

Analysis on the Characteristics of the Relationship Between Language Education Policy and National Construction in Southeast Asian Countries

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Abstract—Based on the dynamic relationship between language education policy and national construction in Southeast Asian countries, this paper analyses the basic experience of language education policy in promoting national construction, puts forward effective strategies to realize the mutual promotion between language education policy and national construction, looks forward to the future development trend of language education policy and proposes reasonable suggestions for the government in formulating language education policy.

Keywords—Southeast Asia; language education policy; national construction; characteristics

I. INTRODUCTION

The study of language education policy in Southeast Asian countries is based on the dynamic relationship between language education policy and national construction. This paper studies the language education policies of Southeast Asian countries from different perspectives, and has a comprehensive understanding of the language education policies of these countries. There exists much diversity among the language education policies of Southeast Asian countries. But as countries in the same region, they have something in common. In terms of linguistic system, monolingual system and bilingual system are two main language regimes. In promoting official languages, more attention is paid to the promotion and education of integrated languages, and the promotion of official languages is organically combined with national identity; in dealing with foreign languages, policies tend to set English as a major foreign language in school curricula. The article will elaborate and summarize the relationship between language education policy and national construction.

II. BRIEF REVIEW OF LANGUAGE EDUCATION POLICY AND NATIONAL CONSTRUCTION IN SOUTHEAST ASIAN COUNTRIES

As newly emerging countries, Southeast Asian countries have obvious nationalist characteristics in the choice of language education policy, emphasizing the national ideal of “one country, one regime and one language”. Most countries

choose the language used by the main ethnic groups as the official language, and choose the native language to show the independence of the country and get rid of colonial rule. Since the time of choosing official language, it has entered the process of national construction. After decades of development, they have accumulated some experience in language education policy and national construction.

A. Attaching Importance to English Education to Bring New Impetus to the Development of China

Through the analysis of the policies and practices of language education in Southeast Asian countries, we find that attaching importance to English has become a new direction of language education in Southeast Asian countries. The question is whether English education can bring new impetus to national development. First of all, it is self-evident that the importance of English has been very clear. It is the common language of international communication and the language carrier of modern science and technology. To master English means to grasp the world's scientific and technological information more quickly, and the development of science and technology is the source of the driving force of national development. Therefore, it can be considered that mastering English is at least a prerequisite for timely tracking the development of science and technology. If we rely on translation to solve the problem of information dissemination, we must be in a backward state. Secondly, the implementation of English education has improved the overall level of education and the quality of talents. Apart from the large number of Malay speakers, the indigenous languages of Southeast Asian countries are basically confined to one country and are not widely used in international exchanges. In addition, their language ontology planning is relatively backward and their language maturity is insufficient, so they cannot be regarded as modern languages. It is difficult to cultivate talents to participate in international competition through the education of these languages. Therefore, the most convenient way is to train English-speaking talents, in order to shorten the gap with that of the developed countries in talent, so as to provide sufficient talent reserves and development power for national development. Thirdly, from the practical analysis of some successful countries, English education is the main way to

train talents. Singapore, for example, has made its education level ahead of other countries in Southeast Asia through bilingual education in English. Singapore's PISA results are in the leading position in the world. The Philippines brings more economic income to the country by training English-speaking technical experts or a large number of workers.

B. Formulating Clear National Policies and Establishing Clear Goal Consciousness

As far as the language education policies of Southeast Asian countries are concerned, they have clear objectives. On the policy of official language education, it is clearly proposed to implement the policy of official language and integrated language throughout the country. For example, the language policies of "Thai" "Laotian" and "Burmese" implemented by these countries have achieved the goal of promoting official languages nationwide through the central assimilation policy. Through the unified national language education policy, Southeast Asian countries have achieved national language unification, thus laying a language and cultural foundation for national construction. In the implementation of the policy, schools are the main educational institutions to achieve the goal of language education policy. School education serves the construction and development of the country by cultivating students' language and knowledge abilities, and cultivating talents who meet the national academic standards.

C. Promoting National Construction by Improving Language Ability

Language is the main symbol of a country. Language promotes the formation of national identity. Southeast Asian countries make the official language the common language of all peoples by promoting the official language all over the countries. The common language also promotes people's identification with the common national identity. The common language also promotes the linkage between different nationalities, overcomes the limitations of dialects or minority languages, and enables people from different nationalities to enjoy the same right to language education. Too many dialects in a country can affect communication and easily form ethnic barriers. Singapore promotes Mandarin as a teaching language in order to break the cultural and linguistic segregation between different Chinese ethnic dialects. Ethnic segregation is extremely unfavorable to the formation of national identity, and also affects the construction of the country. In addition, a strong language education policy can ensure the realization of national construction. For example, Thailand's Thai language policy, the use of the same language throughout the country, after years of promotion, standard Thai has become the national lingua franca, which promotes national construction.

D. Developing Language Economy and Serving National Economic Construction

Language is not only an ethnic mark, a tool of national identity and national construction, but also a real productive force. Language can create language services through language services produce, and cultivate new economic

growth for the construction of the country. Language is a communicative tool, and those who master one or more languages can use it to open up new forms of language services. Nowadays, new language industries have emerged in Southeast Asian countries, such as network media or new media communication, translation industry, language paging industry and many other forms of services. Tourism in Southeast Asia is a major industry. Tourism has led to the development of language translation and language services. Another kind of language service is to make full use of the educational resources, especially in the countries with rich English resources in Southeast Asia, such as Singapore and Malaysia, which make full use of the advantages of higher level of English education, widely absorb foreign students from Asian countries, and expand the industry of language education. The value created in this way can also contribute to national construction and national economic development.

III. STRATEGIES OF MAKING LANGUAGE EDUCATION POLICY AND NATIONAL CONSTRUCTION IN SOUTHEAST ASIAN COUNTRIES TO BE HARMONIOUS AND UNIFIED

Language is an important tool for national construction. Language education policy reflects the political purpose of the ruling party, or strengthens centralization, or weakens local power. In terms of language, it is manifested in strengthening the education of official languages and weakening the role of local dialects. Whatever form of policy is adopted, the ultimate goal is to achieve national construction and promote national development. Southeast Asian countries can do better in language education policy and national construction.

A. Continuing to Maintain the Current Momentum in the Process of Promoting Language Integration

It is not possible overnight to make a language strong in a country. French has become the only official language in France, relying on the persistent promotion of French by the centralization of power for nearly a century and the constant consolidation of its status. At present, the status of official languages in most Southeast Asian countries has been consolidated, but to become a truly strong language not only occupies the space advantage, but also includes the modernity and advancement represented by the language itself. Only in this way can we stand the test of time and become the real dominant language. Make this language a real tool for uniting the nation. To this end, the driving force of the official language should continue to be strengthened.

B. Protecting the Weak Language and Promoting the Harmonious Construction of the State

In the era of globalization, the preservation and development of vulnerable language are facing more and more difficulties, but vulnerable language is an integral part of a country's language. The national language policy should try to protect these languages and improve the linguistic competence of vulnerable language groups, especially bilingual competence. Only when ethnic minorities understand the official language of the state, can they effectively participate in the process of national construction,

rather than being marginalized groups. Only by paying attention to the vulnerable language and enhancing their mutual understanding with the strong language can we promote the communication between the people and make the process of national construction enter a stable and harmonious track.

C. Developing Pragmatic and Effective Foreign Language Education Policies to Enrich the Connotation of National Construction

Southeast Asian countries have made some progress in formulating foreign language education policies. However, according to the three-dimensional analysis of public policy, there are still shortcomings. Firstly, foreign language education policy-making does not take into account the most basic elements. In order to catch up with the pace of English development in other countries, several LDCs propose to offer English courses from the third grade of primary school. In fact, Laos, Myanmar, Cambodia and Vietnam do not yet have the qualifications for teachers. However, facing the urgent challenges of globalization and the pressure of using English as the working language after joining ASEAN, these countries put forward such policies. However, from the actual situation analysis, the situation of foreign language education in rural areas needs to be improved urgently. Secondly, the problems brought about by the urban-rural dualistic system are universal, not only in rural primary schools in the above-mentioned countries, but also in rural or mountainous schools in Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand. English teaching in Malaysia is not only a matter of curriculum, but also a matter of teaching language. After nearly 10 years of implementation of the teaching language conversion proposed in 2002, it was eventually forced to announce that it was stopped because of the obvious teaching quality problems in rural areas. The root of the problem is the dual education system of urban and rural areas. Therefore, this requires the government to take practical actions to improve. Thirdly, we should strive to improve our English proficiency and serve the national construction and economic development. The special role of English makes it more and more important in contemporary foreign language education. Therefore, improving the quality of education is the key to foreign language education serving the development of the country.

IV. POSSIBLE DEVELOPMENT TRENDS OF LANGUAGE EDUCATION POLICIES IN SOUTHEAST ASIAN COUNTRIES

Language education policies in Southeast Asian countries have obvious diversity characteristics. Due to the different development processes and uneven economic levels, it is difficult to construct an all-inclusive policy model. However, this does not mean that the language education policies of Southeast Asian countries are out of order. Based on the analysis of the basic characteristics and experience of language education policy in Southeast Asian countries, the possible development trend of policy is put forward.

A. Predicting the Future Development Direction from Key Points of Language Education Policy in Southeast Asian Countries

The key point of language education policy in Southeast Asian countries is how to deal with the relationship between English and local official languages reasonably and how to realize the fairness of language education policy. On the one hand, the relationship between English and local official languages is a pair of contradictions. Bilingual countries with English as the dominant language should strengthen local official language education while emphasizing the role of English. Although Singapore has succeeded in English education, the quality of Chinese education is declining. The phenomenon of Chinese family language shift has become more obvious, which will inevitably affect Chinese identity and national identity, and threaten Singapore's cultural identity as an Asian country. Therefore, strengthening Chinese and Tamil language education should be a new direction of Singapore's future language education policy. On the other hand, the realization of equity in language education policy is a key point and a difficult problem in the development of education in Southeast Asian countries. This key point is reflected not only in the fairness of providing foreign language education, but also in the inequity of providing equal education to minority areas. It is correct for the state to attach importance to English education, but the problems such as the gap between urban and rural areas and the backwardness of minority areas have not been effectively solved. The implementation of existing policies will only widen the gap between urban and rural areas, make the society develop in the direction of stratification and cause social problems. Therefore, future policies should focus on solving the problem of education equity between urban and rural areas and narrowing the gap.

B. Analyzing the Possible Path Choice in the Future from the Situation of Language Education Policies in Southeast Asian Countries

The colonial history of Southeast Asian countries has brought strong colonial feature to their development, which is reflected in language dependence. Since independence, these countries have been difficult to get rid of the economic, cultural and linguistic influence of their original sovereign countries. How can they go their own way? This is a question that Southeast Asian countries need to think about. If it is only the language reproduction of colonial suzerain countries, without their own cultural and linguistic characteristics, it is difficult for these countries to get out of the curse of colonial model. Therefore, besides attaching importance to English education, it is still very important to strengthen the language and culture education in China. In order to solve the contradictions and conflicts between English and native languages, it is necessary to clarify the priority of language order. For Southeast Asian countries, English is generally placed before native languages, yet we must avoid the tendency of "Westernization" which relies too much on English.

C. Analyzing Whether They Can Serve the Country Strongly or Not from the Development Level of Language Education Policies in Southeast Asian Countries

From the current situation and development level of language education in Southeast Asian countries, the problem of inadequate language development in some countries is becoming more and more obvious. Although Malay is the common language of several countries, stylistic planning has been a matter of nearly half a century. The immaturity of the language has led to Malaysia's constant reversal between Malay and English, which is not only the impact of colonial language, but also the consequence of its own language insecurity. For Southeast Asian countries, in order to make their country strong, English education needs to be strengthened. However, it is difficult to build a strong and confident country by relying solely on English education and weakening official language education. Therefore, we should strengthen the stylistic study of Mandarin, give it a clear position in status planning, and make it the mainstream language of school education. A strong nation must have a strong national language.

V. INSTITUTIONAL CHOICES OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN COUNTRIES TO IMPROVE THE IMPLEMENTATION EFFECT OF LANGUAGE POLICIES

In order to ensure the smooth implementation of language education, the government should create the environment and conditions for language education and make reasonable institutional choices. Language education, as a public product, has public attributes. As a state organ serving citizens, the government has the responsibility to provide adequate public goods, create favorable learning environment and conditions, and meet students' needs for language education. This paper puts forward the following institutional choices.

A. Improving School Conditions

School education needs basic school-running conditions, including hardware conditions such as school buildings and classrooms, and software conditions such as language learning and humanistic environment. The school running conditions in Southeast Asian countries vary greatly between urban and rural areas. This has a certain impact on the implementation of language education. The condition and level of dual system restrict the improvement of the quality of school education in rural and remote areas. Therefore, the government has the responsibility to improve the conditions of weak schools and narrow the inequity of the right to education caused by the gap between the conditions of running schools.

B. Guaranteeing Teaching Facilities

Language education has its own characteristics and requires certain teaching facilities. Ideal language teaching should be assisted by voice equipment, such as multimedia classroom and multi-functional voice room. Language learning under computer or network environment can make language learning realize teacher-student interaction and

student-student interaction. It can also simulate real language environment, make language learning life-oriented, situational and interactive, and also improve the effect of language education and students' learning interest in language. To this end, the government needs to increase investment to ensure the timely acquisition and updating of teaching facilities.

C. Establishing a Stable Teacher Team

In language education, the most critical element is to have a high-quality teaching team capable of teaching. The government should establish a stable teacher training system and plan the scale and demand of teachers. Establish a teacher training system integrating pre-service professional quality training and post-service skills training, strengthen the training of teachers' professional competence, and constantly improve their professional competence. Establishing a stable contingent of teachers is the key to the implementation of educational practice. Especially, we need to take care of the training of teachers in backward areas and minority areas. The implementation of directional enrollment and directional training of teachers in minority areas is conducive to the development of minority languages as teaching aids.

VI. PROSPECTS FOR SOUTHEAST ASIAN COUNTRIES TO DEVELOP BETTER LANGUAGE EDUCATION POLICIES

The purpose of language education policy research is to find out whether language education promotes national construction and development, to clarify and analyze the problems existing in language education practice, to evaluate the implementation of policy, and to make policy truly serve national construction. There are some shortcomings in the language education policies of Southeast Asian countries. We hope that their countries' policies can at least be improved from the following aspects.

A. Establishing a More Scientific Policy-making System

From the analysis of the policy-making process of language education in Southeast Asian countries, we know that some countries adopt a more obvious "top-down" policy-making mode, mainly in the form of issuing administrative orders or issuing documents, ignoring the participation of relevant elements in policy-making. From the perspective of policy analysis, the way of institutional policy is rough and unscientific. Policy formulation should follow policy elements, including order, authority and professional knowledge. Order ensures the stability and predictability of policies. A new policy formulation also requires the participation of relevant authorities, which can provide a prerequisite for the legitimacy of the policy. Professional knowledge as a part of policy-making can provide a scientific basis for policy-making. Therefore, the formulation of a scientific language education policy requires the participation of these elements, so as to ensure that the policy formulation is more scientific and normative.

B. Establishing Correct Awareness of Language Education Policy Serving National Construction

Language education policy has the most basic value for accurately grasping the core elements of language education. The purpose of language education policy formulation and implementation is to improve learners' language competence. The main purpose of the policy is to serve the construction and development of the country. As late-developing countries, Southeast Asian countries are in the process of economic development. Apart from Singapore and Brunei, other countries belong to developing countries and the least developed countries. The development gap between countries is relatively large. No matter what stage of development the country is in, the purpose of its language education policy is for the development of the country. However, for a long time after independence, language education policy should aim at serving the construction of the country. Through the implementation of language education policy, the national recognition of the national common language can be realized, so as to further realize the national recognition. After the formation of national identity, language education policy should establish a correct sense of serving national construction. Language education can achieve the goal of training qualified talents. These talents not only have their own language ability, but also have some foreign language ability. Only in this way can they master the new science and technology which are changing rapidly and serve the national construction.

C. Establishing a Perfect Implementation and Assessment System

Through a comprehensive study of language education policies in 11 Southeast Asian countries, the author finds that researchers in Southeast Asian countries pay more attention to the process of policy formulation, while there are obvious shortcomings in the study of policy implementation and implementation process. Only a few researchers have made some descriptions from some micro-teaching activities. Therefore, we should pay great attention to how to formulate a sound implementation and evaluation system to assess the implementation of the policy, so as to test the results of policy implementation.

VII. CONCLUSION

This paper aims at clarifying the relationship between language education policy and national construction. There exist some contradictions and conflicts between them. Therefore, it is necessary to solve them from the perspective of public policy.

A. Scientifically Planning Language Status and Language Function

Southeast Asian countries have many kinds of languages, the most important of which are English and local official languages. So it is necessary to clarify the status and roles of English and state languages.

B. Promoting a Harmony Environment of Language Education

Among the Southeast Asian countries, the monolingual countries have a clear attitude towards state language. The implementation of the national language assimilation policy consolidates the national identity and benefits the national construction. However, while being vigorously promoted, the official language poses a threat to minority ethnic languages. Therefore, in minority areas, the use of minority languages should be permitted as teaching aids for early learners in primary schools.

C. Promoting Multilingual Foreign Language Education Policy

Although attaching importance to English education has created certain conditions for the development of some Southeast Asian countries, yet with the deepening of globalization, English-only language education policies will also face some challenges. Therefore, it is suggested that the foreign language education policy be revised. Firstly, the language education of the surrounding countries should be strengthened and a certain number of minor language majors should be set up. Secondly, Chinese education should be opened up. Thirdly, the formulation of foreign language education policy with English as the main foreign language not only conforms to the national conditions of Southeast Asian countries, but also reduces the potential threat of relying too much on a single foreign language and safeguards the national language security.

In a word, we need to solve the language dilemma in policy-making, give priority to English language education, and develop the education of the two languages in a moderate and balanced way so as to promote the harmonious development of languages, and make language serve the construction and development of the Southeast Asian countries.

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