

Strategies for Enhancing Career Education of Non-General Language University Students under the Orientation of Market Demand--Taking Central and Eastern European Languages as Examples

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Abstract: In the post-epidemic era, non-general language graduates are facing greater pressure in employment, and students are confused about their career development prospects, meaning the education work based on career development urgently needs to be improved. Using Python programming and manual search as its methods, this paper searches and analyzes the recruitment requirements from 10 key recruitment websites and summarizes the current situation and characteristics of social demand for Central and Eastern European(CEE) languages professionals from different work units. Under the guidance of market demand, four strategies are proposed in a targeted manner to advance the educational level, to broaden the coverage, to intervene with human warmth and to take vigorous steps in career education for CEE languages majors.

Keywords: Market demand, Career education, Non-general language, Supply and demand matching

1. Introduction

With the Belt and Road Initiative rolled out rapidly and comprehensively, since 2015, under the overall deployment and key support of the Ministry of Education, the enrollment and talent cultivation work of non-general languages students in colleges and universities, especially jobs related to the Belt and Road Initiative, have made significant progress. As of 2018, the number of non-general language majors has reached 98, basically achieving the full coverage of official languages from countries obtaining a diplomatic tie with China^[1]. As a key foreign language institution in China, Beijing International Studies University insists on fostering virtue through education, and makes the full use of its language advantages to serve for our country actively under our opening-up policies. Since 2015, the university has reestablished more than 10 Central and Eastern European language majors, including Polish, Czech, Hungarian, Latvian, Estonian, Romanian, Serbian and so on.

In order to effectively guide and promote the career development and employment of these CEE students, this paper focuses on 17 language majors of CEE from the market demand, fully investigates the current situation of social demand for CEE majors by using Python programming and manual search, summarizes the characteristics and trends of social demand for CEE majors from different units, and then proposes optimized strategies for career education to enhance the career education of non-general language students and strengthen their career planning skills. The aim is to improve the career education level of non-general language students and to strengthen the effectiveness of the education targeting at employment.

2. Current Situation of Market Demand for Talents Specialized in Central and Eastern European Languages

In order to get a more comprehensive understanding of the current situation of the social demand for talents in Central and Eastern European languages, we used a combination of Python programming and manual search approach to search and analyze job information from 10 job hunter websites, such as 51job, Zhaopin, Chinahr, Liepin, Yingjiesheng, Jobeast, Gaoxiaojob, Bjrcw, Zjrc and Shuo Wen Civil Service

Information Network, with each language of Central and Eastern European languages as the search keywords. We collected nearly 800 pieces of recruitment information directly, and finally collected 273 pieces of valid recruitment information (excluding the number of civil service and university recruitment information). The following statistics are presented on the social demand for talents of CEE majors.

2.1. Talent Demand of Government Departments for CEE Majors

From 2015 to the present, the government departments with recruitment demand for CEE graduates are concentrated in the Ministry of Commerce, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, International Liaison Department of the Communist Party of China, and the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade and other national civil service departments, recruiting 24 foreign language graduates majoring in CEE.

In terms of the distribution of foreign languages students for recruitment majors, state ministry units have the highest demand for Polish in the past six years, reaching 6; followed by Czech, Romanian, Serbian and Albanian, each of them requiring 2 students; and finally, Greek, Hungarian and Bulgarian, each requiring 1. The educational requirements for these national civil service positions are all “bachelor's degree”, and there is no requirement for years of working experience in the grassroots. The job position offered are mostly “translator” or “assistant to representative office”.

In contrast to the recruitment needs of national civil servants, Beijing's foreign exchange-related departments (including the Foreign Affairs Office of the Beijing Municipal People's Government, the Municipal Friendship Association, the Foreign Affairs Office of the Urban People's Government, etc.) have not directly recruited talents specializing in Central and Eastern European languages for seven consecutive years. The demand for foreign language talents is more in the areas of English, translation, Spanish, French, Japanese and other non-common languages, and those talents are responsible for the exchange and cooperation between Beijing and the local governments, the conclusion of friendship city relations or the translation work of the municipal leaders.

2.2. The Demand for Talents Specialized in Central and Eastern European Languages in Universities

According to the search statistics of foreign language recruitment information on “Gaoxiaojob”, there is relatively little recruitment demand for CEE professionals in colleges and universities, and ten colleges and universities have recruitment demand for graduates with related majors in their recruitment plans, including Shanghai International Studies University, Tianjin Foreign Studies University, Sichuan University Foreign languages department, Sichuan International Studies University, Zhejiang International Studies University, Zhejiang Yuexiu University, Dalian University of Foreign Languages and Jilin International Studies University.

Through the analysis of the information on the recruitment needs and requirements based on university students, it is known that the demand for CEE professionals presents the following characteristics: (1) Universities with recruitment needs for CEE professionals are concentrated in foreign language colleges or foreign language department of comprehensive institutions. (2) The demand for CEE 17 foreign languages is now focused on two languages, Polish and Czech, and the positions are mainly full-time teachers. (3) The educational background requirements for CEE language professionals, except for Tianjin Foreign Studies University, Zhejiang Yuexiu University and Hainan College of Foreign Studies, where the educational background requirements for some professional teachers are bachelor's degree, the educational background requirements of the other universities are master's degree or above, which is slightly lower than the “doctoral degree”, the educational background required by other universities for professional teachers. (4) The universities pay more attention to the “overseas study” experience for the professionals of Central and Eastern European languages. Some universities add “students should have more than one year of overseas study or work experience in principle” to their recruitment requirement, or specify in the advertisement that “those who have overseas experience and foreign language study background are preferred in recruitment”.

2.3. The Demand of Enterprises for Talents Specialized in Central and Eastern European Languages

With the proposal of the Belt and Road Initiative, the diversified demand for CEE majors students not only lies in civil service and university education system, but also lies in different enterprises with various industries, which use approaches such as campus recruitment, social recruitment and overseas recruitment to attract university students.

The enterprises that have demand for CEE professionals share the following characteristics: (1) In terms of industry distribution, the employers or enterprises are concentrated in six major industries, such as foreign exchange, language education, construction and engineering, IT and Internet, overseas finance and cross-border e-commerce. Among them, the demand for talents in IT Internet and cross-border e-commerce is the highest. In the future, the demand for CEE professionals in the cultural tourism industry will also grow. (2) In terms of the nature of the enterprises, the enterprises diversified from the initial stage of the state-owned enterprises mainly engaging in contracting and investment business to the various types of private enterprises operating overseas media, cross-border e-commerce and language training business. (3) From the viewpoint of job positions, CEE professionals mainly undertake language translation work, including translation for business negotiation, translation for marketing operation, technical translation, proofreading translation for game or video text, etc. At the same time, job duties are mostly closely integrated with the company's overseas market operation and promotion (or sales) work. (4) In terms of the form of employment, except for companies that have established or intend to establish a mature system for overseas markets, more enterprises will outsource the business needs related to the Central and Eastern European languages to professional consulting or service agencies, including various types of translation companies, in forms of a project. (5) In terms of workplaces, just like other foreign language professionals, CEE professionals need to cooperate with the companies to develop their business, working aboard in long-term or short-term is a common thing for them.

3. Market Demand for Central and Eastern European Language Professionals

In the road of fulfilling the Belt and Road Initiative, the cultivation of talents is a pivotal procedure^[2]. Along the Belt and Road, there are plenty of countries, forming an integration of different national conditions and public opinions, the complexity of which determines the special request of the required talents. Therefore, the demand for non-common language talents in Central and Eastern Europe under the context of the Belt and Road Initiative is influenced by the demand for talents in the macro employment environment, and also by the professional characteristics of the non-common language itself.

While quantitatively analyzing the demand data of various types of CEE talents, the author has talked with the human resource managers of more than 10 companies, such as Xinhua News Agency, Huawei, the ByteDance, China Tourism Group, China Civil Engineering Group Co., Ltd., China machinery and equipment engineering, Ningbo haoya group, Zhongguancun M & A Development Promotion Association, Oracle Bone easy translation company and etc., through online questionnaires and interviews. A qualitative study on the social demand characteristics and trends of professional talents in CEE was conducted to summarize the preliminary social demand characteristics of talents in CEE.

Through the textual analysis of the employment requirement of the CEE professionals, the employment market has the following requirements for the foreign language talents specialized in CEE: (1) the requirements of foreign language proficiency, including not only the language proficiency of the non-common language to reach the corresponding level of foreign language proficiency, and being familiar with the culture of the language target countries, but also a higher standard of English proficiency. Some companies explicitly require “excellent non-general language translation skills, fluent English interpretation, and experience in large translation projects concerning technology” in their job advertisement. (2) In addition to the professional foreign language skills required by the company, candidates should also obtain a strong interest in the industry they work for. For example, some companies require candidates to have a strong interest or have a knowledge of “data-base” in mind in areas concerning Mobile Internet, overseas video, overseas media, outbound travel, products and technology, e-commerce. A few companies require candidates to have working experience in these industries. (3) In terms of professional ability, in addition to communication and coordination ability, learning ability and professional knowledge and skills, which are important to all types of companies, companies that have a demand for Central and Eastern European professionals also value innovation, execution ability and adaptability. (4) In the areas of professionalism, companies with the demand for CEE professionals value candidates who are good at team writing, responsible and positive in working.

4. Exploration on Career Planning Education for College Students Majoring in Central and Eastern European Languages

Taking market demand as a guide and keeping close to the social demand of talents is the root of college students' career education. We should be fully aware of the significance of the current situation of talent demand in the job market for career planning, that is, we should put forward college students'

career education based on the social demand for talents. We should also be conscious of the new requirements and new challenges put forward by the changing trend of talent demand, and do a good job in career planning education for college students.

4.1. Based on the Needs of the Times, Serve the National Strategy, and Reach a New Height in Career Building of CEE Talents

Along with the Belt and Road Initiative, international cooperation has been deepened, and foreign language talents are bound to get more development opportunities with the opportunity of international foreign exchange, infrastructure and other major project construction and production capacity cooperation. Considering the strong policy sensitivity of the demand for talents in CEE^[3], the career education for CEE majors should guide students to actively practice their national sentiment to combine their personal growth and success with the national strategy, understand the medium and long-term plan of cooperation between China and 17 CEE countries, pay attention to the political, economic, cultural and exchange cooperation between China and 17 CEE countries, and practice the cooperation through action. They should practice their patriotism through their actions, combine their future career development and service with national strategies, and take the initiative to join the trend of China-CEEC cooperation, and continuously reach a new height in career building of CEE talents.

4.2. Respond to Market Demand, Improve Composite Skills and Broaden the Career Breadth of CEE Talents

As the Belt and Road Initiative being put forward, various industries and fields are in urgent need of a large number of comprehensive talents with foreign language skills, professional knowledge and skills in the industry, and good at cross-cultural communication skills, international operation skills, innovation skills, problem-solving skills, information processing skills, teamwork skills, etc^[4]. This requires career education practitioners to be able to provide a comprehensive range of language talents. To this end, career education practitioners are required to guide students to pay attention to information of the demand for CEE professionals, to gain a keen understanding of the trends in demand for CEE professionals, to master CEE language skills, and to enrich their knowledge of the politics, economy, culture, and life of the countries in which they are studying, as well as to consciously develop the skills needed in the job market, including marketing, business negotiation, legal and financial skills, to broaden the career breadth of CEE language talents.

4.3. Respect Individual Differences, Explore Multiple Potentials, and Build the Career Path for CEE Talents

By means of group counseling or individual career counseling, students are guided to explore and develop their abilities to engage in certain specific industries and careers by combining their own characteristics, and they are guided to explore the effective connection between the industries and the CEE majors they study, so as to gradually create a “customized” career temperature for the CEE professionals.

4.4. Awaken Career Consciousness, Focus on Practical Education, and Stimulate the Career Strength of CEE Talents

Combining the characteristics of CEE majors and social needs, we make efforts to build a practical education system while strengthening students' professional learning. On the one hand, we guide students to pay attention to their personal career development as early as possible, set up personal dreams and role models for career development, formulate scientific and feasible action plans, try out the workplace experience of different positions in different industries, and promote the internship practice of CEE foreign language majors; on the other hand, we help students realize that career development is a long-term project, which requires continuous enhancement of professionalism and comprehensive quality in practice. On the other hand, we help students realize that career development is a long term project, and they need to enhance their professional skills and improve their overall skills in practice^[5], so as to stimulate the career of CEE talents.

5. Conclusion

Under the Belt and Road Initiative, research on the demand for non-general language talents is an important and ambitious, yet challenging task. This research is only a preliminary exploration and attempt. Some data and expressions in the report may be inappropriate, and some theoretical and practical difficulties and problems need to be further discussed and improved. We also expect more practical research and theoretical studies to focus on this topic, and together we will provide strong intellectual support for the construction of the Belt and Road Initiative.

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