

A Study on the Impact of the “Seven-Year Planning Outline for Foreign Language Education” on Foreign Language Education in China

Chen Chen, Zheng Qianru

[**Abstract**] The implementation of the “Seven-Year Planning Outline for Foreign Language Education” has ushered in new development opportunities for foreign language education in China and made positive contributions to cultivating well-rounded foreign language talents and promoting international exchanges and cooperation among countries. This paper analyzes the planning outline to probe into its function, status, and impact in the field of foreign language education in China, in a bid to clarify the importance of formulating reasonable language education policies and plans. It reflects upon China’s English education policies and planning in the context of the current era so as to provide relevant experience and enlightenment for the development of foreign language education in China.

[**Key words**] foreign language education; seven-year planning outline; English education planning; education policy

[**About the author**] Chen Chen (1999—), female, from Anqing, Anhui, China, School of Foreign Languages, Anqing Normal University, master of education. Research interests: applied linguistics, sociolinguistics. Zheng Qianru (2001—), female, from Hefei, Anhui, China, School of Foreign Languages, Anqing Normal University, bachelor of English. Research interests: applied linguistics, English teaching methods.

[**Fund**] This paper is a phased result of the first national-level online and offline blended first-class courses “English Curriculum Standards and Teaching Materials and Methods” (2020140416).

[**DOI**] <https://doi.org/10.62662/kxwxy0104007>

[**Website**] www.oacj.net

1 Introduction

The “Seven-Year Planning Outline for Foreign Language Education” (hereinafter referred to as the “Planning Outline”) holds significant status and meaning globally, playing an essential role in promoting international exchanges and cooperation, enhancing national soft power, and elevating individual comprehensive quality (Li Shuo, 2019). It has received extensive research and evaluation domestically and abroad. International scholars like Beards, De Schutter, and Martin have paid attention to the cultivation of practical application ability of language and intercultural communication ability proposed in the “Planning Outline”, focusing on textbook optimization, teacher training, and improvement of assessment methods. Scholars at home and abroad generally believe that the “Planning Outline” has a crucial guiding role in the development of foreign language education and continuously explore how to transform the “Planning Outline” into practical teaching measures and effects through research and practice. The “Planning Outline” serves as a guiding document for China’s foreign language education, significantly guiding the strengthening of foreign language education reform, improving foreign language teaching quality, and cultivating more high-quality foreign language talents.

2 Main content of the “Planning Outline”

The “Planning Outline” is an essential document developed by China’s department of foreign language education. Its main content includes clarifying the development goals and tasks of foreign language education, strengthening the construction of foreign language teacher teams, improving the quality of foreign language

education, strengthening the informatization construction of foreign language education, and promoting the reform and innovation of foreign language education (Li Chuansong et al. , 2006).

In terms of development goals and tasks of foreign language education, the “Planning Outline” clearly states the goals of elevating the overall level of foreign languages, cultivating more high-level foreign language talents, strengthening foreign language teachers’ training and exchanges, and proposing corresponding policy measures. In terms the construction of foreign language teacher team, the “Planning Outline” emphasizes increasing the intensity of foreign language teacher training, improving teachers’ salary, and perfecting evaluation mechanisms. With regard to improving foreign language education quality, the “Planning Outline” puts forward specific measures such as strengthening curriculum construction, optimizing teaching resource allocation, and promoting innovative education methods (Hu Wenzhong, 2001).

3 Functions of the “Planning Outline”

3.1 Guiding the development of foreign language education

The “Planning Outline” clarifies the development goals and tasks of China’s foreign language education, providing guiding principles for reform and development. The implementation of the “Planning Outline” helps unify the development ideas of foreign language education at all levels, promoting an overall elevation in foreign language education. It clarifies the development direction of foreign language education and provides a reference basis for decision-makers and educators when formulating education policies and implementing teaching reforms.

3.2 Optimizing resource allocation

The “Planning Outline” puts forward the requirements of increasing investment and optimizing teaching resource allocation. By intensifying financial input and resource support for foreign language education, education facilities and conditions can be improved, and the level of teacher team construction can be enhanced, providing favorable conditions for the development of foreign language education.

3.3 Promoting reform and innovation

The “Planning Outline” emphasizes promoting reform and innovation in foreign language education. It advocates innovative education methods and approaches, as well as information technology for teaching activities. By promoting reform and innovation in foreign language education, teaching outcomes can be improved, and students’ learning interest and initiative can be aroused.

3.4 Improving education quality

The “Planning Outline” clarifies measures for enhancing foreign language education quality. By strengthening curriculum construction, cultivating high-quality teachers, and improving teaching evaluation mechanisms, the overall quality of foreign language education can be improved, and more high-level foreign language talents can be cultivated.

3.5 Facilitating international exchanges and cooperation

The “Planning Outline” encourages the strengthening of international exchanges and cooperation and the cultivation of talents with international visions and intercultural communication capabilities. It advocates the implementation of international exchange programs and plans for studying abroad, the provision of more international learning opportunities and platforms for students and teachers, and the promotion of language and cultural exchanges between different countries (Xie Qian, 2011).

In general, the “Planning Outline” plays a crucial role in guiding the development of foreign language education, optimizing resource allocation, promoting reform and innovation, improving education quality, and facilitating international exchanges and cooperation. It contributes to the sustainable development of foreign language education, the improvement of students’ linguistic competence and global competitiveness, and the promotion of national educational progress and cultural exchange.

4 Status of the “Planning Outline”

The “Planning Outline” is a significant event in the history of foreign language education in China. Reflecting the international situation at the time, it displays China’s plans for cultivating foreign language talents and utilizing electronics-assisted teaching for the development of socialism domestically. It is an important historical document in the history of China’s foreign language educational technology. The “Planning Outline” holds considerable historical significance. As the first historical document, it demonstrates that China begins to emphasize talents needed for domestic socialist construction in foreign language education planning and acknowledges the importance of electronic education from a strategic planning perspective (Wang Jing, 2018).

4.1 Status of explicit provision

The “Planning Outline” is an essential policy document formulated by China’s education departments, which clearly defines the development directions, goals, and tasks of foreign language education. With legal effectiveness, it serves as a guiding document for various levels of education departments, schools, and teachers in the reform and development of foreign language education (Zhang Zhi & Ge Donglei, 2018).

4.2 Status of comprehensive planning

The “Planning Outline” offers comprehensive planning and coordination across all aspects of foreign language education. It integrates resources for domestic foreign language education, balances national efforts for foreign language education, allocates teaching resources for foreign language education rationally, and promotes the coordinated development of foreign language education in different regions and educational stages.

4.3 Status of guiding and supporting

The “Planning Outline” encourages the strengthening of international exchanges and cooperation and the cultivation of talents with international visions and intercultural communication capabilities. It advocates the implementation of international student exchange programs, teacher exchange programs, and cooperative projects, and the promotion of language and cultural exchanges between different countries. The implementation of the “Planning Outline” provides guidance and support for strengthening international exchanges and cooperation (Xie Qian, 2011).

Therefore, the “Planning Outline” possesses a significant policy-guiding status and planning function in the field of foreign language education. It plays a vital role in promoting the development of foreign language education, improving the quality of education, and fostering international exchanges.

5 Impacts of the “Planning Outline”

In 1964, the “Planning Outline” was introduced, which has a positive impact on the development of China’s foreign language education. It is one of the successful examples in the history of language policy and planning in China, which was established in a timely manner based on the social development needs and has adapted to the trend of the times to promote economic development, social stability, and harmony among the people (Liu Si, 2018).

5.1 Promoting reform in foreign language education

The “Planning Outline” points out the direction for foreign language education reform, guiding foreign language education towards a quality-oriented and innovative development path. Under the guidance of the “Planning Outline”, schools and teachers can consciously carry out educational reform practices and continuously improve teaching quality and learning outcomes (Li Chuansong, 2006).

5.2 Improving foreign language teaching quality

The “Planning Outline” emphasizes the strengthening of the construction and training of foreign language teacher teams. By enhancing teachers’ education level and professional capabilities, foreign language teaching quality is further improved. Meanwhile, under the guidance of the “Planning Outline”, education authorities at all

levels also increase their support and investment in foreign language education , thereby providing better educational resources and conditions.

5.3 Cultivating high-quality foreign language talents

The “Planning Outline” clarifies the goals for improving the overall level of foreign languages and cultivating more high-level foreign language talents. By strengthening the quality and depth of foreign language education , students’ comprehensive foreign language capabilities are improved , and high-quality foreign language talents with international visions and intercultural communication capabilities are cultivated.

Overall, the “Planning Outline” provides a clear roadmap and guidance for the development of foreign language education , promotes reform and innovation in foreign language education , and provides scientific guidance for foreign language teaching reform. It has significant implications for improving the quality of foreign language teaching.

6 Enlightenment of the “Planning Outline”

6.1 Emphasize the practical application ability of languages

The “Planning Outline” emphasizes the cultivation of students’ practical application ability of languages , which enables them to use foreign languages fluently and accurately in actual communication. This enlightenment implies that in foreign language teaching , not only should grammar and vocabulary mastery be emphasized , but more importance should be placed on cultivating students’ practical application ability. Teachers can help students improve their practical application ability by designing authentic communication activities , encouraging oral expression and writing , and etc.

6.2 Cultivate intercultural communication skills

The “Planning Outline” emphasizes the cultivation of students’ intercultural communication skills , which involves effective communication and interaction in different cultural backgrounds. This enlightenment indicates that foreign language teaching is not only about teaching a language but guiding students to understand and respect different cultures , cultivating their intercultural awareness and communication skills. Teachers can help students expand their horizons and increase their cultural confidence and understanding by organizing intercultural communication activities , introducing cultural elements , and sharing case studies.

6.3 Diversified assessment methods

The “Planning Outline” proposes diversified assessment methods , focusing on evaluating students’ overall and practical application capabilities. This enlightenment implies that traditional rote memorization and written tests should be abandoned ; assessments should focus more on examining students’ comprehensive abilities and skills in practical application. Teachers can employ oral communication evaluations , project assignments , practical situations assessments , and so on , to promote students’ comprehensive development.

6.4 Textbook optimization and teacher training

The “Planning Outline” focuses on textbook optimization and teacher training , emphasizing the improvement of the compatibility between textbook and teaching objectives and the professional level of teachers. This enlightenment indicates that textbooks should be closely aligned with students’ needs and practical application , and teachers should constantly enhance their subject knowledge and teaching abilities. Teachers can actively participate in teaching research activities , professional training , and independent learning , continuously update their educational concepts and teaching methods , and provide students with high-quality educational resources and support.

The above enlightenment offers valuable guidance for foreign language education. We should uphold the principles of the “Planning Outline” by committing to foreign language education that serves the Party and the nation’s talent cultivation , incorporating foreign language education into the Party and the nation’s development

planning, adhering to the organic unity of the foreign language's instrumentality and humanism, promoting both foreign language education and mother tongue education, persisting in research-driven foreign language teaching reform, building a high-quality professional foreign language teacher team, promoting the informatization of foreign language education, and unwavering support for the internationalization of foreign language education (Liu Jie, 2021). In combination with practical situations, it is essential to emphasize the cultivation of practical application ability of languages and intercultural communicative competence in teaching, the adoption of diversified assessment methods, the optimization of textbook content and structure, and the improvement of teachers' professional level and teaching quality, thus promoting the comprehensive development of foreign language education.

7 Conclusion

The "Planning Outline" has played a significant guiding role in the development of foreign language education in China. By strengthening the construction of foreign language teacher teams, promoting reform and innovation in foreign language education, and improving education quality, the level of foreign language education in China can be further enhanced, cultivating more high-quality foreign language talents, and making positive contributions to the nation's development and talent cultivation. Studying the "Planning Outline" allows us to gain a clearer understanding of the policy's role in driving the foreign language education sector and provides reference and enlightenment for the formulation and implementation of future foreign language education policies.

References:

- [1] Li Shuo. Research on the Development of English Education Policy in Chinese Universities[D]. Wuhan University, 2019: 39-88.
- [2] Beards More H. B. Language Policy and Planning in Western European Countries[J]. Annual Review of Applied Linguistics, 1993/1994(14): 93-110.
- [3] De Schutter, H. Language Policy and Political Philosophy: On the Emerging Linguistic Justice Debate [J]. Language Problems and Language Planning, 2007, 31(1): 1-23.
- [4] Martin I. Some Remarks on Post-1990 English Language Teaching Policy in Cuba[J]. Tesol Quarterly, 2007, 41(3): 550 - 557.
- [5] Li Chuansong, Xu Baofa. A History of Modern and Contemporary Foreign Language Education in China [M]. Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press, 2006: 227-258.
- [6] Hu Wenzhong. The Gains and Losses of China's Foreign Language Education Planning [J]. Foreign Language Teaching and Research, 2001(4): 245-251+320.
- [7] Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, State Council. Instructions on the Seven-Year Plan for Foreign Language Education[Z]. 1964-11-14.
- [8] Xie Qian. International Comparative Study of Foreign Language Education Policy[D]. East China Normal University, 2011: 205.
- [9] Wang Jing. Research on the Development of Informationization Policy of Foreign Language Education in Chinese Universities[D]. Shanghai International Studies University, 2018: 76-80.
- [10] Zhang Zhicheng, Ge Donglei. Research on the Development and Reform of China's Foreign Language Education Policy since the Founding of the People's Republic of China [J]. Journal of Bohai University (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition), 2018(5).
- [11] Liu Si. A Discussion on English Education Planning under the Background of the Belt and Road Initiative[J]. Overseas English, 2018(14): 100-101.
- [12] Liu Jie. Exploration and Experience: A Hundred-Year Review of the Communist Party of China's Foreign Language Education[J]. Curriculum, Textbook, Teaching Method, 2021, 41(2): 79-86.