

The Enlightenment of Australian Bilingual Education Model to Japanese Teaching Reform in Chinese Universities

Qing YANG

College of Foreign Languages, Xihua University, Chengdu 610039, Sichuan, China

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Abstract: Australia, owning the fourth largest number of Japanese learners in the world, has made very outstanding development and achievements in Japanese education, especially the Japanese immersive bilingual teaching model, which is a successful model. Understanding Australian bilingual education mode, especially the development and implementation of Japanese education in Australia, and the problems they have encountered, we could draw lessons from its successful experience, and combine its Japanese immersion bilingual education mode with the present situation of colleges to cultivate students who are major in Japanese in our school and inspire us a new way of Japanese teaching in our country. The bilingual education provides us references for promoting the reform and development of Japanese education in our country. In this article, we will demonstrate our enlightenment and conception on Japanese immersive learning in China by analyzing the development and status of Japanese education in China and Australia, the bilingual education, the theory of immersive bilingual teaching, and the development of Japanese immersive education.

1. Introduction

Students of Japanese language majors in China basically start from zero foundation, and in just three and a half years of classroom study they have to master the basics, improve their comprehensive application skills, and complete the Japanese Language Proficiency Test. In recent years, due to the new changes in the international situation, the advancement of teaching reforms in higher education, and the changes in Chinese society as a whole, Japanese language education in the new era is facing new challenges and opportunities. The traditional Japanese language teaching mode in the past has gradually failed to meet the requirements of today's society for Japanese language talents in terms of listening and speaking ability and comprehensive Japanese language application ability. According to the last three surveys of the Japan Foundation on *Survey Report on Japanese-Language Education Abroad*, Australia ranks among the top countries in the world in terms of the number of educational institutions, the number of teachers and the number of learners in Japanese language education. Australia is rich in language resources, with more than 200 languages spoken throughout the country. Australia regards language as a resource and has formulated a series of language education policies to serve its political, economic and social development. The study of Australian foreign language education policies and practices can provide some lessons for China in terms of clarifying the strategic position of various languages, establishing a sense of language services, changing teaching philosophy and reforming teaching methods. At the same time, Australia has achieved outstanding development and success in Japanese language education, especially in the bilingual teaching mode of Japanese language immersion, and is a successful model, so it will be helpful for the reform and development of Japanese language education in China to learn from its specific mode of “immersion” teaching method and apply it to Japanese language teaching in Chinese universities. Of course, China is different from Australia, so we cannot directly copy a teaching model and apply it to our teaching, but we hope that the Australian “Japanese immersion” teaching model can provide some reference for Japanese language education in China.

2. Overview of the Current Status of Japanese Language Education in China and Australia

2.1 Current Status of Japanese Language Education in China

According to the *Survey Report on Japanese-Language Education Abroad* from Japan Foundation in 2018, the number of Chinese Japanese learners ranking the first all over the world, which has up to 10,046,250 people and it keeps growing rapidly in recent year. Compared with the 2015 annual survey results, the number of education institutions, teachers and learners has increased relevantly. (Table 1)

Table 1 Number of Japanese Language Institutions, Learners, Teachers in Various Countries and Regions of the World (2018)

rankin g	201 5	Countries , regions	Number of learners			Number of educational institutions			Number of teachers		
			In 2018, 5	In 2015, 3	gradient %	In 2018 ,	In 2015 ,	gradient %	In 2018, 0	In 2015, 2	gradient %
1	1	China	100462 5	95328 3	5.4	2435	2115	15.1	2022 0	1831 2	10.4
2	2	Indonesia	709479	74512 5	4.8	2879	2496	15.3	5793	4540	27.6
3	3	Korea	531511	55623 7	4.4	2998	2862	4.8	1534 5	1485 5	3.3
4	4	Australia	405175	35734 8	13.4	1764	1643	7.4	3135	2800	12.0

According to different educational periods (Table 2), Japanese education in China happens mainly in higher education. The scale of Japanese education in primary education is small, but it has increased obviously compared with that in 2015. In recent years, due to the policy change of the college entrance of Japanese examination, more and more high schools establish Japanese learning, and the number of Japanese education institutions and learners, teachers has increased abundantly, which means less and less students would be a total starter. This phenomenon forces high school to accelerate the reform of Japanese teaching methods.

In higher education, since the recruitment expansion of Japanese majors in 1999, the scale of Japanese majors has expanded rapidly. In 2013, the number of universities with Japanese majors had reached 506, accounting for 50 percent of Chinese universities. The number of Japanese learning in college had once exceeded 600,000. Under such a development background, Japanese education in Chinese universities has also encountered problems such as quality declining of student training, low employment rate and social recognition. "In 2011, there was a great setback in Sino-Japanese relations, which brought a huge impact on China's Japanese education. At the same time, Japanese teaching in new era is confronted with challenges and opportunities due to the changes of the international situation, the promotion of the teaching reform of higher education and the overall changes in Chinese society. (Xiu, 2018) From the recent three reports on Japanese language education abroad investigated by the Japan Foundation, the number of Japanese learners once reduced, from 2012 to 2015, Japanese learners have dropped by 8.9% within three year. Although the survey in 2018 shows that the overall number of learners has increased, the number of Japanese learners in college has reduced. The number of Japanese-major students reduced relevantly. Some colleges even suspended the recruitment of Japanese major or even canceled this major. With the development of times, the setup of the world's higher education and reform of China's higher education have brought new topics to Japanese education in Chinese.

Table 2 Statistics of The Results of the Last Two Japanese Education Surveys (2015 and 2018) in China

year	Number of educational institutions (individual)	Number of teachers (person)	Number of learners (person)	Number of learners in each stage of education (person)				Average number of learners per 100,000 people (people)
				elementary	secondary	higher	Outside of school education	
In 2018,	2435	20220	1004625	3892	90109	575455	335169	75
In 2015,	2115	18312	953283	1573	52382	625728	273600	69

2.2 Current Status of Japanese Education in Australia

According to the Survey Report on Japanese-Language Education Abroad 2018 from the Japan Foundation, Australia ranks the first in Oceania and the fourth in the world in terms of the number of educational institutions, teachers and learners. (Table 1)

It is worth noting that although the number of Japanese learners in Australia is the fourth in the world, ranking after China, the average number of Japanese learners has reached 1,708.3 per 100,000 in the 2018 (Table 3), compared with 75 people per 100,000 alone in China. Australia treats language as a resource and has developed a range of language education policies according to its practical needs to serve the political, economic and social development. Meanwhile, it attaches great importance to language diversification of foreign language education. In the Japanese education, especially the Japanese immersive bilingual teaching mode, Australia has achieved very outstanding and successful development and results.

Table 3 Results of the Last Two (2015, 2018) Surveys on Japanese Education in Australia

year	Number of educational institutions (individual)	Number of teachers (person)	Number of learners (person)	Number of learners in each stage of education (person)				Average number of learners per 100,000 people (people)
				elementary	secondary	higher	Outside of school education	
In 2018,	1764	3135	405175	258794	131223	11353	3805	1708.3
In 2015,	1643	2800	357348	209123	138345	6420	3460	1491

According to the different educational periods (Table 3), the Japanese language education in Australia is different from that in China, mainly concentrated in the primary and secondary education periods. The number of learners in primary education has increased by nearly 50,000 from 2015, the growth rate has increased by 24%. The number of children and students receiving foreign language education has increased significantly, supported by the Australian national language policy. In addition, people gaining a high interest in Japanese culture, which increase opportunities for tourism and business exchanges between Japan and Australia. Besides teacher training and mutual communication in various states all promote the development of Japanese language education. Australia accounts for nearly 80% of the global learners in primary education, and it is on the rise.

At the higher education, the survey showed that the number of learners has increased significantly. The younger generation has always maintained a high interest in Japanese learning, and the implementation of incentive policies for foreign language learning in many schools has also promoted the increase of Japanese learners in the higher education period. The number of social-language learning institutions outside of schools is very small overall, but it also shows a 10 to 20% increase from the previous survey.

3. The Australian Foreign Language Education Policy

Australia is the first English-language country in the world to formulate and implement multilingual policies, and it has accumulated rich experience in foreign language education and language policy. The development history of Australian foreign language education policy can be roughly divided into three stages: the period of assimilation (before the mid-1970 s), the period of integration (from the mid-1970s to the mid-1980 s), and a period of diversification (starting from the late 1980 s). (Wu, 2018) In the period of diversified development, as the Australian government and the whole society became increasingly aware of the importance of language, more and more people recognized the role and value of languages, including indigenous languages and foreign languages in Australia's economic development and foreign trade. The voices calling for Australia's national language policy formulation is louder and louder. National language policy is formulated and implemented in the context of “language is a resource” for language development, emphasizing the important role of language in the future development of politics, economy, culture and diplomacy. From these policies, we can see the evolution of foreign language education policies in the Australian multicultural era. In terms of the language selection of foreign language education, the Australian government embodies the educational concept of closely combining foreign language education with social development and human development. The Australian government believes that all languages are equal, and that they have the same impact on students' access to knowledge and skills like social, cognitive, language, culture and more.

3.1 National Language Policy (National Policy on Languages for Npl)

In July 1986, the Australian government appointed a professor Joseph Lo Bianco of language education at the University of Melbourne to draft a national language policy document. In June 1987, the National Language Policy, drafted by Bianco, was promulgated and implemented, becoming the first-ever language policy document in Australia. The national language policy supports creative language teaching and promotes Australia to a diversified society. With language (including foreign languages) as resources, the development and utilization of language resources are closely linked with economic development, and we encourage people to learn a second foreign language on the basis of mastering their own mother tongue. There are four main contents of the policy: first, to identify English as the official Australian language; second, to recognize the right of citizens to use other languages than English; third, to require all students to learn a foreign language during compulsory education; fourth, to emphasize Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Indonesian, Japanese, Greek, Italian and Spanish as important languages.

3.2 Australian Language: Australian Language and Literacy Policy (Australia's Language: the Australian Language Literacy Policy for Allp)

In the 1990s, the scope of national language policy was narrowed, and Asian languages received special official attention. In September 1991, the Australian Government released the book “The Australian Language: The Australian Language and Literacy Policy”. Its main contents are the following three points. First, it is emphasized that Australian English is the official language of Australia, and all people must be proficient in Australian English and involve society as widely as possible. Second, the importance of non-English language learning (mainly for foreign language learning) is proposed, emphasizing that Australians should improve their ability in other languages other than English. Third, the 14 languages were identified as priority languages, including the nine languages mentioned in the “National Language Policy” and the five additional languages added. States are required to choose eight of their own priority languages and to fund priority language teaching to increase the cultural activities of Australians and ensure Australia's future economic status. (Hao, 2014)

3.3 Australian School Strategy Asian Language Studies (the National Asian Language Sand Studies in Australian Schools Strategies for Nalsas)

Shortly after the ALLP, Australia in 1994 issued a clear official language policy “the Australian school strategy and Asian language research”, leveling Asian language the position of the national economic development strategy. It also determined the Chinese, Japanese, Indonesian and Korean four priority languages as strategic support language and emphasized the teaching and research of these four languages, in order to improve communication with major Asian countries.

3.4 The National School Asian Language Learning Program (National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Program for Nalssp)

The 21st century is called the “Century of Asia”. Countries around the world have adjusted their policies for their own development, and Australia is no exception. To adapt to the Asian Century, in 2008, the Australian government developed the National Schools Asian Language Learning Program to further strengthen ties with Asian countries. The policy, issued on January 1, 2009, focuses on further strengthening the teaching of four Asian languages (Chinese, Japanese, Indonesian, and Korean) over four years, aiming for at least 12 percent of twelfth-year graduates mastering one of them by 2020. The program encourages more students to learn the above languages and gives students the opportunity to master these languages and cultures and participate in economic globalization in the future. Compared with European and American countries, Australia has closer trade relations with China, Japan and Southeast Asian countries. The teaching of these languages plays a very important role in promoting the international political, economic and cultural exchanges in Australia, which indicates that the language orientation of the Australian government in foreign language teaching and also reflects the needs of the country's economic and social development.

To sum up, Australia's language policy fully takes political, economic, cultural and diplomatic factors into account, and it is specific and detailed. It not only plans the positioning of various languages at the national level, but also carefully plans the language teaching in each state and region. Therefore, a clear strategic status of various languages, the establishment of language service consciousness and the change of teaching concept and the reform of teaching methods are the key problems of foreign language education Chinese needs to highly focus on.

4. The Main Australian Japanese Teaching Method and the Enlightenment of Japanese Education in China

4.1 “Immersive” Japanese Teaching in Australia

The so-called “immersive” teaching refers to the teaching mode of using the second language as the teaching language, that is, learners spend part or all of the time in school “immersed” in a foreign language environment. The teacher communicates with learners only in foreign languages. Besides, teachers deliver other classes in foreign languages. Learning foreign languages doesn't mean to learn the language itself alone but how to use them in daily life. Therefore, “immersive” teaching is not only about know what is foreign language, but how to use them to communicate. In recent years, Japanese teaching in Chinese universities has put forward the concept of “learning Japanese” in lower grades and “using Japanese” in senior grades, which is just in line with the concept of “immersive” teaching.

In recent years, the number of “immersive” schools in Australia has increased. Since the 1980s, Australia has begun the “immersive” teaching mode. In Australia's “immersive teaching program”, the target language learning accounts for about 30% of the time spent. Combined with the learning of language knowledge, it can avoid grammar mistakes which would easily happen in the “immersive” teaching method in the past. In Australia, teaching is not conducted for the purpose of learning foreign languages, but by direct methods such as teaching French in French, also known as “immersive” teaching. It was Monash University in Australia that created this opportunity in the field of Japanese-language education. The “immersive” teaching at Monash University is based on college students for about six hours a week, teaching on Japanese-related topics such as “Japanese

education” and “Japanese diet”. The practice of learners to teach content through the target language as the medium is indeed a major feature of “immersive” teaching. Curtain & Pesola (1994) said that “immersive” teaching can achieve four goals. Students could communicate age-appropriate topics in second language, master the content of the school district curriculum, understand different cultures, share the same or even better language skills compared with single-language learners. In particular, the third kind of “different cultural understanding” is often emphasized. Japanese teachers involved in immersive teaching are asked what are the benefits of “immersive” teaching, “different cultural understanding” would be their first answer.

4.2 Enlightenment of “Immersive” Teaching Method to Japanese Education in China

In the past, owing to most learners majored in Japanese in Chinese universities were starter, it’s difficult for them to lay a solid foundation, improve the comprehensive application ability and pass the Japanese Language Proficiency test in three and a half years alone. Not to mention, in the process of Japanese language teaching in China, most teachers still have some cognitive bias, especially during the primary period of teaching process, taking grammar, vocabulary and language knowledge as the one and only goal. Some teachers even deliver classes without any interactions with students. Students just watch the presentation and blackboard to bury themselves in taking notes alone throughout the class without speaking any Japanese. In the pursuit of efficiency, teachers barely have time to deliver classes in Japanese. In this way, there are many students who major Japanese can not express their opinions in Japanese fluently and can not successfully communicate with Japanese when they graduate. Foreign language, as a tool of communications, need to be fully absorbed by focusing on the usage of foreign language for better comprehension. Only by continuous communication practice could students deepen the understanding of Japanese language, gain enthusiasm and reveal its own value. In this way, we could cultivate the gifted defined by the National Standards for Undergraduate Professional Teaching Quality of Regular Colleges and Universities issued by the Ministry of Education in 2018, with solid Japanese language foundation, cross-cultural communication ability and speculative ability and to further realize the goal of telling Chinese stories in Japanese and spreading Chinese culture. The “immersive” teaching mode in Australia has made amazing results in the foreign language teaching of children and teenagers whose mother tongue are English. Applying the specific development mode of its “immersive” teaching method to the Japanese teaching in Chinese universities is conducive to the reform and development of Japanese education in China.

5. The Application of Australian Japanese Teaching Mode in Japanese Major Courses in Colleges

5.1 The Application of “Immersion” Teaching Method in the Classroom of “Japanese Conversation 1”

The “immersive” teaching method has been adopted by the author in Japanese lessons. Combined with the long-term teaching status of Japanese major in China and the experience in this course, the author believes that the practice of “immersive” teaching is most appropriate in the class of Japanese Session 1 for freshman. Since 2017, the author began to adopt the “immersive” teaching method in the class of Japanese Session 1.

Specific methods are: Make sure that more than 90% of the time in class delivery are in Japanese language. Applying direct teaching method, for example, in the first lesson of Japanese major, teachers could demonstrate some images and presentation when having greetings for the first meet in order to let the students to imitate the Japanese expressions and to understand the differences between Chinese and Japanese expressions and cultures. Teachers could also adopt the “shadow reading” and “role play” methods to let the students understand the Japanese expression and use Japanese for communication. In the teaching process, the Chinese translation and interpretation are prohibited. With specific actions to demonstrate, students could soak themselves into the lesson itself and the interaction between teachers and students is way more better.

5.2 The Application of “Immersive” Teaching Method and “Task-Based” Teaching Method in the Class of Advanced Japanese Language

In the third grade teaching in Senior Japanese, the author has also tried the “immersive” teaching and the “task-based” teaching method for teaching. Take the students of 2017 grade as an example, their overall listening and speaking abilities is more outstanding than that of the previous students for the reason that they have been trained by the “immersive” teaching method in my class “Japanese Session 1” since grade one. More than 80% in Advanced Japanese classes are completely delivered by Japanese. To fully understanding the part of the text, students are divided in groups to shoot micro films, draw mind maps, discuss topic and so on. Through the combination of online and offline teaching design and task-based teaching methods, students’ enthusiasm and subjective initiation on Japanese learning has been greatly activated. To a certain extent, “immersive” teaching also help to cultivate the students' humanistic quality and the ability of critical thinking.

6. Conclusion

To some extent Australian foreign language education policy reform measures and practice can also reflect the general direction of the international foreign language education reform. Especially in the study and analysis of latest three *Survey Report on Japanese-Language Education Abroad* from the Japan Foundation, we deeply know how Australia has made outstanding achievements in Japanese education. Japanese education in China is in the reform transition. How to implement the training goals of *Japanese Guide* and *Japanese Syllabus* , to facilitate teaching reform and cultivate more students to be recognized as builders of Socialism with Chinese characteristic and the successors of high-level Japanese major under the guidance with the *National Standards for Undergraduate Professional Teaching Quality of Regular Colleges and Universities* issued by the Ministry of Education is the direction we need to keep heading in the future. Drawing on the experience of Australia's “immersive” bilingual teaching method in Japanese teaching and applying it to the Japanese teaching in our province, we will explore a new Japanese teaching mode in line with the development of times and the national strategy, which will greatly promotes the development of Japanese education in our province.

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