

Research on the Cultivation of Interdisciplinary Translation Talents in the Energy Field---Take Colleges and Universities in Southwest China as Examples

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Abstract: With "the Belt and Road Initiative", China's energy cooperation with countries along the route has deepened, and the shortage of high-quality interdisciplinary translation talents in energy field has become increasingly obvious. To accelerate the development of "the Belt and Road Initiative" and improve international energy cooperation, the initiative has put forward new requirements for interdisciplinary translation talents in the energy field. This paper analyzes the current situation and problems of cultivating interdisciplinary translation talents in the energy field, and then puts forward some thoughts on the cultivation of interdisciplinary translation talents in the energy field.

Keywords: Belt and Road Initiative; Energy field; Interdisciplinary Translation Talents

1. Research Background

In 2013, President proposed to jointly build the "Silk Road Economic Belt" and "21st Century Maritime Silk Road Economic Belt", both of which are referred to as "the Belt and Road Initiative". As an international cooperation platform with both potential and prospects, the Initiative is increasingly attracting positive responses and support from countries along the route.

National development is inseparable from energy, so energy security is a matter of national economy and livelihood. The countries along the route are the main sources of China's overseas energy imports, and the depth of their energy cooperation is of great significance for solving the real risk of China's energy security [1]. Energy cooperation is one of the top priorities of the construction of "the Belt and Road Initiative". The prerequisite for cooperation is language communication, so professional translators are indispensable to achieve high-quality communication and cooperation under the background of "the Belt and Road Initiative".

In the 21st century, talent is the first productive force and the embodiment of a country's comprehensive national power. Based on "the Belt and Road Initiative", foreign language talents are an important strategic resource for promoting exchange and cooperation and achieving common development. Based on that, translation talents with single background under the traditional training mode cannot effectively contribute to the energy cooperation and development between China and other countries along the route. Therefore, cultivating interdisciplinary translation talents in the energy field is of great benefit to improving the comprehensive strength of talents and promoting the energy cooperation.

2. Current situation of Cultivating Interdisciplinary Translation Talents in Energy Field in Southwest China

Colleges and universities are the cradle for cultivating high-level translation talents. At present, most of the translation talents cultivated by universities in China have solid language skills and rich cultural knowledge reserves, but to a certain extent, they have not yet reached the level of interdisciplinary talents. The southwest region of China is in one of the three major directions of the Silk Road Economic Belt, which is an important hub connecting the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. Therefore, the author will take the colleges and universities in Southwest China that set up translation majors at the undergraduate level and major of translation and interpretation (MTI) at the master's level as the model for analysis and conduct a preliminary investigation into the cultivation of

interdisciplinary translation talents in the energy field.

2.1 Overview of Cultivation of Composite Translation Talents in Energy Field in Southwest China

In 2022, the Translator Association of China conducted the first survey on the talent development status of the national translation industry and published the *China Translation Talent Development Report of 2022*. The report shows that there are numerous translation fields involved by language service providers, and the translation services in the energy field are as high as 29.3%. In terms of energy reserves, Southwest China has a variety of energy resources such as coal, natural gas and biomass energy, accounting for about 1/5 of the country's total reserves, making it one of the regions rich in energy resources [2]. In terms of geographical location, Southwest China has inherent advantages for participating in the construction of "the Belt and Road Initiative". Therefore, there is a greater demand for energy translation in Southwest China. Based on this background, the author conducted research on colleges and universities in Southwest China, covering all aspects of translation talents cultivation from quantity to quality.

In terms of quantity, there are 142 colleges and universities in Southwest China, among which 33 colleges and universities set up translation majors at the undergraduate level, accounting for 23%; 34 colleges and universities offer MTI (Master of Translation and Interpreting) at the master's level, accounting for 24%.

Among all the statistics, in terms of major in minor languages, the number of major in minor languages in language type colleges and universities is large, while the minor language majors in comprehensive colleges and universities mainly focus on four languages, namely Japanese, French, Russian and German. In terms of the cultivation fields, most universities have narrower fields for cultivating interdisciplinary translation talents, basically focusing on general translation without setting specific directions. In terms of curriculum related to energy translation, most of them do not set up energy translation courses specifically.

2.2 Existing problems

2.2.1 Insufficient Establishment of Minor Language Majors

Based on "the Belt and Road Initiative", China has many energy cooperation countries. According to the research data, there is a "bias" in translation education in China, which means that most universities set up English majors and there is a shortage of interdisciplinary translation talents in minor languages. In the universities in Southwest China, there are few translation majors in minor languages other than English at the undergraduate level. Even for students majoring in English translation, the second foreign language courses they can choose are mainly focused on the four languages mentioned above, namely Japanese, French, German and Russian. And the teaching effect of the second foreign language is not satisfactory, and most of the students cannot achieve the purpose of listening, reading, and writing, let alone translating. In terms of the postgraduate level, from the perspective of the universities setting up MTI, most of them only offer master's degree in English translation while few offer master's degrees in translation in other languages. There are 31 universities in Southwest China setting up MTI, most of which are English translation or English interpretation majors. And there are only 6 universities with MTI majors in other languages, namely, Southwest Minzu University, Sichuan Normal University, Sichuan International Studies University, Guizhou University, Yunnan University and Yunnan Normal University. Whether at the undergraduate or postgraduate level, the translation majors are all inclined to English, and such a setup cannot provide the interdisciplinary talents of minor language translation for the "Belt and Road" language services.

2.2.2 Insufficient Cultivation of Interdisciplinary Translation Talents in the Energy Field

Energy cooperation is an extremely important field in "the Belt and Road Initiative", involving various aspects of national economy, politics, and diplomacy. So it is crucial to send interdisciplinary translation talents with relevant professional knowledge to the energy field. In general, according to the research data, most of the universities do not have enough training of interdisciplinary translation talents in the energy field.

In terms of curriculum, most of the translation courses in the universities surveyed are linked to the strengths of their own disciplines, and the training of translation talents is carried out by combining their disciplinary background. For example, Southwest Jiaotong University has courses such as *Engineering English Writing and Translation*, *International Engineering Negotiation and Interpretation*, and

International Engineering Management Practice and Translation; Southwestern University of Finance and Economics has courses such as Business Interpreting and Translation; Chongqing Jiaotong University has courses such as Engineering Interpreting and Translation; University of Electronic Science and Technology of China has courses such as *Technology Interpretation and Translation Workshop*. Translation majors at Southwest Petroleum University offer courses such as *Petroleum Technology Translation* and *English for Energy Technology*. From the data, such arrangement has its own advantages, that is, by giving full play to the school's advantages and applying the disciplinary background to the cultivation of translation talents. However, this will lead to the cultivation of translation talents being limited only to the school's advantageous disciplinary background, and the field of talent cultivation is limited. Among the researched universities, only one university, Southwest Petroleum University, specifically offers a course on energy translation. The English majors in the undergraduate stage of the Southwest Petroleum University are divided into two directions: oil and economy. *English for Energy Science and Technology* is set at the undergraduate level, *Petroleum Science and Technology Translation* is set as major course at the graduate level, and elective courses such as *Introduction to the Petroleum Industry* and *Cultural Overview of Oil and Gas Resource Countries* are offered. The practical sessions also include visits to oil drilling installations, etc., to help students understand the whole aspect of the petroleum field.

Some universities do not specifically offer translation courses in the energy field, but in their general translation classes, teachers will select energy-related texts for lectures. For example, in Sichuan International Studies University, although it does not offer a special course on energy translation, teachers give lectures on the translation of texts related to energy types in their science and technology translation courses. In addition, the university has organized teachers and students to provide translation services for the International Applied Energy Forum 2013. This has helped students to understand the characteristics of energy translation to some extent, but it is not enough. In general, the cultivation of interdisciplinary translation talents in the energy field is not enough, and most of the students have only general translation ability. Without professional knowledge in the energy field and without understanding the characteristics and skills of energy translation, the students cannot grow into interdisciplinary translation talents in this field.

3. The New Requirements for Interdisciplinary Translation Talents in Energy Field under "the Belt and Road Initiative"

The development of translation major in China has gone through a long development process. The author divides the development into three periods: firstly, the budding stage, that is, from the founding of People's Republic of China (PRC) to the reform and opening-up period; secondly, the stage of rapid development, that is, from the reform and opening-up period to the proposal of "the Belt and Road Initiative"; thirdly, the new stage, that is, from the founding of PRC till now. After the founding of PRC in 1949, the state gave strong support to translation activities for the needs of national construction and foreign diplomacy. At this stage, teaching of translation was mainly focused on language teaching, and it was widely believed that one could be a translator if he or she knew a foreign language. After the reform and opening-up in 1978, many important historical events happened in this period. In 1979, Beijing Foreign Studies University opened the "United Nations Translator Training Course", which was the first example of cultivating professional translators^[3]. In 2006, the Ministry of Education approved three universities, namely Fudan University, Guangdong University of Foreign Studies and Hebei Normal University, to enroll undergraduates in translation majors since 2006, which marked the standardization and legitimization of translation majors. In 2013, President proposed "the Belt and Road Initiative", an event that has contributed to the cultivation of translation talents in professional fields and has also put forward many new requirements for talent training.

3.1 The Importance of Interdisciplinary Translation Talents in the Energy Field

In today's globalization, national development cannot be separated from opening-up and cooperation with the outside world. The world powers almost invariably regard foreign language education as a national strategy^[4-5]. Translation talents are the bridge of communication. And today's translation is no longer the traditional conversion of languages, but more the integration of language and professional knowledge under specialized fields to achieve the purpose of accurately conveying information.

China has released a Vision and Action for Promoting "the Belt and Road" Energy Cooperation" to the world, added more than 70 bilateral and multilateral cooperation mechanisms, and signed more than

100 energy documents. The energy cooperation of countries has been deepening. So, the demand for translation related to energy field in the market has increased greatly. In order to meet the trend of the times and provide sufficient translation talent backup for "the Belt and Road" energy cooperation, it is imperative to focus on cultivating interdisciplinary translation talents in the energy field.

3.2 The New Requirements for Cultivating Translation Talents under the "Belt and Road Initiative"

The training mode of translation talents will change with the times. During the period of May 4th Movement, ideas were liberated, and new literature was promoted, hence many literary translations were made during this period. In the post-epidemic era, there is a greater demand for epidemic-related or medical-related translation. And in the time of energy cooperation under "the Belt and Road Initiative", the market demand for specialized translators in the energy field is increasing. With the promotion of the Belt and Road Energy Partnership Cooperation, college graduates with only bilingual translation ability cannot meet the market demand. Thus new requirements are put forward for the cultivation of translation talents, one of which is to improve the ability of second foreign language, and the other is to have the compound ability of "language + professional knowledge in energy field".

Up to now, China has signed cooperation documents with 149 countries to build the Belt and Road Energy Partnership Cooperation, and there is a huge demand for multilingual translation talents from various countries. More than 20 languages are spoken in the 30 member countries, including English, French, Arabic, Burmese, Lao, Malay, and others. Therefore, it is necessary to cultivate translators who are proficient in a second language or are multilingual to meet the needs of the international market.

Compound translation talents in the field of energy provide services in the field of energy. The energy field has a huge system and diverse professional knowledge, including oil, coal, natural gas, and so on, and involves various aspects such as engineering, technology, chemicals, physics, and trade, so it is not an easy task to do well in energy translation. As a compound translation talent in the energy field, it is necessary to master not only foreign languages, but also professional knowledge, industry terminology and development prospects of the above-mentioned fields in order to accurately translate the content in the energy field. Therefore, it is a priority for colleges and universities to cultivate compound translators who master language and energy expertise.

4. Conclusion

4.1 Impact of "the Belt and Road Initiative" on the Cultivation of Compound Translation Talents in Energy Field

Since the launch of "the Belt and Road Initiative" in 2013, universities have made corresponding changes in the cultivation of compound translation talents. By setting up research centers, conducting related lectures and establishing joint programs, universities have cultivated students' awareness of language services for "the Belt and Road Initiative". For example, Chengdu Jincheng University established the Belt and Road Foreign Language Talent Training Base and foreign translation Talent training base in 2018, covering all aspects of the Belt and Road. Its talent training mode is: "under the background of "the Belt and Road Initiative", the university focuses on exporting 'foreign language +X' future compound talents". The University of Electronic Science and Technology of China conducted lectures and project applications related to language services for "the Belt and Road". Southwest Jiaotong University set up a translation center to give lectures on foreign language talent training under "the Belt and Road Initiative". According to the initiative, Southwest University carries out cultural cooperation and exchanges between domestic and foreign universities and sets up international joint training projects. Chongqing Technology and Business University has set up the Research Center of Language and Culture Service and International Communication for the Belt and Road Initiative in West China. Yunnan University has set up the Belt and Road Research Institute, and its professors have published articles on energy cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative. Most universities support students to participate in the Energy Industry Translation Contest and provide energy translation training courses for students. Thus, after "the Belt and Road Initiative" was proposed, energy cooperation is booming in our country. Most universities are paying greater attention to the cultivation of compound translation talents in the field of energy translation.

4.2 Some Thoughts on Compound Translation Talent in Energy Field

Translation is an act of communication, ostensibly converting one form of text into another, but in essence requiring the translator to combine the cultural backgrounds, expression habits, and ways of thinking of both languages to convey the information. In addition to meeting the above requirements, translators in professional fields also need to have professional knowledge in related fields and combine the professional knowledge with translation. Through the research on the colleges and universities in Southwest China that set up translation majors, the author has the following thoughts and suggestions on the cultivation of interdisciplinary translation talents in the field of energy.

First, clarify the goal of cultivation. The teaching effect of translation majors largely depends on the training mode, target orientation and teaching plan of schools. Based on the data collected, most of the colleges and universities are not clear about their cultivation goals, the teaching plans are relatively general, and the cultivation of interdisciplinary translation talents in the field of energy is superficial without forming a systematic plan. At the same time, the market has a large demand for translators in the field of energy, which is difficult to meet. In order to cultivate high-level interdisciplinary translators, educators need to clarify their cultivation goals. Therefore, the goal of talent training in colleges and universities should not only be limited to the mastery of language translation ability, but also need to systematically impart the professional knowledge in the field of energy to students, taking the composite skills of "language + professional knowledge in the energy field" as the teaching goal.

Second, add minor language majors. According to the research data, most of the translation majors at the undergraduate and graduate levels in Southwest China are English oriented, and the cultivation of MTI majors rarely involves other languages except English. In order to contribute to the construction of "the Silk Road Economic Belt" and "the 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road", the school can appropriately add minor language majors, create a multilingual training mode, and explore the way to cultivate "English + minor language" type of interdisciplinary translation talents in the energy field.

Third, optimize the teaching content. Based on "the Belt and Road Initiative", the curriculum for training interdisciplinary translators in the energy field needs to be optimized. The Deputy Secretary General of The Charhar Institute once said at the conference of *Panoramic Analysis of the Belt and Road Language Service Market and Industry and Policy Suggestions* that at present, in the context of the construction of "the Belt and Road", language services are facing the problem of insufficient integration of language and professionalism. In order to meet the needs of energy cooperation under the background of "the Belt and Road Initiative", schools can set up energy translation courses and offer energy-related elective courses to improve students' professional knowledge in related field so as to create the characteristics of "translation + major". At the same time, teachers can appropriately add content related to "the Belt and Road" in classes to help students clearly know the development trend of talent demand in the market and improve their awareness of the "the Belt and Road" language service.

In conclusion, the cultivation of interdisciplinary translation talents in the energy field is to satisfy the needs of the development of "the Belt and Road". To better cultivate such translation talents, colleges and universities should clarify the cultivation goal, optimize the teaching content, and create the cultivation characteristics of interdisciplinary translation talents. In this way, it is possible to cultivate interdisciplinary translation talents in specialized fields to effectively serve China's "the Belt and Road" strategy.

Acknowledgements

Fundamental Project: "Translation Research Center of Southwest Petroleum University 2021" (Project No. TRC202112).

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