

Sustainable Development of Language Communication: Localization and Innovation of Confucius Institutes in Spain

Desarrollo Sostenible de la Comunicación Lingüística: Localización e Innovación de los Institutos Confucio en España

语言传播的可持续性发展：西班牙孔子学院本土化创新研究

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Abstract: Confucius Institute has fulfilled its function of spreading of Chinese language around the world since it was founded in 2004. Localization of teaching process towards regional educational and cultural system becomes key important for the sustainability of CI overseas. This paper adopts qualitative methodology of in-depth interviews among 18 participants who are administrative and teaching staff in the CIs of Spain to investigate the characteristic motivation, path, mode and effectiveness of CI in

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order to seek new ways to solve the problems of regional positioning, integrative strategy and post-pandemic development from the perspective of country-specificity and localization for the cross-border education. The findings of this study show that the CIs in Spain promote cross-fertilization between Chinese and Spanish teachers, share core values tactically via transnational culture and strengthen a positive cognition among local media and learners. In order to achieve the depth and breadth of the localization of Chinese education in Spain, the following strategies should be adopted: Targeting the economic and cultural values of Chinese language, investigating the local language policies in depth, and promoting the full integration of Chinese into the Spanish national education system; formulating the adaptive strategies for the localization of international Chinese level standards to increase the supply of Chinese teaching resources; understanding the current situation of teacher training in Chinese education in Spain and assisting the local teacher training at all levels; improving the ability of international Chinese education precision service.

Key Words: Confucius Institute; cross-border education; Spain; development path; localization.

Resumen: Como típica educación transfronteriza, el Instituto Confucio ha cumplido su función de difundir el idioma chino en todo el mundo desde su fundación en 2004. La localización del proceso de enseñanza hacia el sistema educativo y cultural regional se vuelve clave para la sostenibilidad de IC en el extranjero. Este artículo adopta una metodología cualitativa de entrevistas en profundidad entre 18 participantes que son personal administrativo y docente de las IC de España para investigar la motivación característica, el camino, el modo y la eficacia de la IC con el fin de buscar nuevas formas de resolver los problemas de posicionamiento regional, estrategia integradora y desarrollo postpandemia desde la perspectiva de la especificidad del país y la localización para la educación transfronteriza. Los hallazgos de este estudio muestran que los IC en España promueven la fertilización cruzada entre profesores de chino y español, comparten valores centrales de manera táctica a través de la cultura transnacional y fortalecen una cognición positiva entre los medios locales y los estudiantes. Para lograr la profundidad y amplitud de la localización de la educación china en España, se deben adoptar las siguientes estrategias: Centrarse en los valores económicos y culturales del idioma chino, investigar en profundidad las políticas lingüísticas locales y promover la plena integración del chino en el sistema educativo nacional español; formular las estrategias de adaptación para la localización de estándares internacionales de nivel de chino para aumentar la oferta de recursos de enseñanza de chino; comprender la situación actual de la formación del profesorado en educación china en España y ayudar a la formación del profesorado local en todos los niveles; mejorar la capacidad del servicio de precisión de la educación china internacional.

Palabras clave: Instituto Confucio; educación transfronteriza; España; trayectoria de desarrollo; localización.

摘要: 孔子学院自2004年成立以来，就一直世界范围内发挥着传播中国语言文化的作用。国际中文区域教育和文化传播的本土化发展是孔子学院海外可持续发展的关键。本文对18位在西班牙孔子学院工作的行政和教学人员进行访谈，总结孔子学院本土化发展的特征、动因、路径、模式以及有效性，以寻求解决区域发展的创新策略与途径。新冠疫情后时代跨境教育国别化与本土化研究结果表明，西班牙孔子学院促进了中西教师之间的交流，增强了当地媒体和学习者对孔子学院文化身份和教育身份的积极认知。西班牙的经济、社会、文化和教育环境是孔子学院本土化的基本动因，同时，为进一步加强西班牙中文教育发展的深度和广度，还应采取如下完善策略：明确中文在当地的语言价值；深入考察当地语言政策，促进中文全面纳入西班牙国民教育体系；制定国际汉语水平标准本土对接方案；增加中文教学资源供给；协助当地各层级中文教师师资培训；提升国际中文教育精准服务能力。

[关键词] 孔子学院；跨境教育；西班牙；发展路径；本土化

1. Introduction

The rise of Chinese as a modern foreign language in schools and universities in different countries needs to be set in the background of the rise of Chinese as a global language. Different from other language institutes, such as the British Council, the French Alliance, the Spanish Cervantes Institute or German Goethe Institute, the Confucius Institute around the world is cooperated with host universities regionally. As China's cross-border language and culture institute, CI is established by a partnership between two academic institutions, one from host country and one from China, with Center for Language Education and Cooperation providing start-up fund for the institutes. As the number of CI continues to grow, there are increasing interests and concerns about it. As a result of its global coverage, CI has earned itself a reputation as the flagship of Chinese cultural diplomacy which, some years ago, was defined by Cummings (2009) as the exchange of ideas, information, values and systems, traditions, beliefs and other aspects of cultural life, with the intention of fostering mutual understanding. Some scholars argue that the establishment of CI in different parts of the world has facilitated teacher exchanges between Chinese universities and their foreign partners to promote Chinese language and culture (Starr 2009; Yang 2010). Some scholars (Zaharna 2014; Kluver 2014) argue that incorporation of the CIs into the society of the host country, represent a higher level of coordination and commitment than independent cultural institutes that are linked only to the headquarters in the home country, for the commitment more than cultural and language dissemination are involved in the cooperation. Akhtaruzzaman (2017) investigates CI's influence on international relationships between China and other countries to claim that CI promotes China's higher education institute in other countries from a macro-level. As the number of students enrolled in courses teaching Chinese as a foreign language in school settings is indisputably increasing every year around the world, Ning (2017) indicates that after a development phase and the consolidation of improvements in quality and efficiency, sustainability must be maintained, emphasising teacher training and teaching resource have to meet the local needs to assist sustainable development of CI.

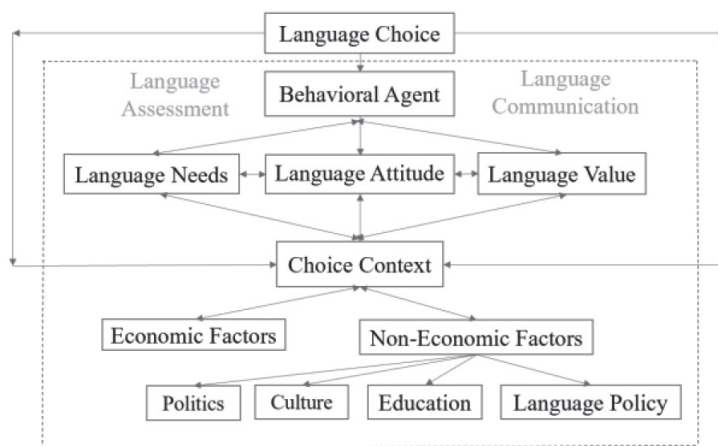
A close diagnostic study that has been completed on CIs in Spain (Liu, 2016) in which it recommends investigation into what goes on at these institutes should be conducted in order to understand a sustainable, innovative model of Chinese language teaching. In this paper, we argue that analyzing the relationship among language choice and language needs as a

basic frame and exploring the motivation, path and mode of CI development is necessary to comprehend the complexity of various overseas powers. The ability to act and react according to the local educational and cultural specificity of target countries and societies will explain how CI operates in relation to different international voices. This will lead to the less explored issue of the localization and sustainability of CI in the target country. To investigate it, this paper draws on specially the relationship between localization and developing path of the CIs in Spain, together with the long-standing connection between Spain and China in the political, cultural and economic context.

2. Localization and Sustainability of Language Communication

2.1 Language choice: needs, value and attitude

Language economy and language management theory (Bourdieu, 1991; de Swaan, 2001; Spolsky, 2009) analyzes economic value of language and symbolic power, arguing that choice of language is influenced by complicated factors such as language needs, language value, language attitude. Individual language choice is a direct reflection of language value and language needs. As demonstrated in the graph below, language needs of behavioral agent (from national organization to individuals) determine which values of language are more important and behavioral agent effectively assess their language needs to form a certain attitude to the language. On the other hand, the behavioral agents' language attitude affects their assessment on his own language needs and language values. Second, language value, language needs and language attitudes are also affected by the behavioral agents. The important influence of specific choice context (including economic factors and non-economic factors). These contextual factors define the language needs, attitude and value. The language needs of the agent fundamentally restrict the language attitude. Thirdly, language choice context has direct and indirect impact on language needs, language values and language attitude. Fourthly, the agent's language needs and attitude also have an important reaction to the factors of language choice context.



Motivation Mechanism of Language Choice

The fundamental motivation of language communication lies in the language value, which can be divided into economic value, cultural value and emotional value. Li (2011; 2012) argues language value depends on social and historical status of the behavioral agents, namely it is the social elite's assessment on language value accounts, due to the fact that this language will meet their political and economic needs to maximum. In the process of international communication of language, influenced by factors such as economic and trade exchanges, cultural exchanges, language contacts, geopolitics and immigration history between the language-disseminating countries and the host country, the economic value, cultural value and emotional value of a particular language are not consistent in different countries and regions, which directly or indirectly affects the "foreign language role" of the language in the host country.

The behavioral agents make their choice of learning a language out of potential motivation. In the choice context formed by economic and non-economic factors, including politics, culture, education, and language policy, the behavioral agents will make their assessment of the language value and attribute, the ability of the language to meet its needs, and their language attitude, formed according to their assessment, finally decide their language choice. For example, in the Philippines and Laos, where Chinese language is regarded as a "Basic Education Foreign Language" in these countries, highlight the economic value of Chinese. Whereas, in Thailand and Vietnam, Chinese has high economic value and emotional value, and is addressed as "Important Foreign Language" (Li, 2022). In Singapore and Malaysia, Chinese economy plays an indispensable role in

the national economy and Chinese literature plays an important role in the process of cultural isomorphism. Chinese has become an important language. The reason is that in addition to the important role played by the economic value and cultural value of Chinese, its emotional value cannot be underestimated, reflecting the need for emotional inheritance of Chinese families in these two countries (Liu, 2017). Chinese has been partially integrated into the Spanish national education system, its status in Spain is therefore moving from “basic education foreign language” after English, French, Germany, Italy, to “important foreign language”, which is closely related to the high local visibility of Chinese economic and cultural values.

Successful language communication is achieved by behavioral agent’s language attitude in specific context of choice. In the context of European countries which seek the development of language and cultural diversity, many countries, including Spain, have listed Chinese as the most strategically valuable “future language”, further enhancing the closeness and recognition of Chinese values by Spanish learners and the general public. The studies on language communication and the development of communications institution are therefore on the premise of the analysis of the language choice motivation. Established overseas, Confucius Institute has to be investigated based on language choice mechanism.

2.2 Localization: from product to Chinese language education

Originated from the concept of “region”, “place” and “space” in globalization, Localization or indigenization refocuses and emphasizes geographical and spatial problems that are diluted and ignored. Before the globalization of goods, services, capital, personnel and information, there was no “localization”. Successful global enterprises adapt their products and services to specific target countries and regions, and meet the needs of local consumers for personalized products, so as to adapt their products and services to specific target countries and regions. Roland Robertson (1992) first proposed that globalized products should adapt to the local characteristics of the countries they sell, so globalization must be closely integrated with localization. Globalization is a process of international promotion aimed at bringing products and services to the whole world, and localization is a process of this action. Globalization makes products and services localized and requires further improving capacity, effectiveness and brand value of the products and services.

While limited studies examined localization and indigenization in education literature, sociologists and organizational theorists have studied and theorized on this process for years. Some scholars (DiMaggio & Powell,

1983; Westney, 1987) argue the successful imitation of foreign organization patterns requires innovation and alteration of the original patterns to adjust them to their new context, and change in the environment to make it a more favorable setting for the emerging organization. Some scholars (Knight, 2006; Chetro-Szivos, 2010; Ouyang & Li, 2019) deem cross-border education as one form of international education product and service, focusing on the mobility of students, program and institution providers deliver foreign education qualifications in different contexts, and how teachers in the exporting countries can help students in the importing countries to generate interest in foreign curriculum knowledge, digest classroom knowledge in time and improve learning through effective communication.

International Chinese education, represented by Confucius Institutes and Confucius Classrooms has basically built a global communication system of Chinese language and culture with comprehensive function and wide coverage in the past seventeen years. The state-led mode, however, is close to maximization, with CI leading the world in terms of geographical coverage, in terms of the number of branches, host countries, students, and faculty, compared with other institutions of language communication around the world (Wu, 2016). In this case, according to the mutual developing path of language institutions, the localization of international Chinese education has become a key way to improve the Chinese language brand and enhance the status of the language. The localization of Confucius Institutes refers to the process in which overseas CI, consciously promote the integration of institute-running with the local culture, serving the actual needs of the people, and cultural environment of the target country. Localization is one of the most profound and effective development modes of the CIs, reflecting the development trend of Chinese teaching's integration into local elements and having local characteristics gradually (Li & Liu, 2021). This paper examines the characteristics and effectiveness of the development of the CIs through the research on the motivation and path of the localization of the institutes in Spain, providing research implications for the sustainable development of CIs globally.

3. Motivations for the Localization of Confucius Institutes in Spain

3.1 The embodiment of Chinese language value in Spain

First, the fundamental motivation of language communication lies in language value, which mainly depends on three factors: the social and historical status of language owners; the value of language-to-language

recipients; and the value judgment of language recipients. Language value consists economic value, cultural value and emotional value (Sposky, 2009). The number and scope of language use are important indicators to reflect the economic value of language. Spain is the world's tenth largest immigrant country and one of the important settlements for Chinese immigrants with a large number of Chinese users as their mother tongue and foreign language. According to the statistics of the Ministry of Employment and Social Security of Spain, by the end of 2021, the total number of Chinese immigrants in Spain was nearly 300,000. Based on the latest statistics from the Education Group of the Chinese Embassy in Spain, there are currently 50,000 people in Spain who study Chinese and take the first Chinese proficiency test in Europe. In recent years, economic and trade cooperation between China and Spain has greatly expanded the geographical and workplace of Chinese language communication in Spain. At present, China has become Spain's largest trading partner outside the EU, Spain is China's sixth largest trading partner within EU. According to the figures from the Spanish Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism, Spanish exports to China are more than 5.7 billion euros between January and September 2020, an increase of 19.6% over the same period in the previous year. Chinese companies invested \$ 370 million in Spain, an increase of 362 %. In addition, China's "Belt and Road" infrastructure construction in Europe, "China-Europe" Railway Express (Yiwu-Madrid) Project, China's investment of Valencia and Bilbao port construction, produce better opportunities and conditions for the development of trade between China and Spain, creating more jobs for Chinese learners and expanding the use of Chinese. With the increase in the number of Spanish language users and the scope of use, the local economic value of Chinese language is increasingly prominent, so are the business, transportation, tourism and other "professional Chinese" learning needs.

In this context, three new Confucius Institutes and one Confucius classroom have been built up since 2017 (Nine Confucius Institutes and eleven Confucius Classrooms till now). The CIs in Spain rely on cooperative universities, college students, relevant social and cultural groups and local young students as teaching targets. Confucius classroom provides Chinese teaching services for Spanish students at all levels of education. It is a small cultural exchange center to meet the needs of students to learn Chinese and also a satellite institution of Confucius Institutes, mainly located in the areas and cities where the CIs cannot cover. At present, the number of Chinese learners in Spain is one of the largest in Europe. Chinese teaching has covered seventeen autonomous communities and fifty regions, and the number of learners exceeds 50,000. 2019 witnessed the

increasing number of the CI students in Spain exceeded 14,000, which is an increase of 17% year on year. Chinese is considered a “future language”, and is widely welcomed locally. The number of HSK candidates in Spain has multiplied, ranking the top five in Europe for nine consecutive years. The relevant Chinese teaching system has been continuously improved, and Chinese courses has been set up as the second foreign language in many local schools in recent years. Among them, the government of Andalusia Autonomous Community has incorporated Chinese teaching into the plan of foreign language education development strategy from 2014 to 2020, promoting Chinese into the formal primary and secondary education system in the whole region.

Secondly, the cultural value of language is the historical, aesthetic and strategic value embodied in the culture contained in language (Zhang, 2019), which provides indirect contextual factors for language selection. Cultural exchanges and academic interaction between language-disseminating countries and language-receiving countries are important ways to enhance and realize the cultural value of both languages in the target country. As early as the 16th century, China and Spain achieved trade and cultural exchanges between North America, Asia and Europe under the connection of Spanish merchant Manila sailing boat. This “Pacific Silk Road” laid a solid foundation for the exchange of folk culture between China and Spain, and was one of the sources of Spanish ordinary people’s cognition of Chinese cultural value. Spain pioneered sinology in Europe in the 16th century. Early Spanish sinologists wrote and edited a large number of Chinese and Spanish dictionaries, manuals and Chinese textbooks, leaving valuable Chinese language and culture learning and research materials, deepening and consolidating the Spanish common people’s awareness of the value of Chinese culture. The rapid development of contemporary China has become the focus of new Spanish sinology, and many Spanish scholars have turned their attention to the research on the socio-economic, political, linguistic and cultural development of contemporary China. Spanish Sinology based on Spanish university research center and team, has gradually emerged and achieved rapid growth (Li & Ramírez Ruis, 2019). East Asian research centers in Spanish universities have sprung up in recent years, setting up bachelor, master and doctoral degrees in Chinese related majors. This new development is mainly reflected in the establishment of departments and courses in higher education about China, namely sinology, and related studies. The academic research on Chinese by Spanish academics and sinologists has greatly enhanced the awareness of ordinary Spanish people about the cultural value of Chinese, which is a potential driving factor

for individuals to make language choices. According to the latest statistics of the Education Group of the Chinese Embassy in Spain, the number of Spanish students studying in China is also steadily increasing. More than 4000 Spanish students study Chinese and related majors at Chinese universities.

3.2 Language choices at individual, educational and national level

3.2.1 Individual level

Individual language choice is a direct reflection of language value and language needs. In the context of European countries that seek the development of linguistic and cultural diversity, many countries, including Spain, have listed Chinese language as the most strategically valuable “future language”, enhancing the closeness and recognition of Chinese values by Spanish learners and the general public. According to the survey on foreign language learning needs of 2,477 and 2,466 respondents conducted by the Spanish Center for Social Research, Apart from English, the first foreign language, 17 languages such as French, German, Italian, Portuguese, and Chinese are listed as top foreign languages in Spain in terms of the number of people who are learning or want to learn in the future. More importantly, the number of people who are learning Chinese rose from 0.3 % to 1.1 %, and the number of people who want to learn Chinese rose from 2.7 % to 3 %. In contrast, English, German, Italian and Portuguese have declined to varying degrees in these two values. In addition, the proportion of respondents wishing to learn Chinese is much higher than that of Arabic and Japanese, two languages that are as far away from Spanish, and the growth rate of Chinese learners is much higher than that of Arabic and Japanese.

3.2.2 School Level

Schools as a language choice at the educational institution level is a reflection of language policy at the national level, while affecting and restricting the individual language choice of the general public. The places of Chinese education in Spain mainly include public and private universities, primary and secondary schools, official language schools, Confucius Institutes/classrooms, private education institutions and Chinese schools. Schools or educational institutions at all levels actively carry out Chinese language teaching, which has played a positive role in promoting and guiding the personal language choices of ordinary Spanish people, which is manifested in the following aspects.

First, Chinese has formally entered the curriculum system of public and private universities in Spain. At present, in 17 autonomous regions of Spain, more than 200 primary and secondary schools have listed Chinese as a second foreign language course. Among them, Andalusia, Castilla-Leon

and Catalonia included Chinese language teaching in the strategic plan for the development of foreign language teaching and included Chinese language in the primary and secondary education system throughout the Autonomous Region. Second, Chinese language is expected to enter the Spanish examination system. In 2018, the Spanish Ministry of Education convened the 2nd conference of “Present Situation of Chinese Teaching in the Spanish Education System”, proposing the inclusion of Chinese in the Spanish College Entrance Examination to assist Chinese inclusion in the national education system. Third, official language schools and non-governmental education institutions become a powerful complement to Chinese education. As of December 2021, there have been 21 official language schools throughout Spain offering Chinese courses, some of which directly adopt the International Chinese Language Teaching Curriculum Standards. Non-governmental education institutions have also begun to participate in Chinese projects. For example, the community of Madrid cooperates with MACMA to start Chinese courses in more than 60 primary schools in Madrid, with more than 2,000 registered students (Chen, 2021). Fourth, Chinese schools gradually integrate into the local education system. In recent years, with the improvement of the economic strength of Chinese people in Spain, Barcelona and Valencia, the rapid development of Chinese communities, the coverage of Chinese schools in Spain has gradually increased. Bilingual bicultural courses have gradually become the mainstream direction of Chinese school curriculum.

3.2.3 National Level

Language choice is a manifestation of language policy. The state carries out macro control and planning on individual language choice. Language policy is an important part of non-economic factors and the most direct context factor. It plays a key role in language selection (Kamwangamalu, 2013). Language policy makers' choice of local languages and people's actual language ability affect the spread of the language in the local area (Spolsky, 2009). Language choices are influenced by language management and planning decisions of the governments and educational institutions of autonomous regions at the international, regional and national levels. Language policy is also a direct reflection of individual language ability, language choice and language value.

According to the European Union's foreign language education policy and educational conception, Spain promotes linguistic and cultural diversity and cultivates the basic literacy of “world citizens”. Its educational acts in different levels support for multilingual education for students to use at least one foreign language fluently, and encourage the inclusion of a second

foreign language in educational curricula. The autonomous regions in Spain follow the national language policy, formulate specific foreign language education policies according to the development of regional language learning and foreign language education, and make clear provisions on the choice of second foreign language and the arrangement of class hours. The above language policy is an important legal basis and principle for Chinese teaching in the basic education system in Spain. In addition, it creates the social context and school context of language selection, and plays a positive guiding role in individual language selection. At present, the Castilla-Leon and the Catalan have set the second foreign language as an optional course and promulgated the Chinese curriculum outline for secondary schools. Andalusia and Aragon set the second foreign language as compulsory courses in primary school (grades 3 to 6 in primary school and grades 5 to 6 in primary school respectively, and introduce the curriculum outline of Chinese in primary school. By the end of 2020, 35 public primary and secondary schools in Andalusia have started Chinese compulsory or optional courses, with more than 4,000 registered students.

4. Materials and Methods

This study is part of the a much wide project which has the general objective of investigating the Chinese language education represented in overseas CI's operation. The administrative and teaching staff are the most important participants in this process, and many different views lead us to a connection between localization of the CIs and its connection with the motivation mechanism of Chinese language choice in Spain. In this study, we associate language choice context, namely the economic and non-economic factors that affect the development of CI with the localization of cross-border institution, based on ethnographic approach with observer-participants, following the criteria established by Hammersley and Paul (2007) in a study where they used in-depth interviews. The study involves one year of fieldwork in Spain between 2018 and 2019, when the author worked as a Chinese teaching staff in one of the CIs of Spain, having the opportunity of observing, attending in classes, meetings, activities, and participating in academic events in host university to which the author could wrangle an invitation, and the opportunity of interviewing the directors and staffs in the CIs in Spain. Furthermore, official websites, Facebook and Weibo observation of these CIs was conducted. In order to have a comprehensive assessment of various factors that affect the Chinese language choice in Spain, the author also collected numerous documents

pertaining to the collaboration and development of the CIs, including planning documents, working report, press coverage, syllabus arrangement which guide this study with sufficient literature.

The study was conducted with qualitative methodologies and literature research. Semi-structured, face-to-face, in-depth interviews were implemented with 18 participants (6 males, 12 females), including the directors, teaching and administrative staff at Confucius Institute of Barcelona, Madrid, Leon, Granada, Valencia, Castilla and La Mancha, and Las Palmas, who had been in Spain for periods between 2 and 6 years.

Concerning the research procedures, informed consent was sought from participants and all were told of the study objects and how it would be performed. The interviews were conducted, focusing on the questions, such as how do you value working foci of the CI where you work? What are the local language needs? How does your CI perform in meet with these local needs in terms of Chinese language class planning, cultural and academic activities organization, and media response? What roles do host university, partner university, CI, and local community play in? What is the relationship among these roles?

The participants are informed that their participation was totally voluntary and that there would be absolute confidentiality with regards to both their answers and in the management of data. The gathered interviewed data were then compiled and transliterated, along with previous literature review of the relevant studies. The comments from the participants on the CI's local teaching and cultural events were collected and the reflections on how these institutes integrate with local society were reported and analyzed in this study. Riessman's (2008) techniques of thematic narrative analysis were used to complete a qualitative assessment of the data, establishing categories for analysis.

5. Results and Discussions

The characteristic positioning and development of Confucius Institute is guided by local needs and the national education system of the country effectively. It sets up a clear orientation and distinctive curriculum plan, and reserve sufficient teaching staffs to promote its sustainable development. The CIs adopts the strategy of institute-running according to local conditions in different countries and regions to achieve the goal of "one country, one policy; one institute, one policy", enforcing a diversified development and localized acculturation (Bai, 2020). The localization path of the CIs is the way and practice to adapt to the local economy, culture,

customs, legal system, language policy and etc., following the inherent law of cross-border education and dissemination of language and culture, and serving the teaching objects of the locality after they are rooted in the host countries.

Established abroad, the localization path of CI is influenced by the external communication strategy with the local environment. CI, as a transnational Chinese language education organization, its comprehensive service provides support for the development of education resources and teaching quality in various countries, as well as building up mental bridges for the people of various countries (Zhang & Tong, 2019). It is integrated into the local society that promotes further communication and cooperation, and serves the development of local Chinese education. Rooted in the exotic environment, CI has to overcome local language and cultural barriers, cooperate with local governments and media, strive for the support of local governments and the outside world, conform to the local cultural environment, conduct in-depth and detailed research and analysis of local foreign language education policies and laws, and create a benign environment for the adaptation, survival, sustainable development. The acculturation of CI helps build platform for communication between local society and China, and understand the China issues. The mode of Sino-foreign cooperation in CI determines the basic survival logic of localization. In this process, CI has gradually changed from being administered by Chinese government to being jointly managed by the host university. It continuously integrates into the local administrative mechanism, universities, employees and resources, achieving a win-win situation in terms of staff, financial and material resources.

5.1 Adhering to school-running characteristics according to local conditions

According to the geographical and national cultural characteristics, social needs and the influence of China's political and economic relations, the CIs in different regions need reasonable planning to break through the homogeneous development. Institute-running characteristics are the fundamental advantages of international Chinese education in development mode, and the key to the core competitiveness of international education market (Li, 2018). It has been fifteen years since the establishment of the first Confucius Institute in Spain. Under the premise of the good development trend of Sino-Spain relations, the revival of Spanish Sinology and the continuous growth of the language value, the nine Confucius Institutes have basically formed a localized development path and mode.

The adaptation of CI to local society is to put local needs of Chinese education and corresponding social values into the first place (Yuan & Li, 2021). It emphasizes the integration of Chinese culture and local culture. Flexible and two-way communication should be adopted to eliminate misunderstandings in the development of the CIs in a sincere manner (Cheng & Liu, 2016). A mode of CI as a core and wide teaching service for the surrounding areas has been formed in the past decade. In the process of language education, it is essential to be familiar with the local foreign language education policy, and present Chinese teaching situation in local elementary education, higher education, and social education so as to make a place-based plan for the development of the Institute.

Barcelona Confucius Institute, established in 2010, has broken through the cooperation mode of “1+1” (one Chinese university and one host university) to develop into the world’s first “12+1” Confucius Institute mode (Barcelona Confucius Institute cooperates with 11 local universities and 1 university in Andorra), becoming a transnational Confucius Institute.

The practice of “Going out to Teach” and “Sending Exams to other Cities” is applied along with a full consideration of teaching resources and staffing to meet the needs of Chinese learners in the surrounding cities and regions. The CIs in Spain broaden teaching areas and increase examination sites, and provide convenience for local people to learn Chinese (Chang, 2015).

The CI of Leon University, located in the northwest of Spain, opened teaching branches in University of Valladolid, University of Vigo, the Campus of Ponferrada, University of Oviedo and University of Burgos, and also set up courses in local primary and secondary schools with the permission of Education Department, Castilla and Leon Autonomous Community.

The CI in Las Palmas established teaching branches in the Canary Islands, including the Agora Portals Private International School and the Lingua-Kungfu Chinese Language Institute, attracting more than 3,000 students every year, which is a CI that has the largest registration number in Spain.

Based on the Chinese education projects and the local language service, the development mode of the CIs in Spain can be summarized as

“Chinese teaching +”. Specifically, the CI of Barcelona and the CI of Valencia University have formed a compound mode of “Chinese teaching +” from the aspects of local university tradition, regional development characteristics, local Chinese communities and economic interaction. In Chinese teaching, cultural activities, academic research, and integration into local society, government and media, they have developed into “International Confucius Institute” and “Chinese education + ‘The Belt and Road’ service”. The CI of Granada University and the CI of Leon University rely on the existing East Asian Study Center and relevant researches to establish journals on sinology studies, organize China Study Conferences, and publish China study collections, building an interactive platform for Chinese and Spanish scholars, and establishing the development mode of “Chinese teaching + sinology”. The CI at University of las Palmas is located on the island. It is in the forefront of Spain in terms of the number of students, the number of teaching branches and the number of examinees. The development mode of this institute is positioned as “Chinese teaching”, which has become the center of Chinese education, examination and teacher training center on the island. Located in the capital city of Spain, the number of students and HSK examinees have doubled since the establishment of the CI in Madrid. Under the leadership of the foreign directors of the two sinologists, the CI of Madrid held high-end exchanges of Chinese and Spanish culture. In recent years, it develops into the mode of “Chinese teaching + cultural communication”, and has become the core of cultural exchanges between China and Spain. The CI at University of Castilla and la Mancha, established in 2017, and the CI at University of Zaragoza are moving towards the mode of “Chinese teaching” and “Chinese teaching + Culture Dissemination” modes respectively.

5.2 Sinology study and dissemination of Chinese language

The spread of Chinese language is closely related to the development of overseas Sinology. In Sinology study, the spread of Chinese is not considered only from the “local Chinese view”, but from both “local” and “other” views (Zhang, 2006). This idea expands the discipline of international spread of Chinese language, and provides new theoretical guidance and operational suggestions for the practice of international spread of Chinese language.

Sinologists are the practitioners and experts of Chinese teaching. They are first and foremost excellent Chinese language learner before they are engaged in a specific field of sinology. The working and studying experience in China in their early years enable them to have good

mastery of Chinese language. Spanish sinologists are well aware of the learning rules, strategies and major difficulties that the Chinese learners may encounter in Spain.

Sinologists' understanding of Chinese language and the study of the language and teaching methods in the process of language contact, providing academic support for today's international Chinese language education. Furthermore, international Chinese education has also injected original impetus into the formation and development of New Sinology (Li, 2019). Sinologists' better understandings about China boost their passion for introducing China in every aspect to the people of their county (Li & Ramírez Ruiz, 2020). They are the collaborators in the management of Confucius Institutes, and important practitioners of Chinese language education, teacher training and textbook compilation.

As an overseas Chinese language education institution, CI is closely connected with Spanish Sinology study, by organizing international conferences, seminars, lectures on China issues, publishing books and journals on introducing both traditional and contemporary China related topics, executing the cooperation and exchanges between Spanish sinologist. With the help of cultural exchange and cooperation mode, Chinese education in Spain has been promoted in depth, which further highlights the important role of Confucius Institutes in communication between Chinese and Spanish.

Confucius Institute, University of Granada, following its profound tradition of sinology, organized academic talks, lectures, salons, seminars and conferences on "Comparative Literature", "Chinese Literature Translation Competition", "Women in Love, Women in Romantic Passion in Ming and Qing Literature" with the cooperation of Asian Research Forum¹, University of Granada, to realize the exchange and interaction of sinology studies between China and Spain. These academic activities also serve to introduce Chinese history, literature and contemporary Chinese society to the local citizens.

As the forefront of the international dissemination of Chinese language, the CIs have the priority of grasping the research dynamics of local sinology, understanding the history and trends of local sinology or

¹ Official website of Confucius Institute at University of Granada: https://institutoconfucio.ugr.es/pages/presentacion_confucio/presentacion

Chinese studies, building a platform for Sino-foreign sinologists and scholars of Chinese studies, promoting the academy of the host country to further understand China comprehensively, and helping cultivate young generation of sinologists who are proficient in Chinese language and culture (Li, 2020).

Barcelona Confucius Institute organized a number of high-level academic activities since foundation, including several conferences and seminars on “Ibero-American Sinology” and forums on “China Economic and Trade”, which attracted high-level scholars from various countries to participate in interaction and promoted the influence of the institute.

Confucius Institute at Leon University created *Sinología hispánica: China Studies Review*, an academic journal mainly to provide communicative platform for the researchers in the area of Sinology. In addition, the institute also organized three international conferences on “East-West Contacts and Dialogue: Contemporary Chinese Studies”, which brought new vitality to Sinology studies in Spanish-speaking countries and regions and strengthened academic links between countries, universities, research centers and the other Confucius Institutes.

The most important external factor for Chinese academic transformation from traditional Confucian classics to modern academics is the interaction with Sinology (Shan, 2003). Sinology study helps Chinese academy have a comprehensive vision on China from overseas point of view and plays a leading role in China’s integration into the international community, promoting the mutual understanding of China related issues, and enhancing people’s communication with the world.

5.3 Sino-Spain cooperation and local language teaching resources development

The localization of Chinese textbooks is one of the most effective ways to improve the quality of language teaching and branding of the CI. It is also an important part of the localization of Chinese language education. Starting from the current situation of overseas Chinese teaching, adapting to the needs of local learners, developing diversified and market-oriented textbooks for different types of learners are the specific measures for the localization of Chinese international education.

With the support of well-known international publisher, Confucius Institute at Leon University compiled the textbook *The Road of Chinese*. This book was cooperated by Chinese and local Spaniard, starting from

Spanish native speakers' difficulty of learning Chinese with task-based design, featuring in the local learners' taste and market need. It is published by McGraw-Hill Education, an international authoritative publisher. The compilation of local textbooks meet the urgent need for the lack of local Chinese teaching materials, meeting HKS standards, enriching the local Chinese teaching material market in Spain, and also help the promotion of Chinese teaching materials in Spanish-speaking countries.

Barcelona Confucius Institute translated and published *Apprehend Chinese with me* (English version), *Chinese Paradise* (Spanish version) and *Great Wall Chinese: Essentials in Communication* (Spanish Version). In addition, the multimedia European distance teaching platform for *Great Wall Chinese* was established according to the characteristics of teaching and students in Spanish-speaking countries.

The Compilation of textbooks with local characteristics requires removing the inertia of "General" textbooks for teaching Chinese as a foreign language. The textbook compilers have to take the local learners' learning style and features of their first language, comparison of Chinese and local language, and local language teaching methods into full consideration (Zhou & Chen, 2014).

5.4 Market demand and training of local teachers

As Constitution of CI clearly stipulates: Confucius Institute is responsible for training Chinese teachers, providing Chinese teaching resources, organizing Chinese examination, and fulfilling Chinese teacher qualification authentication. The localization of teaching is therefore an inevitable choice for the development of international Chinese education. In recent years, the European Union and the United States introduced foreign language teaching standards, and many countries made corresponding adjustments in foreign language teaching.

Localized teachers are more likely to update their teaching concepts and adopt more grounded teaching methods because they have a better understanding of foreign language education policies and frameworks in their countries and regions, which is conducive to the rapid integration of Chinese teaching into local foreign language teaching standards. Localized Chinese teaching staff tend to have a better understanding and mastery of learners' native language and culture. It is necessary to carry out Chinese teaching methods and practical training for local teachers, providing

opportunity of regular short-term training in China and communication platform of teaching, which is a conducive way to improve local Chinese teachers' capacity.

The Centre for Language Education and Cooperation and Chinese Embassy in Spain co-organized the first training course on Chinese language teaching materials for native teachers in Spain in 2011. The main topics include digital teaching materials and learning, the analysis and utilization of language materials in the teaching process, and the main problems of Spanish students in learning Chinese language. The Office in Spain of the Centre for Language Education and Cooperation provided teacher training for local Chinese teachers annually since 2018. The training includes linguistic knowledge of Chinese, language teaching strategies, the selection of teaching materials, Spanish education system and foreign language teaching methods that are related to the laws and regulations, the access to local teachers' qualification and so on².

Barcelona Confucius Institute has regularly trained local Chinese teachers in the Catalan region since 2012 by selecting specific training content every year to provide more specialized and diversified teaching skills and teaching resource. The 7th training of Chinese language teacher in Catalan has been organized in 2018 in order to strengthen the teaching to the learners with different ages, classroom management skills, as well as to help teacher get CTCSOL (Certificate for Teachers of Chinese to Speakers of Other Languages).

Confucius Institute of Madrid, Las Palmas University, University of Castilla and La-Mancha, and University of Leon have focused on the training of local Chinese teachers. The local Spanish native teachers are invited every semester to provide in-service training according to regional education policies, characteristics of students with different ages and teaching methods. These trainings promote the communication among Chinese teachers from various regions of Spain, enabling local Chinese teachers to understand the latest education situation and policies in different areas of Spain.

² Official Office of Center for Language Education and Cooperation 中外语言合作中心西班牙代表处. Professional Teaching and Closer Exchanges: Training for TCFL Teachers 对外汉语教师培训——让专业更加专业, 让关系更加紧密. <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/f4R8gs1TONCShTjpGwiFag>

5.5 Brand identification of the cis with higher teaching quality

These important events and activities, as long as CI, are branded as Chinese language education overseas and win the fame for this “future language”. Overseas Chinese learners associate these branding activities with the CIs abroad.

World “Chinese Bridge” and summer camp every year make it possible for the young people to come to China, immersed in the real Chinese environment and make friends all over the world. HSK, along with YCT the Chinese language test for adults and young learners, with the assessment for people from different ages with different Chinese language level, has been widely accepted and attended by the examinees who would prove their language levels. “Confucius New Sinology Plan”, a platform designed for scholars with opportunity to go for further degrees and academic study in the field of China related issues.

More importantly, teaching quality as the essence of the CIs, represented by pedagogical methodology, teaching resource and teaching staffs has to be improved so as to maintain the brand of CI. Teacher training mechanism to adapt to the characteristics of Chinese education in local primary and secondary schools is to be created, so as to maintain enough teaching force for the elementary education.

Local teachers who are proficient both in Chinese and Spanish language are believed to be the most suitable teaching candidates, for they have advantage of language and culture, well-informed with pedagogical knowledge about local learners. The CIs will provide opportunity of visiting and training in China for these local teachers every year as exchanging project to reenforce their language ability and teaching qualification.

Qualified teacher, locally flexible materials and learner-oriented pedagogical methodology are the basis for constructing branding image of CI locally, ensuring the teaching quality. Data collection and corpus construction for teaching cases, learner portfolio, and online resource are very essential to overcome the obstacles caused by cultural differences, and explore teaching methods that are easily acceptable to the learners. Furthermore, the marketization of Chinese textbooks is promoted as to provide high quality teaching and learning resources in different Spanish-speaking countries and regions. The compilation of textbooks with cooperation of native speakers and the online classroom design shall take

full consideration of learning characteristics of learners at different ages and in different places so as to meet the needs of local language education.

The mode of online teaching in international Chinese education and online class design and interaction requires information literacy a necessary quality for the Chinese teachers in Confucius Institute. In the face of the fact that European countries, such as Spain, rich in online communication facilities and resources, and the number of CI students has increased after the epidemic, the CIs made quick teaching countermeasures. Handling teaching tasks in the pandemic, teachers and artificial intelligence play their roles respectively to assist language teaching.

The total number of registered students of Confucius Institute in Madrid and Confucius Institute in Barcelona in the first semester of 2020-2021, has maintained steady growth. Classroom activities, Chinese language examinations, teacher training, cultural activities, academic conferences, and Chinese Bridge competitions have been carried out through various online communication platform.

A distant online Chinese education platform by combining online teaching with the construction of shared resources shall be constructed further to promote the co-construction and sharing of international Chinese teaching resources. An open Chinese teaching ecology, a public and shared platform for Chinese education, and service capacity of international Chinese education shall be further enhanced to assist new exploration and attempt for the sustainable development of Chinese education.

5.6 Preparation to entrance of national education system

Promoting the integration of Chinese into the national education system of overseas countries is an important issue that the academic community attaches importance to and the language policy indicates. It is not only one of the important symbols of Chinese going to the world, but also the realization path of the “connotative, localized and integrated” development of international Chinese education (Wang & Wu, 2015: 95).

In Spain, Language teaching at all levels is based on the European common language reference framework, therefore, Chinese teaching and testing levels in Confucius Institute have to be in accordance with these local actual needs and learners’ individual development. Multilingual education in Spain has remarkable localized characteristics, Confucius Institute shall adhere to these characteristics and replace the same homogeneous mode with a highly integrated localization.

As the EU language value has demonstrated that language diversity has to be kept through cultivation of citizens' multilingual and cross-cultural abilities (Marco Martínez, 2011). The autonomous communities in Spain where the majority of the population is located actively in response to the EU multilingual education initiative and starts to offer second foreign language courses from the primary school stage, which provides a possible choice of Chinese language to enter the Spanish education system. The option of foreign language by policy-making departments is affected by the value of EU mainstream policies, that is, learning a foreign language should not only pursue its practical instrumentality, but should implement the concept of cultivating cross-cultural citizenship (Casas-Tost, 2018); "Cross culture" should not only cross European countries, but also look at the world, so that foreign language learners can have international cultural perspective in the context of Globalization (Byram, 2008).

Chinese in certain autonomous communities of Spain has currently been integrated into their local education system. The current partially integrated situation involves certain reasons: whether the central government and the autonomous community government set up Chinese courses is an important consideration. The former determines the possibility that Chinese will be included in the text of national laws and regulations, and the latter determines whether the policy implementation of Chinese effectively entering local class.

The possibility of introducing Chinese teaching in different Spanish communities depends on several factors, including whether it is a bilingual autonomous community or not, as is the case of Galicia, Catalonia or the Basque Country, which would mean adding an overload in the school curriculum; the previous political commitment to a bilingual Spanish-English education, as is the case in the Autonomous Community of Madrid; or the sensitivity for the teaching of second languages, promoting the possibility of choice for their students of different languages, among which Chinese is included, as is the case of the autonomous community of Castilla y León or Andalusia, which already include it in their secondary and primary curriculum respectively.

The great challenge in Spain would be to include the teaching of Chinese in the national curriculum, so that all communities have the obligation or the opportunity to offer it in their educational curriculum, which in the end, allows training a specialty in the teaching staff with the specialty of Chinese, as there is for other languages. More importantly, the

choice of foreign language learning also depends on the contribution of foreign languages to national political, economic and personal development. Therefore, the economic power has decided that the situation develops in a dynamic way. Thirdly, the employment situation of local Chinese teachers can be regarded as the epitome of the development Chinese education in Spain. The possibility of working in public educational schools through Chinese skills is not only related to the Chinese curriculum of relevant institutions, but also reflects the importance of Chinese to individuals. Spanish universities are preparing a path from above, trying to offer degrees and masters that incorporate the teaching of contents related to Asia in general and with Chinese in particular (as Table 1 and 2 has shown).

The CIs will further provide Chinese language teacher training, opportunity of internship, teaching position and exchanging in China for those universities which has set up the degree on Chinese language studies and education so as to help cultivate qualified local Chinese language teachers for the elementary education system in Spain. Furthermore, the database construction of “Chinese language resource” for local Chinese teaching, will optimize the resource sharing mechanism, avoid the waste of teaching resources, and give full play to the platform role of Confucius Institute to the greatest extent. For the regions with Chinese entrance of Spanish education system, for instance, the autonomous community of Andalusia, teaching resource shall be provided, including overall teaching outline and syllabus planning, textbook compilation and local teacher training. For the regions that government has not issued the relevant decrees, regular evaluation should be carried out to provide teaching resources with high adaptability according to different development stages.

6. Conclusions

Confucius Institute, as a cross-border education institution, is shaped and sensitized not only by the state power, but also by the local historical bond, sociocultural connection and political relationship. CI is not to be regarded as a simplified transference of language education from China to the world, but an interconnection of culture exchange, teaching system (including teaching staff training and teaching resource compilation), language policy, and social integration. The characteristic localization path of CI in accordance to social and cultural specialty will mostly decide how the international Chinese language education will be sped up, or hindered. As an international cultural project to create “common language community”, in which CIs are embedded and compatible with development of local Chinese

education, is a long-term development plan. How to integrate the CIs into local societal and educational system, along with China's higher education internationalization project have to be conducted with the consistent idea for CI' overseas running. It is a necessary way to integrate and develop, and also a realistic way for sustainable development.

Delving into the locality, this paper highlights localization as the starting point to explore the interactive relationship and development path of the CIs in Spain, in relation with other elements such as a platform for cultural exchanges and international relations, historical origins and economic motivations, which provides reference for the theoretical and practical development of the CIs. In addition, the participants report in the paper show the role of CI's diasporic actors in building a bridge between Spain and China in order to establish a cultural and educational network. Chinese language teaching in Spain has gradually accepted by the national education system. The communities and university are working on language teacher education, curriculum outline designing to prepare for the further development of Chinese language resources. The constructive cross-border collaborations stem from deep and longstanding involvement from the sending institution's faculty members. Directed by sinologists, cooperated with Chinese directors, assisted by both local and teaching staff from China, the CIs involve collaboration in pedagogical and administrative activities. Mutual trust and respect for individuals within the CIs, and the components of the collaboration under their purviews have been particularly fruitful and constructive as a result.

The outbreak of the public health events of the Coronavirus-19 pandemic is an important test for the localization mode of Confucius Institutes in various countries. Undoubtedly, it has been a catalyst in the implementation of online teaching systems that had already been brewing. It requires Confucius Institutes in various countries to quickly adapt to the development trend of online education of international Chinese education under the new situation based on the actual situation of the local epidemic, and provide instant educational resources for more Chinese learners who have been affected by the epidemic (Wen & Yang, 2021). The processes of online teaching have been accelerated, the utility has been seen, its benefits have been experienced, although in a rapid and exceptional way, and this has meant that we continue to bet on this type of teaching. Seen from the language teaching experience of other language and culture communication institutions such as Cervantes Institute in the post-epidemic era, the normalization and specialization of online Chinese education are quickly realized. Although the pandemic has limited the communication between

the countries and the people, the enthusiasm for learning and working has not subsided. The language and culture communication institutions in China and Spain have not slowed down their pace of development in the epidemic period.

In the past decade, the localization trend of CIs in Spain has been obvious and has achieved remarkable results. It is mainly due to the positive interaction of Chinese language value, language choice and language policy in the local area. Furthermore, it is also the result of the combined effect of China's push as a mother tongue of Chinese and the pulling force of Spain. However, the depth and breadth of the localization of Chinese education in Spain still need to be further promoted from the perspective of the spatial dimension and form of Chinese inclusion in the national education system. Teaching evaluation standards and examination system construction are to be developed from the perspective of Chinese "foreign language role" to "important foreign language". On the basis of steadily improving the quality of Chinese teaching, further studies should be further continued: the economic value and cultural value of Chinese language, language policy and education system in Spain, and the needs and development status of Chinese teaching in various places. And the corresponding strategies in the training of Chinese teachers at all levels, the localization of international Chinese level standards and the improvement of personalized Chinese service ability are to be further conducted.

Language community through the localization path of high integration shall be one of the important goals for Confucius Institutes to achieve, by improving the quality of institute-running and enhancing the cultural brand identification, regionalizing as the core and carrying out academic exchanges and cooperation with local universities in East Asia research institutions. Moreover, timely response to the online teaching pressure after the pandemic, international Chinese public and common platform, and the Chinese education service are to be further enhanced after the pandemic. In a summary, whether CI may achieve its sustainable development and aim of creating common language community in the countries it operates will depend on the interaction with the local particularities that consist of historical and cultural context, university collaboration, policy making, characteristic institute-running, academic cooperation, and multiple interest.

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30

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