

A Literature Review on the Planning and Policies of Chinese Language Education as a Foreign Language in China

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Abstract: With the rapid development of China's economy, the cause of teaching Chinese as a foreign language has flourished. According to the "Study Abroad in China Plan" issued by the Ministry of Education in 2022, it is expected that China will become the largest country for international students in Asia by 2022. This paper mainly combs the development of the planning policy of TCFL education diachronically, and analyzes the factors affecting the change from the perspective of language policy. Using the method of literature review, this paper introduces the content and characteristics of language policy in other countries, hoping to inspire the innovation and development of Chinese language policies.

Keywords: Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language; Language policy; Chinese language promotion

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1. Introduction

The competition for language resources around the world is becoming increasingly fierce, and enhancing the external communication strength of Chinese language and culture can effectively enhance the soft power of Chinese culture, which has an indescribable role in enhancing "cultural confidence".^[1] Some scholars even believe that if a country wants to establish itself in the world, its language must go global. A country that becomes strong must have a "dominant language". As the main channel for the spread of Chinese as a foreign language, studying the development path of its language policy is of great significance for the spread of Chinese language and culture^[2]. This paper mainly uses the language policy theory as the theoretical basis and the literature review method as the main research method to make a diachronic review of the language policy of TCFL. Studying the planning policies for Chinese language education as a foreign language can provide a clear understanding of the changes that have occurred in previous policies and the reasons for these changes. In the past, there were few diachronic studies on Chinese language education policies as a foreign language, most of which focused on the comparison between Chinese language promotion policy research and foreign language policy promotion research, comparing Chinese language promotion policies with other countries' language promotion policies, and improving the promotion strength of Chinese language by learning the benefits of other countries' language promotion policies.

2. Planning and Policies for Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language

2.1 Pioneering period

The establishment of special teaching institutions for Chinese as a foreign language in New China can be traced back to the "Eastern European Class" of Tsinghua University in 1950. The opening of the "Chinese Language Special Class for Eastern European Exchange Students" marks the establishment of the first Chinese as a foreign language institution in China. In July 1962, the Foreign Affairs Office of the State Council drafted two draft pilot regulations on the work of foreign students and interns. In August 1963, the Ministry of Higher Education held the first National Conference on the Work of International Students since the founding of the People's Republic of China. Trial Regulations on the Work of Foreign Students (Draft) The formulation of the National Conference

on the Work of International Students and the convening of the First National Conference on the Work of International Students have made the tasks, guidelines, and policies of international student education and management in preparatory schools for international students and related institutions clearer, and have begun to enter a standardized track with rules to follow. In January 1965, the Preparatory College for Foreign Students changed its name to Beijing Language and Culture Institute, and Chinese as a foreign language was put in a more prominent position in terms of school scale, mode and school level. In 1956, a specialized agency, the Diplomatic Personnel Service, was established to serve foreign missions in China, making Chinese language teaching for foreign mission personnel a planned and organized teaching activity^[3].

2.2 Development period

After that, the party and the state also attached great importance to Chinese as a foreign language, and held various meetings to guide various kinds of work, paving the way for Chinese as a foreign language:

(1) The Office of the National Leading Group for International Promotion of Chinese Language (referred to as the “Hanban”) has been established, specifically responsible for and coordinating the international promotion of Chinese language.

(2) A Chinese proficiency test has been established. In 1984, the “Chinese Proficiency Test” (HSK) was developed, and in 1991, China promoted the “Chinese Proficiency Test” to both domestic and international audiences. This test is a national standardized examination set up to test the Chinese proficiency of non native speakers (including foreigners, overseas Chinese, and Chinese ethnic minority individuals).

(3) Established the discipline of Chinese as a foreign language. The Ministry of Education of China has upgraded Chinese as a foreign language to a secondary discipline, that is, to set up a secondary discipline of “Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language” under the Chinese language and literature. Ensuring the scientific development of theoretical research and teacher supply in teaching Chinese as a foreign language. In December 1999, the second National Working Conference on Chinese as a foreign language was held in Beijing^[4]. Chen Zhili, the leader of the National Leading Group for Chinese as a foreign language, made a theme report titled “Raise awareness, seize opportunities, strengthen sense of urgency, and vigorously develop the cause of Chinese as a foreign language”. This conference is the largest conference on Chinese as a foreign language since the founding of New China, with the most clear tasks and goals. It points out the direction for Chinese as a foreign language in the new century, and is a new and powerful driving force for the in-depth development of this cause. After the meeting, the State Council approved the Request for Instructions on Strengthening the Work of Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language and Implementing the Five Year Work Plan, which pointed out the direction for the work of Chinese as a foreign language in the new century and fundamentally ensured the comprehensive implementation of the spirit of the meeting.

2.3 Deepening period

(1) Established the future development direction of “international promotion of Chinese language”. In March 2006, the General Office of the State Council forwarded the “Several Opinions”, proposing the guiding ideology, overall plan, and policy measures for accelerating the internationalization of Chinese language.

(2) The establishment of Confucius Institutes. The Ministry of Education of China and the National Leading Group for Chinese as a foreign language (now the National Leading Group for International Promotion of Chinese Language) began to plan to set up language promotion institutions overseas in 2002. In March 2004, Chinese State Councilor Chen Zhili officially named China’s non-profit Chinese language promotion institution located overseas as the “Confucius Institute”. In July 2005, the Office of the National Leading Group for the International Promotion of Chinese Language (referred to as the National Hanban) held the first World Chinese Language Congress in Beijing. The convening of the first World Chinese Language Congress marks the comprehensive implementation of international dissemination of Chinese language as a strategic national policy^[5].

(3) Chinese language education as a foreign language has become an important tool to showcase the country’s cultural soft power. Since 2022, the pace of Chinese culture’s “going global” has accelerated.

3. Policy Suggestions for Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language

Firstly, the dissemination of Chinese as a foreign language should become an important cultural component of China’s national strategy. It should be closely linked to national foreign policy. China has also proposed a strategy of “accelerating the internationalization of Chinese language, enhancing its cultural influence, enhancing its national soft power, and enhancing its international status”. Therefore, China needs to comprehensively adjust its Chinese language dissemination strategy and learn from other countries’ foreign language dissemination models. At present, the international dissemination of Chinese language needs to improve policies mainly by establishing relevant functional institutions for international dissemination of

Chinese language; Determine the overall policy for the international dissemination of Chinese language; The improvement of the Chinese national examination system .

Secondly, it is imperative to change the training mechanism for undergraduate Chinese language education as a foreign language. Firstly, it is necessary to change the subject setting and make more use of the school's own international student resources as training objects. When teaching Chinese language basics and Chinese culture, it is more important to pay attention to how they are applied in Chinese language teaching. What we need are "international" and "compound" talents, students should not only have a deep foundation in the Chinese language, but also have proficient cross-cultural communication skills. Universities can consider reforming the training methods of master's degrees in Chinese language education as a foreign language, enriching course offerings, and optimizing course structures. In addition, it is necessary to continuously revise the "Standards for International Chinese Language Teachers" by identifying the evaluation policies of foreign language teachers in China.

Finally, for other countries and regions, a detailed investigation should be conducted to understand the attitudes of the national towards Chinese language and Chinese culture, and to study and analyze the level of public demand for Chinese language and tolerance towards Chinese culture, in order to formulate effective Chinese language promotion policies. We should have a global perspective and integrate Chinese language according to local customs in different regions and countries. At present, research and implementation of Chinese language policies in this area have been carried out, but there is still a need for exploration from multiple perspectives, deep levels, and all directions.

Conclusion

In summary, by understanding the literature achievements related to foreign language education policies in recent years, in the context of China's economic development, we can promote the vigorous development of foreign language education in the future, improve China's comprehensive strength internationally, and accelerate the international promotion of our own language.

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