

The Current Situation and Reflections on the Development of Bilingual Education for Ethnic Minorities in China

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Abstract

Since the founding of New P.R.China, our country has emphasized the diversity of ethnic cultures, respect for ethnic cultures, and equality of ethnic cultures. Bilingual teaching, on the one hand, is to encourage minority students to master Chinese, integrate into mainstream society, and have more opportunities. On the other hand, they are able to protect and inherit their culture. In addition, the fairness of bilingual teaching and education is linked, and non-Chinese speaking students should be given the same right to their education. Bilingual teaching in China is still at a relatively low level, mainly due to insufficient teachers and relatively few policies and funds. There are several modes of bilingual education for ethnic minorities. Some use both languages as a medium of instruction while teaching. Others use minority languages as the main medium of instruction, plus a foreign language course, or vice versa. Personally, I think bilingual teaching should not be language teaching only, but both languages should be used as teaching media, so as to enable students to master the two languages.

Keywords

Ethnic Diversity, Minority Languages, Bilingual Education, Teaching Mode.

1. Introduction: Development of bilingual education in China

"As a conscious national entity, the Chinese nation has emerged from the confrontation between Chinese and Western powers in the past century, but as a free national entity, it has formed in the course of thousands of years of history." [1] The Han nationality, due to population numerous, economically and culturally developed, in the exchanges and integration with other nationalities, a unique combination. And the west-sparse structure has gradually formed. In the development of the Han nationality, the concept of "changing others by Han people" and absorbing the essence of each ethnic group with its own intrinsic cultural essence created the Chinese civilization. Other ethnic groups also continued to absorb Han culture and Chinese during their own evolution.

The distribution of various ethnic groups in China is characterized by large mixed settlements and small settlements, and several major ethnic migrations in history have accelerated the integration and development of various nationalities.[2] Due to the economic, cultural, and demographic factors, Chinese has become the common language of the Chinese nation. After the founding of the People's Republic of China, in order to guarantee the rights of all ethnic minorities to use and develop their own languages and maintain national unity, under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, bilingual education has been widely implemented in ethnic regions, which has greatly improved the cultural quality of ethnic minorities and protected minorities as national precious heritage. However, due to the influence of international and domestic situations, we have to face the history that the our government has made some mistakes in its understanding of ethnic issues in the socialist stage, restricting or even canceling bilingual education in ethnic areas. It has caused serious setbacks in science and education across the country.

The development of bilingual education policy in China after the founding of the People's Republic of China can be roughly divided into three periods: the start-up period (1949-1957), the setback period (1958-1977), and the recovery period (1978-present).

The first stage: the start-up period (1949--1957): From 1949 to 1957, the central government promoted the development of bilingual education in ethnic areas from various aspects. Judging from

the Marxist-Leninist principle of national equality and language equality, this series of policies has guaranteed the rights of ethnic minorities to use their own languages, and greatly improved the overall cultural and educational level of the country. In the 1950s, China's laws and regulations clearly stipulated to ensure the language rights of ethnic minorities. At the same time, the state's efforts to implement various decisions also laid a solid foundation for the future restoration and development of bilingual education in ethnic regions.

Second stage: setback period (1958-1977): During this period, bilingual education in ethnic areas fell into difficulties in language, politics, and teaching. In January 1958, the State Council approved the "Chinese Pinyin Plan". Premier Zhou Enlai emphasized that "the Chinese Pinyin Plan can serve as a common basis for the creation and reform of scripts by various ethnic minorities." It should be based on the Latin alphabet, and the pronunciation and usage of the alphabet should be as consistent as possible with the Chinese Pinyin scheme. [3] However, under the influence of the "ethnic integration style", bilingual education faces many difficulties.

The third stage: the recovery period (1978-present): In 1976, with the end of the Cultural Revolution, the Communist Party of China began to re-examine the basic issues of the socialist stage. In 1992, the Communist Party of China pointed out that the five tasks of ethnic work in the 1990s were: "Accelerate economic reform; develop education, science, and health services; enhance economic independence in ethnic regions; improve the level of autonomy; and promote national unity." Of course, we still cannot be underestimated. It is the lack of qualified bilingual teachers in schools in ethnic regions of our country. Coupled with inconvenient transportation, poor information, distressed life, outdated education, and low economic and social status of people, ethnic regions cannot attract and retain enough qualified bilingual teachers. In this regard, the party and the state have given priority to teachers and teacher education in ethnic areas in various aspects, but bilingual teachers in ethnic areas are still a major issue to be resolved.

2. suggestions for bilingual education in China

2.1 Bilingual education is a search for the intrinsic nature of human beings

In a dialogue relationship, the speaker starts from his unique socio-cultural perspective and describes the world in his eyes to influence and change others. Through the contact between the two languages, the speaker entered the language of the other party. "I understand that it is you (not me) who makes him or her exist, and he also understands that the person who motivates your existence in turn constitutes you and me. According to the dialectical principles of these relationships." [4]

2.2 Bilingual education is the only way to promote children's growth

Traditional education views children's immaturity negatively, so it always emphasizes the leading role of teachers and puts students in a passive learning position. We should take into consideration the different language backgrounds of students in teaching, and give students full subjectivity in language learning. Only then will students become interested in language learning. "Interest (interest), in terms of etymology, contains the meaning of things, that is, the things that connect two things that are far away from each other? In learning, the existing ability of students is the beginning; For a distant end, only through intervening things can the activity begin to achieve a complete result." [5]

2.3 Put bilingual education at the top of national education

Whether you can realize the importance of bilingual education in national education will directly affect the effectiveness and success of education. Bilingual education is an important way to promote the social mobility of ethnic minorities, an important guarantee for maintaining social stability and prosperity and the development of socialist spiritual civilization, and also recognition and respect of the freedom, rights, and dignity of ethnic minorities. [6] Adequate bilingual talents play an important role in promoting international trade and regional economic development. Therefore, the implementation of bilingual education is a great cause of rejuvenating the country.

2.4 Constructing a bilingual education policy from the perspective of the overall national development plan

Bilingual education is not a mere language issue. It is closely related to political, economic, and social issues from beginning to end. "To improve the quality of bilingual teaching courses and continue to expand the number of bilingual teaching courses. Colleges and universities are actively encouraged to carry out international exchanges and cooperation in undergraduate teaching." [7] In many cases, the main reason why bilingual education cannot be effectively implemented, Often, it is not the decision-makers who overlook the important role of bilingual education in promoting student development, but whether the political and social issues related to bilingual education have become a priority for policymakers.

3. Conclusion

Bilingual education is a major issue related to the long-term development and stability of society. However, the funds for bilingual education, teachers, and teaching materials are not a small sum. It can be seen that bilingual education is a costly and slow project. In the case of relatively tight state funding, even if bilingual education is supported by policies, it is difficult to effectively implement bilingual education without the constraints of specific laws and regulations. Therefore, in order to avoid the influence of human factors and ensure the effective implementation of bilingual education, it is imperative to have specific bilingual education regulations. At present, under the strategy of administering the country according to law, the bilingual education law, which is an important part of national education, must be put on the agenda as soon as possible.

As bilingual teachers and bicultural, bilingual teachers must not only have a high degree and special training, but also have the comprehensive ability to engage in bilingual teaching and active and effective teaching strategies. All this makes the training of bilingual teachers need a lot of material and intellectual input. "China is working hard to establish a sound teacher qualification system. The Shanghai Municipal Party Committee and the National University of Singapore and other relevant institutions are studying to establish a bilingual teacher training and evaluation system. It is expected that in 2007, qualifications for bilingual teachers in Shanghai primary and secondary schools will be certified." [8] Furthermore, for the relatively poor ethnic minority regions, the extreme shortage of qualified bilingual teachers is also an urgent issue. The solution to this bottleneck restricting the development of bilingual education is not only to increase the funding for bilingual teacher education in ethnic regions, but also to improve the corresponding bilingual teacher training system and the requirements for teacher qualification certificates.

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