Analysis of English-Chinese Bilingual Education Policies in Singapore and China

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Abstract. Singapore used the bilingual education approach and was successful in bringing about prosperity through education, enabling it to overtake less developed nations and earn the moniker of "Ethnic Expo" and "Language Expo." According to the analysis of the Singapore Ministry of Education's 1978 report, bilingual education in Singapore should be tailored to the needs of the students. A reform of the educational system should be started to strengthen the teaching of English and native languages in kindergarten and implement a streaming system in primary and secondary schools. The development of bilingual pupils who are eager to study and possess effective communication skills is the specific aim of bilingualism in Singapore. Singapore's language policy, which is currently English and bilingual, was created and carried out in a way that serves as an example for many other nations. This study aims to describe the background, content, implementation, and characteristics of the three-way bilingual education model in Singapore, to identify and analyze the issues, to ascertain the factors impeding the development of the model, to highlight the benefits and experiences of the model in Singapore, and to make suggestions that can be used in China.

Keywords: China · Singapore · bilingual education Policy · English language teaching

1 Introduction

English-Chinese bilingual education has drawn a lot of attention in China and is now a crucial component of that country's educational development and reform due to the demands of national and social development. The development of English-Chinese bilingual education in China, however, still has a weak basis and accumulation, so it is essential to draw lessons from cutting-edge international experiences. Singapore, a successful example of bilingual education around the world, shares many social, historical, and humanistic characteristics with China. Thus, for the development of English-Chinese bilingual education in China, it is crucial to draw from the successful experience of Singapore's bilingual education.

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2 Literature Review

2.1 Examination of China's English-Chinese Bilingual Education Policy

Sorting out the growth history of English education in China is required in order to examine English-Chinese bilingual education in that country. According to Zhu Yuncui, China's foreign language education strategy was "lopsided" following the nation's formation and up until 1956 because of the political climate of the nation, and Russian was taught as the country's first foreign language rather than English at that time. In China, English became the first foreign language taught in schools throughout the 1960s [1].

State Council concurred and forwarded the "Report on the Seven-Year Plan for Foreign Language Education" and the "Seven-Year Plan for Foreign Language Education" to the State Council's Foreign Affairs Office and other departments [2]. The Outline emphasized the significance of expanding foreign language education and nurturing foreign language talent, and for the first time set the expansion of foreign language education on a course to meet the long-term needs of the nation. English was also established as the first foreign language in China's school curriculum. There is currently little literature on the study of the three-way streaming model in Singapore, both at home and abroad; it is essentially an analysis of the background of the three-way streaming bilingual teaching model and its challenges, with a focus on the "what" of the three-way streaming model and less on the "how" of the streaming model.

2.2 Examination of Singapore's English-Chinese Bilingual Education Policy

The word "Bilingual Education," which is a translation of the English term, has been defined in a variety of ways both nationally and globally. Bilingual education, as defined by the Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching & Applied Linguistics, is the use of a second or foreign language to instruct academic topics in schools [3]. According to the International Encyclopedia of Education, a pedagogy that employs at least two teaching words in some of the instructional processes should be the minimal requirement for the classification of bilingual education [4]. It involves roughly half of the coursework being taught in each language and aims to prepare students to be equally adept in two languages.

Zhou Qinghai supports Singapore's bilingual education policy and its efficacy in his book. He noted that Singapore has embraced a "non-parallel" bilingual education from its own perspective in The Way to Go for Chinese Language Education [5]. Due to its exceptional "practicality," English was given special consideration by the Singaporean government and society under this system, while the mother tongue of each ethnic

community took a back seat to the function of cultural transmission. This was also influenced by the social reality of Singapore at the time, when learning English was becoming more and more popular as a result of its increased utility and worth. The entire process of introducing two languages and cultural instruction is known as bilingual education.

Wu Man-Fat Manfred's paper outlines the four phases of Singapore's reasonably consistent bilingual education reform. The infancy stage and the initial stage were from 1946 to 1955 [6]. The Ten-Year Education Development Plan, which fostered the concept of bilingual education, was at this stage announced by the Singaporean government. The formalisation of the bilingual education policy came with the publication of the White Paper on Education Policy in 1956. The third stage, known as the maturation stage, began in 1966 when the Singaporean government introduced a comprehensive policy requiring bilingual schooling. The mother tongue was introduced as a second language in primary and secondary schools in Singapore in 1987, with English serving as the medium of instruction or "official language." The fourth phase, which is currently in effect, sees Singapore use its mother tongue as its primary language and English as a second language in the classroom as necessary. Only at the sixth grade of the orientation stage, where passing the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) is a requirement for continuing education at the secondary level, is a three-way streaming model implemented. This is followed by three study options based on test results and students' language proficiency and interests: the General Bilingual Program, the Express Bilingual Program, and the Special Bilingual Program.

2.3 Developments in China's Policies Regarding English-Chinese Bilingual Education

China is facing a new environment and opportunities for economic development in the twenty-first century as a result of its deeper integration into the global economic system. Society is no longer content with foreign language talent limited to a single language ability, but instead has a greater need for complex talents. Bilingual education in English and Chinese follows this historical pattern. In the Opinions on Strengthening Undergraduate Teaching in Higher Education Institutions and Improving Teaching Quality, published by the Ministry of Education on August 28, 2001, it was first suggested that "undergraduate education should create conditions for teaching public and professional courses in English and other foreign languages in order to meet the challenges of economic globalization and technological revolution." [7].

Education development and reform require consistent financial support, yet many Chinese colleges only have a little budget for education development. The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Finance have begun to jointly formulate relevant policies to provide financial support for the development of English-Chinese bilingual education in China's colleges and universities in order to increase the enthusiasm for developing bilingual education in those institutions and to put the educational teaching reform into practice.

2.4 Developments in Singapore Policies Regarding English-Chinese Bilingual Education

Regarding the contributing variables of Singapore's bilingual education approach, in their article "A Survey and Analysis of Singapore's Bilingual Education Model and Language Shift Trends among Chinese Families," published in 2010, the authors 4 first comprehensively outlined the background and present state of Singapore's bilingual education model [8]. They then examined, using a large-scale linguistic survey, the most recent shifts in the use of English, Chinese, and dialects among three generations of Chinese in the context of language shift among ethnic groups and the relationships between these shifts. In this study, we examined current shifts in the three generations of Chinese speakers' usage of English, Chinese, and dialects in the context of language shift, as well as the connection between these shifts and the three-way divergence. Chen Zhiquan provides a brief overview of the development of Chinese language education and the Chinese language curriculum in Singapore in his book "Big Questions, Small Deeds: Essays on Chinese Language Curriculum and Teaching in Singapore." Chen Zhiquan analyses the construction and consideration of the Chinese language curriculum in Singapore from central to school-based and suggests two key principles for its construction. Additionally, he contends that "the curriculum of a nation can function at three levels: national, municipal, and school. In the case of Singapore, a two-tier approach to curriculum creation can be used, with a centralised curriculum and a school-based curriculum functioning in parallel because of the small size of the country and the absence of distinct local boundaries. Additionally, he examines the intent, strategy, and application of Singapore's "less teaching, more learning" educational concept using reading as an illustration.

3 Discussion

3.1 Comparison of the English-Chinese Bilingual Education Policy Frameworks in China and Singapore

Comparison of social and economic contexts
Singapore is an immigrant country, and the three main ethnic groups there are not native to the nation. The creation of the nation after independence and the building of the international port during Singapore's lengthy history have both aided in the progressive enclaving of foreign communities. Since Singapore's founding, the government has placed great emphasis on maintaining equality and multiculturalism in the formulation and implementation of fundamental national policies, including language and education policies. This is because the government is very aware of Singapore's fundamental characteristics as a country of immigrants.

Chinese bilingual education was developed in a different socioeconomic environment than Singapore's. We should adopt a materialism dialectic mentality and study, assimilate, and rearrange in a selective and critical way while rejecting if we want to learn from Singapore's bilingual education technique, but not all of its methods and a "fetishistic" mindset without differentiation. Although China is a multi-ethnic nation

with a far richer ethnic makeup than Singapore, it has always been a single multi-ethnic nation and has never been an immigrant country. As a result, when looking at the entire nation, China is more culturally homogeneous than Singapore.

Comparison of the political and international positions context

Singapore strongly desired to unite with the Federation of Malaya when it first gained independence from British colonial authority in order to benefit from that country's security and development potential. The Federation of Malaya's fundamental state policy, which naturally included the fundamental language policy of Malaya, i.e. Malay as the national language, had to be approved in order for the merger to proceed. Singapore's lengthy history as a British colony as well as the global language environment have an impact on the country's bilingual education strategy of "English + Mother Tongue." [9] Thus, despite the fact that English is effectively a foreign language in Singapore, it was designated as one of the four official languages when the country was founded. The primary language of communication between the many ethnic communities in Singapore at the moment is English, which has surpassed the status of other ethnic groups' mother tongues. Compared to the position of English in our bilingual education, this is significantly different.

English-Chinese Bilingual Education Policy Practices in China

The establishment and development of teaching materials, curriculum, teachers, and other aspects have relied more on the "awareness" of each region and even each school because the government did not promulgate a clear policy document pertaining to English-Chinese bilingual education until 2001 [10]. As a result, China has not actually developed a supporting system for the growth of English-Chinese bilingual education. The main goal of doing a thorough analysis of Singapore's bilingual education system's methodology is to draw lessons from it based on a thorough knowledge of the methodology. It is a linking process that successfully integrates and reorganizes with the methods and approaches of bilingual education in China. The learning is a form of selective learning and reasonable absorption.

Assessing the features of Singapore's bilingual teaching methodology

The primary issue is that the Chinese educational model lacks innovation in the development of creativity and amplifies the role of examination-based education, which stifles the vitality of thinking in language teaching. In order to revive bilingual teaching and effectively improve language and thinking, Singapore focuses on the integration of bilingual teaching methods with cutting-edge science and technology, the characteristics and academic levels of various school-aged students, and the scientific aspects of teaching methods that are tailored to the physical and mental development and needs of the students with different abilities and levels of acceptance [11].

Recognizing the differences in the bilingual teaching environment between the two countries

When it comes to teaching models, national systems have rather varied values and The mother tongue is the primary language used in our educational system, and while English is studied as a specialist language in higher education, it has little impact on practical social interaction because mother tongue communication is crucial. In Singapore, complete English monolingual education is provided alongside university education,

while bilingual education starts in kindergarten with a concentration on primary and secondary school children [12]. This shows that our knowledge must be tailored to the requirements of bilingual education in China rather than being copied or reproduced in its entirety.

4   Conclusion

Bilingual education policy has emerged as a major concern in the area of educational reform due to the growing globalization of China's economy and the internationalization of talent. There are significant ramifications from China's adoption of the bilingual education policy. Despite the fact that China's bilingual education system as a whole is still in its infancy, this fact cannot be used as justification for maintaining the status quo. The state and local communities must take note of the issues and resolve them in order to advance bilingual education.

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