



中国学生 跨国学习经历研究

——以中英合作办学项目为例

侯俊霞 著

中国社会科学出版社



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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Research Background

Recent changes in China owing to economic reforms have been dramatic (Guthrie, 2009). Since the 'open-door policy' started in 1978, the Chinese economy has achieved a growth rate of around 9.5 per cent per year (Chow, 2007) and in 2008 China was the second largest economy in the world in terms of Gross Domestic Product at Purchasing Power Parity (World Bank, 2009). The accession to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in 2001 marked an acceleration in China's integration with the globalised economy. This has not only enabled the access to international markets and capital, but also to technology, requiring China to put more emphasis on improvements in productivity and technology (Stiglitz, 2006). As a result, the Chinese government is engaging in a process of reform to its entire education system to prepare its 1.3 billion people for the knowledge economy which has become crucial in China's sustainable development.

In response to globalisation, higher education is experiencing internationalisation. Cooperation between Chinese educational institutions and those from other countries delivering foreign awards to Chinese citizens started in the 1990s and has developed considerably over the past two decades. These education joint ventures have become a major part of China's higher education system (Zhou, 2006). In order to encourage and also to standardise this kind of transnational cooperation, the State Council of the Chinese Government enacted the *Regulations of the People's Republic of China on Chinese-Foreign*

Cooperation in Running Schools in 2003, and in 2004 the Ministry of Education (MoE) issued the *Implementation Measures for Regulations of the People's Republic of China on Chinese-Foreign Cooperation in Running Schools*. The enactment of the Regulations aims to make China's education system globally competitive by converting the government's WTO commitments into solid domestic legislation following the three basic principles of WTO: non-discrimination, transparency and fair competition (Zhou, 2006: 271).

These regulations state that high-quality cooperation in the field of higher education and vocational education is an undertaking beneficial to public interest. Britain, as one of the countries which enjoys a good reputation for the quality of its higher education, has become a preferred partner for Chinese institutions. Articulation programmes at undergraduate level are one of the most common forms of collaboration between China and the UK, both for recruitment and educational reasons. These are programmes whereby Chinese students recruited through the National Higher Education Entrance Examination study in a Chinese partner institution for one to three years, then progress to the UK to complete their studies.

Institutions in the UK increasingly recognise the value of building partnerships with Chinese institutions (Oxford, 2008). In 2005 – 2006, there were approximately 11,000 Chinese students studying in China for a UK higher education award, 3,000 of whom were on articulation programmes that would involve their transferring from a Chinese institution in order to complete their studies with a UK partner (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2006). The overall numbers of students taking part in articulation programmes are still low, but growing. This can be evidenced by the increasing number of China-UK cooperative institutions and programmes, which has increased from 40 in 2002 (MoE, 2004a) to 114 in 2010 (MoE, 2010a and 2010b). China, with its huge potential market, has become a favourite source country for international students. Numbers of Chinese students have continued to rise; they have become the largest group represented amongst international students in the UK (UKCISA, 2013). China currently operates

1,979 transnational education programmes, which amount to a total of 450,000 students enrolled in Transnational Higher Education (TNHE) and 1.5 million graduates from TNHE (MoE, 2013a). The Chinese Government is reluctant to accept the current role of the country being a sender in TNHE, although the recent announcement that China will open its first branch campus in Malaysia in 2015 demonstrates a gradual sea change in this respect.

The Chinese Government emphasises that the essence of the cooperation should be for the Chinese institutions to introduce and absorb high-quality educational resources through which their own education system can be improved (MoE, 2007 and 2013a). It should not be simply about sending Chinese citizens abroad. However, the quality audit system was not set up until 2012 when the Chinese Ministry of Education conducted an experimental audit on TNHE programmes and institutions in three provinces (Liaoning, Jiangsu and Henan) and one municipality directly under the Central Government (Tianjin). Those who failed in the audit were ordered to terminate the cooperation. Lacking statistical figures from the Government, the general results of the audit are not clear. But it is certain that in the audit, not only students' satisfaction was given importance, but the actual introduction of high quality of education resources was considered as one of the crucial standards to be met (MoE, 2013a). The Chinese Government intended to order Chinese universities to import one third of core modules for each TNHE programme, invite foreign staff to deliver one third of the core modules and bear one third of the teaching hours (MoE, 2006). However, to save the cost, some Chinese universities and their partners did not provide these resources to the students and damaged the reputation of TNHE in China. Therefore, another round of audit is being carried on 314 TNHE programmes and institutions in 23 provinces and municipalities since the early of 2013 (MoE, 2013a). Students and their parents can check their registration information on the official website (www.crs.jsj.edu.cn) to increase the public participation in the audit. Therefore, only partner institutions who pay attention to the quality can get the licence from the Chinese Government.

As a Chinese educator who was involved in three China-UK articulation programmes, I was eager to know how to prepare the Articulation Programme Students for their study abroad. How will they cope with their study? Can the preparations facilitate their transition? In which ways? What more could be done before their leaving for the UK? What will the English counterparts think of these students' performance? How are their teaching practices different from ours? How do the differences affect students' learning approaches? Are there better ways to bridge the two stages of teaching and learning? In 2006, I had a chance to pursue my Masters degree in Education Studies in the UK. During that year, I met many other overseas Chinese students, including students coming through articulation programmes. In the summer of 2007, I became a visiting lecturer in the School of Health, Community and Education Studies, teaching Articulation Programme Students from China. My dual role as an international student and a part-time lecturer offered me a valuable chance to understand students' learning experience on the programmes. Whilst there is a great deal of research on international students overall, research focusing on their experiences on undergraduate articulation programmes is rare, perhaps due to the complexity involved in scrutinising educational activities in two countries. This is an under-researched area, therefore, a relevant topic area for my PhD research project.

1.2 Research Overview

The main research question of this study is:

How do Chinese Articulation Programme Students experience their transitional stage from China to the UK?

This study aims to explore Transnational Articulation Programme Students' transition experience between the educational context in China and the UK, with the objectives to investigate the factors that have influenced students' transition and the impact of students' transition on the educational context in both higher education institutions.

The '2+2' articulation programme researched in this study was set up by a university in the southeast of China and a university in the north of England in 2004 for two courses: *BEng (Hons) Electrical and Electronic Engineering (EEE)* and *BEng (Hons) Communication and Electronic Engineering (CEE)*. To protect the confidentiality of the field setting, the two universities are referred to here as Southeast China University and North Britain University. The participants in this study ($n = 50$) registered in 2006 on the Articulation Programme in Southeast China University, where they spent two years studying the core modules imported from North Britain University, as well as the compulsory modules required by the Chinese Ministry of Education. These students came to North Britain University in 2008 for their final two years' study. After successfully finishing the four years' study, they were awarded two undergraduate degrees, one from each university. Students who preferred to undertake a work placement before the final year need one extra year to obtain their degrees.

A longitudinal ethnographic study was designed to explore the intercultural transition experiences of this group of students, based on on-site and online fieldwork carried out over 15 months in China and the UK. I went to Southeast China University in early 2008 when students were in their last semester in China. I stayed in student accommodation and participated in students' academic and social activities, then followed them through a whole academic year in the UK, carrying out observations on the students' in-class and out-of-class activities. Sixteen students were interviewed on three occasions. The first round of interviews were conducted in China before students' leaving the country. The second and third interviews were carried out, respectively, two months after their arrival in Britain and the month after their first academic year. In addition to this, ten Chinese staff members, eight British staff members, five English students, two international students, and two Chinese parents were interviewed. I also conducted cyber observations on students' online chat and used their blogs and coursework to obtain a comprehensive picture of students' experience in their transitional stage.

1.3 The Organisation of the Book

This book is presented in seven chapters:

Chapter One: introduces the whole project with a brief description of the research background followed by the rationale, the derivation of the research question, and a review of the research study.

Chapter Two: analyses the current situation of Transnational Higher Education (TNHE) in China by conducting a comprehensive documentary analysis. It first situates the phenomenon in global transnational mobility in higher education and then explores the diverse motivations of importing and exporting countries taking China and the UK as linked examples. The documentary analysis carried out for this part suggests that China has stated aims to promote Transnational Higher Education as a public good, whereas UK motivations for Transnational Education are ostensibly more driven by financial reasons. The chapter also identifies three features of the current situation in China: first showing that the distribution of the Transnational Higher Education in China is imbalanced; second, partner institutions are based in 21 economic developed countries or regions; third, the prominent cooperative arrangements are strongly focused in particular disciplines. The chapter argues that these features have led to unfair competition in some areas. Therefore, it appears that there are some inconsistencies and tensions between the stated aims of Chinese TNHE policy and the way in which TNHE is spreading and developing in practice.

Chapter Three: provides a critical review of the literature in relation to intercultural transition. This literature review was drafted after I finished an independent data analysis and generated a substantive theory in order to avoid importing preconceived ideas and imposing them on my work (Charmaz, 2006). It first reviews existing models and theories, including cultural shock theory, U-shaped curve theory, stress-adaptation-growth model, and developmental models, leading to the conclusion that international students'

transition experience is a complex journey and cannot be oversimplified by any of the existing models. This chapter then discusses national cultural theory and culture of learning theory, which argues that understanding individuals' intercultural transition experience from the perspectives of these theories has the potential to fall into the traps of stereotyping. This chapter tries to understand the transition from both a microscopic perspective, focusing on individual factors, as well as a contextual perspective focusing on situational factors. The final part of this chapter examines the social interactions between members of the host community and sojourners, and interprets the intergroup relations by social identity theories. Possible ways to reduce intergroup bias are explored at the end.

Chapter Four: first presents my philosophical assumptions, which consist of ontological orientation, my epistemological consideration, and my intention to be an inside learner with a balance to be an outside expert in understanding my participants' social world. It then moves on to a discussion of the rationale of my choice of a qualitative research strategy: ethnography. My data collection methods, including participant observation, in-depth interviews and document analysis, are described and followed by an explanation of the data analysis process. My ethical concerns and critical reflexivity on the research process are also discussed.

Chapter Five: focuses on the individual transition experience across two universities. Although the students on the programme came from the same country and had the similar educational experience, there were a lot of factors which made individuals' transition experiences and their response to those experiences very different. We should not overgeneralise their experiences based on their nationality and 'culture of learning'. However, there were some significant patterns. Three broad response categories were identified which represented the key types of experience found within the group. They encompassed different motivations for studying abroad and strategies and attitudes towards the pre-departure preparation which particularly influenced their interaction with the new learning environment and their outcomes of