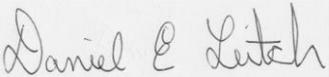


A REVIEW STUDY OF IMPROVING THE ENGLISH EDUCATION ON THE RURAL
PRIMARY SCHOOL IN WULING MOUNTAINOUS AREA

Approved:  Date: May 24, 2017

A REVIEW STUDY OF IMPROVING THE ENGLISH EDUCATION ON THE RURAL
PRIMARY SCHOOL IN WULING MOUNTAINOUS AREA

A Seminar Paper

Presented to

The Graduate Faculty

University of Wisconsin-Platteville

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirement for the Degree

Master of Science in Education

English Education

By

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2017

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

At first, I want to thank the South-Central University for Nationalities for giving me this opportunity to join this program, which is an amazing journey for me to change my designed plan for the future. My peers and professors give me assistance with my study of English and preparing to be a teacher.

Secondly, I am willing to thank my classmates in this program. Most of them majored in English when they were undergraduate students, but I did not. Because of this gap between us, I motivate myself to keep up with them. Meanwhile, they helped me to correct my pronunciation, grammar, and structure of sentences. Without their assistance, I would feel nervous from day to night.

Thirdly, it is my great honor to recognize Dr. Hu. Her serious attitude towards everything taught me to follow the rules. She often discourages and encourages me about my English study, which makes sense the lesson “life can teach you.”

Finally, it is the best gift for me to have an advisor whose name is Dr. Dan. He is the nicest man I have ever met before. He always gives me the glorious words to encourage the boy with the poor proficiency in English. Although I am not good enough now, I believe “Every dream has a pair of wings. You have to try your best to pursue it; otherwise, you will never achieve it.” Your kindest words will motivate me during my rest of life.

Thank you all.

Abstract

A REVIEW STUDY OF IMPROVING THE ENGLISH EDUCATION ON THE RURAL PRIMARY SCHOOL IN WULING MOUNTAINOUS AREA

Lindong Yang

Under the Supervision of Prof. Daniel E. Leitch, PhD

This paper is to deal with the problem of English Education in the rural areas in China, especially in the Wuling Mountainous area. The author uses library research as the main methodology in the paper to review the academic sources from distinct fields. In this paper, the author hopes to address and solve the core two problems: the inequality of educational resources between rural areas and urban areas, and how to utilize the achievement of urban schools as a reference for the rural schools. At last, the author proposes four useful recommendations for the rural schools in Wuling mountainous area.

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Chapter I Introduction

Agriculture, farmers, and rural areas are the core problems restricting the economic development and the society transformation in China. Indeed, education is the elementary condition of rural development, which reflects the basic evolution of the regions. What's more, setting education in a crucial position is a conducive way for the rural areas to promote the local economy. In addition, the rural English Education (EE) is a significant aspect of the pedagogy in recent Chinese Education System.

In contemporary China, there is an imbalance of the education resources between urban and rural areas, especially in the mountainous areas. In fact, numerous scholars have done the surveys and research results about the “Dual Economy” in China, and it is a complex question “How does this impact the development of the entire rural places?” Consequently, there is a large quantity of classical articles to state the unbalanced growth during the period of transitional China. At the same time, China released the “Develop the Country through Science and Education” as a national strategy in 1995. Thus, it is crucial to improve the whole educational system in China, not a specific region. Generally, the most schools have come under increasing pressure because of the distinct cultural backgrounds, different learning styles and needs of their students, both in urban and rural areas. However, rural schools face more restrictive problems than the urban ones, such as how to retain the high quality teachers, as well as how to solve the problem about the geographic isolation (Michael L. Arnold et al., 2005). A number of researchers have studied English Education in different fields, and the urban students have already enjoyed the benefits from the modern English Education, including the modern teaching techniques, emotional education, technologies' application, and many other benefits. This work helped researchers gain much information about urban English Educational techniques, methods

and approaches. However, researchers have a paucity of academic resources to draw conclusions between the urban and rural areas. Apparently, the shortage of information about rural English Education has been neglected by scholars; therefore, I would like to do some analysis about the advantages in urban English Education, and the disadvantages in the rural areas.

The English Education in primary schools play the basic function in terms of preparing students for a whole life of English study. The Chinese government established English as the part of universities' entrance examinations many years ago. Different scholars have their own ideas about the dominant foreign-language Education categories: Yi Yang (2000) made a systematic study of English Education in China from 1919-1998. He classified EE into three categories: English teaching in the Republican Period (1919-1949), English teaching in the Socialist Revolutionary Period (1949-1978) and English teaching in the Open Door Period (1978-1998). In fact, the Door Open policy significantly promoted Chinese EE. After the policy was issued in 1978, English Education played a role in exam-oriented curricula, starting with the Chinese Historical Education stage. Despite government alteration of English Educational policies in the rural primary schools, it does not work as well as expected. Therefore, Chinese leaders did not change the basic policy about the Examination. Consequently, it is a hard process to alter the teachers' role in the classroom remaining the empirical and didactic teaching techniques in the rural areas (Chunmei Yan, 2015).

In addition, this author wants to use the urban English Education success as the reference, and transfer some teaching methods to the rural areas in a way to respect domestic customs. Finally, this author intends to give some suggestions about how to improve the rural English Education in a holistic and comparative way.

This paper is written by an author who is from the central part of Wuling Mountainous area. In order to help the readers to comprehend the culture of this specific region, some of this paper originates from the first-hand knowledge of the author and not from secondary sources.

Statement of the Problem

For China, distribution and redistribution are the complex aspects of the resources. In general, doing a study about the allocation of educational resources is the basic problem for the contemporary China. Therefore, this paper will conduct a literature review to gain the abundant sources about the achievement of urban English Education in China, concluding the communal reasons to impact the progress of urban EE achievement. Secondly, what are the factors to involve the English Education in the rural primary school in Wuling Mountainous Area, taking the local internal and external environment into consideration? Lastly, how to improve the English Education in the Primary school in Wuling Mountainous Area (Give some suggestions about the shortage of the guidelines and introduce some organizations to help the local education)?

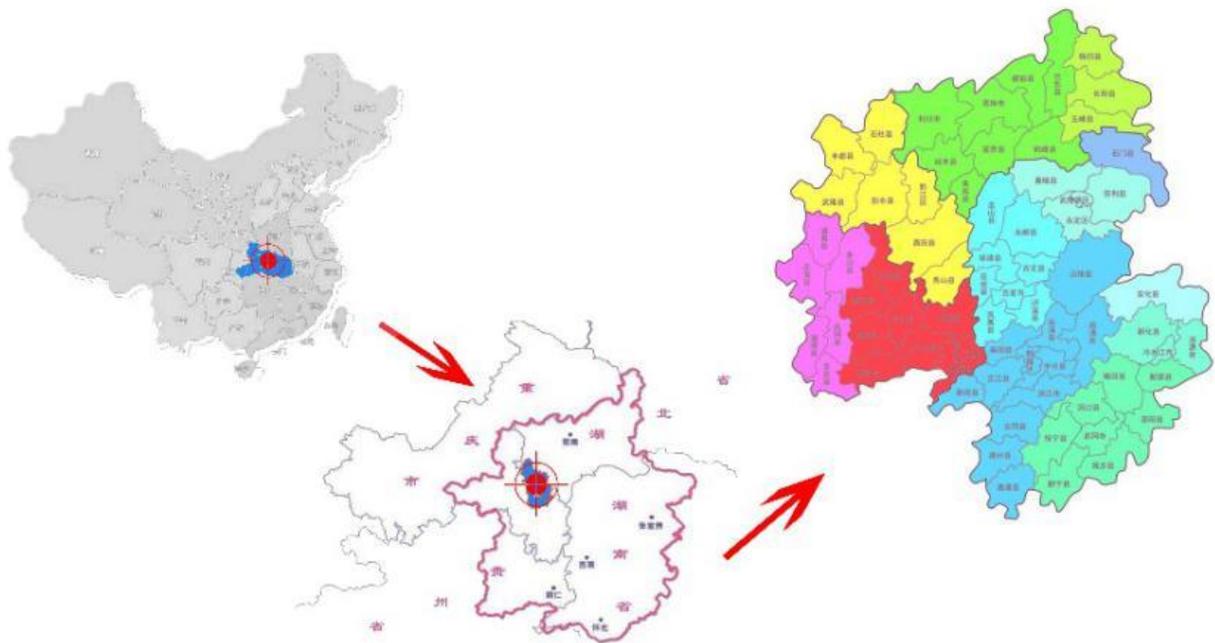
Definition of Terms

Wuling Mountainous Area

Wuling Mountain is a district with mountain averaging 1000 meters. It is a mountainous range located in Central China, running from Chongqing Municipality to ending at the East Guizhou Province, and boundary to West Hunan Province. Chen Gongxi et al. (2002) have

defined the exact location for the Latitude and longitude aspect “between 27° 28’ N and 30° 05’ N, 109° 02’ E and 111° 33’ E, from to 189. 4m to 2570m above sea level, with an area of about 100,000km²” and described the diversity of ecosystem in Wuling Mountains with abundant species. Leng Zhiming (2006) specifies the “Wuling Mountains Area” in terms of Cooperative Poverty-Eradication (Zhou Aiping, 2013), meaning this area is under the poverty line called “Centralized Poverty Joint” for its isolated geographical region. The author draw a map to make this term as a viscous concept to comprehend.

Figure 1 The map of Wuling Mountain



English Education in China

English Education is an extremely large academic term to define and discuss. However, as a major term in this article, it should be narrowed to a small scope from the big scope.

Therefore, the English Education ought to be discussed in China. A large amount of scholars have done the research about the different periods of English Education in China. Hu Zhuanglin (2005) holds the view that Chinese EE had suffered some setbacks before the 1976, and policy changed into a new one during the Door Open policy. Hu Guangwei speculates that the new era of EE in China emerged after the Cultural Revolution, and it has a strong tie with the political element for the Chinese central government. There are more than 200 million persons who speak and learn English as a second language in China, and over 50 million secondary schoolchildren are studying the English as their foreign language (Qu, B, 2007).

English Education in China is a sort of curricula based on the Chinese educational policies, which is illustrated as a policy-oriented course in term of the six phases of foreign-language-education used in China since 1949 (Agnes Lam, 2002). In general, the Chinese EE is structured by the four aspects of the English language planning, teacher education, materials (textbooks chosen and written), and large-scale exams designed to assess the proficiency of English Learners (Yi'an Wu, 2001).

Junyue Chang (2006) states that EE in China has not been established just for the educational policy, but also imposed because of globalism. Therefore, Cheng, K. M. (2010) chooses Shanghai, the first city to trigger the Chinese educational reform, Hong Kong, sharing “one country, two systems” national policy. These are two typical places to represent urban EE in China, which started to develop the students’ language potential and ability to exert it.

Rural Primary School

Rural Primary School is a definition to describe the location of Primary school, which could be explained with the contrast definition of Urban Primary School. Michael Gardiner

(2008) argues that the concept of urban and rural is not based on the terms like “modern” and “traditional”, however, it should be considered by the geographic isolation and modern technologies’ limitation. Melhuish, E. C. et al. designed survey about the fundamental impact of the home learning environment and preschool center experience, which demonstrates the crucial function of students’ behaviors and learning attitudes in early primary school. Wang Qiang (2002) gives the basic requirements issued by Chinese Ministry of Education, which contains motivation of students’ interests towards English learning, cultivation of students’ language-environment sense, and development of pupils’ ability of using English.

In fact, there are many differences compared with the former rural primary schools in China, merging the smaller rural primary schools into a large central one since government issued a report called “A Decision to Reform and Develop Primary School Education” in 2001, which allocated more investment in the central primary schools (Chengfang Liu, Linxiu Zhang, Renfu Luo, Scott Rozelle, and Prashant Loyalka, 2010).

According to the figure2, it is clear that primary students make up the largest percentage of the entire students’ number. And there are nine million the "left-behind" children in the rural areas in China. Although the number rapidly decreases in 2016, it is still a big problem for the rural education.

Figure 2 China Educational System

Age	Semester	
27	22	Doctor (280 thousand students in school)
26	21	
25	20	
24	19	Master (1.43 million students in school)
23	18	
22	17	
21	16	Bachelor/Vocational Education (25.991 million students in school)
20	15	
19	14	
18	13	
17	12	High school (23.734 million students in school)
16	11	
15	10	
14	9	Senior school (43.054 million students in school)
13	8	
12	7	
11	6	Primary school (99.84 million students in school)
10	5	
9	4	
8	3	
7	2	
6	1	
5		

4		Pre-primary school (36.86 million students in school)
3		

Purpose of the Study

The current problem of English Education in the rural primary school have been found and discussed for many years, this paper will explore how to develop and solve the problems.

Significance of the Study

Actually, large number of scholars did some research on this topic from different background, cultural things, the inequality of different region and many other aspects.

How can educators transfer the achievement of Urban EE to the Rural EE in primary schools? This research hopes to illuminate this question.

Delimitation of the Study

1. The place is delimited in Wuling Mountainous Area, therefore, the special culture, identity, nationality and local language have an effect on the consequence of English study.

2. It is a case study about the specific region, so the suggestions are not general in different places.

Methodology

Secondary research (Literature Review):

Reading different academic books and journals



Collecting various data from the statement of government/institution/organization...



Summarizing the different proposition



Finding out the common problems



Analyzing the problem



Solving the problems & Developing the English Education in the Rural primary school

Chapter II Review of Literature

Theory support: Cumulative Causation Theory and Dual Economy

Myrdal G (1968) defined two distinct elements in terms of his research about the poverty in Asia areas, in fact, he explained the implicit concepts about circular causation and its cumulative effect.

Shi weiwei (2008) summarized the Myrdal G' Cumulative Causation theory from his book *Economic Theory and Underdeveloped Regions*, which used Spread effects and backwash effects to explain how the resources flowing from the developed areas to the underdeveloped regions. She thinks it is a natural reflection for the movement of resources to keep balance.

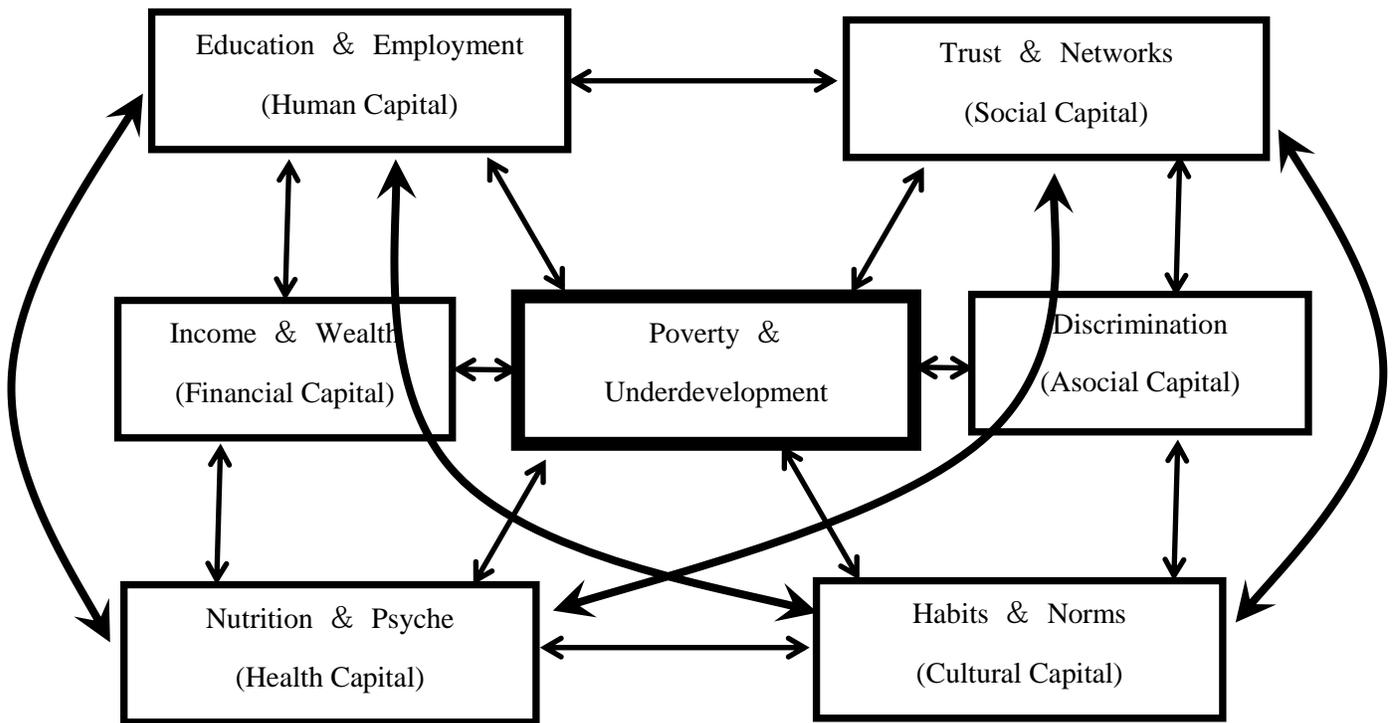
Phillip Anthony O'Hara (2008) does a deep explanation about the impact of political economy based on the Circular Cumulative Causation (CCC) theory, and give us a dynamics analysis on Figure 3. Moreover, Sebastian Berger (2008) applies CCC as a theory to guide the economic planning to minimize the social costs as stated in institutional economics.

Lewis, W. (1954) proposed the concept of Dual Economy in the model of Dual Sector and demonstrated Dual Economies as two sectors: local needs and global export market, which throughout the notion of Marginal productivity explain the distinct revolution level between the agriculture and industry.

The research by Dale W. Jorgenson (1961) indicates that it is impossible for agriculture to achieve the capital accumulation based on the Dual Economy Theory. Therefore, rural areas need policy to guide public resources' flows. Jeffrey Sachs, Xiaokai Yang, and Dingsheng Zhang (2000) apply inframarginal analysis to demonstrate that China has to implement the institutional reforms after establishing membership with the World Trade Organization, in terms of the

endogenous comparative advantage and exogenous comparative advantage, which illustrate that distinctive regions would achieve their domestic development with resources exchange.

Figure 3 Cultural and Socioeconomic CCC Dynamics



The effectiveness of urban EE

Nowadays, urban schools are not the only places for students to study (William, H. Teale, 2009), however, most of them choose to enter the urban schools and suppose they are able to gain the high-quality EE (Clemencia Cosentino de Cohen, Nicole Deterding, and Beatriz Chu Clewell, 2005). There is an Educational Achievement Gap occurring in urban areas, caused by race and class (English Fenwick W., 2002). What's more, Kauffman, Johnson, Kardos, Liu, and Peske (2002) have already figured out that various guidelines impact the teachers' teaching styles and leaves them "lost at sea", however, Margaret S. Crocco and Arthur T. Costigan (2007) argues that training the teachers in a professional way should be a long-term goal for the beginning urban teachers, because of multiple working conditions, narrowing of curriculum, and pedagogy. In fact, it provides evidence that salary sets a major reason to influence the Teacher Sorting, and supposes that high salaries would attract high-quality teachers particularly in urban school (Hamilton Lankford, Suanna Loeb, and James Wyckoff, 2002).

The classroom observation findings indicate that five standards (based on students English proficiency and divided students into five groups, then to give them five standards to require) of effectiveness on students' English proficiency have an effect on the students' engagement in their work, meaning that different students need distinct requirements to follow. (Yolanda N. Padron and Hersholt C. Waxman, 1999). On one hand, English Language learners have already benefited from the general instructional principles such as basic assessment, clear learning objectives, and well-designed instructional routines (Goldenberg, 2004; Goldenberg, 2006; Goldenberg, 2008). On the other hand, literacy instruction is applied in the EE, including comprehension, vocabulary study, phonological awareness, reading fluency, and writing

(William, H. Teale, 2009). Jason Snipes, Fred Doolittle, and Corinne Herlihy (2002) applied the case study method to confirm the urban school system actually brings a good improvement on students' study. In fact, students are motivated by their emotion rather than focusing on enhancement of teaching techniques in the urban school system, which will boost students' learning interest in the English (Cynthia Lewis & Jessica Dockter Tierney, 2011). In addition, Valerie F. Kinloch (2005) recognize that poetry, literacy, and creativity are crucial for the teachers to structure the learning strategies in the urban classroom.

Moreover, urban schools have numerous advantages to introduce and test advanced pedagogy such as Critical Language Pedagogy into the urban English classroom, which helped African American vernacular English learners to build an easy approach on language code-switching and a new view on their own dialect (Amanda J. Godley and Angela Minnici, 2008). Current EE in the urban area, considers English from the aspects of politics, pluralism, and possibilities and is a method to preserve the diverse students from cultural domination, absorption, and social marginalization. This construct EE is a comprehensive and accurate way in the urban English contexts (David E. Kirkland, 2010).

Frankly, the progress of the urban EE is on the aspects of teaching techniques, teachers' proficiency, and students' benefit from the school, particularly for the special education on the English Language learners who are disabled (Artiles, A. J., Rueda, R., Salazar, J. J., and Higareda, I., 2005). In addition, parents in the urban areas pay much attention on their children's study, and parent involvement has a direct effect on children's literacy in EE (Angela Calabrese Barton, Corey Drake, Jose Gustavo Perez, Kathleen St. L., 2004).

The shortage and problems of rural EE

In fact, rural schools have suffered many educational problems and challenges, compared to urban schools, such as geographic isolation, students' diversity, and limited educational resources (Johnson, J. & Strange, M., 2007). Hu Jing (2007) stated a serious situation about how to retain the professional English teachers in rural areas of China, which has a bad effect on recruiting English teachers and no explicit advantage compared to urban areas. Meanwhile, English teachers in rural areas need more time and training to be able to teach the new versions of English textbooks due to the limited communication and geographic isolation. Therefore, distance education was identified as an effective approach to deal with these problems (Hannum, W. H., Irvin, M. J., Banks, J. B., & Farmer, T. W., 2009).

Joel Andreas (2004) proposed a significant case that the purpose of rural education in China is to impart the practical rural-oriented knowledge to help local students escape from their rural life. However, this conservative educational thought gradually affected the rural students who went to the general college instead of the vocational school. Therefore, a large amount of research was done on the examination-orientated English teaching in the rural China.

Michelle W. L. Fong (2009) offers a new insight to analyze urban and rural regions by evaluating the adoption rate of Information and Communications Technologies. Digital development gradually became a significant aspect to assess the rural evolution. Some of the rural mountainous regions in China have already increasingly focused on to the English Education. Instead, students gain some skills to pass the exams, but they are not able to apply their language ability (Yang, J. L., Ling, Q., College, F. L., & University, N. N., 2014). As for the high-needs areas, novice teachers are often required to be equipped with high-teaching skills

such as help-seeking, problem-solving, and class-managing, causing high-needs areas are to suffer some uncertain situations (Antonio J. Castro, John Kelly, and Minyi Shih, 2010).

Chapter III Conclusions and Recommendations

Guide the recourses from the urban to rural areas.

CCC theory is the crucial guideline to lead the direction of resources up to certain areas. Educational resources are a huge part of public resources. Basically, there is a high ability for the educational resources to flow into the undeveloped areas in order to maintain the balance between the rural and urban areas. However, educational resources sometimes are extremely unstable in terms of the various elements of the structure, which contain the tangible and intangible factors that impact the management of resources. What's more, English is the only foreign language taught in the Chinese primary schools. EE requires more professional skills for the teachers than other basic curriculum, but it is hard for the schools to recruit native English speakers to teach students in the rural areas in China.

Married women the elderly, and children represent the majority of the population, thus, effective measures should be taken to eliminate the dual economy between the urban and rural places and to intensify the provision of public resources in the rural communities Xiang Biao (2007). In fact, some developed countries suffered the resource disequilibrium as well. United States rural schools also face the problems such as financial inequalities, less well-educated faculty and limited curriculum (Stern, J. D., 1994).

Simultaneously, President Clinton had signed executive issue called *Rural Education Achieve Program* (REAP) aimed to compensate the compulsory education in the rural areas of the United States. In fact, this policy is an executive order to ensure long-term financial support, emphasizing that the low English proficiency students need more attention and assistance. As for the Chinese central government, a new special plan on the English Education in the rural areas needs more consideration. Despite of the obligatory policy for the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, it would be another practical approach in the reality. There is a big gap between the government and the remote schools in some rural areas. On the one hand, it is hard work for them to completely comprehend the policy from the central government. On the other hand, central government should put huge effort on the issue because of distinctive schools in different areas. Thus, REAP gives the China rural education system a good reference to stop the problem from getting worse.

The first step for the Chinese government to EE is to change the one final examination into multiple examinations. Thus, EE will not serve as a core curriculum in the entire Chinese educational system. Instead, this policy perhaps assistants reduce the stress of English learning. Therefore, it will make the teaching techniques and learning styles more flexible.

Set the advantages of urban EE as a reference.

Urban English Education is mentioned in the pre-writing, so advanced technologies, modern educational techniques, and emotional education is doing very well in the China educational system. It is hard for the rural schools to copy the achievement directly. However, the Late Mover Advantage (LMA) illustrates that late entrants would sell more than the pioneers in the marketing (Venkatesh Shankar, Gregory S. Carpenter and Lakshman Krishnamurthi,

1998). Rural schools would act as late mover compared to the urban schools by observation of EE teaching techniques in urban areas. Under the environment of Dual Economy, LMA is rather effective in the rural areas, so the rural schools should take this advantage. Nevertheless, English is a special course in the rural schools because of the underdevelopment of the rural pedagogy.

Teacher development/education

Frankly, limited technologies are not the major problem to influence the teachers' teaching techniques and students' learning strategies in mountainous regions in China. Wuling Mountainous areas contain 30 different ethnic minorities, thus, the local traditional thinking is a huge setback to baffle the global language learning. Native persons encourage their children to study hard and get rid of the life which was identified with poverty and conservatism. Although it seems to promote the revolution of local education, this very traditional idea may hinder the high-qualified teachers from returning back to develop the economy and education in their hometowns. Therefore, dual economy has been triggered.

In fact, the shortage of professional English teachers is the most significant problem for the Wuling Mountainous area's native schools. In the case of Xianfeng County, Huangjindong ethnic primary school has more than 300 primary students in the school, but none of their English teachers majored in English. This is the typical primary school in the Wuling Mountainous areas, which represents the most common problems in these areas. Salary should act as a direct factor to attract the high-qualified teachers to staff the rural areas, especially for English which is a very professional course. The only financial support for the rural schools are the public financial investment. The wage for teachers is their only income without any additional funds. Thus, high-qualified teachers would choose the urban schools owing to the

attractive salary. Using the sufferings of rural school students to pick up the teachers who have the pure love to dedicate themselves into the rural education is a test to the teachers' consciences. Under the backgrounds of commercial globalism, it is a rational choice for the professional persons majored in English join the big corporations, associations, and institutions to achieve their goals rather than going to the less-developed areas. So tertiary education should add the rural practical courses for the English majored students. Awakenning the awareness of the English teachers is a conductive way to help the graduated students have multiple choices for their occupations.

Non-governmental Organization (NGO) act as a new role in the rural areas

The NGO is a new organization which is a not-for-profit institution aiming to deal with some problems in particular social fields, such as disabled persons' care, environmental pollution, hygiene health, education in under-developed areas and so on. As for the education in the rural areas, it is a resource that requires the dedication of teachers and the budget from the local government. Therefore, it is tough work for the rural schools to solve these troubles. The school's goal is to help the students achieve their career and shape their behaviors instead of wasting time on how to retain the well-educated teachers and how to gain the financial support from the government. Meanwhile, it takes much time for the leaders in rural schools for recruiting the high-qualified teachers, initiating infrastructure construction, and improving budgets from the public finance. However, when the NGO comes into the rural areas, it will help these regions focus on the most essential parts.

NGOs always recruit some volunteers who work for this organization without profit. Some of them want to go for their dream to help people escaping from poverty, while others

purely pursue their own goal to educate the students in the rural areas. Many members in these organizations have new ideas to change the hygiene environment for the isolated places. In conclusion, NGOs are organizations to help the under-developed places to boost the local development by their assistance.

Thus, local government should open channels for some NGOs concentrating on the rural education of the schools in Wuling mountainous areas. Indeed, there are many successful cases in the Yunnan province, and schools are benefiting from the NGOs including *Teach for China*. NGOs assist the rural areas dealing with the problem of lacking the professional English teachers by recruiting the teachers who majored in English from the top universities in China and Overseas. In fact, it is a win-win work for the rural schools and the volunteers, which would help the rural students enjoy the most updated pedagogies and give an opportunity for these teachers implement their new concept without some outmoded teaching techniques. At the same time, NGO faculty would bring some new ideas from outside, and help the local schools apply funding from the non-profit foundation, not just from the government.

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