

Summary of Studies on Language Policy in Hong Kong and Macao

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Abstract

Hong Kong and Macao, as an inalienable part of China's territory, have unique historical, political and cultural backgrounds, which together shape the complex and diverse linguistic pattern of Hong Kong and Macao. As an important means for the state and region to manage, standardize and develop language use, language policy plays an important role in the social life of Hong Kong and Macao. During the colonial period, Hong Kong formed a language pattern of emphasizing English over Chinese, while Macao used Chinese and Portuguese bilingualism as its official language. After the reunification, the language policies of the two places are gradually in line with the national common language policy, and at the same time, it is necessary to take into account the international needs and local language ecology. Taking the relevant literature in the field of language policy in Hong Kong and Macao in recent years as the object, this paper sorts out the historical evolution, present situation characteristics and future development trend of language policy in Hong Kong and Macao.

Keywords

Hong Kong; Macau; Language policy.

1. The Evolution of Language Policy in Hong Kong and Macau

1.1. Hong Kong: From colonial heritage to biliteracy and trilingualism

English was the official language of Hong Kong during the colonial period. English is widely used in government documents, legal provisions, education, etc. English is not only the language of the administrative and judicial systems, but also the lingua franca in the fields of business and education. However, in official occasions and in the field of education, the status of Chinese is relatively low. Many schools use English as the main medium of instruction, which leads to the neglect of Chinese education. Until the return of Hong Kong to the motherland in 1997, the government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region formulated the language policy of biliteracy and trilingualism according to the historical, cultural and social reality of Hong Kong. Zou Jiayan (2001) propose the English first policy pursued by the British Hong Kong government has led to the marginalization of Chinese for a long time. [1]After the reunification in 1997, the Basic Law established the framework of biliteracy and trilingualism (Chinese, English; Cantonese, English, Putonghua) in an attempt to balance national identity with

international competitiveness. Tian Xiaolin (2010) emphasized that the adjustment of Hong Kong's language policy has always faced the tension between internationalization and localization, such as the dispute over mother tongue teaching and the resistance to the promotion of general education (teaching Chinese in Putonghua).[2]

1.2. Macao: Bilingual Chinese and Portuguese and Cantonese-dominated diversified ecology

During the colonial period, Portuguese gradually became the official language, but it failed to replace Cantonese, the daily language of Macao residents. Many Macao people have become bilingual, using both Cantonese for daily communication and Portuguese for formal occasions. When the Basic Law of the Macao Special Administrative Region came into effect, the status of Chinese and Portuguese as official languages in Macao was established. With the development of the times, Macao's language policy has been further enriched, forming the characteristics of three languages and four languages. Cheng Xianghui (2005) mentioned Macao's bilingual policy (Chinese and Portuguese) is more symbolic, Cantonese, as the folk lingua franca, occupies a dominant position in practice, and the scope of use of Portuguese is limited to the legal and administrative fields.[3] Shao Chaoyang (2018) pointed out that Macao's language policy is relatively inclusive, but the inheritance of Portuguese is facing a fault crisis, and it is necessary to strengthen the bilingual talent pool between China and Portuguese through education policies.[4]

2. Summary of Multilingualism and Language Policy Suggestions

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region adheres to the language policy of bilingualism and trilingualism, while Macao is unique and implements the language strategy of trilingualism and four languages. The linguistic diversity of these two SAR provides a unique opportunity for Greater Bay Area to build a multi-linguistic environment. English education, as a bridge for Greater Bay Area to enter the international stage, is self-evident. In this regard, Hong Kong should play a more critical role, not only continuously providing high-quality English teachers to Greater Bay Area, but also shouldering the important task of training English teachers and continuously cultivating business elites with superb English proficiency. In addition, by holding various forms of English exchange activities, we will help primary and secondary schools in nine major cities such as Guangzhou and Shenzhen to improve the quality of English teaching, and make English the universal language connecting the world in Greater Bay Area.

Macao shoulders the unique mission of cultivating Portuguese-speaking talents. There are more than 200 million Portuguese-speaking speakers worldwide, and Macao plays an important role as a bridge between China and Portuguese-speaking countries. In order to speed up the cultivation of Portuguese-speaking talents, Macao can join hands with institutions of higher learning in Guangzhou and Shenzhen to carry out fixed-point cooperation to jointly build a highland for the cultivation of Portuguese-speaking talents.

Cantonese dialect, as the mainstream dialect in Greater Bay Area, is like a vast ocean of dialects, which occupies a strong position among many dialects. Under the solid guarantee of the national language protection policy, Cantonese dialect will not disappear or degrade, but will shine even more in the booming development of Greater Bay Area. It is worth mentioning that Greater Bay Area has gathered many scholars who study Cantonese dialect, and there are many

talented people who contribute wisdom and strength to the inheritance and development of Cantonese dialect. With the development of Greater Bay Area, Cantonese dialect will continuously absorb new nutrients and enrich its own connotation. At the same time, it will continuously inject fresh new words into Putonghua thesaurus, showing the unique contribution and charm of community vocabulary in Hong Kong and Macao to Chinese thesaurus.

There is multilingual phenomenon in Hong Kong and Macao. Grasping the overall language living conditions and formulating reasonable language policies are conducive to social stability and economic prosperity. The most important part of the study of language policy in Hong Kong and Macao is the description and display of local living conditions, the change of social development from the perspective of language changes, the prediction of the development trend of language pattern, the thinking and suggestions on language policy, etc. Wang Peiguang (2012) and other scholars think more about how to deal with the relationship between Chinese and English in Hong Kong, the relationship between Chinese, Portuguese and English in Macao, and the relationship between Putonghua and Cantonese dialects in Hong Kong and Macao. [5]The early research lacked the support of empirical materials and objective basis, and relied more on subjective experience to put forward suggestions and solutions to the problems in the language planning of the two places. However, it also provided design research reference for the investigation of language use in specific social fields such as government departments and media.

3. Language Education and Educational Languages

Language education is one of the core areas of Hong Kong and Macao's language policy, which is not only related to the construction of national identity, but also affects social equity and economic development. Hong Kong takes being biliterate and trilingual as its educational language framework, while Macao takes being trilingual and trilingual as its policy goal. The language policies of the two places will directly affect the language ability of the younger generation.

]After the return of Hong Kong, the establishment of the framework of being biliterate and trilingual, the popularization of Putonghua and the change of language education policy have made mother tongue teaching improve students' learning efficiency, especially in the field of science. However, famous schools insist on English teaching, and even some parents think that Putonghua education weakens English education, hinders the implementation of policies and aggravates the inequality of educational resources. The debate on whether to use English or Chinese as the teaching language is a hot topic in the early research of Hong Kong's language policy. Zhu Qingzhi (2016) proposed Whether the incoherence of language policies between middle schools and universities will lead to confusion in language management in universities. In the later period, the state promoted Putonghua, aiming at improving students' Putonghua ability and national identity.[6] Besides, Zhong Jinchun (2008)[7]、Sardonar Lee (2010) [8]and others, through the motivation of Hong Kong's decision-making on Chinese education policies and the implementation strategies, analyze the background and reasons of these policies, show the implementation of Chinese education policies in Hong Kong and Macao before and after the reunification, and thus clarify the relationship between the changes of Chinese education policies and social changes.

Macao's language policy is more relaxed than that of Hong Kong. In the primary and secondary schools in Macao, schools have always decided the language of instruction independently, and it was not until the university stage that English was officially introduced as the medium of teaching. Zhang Guiju (2010) pointed out that trilingualism and four languages is a unique phenomenon in Macao's cultural and social life, and it is also a difficult problem that has long plagued Macao's non-higher education.[9]When formulating, implementing and evaluating language education policies, the government obviously cannot ignore the leading role of the values of language pragmatism. Besides, it should also consider various influencing factors such as Macao people's historical complex, power relations and ethnic consciousness. The coexistence of tolerance and alienation in Macao's language education policy has led to the inconsistency between the language beliefs of Macao universities and the language time of teachers and students.

4. The use of Putonghua and its promotion

The study of language policy in Hong Kong and Macao focuses on the use and promotion of Putonghua. In the discussion on the present situation and prospect of Putonghua in the whole society, Shao Jingmin and Shi Dingxu (2006) hold that Hong Kong style Chinese will be retained for a long time, resulting in the coexistence of four languages; Hong Kong style Chinese will gradually move closer to standard Chinese, but it is unlikely to disappear in the short term. [10]This process will develop with the development of mainland China in Hong Kong; The significance of studying Hong Kong style Chinese is mainly to explore the integration and influence of common language, dialect, and foreign language, and to explore the influence and penetration of spoken language on written language. Sort out the research on language policy and planning in Hong Kong, analyze the current situation of Mandarin in Hong Kong, summarize that there is still a need to improve and deepen theoretical research on Mandarin, and propose relevant policy recommendations.

In the relevant research on Mandarin teaching, in addition to analyzing the current situation, analyzing the linguistic characteristics of Hong Kong style Mandarin and Hong Kong style Chinese can help us better understand the characteristics and difficulties of Mandarin learning for students in Hong Kong and Macao. The Mandarin teaching strategy based on second language acquisition theory provides us with scientific and effective teaching methods and tools. By implementing these strategies, we can help students in Hong Kong and Macau better master Mandarin, promote exchanges and cooperation with the mainland, and enhance their sense of national identity.

5. Language and Identity Recognition

The participation of language as a symbolic symbol in the construction of Hong Kong identity is a complex process, deeply influenced by various factors such as the political and social environment, government language policies, individual language use, and language proficiency. For most local residents, Cantonese is considered the most familiar and representative language of the identity of Hong Kong people. The popularity of Mandarin in Hong Kong has greatly increased compared to before the return, partly due to the strengthening of Mandarin education after the return, and partly due to the increasingly frequent contacts between Hong

Kong and the mainland. Although the practical value of Mandarin has been increasingly valued by citizens, Hong Kong citizens have yet to establish a conscious connection between this language and ethnic identity (or national identity). Wang Peiguang (2019) pointed out through social surveys that the younger generation's insistence on Cantonese is seen as a symbol of local cultural resistance, while the promotion of Mandarin is seen by some groups as a threat of de localization. Shao Chaoyang (2021) emphasized that due to historical and geographical factors, Macau's language policy tends towards moderate integration, and Cantonese, as a cultural bond, enhances residents' acceptance of national policies. Mandarin and Chinese characters, as the universal language and characters of the country, are not only treasures of Chinese culture, but also important symbols of national identity. However, in the Hong Kong region, there is still room for improvement in the use of Mandarin and the recognition and reading ability of simplified characters among the public. Some citizens have misconceptions about the national common language and characters. Therefore, the improvement of Mandarin education and simplified character recognition education is particularly important. In order to comprehensively strengthen the popularization of the national common language and characters in Hong Kong and Macao, we should start from multiple dimensions such as law, education, and media communication, take multiple measures, and focus on enhancing and shaping the high reputation of Mandarin and simplified characters in the hearts of the people. Through the unique medium of language and writing, we can more closely connect regional identity with national identity, promoting deep integration between the two.

6. Emerging research directions

6.1. New Media and the Evolution of Language Ecology

With the popularization of Internet technology, new media platforms have become an important field for language use and dissemination, affecting the language ecology of Hong Kong and Macau. In Hong Kong's cyberspace, Cantonese online terms (e.g., "Hong Kong-style pinyin" and "cyber-philosophy") are not only tools for daily communication, but also symbols of resistance to local culture.

6.2. Internationalization Comparison of Language Policies

Hong Kong and Macau, as typical representatives of multilingual societies, have comparable language policies and international experiences. The linguistic background of Hong Kong, China and Singapore is more similar to that of mainland China, and their theories and practices of bilingual teaching are earlier than those of the mainland. Singapore's bilingual teaching has been implemented for many years and has made great achievements; while Hong Kong, China's bilingual teaching's practical path has not been smooth, experiencing failures and then rediscovering an applicable bilingual teaching model. An Jing & Li Hongwei (2010), according to which concludes that we should adopt selective, stage-by-stage and progressive development of bilingual teaching, meanwhile, the use of mass communication media provides a good environment for bilingual teaching, and lastly, we should also pay attention to the cultivation of teachers' power.[11]

7. Summary

To summarize, there are quite a few studies on the language situation in Hong Kong and Macau, which is complicated due to historical factors. Therefore, existing studies need to be summarized and evaluated to identify problems and propose solutions. The core of an in-depth language survey in Hong Kong and Macau is to explore the intrinsic connection between language and identity. The key role played by language in the construction of national consciousness, ethnic identity and political identity needs to be carefully analyzed from multiple dimensions, aiming to provide a solid theoretical foundation for language policy formulation. In addition, attention needs to be paid to language education and the use of language in education, as well as hot issues such as the promotion of Putonghua. Meanwhile, the language usage of young people in Hong Kong and Macau will also be the focus of our survey, in order to have a comprehensive understanding of the language habits and identity tendencies of the younger generation.

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