symbolism of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games far transcends the boundaries of sport. After having experienced fading glory and identity loss in the past one and a half century, China seized the 2008 Olympic Games as a hard-earned opportunity to revive a powerful national identity and foster its soft power on the global stage. The preparation work for the Beijing Olympics marked a pivotal period of identity construction at three levels: China as a

harmoniously developing modern nation-state, Beijing as an international Olympic city and Chinese people as patriotic yet global citizens. The indispensability of English for the three levels of identity construction was recognized by the Chinese government in numerous official discourses and assured through policy measures. It is the intense desire for these identities together with the benefits these identities were assumed to bring that drove a massive English popularization campaign in the preparation for the Beijing Olympics.

In Chapter Two I discussed how Chinese foreign language education policies have been influenced by Chinese cultural traditions, its semi-colonial history, changing political and economic situations, and international relations. I have argued that the spread of English in China is not a “natural” process and that Chinese foreign language education policies are not empty of ideologies and political agendas. To achieve an in-depth understanding of the ideological underpinnings of language policies and practices for the Beijing Olympic Games, I first traced back this discourse to the principle of “Chinese learning for essence (体 *ti*); Western learning for utility (用 *yong*)” proposed by Qing reformists in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Drawing on the Confucian tradition of separating “internal essence” and “external utility” in learning, Qing reformists promoted English as a “neutral” and “beneficial” instrument for practical purposes and believed that English could be learned while keeping Chinese cultural values and identities intact. This instrumentalist principle and the associated neutrality and usefulness of English learning have been a key Chinese perspective on English ever since and undergirded language policy and planning for the Beijing Olympic Games.

Secondly, LPP for the Beijing Olympics are best understood within the historical context of China’s continued integration into the modern world system at the turn of this century. The 21<sup>st</sup> Century is an era of increasing globalization, one characterized by a more integrated, interdependent, yet culturally diverse world. It is also marked by the worldwide use of English and its prominent role in international communication. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, China has become the world’s fastest growing major economy. The Beijing Olympic Games demonstrated China’s ambition to pursue a more modernized, unified, and internationalized nation and move towards a more central position in the world system. For the Chinese

government, China can only become a strong state by integrating into the world system and English is the key to accessing development opportunities and “playing” on a world stage. Accordingly, English language education has been accorded high priority in China during this period. The analysis of China’s foreign language education policies in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century in Chapter Two reveals that the Chinese government has maintained an instrumentalist approach to English which stresses the usefulness of English, and strived to present ELT in a natural (unrelated to imperialism and colonialism), neutral (unconnected to cultural values and political ideologies), and beneficial (to national and personal development) manner. Moreover, these policies underscore the necessity of English education for cultivating patriotism and promoting Chinese culture. I contend that the instrumentalist view of English learning and ideologies about patriotism and collective identity are strategies used by the state to maintain its control and promote its social, political and economic agendas. In LPP for the Beijing Olympic Games, the Chinese government manipulated all these strategies in motivating Chinese learning English.

Following the presentation of the study’s Methodology, Chapter Four then presents an overview of the Olympic English popularization campaign and a discussion of its mechanisms, outcomes and effects. I have argued that although ELT has been continuously promoted since China adopted the outward-looking policy in the 1980s, the 2008 Olympic Games initiated a new upsurge of English learning in the country, with Beijing at the center of this nationwide English fever. Since Beijing won the right to serve as the host of the 29<sup>th</sup> Olympiad in 2001, the city had witnessed an unprecedented top-down English popularization campaign in the Olympic spotlight. The founding of the Beijing Speaks Foreign Languages Program (language policy making and enforcing mechanism), the launch of the Beijing English Testing System (language testing mechanism), the initiation of the Official Language Training Services Suppliers of the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games (language training mechanism), and the promotion of English learning celebrities (role model and identification mechanism) were four important parts of the construction work of Beijing’s “international language environment.”

The Beijing Speaks Foreign Languages Program is an on-going governmental program

responsible for formulating and enforcing regional regulations on English use and organizing various foreign language learning and standardization activities (see Section 4.3.1). In accordance with the preparation work of the Beijing 2008 Olympics, the first BSFLP Plan (2003-2008) strived to train 5 million foreign language speaking Beijing residents, upgrade foreign language services of key service industries, and standardize English translation in bilingual signs. To achieve these aims, the Organizing Committee of the BSFLP set strict English language training and testing requirements for Beijing residents from different walks of life. Rules were developed that require employees to have an English proficiency certificate for employment in certain industries or professions. The Beijing English Testing System is an efficient mechanism to push further English learning and testing among Beijing residents (see Section 4.3.2). Since its launch in 2006, this gate-keeping English proficiency test has become the key to a host of opportunities in Beijing, such as Olympic volunteer recruitment, career opportunities in the public and private sector, eligibility for professional promotion, and government-sponsored study abroad programs. The nomination of EF and Aifly as the Official Language Training Services Suppliers of the Beijing Olympic Games in 2007 was another important mechanism to promote the development of the Olympic English popularization campaign towards specialized English training for Olympic volunteers and professionals directly involved in the 2008 Olympics (see Section 4.3.3). While EF used the ideologies of internationalism, professionalism and native speakers as their unique selling proposition, Aifly underscored the ideology of patriotism and the symbolic capital of English in the promotion of English learning. Establishing the founder of Crazy English Li Yang and multilingual policeman Liu Wenli as official ELLT celebrities was another important driving force in the Olympic English popularization campaign (see Section 4.3.4). Through celebrity identification, their success stories, which were widely publicized in the media, were used as a powerful tool to encourage the Chinese to express their patriotism and obtain an elite identity through learning English in service of the Beijing Olympic Games. I contend that the integration of the four language policy mechanisms contributed to a powerful control system that imposed the learning and use of English in accordance with the national, social, political and economic agendas and perpetuated the state's cultural and political governance.



In Chapter Four, I also discussed the enormous impact of the top-down Olympic English popularization campaign. The campaign had involved over 4,000 athletes, judges, BOCOG staff, 1.5 million Olympic volunteers, and millions of Beijing residents from all walks of life in various English learning, testing and training activities. Armies of senior citizens had been enlisted to take English lessons every weekend. Regular English-speaking competitions were held in parks and English song performances were televised. Taxi drivers and police officers had been handed tapes and textbooks and ordered to learn 100 common English phrases. In addition to “learning” English, taxi and bus drivers, tourist guides, shopping center salesmen and post office workers were all encouraged to have their level of proficiency “tested” and thus officially recognized. In the campaign, governmental English popularization and testing agencies, English language schools and ELLT celebrities all contributed to the magnification of the symbolic capital of English and the intensification of English desire in Chinese society. For Chinese people, proficiency in English has been constructed as the key to a host of opportunities, such as a university education at home or abroad, a desirable job in the public or private sector, eligibility for professional promotion, and a valuable asset for life potentials. For ELLT celebrities such as Crazy English’s Li Yang and Policeman Liu, their proficiency in the language even won them fame, honor, fortune, iconic status, power and influence. For millions of Beijing citizens and Olympic volunteers, learning English had become a patriotic act, an act of service to the entire country and, simultaneously, also an act of self-service.

Although the Olympic English popularization campaign has exerted profound influence on the spread of English in the host city and across the whole nation, I have shown in Section 4.4 that the program did not actually achieve a favorable “international language environment” as asserted in official statements. It should be noted that foreign language policies (with English popularization at the center) in service of the Beijing Olympic Games were a product of state ideologies and formulated in a top-down manner in a centralized system. The authority organized relevant government agencies (e.g., the Foreign Affairs Office of the Beijing Municipal People’s Government) and “a consulting group” (composed of 35 domestic and international foreign language educationists) in policy making but did not take into account the opinions and needs from grass-root sectors of the society,

especially companies, organizations and institutions with foreign language requirements. In addition, the massive Olympic English training classes offered to Olympic volunteers, service staff and ordinary Beijing residents put undue emphasis on quantity and efficiency at the expense of quality. Consequently, the outcome of the program was in fact a huge number of foreign language speakers but with low proficiency. As a direct result, Beijing was short of advanced English speakers, multilingual speakers and speakers of foreign languages other than English at the time of the Games. Most significantly, the regulations such as the requirement for employees in service sectors in Beijing to pass English tests for employment served to maintain the hegemony of English and perpetuated the differentiation of the “haves” from the “have-nots.” I have also pointed out that the widespread English fever boosted by the Olympic drive intensified *ti-yong* tensions in English learning among the Chinese, with some academics warning against the hegemony of English and urging a counter trend of learning traditional Chinese culture.

#### 8.1.2 Language textbooks for Olympic purposes

Language policy informs practical language teaching, learning and use, and instructs teaching material compilation and selection. Language textbooks are created as a consequence of overt language policy, at the same time, used as an effective “mechanism” or “policy device” for turning language ideologies embedded in policy documents into language practices (E. G. Shohamy, 2006). Consequently, in Chapter Five, I examined two official Olympic English textbooks to gain an additional perspective on LLP for the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

The Beijing Olympic Games not only boosted the multi-billion dollar English training industry but also gave a great impetus to the flourishing of ELT publications. Various domestic and overseas ELT materials had flooded the Chinese book market by the time of the Olympic year. The sampled data in Chapter Five is *A Conversational English Reader* (Elementary & Advanced), the first English-language training material regarding Olympic services in China. This volume was compiled and published under the direction of the Beijing Municipal Education Commission and BOCOG and thus represents officially

authorized knowledge about the Olympics and English, especially how the image of Beijing as Olympic city should be projected in English. The two *Readers*, though different from each other in terms of targeted learners and pedagogical content, both feature similar identity constructions: that is, a male dominated Chinese community in which Chinese people are accessible, polite, helpful and trustworthy and able to avoid misunderstandings with fluent English on every occasion; and an imagined target community composed of predominantly middle-class White male native-English speakers who show tireless interest in traditional Chinese culture. In both *Readers*, female characters are marginalized in numbers and professional identities. In addition, Beijing is discursively constructed as a harmonious society with a good mixture of both tradition and modernity, where Chinese are delving into their English study with enthusiasm while preserving cultural traditions. The international community in the Olympic city is imagined as a monolingual space with English as *the* international language. These discursively constructed imagined communities exactly indicate that the two official language textbooks are ideological and that the Chinese government is maintaining governance by practicing ideological hegemony. Given the role of language textbooks in instructing language learning and turning language ideologies into practices, the two *Readers* can thus be expected to have a significant impact on learners' perceptions of English and its functions, context of use and ownership (but see 8.3.2 below for the limitations of this approach). My analysis of the *Readers* in Chapter Five indicates that the two official language textbooks offer misrepresented, stereotyped, and oversimplified identity options to the targeted learners. Pavlenko & Norton (2007) argue that identity options available to FL/SL learners in imagined communities affect their learning trajectories, influencing their agency, motivation, investment, and resistance in the learning of English. Desirable identities may motivate the learners, whereas undesirable and powerless identities may hamper their learning and even result in resistance. Non-included identities may leave some learners without important linguistic means of self-presentation. It is my contention that Chinese educationalists, ELT practitioners and learners need to raise critical awareness with regard to English domination, construction of identities, and social, linguistic, racial, ethnic and gender inequality inscribed in language textbooks.

### 8.1.3 Linguistic landscape of the Olympic host city

Language policy and planning for the Beijing Olympics manifested itself not only through such explicit policy documents and test materials but also through the linguistic landscape (LL) – language objects that marked the public space in the Olympic city. In Chapter Six, I have examined the relative power and status of visible languages in the linguistic landscape of Beijing during the 2008 Olympic Games. Beijing is neither ethnically nor linguistically homogenous. In fact, the city has a multiethnic and multilingual Chinese population, and its long-term foreign residents and Olympic visitors came from diverse linguistic backgrounds. However, my analysis in Chapter Six finds that the officially planned LL of Beijing gave most visibility to three languages: Mandarin Chinese (for Beijing as the capital of a harmonious society), English (for Beijing as a global city) and French (for Beijing as an Olympic city). This pattern of LL delivered symbolic messages about the importance, power, significance and relevance of these three languages and the irrelevance of others.

Mandarin Chinese (in its standard spoken and written form: *Putonghua* and Simplified Chinese characters) was used as a prominent identity marker of Beijing as the capital of a united harmonious Chinese nation (see Section 6.4.1). Despite the fact that China is a multilingual and multiethnic country, the monolingual use of Simplified Chinese on signs was ubiquitous. This monolingual language choice has its origin in the notion of the nation-state, where the Chinese national identity is associated with the language of Han Chinese, the dominant ethnic group. I argue that such language manipulation will only continue in the current era as Mandarin Chinese continues to be used as a symbol of belonging to the Chinese nation.

In addition to Simplified Chinese, English, as a global language, was given considerable prominence along with Mandarin Chinese (in its standard form), the dominant language for national cohesion and harmony (see Section 6.4.2). The high concentration of English signs often marks a tourist site or a public location frequented by an imagined English-speaking community. Noticeably, the presence of English on many guiding signs was for its symbolism of reputation, prestige, cosmopolitanism and globality, rather than for its informational and instructional content. In addition, English was not only present as

medium, but also as content via Simplified Chinese on advertising billboards for English training institutions (see Section 6.4.3). In many cases, images of White people were an inseparable part of advertisements promoting the “consumption” of English. These advertisements promoted and perpetuated a native speaker ideology in which English is not an international language but the property of White native speakers.

In the LL of Beijing, French was given a certain visibility on a few official multilingual signs set up in certain special premises and stadiums closely related to the Games, due to its Olympic official language status (see Section 6.4.4). By contrast, the presence of French was much weaker on unofficial signage issued by autonomous social actors. The under-representation and temporality of French in Beijing’s LL demonstrates that French has much less popularity and symbolic capital than English in local language practices and ideologies. The planning of Beijing’s LL in the Olympic context showed a strong preference for Mandarin Chinese and English over other community and foreign languages (see Section 6.4.5). Despite the internal diversity of foreign resident and tourist populations in Beijing during the Olympics, foreign languages other than English and French were found to be practically absent on official signs at key public and cultural spaces. Furthermore, ethnic minority community languages were basically invisible in Beijing’s LL, which reflects the centre-periphery relations between Mandarin Chinese and ethnic minority languages. Given LL as a mechanism of language policy, the consequence of using LL in public space is that it “reaffirms the languages and groups in power while marginalizing other languages and groups that are not” (E. G. Shohamy, 2006, p. 124). The LL of Beijing hindered a full understanding of the cultural and linguistic diversity in the Chinese and global communities.

In Chapter Six, I have also discussed that standardization was used by the authority in the Olympic English popularization campaign as a top-down language policy device to manipulate language behaviors by enforcing homogeneous norms and standards about “correct” ways of using English in the public space of Beijing (see Section 6.2). As a priority of the BSFLP, the standardization work of public English signs aimed to build a spectacular linguistic landscape of urban modernity for the Olympic city. The on-going

Olympic English signage standardization campaign has been driven by the “Standard English” ideology. The relevant departments and professionals involved in this campaign had a strong preference for native speaker varieties (especially British English and American English) over English varieties in the Outer and Expanding Circles. The Chinese government’s strong sense of a native variety standard led to a citywide crack down on Chinglish as an “inferior” and “deficient” variety of English. Rules and regulations were formulated to standardize English translations of public signs, menus, and professional titles. It is important to point out that “standardization is a political notion with no foundation in real language use” (E. G. Shohamy, 2006, p. 65). When it comes to English, a lingua franca with a large number of varieties used among various communities in the world today, the attempt to standardize the language modeled on an irrelevant native variety is especially unrealistic and unnecessary.

#### 8.1.4 Language learner experience as consequences of Chinese foreign language education policies

As I argued in Chapter Two, the Chinese government’s political agenda to further integrate into the global community has resulted in a major acceleration of provisions and planning on behalf of foreign languages in general and English in particular. In spite of the powerful role of language education policy (LEP) in determining language practices and the role it plays in manipulating language and ideologies, Shohamy (2006) points out that there is very little research on the actual effect and consequences of LEPs. To address that shortcoming, in Chapter Seven I approached the language policy context of the Beijing Olympics from yet another perspective by exploring English learning experiences embedded in contemporary Chinese foreign language education policies through case studies. By doing so, I aimed to provide an insight into how Chinese learners of English take up, adjust to or resist top-down Chinese English education policies and their embedded ideologies.

In Chapter Seven my interview participants’ biographies of their English learning trajectories and perceptions of English demonstrate prolonged *ti-yong* tensions and identity dilemmas among Chinese learners of English. On one hand, English *ti*, namely the

utilitarian value of English, has been set up and perpetuated through a system both of material and institutional structures and ideological positions in China. The “common-sense” ideology that learning English can help people gain advantages and English is needed for education, employment and upward mobility, regardless of practical opportunities of using the language, was commonly accepted. On the other hand, the nationwide promotion of English has produced a series of problems. Firstly, a few interviewees like Chen Zheng reported a lack of spontaneous motivation for learning English as the freedom of choice with regard to the preferred language(s) is constrained in the current education system. Secondly, for many of my interviewees like Ji Haiqiang, English language learning is mostly presented as a story of hardship and failure as the current education system is still largely examination-oriented and the quality of ELT was unsatisfactory, especially at the university level. Despite that the official emphasized on personal choice, benefits, neutrality and complementarity of English language learning, Xu Jian, an English major and proficient English user, reported that English learning had negatively affected her L1 competence and her cultural identities. Although Xu Jian is only one example, she may represent part of Chinese English learners who consciously felt the *ti-yong* tensions in their individual English learning trajectories. Based on my interview data, I have argued that the *ti-yong* tensions in English language education were not resolved in the Olympic English campaigns and are still a haunting issue in the post-Olympic China.

Viewing China’s widely-publicized English desire in the Olympic drive makes it too easy to assume that Chinese learners of English are all motivated to learn English for instrumental or integrative purposes, regardless of their diverse economic, ethnic and linguistic backgrounds. In fact, the mandatory learning of English could pose serious problems of educational equity and dilemmas of learner identity for some Chinese learners like Wei Ru who lack equal access and subjective desire to learn English. In Chapter Seven I have also discussed in greater detail the English learning experiences and perceptions of Wei Ru, an ethnic minority college student studying in Beijing. Her English learning trajectory uncovers that the overwhelming English fever in education across China promoted through a system both of material and institutional structures and ideological positions has caused widening regional educational disparities and inequalities. In Heilongjiang Province, for

example, despite the fact that the strategic cooperation partnership between China and Russia has created a huge market demand for professionals with a good command of Russian, Russian language education has declined significantly under the influence of national English popularization policies. Consequently, the shortage of qualified personnel with Russian proficiency poses serious problems for the sustainable development of Heilongjiang Province. In continuing nationwide English popularization campaigns, Chinese learners, especially those living in underdeveloped regions, who find English language learning conflict with their identities can be put at a severe disadvantage in today's Chinese society where English serves as an instrument of social stratification and inequalities.

## **8.2. Implications**

### 8.2.1 *Ti-yong* tension and English as a Chinese language

China's English language education has been constantly adjusted with the changes of Chinese social, economic and political contexts. Since the principle of "Chinese learning for essence (*ti*); Western learning for utility (*yong*)" was proposed in the late Qing dynasty, the learning of foreign languages in China has been driven by the ideology of using foreign languages to serve national ends while maintaining the integrity of Chinese culture. However, throughout China's ELT history, the promotion of English *yong*, the usefulness of English, has been always accompanied by resistance to the cultural threat that English learning is perceived to bring to the integrity of Chinese culture, Chinese *ti*. In contemporary Chinese society, the hegemony of English in education and other spheres has aggravated various *ti-yong* tensions and provoked resistance by people who seek to protect the integrity of Chinese culture and assert their cultural identity.

It is noteworthy that what is embedded in the *ti-yong* conceptualization is a structuralist-essentialist view of language and culture (Y. Gao, 2009a). On one hand, the notion of *yong* suggests that it is possible to learn a language as a "neutral," "apolitical," and "beneficial" tool for practical uses with the national linguistic habitus intact. Thus, the internal and



external functions of English language learning can be separated. In the case of China, English has a vital role to play in the country's drive for modernization and internationalization without affecting the integrity of Chinese culture. On the other hand, the notion of *ti* presupposes that a pre-conceived homogenous cultural essence is contained within a native language and embodied in its linguistic habitus. In this way, "nativeness" in language is connected with a certain nation-state or region by virtue of birth. Therefore, a unified Chinese language is regarded as the foundation of a unified Chinese national identity. Similarly, English is assumed to contain and embody the "cultural essence" of "inner-circle" English-speaking countries, particularly the USA and the UK, which govern the "nativeness" in the language. In this way, anyone learning English has to respond to the Anglo-American cultural essence contained in the language. The self-contradiction of the *ti-yong* conceptualization explains the persistent *ti-yong* tensions and identity dilemmas throughout the history of China's English language education.

Resolving the identity anxiety among Chinese involved in learning English requires deconstructing the structuralist-essentialist *ti-yong* conceptualization and adjusting the very conception of the English language, its functions, context of use, ownership and how it should be taught. In the first place, the discourses of English "*yong*" need to be critically examined rather than assumed. Worldwide, researchers have long recognized that the spread of English manifests itself differently in different contexts. Even though it is generally believed that English proficiency gives better access to symbolic resources (e.g., education, social status) and material resources (e.g., economic enhancement, career advancement), the value and power of English are by no means fixed and universal (I. Piller, *et al.*, 2010; K. Takahashi, forthcoming 2011). Tollefson (2000) argues that the spread of English is intimately linked with political decisions that benefit some groups at the expense of others. Likewise, Phillipson (2007) suggests that the neutral and beneficial view of the spread of English ignores the reality of the market forces that strengthen some languages at the expense of others locally and globally. Moreover, ascribing to English superiority over other languages may make people lose sight of the linguistic and cultural diversity in local and global communities. The notion of *ti* suggests a homogeneous inherent cultural identity and perpetuates a native/non-native dichotomy. For social constructionists, however, culture

and identity are plural, multifaceted, ever changing and socially constructed. A social constructionist view of culture and identity rejects the ideas of a singular inherited “Chineseness” or “Englishness.” In terms of language learning, Piller (2001) has problematized various linguistic concepts such as “native speaker,” “mother tongue,” and “standard language.” In what has become a global world and a transnational space, English has been increasingly used for communication between and among so-called native and non-native speakers of various varieties earning the name World Englishes, New Englishes, and English as a Lingua Franca. Many researchers studying the phenomenon have recommended changes to ELT that require re-examining firmly entrenched essentialist assumptions still evidenced in teaching practice. In the post-structuralist era, Chinese language policy makers, educators, ELT practitioners and learners need to redefine the English language according to the actual current Chinese situations, so as to develop unique forms of intercultural competence, take greater ownership of English and open up more opportunities for identity development for self-expression.

### 8.2.2 Spread of English and development

In Chapter Two I have discussed that in today’s pragmatic Chinese society devoted to economic advancement, English was assumed as the necessary means to achieve two purposes: national development (modernization and internationalization) and personal development (symbolic capital for education, career and upward mobility). In the academic domain, this way of thinking is supported by Crystal (1997) who views the global spread of English as the result of “the natural choice for progress” (p. 75). However, my study has shown that this position is not only problematic but also harmful.

First of all, I argue that the supposed role of English as an instrument of development should be understood as a social construction constantly maintained and reaffirmed within Chinese society rather than any inherent quality that English possesses in itself. People who view English as an instrument of development often hold that English is the language better suited for modern use, for science, technology, international communication, and so forth. In China, English as a supposed instrument of development has its root in China’s semi-

colonial history when China was subject to aggression from Western powers. Under the recognition of the technological superiority of the West, the late Qing reformists added English to the curriculum of universities for technological purposes as the country moved to modernize. After the market reform (1978 onwards), China has shifted emphasis on economic development, coupled with the growing role of English in the global economy, further legitimizing the role that English is deemed to play in China's modernization and internationalization process. However, one significant problem with this position is the essentialist perception of the relationship between English and other languages. Economic relationships between the developed countries and the developing countries are constantly changing in the globalizing era. Graddol (2006) points out that the world economy is experiencing the impact of two new economic superpowers emerging simultaneously: China and India. Besides the two new economic superpowers, Russian and Brazilian economies are also growing fast. After three decades of reform, China overtook Japan as the world's second-largest economy in 2010 ("China Overtakes Japan", 2010). The report by economist Keidel (2008) concludes that China's economy will surpass that of the United States by 2035 and be twice its size by mid-century. China's global influence is also growing steadily with its economic rise. The changing world economic order and pattern leads Graddol (2006) to predict that perceptions of the relative importance of world languages may also change. Chinese and other major world languages other than English may play an increasingly important role in vital fields of modern use such as science, economy, the media, the Internet, education, and diplomacy. Therefore, the supposed role of English as an instrument of development is problematic.

Secondly, Chinese foreign language education policies that stress the instrumental role of ELT for national and personal development strive to force people to learn English without considering significant regional differences and the actual demands of the different groups for development. The implementation of compulsory English education in China is a direct outcome of the state ideology that English language education is a means of development. In compulsory education, Pennycook (2000) contends that English may be negatively related to development as the presence of English in a school curriculum may in fact have negative consequences in terms of keeping other, more useful, languages and subjects out.

Wei Ru's foreign language learning trajectory is a good example. My study has found that in the past decade national English popularization policies in China have caused the contraction of Russian language education in Heilongjiang Province, despite huge demand for personnel with Russian proficiency for regional economic development. Based on my findings, I argue that the assumption that English is the key to economic success of nations and the economic well-being of individuals overlooks existing social, political, economic and educational inequalities that the spread of English exacerbates.

### 8.2.3 English and inequality

Throughout this thesis I have discussed how the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games had accelerated the spread of English and maintained its hegemony that created and reproduced various inequalities in China. In contemporary Chinese society English has become a form of symbolic capital that serves to attain better education opportunities, career prospects and upward mobility. As more value and capital becomes attached to English, proficiency in this language separates the haves from the have-nots. In the Olympic English popularization campaign, English proficiency was advantageous for stakeholders who share a vested interest in the English training industry. While benefiting a few, the regulations such as the requirement for employees in service sectors in Beijing to pass English tests for employment clearly deprived those have-nots of equal rights of living and developing. Furthermore, as English resources are not equally accessible for all Chinese people in different regions, national English popularization policies such as compulsory English education that were formulated in a top-down manner and imposed on the whole population often serve as a means of reproducing inequalities. Wei Ru's trajectory proves that the "need" to learn English may result in serious disadvantages to those who lack equal access to English teaching resources, including members of minority ethnic groups whose cultural and personal dispositions favor languages other than English and who had the need to learn English imposed on them. Given the economic benefits and social prestige associated with English proficiency in China, unequal access to English provision not only perpetuates but exacerbates educational inequality which poses a serious threat to continual national development (see also G. Hu, 2005). I would suggest that policy makers in China should

pay more attention to how China's English education policies may impact on the social exclusion of ethnic minorities and other disadvantaged groups.

#### 8.2.4 An expanded view of language and language policy

Following Shohamy (2006), language policy is viewed in the current study in a broad and expanded way, including not only explicitly declared, formalized and codified policy documents such as laws, curricula and tests, but also a variety of covert and implicit mechanisms used mostly (but not exclusively) by those in authority to affect, create and perpetuate language practices which are not conventionally viewed as policy devices as *de facto* language policies. In line with Shohamy (*ibid.*), I argue that language policy research should not be limited to the examination of overt and declared policy documents, but rather, there is a need to examine the use of a variety of covert and implicit mechanisms and their consequences and effects on language practices. Moreover, viewing language policy in an expanded way necessitates an expanded view of language itself. That is, language is not a context-free closed and finite system governed by defined boundaries and controlled by prescriptions about “good vs. bad,” “accurate vs. inaccurate,” “native vs. non-native,” “standard vs. non-standard,” etc. Rather, language is open, ever evolving, and free from any prescribed rules of correctness and incorporates multi-modal means of representation. I would suggest future language policy research to go beyond declared policy statements and examine a variety of more covert, implicit and multi-modal language policy devices that are used to perpetuate language practices. In addition, in language teaching there is a need to raise awareness of how language is used to “dictate, regulate and create set orders of hierarchies in the name of classifying and categorizing those who use the language in ‘the right way’ in relation to those who do not” (*ibid.*, p. 2).

#### 8.2.5 Actors in language planning and making process

A state is often a crucial actor in the policy planning and making process and a state's ideologies are often reflected through its language policies. Nevertheless, viewing states from a globalizing “modern world-system” (I. M. Wallerstein, 1974, 2004), a state *per se* is usually

not the sole determiner in the process since it is only one among many actors and its role and power are driven or constrained by other actors both above the state level (e.g. transnational agencies and the other states) and below the state level (e.g. civil organizations). Therefore, language policy is not only a way by which the state gains consent, maintains cultural governance, and exerts hegemony internally but also a product that shows the combined force of the dominant actors both from above and below state levels in the modern world-system. In other words, language policies are the end result and manifest how the state acts and responds in the interconnected modern world-system.

Besides the state actor in language policy planning and making, this thesis also explored in detail the roles of language policy actors both above and below the Chinese state. These non-state actors include international governing bodies (particularly the International Olympic Committee), of commercial entities (particularly commercial language providers, both multinational corporations and national operators), and regional cultural and economic actors (particularly cross-border trade with Russia in Heilongjiang). In Chapter Four, I discussed the powerful role IOC played in Beijing's commitment to building an "international language environment." In Chapter Six, I explored how IOC impacted on the status and role of three official languages (French, English and Mandarin) in the linguistic landscape of Beijing during the Games. The important roles of both multinational and national commercial language providers (namely, EF and Aifly) in the foreign language popularization campaign for the Beijing Olympics are discussed in detail in Chapter Four. In Chapter Seven, I analyzed the regional foreign language education environment of Heilongjiang and existing problems of foreign language education in this region with regard to cross-border trade with Russia and the huge market demand for professionals with a good command of Russian in this province.

### **8.3. Limitations and Future Directions**

#### **8.3.1 English in post-Olympic Beijing**

For China, the Beijing Olympiad marked a watershed in China's continued long march toward a modernized, unified, and internationalized nation in the globalizing world (X. Xu, 2006). Although the English popularization campaign was spurred on by the Olympic

Games, its efforts to promote English within the capital city and throughout China have proceeded beyond 2008. After the Games, the Beijing Municipal Government has initiated a drive to transform Beijing from a “city well-known for its culture” into a modern “world city” (L. Ji, 2009). In response to the new drive, the government stated Beijing has entered into a new phase of development while facing new challenges in the construction of the capital’s “international language environment” (ibid.). It is firmly believed that English is required if the capital’s sustainable modernization and internationalization is to continue (S. Deng, 2009). The inseparability of English for the city’s modernization and internationalization is made explicit. As a result, the organizing committee of the BSFLP formulated the *Tentative Program of the Capital’s International Language Environment Construction 2011–2015* to step up the English popularization campaign in Beijing. The renewed BSFLP plan calls for all city kindergartens to introduce English courses within five years, so as to create systematic study up to university. Other targets set to achieve by 2015 include: 1) At least 10 percent of public servants must pass BETS-1; 2) Every civil servant under the age of 40 with a bachelor’s degree must grasp a minimum of 1,000 English sentences for work and communication; 3) A minimum of 60 percent of shop assistants, receptionists and hairdressers under 40 will be required to pass English tests in their field; 4) 80 per cent of police officers will also be required to pass Beijing Oral English Certificate (BOEC) elementary stage (T. Dai, 2010). With the vigorous push and backing of the Beijing Municipal Government, the standardization work of public English signs has also been promoted to a new level after the Beijing Olympics.

It can be well argued that, in the future, the enormous number of English learners in Beijing and the rest of China will be growing at an even faster rate, with more and more economic benefits and social prestige given to English proficiency. However, the importance attached to English in education and other spheres of life does not mean Chinese people readily embrace English in constructing their subjectivity and cultural identity. Post-Olympic China is facing increased *ti-yong* tensions in surging waves of English fever. I would suggest that more research is needed to critically examine how those in authority use a variety of language policy devices, overt and covert, explicit and inexplicit, to manipulate the teaching, learning and use of English in post-Olympic Beijing as well as the whole country.

In addition, language education policy is always “an arena for negotiation as well as resistance” (E. G. Shohamy, 2006, p. 92). Therefore, I contend that there is a need to examine the actual effect and consequences of top-down language policies, especially, how different interest groups take up, adjust and resist those policies.

### 8.3.2 Reader response studies and ethnography

There are two limitations that need to be acknowledged and addressed regarding the present study. Firstly, my textbook analysis focuses primarily on the content and form of the work rather than the readers/learners’ experience of the work. However, language textbooks are subject to multiple interpretations, depending on the relationship of the reader/learner to the dominant culture. In recent decades, reader response theory has recognized that the reader is not a passive receptor of message but an active agent in the reading process and an active interpreter in the production of meaning (N. J. Karolides, 2000, p. 4). As it was not the aim of my enquiry in this current study to probe into readers/learners’ responses to the two *Readers*, I would suggest future research attempts to address how language textbooks are interpreted, taken up, mediated and resisted by their readers/learners.

Secondly, for this study, I was not able to conduct a long-term ethnography in which wider observation and more intensive contact with participants could have been achieved. In the literature of ELT in China, a large body of literature has reported on the escalating demand for English proficiency brought about by the rapid economic and sociocultural development in China. There also exist a good number of researches attesting to the development of English language education since China’s economic reform. However, the existing literature often overlooks the significant regional differences in how English has been perceived, learned and used among China’s ethnically and linguistically diverse EFL population (G. Hu, 2003; J. Yang, 2005). Besides, little ethnographic research has been done to document how the phenomenon of English fever in China impacts on the lives of ethnic minority students who usually come from economically, socially and educationally disadvantaged areas and how they negotiate their identities in China’s English fever. In concluding this thesis, I would suggest that future longitudinal ethnographic study based on long-term immersion and



participation in various groups of Chinese EFL learners will profit the research tradition on ELT in China.

### 8.3.3 Transnational studies of LPP in global sporting events

This study so far has investigated issues of LPP for the Beijing Olympic context. I hope my analysis has demonstrated how China as a modern nation-state seeking a more central position in the world system connected sport with English and manipulated them as important tools to serve national, political, social, and economic agendas. Assuredly, the ever-increasing scale and the diversity of cultural and linguistic background of competing nations often pose problems for communication in global sporting events such as the Modern Olympic Games. For host countries, especially non-European developing countries where neither English nor French is their national/official language, language policy and planning is considered as an important aspect of their preparation work. Therefore, global sporting events, the Olympic Games in particular, constitute a fruitful context for the study of questions related to language policy and planning. In spite of that, few studies have taken a language policy/sociolinguistic perspective to global sporting events. Therefore, I would call for more transnational studies of LPP in global sporting events, which I believe will enrich both sports and language policy studies.

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## Appendices

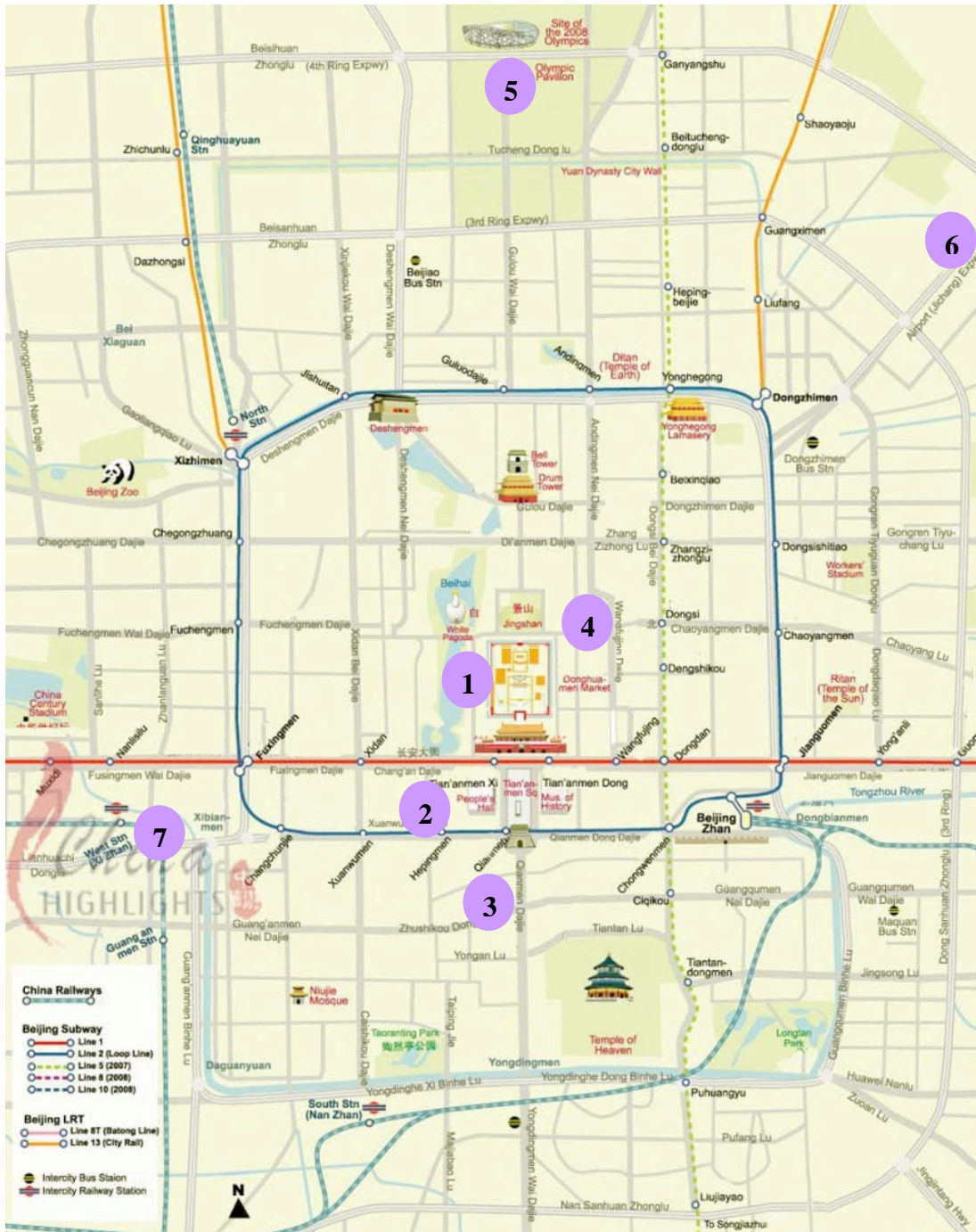
### Appendix 1: The History of English Language Education in China

Historical Period	Time Frame	Phase	Ideologies of English	English Education
ELT & Colonization	1757 – 1839	The closed-door policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>English as a barbarian tongue</li> <li>English only permitted to be spoken by despised compradors</li> <li>Chinese people were prohibited to learn English</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Self-study by compradors in Guangzhou (Canton);</li> <li>The first protestant missionary Robert Morrison;</li> <li>The Morrison school, the first Anglo-Chinese missionary school opened in Macau in 1839</li> </ul>
	1840 – 1911	Semi-feudal and semi-colonial society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>English as the language of foreign aggressors E.g., ‘Learn advanced technologies from the barbarians (the West) to defeat them’</li> <li>English as a vehicle for gaining access to Western science and technology E.g., ‘Chinese learning for <i>ti</i> (essence); Western learning for <i>yong</i> (utility)’</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On the curriculum of institutions set up to facilitate transfer of science and technology;</li> <li>On the curricula of secondary and tertiary institutions</li> <li>On the curricula of missionary schools</li> <li>The Chinese Educational Mission</li> </ul>
ELT & Nationalism	1912 – 1921	The New Cultural Movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>English as a vehicle for transferring Western science and technology</li> <li>English as a vehicle for importing Western knowledge and ideas</li> <li>Chinese <i>ti</i> being overtaken by English <i>yong</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On the curricula of secondary and tertiary institutions</li> <li>On the curricula of missionary schools and tertiary institutions</li> <li>the Boxer Rebellion Indemnity Scholarship Program</li> </ul>
	1922 – 1949	Seeking support from the West	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>English as a vehicle for seeking diplomatic, military support from the West, esp. the U.S.;</li> <li>The CPC’s relationship with the U.S. sharply deteriorated as a result of the US policy to back KMT</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On the curricula of secondary and tertiary institutions;</li> <li>Teaching force was greatly improved due to the return of overseas Chinese students from the U.S. and Europe</li> </ul>
ELT & Communism	1949 – 1956	The Sino-Soviet Alliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Russian was the most prominent foreign language;</li> <li>English as the language of ‘the American enemies’ was less favored</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On the curricula of very few secondary and tertiary institutions</li> </ul>
	1956 – 1965	Reviving English education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Popularity of English increased as Sino-Soviet relations tensed;</li> <li>English considered as important for science and technology transfer as China looked to the West for economic ties</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On the curricula of secondary and tertiary institutions;</li> <li>On the curricula of foreign-language schools though small in number</li> </ul>



	1966 – 1976	The Cultural Revolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• English speakers and learners condemned as unpatriotic;</li> <li>• English was reduced to an instrument of political propaganda and perceived as useless for proletarian revolution and were undesirable among many Chinese people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Removed from the curricula of secondary and tertiary institutions between 1966 and 1970;</li> <li>• Resumed gradually on the curricula of secondary and tertiary institutions since 1971</li> </ul>
ELT & Market Reform	1977 – 2000	The modernization drive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• English seen as useful for the modernization drive and improving China's national image;</li> <li>• The role of English had a more explicit focus on economic development rather than communist ideology after 1985</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On the curricula of secondary and tertiary institutions;</li> <li>• On the curricula of urban primary schools;</li> <li>• English on the curricula of non-English majors</li> <li>• Self-sponsored study abroad programs</li> </ul>
	2000-	The internationalization drive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• English perceived as highly desirable for the internationalization of China;</li> <li>• English considered as a requisite for Chinese citizens of the 21<sup>st</sup> century;</li> <li>• English proficiency of Chinese citizens is regarded as an integral part of the comprehensive strength of the nation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On the curricula of primary schools beginning from Grade 3;</li> <li>• On the curricula of secondary and tertiary institutions;</li> <li>• English on the curricula of non-English majors;</li> <li>• English as the media of instruction for 5-10% courses in universities;</li> <li>• Private English training schools boomed</li> <li>• Self-sponsored study abroad programs</li> </ul>

## Appendix 2: Data Collection Sites in Central Beijing



Source: Retrieved Feb 27, 2011, from <http://www.ebeijing.gov.cn/BeijingInfo/BJInfoTips/Beijingmaps/t956116.htm>

Note:

- 1-Forbidden City; 2-Tiananmen Square;
- 3-Qianmen Street; 4-Wangfujing Street; 5-Olympic Green;
- 6- Beijing Capital International Airport; 7- Beijing West Railway Station

### Appendix 3: List of Interview Participants (NO. 35)

NO.	Date	Pseudonym	Ethnicity	Title & Position
1	July 10, 2008	Xie Changbing	Han	Dean of Volunteer Action Center, xxx Provincial Committee of the Youth League
2	July 11, 2008	Du Jie	Han	English teacher at xxx New Oriental School
3	July 15, 2008	Qi Hong	Han	Manager of Medical Service at International Youth Camp
4	Sept 10, 2008	Guo Mao	Han	English teacher at xxx New Oriental School
5	Sept 19, 2008	Sun Lin	Han	Manager of Language Service for Marathon contest
6	Sept 26, 2008	Hu Junfang	Han	English teacher of Senior Grade 2 in Beijing NO. xx Secondary School
7	Aug 8, 2008	He Yonghui	Han	Taxi driver in Beijing
8	July 13, 2008	Zhao Chan	Han	Olympic volunteer of media operation at Main Press Centre (MPC) (recruited from University A)
	Sept 22, 2008	-	-	Follow-up interview with Zhao Chan
9	Aug 3, 2008	Ji Haiqiang	Yao	Olympic volunteer of hotel service for Nikko Hotels International (recruited from University B)
10	Aug 3, 2008	Sun Hui	Han	Olympic volunteer of spectacular service at the National Stadium (Bird's Nest) (recruited from University B)
	Sept 23, 2008	-	-	Follow-up interview to Sun Hui
11 12 13 19	Aug 3, 2008	Li Jie	Han	Olympic volunteer of transportation service at shuttle bus station for athletes in the Olympic village (recruited from University C)
		Zhou Shen	Han	Olympic volunteer of spectacular service at the Laoshan Velodrome (recruited from University C)
		Wu Linna	Han	Olympic volunteer of spectacular service at Workers' Indoor Arena (recruited from University D)
		Sept 20, 2008	-	-
14 15	Aug 7, 2008	Zheng Suduan	She	Olympic urban volunteer at Purple Bamboo Garden (recruited from University B)
		Wang Xia	Han	Olympic urban volunteer at Purple Bamboo Garden (recruited from University B)
16	Sept 20, 2008	Feng Sanghui	Han	Olympic volunteer of spectacular service at Beijing National Aquatics Center (Water Cube) (recruited from University E)
17 18 19	Sept 21, 2008	Chen Zheng	Manchu	Coordinating assistant of outdoor cultural and artistic activities in the big event group of the International Youth Camp (recruited from University B)
		Wei Ru	Hezhe	Coordinating assistant of outdoor cultural and artistic activities in the big event group of the International Youth Camp (recruited from University B)
		Zhu Ning	Han	Olympic volunteer of spectacular service at the National Stadium (recruited from University B)
20	Sept 22, 2008	Jiang Fangqi	Han	Olympic volunteer of media operation at Olympic News Center (ONC) (recruited from University F)
21	Sept 22, 2008	Shen Manli	Han	Olympic volunteer of doping testing service (recruited from University F)
22	Sept 22, 2008	Han Yun	Han	Olympic volunteer of media operation at Shun Yi rowing site (recruited from University F)
23	Sept 22, 2008	Yang Yijing	Han	Olympic volunteer of language service for Olympic venues (recruited from University F)
24	Sept 22, 2008	Qin Si	Han	Olympic volunteer of VIP accompanying and (Spanish) language service (recruited from University F)
25	Sept 22, 2008	You Qingchuan	Han	Group leader of the urban volunteer booth at the gate of BFSU (recruited from University F)
26	Sept 22, 2008	Xu Jian	Han	Olympic volunteer of VIP accompanying and (English)

				language service (recruited from University F)
27	Sept 23, 2008	He Ying	Han	Olympic volunteer of spectacular service at Capital Indoor Stadium (recruited from University G)
28	Sept 23, 2008	Lu Xin	Han	Manager assistant of the International Youth Camp (recruited from University B)
29	Sept 24, 2008	Shi Na	Han	Examiner of the English proficiency test for Olympic drivers and Olympic volunteer of VIP accompanying and (English) language service (recruited from University F)
30	Sept 27, 2008	Zhang Qing	Han	Olympic volunteer driver at Wukesong Culture and Sports Center (recruited from University H)
31		Kong Pei	Han	Olympic volunteer driver at Table Tennis Stadium of Peking University (recruited from University H)
32		Chao Feixiang	Han	Olympic volunteer driver at Main Press Center (recruited from University H)
33	Sept 27, 2008	Hua Shuo	Han	Olympic volunteer driver at Beijing National Aquatics Center (Water Cube) (recruited from University H)
34		Jin Yuan	Han	Olympic volunteer driver at the Olympic Inner area (recruited from University H)
35		Tao Bin	Han	Olympic volunteer driver at International Broadcasting Center (IBC) (recruited from University H)

Note:

1. Pseudonyms are used for all participating individuals and institutions throughout this dissertation.
2. Transcripts are labeled by dates following the order of *date-month-year*.
3. I transcribed in the interview language. For the full list of transcription conventions, see Appendix 8. English translations in this dissertation are mine.

## **Appendix 4: Information and Consent Form for Individual Participants (English)**

### **Information and Consent Form (For individual participants)**

#### *The Beijing Olympics-driven English Language Training and Intercultural Communication Education*

Dear participant,

You are invited to participate in a study concerning the Beijing Olympics-driven English language training and intercultural communication education. The study aims to investigate how the English language is related to Beijing 2008 Olympic Games and also discuss intercultural communicative strategies in the context of the Beijing Olympics.

The study is being conducted by PhD candidate Jie ZHANG of Linguistics Department at Macquarie University to meet the requirements for the degree of PhD in Linguistics under the supervision of Professor Ingrid Piller and Dr. Kimie Takahashi of the Department of Linguistics at Macquarie University. Contact details are as follows:

Jie ZHANG (Tel: +61 2 98508763; Email: [jie.zhang@ling.mq.edu.au](mailto:jie.zhang@ling.mq.edu.au))

Ingrid Piller (Tel: +61 2 9850 9646; Email: [ingrid.piller@mq.edu.au](mailto:ingrid.piller@mq.edu.au))

Kimie Takahashi (Tel: +61 2 9850 9939; Email: [Kimie.Takahashi@ncltr.mq.edu.au](mailto:Kimie.Takahashi@ncltr.mq.edu.au))

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to take part in an informal interview. The main questions I would like to ask include:

- your experiences of learning English and intercultural knowledge;
- your English language practices at home and work;
- your views on Beijing's English popularization and intercultural education in preparation for 2008 Beijing Olympic Games;
- your opinions on Beijing as an Olympic host city.

The interview can take place where and when it is most convenient for you. You can invite another person (e.g., a friend, family member) to be with you should the interviews take place at home. Depending on the topic and your availability, the duration of each interview is expected to be from ten minutes to one hour.

In addition to an interview, I am also interested in observing your Olympic English learning activities and English practices in Beijing. The purpose of the observation is to gain an understanding of the popularization of English in preparation for the Beijing Olympics. This, however, is not an evaluation of your English performance; it is an attempt to understand how 2008 Beijing Olympics is related to your English language study and practices and vice versa. The total duration of our contact (interview and observation) is expected to last from 10 minutes to several hours, depending on your availability. Please be assured that even if you agree to be interviewed, you can decline the observational part of the research.

If you agree, interviews may be recorded by a tape/IC recorder so that I have an accurate record. Any information or personal details gathered in the course of the study are strictly confidential and will not be disclosed to anyone or any organization. Only the researcher and her supervisors mentioned above will have access to data. All data will be securely kept in my office at Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia. Tapes will be securely discarded five years after the completion of the study. You will be given a different name and other measures will be taken so as to ensure that no individual will be identified in any publication of the results.

After the completion of the study, I will be sending you a report of the study via email or mail. You are welcome to give us your feedback on my interpretations of the data.

Please note that your participation in this study is strictly voluntary and you can withdraw from the study at any time without having to give a reason.

If you choose to participate and sign this form, you will be given a signed copy of the form to keep. I look forward to learning about your insights and experiences which are valuable to my research. Thank you for your participation!

---

Please tick  your type(s) of participation: Interview (  ) Observation (  )

I, \_\_\_\_\_ have read and understand the information above and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this research, knowing that I can withdraw from further participation in the research at any time without consequence. I have been given a copy of this form to keep.

Participant's Name:  
(block letters)

Participant's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date:

Investigator's Name:  
(block letters)

Investigator's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date:

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Ethics Review Committee (Human Research). If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Ethics Review Committee through its Secretary (telephone 61 2 9850 7854; email [ethics@mq.edu.au](mailto:ethics@mq.edu.au)). Or should you wish to confirm the researcher's identity or express any concerns, you may

contact Professor Qun XIE, Dean of Foreign Language School, Zhongnan University of Economics and Law (telephone 86 27 88385001; email [xieccnu@hotmail.com](mailto:xieccnu@hotmail.com)). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.

## Appendix 5: Information and Consent Form for Individual Participants (Chinese)

### 信息与同意书 (个人参与者)

#### 北京奥运会英语语言培训及跨文化交际教育

尊敬的参与者:

诚邀您参与“北京奥运会英语语言培训及跨文化交际教育”研究课题的调查活动。本课题旨在研究英语语言与2008年北京奥运会之间的相互关系,并探讨北京奥运会背景下的跨文化交际策略。

本课题为澳大利亚悉尼麦考利大学语言学系博士研究生张洁的语言学博士学位研究项目,并由麦考利大学语言学系 Ingrid Piller 教授与 Kimie Takahashi 博士联合指导。

联系方式为:

张洁: 电话: 61 2 98508763; 电邮: [jie.zhang@ling.mq.edu.au](mailto:jie.zhang@ling.mq.edu.au)

Ingrid Piller: 电话: 61 2 9850 9646; 电邮: [ingrid.piller@mq.edu.au](mailto:ingrid.piller@mq.edu.au)

Kimie Takahashi: 电话: 61 2 9850 9939; 电邮: [Kimie.Takahashi@nceltr.mq.edu.au](mailto:Kimie.Takahashi@nceltr.mq.edu.au)

如您愿意参与此项研究,我将访问如下主要话题:

- 您学习英语及跨文化知识的经历;
- 您在生活及工作中应用英语语言的实际情况;
- 您对北京迎奥运所开展的英语普及和跨文化教育活动的看法;
- 您对北京作为奥运会主办城市的评价。

访谈将在您认为最方便的时间和地点进行。如果在家里接受访谈,您可邀请他人陪同(例如:朋友、家人)。根据具体情况,每次访谈时长可能为十分钟到一个小时。

此外,我也希望实地参与您在北京的奥运英语培训与英语实践活动。参与的目的在于了解北京迎接奥运会的英语普及情况。该调查不是评价您的英语水平,而是探究北京奥运会和英语语言学习与实践之间的相互关系。根据具体情况,调查活动总持续时间可能为十分钟到几个小时。即使您同意接受访谈,您也可拒绝我参与您的英语培训和实践活动。

如您同意,访谈将被录音以便妥善保存。访谈过程收集的所有信息及个人资料将严格保密并不向任何个人或机构泄露。只有研究者本人及其导师能使用资料。所有资料将安全保存于研究者在澳大利亚悉尼麦考利大学的办公室内。录音带将在论文结题五年后销毁。研究者在发表科研成果时将使用假名代替您的真名,并且采用其他相关措施以确保您的身份不被暴露。

您将在论文结题后通过信函和电邮的方式获得一份研究报告。欢迎您对资料的阐述提出宝贵意见和建议。



请注意：您可完全自愿选择是否参与本研究的调查活动，并且您有权不提出任何理由而随时退出本研究。如您决定参与，请在此表上签名并保存一份署名原件。感谢您参与本科研调查，期待分享您的见解与宝贵经历。

---

请您在相应参与的科研调查活动后打勾：采访 (        )    观察 (        )

我， \_\_\_\_\_ 已浏览并了解以上信息。我的所有疑问已得到满意答复。我同意参与此研究的调查活动，并获知我可随时退出该研究的调查活动而不承担任何责任。我已保存了一份该表格。

参与者姓名：  
(字迹清晰)

参与者签名： \_\_\_\_\_ 日期：

调查者姓名：  
(字迹清晰)

调查者签名： \_\_\_\_\_ 日期：

该项目已获麦考利大学科研道德审核委员会（人文类研究）的审批。如您对参与此研究的调查活动有任何科研道德方面的不满或保留意见，可通过道德审核委员会秘书反映（电话 61 2 9850 7854; 电邮 [ethics@mq.edu.au](mailto:ethics@mq.edu.au)）。如您需确认研究者的身份或了解有关情况，可与中南财经政法大学外语学院院长谢群教授联系（电话 86 27 88385001; 电邮 [xieccnu@hotmail.com](mailto:xieccnu@hotmail.com)）。您的意见将予以保密并调查，调查结果会向您告知。

## Appendix 6: Information and Consent Form for Institutions (English)

### Information and Consent Form (For institutions)

#### *The Beijing Olympics-driven English Language Training and Intercultural Communication Education*

To whom it may concern,

You are invited to participate in a study concerning the Beijing Olympics-driven English language training and intercultural communication education. The study aims to investigate how the English language is related to Beijing 2008 Olympic Games and also discuss intercultural communicative strategies in the context of the Beijing Olympics.

The study is being conducted by PhD candidate Jie ZHANG of Linguistics Department at Macquarie University to meet the requirements for the degree of PhD in Linguistics under the supervision of Professor Ingrid Piller and Dr. Kimie Takahashi of the Department of Linguistics at Macquarie University. Contact details are as follows:

Jie ZHANG (Tel: +61 2 98508763; Email: [jie.zhang@ling.mq.edu.au](mailto:jie.zhang@ling.mq.edu.au))

Ingrid Piller (Tel: +61 2 9850 9646; Email: [ingrid.piller@mq.edu.au](mailto:ingrid.piller@mq.edu.au))

Kimie Takahashi (Tel: +61 2 9850 9939; Email: [Kimie.Takahashi@ncltr.mq.edu.au](mailto:Kimie.Takahashi@ncltr.mq.edu.au))

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to take part in an informal interview. The main questions I would like to ask include:

- the Olympics-driven English and intercultural communication training you provide for adult EFL learners of different English levels, motivations and personal backgrounds;
- teaching methods, teaching aids and means of assessment of English and intercultural communication training adopted for this particular group of clients;
- your views on the Olympic English popularization and intercultural education in Beijing;
- your opinions on Beijing as an Olympic host city.

The interview can take place where and when it is most convenient for you. Depending on the topic and your availability, the interview is expected to take from ten minutes to one hour.

In addition, I wish to observe English teaching practices at your institution. Workplace sites of my interest include English training classrooms or other English teaching venues. I would like to stress that the purpose of such observation is not to evaluate your English training service quality, but rather to gain a better knowledge of how 2008 Beijing Olympics is related to the English language training market in Beijing and vice versa. The total duration of our contact (interview and observation) is expected to last from 10 minutes to several hours, depending on your availability. Please be assured that even if you agree to be interviewed, you can decline the observational part of the research.

If you agree, interviews may be recorded by a tape/IC recorder so that I have an accurate record. Please note that any information or personal details gathered in the course of the study are strictly confidential and will not be disclosed to anyone or any other organization. Only the researcher and her supervisors mentioned above will have access to data. All data will be securely kept in my office at Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia. Tapes will be securely discarded five years after the completion of the study. To ensure confidentiality, your real name and the name of your institution will not be used - no individual or institution will be identified in any publication of the results.

After the completion of my study, I will be sending you a report of the study via email or mail. You are welcome to give us your feedback on my interpretations of the data.

Please note that your participation in this study is strictly voluntary and you can withdraw from the study at any time without having to give a reason.

If you choose to participate and sign this form, you will be given a signed copy of the form to keep. I look forward to learning about your insights and experiences which are valuable to my research. Thank you for your participation!

---

Please tick  your type(s) of participation: Interview (        )    Observation (        )

I, \_\_\_\_\_ have read and understand the information above and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this research, knowing that I can withdraw from further participation in the research at any time without consequence. I have been given a copy of this form to keep.

Participant's Name:  
(block letters)

Participant's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date:

Investigator's Name:  
(block letters)

Investigator's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date:

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Ethics Review Committee (Human Research). If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Ethics Review Committee through its Secretary (telephone 61 2 9850 7854; email [ethics@mq.edu.au](mailto:ethics@mq.edu.au)). Or should you wish to confirm the researcher's identity or express any concerns, you may contact Professor Qun XIE, Dean of Foreign Language School, Zhongnan University of

Economics and Law (telephone 86 27 88385001; email [xieccnu@hotmail.com](mailto:xieccnu@hotmail.com)). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.

## Appendix 7: Information and Consent Form for Institutions (Chinese)

### 信息与同意书 (机构参与者)

#### 北京奥运会英语语言培训及跨文化交际教育

尊敬的参与者:

诚邀您参与“北京奥运会英语语言培训及跨文化交际教育”研究课题的调查活动。本课题旨在研究英语语言与 2008 年北京奥运会之间的相互关系,并探讨北京奥运会背景下的跨文化交际策略。

本课题为澳大利亚悉尼麦考利大学语言学系博士研究生张洁的语言学博士学位研究项目,并由麦考利大学语言学系 Ingrid Piller 教授与 Kimie Takahashi 博士联合指导。联系方式为:

张洁: 电话: 61 2 98508763; 电邮: [jie.zhang@ling.mq.edu.au](mailto:jie.zhang@ling.mq.edu.au)

Ingrid Piller: 电话: 61 2 9850 9646; 电邮: [ingrid.piller@mq.edu.au](mailto:ingrid.piller@mq.edu.au)

Kimie Takahashi: 电话: 61 2 9850 9939; 电邮: [Kimie.Takahashi@nceltr.mq.edu.au](mailto:Kimie.Takahashi@nceltr.mq.edu.au)

如您愿意参与, 我将访问如下主要话题:

- 您针对不同英语基础、学习目的和个人背景的成人英语学习者, 所提供的奥运英语培训和跨文化教育;
- 针对这类学习者的英语及跨文化培训, 您所采用的教学方法、辅助措施及评估手段;
- 您对北京的奥运英语普及和跨文化教育的看法;
- 您对北京作为奥运会主办城市的评价。

采访将在您最方便的时间和地点进行。根据具体情况, 每次采访时长可能为十分钟到一个小时。

此外, 我也希望参与您单位的英语培训实践活动。我感兴趣的观察地点为英语教室及其他任何奥运英语教学场所。需要强调的是该调查不是评价您的英语培训服务水平, 而是探究 2008 年北京奥运会和北京英语培训市场之间的相互关系。根据具体情况, 调查活动总持续时间可能为十分钟到几个小时。即使您同意接受访问, 您也可拒绝参与本研究的观察活动。

如您同意, 访谈将被录音以便妥善保存。访谈过程收集的所有信息及个人资料将严格保密并不向任何个人或机构泄露。只有研究者本人及其导师能使用资料。所有资料将安全保存于研究者在澳大利亚悉尼麦考利大学的办公室内。录音带将在论文结题五年后销毁。研究者在发表科研成果时将使用假名代替您的真名, 并且采用其他相关措施以确保您的身份不被暴露。

您将在论文结题后通过信函和电邮的方式获得一份研究报告。欢迎您对资料的阐述提出宝贵意见和建议。

请注意：您可完全自愿选择是否参与本研究的调查活动，并且您有权不提出任何理由而随时退出本研究。如您决定参与，请在此表上签名并保存一份署名原件。感谢您参与本科研调查，期待分享您的见解与宝贵经历。

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请您在相应参与的科研调查活动后打勾：采访(        ) 观察(        )

我， \_\_\_\_\_ 已浏览并了解以上信息。我的所有疑问已得到满意答复。我同意参与此研究的调查活动，并获知我可随时退出该研究的调查活动而不承担任何责任。我已保存了一份该表格。

参与者姓名：  
(字迹清晰)

参与者签名： \_\_\_\_\_ 日期：

调查者姓名：  
(字迹清晰)

调查者签名： \_\_\_\_\_ 日期：

该项目已获麦考利大学科研道德审核委员会（人文类研究）的审批。如您对参与此研究的调查活动有任何科研道德方面的不满或保留意见，可通过道德审核委员会秘书反映（电话 61 2 9850 7854; 电邮 [ethics@mq.edu.au](mailto:ethics@mq.edu.au)）。如您需确认研究者的身份或了解有关情况，可与中南财经政法大学外语学院院长谢群教授联系（电话 86 27 88385001; 电邮 [xieccnu@hotmail.com](mailto:xieccnu@hotmail.com)）。您的意见将予以保密并调查，调查结果会向您告知。

## Appendix 8: Key to Transcription Conventions

<b>Symbol</b>	<b>Function</b>
...	pause
-	truncation
[ ]	translator's supplement to incomplete utterance
(...)	a section cut from the transcript
CAPS	emphatic stress
>> ... >>	spoken rapidly
<< ... <<	spoken slowly
@spoken laughingly@	the utterance between the two @s is spoken laughingly
erm	hesitation marker

## **Appendix 9: Note on Translation**

Translation has been used to transfer written Chinese texts and transcribed Chinese interview quotes to equivalent written English texts. Following Nida (1964), the translating procedures are as below:

1. Analyzing the source and target languages;
2. Studying the source language text before making attempts to translate it;
3. Making judgments of the semantic and syntactic approximations;
4. Constantly reevaluating translated texts;
5. Contrasting it with the existing available translations of the same text done by other translators;
6. Checking the text's communicative effectiveness by asking a target language proofreader to evaluate its accuracy and effectiveness.

In order to make the translation maximally transparent, I provided all Chinese-language data in the original and in translation.



## **Appendix 10: Rules of Quotation Marks**

1. Use double quotations marks 1) to designate words in an direct quote; 2) to set off the title of an article or chapter in a periodical; 3) to introduce a word or phrase used as an ironic comment, as slang, or as an invented or coined expression; 4) for a word used as a term.
2. Use single quotation marks to enclose quotes within another quotation.
3. Direct quotations that constitute fewer than four typed lines are incorporated into the text and enclosed by double quotations marks.
4. For direct quotations exceeding four typed lines, omit the quotation marks, indent the quoted material five spaces from your left-hand margin, and display it in a single-space block.
5. When a period or comma occurs with closing quotation marks, place the period or comma within the closing quotation mark, except when a parenthetical reference follows. Put any other punctuation mark outside the quotation marks unless that mark is part of the quoted material.
6. Ellipsis points are used to indicate omitted material. Type three periods with a space before and after each period to indicate omission within a sentence (...).

## Appendix 11: Final Ethics Approval Letter



27 June 2008

Ms Jie Zhang  
W8C 124  
AMEP Research Centre  
Macquarie University

Reference: HE27JUN2008-D05925L&P

Dear Ms Zhang,

### FINAL APPROVAL

***Title of project: "The Construction and Negotiation of Beijing's Identity as an Olympic Host city and Intercultural Communication Strategies in the Context of Globalization"***

Thank you for your recent correspondence. Your responses have addressed the issues raised by the Division of Linguistics and Psychology Sub-Committee of the Ethics Review Committee (Human Research) and you may now proceed with your research.

Please note the following standard requirements of approval:

1. Approval will be for a period of twelve (12) months. At the end of this period, if the project has been completed, abandoned, discontinued or not commenced for any reason, you are required to submit a Final Report on the project. If you complete the work earlier than you had planned you must submit a Final Report as soon as the work is completed. The Final Report is available at: [http://www.research.mq.edu.au/researchers/ethics/human\\_ethics/forms](http://www.research.mq.edu.au/researchers/ethics/human_ethics/forms)
2. However, at the end of the 12 month period if the project is still current you should instead submit an application for renewal of the approval if the project has run for less than five (5) years. This form is available at [http://www.research.mq.edu.au/researchers/ethics/human\\_ethics/forms](http://www.research.mq.edu.au/researchers/ethics/human_ethics/forms). If the project has run for more than five (5) years you cannot renew approval for the project. You will need to complete and submit a Final Report (see Point 1 above) and submit a new application for the project. (The five year limit on renewal of approvals allows the Committee to fully re-review research in an environment where legislation, guidelines and requirements are continually changing, for example, new child protection and privacy laws).
3. Please remember the Committee must be notified of any alteration to the project.
4. You must notify the Committee immediately in the event of any adverse effects on participants or of any unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project.
5. At all times you are responsible for the ethical conduct of your research in accordance with the guidelines established by the University [http://www.research.mq.edu.au/researchers/ethics/human\\_ethics/policy](http://www.research.mq.edu.au/researchers/ethics/human_ethics/policy)

If you will be applying for or have applied for internal or external funding for the above project it is **your responsibility** to provide Macquarie University's Research Grants Officer with a copy of this letter as soon as possible. The Research Grants Officer will not inform external funding agencies that you have final approval for your project and funds will not be released until the Research Grants Officer has received a

ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE (HUMAN RESEARCH)  
LEVEL 3, RESEARCH HUB, BUILDING CSC  
MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY  
NSW, 2109 AUSTRALIA

Ethics Secretariat: Ph: (02) 9850 6848 Fax: (02) 9850 4465 E-mail: [ethics.secretariat@vc.mq.edu.au](mailto:ethics.secretariat@vc.mq.edu.au)  
[http://www.research.mq.edu.au/researchers/ethics/human\\_ethics](http://www.research.mq.edu.au/researchers/ethics/human_ethics)