The Strategic Crisis Response of International Chinese Language Education Based on 5W Model

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Abstract: Under the complex and changing international political, economic and cultural background, international Chinese language education faces various crisis. This study uses PEST analysis to analyze the external crisis faced by international Chinese language education, discusses its own dilemma, and establishes a strategic crisis response model based on 5W model, in order to benefit the healthy development of international Chinese language education.

Keywords: International Chinese language education, PEST analysis, 5W model, Crisis response model, Strategy

1. Introduction

ICLE (International Chinese language education) refers to the education for learners of Chinese as a second language (including spoken and written languages).

The concept evolved from the earlier term "Chinese language international education" and the earlier term "teaching Chinese as a foreign language". According to CCTV（China Central Television）News, by the end of 2020, more than 180 countries and regions around the world had launched international Chinese language education, and more than 70 countries had incorporated Chinese into their national education systems.

The diverse international political and economic, ideological and cultural backgrounds have exposed ICLE to various crises. In-depth analysis of the risks and proposed strategies to cope with the crisis can make ICLE an important tool for spreading Chinese culture, which should be a major issue for relevant professional institutions and practitioners.

2. External Anxieties and Internal Troubles: ICLE Crisis Analysis

PEST analysis is a common analysis method in the study of enterprises' strategic management, which analyzes the impact of external macro environment on the development of enterprises from four dimensions: political, economic, social and technological. Currently, the world's political and economic situation is changeable, and the culture and ideology are multiple, ICLE is affected by various unfavorable factors. [1] The study analyzes the "external anxieties" faced by ICLE from four dimensions by using PEST analysis.

2.1 The "External Anxieties" under PEST analysis

Politics. At present, China has established more than 500 Confucius Institutes and more than 1,000 Confucius Classrooms in more than 100 countries around the world, which has become one of the important paths for China to promote outstanding Chinese culture to the world. However, for a long time, there are huge differences between Eastern and Western countries in terms of politics, economy, culture and ideology. According to local media reports in 2020, some countries such as Germany, Australia and the United States have closed down some Confucius Institutes one after another, and the development of ICLE overseas is encountering a severe winter, facing many difficulties and obstacles.

Economics. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) predicts that a serious global economic recession will be unavoidable in recent years. With high unemployment rates and declining incomes in

many countries, the deteriorating economic situation will inevitably affect many foreigners' plans to learn Chinese or to study in China. [2] In countries or regions where Chinese has not yet entered the national education system and Chinese teachers are scarce, Chinese language education is more likely to be shelved or even canceled due to insufficient investment. In addition, due to insufficient investment in funds, educational institutions will be restricted in their activities such as enrollment promotion and consultation, which directly affects the development of ICLE enrollment and teaching.

Society. In recent years, the frequency and scale of interactions in political, economic, and cultural between countries have decreased, and cross-border population movements have plummeted due to the epidemic. It is estimated that in the first quarter of 2020, the world's cross-border population flows dropped by more than 40% year-on-year. [3] International activities have been drastically reduced, cultural venues have been closed, and transnational humanities exchange activities are struggling. The teaching activities of ICLE have been seriously affected. Universities, Confucius Institutes and other educational and training institutions in China and abroad have been forced to start online teaching mode, which has to some extent lowered the reputation and effectiveness of ICLE.

Technology. Online teaching has turned traditional person-to-person communication into person-to-machine communication, and the lack of media and information literacy of teachers and students has caused many new problems and difficulties in online teaching. For example, students receiving ICLE are scattered all over the world, and it is difficult to unify the teaching time due to time-lag; online teaching lacks interpersonal interaction and learning atmosphere, and lacks effective practical activities for operational skills such as Chinese calligraphy teaching; online teaching is not strictly supervised, as well as the students lack self-restraint and independent learning ability. In addition, the instability of teaching equipment also causes a lot of problems to online teaching. In short, technological factors have become a new disturbance facing ICLE.

2.2 The "Internal Troubles" from four aspects

Teachers, teaching materials and teaching methods are the key elements of ICLE. The teacher is the leader of teaching activities, the teaching material is the carrier of curriculum implementation, and the teaching method is the specific method to implement teaching and learning activities. In addition, the online teaching platform has become an important means of online teaching. In today's situation, teachers, students, teaching materials and online teaching platform are also facing various problems.

Teachers. ICLE has always suffered from a lack of teachers, low professionalism and high mobility. The new changes and demands of online teaching have highlighted another challenge, that is, many Chinese teachers do not know how to use digital information effectively. They are neither familiar with computer operation nor do they know how to use online platforms. The media and information literacy of ICLE teachers is not compatible with the requirements of online teaching, and ICLE teachers' ability to use digital technology needs to be strengthened.

Teaching materials. With digital network technology background, the teaching materials of ICLE have been generalized to include multimedia and integrated teaching resources such as textbooks, courseware, videos and pictures. The online teaching of ICLE is a sudden and acute measure, and the huge difference between traditional offline teaching and online teaching makes it difficult for the current teaching materials to meet the needs of online teaching. The "new infrastructure" project of digital teaching resources should be put on the agenda as soon as possible.

Teaching methods. ICLE emphasizes practical exercises and situational experiences, for example, teachers can teach students to write Chinese calligraphy through blackboard or pencil and paper, and teach Chinese tea culture by letting students taste tea on site. Teachers who are accustomed to teaching on-site have little experience in online teaching and lack effective teaching methods, relying on a single, monotonous teaching method that is often ineffective and difficult to adapt to online teaching. If students are not willing to interact online, online teaching is like a "one-man show" for the teacher, and the teaching effect is not satisfactory.

Online platform. Online teaching must rely on a professional and stable digital technology platform to be implemented effectively. However, teachers and students of ICLE are spread all over the world, and it is difficult to unify the online teaching platforms used by different countries, and the operation and maintenance of some live platforms cannot keep up with the demand, which brings various difficulties to online teaching. In addition, the functions of most current teaching platforms are only applicable for general subjects, and there is an urgent need to develop and utilize online teaching platforms for language learning, especially Chinese as a second language learning, to meet the needs of

ICLE professional teaching. [4]

3. The Strategic Crisis Response Based on 5W Model

Laswell, an American political scientist, first proposed a "5W" model of communication process in 1948, i.e.: Who (Who) → What (Says What) → Through what channel (In Which Channel) → To whom (To whom) → With what effects (With what effects). "5W" model is an effective method to analyze the communication process. "5W" model is very similar to the education process in general. The education process includes several elements, such as the means through which the teacher teaches, what content is taught and what effect of the teaching, etc. Teachers, teaching materials, teaching methods, students and academic performance are equivalent to the subject, content, channel, audience and effect of the communication process. The high similarity between the education process and the communication process makes it possible for us to build a model of crisis response strategies for ICLE based on the "5W" model.

Based on the PEST analysis and the "5W" model, this paper tries to build a strategic crisis response model (Figure 1), hoping to provide ideas for ICLE development in the complex political, economic and cultural background.
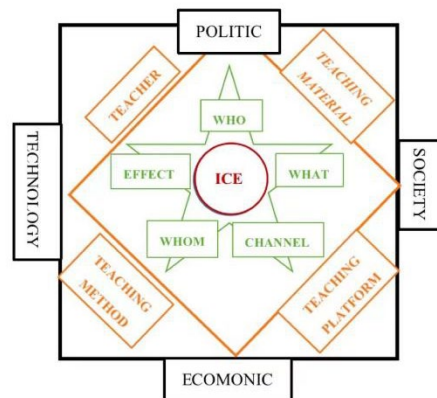

Figure 1: Model of ICE strategic crisis response

3.1 Subject - Teacher as the Soul

Hannelore B. Rader, the librarian at the University of Louisville, USA, believes that information literacy includes library literacy, media literacy, computer literacy, Internet literacy, research literacy, and critical thinking skills. [5] ICLE teachers must have basic digital information awareness and technical skills, be proficient in multimedia technology, develop and use online teaching resources, master and innovate online teaching methods, and adapt to the special needs of online teaching.

In addition, just as English is mostly taught by local teachers in China, relevant educational institutions should also make great efforts to train excellent local teachers overseas to stimulate ICLE to integrate into the local education system and social life. [6] Localization of teachers can effectively avoid the "culture clash" or "culture shock" in cross-cultural communication, and ICLE can also realize the dual mode of offline + online teaching, which is the best way to avoid risks.

3.2 Content - Culture as the Root

"Universal values" refers to the values shared by all human beings. Since it transcends race and country, and reflects the cultural commonality of all human beings, it is most suitable as a common-meaning space for cross-cultural communication. The content of ICLE should highlight the universal values of culture and encourage students from different cultural backgrounds to conduct equal, democratic and open debates and hdiscussions, so as to eliminate the gaps and misunderstandings caused by cross-cultural communication and achieve the cultural coexistence in a harmonious way.

In addition, "Chinese + Vocation Skills" is a popular model of ICLE. Some African countries have successfully tried it. Rwanda has been practicing the model of combining Chinese language education and vocational skills since 2009, and the school has set up a special class for students who want to

study in China or work in local Chinese enterprises. In addition, the school also cooperates with vocational education institutions or enterprises to form a "Chinese workshop" . [7] There is great room for exploration and development of ICLE in the direction of "Chinese + Vocation Skills" in the countries along the Belt and Road Route.

3.3 Channel - Technology as the Power

Online teaching is a double-edged sword, and while it has caused many new difficulties, it has also opened a new window for international communication of ICLE. In 2020, the "Chinese Language Union" digital teaching platform went online, providing more than 190 courses and 6,000 online courses on Chinese language learning, Chinese national conditions and Chinese culture for the whole world. The teaching platform has also innovated the online examination. "Chinese Bridge" (Chinese language competition) in the cloud, Chinese music and culture online summer camp and other innovative cultural activities have also been launched. [8] The "Internet + Education" is developing steadily.

In the era of We-Media based on digital technology, the theory of "weak communication" tells us that the main theme is the least easy to spread, and top-down propaganda often has little effect, while the flexible means of communication can make the culture move the audience better. [9] ICLE should make full use of We-Media to teach Chinese in small doses with high frequency, so as to achieve the goal of flexible education and cultural communication.

3.4 Audience - Students as the Foundation

It is meaningless to talk about education without students. Having a large number of foreign students who are willing and available to have Chinese education is the foundation for the sustainable development of ICLE. From the perspective of communication, the audience of ICLE can be divided into several types, such as expected audience, real audience and potential audience. Those who are interested in learning Chinese culture, those who have a need for contact with Chinese culture, and those who have settled in China or have a family of Chinese nationality are all potential audiences of ICLE. Education institutions should try to enlarge the students of ICLE by serving the existing real audiences, actively converting the potential audiences into new real audiences as soon as possible.

Teachers are the most direct contact with students and have an important impact on attracting more students to learn Chinese. International Chinese teachers, as disseminators of Chinese culture, are also learners of foreign languages and foreign cultures. ICLE teachers should insist on student-oriented, regard the students' central position, and try to minimize the differences in cross-cultural communication between teachers and students, thus foreign students will learn Chinese, fall in love with Chinese, and understand and appreciate Chinese culture.

3.5 Effect - Feedback as the Energy

A one-way, linear communication model that lacks a feedback mechanism, ignores audience surveys is crippled and ineffective, while valuable feedback can be effectiveness. The essence of ICLE is the international communication of excellent cultural information. Educational institutions must supervise the communication process, collect feedbacks, and modify the communication plan according to the feedbacks, so that the communication process can form a loop with timely feedbacks, thus achieving the effective and efficient education.

To complete the monitoring and feedback mechanism of ICLE, a top-level design by education institutions is needed first and foremost. For-profit or non-profit institutions should arrange special staff to conduct regular surveys, collect and process feedback from teachers and students, analyze them in depth, formulate improvement measures, and implement them regularly. In addition, scholars and experts who study ICLE should hold more conferences and peer meetings to discuss the current situation, make objective evaluations, propose guidance and improvement policies, and jointly promote the further improvement of ICLE.

4. Conclusion

Humans face endless paradoxes in cultural. In China, the unification of scripts by the first Emperor Qin tells us that language has a cohesive power, which helps humans to integrate into a tight-knit group,

to promote a flourishing socio-economic development. In Western, the story of the Tower of Babel in the Bible tells us that language has the power to divide humans into different groups, creating divisions and disintegrating the unity.

The complex international political and economic situation, ideological and cultural differences have various impacts on ICLE, which warns us that the crisis response strategies need to be given sufficient attention and studied in depth. What is the future of ICLE? An inspiring quote from Isao Furukawa, a Japanese sinologist at Osaka University, is the best answer to this question, "Chinese is qualified to be the next international language ! " [10]

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