Language Planning in the Belt and Road Initiative

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ABSTRACT The language issue should be taken into consideration in the practice and research of the Belt and Road Initiative. Responding to the challenges of language competence in "The Road and Belt Initiative", it is imperative to implement the strategy of language planning, which should be conducted from the perspectives of language functions, language security and language spread for the purpose of planning language competence construction along "The Road and Belt Initiative".

1. INTRODUCTION

The core of the "belt and road" construction is cooperation. The key to cooperation is policy communication, facilities connectivity, smooth trade, financing and people to people connectivity. The foundation of "five links" is language exchange. The important value of language in serving connectivity, connecting Chinese and foreign ideas, transcending cultural barriers, promoting civilization innovation, and promoting people to people exchanges has become increasingly prominent. However, the language competence of the "belt and road" construction is facing challenges. In order to meet this challenge, language planning be prepared beforehand.

2. BACKGROUND

The capacity of a country's language resources, especially the quantity and quality of foreign languages, to a certain extent determines the ability of a country to obtain information, to reserve and use information resources, to expand international space, to create wealth and to cope with various emergencies. The belt and road initiative is guided by the economy and promotes mutual political trust, mutual learning of civilizations and common economic prosperity of all countries along the belt and road. [1] It involves a wide range of interstate politics, economy, law, commerce, culture, education, as well as national, religious, historical, technological, information, or international law, international organizations and other issues of different nature and fields. The common material carrier of these problems is language, and the construction of the belt and road will surely bring multi-level, diverse, diversified and multi domain language needs. Therefore, the construction of the belt and road must be based on language and guided by language planning.

At present, our country is not only lack of language, but also lack of language education. There are more than 6000 languages in the world today. There are only more than 100 languages that we know, and less than 70 are listed in the Undergraduate Catalogue of the Ministry of education. [2] There is only one university for many languages. Although "people all over the country learn foreign languages", almost 99% of them learn English. In the education system, English is the only common foreign language learned in China. As a result, language talents are in short supply, and the structure of talents is extremely unreasonable, which leads to a serious shortage of language service ability, far from meeting the demands. This situation not only slows down China's pace towards the world, but also does not fit in with the new situation of China's transformation from a "local" country to an "international" country, nor can it meet the needs of the belt and road construction and the language based connectivity. [3] At present, there is a shortage of language talents in more than 50 countries along the belt and road.

3. The Relationship Between the Belt and Road Initiative and Language

First, language is the "home" of human thought, and the "key" to open civilization and culture. Most of the content of software construction needs to be expressed, transmitted and inherited through language. [4] If we want to understand the cultural customs, ideology, management system and other software content of countries along the belt and road, using local language is the most direct and basic method. If we want to use the translation method to understand these contents, we also need to train various talents who understand the local language. It can be seen that language plays a leading role in the construction of the belt and road.

Second, language itself is a part of cultural content. The language itself and the cultural content reflected from the language are extensive and profound, which are important social resources of human beings. [5] Therefore, the process of language learning is the process of understanding and acquiring the content of cultural construction. With the development and progress of human society, people have more and more profound understanding and application of the basic attributes and social functions of language.

Third, language is an important tool for developing the "belt and road". With the development of the belt and road initiative, many Chinese (especially technical professionals, front-line builders, students and tourists) will go abroad to work, study or travel in the countries along the belt and road. Their contact with the local people is a part of the construction of people to people communication. To some extent, their behaviour reflects or represents the image of China, but their foreign language ability affects their behaviour, and then affects the development of people to people communication. [6] Although language communication does not mean heart to heart communication, language barrier will affect or hinder heart to heart communication to a great extent.

4. Relationship Between Language Policy and Planning and Economic and Social Development

The formulation and implementation of language policy and language planning must be closely linked with economic and social development, so as to have vitality and motivation. The research and construction of the "belt and road" language strategy can not only serve the construction of the "belt and road" software content from a certain perspective, but also enrich the practical content of language policy and language planning discipline to a certain extent. [7] The interaction between language policy and planning and economic and social development is mutual: Economic and social development affects the formulation and development of language policy and planning. Language policy and planning must serve the country's economic and social construction, such as training corresponding talents in various languages and providing corresponding language services. [8] Language policy and planning can also react on economic and social development, which can, to some extent, affect the development of economy and society.

China is an indispensable trade partner of Central Asian countries. On the one hand, there is a strong complementarity between the import and export commodity structures of Central Asian countries and Xinjiang. Due to the lack of comprehensive and balanced industrial structure in Central Asian countries, there is a large demand for China's textiles, grain, oil and food, household appliances, chemical products, general merchandise, light industrial products. Meanwhile Xinjiang imports a large amount of crude oil, petroleum products, natural gas, non-ferrous metals, leather and other energy and raw material products from Central Asian countries. On the other hand, China's economic strength and development model have a strong attraction for Central Asian countries. Central Asian countries are all newly independent and post developing countries, most of which lack the necessary funds, technology and experience for economic development. Therefore, they hope to make up for their lack of funds and technology and promote their own economic development through cooperation with China in the economic field. In addition, the Central Asian countries are all located in the inland, so China is regarded as an ideal foreign trade channel to realize the strategy of resource rich countries, and has become an important trade partner of almost all Central Asian countries.

The closer the economic ties between Xinjiang and the Central Asian countries, the more it can show the advantages of cross-border ethnic groups in the core area in language communication and the international tool value of cross-border language, and the greater the demand for cross-border language talents in the field of international economy and trade. According to the research of Pan Ke kimowitt, a professor of Harvard Business School, under the same conditions, the trade volume between two countries with a common language is three times that of countries with different languages. Taking the demand of Russian talents for the in-depth development of economic and trade between Xinjiang and Central Asian countries as an example, according to the data of Xinjiang talent exchange center, the gap of senior Russian translation in the market in Xinjiang is 90%. With the development of the Silk Road Economic Belt in Central Asian countries, the demand for Russian talents in the core market will continue to expand year by year. In view of the gradual improvement of Kazakh, Uzbek, Kyrgyz, Turkmen and other languages in the political, economic, cultural and other fields of Central Asian countries, the demand for these languages in the economic market will gradually expand.

Economic and trade exchanges with Central Asian countries are very important to promote the economic development of China, especially Xinjiang. Xinjiang's economic development level is relatively low compared with some inland provinces, which has the demand and pressure for economic development. It needs to import a large number of energy from Central Asian countries to achieve its own development. At present, the five Central Asian countries have become the most important trade partner of Xinjiang. According to statistics, during the 10 years from 2003 to 2012, the total trade between Xinjiang and the five Central Asian countries increased from 2.848 billion US dollars to 17.583 billion US dollars, an increase of more than five times. Moreover, the trade volume between Xinjiang and the five Central Asian countries accounts for more than 60% of the total foreign trade volume between China and the Central Asian countries. The win-win and multi win effects of regional cooperation between Xinjiang and Central Asia are of great practical significance for improving the overall economic strength of Xinjiang and promoting the economic development of the western region. It can be seen that the foreign trade and economic development of the five Central Asian countries are complementary to that of China to a certain extent, which constitutes the material power and economic foundation of the two interest communities.

5. Basic Principles of Language Planning for the Belt and Road Iinitiative

First, the government should dominate language planning in the " belt and road" construction. The top-level design and unified management of the country is of great importance. [9] It is because that social schools are run for profit according to market rules. They will not think about key languages, general languages and cross-border languages in the construction of the belt and road. Therefore, it is difficult to achieve language integrity and long-term teaching when choosing language objects. Key language programs in the United States are funded by the federal government so as to ensure that foreign language talents are urgently needed. At present, colleges and universities in our country are all independent in the cultivation of foreign language talents. In terms of the language of foreign language education, it has a large repeatability and a small language coverage. [10] Therefore, the relevant departments of the state should coordinate and manage the means of funding and its construction, so that some colleges and universities can contribute to the language strategy of the belt and road initiative and ensure the diversity and pertinence of languages in foreign language education in China.

Second, language planning needs to be scientific. Language strategy needs to be formulated by the language policy and planning committee composed of government decision makers, experts in language related fields, language policy and planning experts to ensure the democracy, scientific and impartiality of policy-making. Every detail and clause of language strategy should be based on a large number of scientific research, with both theoretical and practical data support. Any good language policy is not achieved overnight. It has to go through the process of research, formulation, implementation, evaluation and revision.

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Thirdly, the development of language planning needs systematization. The state should encourage some colleges and universities to develop the discipline of language policy and language planning so as to train high-level talents of language policy and language management for employers such as the state, research institutions and enterprises. The society needs multi-disciplinary and interdisciplinary language policy and planning research institutions or think tanks to engage in basic research on language policy and planning, provide theoretical support and factual basis for the formulation, implementation, evaluation and revision of national language policy and planning, and provide universal reading on Chinese and foreign language and culture for the vast number of Chinese and foreign personnel participating in the "belt and road" construction. [11] National education departments should encourage, fund and coordinate the training of key language, common language and cross-border language talents in colleges and universities along the belt and road. The relevant departments of the state need to establish a national talent pool and an information network of foreign language employers, especially small language talents.

Fourth, the implementation of language planning is a long-term task. The teaching and learning of language，especially foreign language，should conform to the development law of language itself. The cultivation of foreign language talents is a slow process, and foreign language teaching should not be quickened. Once the "belt and road" language policies and plans are formulated, they cannot be changed at will due to political and market factors.

6. conclusion

China is bound to encounter many language-related problems in the construction of the belt and road. If these problems are not properly understood and properly solved, they will bring some negative impacts on the construction of the belt and road to some extent. Therefore, we should fully realize the role and position of language in the construction of the belt and road. Besides, we should study, plan and formulate relevant language strategies according to the characteristics of language and language education, and train, develop and make good use of relevant language strategists and language talents from the perspective of long-term and overall situation.

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