

Cohesion of EFL Teaching at Chinese High Schools and Universities

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Abstract—Fine cohesion of EFL teaching at high schools (including junior and senior ones) and universities can ensure the consistency of Chinese EFL educational policy, which has been a significant proposition in the field of Chinese EFL education in recent years. This paper, based upon the investigation of *English Curriculum Standard of Senior English (For Trial Implementation)*, employed the method of education policy analysis, examined the cohesion of the three phases (junior high school English, senior high school English and college English) from the perspectives of text and the “standard” implementation. Results indicated that although the “standard” had much room for improvement in the text, the cohesion of EFL teaching at the three phases proved to be good in terms of both theory and practice.

Index Terms—cohesion, EFL teaching, policy analysis, text analysis, implementation effect

I. INTRODUCTION

In China senior high school EFL teaching is a bridge that not only connects compulsory education with college one, but also the extension of English education at the compulsory stage and preparation phase of college English education. Since the Chinese Ministry of Education released *English Curriculum Standard of Senior English (For Trial Implementation)* (*ECSSSE*) in 2003 (Chinese Ministry of Education, 2003), senior high school English teaching reform has gradually been practiced all over China for more than 10 years and significant progress has been made. “In the past decade great changes have taken place in senior English teaching, and students have made prominent progress in listening, speaking, reading and writing, and ‘dumb English’ previously criticized is gradually disappearing” (Zou, 2012).

In order to verify the implementation effect of *ECSSSE* in an objective and overall way, the Chinese Ministry of Education organized relevant experts to make an investigation all over the country. The investigation employed the method of group sampling, involved 72 senior high schools of different categories and levels from eight provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the Central Government with its participants being experts of *ECSSSE* writers, coursebook compliers, English instructors from various districts and cities, teachers and administrators from schools, senior school students and some of the college students. The investigation adopted the main methods applied in educational science research which included questionnaires and interviews. In addition, it combined quantitative analysis with qualitative one to process the data collected so as to examine various issues with regard to the implementation of *ECSSSE* in an all-around way. The research questions consisted of several categories, including objective and value orientation, contents and structure, implementation effect and the text of *ECSSSE* itself. Among them the cohesion of *English Curriculum Standard of Senior English (For Trial Implementation)* was one of the focuses, belonging to the dimension of “contents and structure” and simultaneously an important factor to be considered in the dimension of implementation effect. To be more specific, it refers to whether senior English under the guidance of *ECSSSE* can serve as a connecting link between compulsory education (junior English) and college education (college English) at both theoretical and practical levels.

II. THEORETICAL BASIS

ECSSSE as policy text of Chinese foreign language education plays a crucial role in the guidance of senior high school EFL teaching. Any policy made by the authorities will aim to ensure the unanimous adoption and implementation of authoritative standard and value in different groups, and policy of foreign language education is no exception (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). Policy research may explore the nature of policy and its existing problems, look for practical replacement project and predicts its implementation effect (Goertz, 2006). Education policy can be either material or symbolic. The former is practical and evaluative while the latter advocates a sort of idea. Hence the object of such researches may include both implementation effect and policy text itself. In other words, there are three categories of policy researches: social background of a policy, policy and text, policy implementation and effect, and each of the categories is composed of various specific research questions (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). For example, the first category includes the source of a policy, reasons for its implementation, its relations to the preceding policy, policy ensemble and relevant aspects of policy implementation. Rizvi & Lingard (2010) listed in details the crucial issues on policy analysis. There are many issues to be taken into account, but education policy analysis need not be made in an all-around way.

Researchers may simply discuss about some of the issues according to their own research purpose and standpoint.

Foreign education policy research belongs to public policy domain within social science category, with the characteristics of public policy and the issues it focuses upon prove to be almost the same in nature as public policy research. It is worth noting that this category of research has become a new focus in the foreign education world. Zou ((2011) analyzed the characteristics of policy research in foreign language education and based upon this, he proposed three relevant essential issues and specific research questions that derived from them.

In addition, “policy ensemble” is an important concept with respect to education policy research, consisting of a set of policies that are closely associated with each other, either one being succeeded by another or simply having a progressive relationship. There exists intertextuality among the policies that form “policy ensemble”. In other words, between the policy texts there is implicit or explicit concrete cross-referencing in terms of wording or idea (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). The introduction of the notion “policy ensemble” makes it possible for policy analysis to avoid the predicament of having one’s view of the important overshadowed by the trivial and the arrival of one-sided conclusion. As far as researches on foreign language education policy are concerned, when a policy is analyzed, it is required to be taken into account whether the policy is simply one of the “policy ensemble” so that the policy itself can be better understood.

At the same time, research methods are also to be considered. For different questions, education policy research employs different methods, including both qualitative analysis and quantitative one. Maguire & Ball divided qualitative methods of education policy into *elite studies*, *trajectory studies* and *implementation studies* (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). Elite studies, by means of interview with the main policy makers, interpret policy text and policy construction process, and show concern for the political factors that cause policy text to come into being. Trajectory studies discuss the whole process of a policy emergence, its implementation and even its backwash effect. Implementation studies pay special attention to the social environment of policy implementation and use the methods of interview, observation, text analysis and even portfolio. Rizvi & Lingard (2010) believed that qualitative studies of education policy were supposed to include policy text analysis, use critical discourse analysis, deconstruct the components of the text, discourse features and the environment in which the text was created, and even predict the possible effects of the text from the above. In addition, quantitative study is an important part of the policy research methods and quantitative analysis is usually combined with qualitative one to verify the effectiveness of an education policy.

ECSSSE as a programmatic policy document has to be examined its its cohesion at both theoretical and practical levels. Hence the researcher of this paper determined the research questions as the implementation and effect, policy and text questions, employed the methods of implementation research and text analysis, discussing about *ECSSSE* within “policy ensemble” in an all-around way and from different perspectives.

III. RESEARCH DESIGN

A. Questions

This research takes the cohesion of *ECSSSE* as object from the aspects of theory and practice, focuses on whether the policy document plays the role of a bridge. The following questions are to be answered:

- (1) At the practice level, whether *English Curriculum Standard of Senior English (For Trial Implementation) (ECSSSE)* can effectively carry on the EFL education at the compulsory phase and meet the needs of higher education?
- (2) At the policy text level, whether *English Curriculum Standard of Senior English (For Trial Implementation) (ECSSSE)*, *English Curriculum Standard of Compulsory Education (2011 Edition) (ECSCCE)* and *College English Curriculum Requirements (For Trial Implementation) (CECR)* can constitute the “policy ensemble” (Chinese Ministry of Education, 2000, 2012)? To what extent are the three policy documents cohesive in terms of both form and contents?
- (3) Whether the three documents have continuous and progressive relations to each other?

B. Methods and Materials

As this research aims to examine the cohesive traits of *ECSSSE* at theoretical and practice levels, it belongs to text and implementation research among policy studies. The researcher combined qualitative analysis with quantitative one, using the methods of questionnaire, interview and discourse analysis. For the research methods and materials, see table 1.

TABLE 1
METHODS AND MATERIALS

Research Level	Methods	Materials
Practice Level	Quantitative	Scales for Self-evaluation of EFL Competence
	Qualitative	Interview
Text level	Qualitative	Three Documents (<i>ECSSSE</i> , <i>ECSCCE</i> & <i>CECR</i>)

At practice level, this research investigated the cohesion of *ECSSSE* from two aspects. Firstly, the researcher used questionnaire to test high school students’ (grade two and three) English competence. The questionnaire consisted of 56 items which were categorized into four levels, covering the competence levels described in *ECSSSE*, namely levels of 5-6, 7-8, 8-9 and elective level. Test method involved students’ own judgment of whether they were capable of “doing

something in English". The highest score for each item was 4, and the reliability coefficient for the four levels were all above 0.85, indicating that this instrument was reliable enough. 3780 high school students participated in the investigation and all of the questionnaires were returned (100%) and proved to be valid (100%). The instrument turned out to be able to objectively describe participants' real English competence and of great help to explain whether the EFL teaching at the phase of compulsory education could transit smoothly and high school EFL teaching was able to meet the needs of Chinese higher education. In addition, This research also attempted to discuss the cohesion of *ECSSE* from the angles of high school teachers and university students. In the course of investigation, more than 230 high school teachers, administrators and 30 college students participated in the interview, the focus of which was cohesion of EFL teaching at the three phases. Analysis of the interview contents made it possible for the researcher to obtain first-hand information on participants' answers to the research questions.

Text analysis is a method frequently used for education policy research and so it was in foreign language education policy. Zou (2011) pointed out that the text of foreign language education policy was supposed to be the main research object of relevant researches. Accordingly this research paid close attention to the three policy documents: *English Curriculum Standard of Senior English (For Trial Implementation) (ECSSE)*, *English Curriculum Standard of Compulsory Education (2011 Edition) (ECSCCE)* and *College English Curriculum Requirements (For Trial Implementation) (CECR)*, aiming to analyze the interrelations between them, wonder about whether they belonged to the same "policy ensemble" and focus upon whether *ECSSE* possessed the cohesive traits at text level or continued from the above and introduced the following. In the course of text analysis, the researcher employed part of Zhang & Zou's framework designed for the contrastive study of international English curriculum standard (Zhang & Zou, 2010), and examined the three policy documents in terms of form and contents. As for the contents analysis, the researcher paid close attention to its scientificity or interpreted it from the perspective of education and whether it could meet the needs of learners and the society, proposed reasonable teaching purposes, objectives, process and evaluation measurement. As far as form was concerned, the researcher examined the formulation of the three texts, which mainly referred to the detail level of formulation for language learning or teaching objectives, since objectives with detailed formulation tended to be more practical. In addition, as the focus of this paper was on the cohesion of *ECSSE*, and the three policy documents involved junior high schools, senior high schools and universities, horizontal contrast had to be made for part of the teaching objectives in the documents so as to discuss the issue of cohesion at the text level.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Implementation

The implementation of policy means the process that policy resolution is determined and practiced by local authorities in the form of government project until expected effect is achieved. Accordingly Berman divided policy implementation into macro-implementation process and micro-implementation process (Berman, 1978). Text itself pays attention to micro-implementation process, discusses the issue of implementation effect for *ECSSE* and whether it is capable of playing the role of transition from compulsory education to college education. Besides, in the evaluation of a standard, content alignment is an important notion which refers to the consistent level of intended curriculum and enacted curriculum and is usually used to assess the implementation effect of a standard (Porter, 2006).

Since the publication of *ECSSE* in 2003, it has been implemented all over China and prominent achievements have been made (Zou, 2012). The objectives of *ECSSE* are based upon the objectives of 1-5 levels for compulsory education and divided into four levels (6-9) of requirements. Among them level 6 is the transition level from junior to senior high school, level 7 tends to be the graduation level of senior high school and level 8 is usually regarded as the requirement for the National Entrance Examination or the admission level of college freshmen. Hence since the implementation of *ECSSE*, if senior high school EFL education has good effect of cohesion, senior high school students' EFL competence and skills should not only smoothly achieve the objective of level 5 required by *ECSCCE*, but also meet the needs of higher education or achieve level 8. Therefore the researcher investigated the senior high school students' actual English competence.

As the above mentioned (see "3. Research design"), there were 3780 high school students as participants. The full mark for each item was 4 and the reliability coefficient of questionnaire was above 0.85. Scores for the 4 categories of language evaluation scales of *ECSSE* were respectively 2.9 for level 5-6, 2.6 for level 7-8, 2.4 for 8-9 and 2.3 for selective course. On the whole, senior high school students' EFL competence accorded with the objective level required by *ECSSE*. At the same time, as the data collected merely involved the relationship between policy objective and students' learning result (there are the stages of teaching and testing to be considered), they were not able to directly indicate the content alignment in the course of *ECSSE* implementation, but well accounted for the success of textbook compilation instead. Textbooks turned out to have implemented the spirit of *ECSSE* and had become the "embodiment of *ECSSE*" (Zou, 2013). In addition, senior high school students got the highest scores for their EFL competence at the level of 5-6, revealing that their EFL competence and skills could smoothly transit from level 5 required by *ECSCCE* to the higher level and that students well adjusted themselves to the senior high school EFL learning. The level of practice revealed that the junior and senior English guided by *ECSSE* were well cohesive and smoothly transit. Simultaneously the data indicated that after senior high school EFL education, learners in general had achieved the objective of level 7 or 8 required by *ECSSE*. Once they began to communicate in English, their language knowledge and basic

communicative competence were sufficient for them to meet the needs of communication. Based upon this, the researcher believes that since students are able to achieve the objectives required by *CECR* and even more than *CECR*, they are capable enough to face the college EFL learning so as to meet the needs of Chinese higher education.

In addition, records of interviews with senior school teachers and administrators indicated that most of the participants observed that transition of EFL teaching for both junior and senior high school proved to be smooth and that senior high school students of grade one could well adapt themselves to senior high school EFL teaching guided by *ECSSSE*, which had been recognized in secondary and above schools. Nevertheless, in some regions, especially in some poor schools, the cohesion of EFL teaching between senior high school and compulsory education was not smooth enough, mainly in that some students found it difficult to catch up with the teaching schedule. In the researcher's view, the problem was merely local and the main reason was that *ECSSSE* was not completely practiced in some areas and test evaluation system had been separated from curriculum standard. Due to the pressure of examination and entrance of a higher school, teachers from some poor schools did not teach according to *ECSSSE*, but regarded examination as direction, knowledge as teaching objective and neglected the development of specific EFL skills. On the whole, the cohesion of both junior and senior high school EFL teaching was fine and the transition proved to be smooth. Among the participants, the senior high school teachers and administrators revealed sufficient self-confidence in the effect of senior high school EFL teaching. They unanimously agreed that since the implementation of *ECSSSE*, senior high school students had made significant greater progress in their EFL skills than a decade ago. The English language skills of some distinguished students even reached or surpassed college English level 4, which once again verified the fact that the implementation of *ECSSSE* might help supply qualified senior high school graduates for colleges and universities and lay solid foundation for college English teaching.

In addition, the researcher randomly interviewed about 30 college students with the intention to examine their attitude and viewpoints with respect to senior high school EFL teaching and differences between it and college English teaching. Records of interviews indicated that participants' views tended to be unanimous. Most of them were not satisfied with the examination-oriented component at senior high schools, but they still recognized the guiding principles, methods and teaching effects in senior EFL teaching. They all believed that they did lay a good foundation for EFL education which might ensure their college English learning.

At the practice level, *ECSSSE* was well practiced, and students in general achieved the skill objectives required by *ECSSSE*, which meant that the teaching objectives required by *ECSSSE* did not build a castle in the air, instead they consulted the objective of level 5 for junior high school graduation requirements demanded by *ECSSSE* and also took into account the needs of going to a school of a higher grade and employment. Hence *ECSSSE* had a realistic solid foundation. In the course of implementation, *ECSSSE* was sufficiently able to inherit EFL education at compulsory phase and meet the needs of higher education.

B. Text Analysis

1. Scientificity of text

The setting of aims and specific objectives in foreign language curriculum standard reflects perceptions of education, curriculum and values. To be more specific, the perceptions mainly include academic idealism, the idea that education serves the social culture and economic development, the concepts of learner-centeredness, social reconstruction and multi-dimensional culture (Richards, 2002). The three documents that this research focuses upon all reflect the above perceptions and conform to the development tendency of curriculum theory in the field of international basic education (Zou, 2013). Scientific foreign language curriculum standard has to reflect social reality so as to meet the social needs. As far as Chinese foreign language education is concerned, there is a tremendously wide gap either between different regions or learner individuals. The three documents do reveal the Chinese social reality. The three standards consider all the above factors when setting the different levels. For example, *ECSSSE* requires that level 7 should be for senior high school graduates, level 8 and 9 are above that and fit for top students. Similarly, *CECR* also sets three levels, namely average requirement, comparatively high requirement and higher requirement, which may meet the needs of different regions and different universities of different levels as much as possible. On this point, the three documents echo each other, have strong intertextuality, form a "policy ensemble" with organic unity and achieve the effect of inseparable cohesion.

At the same time, scientificity of foreign language curriculum standard is also reflected in the definition of language competence. Zhang (2010) pointed out that language competence consisted of language knowledge, discourse knowledge, pragmatic and stylistic knowledge, strategy knowledge and learners' affections. Nevertheless, in both *ECSSSE* and *ECSSCE*, the connotation of language competence is defined as language knowledge and skills, learning strategies, affections and attitudes, cultural awareness, etc. Pragmatic and stylistic knowledge are not mentioned in the three texts, which has something to do with policy-makers' interpretation of language competence. As for the research questions of this paper, *ECSSSE* and *ECSSCE* give exactly the same definition to language competence and set the same models of teaching objectives so that they have ensured the smooth transition of junior high school EFL teaching to senior high school one. On the other hand, however, *CECR* defines language competence as linguistic skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing, translation and part of language knowledge, e.g. vocabulary). Hence a gap seems to have been formed between the first two standards (*ECSSSE* & *ECSSCE*) and *CECR*. However, linguistic skills and knowledge compose the essence of language competence, other non-linguistic components are based upon them. *CECR* refers to

the international common practice for its standard of language curriculum, seizes the core of language competence, achieves the effect of clearness and conciseness and realizes the coherence between it and the first two texts at this level so as to ensure the cohesion of EFL teaching in China.

2. Text formulation or description

In the education science field the so-called “objectives movement” makes it possible for education objective to be described in terms of behaviour change. In foreign language education it is usually believed that teaching objectives are supposed to precisely describe observable learner behaviours. The description is usually composed of task-statement, conditions statement and criterion statement (Nunan, 2007). Precisely described objectives are able to strengthen the practicality of a standard, facilitate the measurement of teaching effect and promote the implementation of the standard (Richards, 2002). Comparing the objective formulation of the three standards, the researcher found that most of the formulation included task statement and criterion statement but lacked conditions statement, which coincided with the result from Zhang & Zou (Zhang & Zou, 2010). In addition, when stating a task, general wording instead of specific one is used on most occasions. For example, in *ECSSE* the objective of reading skill level 6 is described as “being able to obtain the main information from ordinary written materials”. What sort of written material is ordinary? inexplicit wording makes it difficult for the objective to be implemented in the teaching practice, and most probably the “standard” will accordingly lose its value of guidance and reference. Nevertheless, although their practicality decreases, they conform to each other in their descriptions and objectively ensure the cohesion of curriculum standards due to the similarities of description in the three texts.

3. Standard of contents

The objectives of curriculums aim to better meet the needs of learners and the society so as to promote learning and teaching. When setting the objectives, both *ECSSE* and *ECSCCE* chose the language competence, language knowledge, affections and attitudes, learning strategies and cultural awareness together as the general objectives of English curriculum. Later they stipulated the specific objectives of the five aspects at each level, increased their practicality in actual teaching, which accords with the characteristics of Chinese basic education. The two texts completely conform to each other in terms of contents standard and turn out to be closely cohesive. However, *CECR* simply consists of linguistic skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing and translation) and part of language knowledge (vocabulary). The contents of *CECR* appear to be simple, but in reality reveal the nature traits of higher education and the core concept of foreign language curriculum standard. At present in China, college education still belongs to elite education which aims at adult learners with sound cognitive abilities. In addition, the nature of foreign language curriculum standard is to define language skills and knowledge objectives. Hence *CERE* abandons various notions and compacts the core of foreign language curriculum, highlights the two aspects of skills and knowledge and achieves cohesiveness to *ECSSE*, which appears to be scientific.

From the angle of “policy ensemble”, there is strong intertextuality between the three standards, which especially embodies the notion of foreign language education, language skills and knowledge objectives, etc. This means that the three come from the same “policy ensemble” and at the level of macro education policy ensure the coherence and hierarchy of EFL learning at the three stages.

TABLE 2
COMPARISON BETWEEN OBJECTIVE OF LEVEL 5 AND OBJECTIVE OF LEVEL 7

Objective of Level 5	Objective of Level 7
Having fairly explicit EFL learning motivation and active learning attitude and self-confidence; being able to listen and understand the statements on relevant familiar topics and participate in the discussion; being able to exchange information with others in terms of everyday English and express one's own ideas; being able to read and understand the materials, newspapers and magazines of corresponding level, overcome the difficulties of new words and obtain the main idea; being able to use appropriate reading strategies according to reading purposes; being able to independently draft and revise short compositions according to hints; being able to cooperate with others, solve the problems, report the result and finish the learning tasks together with others; being able to evaluate one's own learning and summarize one's learning methods; being able to learn by making use of various educational resources; being able to further strengthen the understanding and knowledge of cultural differences.	Having explicit and continuous learning motivation and autonomous-learning awareness; being able to exchange information, ask questions and state one's own ideas and proposals on familiar topics; being able to understand simplified stories of English novels and magazines in English; having basic practical writing ability; for example, being able to write announcement and inviting letters; being able to actively participate in planning, organizing and implementing language practice activities under the guidance of teachers; being able to actively extend and make use of learning resources, obtain information through various means; being able to clearly and systematically express the information obtained; having strong competence of self-evaluation and self-regulation and generally form one's own learning strategies; being able to understand the cultural differences in communication and by and large form the awareness of intercultural communication.

In addition, in order to better examine the cohesion of the three standards, the researcher divided the cohesion into that of junior high school and senior high school, and the cohesion of senior high school and university. The differences can be distinguished by comparing the objective of level 5 (graduation level at the stage of compulsory education) in *ECSCCE* and the objective of level 7 (senior high school graduation level) in *ECSSE*. As for the detailed description of the two levels, see table 2.

It can be seen from table two that both the objectives level 5 and 7 define curriculum teaching objectives in terms of five dimensions, the two documents (*ECSSE* & *ECSCCE*) accurately conform to each other on this point. At the same

time, it is found that there is certain declivity between the two levels and the difficulty level of contents in level 7 is appropriately elevated. For example, writing ability in level 5 is described as “being able to independently draft and revise short compositions according to hints” and objective of this ability requires comparatively low cognitive effort and language proficiency while writing ability in level 7 is described as “having basic practical writing ability, for example, being able to write announcement and inviting letters”. The expression appears to be more concrete, the difficulty level of tasks is increased and the objective ability therefore requires more language knowledge and cognitive effort. It is these differences that compose the contents of senior high school EFL teaching, which makes junior and senior high school English teaching coherent with traits of progressing step by step.

As *CECR* simply proposes concrete objectives of linguistic ability and vocabulary knowledge, horizontal contrast could be made between skill objective and vocabulary knowledge objective to examine the connection of senior high school English with college English teaching. However, the choice of levels as contrast is of great significance. After three years of study, senior high school students passed the national entrance examination and entered universities and colleges, and most of them ought to have reached the objective of level 8 required by *ECSSE*. Hence linguistic skill objective of level 8 automatically has become the objective level of text analysis. In addition, it is explicitly required in *CECR* that undergraduates ought to be able to reach the general requirements after two years of college English education (there are no English classes in the third and fourth year). Accordingly, the researcher chose the general requirements in the text as contrastive analysis.

Result of comparison and contrast indicated the following three points.

Firstly, in terms of linguistic skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing, the objectives set in the two documents are very much close to each other with regard to contents and difficulty level and level 8 required by *ECSSE* is even higher than the general requirements in *CECR*. For example, when describing listening ability, *ECSSE* states “being able to roughly understand the main idea of English broadcast and TV English news ” while *CECR* merely requires students to “be able to understand English broadcast and TV programs (130-150 words per minute), grasp the main idea and the key points”. In the description of oral competence, *ECSSE* requires that “being able to use appropriate intonation, tone and rhythm to express one’s own intention and feelings, etc.” while *CECR* accordingly proposes higher requirements. Therefore, Cai (2004) believed that it did not accord with regular pattern of learning and violated the basic principles of step-by-step educational progress. The researcher of this paper observes that *CERE* moderately lessens the competence objective of general requirements (between level 7 and level 8 in *ECSSE*) for the sake of significant regional differences in foreign language education in China and to ensure the smooth transition from senior high school English to college English teaching, indicating that it turns out to be a flexible move.

Secondly, although the two documents are fairly close to each other in terms of contents and difficulty level, their teaching focuses are completely different, indicating the respective characteristics and differences of senior high school and college English teaching. For example, the reading ability objective of *ECSSE* is to emphasize students’ “learning to read” and amount of reading while *CERE* lays stress on “what to read” and students’ reading speed. In the respect of writing ability objective, *ECSSE* stresses the development of comprehensive “writing” ability while *CECR* requires students to “write well” and lays particular stress on the use of writing skills.

Thirdly, as far as vocabulary learning is concerned, most of the college freshmen still believe that vocabulary is the difficult point in college English learning (Zou, 2011, 2012). The researcher of this paper suggests that the vocabulary size required by general requirements is reasonable and connected well with *ECSSE*, covering all the vocabulary in senior high school English teaching and providing high school graduates with buffer space for their adaptation to college EFL learning. In addition, there is a difference of the amount of 1495 words and phrases between *CECR* and *ECSSE* (level 8 requires 3300 words and general requirements demand 4795 words). According to college students’ cognitive level, it is not difficult to master these words within two years, which conforms to EFL learning regularity. Besides, vocabulary size stipulated by *CECR* makes full preparations for college English to be transitted from ordinary English to academic English.

Based upon the above text analysis, it can be concluded that the three standards or documents prove to be well cohesive, reveal the traits of mutual reference and thus constitute a “policy ensemble” for Chinese foreign language education. They present a sort of progressive relationship in terms of content objective and difficulty level and supply references and policy support for the gradual development of Chinese EFL teaching practice. It can not be neglected that there is still some room for improvement with respect to the three documents’ scientificity and text formulation or description.

V. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Foreign language education research aims to analyse policy text, find out the effect of policy implementation and problems to be solved, provide foundation for other possible practical projects. This research discussed the cohesion of Chinese EFL teaching at three stages (junior high school, senior high school and university) guided by curriculum standards from the angles of policy text and policy implementation. Result indicated that at the level of policy implementation, after the implementation of *ECSSE*, senior high school students’ EFL proficiency has revealed good tendency of development, which means that the transition of EFL learning from junior to senior high school is smooth, the cohesion of the two is sufficiently close and paves the way for college English teaching and meet the needs of

higher education. At the theoretical level, although there appears to be some drawbacks in the three documents in terms of scientificity and text formulation or description from the comparative perspectives of international curriculum standard, they conform to each other to a great extent and compose the policy ensemble of Chinese foreign language education. In the aspect of content standard description, the three documents take Chinese reality into account, present a reasonable gradients in the competence objective, which accords with the progress-step-by-step principle of foreign language education. The documents organically combine the three stages of EFL education and have achieved a fine cohesion.

The conclusion of this research may provide references for the text reformulation of *ECSSE* and its actual practice. Firstly, the competence objective description in *ECSSE* may refer to common description frame, and makes it more meticulous so as to increase its practicality and reference value for actual teaching. In addition, it is of necessity to appropriately supplement the definition of language competence in order to increase its scientificity. Finally it is also a must to moderately cut down the levels of non-linguistic competence and avoid ambiguous formulation caused by too fine segmentation which may affect the interpretation and operation of standard users. At the practice level, the starting level of senior high school EFL teaching ought to be appropriately lowered so as to ensure its cohesion to junior one. And teachers are supposed to teach according to students' actual level of English and make every effort to avoid doing everything precisely as required by *ECSSE*.

Nevertheless, the issue of cohesion could be gone into further details. At the practice level, it may be explored by integrating the implementation effect of *ECSSE* with that of *CECR*. At the text level *ECSSE* might be examined within a greater discourse framework with regard to text traits, policy issues, policy structure and resources, etc.

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