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**THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS  
AS AN INDEPENDENT SCIENCE IN CHINA FROM 1978 UP TILL  
NOWDAYS**

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*The article describes the historical development of Applied Linguistics as an independent science in China from 1978 up till nowadays. It was the period when great changes and reforms happened in the Chinese science after years of stagnation. During this time a lot of researches on Applied Linguistics were developed, new approaches were integrated; great attention was paid to the correction of the mistakes of the past years and to the creation of a new theoretical base, which can match the requirements of the world standards.*

*The author highlighted the key events in the process of the formation and development of Applied Linguistics in China, such as: opening training direction for master degree on the major «Linguistics and Applied Linguistics» in Guangzhou University of Foreign Studies (广州外国语学院); beginning first time in the whole country eight months course «The course of Applied Linguistics»; foundation of the «National Key Research Centre for Linguistics and Applied Linguistics» and publication of the journal «Applied Linguistics» (《语言文字应用》), one of the most important events of this period.*

*The author researched the studies of the leading linguists in China, such as Dong Changlai (董昌来), Feng Zhiwei (冯志伟), Gui Shichun (桂诗春), Liu Yanchun (刘艳春), Shi Linping (石林平), Yu Genyuan (于根元), Wen Qiufang (文秋芳), Zhang Yan (张艳) and others and on the base of this information created her own system of the historical development of Applied Linguistics in China. The successful experience of Applied Linguistics formation and development in China can be useful for the reformation of the major «Foreign language and Applied Linguistics» in Ukraine.*

*Key words: Applied Linguistics, historical development, professional training, reforms, specialization, foreign experience, China.*

**Introduction.**

The aims of the article are to describe historical periodization of Applied Linguistics development in China, to distinguish main tasks and directions of the subject and to represent some opinions of Chinese linguists about this phenomenon. General issues of Applied Linguistics were researched in the works of the scientists from different countries. The historical analysis of Applied Linguistics development as an independent science was researched in the works of Kaplunova M.,



Zavialova O., Leninceva V., Semenas A., Bolton K., Na Liu, Dong Changlai (栋昌来), Norman, J., Feng Zhiwei (冯志伟), Liu Yanchun (刘艳春), Shi Linping (石林平), Yu Genyuan (于根元), Gui Shichun (桂诗春), Wen Qiufang (文秋芳), Zhang Yan (张艳) and others. Our research shows the objective socio-economic and political factors that have influenced the development of Applied Linguistics as an independent science in China, tells about founding of the research establishments, specialized public-cations, new young scientists, and new tasks in the development of Applied Linguistics in China.

Having analysed the studies of Chinese and foreign linguists we put all information together and form new view of the historical development of Applied Linguistics which began about 5 century B. C. and still continues. We divided the development period into 6 segments: 1) the period of traditional researches; 2) the second period from 1845 till 1963; 3) the third period from 1964 till 1977; 4) the fourth period from 1978 till 1991; 5) the fifth period from 1992 till 1999 and 6) the sixth period from 2001 up till the present day. In our previous research «The periodization of the historical development of Applied Linguistics in China till 1977» we described first three periods. In this article we are going to describe three periods among those six, namely from 1977 up till nowadays.

*The period from 1978 till 1991* is the time of fruitful development of Applied Linguistics in China, which is distinguished by the reviewing of already known and the introduction of the new theoretical knowledge. We can safely assert that this period was the period of Applied Linguistics formation as a scientific branch in China. The lower limit of the third period in Applied Linguistics development in China is 1978, the time when Guangdong University of Foreign Studies (广东外语外贸大学- 广外), at that time Guangzhou University of Foreign Studies (广州外国语学院) began to create training direction for master degree on the major «Linguistics and Applied Linguistics», approved by the educational commission later in 1984. Also this year was important because of the creation of the journal «Modern Foreign Languages» (《现代外语》).

1980 is particular important as in Guangdong University of Foreign Studies «Conference on Applied Linguistics and English Language Teaching» was held for the first time, honourable participants became Xu Guozhang (许国璋), Wang Zongyan (王宗炎), Li Funing (李赋宁) and other famous scientists. In October of that year the Ministry of Education intrusted the university's administration to open the whole country eight months course «The course of Applied Linguistics». This project was entirely under the guidance of a prominent Chinese scientist and professor Gui Shichun (桂诗春). Since that time the historical development of Applied Linguistics as an independent science in China had begun and has been going on till nowadays (陈昌来, 2007; 冯志伟, 1999; 桂诗春, 1988).

The undoubtedly significant event of that time was the creation of «China English Language Education Association» (《中国外语教学研究会》) and opening branches according to the language classification in 1981. In 1984, on the base of Guangdong University of Foreign Studies the State Council of the People's Republic of China decided to create «National Key Research Centre for Linguistics and Applied



Linguistics», which consisted of such departments as: the department of raising Putunhua level, department of exam in Putunhua, Putunhua Research Unit and Language Teaching, Chinese language and Pinyin research department (research centre on lexicography), Department of Sociolinguistics Studies and Media language, Department of computer language research (Chinese network of verbal and written language). The first researchers of the «National Key Research Centre for Linguistics and Applied Linguistics» became such outstanding scientists in Applied Linguistics as Gui Shichun (桂诗春), Li Xiaojun (李筱菊), He Ziran (何自然), Huang Jianhua (黄建华), Qian Guanlian (钱冠连) and others (教育部人文社会科学重点研究基地广东外语外贸大学外国语言学及应用研究中心, 2018).

Thanks to the fruitful work of the scientists and continuous reforms during 30 years, «National Key Research Centre for Linguistics and Applied Linguistics» became a very vivid example of the science development in China because of the constant spreading of the research circles. The most important three areas today are the study of foreign languages, analysis of the society discourse and the studying of the language content. As for studying a foreign language, the main issues are the comprehensive study of the acquisition of bilingualism, namely, mastering a foreign language, knowledge testing, Psycholinguistics, Applied Linguistics, Lexicography, etc.

In 1985 Chinese Association for the Study of Foreign Languages and Guangzhou University of Foreign Studies hold «The first international language teaching forum»; and in 1990 Institute of Applied Linguistics and Suzhou University organized «Scientific Conference on Applied Linguistics». Guangzhou University of Foreign Studies founded and researched such discipline as «Linguistics and Applied Linguistics», in 1986 it was the one establishment in the country which got the right to give doctoral degree in this area. And also it has become, and still stays, one of ten top universities of foreign languages in 5 countries of the world, where they train and give the doctoral degree on foreign linguistics (石林平, 2005).

*The period from 1992 till 1999* can be called as the period of active reforms. At that time Chinese Applied Linguistics covered a new level of development – the quantity and the quality of scientific research of that time increased and improved. That was the period when the major attention was devoted to the correction of mistakes made in the studies of past years and the creation of new theoretical materials that would meet world's standards.

Special attention of the Chinese scientists was paid to Computer Linguistics, namely, the greatest interest was devoted to the studying of the issues in information processing's Chinese language vocabulary. In this area we want to value the works of such scientists as Feng Zhiwei (冯志伟), Liu Ruzhan (陆汝占), Huang Changning (黄昌宁) and others. In the field of phonetic research it is necessary to note the results of Wu Zongji (吴宗济) and Cao Jianfen (曹剑芬). A rather noticeable niche was taken by studies on sociolinguistics. Such scientists as Chen Yuan (陈原), Wang Zongyan (王宗炎), Chen Zhnagtai (陈章太), Chen Jianmin (陈建民), Dai Qingsha (戴庆厦), Cai Fuyou (蔡富有), Chen Songcen (陈松岑), Su Jinzhi (苏金智) made great contribution in the researches of the general positions. Chen Jianmin (陈建民) and others worked on the issues of the spoken language, Chen Jianmin (陈建民), Cao Zhiyun (曹志耘), Shen Xiaolong (申小龙), Xing Fuyi (邢福义), Dai Zhaoming (戴昭铭) and others were



engaged in the in the field of linguacultural studies. Chen Enquan (陈恩泉), Xu Siyi (徐思益), Li Rulong (李如龙), Gao Liqin (高莉琴) and others contributed to the researches of bilingualism. Such scientists as Cheng Xianghui (程祥徽), Li Yunhan (黎运汉), Zheng Yuanhan (郑远汉), Zhang Deming (张德明), Yu Genyuan (于根元), Liu Yiling (刘一玲), Li Xizong (李熙宗), Wang Jianhua (王建华) and others reached significant results in studies of language and style of literary works (于根元 1998).

Publishing House of Nanjing University in 1994 printed a collection of articles edited by Cheng Xianghui and Li Yunhan «Theoretical digest of language style» (程祥徽, 黎运汉 《语言风格论集》), which contained the articles of almost all leading linguists in China. The issues of the modern Chinese language and the researches of neologisms got the greatest attention of the scientists. Yu Genyuan (于根元), Liu Yiling (刘一玲), Zhou Hongbo (周洪波) for a long time worked on creation of a chronological dictionary. Tian Xiaolin (田小琳) was first who used the concept «social expressions» (《社区词》) and made researches in this direction that helped a lot in dictionary's studies in general. Beijing seminar on Applied Linguistics the materials of which were published in proceedings «Politeness and polite language» (《礼貌和礼貌语言》) and the result of cooperation of Chen Zhnagtai (陈章太) and Yu Genyuan (于根元) – article «Beautiful language and the formation of spiritual culture» (《语言美和精神文明建设》) made great contribution to the development of the Applied Linguistics (于根元 1998).

One of the most important events of this period was the publication of the journal «Applied Linguistics» (《语言文字应用》). At first the publication was planned after opening Institute of Applied Linguistics (语言文字应用研究), but then the periodical was postponed till 1992. The journal «Applied Linguistics» (《语言文字应用》) became the first professional edition, where Chinese scientists in applied linguistics were able to publish their achievements. It (《语言文字应用》) undoubtedly became a symbol of Applied Linguistics as a science in China (孙丰果, 2016).

In 1992, the Chinese Foreign Language Learning Association in Tianjin hosted the Second International Forum of Teaching English. During that time Chinese scientists analyzed the theoretical achievements that were made in the development of Applied Linguistics, and as the result of this analyse the article «General provisions of the theory of applied linguistics» (《应用语言学理论纲要》) was published. The scientists organized discussions on the future development of Applied Linguistics, seminars on topics «Applied Written and Oral Languages» (《语言文字应用》) and «Philosophy of language» (《语言哲学对话》) were hold in 1994 – 1996 and 1996 – 1997 accordingly. This is the period of the research establishments, specialized publications, the period of new young scientists, time of setting new tasks in the development of Applied Linguistics as an independent science. In December 1995 in China the Conference on Applied Linguistics was held. During this conference the main achievements in this field in the 20th century were



reviewed. In December 1997 another National Language Conference (全国语言文字工作会议) was provided and it summed up 12 years of work and experience. During conference such issues as «language purity», a combination of subjectivism and language diversification, most important constructions and courses in written and spoken language etc. were discussed. This made a significant contribution to Applied Linguistics research. It was the time when Chinese scholars' studies on theoretical component in Applied Linguistics made breakthrough (孙丰果, 2016; 于根元, 1998).

We can say that during this period, linguists in China and abroad reached the same level. But nobody can deny that studies on Applied Linguistics in China still had some drawbacks, for example, the lack of theoretical knowledge. Leading linguists in the country are inclined to believe that for the successful development of Applied Linguistics in China, it is important to achieve three goals.

First, it is necessary to improve Chinese own theoretical achievements. In the past, great attention was paid to introducing and familiarizing with new information about the subject. Today, many scholars are concerned with this issue, for example Hu Wenzhong (胡文仲) accents that the teaching of a foreign language in China did not create its own theoretical system and independent school. It explains that studies in the field of teaching a foreign language still have significant flaws. Shu Dingfang (束定芳) also believes that the results of studies on the theory of teaching foreign languages in the past 10 – 20 years were mostly borrowed from abroad, and at the moment there is lack of its own unique theory (束定芳, 2000). The linguists in China are currently working on this issue and are gradually changing the situation. But it is too early to dwell on what has been achieved, on the contrary, it is necessary to intensify the use of Chinese own theoretical knowledge. If the teachers begin to use the works of their own scientists, this will help the theory to develop in practice. Also, Chinese scientists need to pay more attention to the pedagogical features of China itself, to develop Chinese theoretical knowledge as much as possible, and as a result it will help develop the country's theoretical work.

Second vital issue is intensive using of leading foreign periodicals and increasing the level of periodicals in China. The member of the editorial office of the International Journal of Applied Linguistics (国际应用语言学) Wen Qiufang (文秋芳) brought to light that not many works on Applied Linguistics were published by Chinese scholars in foreign editions. The reasons can be seen in two facts. First, leading journals are mostly in countries of Europe and America and for Chinese scientists it is not so easy to print their work overseas. Second, there is a great cultural gap between China and the west, and the studies of Chinese and Western scholars differ considerably. Thus, Chinese researchers should work according to the demands of overseas standards, show greater flexibility to get as much chances as possible for publications in leading foreign periodicals. In addition, it is necessary to increase the level of periodicals in China, bring them to the level of well-known journals from abroad.

Third, it is significant to use the platforms of international conferences which are the main environment for information and ideas' exchange, acquaintance with



scientists from other countries, and at the same time the place to spread Chinese innovation. On the one hand, this kind of partnership contributes to the enhancement of international scientific exchange, but on the other hand, gives China an invaluable experience of conducting international conferences (孙丰果, 2016: 11).

*The period from 2001 up till nowadays* is the time of innovations. During this period they use and popularize implemented research methods. The lower limit of this period coincides with the date of the first in the county Law of the People's Republic of China on the Standard Spoken and Written Chinese Language (《中华人民共和国国家通用语言文字法》). It was based on the Constitution of the People's Republic of China and stimulates the popularization of the state oral and written language unification, its standardization and development, implements its effective use in society, encourages the national minorities of different regions to engage in cultural and economic cooperation (Gov.cn, 2018).

On May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2001 the Foreign Language Teaching and Research Publishing House conducted a large Third International Forum on the teaching of foreign languages. Its main topic was «Learning foreign languages in China in the 21st century». In April 2004, the Fourth Forum was held in cooperation with the Beijing University of Foreign Languages and the Publishing House of teaching and learning foreign languages. The main theme of the event was «New Directions in ELT in China». In addition, many scientific conferences related to Applied Linguistics were held. In the second decade of June 2002, the Research Institute of Foreign Languages together with the Faculty of Foreign Languages of the Beijing University of Aviation and Astronautics organized the Fifth Forum. The topic was concerned with the statement «Students are in the centre of the science», and various pedagogical methods and ideas were discussed during the event. In April 2003, the Beijing University of Foreign Languages hold the Conference on reforming of teaching foreign language in high school. The main idea of the conference combined four directions: innovative concepts and teaching methods, development and analysis of educational materials, evaluation of abilities, training and development of teaching staff (石林平, 2005).

During recent decades a lot of researches on Applied Linguistics were done, new approaches were integrated, and special attention was paid to experimental and corpus data. A significant number of researches were made and their results were reflected in many periodicals. In addition to publications in general collections of Applied Linguistics many works were published in the scientific journals of China and North America, for example: «Journal of Chinese Linguistics», «Language and Linguistics», «Chinese Language and Discourse», «Journal of Chinese Language Teachers Association», «Journal of Chinese Language Teachers Association», «Teaching Chinese in the world» (《世界汉语教学》) and «Collection of articles on linguistics» (《语言学论丛》). A lot of monographs and works have already been written on Applied Linguistics in China (e. g.: Qin Xiaoqing (秦晓晴), 2009; Zhou Dandan (周丹丹), 2012; Yang Lüxin (杨鲁新), 2013; Xu Hongchen (许宏晨), 2013 etc.). Strengthening the trends of the model in the studying of positivism, gradual tendency of mixing applied methods, spreading interest in a narrative law (Zhan Ju



(战菊), 2010) and the laws of ethnography (Li Citing (李茨婷), Zheng Tongyan (郑咏滢), 2015) syntax and morphology (e.g. Packard, 2000; J. Huang, Y.-H. Li, & Y. Li, 2009; J. Huang, 2010; and N. Zhang, 2010) phonology and phonetics (e. g. Chen, 2000; Duanmu, 2000; Xu, 2001 and Y.- H. Lin, 2007.), in-depth study of the Chinese language (Sun, 2006; Xing, 2006; He & Xiao, 2008; Everson & Xiao, 2009 and Everson & Shen, 2010.) were presented. These works influence the development not only of Applied Linguistics and education in China, but also of the Linguistic Theory in general (Xiao 2011: 8 – 10).

It is also worth mentioning that the «Special Conference on Tendencies in the Studying of Applied Linguistics 2017» was held on 28<sup>th</sup> August in 2017 in Shanghai University of Foreign Languages. The conference was attended by scientists from different countries: America, England, and Australia, also from different cities of China, in total more than 40 people. The main topic was «Internationalization of Chinese Applied Linguistics and Local Innovations».

Li Wei (李巍) a professor of philology from China, a true member of the Academy of Sciences in England, editor of several leading professional publications believes that studies on Applied Linguistics in China should draw attention to two issues. First, researches on Applied Linguistics should raise «great questions» (大问题). Second, «the issue of the right to vote» (《话语权问题》) for the researches on Applied Linguistics of China in the international space. If Chinese Applied Linguistics is viewed from the standpoint of scientific value, then the ultimate goal is solving the general issues of humanity. Only in this case you can get the respect of world society, establish the value of your scientific research. So, «great question» in Applied Linguistics studying should be searched on the theoretical basis. He also affirms that young scientists should pay attention to research methods, know how to perform specific applied operations, realize why they should do it in every case, and understand the theory and essence of the subject. The «right to vote» influences Chinese researches to use foreign theoretical developments because of the lack of Chinese theoretical materials. China has a rich linguistic tradition, a huge base of theoretical knowledge and thoughts, which affect world developments (李贝, 2017).

### **Conclusions.**

As we can see according to the information in this article the studies of Applied Linguistics began long time ago, but because of such events like wars and reforms the development of many sciences was reduced. And new development began again only about 40 years ago. But for such a short period Chinese science and education got significant results. This factor is the main reason why we should pay proper attention to Chinese professional training system with the purpose to get some useful ideas, methods and theories to reform Ukrainian educational system, namely the major «Foreign Language and Applied Linguistics».

The study performed in the article does not cover all the aspects of the problem and requires further investigation. So our next step of this research is to describe the views and thoughts on Applied Linguistics and its development made by the leading Chinese scientists to get the full understanding of this science in China.



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