

Immersion Education in China

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Abstract: For many years, the examination-oriented English examination has become the ultimate goal for most students to learn English, which challenges the use of immersion English in China. On this basis, I will use Phillips and Ochs' framework which focused on analyzing the important factors affecting the educational policy reference in each stage, and formed a framework for analyzing the process of educational policy transfer. Therefore, I will focus on the origin, aim and expectation of immersion education in China. And then use the framework of four stages of educational borrowing a model to describe immersion education in China. Immersion education should meet the challenge of globalization, take the road of internationalization, and at the same time localize the educational methods.

Keywords: Immersion education; Bilingual education; Education in China

1. Introduction

For many years, the examination-oriented English examination has become the ultimate goal for most students to learn English, which challenges the use of immersion English in China.

On this basis, I will use Phillips and Ochs' framework which focused on analyzing the important factors affecting the educational policy reference in each stage, and formed a framework for analyzing the process of educational policy transfer. The model describes the continuous process of four stages of educational policy transfer: cross-national attraction, decision, implementation and internalization/indigenization (Phillips & Ochs, 2004).

In the 1960s, global education and education developed greatly, and the cooperation or assistance of education and education in developing countries reached a climax. The governments of various countries, international organizations and various foundations will carry out western education and education policies in developing countries in a planned way. From a global perspective, the transfer of international education policies in this period is an irreplaceable factor in the great development of education in the post-war world, especially in underdeveloped countries. It also shows that the exchange and study of cross-country education policies have become an important strategic choice for the modernization of education in late-developing countries. Since the 1980s, the main manifestation of the education territory is that the educational policies of various countries reflect the meaning of "world integration" more obvious than before, and tend to develop towards a kind of isomorphism. Driven by globalization, marketization and information-based, cross-country education and education policies began to be transferred and transplanted on a large scale, which made the international education and education policies converge. In the new century, some developing countries, with the rising of the national economy, are giving full play to the comparative advantages of education and education in their own countries. Based on strengthening the recognition of ethnic cultures, they are gradually exporting educational policies and actively integrating into the global environment of education and education. The path of international education policy shift is gradually moving to the two-way interactive stage.

Therefore, I will focus on the origin, aim and expectation of immersion education in China. And then use the framework of four stages of educational borrowing a model to describe immersion education in China.

2. What is Immersion Education in China

2.1 The Origin of The Policy

The English ability of Chinese people is considered to be the first condition for China to gain a firm foothold in the world market, and also a prerequisite for China's modernization and economic growth plan (Qiang & Siegel, 2012). The ability to understand and speak English is also considered as the advantage of citizens in employment opportunities and career development. In the early 1990s, the opening of China's foreign trade and the growth of tourism brought by the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games also led to an increase in China's demand for English. Therefore, in the 1990s, people became more and more interested in English teaching reform.

In 1992, the State Education Commission adopted a new English syllabus, making English a core course in middle schools (Knell et al., 2007). However, the new English syllabus has not changed fundamentally, learning grammar and vocabulary too much, but ignoring the importance of spoken English. Therefore, national, local or institutional levels are looking for effective education policies to improve students' English communicative competence.

In 1959s, The French immersion system was developed in Canada, which have two official languages, English and French. According to Siegel (2011), English-speaking parents and teachers in Montreal thought that students didn't really learn to speak French because of the traditional teaching mode, so they took the lead in carrying out an educational reform called "French Immersion". In this reform, English-speaking children receive French education from the beginning of their school career. The result of this educational reform was very successful, and the children who participated in French immersion program learned to speak, read and write French. They are fluent in French and comfortable speaking French, although they are usually not as fluent as native speakers. (Siegel, 2011)

Immersion from France stimulates Chinese scholars to pursue the possibility of transferring this model to China (Qiang & Kang, 2011). First of all, French immersion teaching is a well-known innovation in second language education, and its teaching methods have a great impact on the research and practice in foreign language/bilingual education. Secondly, Qiang and Zhao (2001) state that the effect is obvious. Evaluation studies show that students who are immersed in learning perform better in the second language, mother tongue and academic achievement than students who are not immersed in learning. The theoretical principle of French immersion is also very attractive to Chinese scholars. Children learn English in a way similar to their mother tongue acquisition. Through the integration of language learning and subject knowledge, they can acquire a second language easily and naturally in a meaningful context (Qiang & Zhao, 2001). A seminar held in Xi 'an in 1996 took the success of Canadian French immersion teaching project as an example and introduced Canadian French immersion teaching plan.

The English Immersion Teaching Project in China is organized by the China-Canada-United States English Immersion Cooperation Project (CCUEI), which represents the academic cooperation between research teams from three countries. Teams from Canada and the United States played a key role in providing technical support for the project, and cooperated with Chinese team members to design training plans, organize seminars, observe classroom teaching and provide guidance and support for teachers. The international teams of the three countries cooperated in developing textbooks, organizing annual meetings, editing research papers and promoting the international exchange of immersive projects (Qiang & Siegel, 2012).

2.2 The Aim of the Policy

In Chinese traditional English classroom teaching, teachers usually only pay attention to written teaching forms, such as grammar, word memory and sentence pattern exercises, in order to adapt to the examination mechanism in Chinese exam-oriented education. Achievement first has framed teachers in a rigid teaching mode. Therefore, the English immersion teaching method is a change of traditional teaching methods, which pays more attention to the cognition of English language, the understanding of subject knowledge and even the comprehensive development of social and cultural ability. This kind of immersion teaching is mainly aimed at the physical, cognitive, aesthetic and social and cultural skills suitable for the age to attract students. Students can actively participate in English communication mode in immersion teaching, and this mode also provides a variety of expressions. Secondly, this kind of participation also aims to integrate the principles of moral education, which can also improve students' resonance, respect and tolerance for various viewpoints, and have more critical thinking, so

that they can maintain respect for Chinese culture and different cultures in English-speaking society. At the same time, immersion education can stimulate students' curiosity, creativity, perseverance and sense of responsibility, so that they can become self-confident, self-directed, self-disciplined and goal-oriented learners (Huang & Trube, 2006). Therefore, teachers in immersion classes only need to communicate with students in English instead of Chinese. In the immersion class, English and Chinese will not be taught by the same teacher, but will be taught separately. This can make students less disturbed by their mother tongue in class, and completely immerse themselves in learning English, thus achieving the effect of bilingual learning. In a single foreign language learning environment, students can develop the habit of thinking and speaking in English and provide more opportunities for students to learn English. Therefore, immersion teachers create an environment for learners to communicate in English.

What's more, in the traditional English class, English is the target language to be taught. Children only know the process of language learning, but this process has never been related to the subject content. Therefore, it is difficult for students to master English while learning English. In English immersion, English is a structural language, and students can express new concepts and facts of their subjects in English, such as art, music, science and social studies. Immersion teaching aims to learn the achievements in two fields, foreign language acquisition and subject content learning. This dual learning principle also makes immersion teaching different from other foreign language learning methods. In the immersion system, learning the target language is realized by using the target language as the only teaching medium for learning the subject content. According to Fortune and Tedick (2008), For teachers, there are two immersion teaching goals, one is to help students learn more English, and the other is to help students learn a subject.

2.3 The Expectation of The Policy

In the traditional English teaching classroom, Chinese as the mother tongue is a necessary tool to promote English teaching. Most teachers are more accustomed to using Chinese to explain English, which is quite different from immersion teaching. Traditional classroom teaching is usually bilingual, and language is mixed-in class. However, teachers who use immersion teaching only need to communicate with students in English instead of Chinese. In class, English and Chinese learning are separate and not taught by the same teacher. By immersing students in monolingual English, immersion teachers can help reduce mother tongue interference, provide more opportunities for English language acquisition, and force students to develop the habit of thinking and speaking in English. Therefore, immersion teachers build an environment for learners to communicate with each other in English. According to Johnson, Swain and Long (1997)'s case study of immersion education in various countries in the world, transplanting immersion teaching programs of Canadian French to Chinese schools is a thoughtful effort based on research. However, in the process of using French immersion teaching model for reference, it is necessary to have some changes to make this course suitable for Chinese students.

3. Critical Examination of Immersion Education in China

3.1 The Idea of Policy Transfer

In the new century, with the rising of the national economy, some developing countries are giving full play to their comparative advantages in education, exporting education policies step by step on the basis of strengthening national cultural identity, and actively integrating into global education environment. The path of international education policy transfer is gradually moving towards a two-way interactive stage.

Educational policy transfer refers to the dynamic process of comparison, transplantation or transfer of a country's educational policies across national boundaries, which includes the complex process that such foreign educational policies or practices are changed and adjusted by a country, and then implemented and absorbed. The process of international education policy transfer is not only the process of education policy knowledge, education policy idea and transfer, transplantation and embedding based on administrative arrangement, but also makes different nationalities and races learn from education policies. The concept of education transfer leads to the study of "external influence". Since Jullien tried to establish a set of universal educational principles in the early 19th century, the theory of education transfer has gone through several stages of development, from the concept of

"international transportation" to the feasibility of transfer, and then to the search for scientific methods to ensure the success of education transfer, finally leading to the education transfer process being regarded as a form imposed by colonialism or neocolonialism (Beech, 2006). In the late 20th century and 21st century, with the rapid development of information technology and globalization, the theme of education transfer has become more complex. The content of education transfer has also changed. In addition to explicit borrowing and lending, more mechanisms for indirect transmission and acceptance of knowledge have also attracted attention. According to Evans and Davies (1999) state the conceptual transmission and implicit transmission of ideas, concepts and discourse which is soft transfer. However, open and explicit policy lending and the imposition of specific patterns, structures or practices are hard to transfer. The level of educational transfer has also changed. In Robert Cowen (2009)'s view, migration is a movement of educational ideas or practice in supranational, transnational or transnational space. With these changes, education transfer takes place in a wider space, and its contents are richer, showing the influence of globalization.

In the field of education, attention has been paid to the international learning and learning of educational policies for a long time. The purpose of comparative education was defined by Julian as learning from other countries' experiences, which experienced the development of Sadler and Hans, and perfected the purpose of comparative education more systematically. Holmes and King combined comparative education with educational decision-making, and re-emphasized the practicality of comparative education in providing suggestions and lessons for educational policy and educational reform, which strengthened the purpose of comparative education and lessons, and pushed the purpose of comparative education to the extreme, that is, directly serving educational practice. With the development of internationalization of education, the transfer of cross-national educational policies has gradually aroused the interest of researchers in international educational circles, who have studied through different paths. Some researchers believe that there are uncoordinated and conflicting features in the historical process of teaching and education policies in various countries in the world. First of all, this inconsistency is mainly reflected in the reference of the national education system in 19. Secondly, for the purpose of learning, it combines all kinds of benefits between nationalization, internationalization, localization and cross-regional regionalization.

Besides policy transfer, researchers also use other terms, such as policy borrowing to describe educational policy transfer (Phillips, 2005). Policy borrowing emphasizes the transfer process of different backgrounds and countries, the actors in this process, and how education policies and practices are resisted, modified and localized. Jason Beech believes that in view of the complexity of foreign influences in the context of globalization, it is necessary to consider a broader concept of educational space.

Steiner-Khamsi (2000) claims that the comparative study should explain questions about policy migration, the implementation of policy transfer and the agent of policy transfer. In this case, Steiner-Khamsi argues that the normative and practice-oriented problems should be changed into descriptive and research-oriented problems, that is, from studying the content of migration to exploring the external reasons of migration or the impact of globalization on educational migration. However, Rappleye (2006) paying more attention to the influences and changes of globalization, the international community and the transfer of practice around best practice education will help to understand the complex interactions between international and national community actors. Laura and George organize that education transfer includes three stages: imposing, spreading and learning lessons. They drew a map of the learning process and network behind education transfer to understand the relationship between different research and methods. What's more, Ochs and David Phillips who are famous scholars in this field, have completed many research projects and investigated the educational transfer in different backgrounds and periods. They developed a model and framework for analyzing educational policy borrowing. According to their research founding, Rappleye developed a concept map of transnational attracting background to analyze the change of background transfer in different stages of educational policy borrowing.

3.2 Four Stages of Policy Borrowing

Professor Phillips and Professor Ochs of Oxford University summarized and designed a four stages model of educational policy reference based on the case studies of British education reference to Germany in the past 200 years and many other developed and developing countries. These four stages constitute the basic process of learning from educational policies. On this basis, Phillips and Ochs focused on analyzing the important factors affecting the educational policy reference in each stage, and

formed a framework for analyzing the process of educational policy transfer. The model describes the continuous process of four stages of educational policy transfer: cross-national attraction, decision, implementation and internalization/indigenization (Phillips & Ochs, 2004). According to policy transfer occurs among different entities, organizations and governments, policy transfer is a multi-dimensional level including global, national and international. Various international development organizations have been introduced into international education and education policies, such as UNESCO, OECD, World Bank, IMF, etc., which are of great importance in the transfer of international education and education policies. Many educational policies spread at the global level, which directly affects the implementation of national education planning and education policies. They provide universal humanitarian or democratic education for global education development, strengthen the institutionalization of education, and make different countries pursue similar education cultures. All kinds of international education and education organizations have always formed a common education and education theory by setting up a policy goal of education and education, and pushed forward a global education and education system that tends to be assimilated. They are especially in some developing countries or regions-at present, the theoretical research on the transfer of educational policies mainly focuses on the practical mechanism of international educational organizations in the study and transfer of international educational policies. Some researchers hold that the role played by international organizations in the transfer of educational policies is unidirectional and unequal to a great extent, but some researchers hold that some non-government organizations can successfully meet the development requirements of localization of educational policies in the transfer of educational policies. The relationship between education, assistance and assistance in international education and education organizations has changed from inequality to the relationship of cooperation and partnership.

3.3 Case Study: Immersion Education in China

English immersion teaching is a new and potentially influential learning method in China. In this paper, I will use the framework of four stages of policy borrowing proposed by David Phillips and Ochs to analyze English immersion education in China. According to the model, I will analyze English immersion teaching in China with the method of step-by-step narration.

The first stage of this model starts with the impulse to stimulate cross-national attraction. The driving force of English immersion teaching in China comes from globalization. And the impact of globalization on education is profound and complex, which is mainly reflected in three aspects: economy, politics and culture. At the economic level, economic globalization has put forward higher requirements for talents. Chinese students need to face the changes of working environment in post-industrial society, the emergence of new technologies, the complexity and diversity of job changes, and the increasing competition in the international labour market. Therefore, schools must reconsider their mission. Schools should not only train students as producers. Moreover, they should be molded into talents that meet the requirements of the country and symbolize the market demand. The great economic benefits of globalization force governments of various countries to adopt new liberal education policies. At the political level, with the increasing number of global affairs and the increasingly standardized global economic coordination and exchanges, global conflicts, crimes, terrorism and environmental problems are also becoming increasingly global. Therefore, education should play a vital role in solving these political problems. Finally, at the cultural level, the globalization of culture has a profound impact on educational policies and practices. In particular, the issue of multiculturalism is of special significance in the global context. These developments show the importance of English, which not only affects the scale and efficiency of various international exchanges, but also affects China's competitiveness in the world. The cultivation of English talents is not only a teaching problem, but also a core issue in implementing the policy of opening to the outside world (Li, 1996).

What's more, French immersion programs is a reform of language classroom teaching methods, which combines pedagogy, psychology, linguistics and language teaching methods (Qiang, 2001). It is considered as a very successful model of foreign language/second language education, and it is also very attractive to Chinese scholars.

In the second stage of "decision", I mainly pay attention to the measures adopted by the government and other institutions to start the process of change (Phillips and Ochs, 2003). Considering the availability of resources, the supply of teachers and the need of English teaching innovation, cities are the best places to carry out English immersion teaching in China. However, due to the imbalance of educational resources between urban and rural areas in China, the conditions for deciding where to develop inclusive education are harsh. English is a foreign language, and English teachers in most

schools are Chinese teachers who know English and teach it in a traditional way, which means they don't know how to use English as a tool to teach subject knowledge. Therefore, in China, there are few immersion teachers who meet the standards. This project also needs to decide what kind of teachers to choose and how to train them to become qualified teachers.

In the implementation stage, Important participants in the implementation stage of immersion English teaching in China include children, teachers, school principals, parents, scholars and senior administrative leaders. Children are actors of immersion learning, and immersion teaching can stimulate children's interest and cultivate their inner sense of motivation. As time goes by, they have more confidence in themselves and use language more actively (Zhou, 2006). Teachers are the practitioners of English immersion classes. Since the principles of English immersion teaching are different from those of traditional English teaching, teachers need to overcome these difficulties by attending seminars to improve their oral English, subject knowledge and mastery of immersion principles. According to Gao (2009) states that with the change of teaching philosophy and teaching behaviour to immersion teaching principle and teaching strategy, they need to learn to teach and organize activities in English, and observe and be observed through self-reflection. In terms of school principals, parents, scholars and senior administrative leaders, support teachers to understand and accept the goal of immersion learning, and take the responsibility of developing second language learning and content learning in the process. This may be easier said than done because these goals are not always understood and accepted by parents, school or curriculum leaders (Hoare, 2008). This is also a very realistic problem.

English immersion teaching in China is a new teaching method, so there is no textbook for reference, which also causes problems in the implementation process. What's more, some structural factors limit the development of English immersion teaching. China's examination and assessment system reduces teachers' enthusiasm, because they only care about students' academic achievements, and only pay attention to written English and grammar, but not to the real use of spoken English. In addition, the class size is very large, with 50 to 60 students in each classroom, so it is difficult for teachers to organize and manage group activities, which are necessary in children-centered immersion teaching. In addition, the lack of English environment and teaching resources restrict the development of English immersion teaching.

The last stage is Internalization/Indigenization of English Immersion in China. At this stage, it mainly focuses on the influence of foreign education policies on China's education system. Firstly, the management of immersion schools is divided into English courses and Chinese courses. Secondly, the class size is controlled to better adapt to immersion teaching. In addition, a set of practical teaching strategies are formulated in teacher training, so that they can integrate content with English. To develop English immersion teaching with Chinese characteristics, the teaching principles of immersion teaching are summarized as follows: the integration of English language objectives and subject content, language acquisition, reading and writing module with listening skills as the first, monolingual immersion teaching practice, activity-oriented teaching and learning, etc. (Zhao, 2006). For many years, the examination-oriented English examination has become the ultimate goal for most students to learn English, which challenges the use of immersion English in China. China's current examination system has seriously inhibited teachers' enthusiasm for immersion, because students' examination results have a great impact on students' future and teachers' career development. The focus of the exam is written English and grammar, but there is no real use of English and immersive communication skills. Attention to test scores explains why principals are reluctant to increase immersion teaching time, especially in junior high schools, where students must pass provincial standard examinations before they can graduate and enter senior high schools. At this stage, it is necessary to ensure the survival and sustainability of the education model after the policy transfer. The decision made in the implementation stage is to adapt the foreign model to the domestic situation, and to adapt the actors and local traditional factors to the foreign model. With their successful interaction, foreign models will be internalized and localized.

4. Conclusion

On this basis, Phillips and Ochs focused on analyzing the important factors affecting the educational policy reference in each stage, and formed a framework for analyzing the process of educational policy transfer. The model describes the continuous process of four stages of educational policy transfer: cross-national attraction, decision, implementation and internalization/indigenization (Phillips & Ochs, 2004). According to policy transfer occurs among different entities, organizations and

governments, policy transfer is a multi-dimensional level including global, national and international. Various international development organizations have been introduced into international education and education policies, such as UNESCO, OECD, World Bank, IMF, etc., which are of great importance in the transfer of international education and education policies. Many educational policies spread at the global level, which directly affects the implementation of national education planning and education policies. They provide universal humanitarian or democratic education for global education development, strengthen the institutionalization of education, and make different countries pursue similar education cultures. All kinds of international education and education organizations have always formed a common education and education theory by setting up a policy goal of education and education, and pushed forward a global education and education system that tends to be assimilated. They are especially in some developing countries or regions-at present, the theoretical research on the transfer of educational policies mainly focuses on the practical mechanism of international educational organizations in the study and transfer of international educational policies. Some researches hold that the role played by international organizations in the transfer of educational policies is unidirectional and unequal to a great extent, but some researches hold that some non-government organizations can successfully meet the development requirements of localization of educational policies in the transfer of educational policies. The relationship between education, assistance and assistance in international education and education organizations has changed from inequality to the relationship of cooperation and partnership.

According to the model, I will analyze English immersion teaching in China with the method of step-by-step narration. The first stage of this model starts with the impulse to stimulate cross-national attraction. The cultivation of English talents is not only a teaching problem, but also a core issue in implementing the policy of opening to the outside world (Li, 1996). It is considered as a very successful model of foreign language/second language education, and it is also very attractive to Chinese scholars. In the second stage of "decision", I mainly pay attention to the measures adopted by the government and other institutions to start the process of change (Phillips and Ochs, 2003). In the implementation stage, important participants in the implementation stage of immersion English teaching in China include children, teachers, school principals, parents, scholars and senior administrative leaders. The last stage is Internalization/Indigenization of English Immersion in China. At this stage, it mainly focuses on the influence of foreign education policies on China's education system. Firstly, the management of immersion schools is divided into English courses and Chinese courses. Secondly, the class size is controlled to better adapt to immersion teaching. In addition, a set of practical teaching strategies are formulated in teacher training, so that they can integrate content with English.

Immersion education in China should meet the challenge of globalization, take the road of internationalization, and at the same time localize the educational methods. Therefore, it is necessary to reform from four aspects: educational idea, school-running goal, scientific research approach, curriculum content and method.

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