

The University of Hong Kong

Faculty of Education



MEDD 6341: Globalization and Higher Education

M.Ed. specialist strand in the specialism of Higher Education (Fall Semester 2010)

Instructor: Dr. Rui YANG, Associate Professor

Englishization and Globalization of Higher Education: A Path to Build and Establish
World-Class Universities in mainland China by the Year 2020

Name: CHAN, Roy Yew Hung

University Number: 2009938028

Date: January 12, 2011

E-mail(s): rychan@hku.hk / rychan@uci.edu

Webpage: <http://www.rychan.com>

In this past century, China's education policy has been largely devoted to improving the quality of its classroom experience, specifically with instructional concerns, pedagogical effectiveness, program designs, use of textbooks as well as the design of assessments (Bianco & Orton, 2009). Additionally, Chinese universities are working hard to instill an English academic culture in China's higher education institutes as well as conducting more courses using English as a medium of instruction as their strategy to more globalize (Lam & Chow, 2004). Nowadays, many developing nations see English as a symbolism of modernity, technology, and Western culture (Tam, 2004). With the increase demand for English language instruction and English learning materials throughout mainland China, economists and scholars see it as a thriving business (Yang, 2001). Nevertheless, researchers suggest that the rise of English language instruction throughout China's higher education institutes is a process and progress of westernization (Tam, 2004). English is not only a dynamic entity for change in mainland China but also an entity to move the country forward towards globalization (Bianco & Orton, 2009). As a result to globalization, internationalization is changing the world of higher education (Yang, 2005). Though English is still taught as a second language to a majority of undergraduate students, the continuous rise for more English language instruction; the demand for more English-only programs; the vow to create an English language culture on-campus; and the desire to instill Englishization and globalization in Chinese university campuses are the result of China's Ministry of Education (MoE) commitment to invite the more talented international students to study abroad in China; to keep Chinese students and scholars informed of the outside world; to turn several Chinese research institutions into world-class universities; and to make the country into a "Research Superpower" house by the year 2020.

But how does China identify and view the English language today? And why are students so eager to learn English in China's higher education institutions? Prior to understanding this global phenomenal, the context of English and the use of the English language must be examined in its entire context. Since the early twenty-first century, Chinese students' strong desire to learn and study English is the result of China's interest to participate in global affairs (Tam, 2004). International events, such as, Beijing's hosting of the 2008 Olympic Games as well as Shanghai's successful World Expo in 2010 are the primary reasons that led to the acceleration of English majors throughout Chinese higher education system. As a result of China's admission into the 2001 World Trade Organization, many academics suggest that English is the primary

language people use to communicate with other societies from different language groups and cultures (Yang, 2001). Additionally, English in general helps Chinese students further appreciate other cultures as well as understand their own cultural and political views (Bianco & Orton, 2009). In other words, many Chinese citizens use English as a process to create globalization and internationalization in China's higher education sector (Tam, 2004). With English sharply on the rise in many developing nations, scholars are questioning whether globalization is seen as a good or bad thing for Chinese universities?

As globalization transforms higher education across the world, the concept of it has become a rising debate on the future of China's higher education system (Yang, 2003). According to research, Scott (2000) believes that globalization is the biggest challenge facing universities today. Hence, it is no surprise to see that globalization in higher education is politically a sensitive issue in mainland China (Yang, 2003). Leslie Sklair, a Professor Emeritus in Sociology at the London School of Economics and Political Sciences, defines globalization as the "emergence of a globalized economy based on new systems of production, finance and consumption" (Sklair, 1998). In other words, Sklair accept the fact that globalization is a market-induced process (Mittelman, 1996), driven by market expansion (United Nations Development Programme, 1999). The concept of globalization and the ideal of the knowledge-based economy are significantly leading many higher education institutions to change around the world (Mok, 2003). Thus, researchers believe that globalization presents both benefits as well as disadvantages on higher education in China (Currie & Newson, 1998). But how do globalization and the English language affect Chinese universities?

To understand this debate, societies in developing nations recognize the fact that English is the official language of every major international organization (Altbach, 1998). Researchers believe that English is not only a tool for communication but is also the language people use to communicate with different language groups (Yang, 2001). In addition, scholars suggest that English has the capacity to "homogenize" local culture and languages in a society to achieve globalization (Tam, 2004). With 80% of all information stored is primarily English, many developing countries as well as developed nations identify English as a "lingua franca" and a medium of international communication that connects different parts of the world through various professions (Altbach, 1998). In other words, a large number of Chinese academics acknowledge the fact that English is the global language of international communication in

politics, economy, culture, and science.

According to Crystal (2003), the number of speakers who understand English as a first or second language has reached 2,213,507,500, making up over a third of the world's population (p. 107). As of today, it is known today that an estimated 213.7 million Chinese had participated in some kind of English learning program (Bianco & Orton, 2009). Nowadays, Chinese students and scholars use English more than ever before because the Internet is vastly written in English (Yang, 2001). Much words and phrases has already entered into Asian culture (Tam, 2004). English is simply the world's lingua franca, or in Fishman's (1996) terms, the world's principal language of wider communication. As a result, many academics believe that English is becoming a global language. According to Yang (2001), the large dominance of English is the result of two factors: 1) the expansion of British colonial power, which peaked toward the end of the 19th century, and 2) the emergence of the United States as the world leading economic power throughout most of the 20th century (p. 345). Surprisingly, the reason English is becoming a global language has little to do with the number of people who speak it. Rather, Yang (2001) suggests that it has much more to do with who these speakers are. When they succeed on the international stage, their language succeeds with them (p. 345).

Consequently, a range of international scholars has re-emphasized the importance of teaching English as a foreign language in China (Yang, 2001). In this new day and age, many Chinese universities normally teach English to students who aspire to become future intellectuals (Tam, 2004). Those who do become English majors in mainland China are encouraged to take a variety of classes such as law, commerce, and science to complement their English competence and make them more marketable in the world (Lam & Chow, 2004). Though English majors do not necessarily find employment quicker compared to engineering or science majors, students majoring in English are more willing to participate in global affairs. Hence, it is no surprise to see that many developing higher education institutes identify English as a key to Westernization. As a result, academics believe that teaching English in China is a way to promote Englishization and globalization in higher education in order to further increase the number of international students studying abroad in Chinese universities.

Englishlization, a recently new term coined by Professor Kwok-kan Tam from the Chinese University of Hong Kong, occurs when native languages and cultures in countries becomes expose by the English language from a non-English speaking country (Tam, 2004). She

defines *Englishlization* as “the transformation which takes place in non-English cultures and languages as a result of exposure to the English language” (Tam, 2009, p. 1). Surprisingly, many scholars would view Englishlization as a window to the outside world of which students have the ability to transform social relations in order to enhance the production of knowledge in developing nations (Chang, 2006). Englishlization not only connects different countries and professions but also make them interdependent through a common language (Tam, 2009). Hence, more and more Chinese universities are seeking to build an English culture in several China higher education institutions as a bait to attract more international students and scholars to study at their respected institutes. In other words, one can see Englishlization and Westernization are semi-related to create new identities and new social institutions.

Simply by creating an English language culture on-campus as the primary instruction in China’s higher education institutes, Chinese President Hu Jintao allows the country to easily recruit more talented students from overseas to study or work in mainland China to one day make Chinese universities as a “Research Superpower” house by the year 2020 (Xueqin, 2010). Since the year 1998, several new projects had been set up by the Ministry of Education to help accelerate the process of building world-class academic institutions in mainland China (Wang, 2010). These projects includes and are not limited to Project 211, Project 985, the 2003-2007 Action Plan for Rejuvenating Education, as well as the development of the C9 League. These initiatives and a lot more are just examples of China’s vow to place several key research institutions into the top ranked universities in the world. As a result, a large number of overseas students across the world are beginning to find Chinese universities very attractive specifically in countries like South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, United Kingdom and the United States (Zhang, 2008).

Through these international collaborative programs in mainland China, Chinese higher education institutions are strengthening international academic cooperation overtime, increasing the number of students going abroad, as well as encouraging faculty members to develop research collaboration within their own country (Zhang, 2008). Although China’s educational system are vastly less attractive for foreigners than most other developed nations, the large number of English courses available in elite Chinese universities as well as the large number of Chinese students studying English is the result of the dramatic acceleration of globalization in many China’s higher education institutions (Chang, 2006). With English language teaching in

China becoming far more international, the country has become far more global in its outlook to mobilize teaching and learning in Chinese higher education institutions; to transform the country into a “Research Superpower”; as well as make several Chinese research institutions into world-class universities by the year 2020 (Lam & Chow, 2004). Thus, it is no surprise to see Chinese scholars debating on the issue of what constitutes a ‘world-class’ universities and how do such universities achieve such prominent status?

Philip G. Altbach, a renowned international higher education scholar, identifies ‘world-class university’ as a mere catch phrase rather than a stature. Altbach, the J. Donald Monan, S.J. University Professor from Boston College Lynch School of Education, once write “Everyone wants one, no one knows what it is, and no one knows how to get one” (Altbach, 2004). Clearly, as of today, there is little to no universal formula for “making” a world-class university. In general, the paradox of what constitutes a world-class university has been vaguely defined overtime. Academics and scholars from Harvard, Princeton and Yale suggest that great world-class universities normally three major parts: (1) excellence in education of their students; (2) research, development and dissemination of knowledge; and (3) activities contributing to the cultural, scientific, and civic life of society (Levin, 2006). Although Harvard, Princeton, and Yale are considered the most elite institutions in the world, researchers believe that making admission more selective, raising the cost of tuition, or having a high number of enrollments will not help institution to become world-class (Salmi, 2009). Thus, it is no surprise to see many scholars debate on the concept of what defines a world class university.

Generally, the theory to establish a world-class university requires strong leadership, a bold vision of the institution’s mission and goals, and an articulated strategic plan to translate the vision to reality. Many academics and scholars suggest that world-class universities can produce highly sought graduates, leading-edge research, and technology transfer (Salmi, 2009). Moreover, world-class universities can produce more scholars to contribute to knowledge through research and publication; teach with the most innovate curricula an pedagogical methods; make research an integral component of undergraduate teaching; and develop graduates who stand out the most because of their success after graduation (Salmi, 2009). Thus, it is assumed that by attending a world-class comprehensive research university, students from developing nations can easily find better jobs; produce cutting-edge research; and contribute to technical innovations.

Like Salmi, Zhang (2008) outlines several key steps to create world-class institutions. Some areas he highlights are: a) setting up more dual degree programs with leading international universities, b) increasing study abroad programs and international internships, c) expand bilingual teaching, d) starting English-only programs, e) launching summer schools, and f) offer short period programs for students coming from international partner universities (p. 23). Hence, Chinese scholars suggest that world-class universities must remain in contact with universities outside Asia, specifically in Western countries. Moreover, China's higher education institutes must create an English culture within their own campuses as a way to internationalize academic community and curriculum to promote internationalization of higher education (Min, 2004). By creating an English language culture while internationalizing the curriculum in Chinese universities, China's higher education institutions can move far much closer to recruit the best and brightest students from overseas. Though there is a sharp rise of students enrolling in English language courses within mainland China, creating a world-class university by the year 2020 also requires improvement in other areas ranging from the quality of research to the quality of faculty management.

To improve the quality of its research, Chinese universities must seek more partnerships with Western elite schools; build joint research centres with leading international universities and research institute; set up satellite research laboratories with major international corporations, participate in major international science projects; as well as conduct joint research projects and publications (Zhang, 2008). In addition, China's higher education must improve management by recruiting Deans and Professors from leading international universities; increase the percentage of faculty members with doctoral degrees from leading international universities; as well as sending more young scholars to international universities and research institutes overseas (Zhang, 2008). By being proactive to improve both research and management, creating an effective English culture in Chinese universities will become far much easier for the country to achieve world-class university status.

Conceptually, world-class status can be achieved in five different ways: 1) independent campuses in China set up by overseas universities, 2) joint institute or schools, 3) dual degree programs, 4) joint programs or projects, and 5) overseas campuses set up by Chinese universities (Salmi, 2009). Moreover, building and creating joint programs are strategic ways to increase international student enrollment within Chinese higher education system. Consequently, it is no

surprise to see that English language has indisputably become the language of international communication (Crystal, 1997). Chinese citizens are starting to learn English more and more than ever before because the Internet is vastly written in English (Yang, 2001). A large number of universities teach English because it is considered a “global” language in China’s higher education institution. It is no longer true that to learn English one must learn the culture (Hamp-Lyons’s, 1983). Rather, English belongs increasingly to anyone who can use it (Smith, 1985). Nevertheless, English in China is seen as the country’s desire for globalization. It symbolizes modernity, technology, and Western culture that associate with its Western cultural underpinnings (Tam, 2004).

In closing, Englishization and globalization is strongly connected with the development of the English language becoming a global language in China’s higher education institutions. English is a world language that will continue to challenge Chinese education policy makers, language educators and learners (Bianco & Orton, 2009). As a result, many academics suggest that China is moving towards a cultural homogeneity because of the dominance of English as a global language. With China GDP now being the world’s second-largest economy, Chinese governments has been working diligently to redesign its higher education system to attract more and more foreigners to study abroad in the mainland. Several Chinese universities and higher education programs are urgently learning how to improve the quality of teaching and learning as their goal to one day make world-class research universities in mainland China. Hence, the continuous rise for more English language instruction; the demand for more English-only programs; the vow to create an English language culture on-campus; and the desire to instill Englishization and globalization in Chinese university campuses are the result of the China’s Ministry of Education(MoE)commitment to invite the most talented international students to study abroad in China; to keep Chinese students and scholars informed of the outside world; to turn several Chinese research institutions into world-class universities; and to make the country into a “Research Superpower” house by the year 2020.

References

- Altbach, Philip (2004). "The Past and the Future of Asian Universities." Found in *Asian Universities: Historical Perspectives and Contemporary Challenges*. New York: The John Hopkins University Press.
- Albach, Philip. (2010). *Leadership for World-Class Universities: Challenges for Developing Countries*. New York: Routledge.
- Albach, Philip. & Balan, Jorge (2007). *World Class Worldwide: Transforming Research Universities in Asia and Latin America*. New York: The John Hopkins University Press.
- Bianco, Joseph L. & Orton, Jane (2009). *China and English: Globalization and the Dilemmas of Identity*. Hong Kong: Multilingual Matters.
- Chang, Junyue (2006). Globalization and English in Chinese Higher Education. *World Englishes*, Vol. 25, No. 3-4, p. 513-525.
- Crystal, David (1997). *English as a global language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Currie, Janice & Newson, Janice (1998). *Universities and Globalisation: Critical Perspectives*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Fishman, Joshua A. (1996). Summary and interpretation: post-imperial English 1940-1990. In *Post-Imperial English*. Edited by Joshua A. Fishman, Andrew W. Conrad and Alma Rubal-Lopez. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, p. 628. (Quoted in Bamgbose, 2001.)
- Hamp-Lyons, Liz (1983). Motivation for learning English as a world language: Integrative and instrumental. *World Language English*, 2(3), 145-149.
- Lam, Agnes & Chow, Kathy (2004). English language education in China: An update. In: Tam, K. & T. Weiss. (Eds.). *English and globalization: Perspectives from Hong Kong and Mainland China*. Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 233-251.
- Levin, Henry (2006). "What is World-Class Universities?" Paper presented at the 2006 Conference of the Comparative & International Education Society, Honolulu, Hawaii,

March 16, 2006.

Meek, Lynn (2007). "Policy Debate on Research in Universities in China." Found in Chapter 5: *Higher Education, Research, and Knowledge in the Asia Pacific Region*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Mok, Ka-Ho (2003). "Globalisation and Higher Education Restructuring in Hong Kong, Taiwan and Mainland China." *Journal of Higher Education Research & Development* .Vol. 22, No. 2, 2003. Hong Kong: City University of Hong Kong.

Mohrman, Kathryn (2009). "What World-Class Universities Should Not Adopt from U.S. Higher Education," in Jan Sedlak and Liu NianCai, eds., *World Class Universities: Proceedings from the 2007 World Class University Conference* (UNESCO-CIPES, 2009)

Murata, Kumiko& Jenkins, Jennifer (2009). "Global Englishes in Asian Contexts: Current and Future Debates.

Min, Weifang (2004). "Asian Universities: Historical Perspectives and Contemporary Changes." Found in Chapter 3: *The Legacy of the Past and the Context for the Future*. New York: The John Hopkins University Press.

Mittelman, James (1996). *Globalisation: Critical Reflections*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner.

Salmi, Jamil (2009). *The Challenge of Establishing World Class Universities*. New York: World Bank Publications.

Scott, Peter (2000). "A Tale of Three Revolutions? Science, Society and the University." In *Higher Education Re-Formed*, edited by P. Scott. London: Falmer Press.

Sklair, Leslie (1998). "Competing Conceptions of Globalisation." Paper presented at the World Congress of Sociology, Montreal, 26 July – 1 August 1998.

Smith, L. E. (1985). EIL versus ESL/EFL: What's the difference and what difference does the difference make. *English Teaching Forum*, October, 2-6.

- Stromquist, Nelly (2007). Internationalization as a Response to Globalization: Radical Shifts in University Environments. *Higher Education*, 53 (1), pp. 81-105.
- Tam, Kwok-kan (2004). *English and Globalization: Perspectives from Hong Kong and Mainland China*. Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press.
- Tam, Kwok-kan (2009). *Englishlization in Asia: Language and Cultural Issues*. Hong Kong: Open University of Hong Kong Press.
- United Nations Development Programme (1999). *Human Development Report 1999*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Wang, Xin (2010). *Higher Education as a Field of Study in China*. Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Warschauer, Mark (2000). The changing global economy and the future of English teaching. *TESOL Quarterly*, 34, 511-535.
- Xueqin, Jiang (2010). "Cheating in China." Found in the *New York Times*. Published on *The Diplomat Magazine*. October 16, 2010.
- Yang, Rui (2010). "Changing Governance in China's Higher Education: Some Analyses of the Recent University Enrollment Expansion Policy." Found in Chapter 3: *The Search for New governance in Higher Education*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Yang, Rui (2005). "Internationalising Chinese Higher Education: A Case Study of One Major Comprehensive University," in P. Ninnes and M. Hellsten (eds.) Internationalising higher education: Critical perspectives for critical times (Hong Kong and Dordrecht: Comparative Education Research Centre, University of Hong Kong and Springer, 2005), pp. 97-118.
- Yang, Rui (2003). "Globalisation as a Context of Inequality and Scarcity for Higher Education Development: A Critical Analysis." *International Review of Education* 49(3-4): 269-291.

Yang, Rui (2002). "University Internationalisation: Its Meanings, Rationales and Implications."

Intercultural Education 13(1): 81-96.

Yang, Rui (2001). "An Obstacle or a Useful Tool? The Role of the English Language in

Internationalizing Chinese Universities." *Journal of Studies in International Education*,

Vol. 5 No. 4, p. 341-358.

Zhang, Jie (2008). "Response of Chinese Higher Education and SJTU to Globalization: An

Overview." Found in Chapter 10: *The Globalization of Higher Education*. London:

Economica, Ltd.