

A study about secondary school students' attitudes toward studying English as a foreign language was carried out in China.

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Abstract

A number of factors can be cited as to why this study is pertinent: As a first step, this study demonstrates that social status is an important determinant in rural Chinese students' ability to acquire English, as well as the amount to which English may be viewed as cultural and other capital. Students from rural areas of China are regularly confronted with mitigating variables that frequently restrict their progress to higher education, which thus necessitates them to do more work during their educational travels than their urban counterparts. Teachers in rural regions may benefit from tracing their paths in terms of 'investment' in the future, as it will assist to highlight inadequacies in the existing system that may be remedied by the individual teacher. Class-based social capital explains a person's interest in and commitment to English language study.

Secondly, this study provides students with the opportunity to tell their own tales of joy, disappointment, and fear as they go through their English learning journey. As a final point, this study provides a chance to examine how students in rural China conceptualise English acquisition in terms of their present economic and social resources. Teachers in rural areas may be able to help their pupils overcome the unfavourable aspects of studying English in rural areas through this study. In the absence of adequate economic and social capital, it may be assumed that students' views of themselves (standards, respect, and values) and academic success are influenced by these factors. It also sheds light on how educational contexts are reproduced (cf. Bourdieu, 1971 and 1990; Bowles & Gintis and 1976; Apple 1995 and Giroux and 1990). All those whom believe that schools are institutions that perpetuate class hierarchy and inequality.

Keyword: Acquisition Of English, Education Standards, Context Of Education

INTRODUCTION

English language globalization is a worldwide phenomenon that has had an impact on English education across the world (Gil & Adamson, 2011). No country is exempt from this rule, even China. The government's strategic strategy for national economic growth includes boosting

English instruction as a key aspect of educational reform in China (Gao, 2012a; Qiang, Huang, Siegel & Trube, 2011). Initially, administrative promotion of English study was envisioned as a clear portal to 'western' technical knowledge; but, English is now intimately linked to China's construction of its 'narrative of self-identity.' This transition has had an impact on both informal and official English education. Recently, the Chinese government has taken steps to codify and institutionalize this influence, promoting the use of English as a type of 'soft power' to gain access to the global marketplace.

Since then, English instructors and students throughout China have been directly affected by the historically unparalleled shifts in economic, educational, cultural, and racial power that have been taking place. There has been a rise in the use of the English language as a medium for capital accumulation, connection with the lives of a larger global population, and creation of ties across geography, time, and location that has followed globalization. As a result of this, my research largely focuses on the link between English and students' capital, and the investment of students' identities in the study of English as it changes over time and geography.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Since 1978, China's economy has grown rapidly and social reforms have been sweeping across the country. Economic reform has been threatened by increasing socioeconomic imbalance, and the rigid social-status hierarchy that emerged out of a state socialist economy is no longer suitable to represent the growing social and economic fragmentation of Chinese society (Bian, 2002). With the goal of maintaining economic growth and creating a "harmonious society," China's government closely monitors social disparity. Following Marxist class analysis, the term social stratum has superseded social class. It's a new term used to describe how China's social structure changed in the 1990s (Anagnost, 2008). When it comes to addressing social inequalities without presuming societal animosity, the term social strata is utilised. Rather than class-based conflict, socioeconomic inequalities are expressed as cultural differences in a hierarchy of patriotic affiliation (Anagnost, 2008).

In the backdrop of this study, the antagonism and conflict between different socioeconomic strata in China is still quite prominent. Market reforms in China are a good match for China's complex social strata since it encourages individuals to follow their own interests and rise up the social ladder (Liang, 1997). People from various socioeconomic classes have unequal access to social capital in accordance with the theory of social reproduction. Nine participants in this research are from working-class or peasant families, while one comes from a family in the civil service. As a result, their socioeconomic level has a significant effect in the process of learning English and the amount of time and effort they put into it.

Guanxi (in Chinese), a fundamental idea in Chinese society, is nearly identical to the notion of social capital in the Chinese language. For example, guanxi, which literally translates as connections and ties, is actually much more than this, as relationships aren't always required to create it. A guanxi is a "dyadic, specific, and emotive tie that has the possibility of promoting favour transfers between the persons connected by tie (Bian, 2006, p.312). Alternatively, it can be seen as a form of social investment or social capital (Butterfield, 1983), which creates a culture of connections and provides the individual with easy access to specific resources,

increased access to controlled information, credit grants and protection from external competitors (Butterfield 1983). (Lee, Pae & Wong, 2001).”

Guanxi is highly regarded by many Chinese people. 'One more link gives another path' is a Chinese saying that emphasises the importance of guanxi. When it comes to obtaining clearance or access to almost everything in China, guanxi is "the informal relationships so vital" (Tsang, 1998, p.64). Guanxi and class selection have a significant impact on the investment of students in their English education in the setting of their school.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

As a result of the Third Plenary Session of Eleventh Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, which was held in Beijing in 1978, of which the motto was 'Practice is the only real criterion to test truth,' China has undergone rapid economic development and dramatic social reform, achieving significant growth both economically and socially.

Both socioeconomic disparities and China's strong social-status hierarchy, which evolved from a state socialist economy, are becoming problems for the country's economic reform efforts (Bian, 2002). Rural-urban dual-structured society is still prevalent in China, with a clear divide between rural and urban regions.

Objective of the Study

- To identify the changes in attitude concerning the possibilities of converting English to cultural capital within the scope of their social capital, along with the shift of their identities across time and space.

Research Questions

- How do their changing identities across time and space affect their motivation/investment in English learning?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A primary goal of narrative research is to draw links between people's everyday lives and the larger world around them. Narratives can assist researchers who are interested in education processes grasp the reality and develop a connection between these experiences and appropriate educational theories and practises. In addition, it is a first step toward gaining a better understanding of how participants in the study see their niche (Menezes, 2011) within the changing 'ecology' and their affordances (Gibson, 1986; Tudor, 2003; van Lier, 2004, 2008, 2010) when it comes to language learning and language use – whether that is in the classroom, outside the class, after graduation or in their jobs.

It is based on the social notion that one's life storey is a social construct made up of both social fact and one's own personal, experiencing world. Narrative inquiry (Rosenthal, 1993). People's daily activities are shaped by a narrative. Storytelling is a way for people to establish their own identities and those of others around them, while also interpreting their understanding of the past, present, and future.

An investigative method known as narrative inquiry views personal experience as a storey, and the storey is a fundamental and essential way of analysing and interpreting the world. If you want to study anything, you have to look at it through the lens of a narrative inquiry process

(Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 375). This methodology's basic steps can be summarised as follows: One of the first steps in conducting a research project is to gather data from participants. Then, the researcher transcribes and reads through the stories. The researcher then (re)creates the stories, keeping the participant's "voice" in mind while doing so. Using the first person, past tense, chronological order, and describing the plot, scenes, characters, etc.; 6) if possible, the narrator's perspective.

It is possible to check with the participants to see if they have a similar understanding; 7) narratives are reworked and themes relevant to the research questions are highlighted; Categories and codes for each individual tale are amended with the study supervisor (or other members of the research group), and a typology is built from the combination of categories found in each narrative. For narrative researchers, it's critical to go beyond simply summarising or interpreting what a story has to say (cf. Chadse (2008), Carle (2000), and Connelly & Clandinin (2008)). (1990).

After compiling the participants' personal experiences, I next used narrative inquiry to 'recreate' their stories in order to better comprehend their experiences. Researchers and participants have worked together for a long period, in a certain location, and in social contact. An illustration depicting the creation of milieus through a process in which the researcher and participants interact and engage in discussion together is presented here (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). As part of this study's analysis, these stories were used to shed light on the intersubjective positionings and perceived 'affordance' of language communities, which were often imagined communities in cases where there was little chance of actual use. cf. Norton, 2001.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The emphasis of my research is on a group of kids from a rural Chinese school and their progress in learning the English language in particular. I am interested in tracing the connections between such trajectory and the students' perception of current or future access to certain forms of social, cultural and economic capital as well as the relationship between investment in English learning and how this is directly and indirectly linked to their identities, which change over time and space. Language and identity are intertwined. Main focus in the applied linguistics discipline.

Applied linguistics is concerned with the idea that language usage is not simply a cognitive endeavour but also an immanently social one. The concept of identity ties in with this approach. As a result of this idea, we are more aware of how and why individuals use language, how others see them as language users, what they are trying to say and what resources they are using to do so. As cited by Zotzmann & O'Regan (2016), (p. 113)

DATA ANALYSIS

The researchers came to the conclusion that it would be more efficient for them to keep the text exchanges that took place during the online interviews as text documents as opposed to capturing and storing the audio from the focus groups and face-to-face interviews. They were looked at on several occasions and re-played in their entirety during the process.

When we replay a discussion after it has already taken place, our ears and brains are able to overlook a surprising amount of information, and our recollections may become warped as a result (Cole & Knowles, 2000).

Because of this, the researcher needs to read and listen to each item of data a significant number of times in order to acquire a feel for it and select the extracts that are the most relevant (issues related to capital, topics linked to English).

CONCLUSION

According to the results of my research, each participant began my study with their own unique and individualised conceptions of how learning English will impact their cultural, economic, and social capital. Lily, for instance, strongly identified with the "imaginary" target group, and as a result, she worked hard in school and soon got to the top of her class. Additionally, Serena anticipated future career opportunities due to the "commodification" of the English language (although a hazy one). To be specific, Cherry and Ding's intersubjective positionings with respect to English as potential capital were more sophisticated. Cherry's parents and grandparents placed a premium on her learning English; they moved the family to a new area so that she might develop a more "obedient student" persona than her peers Lily and Serena, who were driven to learn on their own will. When Ding was in high school, he had an even more unfavourable intersubjective positioning: he cared less about English and instead focused on math and the hard sciences since he believed they would be more useful to him in the long run.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Despite the researcher's best efforts during the proposed data gathering, analysis, and final thesis writing, he acknowledges that his study may have certain inherent limits and shortcomings. Acknowledgement is important to him, and he sees them as promising avenues for future research.

First and foremost, the length of the study will be a limiting factor. Observation, interviews, and a focus group will take place over the course of eight weeks, and the researcher plans to maintain contact with participants via QQ for more than two and a half years. The researcher feels he could have captured the dynamic process and the social as well as linguistic environment of his study more fully if only allowed to stay at the research location longer. The more information he had, the more able he was to see things from both an outsider's and an insider's perspective.

As with other qualitative research, the second restriction may be that he was unable to adequately describe all aspects of his presence on the subjects. My identification and position (teacher? learner? friend? researcher) may have had an impact on the participants' perceptions of me when I spoke to them. What impact did the fact that he was a real person have on the findings of his study? All of these impacts are unknown at this point in his research. To continue his investigation, he hopes that one day, the opportunity may arise for him to do so.

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