

Development of Foreign Language Education in Universities and Higher Colleges of the PRC in the 20th – 21st Centuries

Abstract. Foreign language education in universities and higher colleges in the People's Republic of China (PRC) has undergone profound changes from the 20th century to the present, adapting to the country's evolving socio-economic landscape and global positioning. Initially focused on languages like Russian and English for diplomatic and economic purposes, the curriculum has shifted significantly since the late 20th century, driven by the necessity for broader language skills to support China's increasing engagement in international trade and cultural exchanges. The article is devoted to the analyses of the development of foreign language education in Universities and Higher Colleges of the China in the 20th – 21st Centuries.

Keywords: foreign language education, universities, higher colleges, China.

The educational reforms in foreign language studies have incorporated a strong ideological component, reflecting the Chinese government's focus on aligning linguistic training with national interests. Recent curriculum changes emphasize not only language proficiency but also the integration of ideological and political education, aiming to cultivate a generation of language professionals who are well-versed in both communication skills and moral values [2].

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This ideological integration poses both a contemporary opportunity and a point of contention within the academic community, as it raises questions about academic freedom and the role of education in shaping national identity. The introduction of the Belt and Road Initiative in 2013 has further influenced foreign language education policies, promoting the development of programs that enhance national security and foster global competitiveness. Educational institutions are now tasked with diversifying language offerings and strengthening English language education, which is viewed as essential for preparing students for careers in an increasingly interconnected world [3].

Despite these advancements, foreign language education in China faces notable challenges, including the need for improved evaluation methods, the integration of digital technologies, and the adaptation of curricula to cater to the diverse backgrounds of students. As societal demands continue to evolve, there is an ongoing necessity for policies to be regularly updated, ensuring they remain relevant and effective in fulfilling both national goals and individual aspirations [1].

Foreign language education in China has undergone significant transformations from the 20th century to the present day, evolving in response to national needs and global trends. The reforms in this domain have been heavily influenced by broader socio-economic changes, international relations, and educational philosophies.

In the early years of the People's Republic of China, foreign language education primarily served the state's need for international communication, especially in economic and diplomatic fields. The focus was largely on teaching Russian and English, reflecting the political alignments of the time [1].

However, as China embarked on its economic reforms in the late 20th century, there was a marked shift towards enhancing individual capabilities and accommodating the increasing demand for diverse language skills, particularly in English, to facilitate international trade and cultural exchange [1].

Recent years have seen a growing emphasis on integrating ideological and political education into foreign language curricula. This approach aims to develop not only linguistic proficiency but also ideological awareness and moral values among students. The

curriculum-based ideological education is designed to unify students' professional knowledge and political quality, addressing the challenges faced by foreign language disciplines in the modern educational landscape [2].

This initiative reflects the Chinese government's strategic focus on fostering a new generation of language professionals who are aligned with national interests and capable of engaging in global contexts.

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), launched in 2013, has further reshaped foreign language education policies in China. The initiative highlights the need for improved foreign language programs to enhance national security and global competitiveness. As a result, educational institutions are encouraged to develop curricula that not only improve language proficiency but also cultivate international and intercultural competencies among students. This alignment has led to an increased focus on diversifying language offerings and strengthening English as a vital tool for expertise training [3].

Despite the advancements, foreign language education in China faces several challenges. These include the need for a robust evaluation mechanism for teaching methods and materials, the integration of digital technologies, and addressing the varying backgrounds of local and international students in English-medium instruction programs [4].

The evolving demands of society necessitate continual updates to foreign language education policies, ensuring they remain relevant and effective in meeting both national and individual aspirations.

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**Развитие иноязычного образования
в университетах и высших колледжах КНР
в середине XX века – первой четверти XXI века**

Аннотация. Иноязычное образование в университетах и высших колледжах Китайской Народной Республики (КНР) претерпело глубокие изменения с XX века по настоящее время, адаптируясь к меняющемуся социально-экономическому ландшафту страны и ее глобальному позиционированию. Первоначально ориентированная на такие языки, как русский и английский в дипломатических и экономических целях, учебная программа значительно изменилась с конца XX века, что обусловлено необходимостью более широких языковых компетенций для поддержки растущего участия Китая в международной торговле и культурных обменах. Статья посвящена анализу развития иноязычного образования в университетах и высших колледжах Китая в XX–XXI веках.

Ключевые слова: иноязычное образование, университеты, высшие колледжи, Китай.

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