

A Comparative Study on Internationalization of Higher Education between China and Europe

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Abstract: Europe is the birthplace of modern higher education with many famous universities and institutions and plays an important role in the world's higher education. And international exchange and cooperation has also become the fifth major function of Chinese universities. Through a comparative study on the internationalization of higher education between China and Europe, this paper tries to clarify the history, development and current situation of the internationalization of higher education in China and Europe and provide references for Chinese universities to further improve the level of internationalization.

1. Introduction

Economic globalization is the tendency of global economic development. A globalized economy helps to promote the internalization of politics, culture, science and technology. With this trend, comes an internationalized higher education, which has become a core issue in the field of higher education in recent decades [1].

Europe is the birthplace of modern higher education with many famous universities and institutions, and plays an important role in the world's higher education. Since ancient times, there has been a tradition of transnational exchange and learning in Europe. As a response to globalization, the European Union and European countries have made and implemented strategic policies and plans to level up the internationalization of higher education. The European Union's policies and measures which are devoted to the construction of European higher education area are of great significance for promoting the internationalization of higher education in China [2,3].

China's *Outline of National Medium and Long Term Education Reform and Development Plan (2010-2020)* defines internationalization as the long-term development strategy of higher education, and issues macro policies to support the goal. International exchange and cooperation has also become the fifth major function of Chinese universities. A comparative study requires researchers to clarify the history, development and current situation of the internationalization of China's higher education and Europe's higher education, and to provide references for Chinese universities to further improve the level of internationalization [4]. At the same time, this paper also hopes to promote the cultivation of intercultural communicative linguistics talents in China's college English education and one of the detailed ways to develop higher education internationalization is to cultivate qualified English learners with intercultural communication ability [5].

2. The Development Process of the Internationalization of Modern Higher Education in Europe

As the birthplace of higher education in the world, European ancient universities in Medieval Times had some international characteristics. We can find characteristics of an internationalized higher education in the University of Paris in France and the University of Bologna in Italy in Medieval Times. The University of Humboldt in Berlin, Germany, which used to be the center of teaching and research in the world, was also born in Europe.

In the past few decades, governments, universities, student groups and relevant certification bodies in Europe have all put great emphasis on internationalizing higher education. Influenced by the broad cooperation and exchange in the field of education and scientific research in Europe in the

1980s, education internationalization has developed from a positive issue to a strategic issue of active choice over the years and its focus, scope and content have changed a lot. Meanwhile, local internationalization (internationalized curriculum and education process) has become as crucial as the international mobility (including studying abroad for degrees and short-term studying). The level of internationalization has become a key indicator to measure the quality of higher education and the discussion on the quality of internationalization of higher education is also increasing [6].

2.1. Erasmus Student Exchange Program

In 1987, the Erasmus student exchange program, the most important student exchange program in the European Community, was officially launched. It aimed to strengthen the "Community Dimension" and take education as a mean to enhance mutual understanding and international competitiveness. It also had an aim of catching up with the United States in science and technology. It began to promote international exchanges between higher education institutions and enterprises in member countries through long-term and short-term personnel exchanges, mutual recognition of credits, scientific research cooperation and university-enterprise cooperation.

Erasmus was named after Desiderius Erasmus, a famous European philosopher and educator in the early 16th century. This project improved the internationalization level of Europe's higher education and enhanced its influence and competitiveness. It also had a profound impact and certain demonstration effect on the internationalization of higher education in the other parts of the world. It provided a comprehensive platform for EU Member States and non-EU member states to strengthen exchanges and cooperate in higher education. And it is beneficial to promote a more internationalized higher education in Europe.

Erasmus program has been adjusted several times in the past over 30 years. And the most prominent program is the Erasmus Mundus, which was launched in 2004. It hopes to improve the quality of higher education by providing scholarships and through academic cooperation between EU and the rest of the world. The program sets to achieve this goal in three ways: internationalize students, staff, curricula and research, practice inclusive education and collaborate in networks, projects and research internationally.

2.2. Bologna Process

Besides Erasmus program, the Bologna process, which began in June 1999, has further strengthened the pace of internationalization of higher education in Europe.

2.2.1. Sorbonne Declaration

On May 25, 1998, ministers of education of France, Germany, Britain and Italy jointly announced Sorbonne Declaration at the 800th anniversary of Paris University's founding. Sorbonne Declaration stressed the important role of institutions of higher learning in the development of European culture, the necessity of establishing a European Community of institutions of higher learning and the European model of higher education.

2.2.2. Bologna Declaration.

On June 19, 1999, ministers of education from 29 European countries, including European Union Member States and applicants, held a meeting in Bologna to further explain Sorbonne Declaration. The meeting explored the issues of building a European higher education area in 2010 and improving the common European higher education system. It was a great success and the participating ministers jointly signed the Bologna Declaration.

The Bologna declaration (in full, Joint Declaration of the European Ministers of Education convened in Bologna on 19 June 1999) is the main guiding document of the Bologna process. It proposed a new area of Europe's higher education in which students and graduates could apply for any college in any country to further their study with their qualifications received in the home country.

The principal aims agreed were:

"Adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees". That is to say, countries

should adopt common terminology and standards

"Adoption of a system essentially based on two main cycles, undergraduate and graduate. Access to the second cycle (graduate education) shall require successful completion of first cycle lasting a minimum of three years. The degree awarded after the first cycle shall also be relevant to the European labor market as an appropriate level of qualification. The second cycle should lead to the master and/or doctorate degree as in many European countries."

The Declaration reached six goals: (1) Establish a system of easily readable and comparable degrees. By introducing "Diploma Supplement" (DS) method, the graduation certificates of European Universities Participating in the Bologna process can be more comparable and transparent. (2) Build a two-stage higher education system based on the two-stage model. The school structure will be rearranged, and the academic system of the university will be divided into two main cycles, undergraduate and graduate. (3) Establish European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTs). The introduction of the credit transfer system in Europe makes it easier for students from different countries to accept their courses internationally, and also helps to improve the mobility of students among European countries. (4) Promote the exchange of faculty members and students and break the obstacles of personnel flow. Students have the right to access higher education and training opportunities and related services; teachers, researchers and administrators have access to research, teaching and training opportunities within Europe for a certain period of time without prejudice to their legal rights. (5) Promote cooperation among European countries in education quality assurance. Participating countries could develop and adopt comparable and compatible quality standards and assessment methods. (6) Strengthen the construction of European Dimensions in the field of higher education.

Bologna Declaration marks the start of the construction of European Higher Education Area. On one hand, it puts forward the specific idea of building the European higher education area, explains and clarifies the connotation and essence of the European higher education area. On the other hand, it also provides the specific action program for the step-by-step promotion of European higher education integration and formulates the schedule and follow-up work plan to achieve this goal. In general, the Declaration implements the construction of European higher education area from conceptual framework to specific work schedule.

EU ministers had a series of meetings after the Bologna Declaration. Each meeting released a communiqué, such as the Prague communiqué in 2001, the Berlin communiqué in 2003, the Bergen communiqué in 2005 and the London communiqué in 2007.

2.2.3. Prague Communiqué

In 2001, 32 European Ministers in charge of higher education met in Prague to review the achievements and to set directions and priorities for the future.

After signing the Bologna Declaration, European Ministers in charge of higher education attended the meeting held in Prague and clarified the focus and priorities. Under the influence of the expansion of the European Union, the choice of the venue of this meeting showed that their intention was to involve the whole of Europe in this process. In the Prague communiqué, the ministers accepted the participation of new members, including Croatia, Cyprus and Turkey. In addition to lifelong learning, higher education institutions had also joined it and students' enthusiasm was strong. Therefore, the development power of European higher education had been significantly enhanced. In addition, the participating ministers also pledged to ensure the further development of quality assurance and the development of national qualification frameworks. This goal is related to the goal of lifelong learning because it is considered to be an important factor in higher education, which must be taken into account when establishing a new system. In addition, it must be pointed out that the Prague communiqué raised the issue to social level for the first time. In order to promote the Bologna process, the ministers welcomed and reviewed the report of furthering promoting the Bologna Process commissioned by the follow-up groups and found that the goals set out in the Bologna Declaration have been widely accepted by most signatories, universities and other institutions as basic institutions of higher education for the development of higher education.

In order to promote the Bologna process, representatives of the latest development of the European higher education system, representatives of the government not participating in the Ministerial Conference and other participants were divided into three discussion groups: the course content was based on dividing the research into two main cycles; Higher education institutions were networked to promote mobility and quality assessment and certification.

2.2.4. Berlin Communiqué

Driven by various policies and measures, the European higher education system has been converging and compatible with each other. In order to realize the further development of the construction process of the European higher education area, the second ministerial conference was held in Berlin on September 19, 2003. The conference reviewed the progress of various works since the Prague Conference, formulated the future work plan and issued Berlin Communiqué. Berlin Communiqué put forward three priority development projects: degree system, quality assurance and degree mutual recognition and added a new objective: to integrate PHD education into the Bologna process. It also accepted applications from eight countries, including Albania, Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Russia .etc. Berlin Conference plays a key role in the construction of European higher education area. It makes the construction process of higher education area step into a more orderly development stage day by day.

2.2.5. Bergen Communiqué

On May 19-20, 2005, the third ministerial meeting was held in Bergen as scheduled. The meeting discussed the standards and evaluation methods of education quality assurance system, the recognition of class hours and other issues. It summarized and evaluated the implementation results of the three priority projects proposed at the Berlin Conference, emphasized again that these three are still the key to put forward the future challenges and development priorities. In Bergen Communiqué, European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance of Higher Education were adopted, and it was made to be the contracting countries to implement the quality assurance of higher education. Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and other five countries were approved to join the Bologna process. The Bergen conference not only expanded the participation scale of the Bologna process, but also changed the process from planning for the future to focusing on the actual implementation. It has an important significance in the development process of the whole process.

The Bergen meeting produced a three-cycle framework of qualifications, which in the UK terminology (adopted, at least partially, by many European countries) would be Bachelor for a first degree of three years, Master for subsequent study, and Doctor for a degree which has "made a contribution through original research that extends the frontier of knowledge by developing a substantial body of work".

2.2.6. London Communiqué

In 2007, Bologna Process reached into the eighth year since the launch of the European higher education reform plan. On May 17-18 of that year, the Ministers of higher education from participating countries of the process gathered in London to attend the fourth biennial Ministerial Conference. The conference determined that in the next two years the work of all countries will continue to focus on the three key issues of the Bologna Process: improving the three-level degree system, strengthening quality assurance and promoting mutual recognition of academic qualifications. The meeting required that an assessment report would be submitted to comprehensively evaluate the progress of Bologna Process since 1999 in 2010. And the accession of the Republic of Montenegro to the Bologna Process increased the number of participating countries to 46. The Communiqué also pointed out that the construction of the European higher education area would adopt the development strategy of "European higher education area in the context of globalization", increase its attraction and competitiveness, strengthen the partnership type cooperation alliance, strengthen policy dialogue, improve mutual recognition mechanism of higher education in various countries and promote this work with the organization of OECD & UNESCO. The meeting not only reviewed and summarized the achievements of the Bologna process, but also

pointed out the obstacles in the specific process. So far, the Bologna process is closer and closer to its goals.

3. Current Situation of Higher Education Internationalization in China

3.1. Achievements in the internationalization of China's Higher Education

With the sweeping wave of economic globalization, especially since China joined WTO in 2001, China has become more and more active and open into globalization. And it accelerated the development of higher education, promoted the internationalization of higher education as a long-term strategy in China. We can see that since the Reform and Opening-up Policy was issued in China, China has made some achievements in the internationalization of higher education, especially in the international exchange for teachers and students. The details are as follows:

In response to the trend of internationalization of higher education, Chinese government has given various encouragement and support. The implementation of the "985" project and the "211" project focused on the construction of several key world's first-class universities in China. In addition, many policies have been set up to support and attract overseas students to return China to serve the country in a variety of appropriate ways. This series of policies promoted international cooperation and exchange of China's education, put forward the reform and development of Chinese higher education and of course enhanced the process of China's higher education globalization.

China's Outline of the National Medium and Long Term Education Reform and Development Plan (2010-2020) defines internationalization as the long-term development strategy of Chinese higher education. And many macro-policies have been issued to support the internationalization development of higher education. International exchange and cooperation has already become the fifth major function of Chinese universities. The main contents of the policy are summed up into four aspects: Chinese students studying abroad; oversea students studying in China, joint institutions running by Chinese and foreign universities and international research cooperation. On the basis of combing, analyzing and evaluating all aspects of government policy, it is not difficult to find that policy has played a decisive role in promoting the internationalization of higher education in China.

With the further development of China's economy and the expansion of reform and opening-up, the number of international students studying in China has increased year by year. At present, the scale and quality of overseas student getting educated in China are developing steadily. Many colleges and universities have explored different ideas of overseas student cultivation according to their own practice. In addition, China not only attaches great importance to promoting the internationalization process of students through the development of overseas student education in China, but also actively carries out various policies to strive to move towards the goal of cultivating Chinese students and faculty members with international level.

Generally speaking, the internationalization of higher education in China has the following characteristics in 21st century.

First, on the basis of the continuous improvement of higher education policies, the scale of overseas students studying in China has been expanded a lot. Other Asian countries have always been the most important source of students to study in China. Europe and America has the fastest growth in the scale of overseas students in China. In terms of the source countries, South Korea has always maintained its dominant traditional position, and the number of international students to China from the United States, Thailand, Russia and Laos has increased, while the number from Japan, Vietnam and Indonesia has declined. The internationalization of higher education is closely related to the development of historical tradition, economy and politics. The change of distribution of overseas students in China is influenced by policy, geographical location, economic level, comprehensive strength of higher education and other factors.

Secondly, more and more Chinese students are willing to return to China to work after they finish their study abroad. This is a great change in the past 20 years. At first, Chinese students who

gained the opportunity to study abroad seldom wanted to come back to China and made all their efforts to stay in the countries they were studying or other western nations. And the reason for this change is mainly because of the Chinese social and economic development.

Third, with the policy encouragement and support, with the continuous expansion of the scale of returned students and scholars' from abroad, the proportion of faculty members in Chinese universities with overseas study experience is gradually increasing.

Fourth, the scale of Sino-Foreign joint running institutions has expanded rapidly, and these institutions have become an important part of higher education in China. Establishing overseas higher education institutions has also made a breakthrough and the scale of overseas education is gradually expanding. Learning from the advanced experiences, these overseas institutions will play an important role in the internationalization development of higher education in China.

3.2. Disadvantages in the internationalization of China's Higher Education

Although the international cooperation and exchange of higher education in China has made great progress, compared with western developed countries such as European countries and the United States, China is in a more passive position in the cooperation. The students amount of input and output is not fully proportional, the quality and selective methods of the input students also need to be strengthened. English teaching ability is still insufficient and the competitiveness in the international higher education market is still not strong for many Chinese universities. With the improvement of China's international political and economic status and strength, China should play a more active role in the international development of higher education in the world, add more Chinese elements to the world's higher education, make more contributions to the promotion of international cooperation and exchange of higher education and make China's higher education truly move towards the world.

4. Importance of cultivating qualified English learners with intercultural communication ability.

Cultivating students' intercultural communication ability is an important and even core issue for the internationalization of higher education. They should learn English and English should be taught in a way that enables them to acquire intercultural communication ability. They should be able to communicate effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds and also requires colleges and universities to cultivate students' professional and cultural literacy in a planned way and improve their intercultural communication ability in accordance with the international development of the University.

Intercultural communication studies communications between different cultures and social groups, and how culture affects the communication. It tries to find out the factors affects communication such as race, religion and education and provide clues or solutions to a smooth communication.

English learners should be aimed at professionals and future professionals who wish to go into either the world of research in English Linguistics, the use of ICT and its application to teaching-learning English or to specialize in international and intercultural communications.

Successful intercultural communication is based on understanding of cultural backgrounds, besides linguistic abilities. With regard to intercultural communication proper, it studies situations where people from different cultural backgrounds interact. Aside from language, intercultural communication focuses on social attributes, thought patterns, and the cultures of different groups of people. It also involves understanding the different cultures, languages and customs of people from other countries.

Intercultural communication is widely used in social sciences such as anthropology, cultural studies, linguistics, psychology and communication studies. Intercultural communication is also referred to as the base for international businesses. Several cross-cultural service providers assist with the development of intercultural communication skills. Intercultural communication is in a way the 'interaction with speakers of other languages on equal terms and respecting their identities.

Identity and culture are also studied within the discipline of communication to analyze how globalization influences ways of thinking, beliefs, values, and identity, within and between cultural environments.

The study of intercultural communication requires intercultural understanding, which is an ability to understand and value cultural differences. Language is an example of an important cultural component that is linked to intercultural understanding.

However, there is a lack of intercultural communicative competence in most College English Teaching in China nowadays. To test the students' language ability through the examination paper is the main way to cultivate the English language ability in Contemporary China's English teaching. This way is obviously one-sided and incomplete. Exam oriented education can only make more and more students rely on rote learning and improve exam oriented skills to learn, which can not meet the needs of cross-cultural communication.

The fundamental objectives of English major should be as follows:

- 1) To train researchers in English Linguistics.
- 2) To train specialists in various areas of information technology and its applications to teaching-learning English.
- 3) To train professionals in intercultural communications and translation.

For English major students, some of the professional and/or academic opportunities are the following after their graduation:

- 1) English Language and Linguistics Teacher (university level).
- 2) Linguistics researcher.
- 3) Non-university teacher (secondary education, academies, adult education, etc.).
- 4) Translator.
- 5) Linguistics advisor.
- 6) Linguistics mediator.
- 7) Editor and editorial assistant.
- 8) Linguistics policy and planning professional.
- 9) Education manager.
- 10) Language and communication technology professional.
- 11) Public administration professional (national and international).
- 12) Media professional.

5. Conclusion

From the above comparative study of the history, development and current situation on the internationalization of higher education in China and Europe, it is easy to find that China should learn from the experiences of some other European countries in higher education and promote the process of internationalization of higher education in China. And China must strive to open up a distinctive development path in the interaction of the world's higher education system by combining local experience and international experience. Therefore, Chinese universities could improve their competitiveness and the development level of China's higher education, gain more advanced technology and experience, broaden the cultural vision of Chinese university students, enhance the vitality of social progress and accelerate the process of China's social modernization. Moreover, it is also important to cultivate qualified English learners with intercultural communication ability.

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