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Argentine Language Ecology and Language Policy Research

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***Abstract**: The language laws and policies of a country deeply reflect the language attitude of their makers. The study on the social functions and statues of different languages of a country facilitates the understanding of the social environment and status of the language users. The harmony between languages is critical to the national unity and security. As a multicultural, multinational and multilingual country, Argentina has undergone the transmission from homogenization to diversification in making language policies. Consequently, the relationship between the ethnic groups, which was intense, has become harmonic. The popularization of intercultural bilingual education and foreign language teaching has contributed significantly to the harmonious development of multiple languages. The relationship between languages has a positive correlation with that between ethnic groups. That is, the harmonious relationship between languages leads to national unity; on the contrary, inharmony impedes the unity of ethnic groups.*

***Key words**: Argentina; Language policy; Native Americans; Multilingualism; Bilingual education*

Language, as the most important tool of communication and thinking, is an indispensable part of human life. Individuals or groups have the right to choose the language to be used in private or public. Regardless of the number of people who use languages and the size of the regions in which they are used, these languages have equal status and should be treated in a unified way. Language is a common strategic means in politics, economy, military and social life (Dai, 2018). Giving full play to the positive role of language and making correct language policies are conducive to promoting social stability and harmonious development, otherwise, it may cause national conflicts and endanger national security.

Because of their different historical background, social culture and economic development level, the position and attitude of the government towards the national language are different. Different language choices also lead to differences in language policies, so language policy research has a strong national color. In order to understand the relevant laws, regulations and rules of various governments, we can probe into the harmony of their language relations through their language policies, and then explore the national relations and identity behind the language relations. Harmonious language relationship and balanced language ecology can promote national unity, equality, mutual assistance and stable development, which is essential to maintain national security and expand national interests in the new era (Kong, Wang, Huang, Mai & Xiao, 2016).

Argentina is a multiethnic, multicultural and multilingual country. It is located in the southeast of South America, adjacent to Chile in the west, across the sea from Antarctica in the south, bordering Bolivia, Paraguay, Brazil and Uruguay from the north to the East, and bordering the Atlantic Ocean in the East and south. Argentina has a large latitude span, diverse landforms, changeable climate and distinct four seasons. According to the official website of the National Bureau of Statistics of Argentina, the current population is

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44.93 million. Before the arrival of the Spanish colonists, there were a large number of indigenous people living here. Argentina became a Spanish colony in the middle of the 16th century. It was not until 1816 that Argentina got rid of the colonial rule and declared its independence. Since then, after nearly 40 years of upheaval, the Federal Republic was finally established in 1853. During more than 270 years of colonial rule, the indigenous people were slaughtered, deported, enslaved or suffered from severe infectious diseases such as smallpox and cholera, resulting in a sharp decrease in population. A large number of indigenous languages also died out along with the indigenous people in the national purification movement.

Most of the indigenous people are located in remote and poverty-stricken areas. Such poor living conditions have gradually reduced the Native American population. On the other hand, a large number of Spaniards came here to start a new life, and combined with Native American women, so for a long time, the European and Native American mixed race gradually became the main population of Argentina. After the founding of the Republic, the Argentine government began to encourage immigrants in order to make up for the lack of labor force and promote economic development. Since then, Argentina has ushered in three large-scale immigration climaxes. The complicated population structure also results in the rich and diverse language ecology in Argentina. Different language groups contact with each other, resulting in language conversion, change or extinction. From the process of language change, we can see the changing process of national relations.

The Nation and Language of Argentina

Indigenous people and their languages in Argentina

Indigenous peoples data for most countries in Latin America are derived from census every ten years, and Argentina is no exception. According to the latest census of the National Bureau of Statistics (October 27, 2010), the total Native American population in Argentina is 955,032, accounting for 2.38% of the total population of the country. Except for unreported or unclear nationalities, the survey results show that there are thirty-two indigenous groups in Argentina. There are 17 ethnic groups with a total population of more than 10,000 people, of which only the Mapuche, Toba, and Guaraní (in order of number), have a population of more than 100, 000 people. There are 15 indigenous ethnic groups with a total number of less than 10,000 people, of which the total population of the Vilela and Tapiete is less than 1,000. These Aboriginal communities are mainly concentrated in northern Argentina, especially in areas bordering neighboring countries.

Due to the different understanding of languages and dialects, the data on the total number of indigenous languages in Argentina given by Argentine officials and experts have always been different so far. However, it can be divided into six groups according to the similarity of languages (Censabella, 1999).

Quechua. Users of this language group are mainly distributed along the anti mountains in western South America. In Argentina, the main areas of use of this language group are in the provinces of Jujuy, Salta and Tucuman in the northwest of Argentina. Its language mainly includes Quechua and Kolla. Due to their similarities, some scholars also classify Aymara as this language family, but there are disputes (Messineo & Cúneo, 1998).

Tupí-guaraní. This language group has a large population and wide distribution, which spreads all over the northern and central provinces, mainly including Chané, Ava Guaraní, Tapiete, Mbyá Guaraní and so on.

Guaycurú. This language family originated in the northeast of Chaco Province, so now its population is mainly concentrated in the northeast. In addition to Chaco Province, it also includes Mesa Verde, Santa Fe and other provinces. This language group mainly includes Pilagá, Toba and Mocoví.

Mataco-mataguaya. The users of Mataco are mostly distributed in the northern areas, such as Chaco, vermesa and sarta. The main languages of this group are Wichí, Chulupí and Chorote.

Chon. Chon, a language spoken mainly in Patagonia in the south, is extinct and only a few people use Tehuelche.

Independent languages, such as Mapuche and Vilela, are generally regarded as isolated languages or independent languages due to their great differences and isolation from other languages.

Immigration and loanword in Argentina

Although the Argentine Constitution does not specify the official language in detail, the country ’s political language, media language, and educational language all use Spanish. Argentines whose mother tongue is the native language also mostly learn Spanish as their first foreign language. Argentine Spanish has undergone some changes in pronunciation, form, and vocabulary after contacting and merging with native languages, making the Spanish used in the area somewhat different from the "standard" Spanish. Because the population of users is distributed in the La Plata River Basin, Argentine Spanish and Uruguay Spanish are also known as La Plata Spanish, and exist as a variant of Spanish.

Since the establishment of the Republic, Argentina has been pursuing an open immigration policy. From the 1880s to World War I, Argentina’s main immigrants came from Europe, and the majority were Spanish and Italian. In 1914, the number of immigrants in Argentina once reached 30% of the country's population, and the wave of immigrants interrupted by World War I quickly resumed after the war (Bein, Arrossi, Bengochea, Carbonetti, González, Rusell & Sartori, 2017). Due to the large amount of labor required for economic recovery and social development, the number of immigrants in the neighboring countries of Argentina such as Bolivia, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay increased significantly during the late war.

In South America, there is a saying that "Mexicans are from Aztec, Peruvians are from Inca, Argentines are from the sea", which shows the immigration tradition of Argentina. Argentina is also known as the country of immigrants because of its large scale and diversity of nationalities. According to the 2010 census, Argentina has 1,805,957 immigrants, accounting for 4.5% of the total population, of which more than 40% come from neighboring countries.

The diversity of immigrants and their languages has also become an important factor in Argentina's complex language ecology. In addition to Spanish and Italian, there are also many French, polish, Russian, German, British and Portuguese. These immigrants bring not only their national languages, but also many dialects, such as Galician, Yiddish, Baltic, Welsh, etc. Although there are different attitudes towards loanwords in

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Argentine language policies in different periods, these loanwords are preserved and used in official teaching institutions or immigrant communities. Nowadays, Argentina has become the country with the highest popularity of English in Latin America, and also one of the countries with the largest number of foreign languages. All these benefits from the opening and support of foreign language education in Argentina's language education policy.

Argentina's Language Policy and Ethnic Relations

Pre-colonial period (before 1516)

More than 13,000 years ago, at the southernmost tip of the Patagonia region in southern Argentina, there were remains of human activity. To the Neolithic Age, a new human civilization was developed in the northwestern part of the Andes. Before the arrival of the Spanish colonists, there were Native Americans living in the northwest and northeast of Argentina. Most of these indigenous peoples were in the social development stage of the clan communes, and most of them were nomads. Its development lags behind several other Latin American civilizations in the same period, such as Inca, Aztec, and Maya. Most of the Native American tribes have their own language. Language education and learning are mainly carried out by the family, and they are passed down from mouth to mouth and from generation to generation. A handful of wealthy Native Americans also organized schools to teach their own languages and cultures.

Spanish assimilation policy during colonial rule (1516-1816)

The Spanish colonists' road to conquest in Argentina was not smooth. They were repeatedly resisted and attacked by local Native Americans in the La Plata area. It was not until the middle of the 16th century that the colonists gradually established towns in the northwest region, and by the second half of the 16th century, the colonists returned to the La Plata River Basin and eventually established rule in the area (Song, 2010). During the colonial rule, a large number of Native Americans' land was occupied, and these Native American langragues were forced to become colonists' labor. In the colonial conquest of the southern region from 1675 to 1742, on the one hand, tens of thousands of Native Americans were captured and used as labor, on the other hand, the Native Americans had to leave the settlement and evade to more remote and savage areas. Because of being enslaved, exploited, severely tortured, or expelled, the number of Native Americans decreased dramatically. Although the Native Americans who were dissatisfied with the brutal rule of the Spanish colonists also organized some resistance and uprisings, they were all suppressed by the colonists.

During the colonial period, the language policy was dominated by the castellanización pursued by the Kingdom of Spain. At first, Spanish was promoted only to meet the needs of religious promotion. However, in the process of promotion, the colonists gradually found that they could not find words corresponding to religious teachings in the local language. Therefore, the king of Spain, adhering to the belief of imparting religious doctrines and Spanish to all Native Americans, forcibly promoted the colonial language in the colony (Carrocera, 1981). The Royal Spanish Language Institute established in 1714 and the subsequent branch of the royal language Institute in various colonial countries played an important role in the standardization and popularization of Spanish.

Monolingual policy in the post-colonial period (1816-1990s).

From the declaration of independence to the establishment of the Federal Republic, Argentina has experienced 40 years of civil strife and unrest. After independence, Argentina is eager to follow the European model and establish a unified country. The first constitution of the Federal Republic was promulgated in 1853. Juan Botista Alberdi, one of the drafters of the Constitution, wrote in his notes: "our civilization is European; America was discovered by Europeans, and each of our cities was founded by Europeans; we are about to become independent; our clothing, food, shelter and transportation, including language, are Europeanized; all non-European people and things are vulgar; indigenous people are barbarians; we are civilized people who are born in America, speak Spanish and believe in Jesus Christ." (Alberdi, 1852) From this we can see the national attitude and language attitude of the rulers. Native Americans are assimilated and suppressed as minority and inferior ethnic groups, while other immigrant languages, such as English and French, are included in the teaching and learning system of compulsory education because of their "honorable" status.

Some scholars in Argentina and some other Latin American countries believe that Spanish is backward. They are committed to "modernizing" local Spanish and creating an "independent" Spanish that belongs to Latin America. Therefore, in the following ten years, these scholars set off a "Orthography Movement". Their reinterpretation of Spanish used in Latin America in terms of phonetics and vocabulary distinguishes it from the Spanish "standard language" (Alfón, 2013).

In 1881, Argentina established the National Council of Education. Within the following years, an education decree and an education law were promulgated, stipulating that the language of instruction and the military language must be the national language, that is, Spanish. As mentioned above, during this period, 30% of Argentine residents were foreign immigrants, who brought a variety of languages. In view of many immigrant languages, the government has adopted the language education policy of "De-Europeanization" in order to carry out national integration and national unity (Di Tullio, 2003). In the view of the rulers at that time, the situation of multilingualism was not conducive to national unity and ran counter to their wishes, so immigrant schools teaching in foreign languages were suppressed or changed to Spanish teaching. During this period, the single language system played a positive role in the national rejuvenation of Argentina. By around 1920, most Argentine immigrants had switched to Spanish.

However, the policies of ethnic assimilation and language assimilation have also caused conflicts between different ethnic groups. European immigration is accompanied by the conservative order of the old world, which is very different from Argentine society's expectations of immigrants. Immigration organizations teach mother tongue in private schools, publish newspapers in their own languages and publish publications in their own languages, which in turn runs counter to the purist language ideology advocated by Argentine nationalists. Radical nationalists believe that private schools and foreign language publications are harmful and anti-national. The conflict between populists and immigrants has intensified.

Democracy was restored in Argentina from the 1930s to 1983, during which the country experienced military coups, military dictatorship and wars, and social and economic development stagnated several times. The language policy at this time is not much different from that of the previous period, and it is still based on the implementation of a single language system to strengthen a high degree of national unity and dictatorship. Native Americans are still a minority in society, and their language is marginalized and can only be used

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within the nation. Due to the continuous development of the tertiary industry and foreign trade, foreign language teaching and learning have returned to the field of education, but foreign language teaching in this period is limited to the elite and is not universal.

Generally speaking, the language policy and ethnic relations formulated by the Argentine government after independence show the characteristics of convergence. The rulers took the identity of language as one of the ruling tools, hoping to strengthen the national identity and national identity of the Argentine people with the same language. Although many immigrants and indigenous residents have accepted Spanish to some extent, their family language still uses their mother tongue. These ethnic groups' attitudes towards Spanish are still negative or hostile. The forced promotion of monolingualism aggravates the contradictions between different ethnic groups to some extent.

Multicultural and multilingual policies in the democratic period (1990s to date)

From the end of the 20th century to the beginning of the 21st century, the social environment of Argentina has undergone profound changes, and the economy is in serious recession. At the same time, with the rapid development of globalization and information, the information knowledge industry gradually occupies a dominant position. Neo-liberalism is flourishing in Argentina, and the call for the democratization of education is getting louder and louder. Therefore, after taking office, the democratic government of Argentina has carried out a series of social changes, including the reform of education policy and language policy. It is mainly manifested in the reassessment of the social status and function of Native American languages, the implementation of multilingualism, the protection of language diversity and the promotion of foreign language education in the compulsory education system. At this time, Argentina's language policy gradually changed from convergence to divergence.

Intercultural Bilingual Education Policy for Native Americans

In 1853, Argentina promulgated the first constitution, which has been revised for many times and has been used up to now, while the current constitution was promulgated in 1994. Although the national language or official language has never been specified in Argentina's constitution, the rights and interests of Native Americans are specified in the current constitution compared with the first constitution which ignores the rights of Native Americans. Article 75, point 17, of the Constitution stipulates that "the Native American ethnic group and its culture shall be recognized, the identity of its ethnic group shall be respected, and its right to intercultural bilingual education shall be guaranteed". Article 75, point 19, of the Constitution stipulates that "the basic education law of consolidating and respecting the particularity of nationalities and regions shall be formulated and organized".[1] In addition, some contents of the “International Convention on the Protection of Human Rights”, “American Convention on Human Rights” and “Convention on the Rights of the Child” were included in the 1994 constitution (Bein, 2012). The promulgation of the Constitution ensures the right and obligation of Native Americans to accept their national identity and culture from their childhood. They need to learn the national language as well as the national language. Native American langrague rights are finally regarded as a part of their human rights, and their right to use and promote their

1 See original Constitution, "Constitución de la Nación Argentina,1994, artículo 75, cláusula 17 & 19, “Reconocer la preexistencia étnica y cultural de los pueblos indígenas argentinos. Garantizar el respeto a su identidad y el derecho a una educación bilingüe e intercultural…Sancionar leyes de organización y de base de la educación que consoliden la unidad nacional respetando las particularidades provinciales y locales…"

own national language is protected by law.

Subsequently, articles 52-54 of “National Education Law”, promulgated on 14 December 2006, detailed the right of Native Americans to receive Intercultural Bilingual Education (Educación Intercultural Bilingüe, EIB): "Intercultural Bilingual Education is a form of ensuring that Native Americans receive primary and secondary education. In order to promote the implementation of this policy, Argentina will provide teachers and organize teacher training. " In 2007, the Native American Autonomous Education Committee (Ministerio el Consejo Educativo Autónomo de Pueblos Indígenas, CEAPI), composed of 37 Native American representatives, was established to participate in the discussion and decision on the content and implementation plan of bilingual education policy on behalf of Native Americans.

At present, the implementation mechanism and implementers of this education policy are as follows: national bilingual education policy planning, provincial bilingual education policy planning, Chaco bilingual teacher training institutions, non-governmental organizations, national or local university research teams, teachers in Native American langrague schools. The main contents of this policy include the training of bilingual teachers, the provision of scholarships, nationwide research related to bilingual education, systematic bilingual education and so on (Hirsch & Lazzari, 2016). At the same time, the members of the self-government committee learned about the admission needs of Native Americans according to the survey, so as to adjust or improve the bilingual education system.

Argentina's bilingual education policy has played a positive role in protecting Native American langrague rights and maintaining national unity and harmonious development, which is worth learning from. And the bilingual education system in Argentina is carried out from the top down, and the provinces and regions can adjust the implementation plan according to the characteristics of local residents, with a certain degree of flexibility.

However, there are also some problems in the bilingual education system in Argentina: first of all, the bilingual education system in the Education Law is concerned with education such as junior high school and does not involve higher education. According to the research of the scholar Paladino, the education situation varies greatly in different regions of Argentina. For example, about 16% of the indigenous residents of Chaco and Formosa provinces in the northeast receive secondary and higher education, but only 2% of the indigenous residents of the northwestern provinces of Jujuy and Salta are enrolled in higher education. Overall, the proportion of secondary and higher education enrollment among Argentine Native Americans is only 11%, far below the national average (Paladino, 2009). Secondly, the training mechanism of bilingual teachers is not perfect, and the level of teachers is uneven. Some teachers have participated in systematic training courses and are quite familiar with teaching methods and teaching materials, but some teachers come directly from the original community and have not received systematic teacher training and lack of professionalism. Bilingual teachers are faced with great challenges not only to be proficient in both languages, but also to teach students in accordance with their aptitude. Finally, there is a lack of attention to some very minority languages. Argentina's bilingual education policy is mainly aimed at some large language groups and their languages, such as Mapuche, Guaraní, Vichy and so on. Languages with fewer speakers face the dilemma that they cannot be inherited, assimilated, or will die out.

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Foreign Language Education Policy

Compared with the language exclusiveness of the previous period, Argentina's attitude towards foreign languages in the democratic society is a big turn. The government has provided many policies and financial support for people's foreign language learning, and foreign language teaching has been widely incorporated into the education system. At the end of the 20th century, Argentina began to advocate the learning of multiculturalism and languages. In the document issued by the Ministry of Education and Culture, it is also mentioned that the implementation of multilingualism can broaden learners' horizons, cultivate divergent thinking, and help to establish a three-dimensional and multi-dimensional world outlook (Pozzo, 2009). In the meantime, the Ministry of education has begun to implement a new foreign language education policy, that is, to incorporate three three-year foreign language learning cycles into the nine-year basic compulsory education system. At the end of the three cycles, students must master at least two foreign languages, one of which must be English. But because of the shortage of teachers, many provinces choose to teach English only after the fourth grade. In higher education (national university and private university), there are special foreign language colleges to provide compulsory or elective courses of foreign language courses. In addition, the Argentine government also actively cooperates with the official language teaching and communication institutions of various countries, such as Alliance Française, Goethe-Institut, British Council, etc., in order to promote the foreign language teaching among Argentine people.

The "Language Teaching Framework Agreement" (1997) issued by the Federal language Commission of Argentina divides foreign language learning into three different levels and describes in detail the corresponding requirements for each level. Article 87 of the current “National Education Law” (2006) stipulates that primary and secondary education must include a foreign language teaching, and students must at least reach the primary level stipulated in the "Language Teaching Framework Agreement". Argentine people generally have a high level of foreign language education, which is precisely due to the implementation and implementation of this foreign language education policy.

Thinking and Conclusion

Advantages and disadvantages of monolingual system

In the early days of its establishment, the Argentine Republic followed the European model, imposed a monolingual system, established the official status of Spanish as the national common language, and made efforts to standardize indigenous Spanish to make it different from "standard" Spanish. In addition, the government stipulates that all citizens must receive Spanish education from an early age, so Spanish and Argentine literature are included in the syllabus such as junior high school as compulsory basic courses. Monolingual language policy has brought obvious social and economic benefits to Argentina in a certain period of time, and has played a role in promoting Argentina's unity, national rejuvenation and economic development.

However, the tough language policy ignores the diversity of national culture, which leads to the violation of the rights and interests of the indigenous inhabitants and the broad masses of immigrants. Native American and loanwords are gradually replaced and suppressed by Spanish, and the ecological balance of language is

destroyed. For example, there used to be more than 30 languages in the southern Patagonia region, but now there are only eight, of which six are on the verge of extinction. Language as the carrier and important part of human culture, the demise of any language means that there will be no trace of national traditions, customs, human history and so on, which means the disappearance of the whole civilization. Therefore, in the process of implementing a tough monolingual system in Argentina, the loss of language extinction and national extinction is also inestimable.

Promote Bilingual Education Policies and safeguard minority rights

The Intercultural Bilingual Education Policy implemented by the Argentine democratic government after realizing the importance of protecting multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, multi-lingual plays a certain role in the protection of Native American langrague and culture. Although the Argentine Constitution has no clear statement on the official status of the Native American langrague, it lists the respect and protection of the rights and interests of the Native Americans as a separate clause. Driven by the bilingual policy, local Native American scholars actively collected materials and compiled dictionaries, language manuals and bilingual teaching materials to contribute to the standardization of their national languages. At the same time, Argentina actively cooperates with neighboring countries to explore linguistic research and protection strategies for cross-border languages.

However, there are also some problems in the implementation of bilingual education policy in Argentina. Due to the long-term implementation of the monolingual system, the Native American people have doubts and negative attitudes towards the social functions of their own language. therefore, the effectiveness of the policy of cross-cultural bilingual education needs to be improved. How to improve people's inherent language attitude and create an external environment beneficial to the use of Native American langrague still need to be solved urgently.

Popularize foreign language education and improve international language ability

Talents and language technology are the key, and foreign languages play an extremely important role in the field of national security. Because of the tradition of immigrants and the historical background of colonial rule, Argentina has always tended to follow the western model in the formulation of foreign language policy. The state has given greater policy and financial support to the training of foreign language talents, which is slightly different from some other countries in Latin America. Argentina has incorporated foreign language learning into the compulsory courses of junior high school and other education, so that students can choose a variety of foreign languages, such as English, French, Italian, Portuguese teaching has a certain scale. In addition, the Argentine government has also actively carried out cultural exchanges with governments of various countries and signed cooperation agreements to encourage universities and overseas universities to jointly train foreign language talents. The language policy of vigorously developing foreign language education and training foreign language talents has not only enhanced the language ability of Argentina, but also promoted the development of the tertiary industry.

Multilingualism is conducive to the harmonious symbiosis of multi-ethnic groups.

In recent years, under the active advocacy of the United Nations, the awareness of protecting native

languages in various countries has been significantly strengthened, which also provides a new opportunity for the development of Nativie American languages. When formulating the language policy, the Argentine government has fully taken into account the current situation of multi-ethnic and multi-cultural, adhered to the basic principles of ethnic equality and equal language status, and respected and protected the diversity of the country's languages. This is very necessary and effective to enhance the Native Americans' sense of language identity and national identity. Language policy as an important part of ethnic policy, whether it is correct or not is directly related to national unity and national security. From the case of Argentina, it is not difficult to find that insisting on the equality of language status is conducive to social stability and harmonious development, on the contrary, it may cause ethnic contradictions and endanger national security. In addition, actively carrying out cooperation and exchanges in language research with neighboring countries and protecting cross-border languages are also conducive to the stability and harmony of the border areas.

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