

A Comparative Study on the UK's and Germany's Overseas Language Promotion: A Case Study of China

Yujie Shao

School of Foreign Languages, Central China Normal University, Wuhan, 430079, China

Keywords: language promotion; English; German; China

Abstract: This paper mainly discusses and compares the general situation of the UK's and Germany's overseas language promotion, their promotion policies and institutions, and the promotion of English and German in China. It finds out that English has been promoted in a much larger scale than that of German, and has become the generally recognized global language, while German is striving to become the second foreign language in many countries. The spread of English has also been more active than that of German. The promotion of these two languages in China also follows this trend. In the future, the overheated development of English education in China may slow down gradually, and German may develop slowly.

1. Introduction

The scale of language promotion represents the comprehensive strength of the country to a certain extent, and the promotion of language is also inseparable from the countries' overseas language promotion policy. With the largest population of language learners, China is a proving ground for testing the effects of foreign language promotion. In fact, the promotion of foreign languages in China is closely related to the overseas language promotion policies and corresponding institutions of the countries. There has been related studies on overseas English and German promotion respectively, but there is little research on the comparative study of the two. This paper discusses and compares the promotion of English and German in China on the basis of the UK's and Germany's overseas language promotion.

2. Overseas language promotion of the UK and Germany

Language policy is a government action to intervene in language use, which has a profound impact on the stability, unity and development of the country. In this part, the paper will discuss and compare the UK's and Germany's overseas language promotion policies.

2.1 Policies for overseas English language promotion of the UK

Before 1600, English was only a minority language, but it has become one of the most important global languages in international communication within the following four centuries. The huge success of its development in such a short time mainly contributed to the activities of campaigns, colonization and trade that Britain had between 17th and 19th century (Zhang, 2008). Apart from this, English has advantages in its own language family to become a global language. English belongs to Germanic languages of the Indo-European family, which also includes German, Dutch, Swedish, Danish, Norwegian, etc. As a result, English is easily mastered by those who speak these languages. And people speaking these languages account for half of the world's population (Shen, 1991).

Language education policies in Britain promote the spread of the English language at home and abroad. Most policy documents of the UK on overseas English promotion are titled "Report", such as the Drogheda Report, the Report of the Official Committee on the Teaching of English Overseas, the Hill Report, the Duncan Report, the Berrill Report, and the Seebohm Report, etc. They all covered the process of making, their proposed policies, and their historical influence on the spread of English in the world. Among these reports, the Drogheda Report and the Report of the Official

Committee on the Teaching of English Overseas are of the most importance, which will be further discussed below.

2.1.1 Drogheda Report

In the year of 1954, Drogheda, chairman of the Independent Committee, submitted to the government Report of the Independent Committee of Enquiry into the Overseas Information Services, which is also known as Drogheda Report. The report put forward the aims of promoting overseas English, namely serving the foreign policy of the UK, strengthening the image of the Commonwealth and the British Empire and promoting the domestic development of the economy, which was approved by the British government. The Drogheda Report is one of the most important documents in the history of English language promotion in the UK. The Report strategically affirms the significance of the UK's overseas culture and language promotion activities, with the expanding of the use of English as the core (Wang et al., 2017). Its adoption actually shows that the British government has openly and formally incorporated English promotion into the framework of the national strategy as an important part of its government work. Because of this, the British Council has been regarded as an important tool for overseas English promotion and overseas publicity, which is of fundamental interests to the UK and serves the British foreign policy (He, 2009).

2.1.2 Report of the Official Committee on the Teaching of English Overseas

In March, 1956, the British government received another report named the Report of the Official Committee on the Teaching of English Overseas. The members of the committee came from Foreign Office, Commonwealth Relations Office, Colonial Office, etc. and British Council as well. The British government also approved this Report. The measures mentioned in this Report were aimed at making English an international language and becoming the “indisputable first foreign language of countries that no longer use English as their mother tongue” (Ministry of Education, 1956:3). The Report also regarded English as an important and popular export commodity. This report has also become a programmatic document for the success of the UK's overseas English promotion work. The adoption of the report showed that the British government has taken another important step in the promotion of English and has begun to fully implement its English internationalization promotion strategy (Xu, 2009).

2.1.3 Conferences on Planning of Teaching English as a Foreign Language

The first conference, hosted by the British Council in December 1960, was a high-level seminar at the Nutford House in London. The participants were the most authoritative figures in the language education community in Britain, such as Sir P. Sinker, President of the British Council; J.R. Firth, the first British linguistics professor, etc. (Zhang, 2008) With the theme of “University Training and Research in the Teaching of English as a Second/Foreign Language”, the conference clearly put forward the specific policy and professional planning of overseas English teaching, and guaranteed the quantity and quality of English teachers, which played an important role in the promotion of English in the world.

The other one was the “Conference on Teaching of English as a Second Language” held in Makerere University in Uganda in 1961 by representatives from 23 countries of the Commonwealth. There were three linguists from the United States who attended the conference as observers, namely Markwardt, Prator, and Ferguson. The contribution of this conference was that it quickly defined some specific principles of English teaching in the post-colonial era thus it has become the most important milestone in the period of rapid expansion of English teaching. At the same time, the conference also recommended “close cooperation between donor countries and recipient countries could enhance the self-dependence of recipient countries in English teaching” (Phillips, 1996).

2.1.4 British Council

The British Council is the only international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities in the UK. It is a semi-official organisation (Taylor, 1978) and a tool for political and commercial interests and the enhancement of the soft power of the country (Wang, et al., 2017).

Funding sources of the British Council mainly include government funding and its own operating income. The British Foreign and Commonwealth Office allocates funds to the British Council every year, as no country would like to spend money on pure cultural propaganda unless it also has political and commercial interest (Donaldson, 1984). In recent years, its own operating income has increased year by year.

Specific approaches in overseas English promotion have been made by the British Council. The work of British Council in the field of English language teaching (ELT) has been taking the lead in the world. IELTS and other standardized tests are held by the British Council to measure the language proficiency of English learners around the world. The British Council also manages more than 200 scholarship programs on behalf of the UK (Xu, 2009). However, the sum of scholarships offered to international students is so small due to the limited budget of the government and scholarships focus little on liberal arts. In addition, the British Council spends millions of pounds of book promotion funds in encouraging and supporting British publishing companies to host and participate in various book exhibitions overseas and provides training courses, consulting services and funding for book publishers and distributors.

2.2 Foreign Cultural Policy of Federal Republic of Germany

Germany was once in a state of chaos caused by war, so there had never been a unified German language. It was not until 1871 that the establishment of the German Empire laid the political foundation for the unification of German. Almost at the same time, Germany began to spread German overseas (Zhang, 2008). Before World War II, the international status of German was quite high. This was largely due to the fact that Germany's economy, technology, culture and legal system attracted a large number of foreigners to learn German, rather than the government's overseas language policy (Zhang, 2008). However, because of some historical factors after World War II, the status of German language declined sharply. At the UN, German is still not one of the six official and working languages, those being French, English, Spanish, Russian, Chinese, and Arabic (Darquennes et al., 2006).

The goal of language promotion of Germany is also very clear. First, to attract as many people (especially young people) in the world to learn German. Second, to make German the second foreign language in high schools or universities in most countries. It is acknowledged that it was impossible for German to compete with English, but it is likely to replace the status of French with German, although it is still difficult (Zhang, 2008). Third, to make German the official language and working language of international organizations (especially newly established international organizations) and international conferences.

In 1970, Germany proposed the "Leading Principles of Foreign Cultural Policy", and later issued three important policy documents. These documents served as the framework of the principles and objectives of German foreign cultural policies in the changing international environment and situation of the world.

2.2.1 Report of German Foreign Cultural Policy by Committee of Inquiry of the Bundestag (1975)

After the administration of the Brant government in 1969, Germany's foreign cultural policy centred "cultural communication" rather than "institutional competition" in its cultural policy (Scientific Services of the German Bundestag, 2003). Culture has become an important bridge in the development of international political economic and relations (Wang et al. 2014). In this context, the Federal Republic of Germany introduced the first document of its foreign cultural policy "Report of German Foreign Culture Policy by Committee of Inquiry of the Bundestag" in 1975. This document regarded foreign cultural policy as an integral part of German foreign policy, which required the Foreign Office to set political standards of foreign cultural communication and to explain the role and objectives of German foreign cultural policy. As a result, the federal government has also begun to pay attention to foreign cultural communication with an official foreign cultural policy with political binding force for the first time in the history of Federal Republic of Germany. (Scientific Services of the German Bundestag, 2003)

2.2.2 Foreign Cultural Policy – Conception 2000 (2000)

With the process of European integration and economic globalization, more attention should be paid to the international cultural process than ever before (Scientific Services of the German Bundestag, 2003) in the foreign cultural policy. In this context, in 2000, Germany introduced the Foreign Cultural Policy—Conception 2000 (Foreign Office Cultural Department, 2000), which required that the foreign cultural policy should be based on the goals and interests of German foreign policy. The Conception regarded German culture as an integral part of European culture and regarded Germany as a “cultural nation” in national dialogues with the international community (Foreign Office Cultural Department, 2000). At the same time, the implementation of foreign cultural policy by federal, state, and local governments was incorporated into the domestic cultural and educational policies, while private institutions and people were also allowed to intervene and participate (Wang et al., 2014).

2.2.3 The Foreign Cultural and Education Policy in the Age of Globalization - Winning Partners, Spreading Value, and Representing Interests (2011)

In the 20th century, the federal government extended the focus of its foreign cultural policy to regions and countries with rapid economic growth such as Asia and Latin America. Under this premise, the Department of Cultural and Education of the Federal Foreign Office issued The Foreign Cultural and Education Policy in the Age of Globalization - Winning Partners, Spreading Value, and Representing Interests (Foreign Office, 2010) in 2011. This document further highlighted the foreign policy orientations such as “partnerships, values and interests” (Wang et al., 2014) and called for changes and adjustments to the task distribution, regional priorities and funding and personnel diversion in the existing foreign cultural policy to adapt to the new situation at home and abroad in the 21st century. The implementation of the policy which kept pace with the times guaranteed Germany’s influence in the globalization.

2.2.4 Goethe Institute

The Goethe Institute is a non-profit German cultural association, which promotes the study of the German language abroad and encourages international cultural exchange and relations. Its legal form is the Registered Association. On January 8, 2001, the Goethe Institute was officially amalgamated with the Inter Nationes, now known as Goethe Institut Inter Nationes (Zhang, 2008), which is the largest institution in Germany responsible for German promotion (Zhang, 2010).

The entire Goethe Institute is composed of three major economies, namely headquarters (located in Munich), domestic branches and overseas branches. These three economies work as a whole to promote the education of German language abroad and cultural cooperation and to build a general and up-to-date image of Germany (Foreign Office, 2014). The Munich headquarters and overseas branches are non-profit organizations, mainly financed by the Foreign Office. The domestic branches are mainly maintained by the income of its language courses. In principle, it is self-financing. However, it is still closely tied to the federal government (Zhang, 2010).

Goethe Institute has made great contributions to the promotion of the German language and German culture. Every year on the death anniversary of Goethe (March 22nd), the Goethe Prize will be awarded to those who have made great contributions to the work of the Institute. The Goethe Forum is also held, including performances, cultural discussions, current affairs debates, media art, etc., to introduce foreign cultures into Germany and promote international cultural exchanges. In addition, the branches of Goethe Institute regularly conduct standardized tests, and those who pass the test can obtain the corresponding certificates. The Research and Development Department of the Goethe Institute makes plans for compiling teaching materials, which includes textbooks, workbooks, text teaching aids, reference materials, and exams and references related to the exams, based on the market research conducted by experts.

2.3 Comparison between the language promotion policies of the two countries

After the analysis of the language promotion policies of the two countries, we’ll compare them

from the perspectives of policy and institutions.

2.3.1 Similarities and differences in policy

2.3.1.1 Similarities in policy

First, report documents are regarded as the framework of overseas language promotion policies of the two countries and changes and adjustments are made to them according to the needs in the changing international environment and situation of the world.

Next, great importance is attached by both governments. They provide large sum of funds and aids to their promotion agencies. This is because overseas language promotion not only spread the language all over the world, but also give the whole world a chance to get to know more about the culture, history, society, etc. of the country. What's more, it brings great commercial interests and helps to build a higher status of the country in the aspect of politics and culture.

In addition, Language promotion serves the foreign policies of two countries. In Drogheda Report (1954), supporting the foreign policy of the UK was put forward as the first task of promoting overseas English. Similarly, according to Report of German Foreign Culture Policy by Committee of Inquiry of the Bundestag (1975), the foreign cultural policy was regarded as an integral part of German foreign policy.

2.3.1.2 Differences in policy

First, there are different causes for the rapid development of the two languages in modern times. The British Empire was built through war, colonization, trade, and overseas expansion, etc., which enormously contributed to the spread of English worldwide very quickly in the modern times. What's more, the advantages in the language family of English made it easier to become a global language. As for German, before World War II, the international status of German was quite high, because Germany's economy, technology, culture and legal system attracted a large number of foreigners to learn German.

The two languages have different pursuit of the language status during the process of language promotion. With the colonial expansion and trade of Britain in early times, English has already become a global language. As a result, the main goal of the overseas English promotion for British government is to maintain the status as world lingua franca. However, the government of Germany has realised that German has little possibility of being a global language like English after World War II. Thus they've been making great efforts to make German the second foreign language in most countries in order to substitute French as a second foreign language.

What's more, the drafters of the language promotion policies of the two countries are different. In the UK, the policy documents are not only drafted by the Foreign Office or the government. Committees like the British Council, experts, professors in universities, and other authoritative figures also take part in the decision of the overseas English promotion policy. By contrast, Germany shows a different mechanism. Through the Federal Foreign Office, the federal government determined the foreign cultural policy, while the Goethe Institute and other institutions become important partners in the implementation of the foreign cultural policy.

2.3.2 Similarities and differences in institutions

2.3.2.1 Similarities in institutions:

First of all, there are corresponding official promotion agencies in both countries. As is known to all, British Council serves as the main overseas English promotion agency. Others like British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Overseas Development Agency (ODA), etc. also play important roles in overseas English promotion. As for the promotion of German, Goethe Institute, together with der Deutsche Akademische Austauschdienst, Inter Nationes, etc. is the most active agencies cooperating with the federal government in the work of overseas German promotion.

There are also some similarities in the work for those institutions, here taking the British Council and the Goethe Institute as an example. Both conduct standardized tests for language competence regularly and issue certificates accordingly. What's more, both are dedicated to the training of

foreign English/German teachers by courses for foreign English/German teachers to study in the UK/Germany. In order to promote the overseas language education, both institutions are committed to the publication and export of overseas English/German textbooks.

The sources of funding for the British Council and the Goethe Institute both include government allocation and their own income. Foreign and Commonwealth Office other departments and agencies in the UK allocates funds for the British Council every year. Apart from that, 40% of the total funding comes from its own business activities. As for the Goethe Institute, the Munich headquarters and overseas branches of the Goethe Institute are non-profit organizations, which are mainly financed by the Foreign Office of the federal government of Germany. The domestic branches are mainly maintained by the income of its language courses.

2.3.2.2 Differences in institutions

First, the British Council and the Goethe Institute have different natures. The British Council is a para-governmental cultural institution (Wang, et al., 2017) and a tool for the pursuit of the UK's political and commercial interests and the consolidation of its soft power. By contrast, the Goethe Institute is a non-profit German cultural association. Its legal form is registered association.

Different natures determine that the British Council and the Goethe Institute have different tasks in the process of language promotion. The tasks of the British Council not only includes cooperating with other countries to provide English education services and cultural exchanges and holding English tests, but focus more on the realisation of the political and commercial interests of the UK. As for the Goethe Institute, its tasks emphasize more on cultural cooperation with foreign countries and promotion of overseas German through German language teaching and the provision of chances for German language teachers or researchers to study in Germany, etc.

What's more, these two institutions provides different sum of scholarships and grants for students and the training of language teachers. The sum of scholarships offered by the British Council to international students is so small, which focus little on liberal arts. Students who study language rarely receive scholarships. Differently, teachers from all over the world are encouraged to study German in Germany and foreign students who study German are sponsored. Also, medals and bonuses are awarded to reward those who have made significant contributions to the promotion of German.

3. Analysis of both languages promotion in China

The education of foreign languages is in full swing in China, with English as the first foreign language, followed by German, France, Spanish, Japanese, and so on. Therefore, the study on the promotion of English and German in China can offer important references for the planning of foreign language education policy of other countries.

3.1 Promotion of English in China

Education is an important way of spreading language. For more than 100 years, the spread of English in China has mainly been based on English education (Wang, 2015). Since the middle and late Qing Dynasty, English education in China has experienced complicated and tortuous development. Today, English has become the most important foreign language in China.

The acceptance of English education in China was initially passive (Wang, 2015). After the First Opium War, China, which pursued a seclusion policy, had to open its door to Western powers and accept Western language. English education in China began in the church school founded by foreign missionaries at the coastal treaty ports in the early 19th century (Zhou, 2008). The urgent need of the Qing government for foreign affairs after the Second Opium War revealed the necessity to cultivate talents who understood foreign languages well. As a result, the School of Combined Learning was established in 1862. This also marks the beginning of English education and the official foreign language teaching in China. In 1912, after the establishment of the Republic of China, a new system of academic institutions was established. During the War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression, English education in China was severely damaged and developed slowly. However, English was

still the most widely spread foreign language at the time (Wang, 2015).

Before 1949, there were only 205 colleges and universities, 918 English teachers, and 7000 English majors in China (Hu, 1999). After the founding of People's Republic of China, English education was seriously affected by China's "one-sided" policy, and Russian became almost the only foreign language in the country. In 1957, English education was resumed and entered a period of great development and changes from 1958 to 1966. During the "Cultural Revolution" (1966-1976), English education experienced a sharp decline (Li, 2001), and the spread of English in China was almost suspended.

Since the 1980s, with the recovery of the college entrance examination and the process of reform and opening up, English education has been on the right track. English has become one of the most popular majors among students and then become a subject in the college entrance examination since 1983, which has also aroused the enthusiasm of middle school students to learn English. With the conduct of CET-4 (College English Test-Brand 4) since 1986 and CET-6 (College English Test-Brand 6) since 1989, English has gradually become a foreign language that a student is required to learn from junior school, high school to the first two years in university. In the 21st century, elementary schools have gradually begun to teach English. Nowadays, a nationwide enthusiasm for English learning has been prompted, opening a new era of learning English for the entire people.

In China, English is considered as a "majority foreign language", while almost all the other foreign languages are treated as "minority foreign languages". This leads to the excessive high status of English in China's education system, too much resources and time taken up by English, and even the occupation of time for other subjects and majors (Zhang, 2016). Therefore, opinions on reducing the popularity of English education are arising increasingly in recent years. However, this also reflects the rapid promotion of English education and the wide spread of English in China since the 21st century.

3.2 Promotion of German in China

The spread of German in China also relies mainly on the development of German language education. In general, German education in China started later compared with that of English. Early German education in China was closely related to German missionaries. In the middle of the 19th century, the German church group Rheinische Missionsgesellschaft entered mainland China from Hong Kong, teaching in the rural areas of Guangdong province. As for the official German education, the Qing government recognized the power of Prussia in Europe after Prussia defeated France in the Franco-Prussian War in 1871, and opened the School of German in the School of Combined Learning with the main purpose of training German translators and diplomatic and foreign affairs talents. At the end of the 19th century, the government of the Reich increased its educational strategy in China and established a large number of schools to train talents who understand German well for the colony of Jiaozhou Bay, which had a colonial purpose (Mao, 2014). German as a scientific language was once valued by many departments of colleges and universities. For example, Peking University established the German department in 1919. The number of learners of German language in colleges and universities was increasing as well. But overall, there was still a huge gap between German and English education.

In the period between 1949 and 1976, German education in Chinese universities has generally experienced four stages: first, the decline of German education influenced by the "one-sided" policy in the early 1950s; second, the development of German education as the government began to increase the emphasis on foreign language education and signed an agreement with the German Democratic Republic to carry out cultural communication in the late 1950s to 1960s; third, the destruction of German education during the "Cultural Revolution", and last, the gradual restoration of German education since 1971 (Mao, 2014).

In recent years, German has become more and more popular in China. At present, there are 106 colleges and universities that have German departments. It is estimated that there are about 22,000 students who major in German language in universities. According to the statistics of the Foreign

Office of Germany, the total number of universities and colleges that offer German and related courses has reached 327, and the number of college students studying German is about 45,000. Although the popularity of German in China is much lower than that of English, its competition with French as a second foreign language is gradually gaining an advantage.

3.3 Comparative analysis on the promotion of English and German in China

There are some similarities between the promotion of English and German in China. First of all, the spread and promotion of the two languages is mainly based on education. Through the establishment of various language schools and the opening of English and German majors in universities, a large number of professionals have been trained, and as a result, the spread of the languages has also been accelerated. Secondly, the process of the promotion of the two languages has been affected by the same political and economic factors with the same results. For example, the political environment such as the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression, the “one-sided” policy and the “Cultural Revolution”, etc. have seriously frustrated the education and promotion of English and German.

There are still many obvious differences between the two languages in the process of their promotion in China. First, although both began to spread in China through the missionary activities by foreign missionaries, English was significantly earlier than German. And in the initial process of promotion, it was more passive in accepting English education in China. The fundamental motivation of language communication lies in the value, and only languages of great value can be learned and used by other ethnic groups and countries (Li, 2007). The promotion of overseas English in modern times was mainly through wars, colonization, trade, overseas expansion, etc. of the UK to make English passively accepted in its colonies. After modern China became a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society, there was a tide of German learning for and the development of the military, foreign affairs, industry and the rescue of the country because of the advanced technology and political system of Germany.

Secondly, the status of English is obviously and consistently higher than that of German in the process of language promotion in China. In China, English is regarded as a “majority foreign language” and the first foreign language for most Chinese, while German, together with many other foreign languages, is seen as “minority foreign languages” and the second foreign language.

Finally, German has developed rapidly in China in recent decades, while less attention has been asked to pay on English. The rapid development of German language is inseparable from the policy support of the German government. What’s more, because English is a “majority foreign language”, a large number of English learners also lead to oversupply of talents of English language. Other factors such as the excessive high position of English in the education system of China, too much resources and time taken up by English, and even the occupation of time for other subjects and majors, etc. also lead to public opinions on attaching less importance to English.

4. Conclusion

This paper discusses and compares the overseas language promotion of the UK and Germany, including their policies, corresponding institutions, and their situation in China. Based on the analysis, it can be discovered that the promotion of English in modern times was more active than that of German as English was spread throughout the world through colonisation and trade while German was learned by foreigners who were attracted by its advanced technology and systems. English has already become a global language while German can hardly compete with the status of English. It is still striving to be the second foreign language in many countries. At the same time, the British Council and the Goethe Institute have played a very important role in the implementation of the overseas language promotion policies of the two countries respectively. As for their promotion in China, it is largely based on the language education which is supported by the British Council, the Goethe Institute and other institutions. In the future, the English education in China will not be likely to develop as quickly as before and will gradually level off because of its overheated promotion in China, while the development of German education may be accelerated

slowly. From what have been discussed above, we may find out that language promotion is considerably related to the country's language promotion policy. Therefore, it is necessary for relevant departments to upgrade the concept of policy formulation and keep pace with the times.

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