

Policies to Promote Arabic Education in Official Universities (Gansu Province, China)

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Abstract

Before the founding of the People's Republic of China, after the development of several dynasties, inheritance and accumulation of foreign language teaching experience, many outstanding people through continuous reform and innovation, Arabic teaching in the founding period of the People's Republic of China began to be gradually restored due to the interruption of education due to the cultural revolution, the country began to formulate new development plans, abandoned the traditional political construction. They began to pay attention to economic construction, which brought development opportunities for foreign language teaching. After years of efforts, foreign language education in China had a brilliant development in history by the 1980s. The purpose of this study is to understand the influence of language policy on Arabic. Researchers seldom pay attention to the influence of language policy on Arabic in the past, and analyze the development history of Arabic education in universities. This chapter completes the analysis by means of historical data and interviews, filling the gap in this field.

Key words

Language policy, universities, Arabic, influence

1. Text

In the 1980s, with the gradual improvement of high-level education in the whole country and the continuous expansion of Arabic majors in universities, significant measures were taken and implemented in Arabic majors in universities. "Since the founding of New China, the teaching of Arabic has moved from the traditional teaching of scripture halls into universities, and has become one of the foreign language majors in some universities. Since the reform and opening up, the teaching and research of Arabic in China has developed rapidly and made very good achievements, making a great contribution to

the socialist modernization"¹. The promotion of language policy has the following impacts on Arabic education in universities:

First, Arabic language major established

"After 1980, with the gradual expansion of the enrollment scale, Arabic majors in universities began to be independent from the original departments of Oriental and Asian-African languages, and Arabic

¹ Zhou Lie, 2010, Arabic Teaching and Research in New China, West Asia and Africa, P59

majors developed into Arabic languages. The establishment of independent departments is the inevitable result of the expansion of the teaching scale of Arabic majors"². In 1997, the School of Foreign Languages of Northwest University for Nationalities set up an independent department of Arabic to train students with strong employability, competitive advantages and sustainable development in the fields of diplomacy, international economy and trade, foreign cultural exchanges and international communication. "In particular, the reform and opening up policy of our country has given many domestic companies opportunities to visit foreign countries, and Arab Islamic countries have become important foreign trade objects"³. "The policy of reform and opening up began in 1978. Under this background, Arabic teaching has developed rapidly"⁴. In the 1980s, the country began to shift the core of its work to economic construction, and the policy of opening up to the outside world was once again opened, indicating an obvious trend of foreign exchange. Because the cultural revolution of ten years led to the regression of the country, the National education Conference was held in 1978, and the country began to pay attention to foreign language education, and Arabic talents could not meet the social demand for foreign language talents. Private individuals were encouraged to start setting up schools for private instruction. In the 1990s, in

² Ding Jun, 2013, History of Arabic Education in China, China Social Sciences Press, P91

³ Yang Jian rong, 2006, My Views on Basic Teaching in Arabic, Chinese Muslims, P22

⁴ Zhou Lie, P60

order to meet the needs of social and economic development, to cultivate international and interdisciplinary senior talents with profound professional skills in Arabic language and literature, knowledge of humanities and social sciences, and excellent abilities in learning, thinking, creation, cooperation and management, under the influence of language policy, coupled with excellent teaching ability in each historical period of Gansu Province, As the center of scripture hall education in Northwest China, Gansu Province has rich teaching experience and its teaching scale is constantly expanding. All these provide necessary practical conditions for the independent establishment of a department, which is very convenient in teaching management, foreign exchanges and many other aspects. At the same time, the independent establishment of a department is also an objective requirement for the further development of the Arabic major, which is of great significance for the professional development.

Second, change the period of study

In 1997, the Department of Arabic, School of Foreign Languages, Northwest University for Nationalities was established. Before 1990s, the major of other universities was five years. "After the National Higher Education Examination was reinstated in 1977, the bachelor's degree in Arabic was five years for every university, but four years for other majors, adding one year to the Arabic major increases students' fear of choosing Arabic major"⁵. Under the influence of the national policy, in order to save learning funds and teaching time, it was gradually changed to four years of study time. Among the registered freshmen, Muslims accounted for one third, because they had some knowledge of the language

⁵ Ding Jun, P92

from childhood, which is sure to play a role in their future learning. However, most of the freshmen have no language foundation, so it is very difficult to learn Arabic. An extra year of study will undoubtedly increase the pressure on the family. 85% of the students from other places are relatively rich and can afford the cost of study, while 15% of the local families are poor. Most of the local students are Muslims, and the family conditions are ordinary. In particular, students in some poor areas are more unable to afford tuition fees and living expenses, so they need loans from the state to help them study, reward study funds and help study funds to maintain all expenses. The number of Muslims who improve their education only accounts for 3%, and 60% of them work directly after completing university study. The reason is that four years of university study has brought a heavy burden to poor families. The arduous task for most students is to complete university study, try to get money and get rid of poverty, and the employment direction is generally translation, compared with English translation. Arabic translators have a high income, so students of Northwest University for Nationalities often choose to be sent to Africa and the Middle East with a monthly income of about 3,000 dollars. On the one hand, they can get rid of family poverty and get directly employed after completing the four-year study quickly. On the other hand, only by choosing Arabic can they get more family income. Because Muslims have a natural affinity for Arabic, in consideration of students' economic affordability, the study time is gradually changed to four years, so as to save teaching time and economic costs and adapt to the requirements of the rapid development of The Times, which cannot be separated from the great influence of language policy.

Third, Broaden professional courses

The demand for compound foreign language talents

continues to grow, especially the school attaches great importance to the training of compound talents in the "One Belt and One Road". "With the continuous development of information technology, compound Arabic talents are welcomed by all sectors of society"⁶. "With China's transition from a planned economy to a socialist market economy and the deepening of reform and opening up, the demand for foreign language professionals is constantly putting forward new requirements. Foreign language majors, including Arabic majors, provide talents to government departments, education and scientific research institutions, and it is more and more urgent to take into account the needs of economic departments and enterprises"⁷. In order to enable students to quickly adapt to the changing employment needs of the market, each Arabic major in a university shall expand the teaching scale and increase the number of Arabic majors in a university under the promotion of the national language policy. According to the training program of the college, the expert group shall report to the university after consultation, timely modify the teaching content, adjust and broaden the professional direction to different degrees. The reason is that because of its special geographical location and special ethnic policies, Peking University and International Studies University take the teaching syllabus of Northwest University for Nationalities as the standard, which

⁶ Jiang Ke yin, 2014, Research on the Cultivation Mode of Arabic Compound Talents in Ningxia Colleges and Universities in the Information Age, Journal of Northwest University for Nationalities, P165

⁷ Ding Jun, P92

reflects the sensitivity of Gansu province to policies. On the basis of the curriculum setting of traditional language and literature, the Arabic major of Northwest University for Nationalities timely adds the characteristic courses with strong application, such as economy and trade, architectural engineering, newspapers and magazines, Arabic media, etc., in order to broaden the employment channels for students and improve their competitiveness and adaptability in employment. The representative of culture is language. In order to let Muslims and non-Muslims know more about Arab culture, Muslim teachers have rich experience of studying abroad and understand Arab culture, and are the most qualified to talk about Islamic culture. Universities have arranged some teachers to carry out various forms of cultural education, such as self-study examination, Arabic elective courses in universities. There are elective courses in addition to specialized Arabic courses, and the proportion of graduate students and self-taught students who can choose to study Arabic culture is already quite good. At the same time, Northwest University for Nationalities signed an agreement with some private Arabic schools to promote the junior college degree. On the one hand, it enables more students to obtain a way to improve their education, actively responds to the social and market demands, and promotes the prosperity and development of Chinese Arabic education from the other side, enhances the professionalism, and forms a multi-level and multi-specification teaching situation, So that the Arabic major in colleges and universities has an important influence on the study of folk schools and the majority of self-learners.⁸

⁸ Ma Bin, P161, Footnote number 269 (71、

Fourth, state funds support college students

"Into the 1990s, China made a major breakthrough in the reform of the economic system, the end of the 'big pot meal' model, the traditional planned economic system gradually replaced by the socialist market economy, employment abolish the unified distribution of graduation, emphasize two-way choice, encourage independent career choice, under the conditions of the market economy, the payment of tuition fees and state money to support the university is the trend, This is a major change in higher education and the introduction of a fee-paying system for Arabic education"⁹. In this situation, the reform of the education system is also increasing, and colleges and universities are gradually implementing fee-paying education. The State favors ethnic minorities and helps ethnic minorities solve all difficulties. Because there are many ethnic minorities in Northwest University for Nationalities, the extra unplanned funds paid by the university are fully supported by the State Ethnic Affairs Commission. In order to find jobs, students are enthusiastic about learning. The state provides living allowances for students with difficulties. The impact of this policy is that there is no difficulty in registering new Arabic students, and it is very easy to enroll students nationwide. To train more foreign language talents for the country and the nation, Arabic language talents are an important force for the development of the country and the nation, and enhance the exchanges between China and Arab countries in various fields; On the other hand, for most students

45、 47、 51、 75、 77、 73、 35、 41、 49、 83、 85、 87)

⁹ Ding Jun, P 93

from poor families, financial support is very important for improving the quality of the whole nation and the illiteracy rate of the nation. It can cultivate more research talents. At the same time, it can increase the income of the families of students with difficulties, and the families of students can get rid of difficulties. This undoubtedly brings happiness to the students who continue to study.

In contrast, private foreign language schools currently have difficulties in registering new students: First, the most important thing is the educational background, at the beginning of the school's establishment, most of the students' families are poor, the cost is relatively low, and the registered students' educational level is very low. Studying in private foreign language schools is also a way to learn some basic knowledge. Private foreign language schools were established in a specific era, and now students cannot adapt to the needs of the society, so they can only continue their study abroad, continuous improvement of level and ability; Second, the state policy supports poor families and schools, implements free study of nine-year compulsory education, solves the problem of illiteracy to a certain extent, funds support families and schools, and a large number of students enter universities and receive high-level education, resulting in the difficulty of registering new students in private foreign language schools. The Chinese government has issued a series of national policies to help families in need, help people in need to live and study, a relief system in line with Islam, help and reward students in need to continue learning foreign languages, and increase the number of foreign language talents of both Muslims and non-Muslims.

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¹⁰ Ma Bin, P163, Footnote number 271 (73

Fifth, teaching means and teaching methods are constantly improved

"After the reform and opening up, all kinds of software and hardware conditions of Arabic language education in China have been improved constantly, and teaching methods and means have been improved constantly"¹¹. After the reform and opening up, with the increase of social demand and the promotion of language policy, the modern educational technology of Arabic major in Northwest University for Nationalities has developed rapidly. Multimedia classrooms are set up, especially for some teachers with foreign learning background, who have higher oral and listening skills, which are more suitable for teaching and more flexible in using modern educational technology. These young teachers have more development opportunities in school teaching, while some old teachers do not know how to use the Internet and multimedia, and cannot flexibly use modern educational technology, delaying teaching methods. It is worth mentioning that the person in charge of Arabic teaching in Northwest University for Nationalities has many years of study and work experience in Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and other countries. He fully utilizes his own experience to combine the characteristics and language policies of Chinese people in curriculum setting and teaching methods, especially in the face of characteristic course teaching. Of course, he is faced with many challenges. Timely modification of teaching content and teaching methods, which has a great effect on students' learning, peacetime training of students' basic qualities, such as reading Arabic newspapers, rapid

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¹¹ Ding Jun, P 95

transcription and recording of meeting content, although the number of words required for graduation thesis is very small, but must be written in Arabic, compared to other famous universities in China, Northwest University for Nationalities has higher requirements. The university's syllabus has been cited by other famous schools in China, which fully reflects the sensitivity of teaching leaders to language policies and the professionalism of teaching.

"In the global information environment, the use of the Internet teaching platform is the fastest way to achieve cultural exchange, but also the key to promote the stable development of exchange"¹². Over the past 20 years, multimedia teaching methods, including slides and Internet, have been gradually adopted in Arabic teaching activities in Gansu Province, especially in the last decade, creating an increasingly rich and vivid language learning environment for students. At the same time, Chinese people have been influenced by Confucianism for a long time, and most of the students are not good at communication, but good at self-study and self-research. This character trait seriously affects foreign language learning and the improvement of listening comprehension and oral English, commonly known as dumb Arabic. During the four years' study in university, I deeply feel the improvement of teaching level. The school signed an agreement with Iraqi and Egyptian teachers to provide Arabic major students with speaking and listening courses, compulsory improvement of the speaking and

¹² Lan qing, 2017, Language education strategies for Sino-Arab cultural Exchange under the background of "One Belt and Road", Foreign Language Teaching and Research, P58

listening level, two exams per semester, and the use of students' spare time at night. Egyptian and Iraqi teachers led students to go shopping in the street, held Arab cultural festivals, held Arabic corner every Wednesday night and other activities. This provides Arabic students with the convenience of learning multiple languages, enriches the teaching content, accelerates understanding, increases students' interest in learning, plays a strong role in consolidating students' knowledge and language skills, and significantly improves the teaching efficiency and quality.¹³

Sixth, higher education

In 1980, the Arabic major of Beijing Foreign Studies University was approved as the first institution to grant master's degree in Arabic in China. In 1982, the university admitted the first batch of master's degree graduates in Arabic. Since then, the Arabic major of Peking University, Shanghai Foreign Studies University and other universities have successively become the training centers for master's degree graduates. In 1986, the Arabic Department of Beijing Foreign Studies University became the first institution in China to grant doctoral degrees in Arabic. The postgraduate majors of the university include Arabic language (including grammar, rhetoric, language history, etc.), literature, philosophy, history, culture, etc. The main courses are as follows: History of China-Arab Relations, Middle East Studies, Advanced Arabic, History of Development of Arabic Language, History of Arabic Literature, Reading of Arabic Classical literature, History of Arab Islamic Culture, Islamic Philosophy, etc. "At this point, Chinese Arabic education has finally formed a

¹³ Ma Bin, P164, Footnote number 274 (33、45、37、39、43、29)

complete education system from undergraduate to master, doctoral student, postdoctoral research and so on"¹⁴. "The development of graduate education in Arabic has set up a relatively ideal platform for training senior professionals in Arabic in China, indicating that the higher education of Arabic in China has reached a higher level, which is the result of the efforts of several generations of Chinese people in the half century after the founding of New China"¹⁵. In 2011, Northwest University for Nationalities began to recruit postgraduate students of Arabic teaching theory, and the Arabic major in the university ended the history of no master's degree. By 2021, the proportion of students who continue to study (master's or doctor's degree) in Northwest University for Nationalities will account for 5%-10%, and Muslims will account for 3%. With the improvement of the educational requirements of teachers in universities, the encouragement of teachers to continue to study through national policies and the improvement of personal consciousness, there are many people who have improved their educational qualifications. At the same time, in order to solve the shortage of teachers, the enrollment of domestic graduate students has been expanded, and the number of students majoring in Arabic has been gradually expanded.

"By examining the reality and analyzing the history, it can be clearly seen that the study of Arabic and Persian is one of the long historical and cultural traditions of the Hui Muslims, for a long time, they have made valuable efforts in the field of Arabic teaching and made important contributions to the cause of foreign language teaching and academic

¹⁴ Ding Jun, P98

¹⁵ Ding Jun, P98

research in related fields"¹⁶. The students and teachers who graduated from Northwest University for Nationalities have responded actively to the national policy and completed and trained outstanding doctoral and postgraduate students for the development of our academic field. In particular, Professor Ding Jun has published a number of academic works such as «History of Chinese Arabic Education», «Islamic Culture», «Brief History of the Hui Nationality», «Basic Course of Arabic Culture», and translated «Crossroads»; Associate professor Ma Hebin has published books on «Arabic Language and Culture fundamentals»; Among the works published by Dean Ma Fude are «Basic courses of Arabic Language and Culture, «From the Alphabet to Conversational Arabic»; Professor Ha Baoyu has published books such as «Islamic Law: Classic Traditional and Modern Interpretation», «Foreign Culture and Native Thought -- Manuscripts of Islamic Studies», published 21 papers, presided over 10 scientific research projects, and won 6 provincial awards. They have become a new force in the field of Arabic teaching and scientific research, and play a very important role in different posts, and have a very important influence on training a new generation of Arabic teaching and researchers in our country. All these are the promotion of language policy. Without the promotion of language policy, the state would not attach importance to higher education. Staying in the sutra hall education or private foreign language education, the Arabic language in Gansu Province does not have such a prosperous scene today. The

¹⁶ Ding Jun, 2004, The Contribution of Hui Muslims to Arabic Teaching in China, Newspaper of Northwest University for Nationalities, P25

development of professional master's and doctor's education in Arabic fully reflects the state's attention to high-level education, which greatly improves the level of higher education in Arabic and has far-reaching and important influence on the cause of Arabic education in our country.¹⁷

2. Conclusion

In order to quickly adapt to the language policy, the Arabic major of Northwest University for Nationalities timely adjusted its direction. In the face of such drastic changes and the reality of students, the Arabic major of Northwest University for Nationalities took the initiative to meet the needs under the support of state funds. It also made great efforts in the setting of specific courses, constantly adjusted the teaching plan and teaching methods, and paid attention to the comprehensiveness and professionalism of students' knowledge structure. From the perspective of cultivating innovative foreign language talents, we should increase the practical courses of Arabic and actively respond to the needs of diversified foreign language talents under the market economy, all these are implemented under the influence of language policy, otherwise it will become a rootless tree, the influence of language policy has a profound impact on the Arabic major of Northwest University for Nationalities.

3. Research method

The purpose of this study is to analyze the influence of Chinese language policy on Arabic education in Gansu Provincial Official University, provide information about the research samples and analyze the historical data obtained from the research samples.

The research design used in this paper is the face-to-face interview and historical data research methods of qualitative research, in order to verify the validity of the research. Therefore, in this study, researchers used historical data research methods, comparative research methods and interdisciplinary research methods to complete the research within the framework of the influence of language policy on Arabic education in universities.

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¹⁷ Ma Bin, P166, Footnote number 278 (23、67、69、79)