

Interactive Research on National Language Industry and Foreign Trade along the Belt and Road

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Abstract: As an emerging industry, the language industry has not been formally included in the national statistical category. However, the new format of providing language products and language services is developing rapidly, and its contribution rate to the national economy is rising. The general framework of the language industry in China has basically formed. There are hundreds of national language types along the “Belt and Road”, and language interoperability has become one of the core demands of trade smoothness. The degree of development of the language industry is related to the quantity and quality of foreign trade along the line. Therefore, in order to promote China and countries along the line, we need to promote the development of China's language industry from the aspects of enhancing language industry awareness, improving laws and regulations, and cultivating professional talents.

1. Introduction

As a new industry, the language industry's contribution rate to the national economy is rising. The contribution rate of some developed countries' language industries to the national economy is as high as 10%. In China, although the language industry has not been officially included in the national statistical category, [1] the new format of providing language products and language services is developing rapidly, and the general framework of China's language industry has basically taken shape. In 2013, the “One Belt, One Road” initiative promoted the development of foreign trade between China and the countries along the route, and there are hundreds of national language types along the “Belt and Road”, and language interoperability has become one of the core demands of trade smoothness. [2] The degree of development is related to the quantity and quality of foreign trade of countries along the line. Therefore, in order to promote the development of foreign trade between China and countries along the routes, language barriers to the development of foreign trade need to be removed,[3] and the corresponding development of language translation, language training, language publishing and other language industries is of vital importance.

2. The Theoretical Connotation of the Language Industry

2.1 Definition of Language Economics

Language economics uses economic methods and techniques to study the following questions: how languages are formed and evolved; how does the evolution of language affect people's behavior [4]. The correlation between language and human capital, employment and wage income distribution; language industry and its measurement. So language economics is a new branch of economics with interdisciplinary nature.

Language has always been regarded as a tool for communication and thought. Information theory holds that language communication is the process of "coding, sending, transmitting, receiving and decoding". However, this view is not comprehensive, it ignores the economic function and industrial characteristics of language. In fact, language and economics are closely

related. Therefore, it is not only of great theoretical significance, but also of great application value to explain language from the perspective of economics.

In summary, from the perspective of economics, language is a scarce product with economic value and industrial characteristics, and possessing more resources will obtain more economic benefits.

2.2 The Concept of the Language Industry

As a new industry, there is no unified definition of language industry at home and abroad. Shaoan Huang (2012) thinks the language industry is such a production and service activity: It mainly adopts a market-oriented management method to produce language products or language services to meet the multi-level needs of countries or individuals for various language products or language services [5]. Yuming Li(2014)held the view that language service is the use of language (including text), language products, language knowledge, language technology, language standards, language data, language art and other language derivatives to meet the needs of the government, society, families and individuals[6]. In summary, domestic scholars refer to those industries that use language as content, material, or processing objects to produce language products to meet the language needs of consumers as "language industry". Therefore, the research of Chinese scholars mainly focuses on the definition, composition and management of the language industry [7].

2.3 The Classification of the Language Industry

2.3.1 Foreign Classification Status

At present, the language industry in EU countries covers language translation, subtitles and dubbing, and the development of language technology equipment (including electronic dictionaries, intelligent translation systems, conference and telephone interpreting systems, language training software, etc.). There is no such special term in the "language industry" in the United States, but this does not affect the operation and development of certain industries whose language is the core product according to their own market rules, such as the language translation industry, especially telephone translation, by new immigrants. The influence of factors such as the increase in the number of foreign tourists has shown a rapid development momentum in recent years.

In general, due to historical evolution, geopolitics, economic development and national policy orientation, different countries and regions' language composition will also show their own different characteristics, which will also map to the development of language industry. For example, the language training industry in English-speaking countries and the language-translating industry in the EU countries are more prominent. In addition, people pay attention to the emerging telephone interpretation industry in the United States, as well as the "leading language exhibition industry" in Germany known as the "exhibition kingdom."

2.3.2 China's Classification Status

Since domestic scholars refer to those industries that use language as content, material, or processing objects to produce language products to meet the language needs of consumers as "language industry". On this basis, "language industry" can be subdivided into language competence industry, language content industry and language processing industry. Among them, the language competence industry is developed around the acquisition, maintenance and evaluation of language competence, such as language training, language rehabilitation, language competence evaluation and other formats.

Overall, the formation of China's language industry is closely related to market demand. After the reform and opening up, the emphasis of the national education policy on English learning has made English achievement an important factor in the study, employment, and professional title evaluation. Coupled with the study abroad boom and the presence of foreign companies, it provides a wide range of English-based language training services. The translation of language is also the case. With the deepening of international trade and cultural exchange, translation companies of different scale have been created. The development of digital information technology and the

expansion of demand for language services have led to the rapid emergence of the language and information processing industry.

3. The Interactive Relationship between Language Industry and Foreign Trade

3.1 The Development Status and Issues of the Language Industry along the Belt and Road

Data of the Development Report of the Chinese Language Service Industry displays that as of 2011, the number of language services and related enterprises in the country was 37,197;[8] by the end of 2013, the number had increased to 55,975. In other words, in the two years from 2012 to 2013, 18,778 new language services and related enterprises were added nationwide, with an average annual growth rate of 25%, which greatly exceeded the average annual growth rate of 18.5% among enterprises in 2000-2011. In 2013, the number of language services and related businesses in the camp increased to 55,975, and in 2016, this number climbed to 72,495, with an average annual growth rate of 9.84%. In 2018, it increased to 320,874 on the basis of 2016, with an average annual growth rate of 216.31%. According to the "2019 China Language Service Industry Development Report", at the end of June 2019, there were 369,935 operating enterprises with language services in China, an increase of 49,061 over the end of 2018. Among them, 9734 operating enterprises take the language service as main business, with a total output value of 37.22 billion yuan, and an annual increase of 3.6%. In the era of globalization and information, the market demand for language services has expanded rapidly.

From the perspective of language service, it can be divided into entertainment, professional service and culture. Among them, information technology (IT, electronics, telecommunications and communications) accounted for the highest proportion, 60.2%; cultural and professional services accounted for a balanced proportion; cross-border e-commerce and tourism accounted for a higher proportion, 40.5% and 34.6%, respectively. Language service ability is becoming one of the core competitiveness of China's economic, cultural and technological development.

English, French, Japanese, German and Russian are the top five languages for translation; information technology, education training and government outreach are the main translation services for the domestic language service industry. There are thousands of universities offering foreign language majors nationwide; nine foreign language colleges are among the best in enrollment; Japanese, German, and Korean are the most enrolled in non-universal languages, and the other non-universal languages are less than 20%. There are hundreds of national language types along the "Belt and Road"; Italian, Arabic, Portuguese, Spanish and Thai are the five major languages that are urgently needed by domestic enterprises; the non-universal language talents in the domestic language service industry are in short supply.

3.2 The Interaction Analysis of Language Industry and Foreign Trade

Foreign trade is an important part of the national economy and plays an important role in promoting economic development, creating jobs and increasing taxes. As China's economy has stepped out of its pace, foreign trade has developed rapidly and its links with the world economy have become increasingly close. According to data from the General Administration of Customs of China, the total value of China's foreign trade imports and exports reached a record high of 30, 51 trillion yuan in 2018, a year-on-year increase of 9.7%. Among them, exports were 16.42 trillion yuan, up 7.1%; imports were 14.09 trillion yuan, up 12.9%, and the trade surplus narrowed by 18.3%. Although the global economic growth has continued to slow down due to the economic crisis, China is still a major trading country, and its foreign trade volume is much higher than other similar economies. The existence of language barriers may prevent foreign trade from happening. While calling for a change in the mode of trade growth, Yin Min believes that the trade development mode needs to be changed. From the perspective of reducing the cost of foreign trade, she uses China's trade data with 15 major trading partners from 1993 to 2010 to measure China's foreign trade costs. And the conclusion is that China's foreign trade costs have shown a downward trend between 1993 and 2010.

Figure1. shows the trade volume and growth rate of China and countries along the route since 2013. It can be seen that the trade volume between China and the countries along the line shows an upward trend, and the growth rate has also increased significantly. In 2018, China's trade cooperation potential along the “Belt and Road” countries continued to be released, and the value of imports and exports increased by 13.3%, higher than the overall growth rate. Among them, the growth of imports and exports to Russia, Saudi Arabia and Greece exceeded 20%. As of 2018, the trade volume of goods between China and countries along the route has accumulated more than 5 trillion US dollars. At the same time, relevant data also shows that the proportion of trade between China and countries along the line to total foreign trade has increased year by year, from 25% in 2013 to 27.4% in 2018.

Through the above analysis, it can be seen that language interoperability as a tool to promote exchanges between different countries and regions has gained more and more attention in the rapid development of international trade. The countries along the “Belt and Road” involve hundreds of languages, and the development of the language industry can promote the development of foreign trade between China and countries along the route. Similarly, the in-depth development of foreign trade can in turn promote the upgrading of the language industry and further expand the field of language industry development.

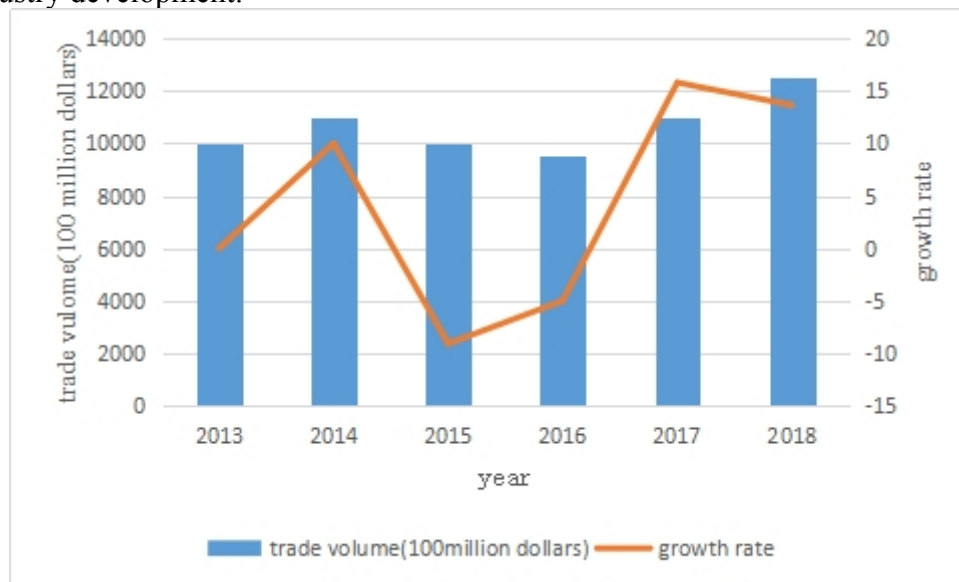


Figure 1. China's trade volume and growth rate to countries along the route in 2013-2018

4. The Development Strategy of the Language Industry along the Belt and Road

4.1 Establish and Enhance Language Industry Awareness

The language industry has developed rapidly in many developed countries. In Europe, research by Swiss language economist Francois Green and his team shows that the language industry generates about 50 billion francs a year in Switzerland, accounting for about Swiss GDP. 10%. Switzerland has a unique language environment and language policy. The four languages of French, German, Italian and Romansh are the official languages of Switzerland. At the same time, Switzerland is home to many international institutions. The huge language demand has contributed to such a huge industrial scale. As far as China is concerned, language translation, language training, language publishing, and language testing have long existed in terms of actual language business activities, [9] and domestic business activities called the language industry began around the 1990s. After the 21st century, these industries began to attract people's attention as a language industry. China began to mention the concept of language industry. Around 2016, the language industry has attracted more attention, and some research institutions have emerged, and some research results have been produced. Therefore, the language industry and its related industries have considerable development prospects in the future.

4.2 Formulate and Improve Relevant Laws and Regulations

Formulating and improving laws and regulations that contribute to the development of the language economy and the language industry plays an important role in the rapid development of the language industry. China's relevant laws on language development lack practical considerations in the formulation. There are many gaps in laws and policies. Facing the rapid development of the language industry, it seems very passive. Therefore, China needs to formulate a series of laws and regulations around language services, language technology, language education and language use to provide legal support for the sound development of the language industry.

4.3 Pay Attention to the Cultivation of Talents in the Language Industry

According to the relevant report data, in the English education and training industry, English training online students often pay attention to the well-known teachers in the training institutions or the teams of well-known teachers. The lag of Chinese language education in China is mainly due to the lack of relevant teachers. Therefore, cultivating a group of teachers with higher comprehensive quality is of great significance to the popularization of Chinese. At the same time, encourage education and training institutions to actively explore the model of production, education and research, cultivate high-quality talents of applied and compound types, and promote the production, study and research of language-related disciplines.

4.4 Promote Technological Innovation

The development of the language industry requires technical support and technological innovation. [10]Efforts should be made to strengthen the use of information and technology in the language industry, and to combine language, language industry and modern technology. According to relevant information, multimedia materials account for more than half of the data research that netizens are concerned about. Software, video, online classrooms and audio account for 5.36% 9.17%, 15.23% and 23 13% respectively.

Therefore, in order to promote the development of China's language industry, it is necessary to rely on the support of relevant macro environmental policies to continuously optimize the industrial environment, encourage language industry, language training institutions and practitioners to innovate and start businesses, and actively promote the use of technological innovation in the language industry.

4.5 Promote Regional Coordinated Development

To narrow the gap between the opening up level and the development scale of the language industry in the central and western regions, expand the competition scope of language services and regional cooperation, and promote the coordinated and specialized development level of China's language industry. Specific measures include: (1) Layout different scales and different types of language industries according to local regional advantages and economic development characteristics. At the same time, different types of enterprises will give preference to different language service providers. For example, the academic education industry selects individual translators, financial enterprises will give priority to small and medium-sized language translation companies, and biomedical enterprises will give priority to large language service providers. (2) Focus on strengthening the development of language industry in the central and western regions. At present, the eastern, central and western regions have gradually formed a high-level, intermediate-level and primary language industry development layout.

5. Conclusion

The language industry is not an emerging industry, and it has existed for a long time, such as language translation industry, language publishing industry, language training industry. However, because the role of the language industry in social culture is not important, and its position in social economic behavior is not very significant. Therefore, the language industry has not received the attention and research of relevant scholars for a long time. With the development of economy,

especially the initiative of One Belt and One Road, language industry, as a new form of industry, has gradually attracted people's attention. From economic perspective, we often refer to those industries that use language as content, material, or processing objects to produce language products to meet the language needs of consumers as "language industry".

The construction of "Belt and Road" cannot be separated from the participation of language. Language interoperability is one of the most important foundations for realizing the "Five Links". In order to promote the development of our language industry, we need establish and enhance language industry awareness, improve relevant laws and regulations, pay attention to the cultivation of talents in the language industry, promote technological innovation and regional coordinated development.

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