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Cultivation of Translation Professionals in Chinese Universities under the Background of Industry-Education Integration

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Abstract: In the context of the ongoing industry-education integration, the cultivation of translation professionals in Chinese universities has encountered unprecedented opportunities as well as significant challenges. This paper conducts a comprehensive analysis of the current status and key issues in translation talent development, including gaps between academic training and market demands, insufficient practical training, and the lack of interdisciplinary knowledge integration. To effectively address these challenges, the study proposes a series of targeted strategies, emphasizing the importance of strengthening school-enterprise cooperation, enhancing curriculum design to incorporate real-world translation projects, and promoting the integration of domain-specific knowledge, such as law, finance, and technology, into translation education. Furthermore, the paper advocates for leveraging advanced translation technologies and tools to improve students' practical skills and adaptability. By aligning educational resources more closely with industry requirements and fostering a multidimensional skill set—comprising language proficiency, cultural competence, technical translation skills, and specialized subject knowledge—universities can better prepare translation professionals who meet the evolving demands of the global language service market. Ultimately, this approach aims to cultivate versatile, high-quality translation talents capable of contributing to China's international communication and cross-cultural exchange in a highly competitive environment.

Keywords: industry-education integration; translation talent cultivation; school-enterprise collaboration

1. Introduction

In the era of rapid digital and technological advancement, the global language service market has undergone a profound transformation, exhibiting characteristics such as diversification of service types, increased cross-border collaboration, cloud-based solutions, and heightened specialization in various translation fields. These changes have substantially raised the requirements for translation professionals, demanding not only high linguistic competence but also interdisciplinary knowledge, technical skills, and adaptability to emerging technologies. Consequently, the cultivation of translation talent faces unprecedented challenges in meeting the complex and evolving demands of the industry.

Since the Ministry of Education of China officially approved the establishment of the Bachelor of Translation and Interpreting (BTI) program in 2006, the country has made considerable progress in building a systematic translation talent cultivation framework. This framework was further enhanced with the introduction of the Master of Translation and Interpreting (MTI) degree in 2007 and the inclusion of translation as a discipline eligible for doctoral degree conferral in the 2022 edition of the “Catalog of Disciplines and Specializations for Postgraduate Education” [1]. Currently, over 300 Chinese universities offer translation-related undergraduate and postgraduate programs, reflecting a significant expansion in academic capacity. However, despite the quantitative growth in trained

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graduates, the language service market still experiences a notable shortage of high-caliber translation professionals [2]. This disparity between supply and demand underscores critical shortcomings in existing educational models and talent cultivation philosophies, necessitating comprehensive reforms to better align training outcomes with industry expectations.

Moreover, with the rapid development of multimedia and digital technologies, the scope and nature of translation have dramatically broadened beyond traditional text-based translation. Contemporary translation now encompasses diverse modalities such as images, mathematical formulas, audio and video content, and dynamic web interfaces. These emerging forms require translators to possess multimodal literacy and proficiency in specialized software and technological tools. Consequently, translation education must undergo deeper reforms, placing stronger emphasis on practical training and industry-education integration to equip graduates with the skills demanded by modern language services.

As a pivotal strategy within the broader structural reform of China's human resource supply side, the industry-education integration model seeks to bridge the gap between academic curricula and the real-world needs of the translation industry [3]. By fostering close collaboration between educational institutions and enterprises, this model aims to synchronize educational resources with industrial demands, thereby addressing the prevalent disconnect between talent cultivation and market requirements. This approach is not only a necessary adaptation to the dynamics of a market economy but also a strategic response to the structural imbalance in China's technical talent supply and demand. Ultimately, the integration model aspires to cultivate high-end, innovative, and entrepreneurial translation professionals equipped to thrive in a competitive and globalized environment.

The core value of this model lies in its ability to foster versatile talents who combine linguistic proficiency with interdisciplinary expertise and practical experience. It promotes a virtuous cycle of mutual reinforcement between education and industry, facilitating symbiotic development and sustainable growth. Through this deepened collaboration, educational institutions can continuously update curricula to reflect industry trends, while enterprises benefit from a steady pipeline of well-prepared professionals capable of meeting evolving market challenges. This paradigm shift in translation talent cultivation represents a foundational step towards elevating China's position in the global language service market and supporting its broader goals of international communication and cultural exchange.

2. Problems in the Cultivation of Translation Professionals

2.1. Weak Correlation Between Curriculum and Practical Application

The current curriculum system for translation programs in many Chinese universities is predominantly rooted within the traditional framework of foreign language and literature disciplines. Typically, these curricula are structured around a set of compulsory and elective courses focused mainly on language acquisition and literary studies. However, courses that are directly relevant to practical translation work—such as translation technology, computer-assisted translation (CAT), localization strategies, and terminology management—are frequently relegated to public electives or optional modules. This peripheral placement results in a significant misalignment between academic instruction and the real demands of the translation industry, thereby limiting the overall effectiveness of teaching. Under this conventional model, undergraduate education continues to prioritize foundational language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—while the cultivation of technical skills essential for contemporary translation practice is often marginalized. This gap creates a scenario where graduates may possess strong linguistic proficiency but lack the applied competencies necessary for modern translation workflows,

such as mastery of translation memory tools, terminology databases, or machine translation post-editing.

2.2. Disconnection Between Theoretical Learning and Off-Campus Practice

Current translation education remains largely influenced by a traditional “translation as language learning” paradigm, wherein translation tasks primarily serve as exercises to assess and reinforce foreign language proficiency rather than as professional skill development. Classroom instruction often overemphasizes the theoretical dimensions of translation—covering linguistic theories, translation methods, and formal standards—while insufficiently addressing the practical application skills that are crucial in today’s language service industry [4]. Students’ coursework typically revolves around conventional text-based translation exercises, with limited exposure to multimodal content or emerging fields such as audiovisual translation and localization. Although internships and off-campus practice opportunities exist, they are often superficial in nature, characterized by observational visits or short-term placements that fail to immerse students fully in professional environments. This lack of substantive hands-on experience diminishes students’ readiness to tackle complex, real-world translation challenges and weakens the linkage between academic learning and industry expectations.

2.3. Incomplete Industry-Education Collaborative Cultivation Mechanism

A well-structured and scientifically designed talent cultivation mechanism is fundamental to ensuring the quality and relevance of translation education. Despite efforts by educational authorities to promulgate policies encouraging industry-education integration, a series of structural issues persists. There remains an imprecise and often fragmented alignment between university talent cultivation plans and actual industry demands, with curricula not adequately reflecting the competencies required in professional settings. Additionally, there is a pronounced separation between pedagogical practices and the operational realities of translation enterprises. Research innovation and academic advancements often fail to keep pace with the rapid technological upgrades within the industry, resulting in a persistent lag between educational outcomes and market needs [5]. This systemic disconnect undermines the effectiveness of integration policies and leaves students with outdated knowledge frameworks, impairing their competitiveness and adaptability in the labor market.

2.4. Insufficient Emphasis on “Soft Skills” Cultivation

The advancement of AI-driven technologies, including large-scale language models, neural machine translation, and interactive platforms such as ChatGPT, has profoundly reshaped the skill set required for modern translators. Beyond traditional linguistic and technical capabilities, translation professionals must now possess technological literacy to operate advanced tools and collaborate efficiently within multidisciplinary teams [6]. However, current translation curricula often lack sufficient focus on essential technical courses like computer translation technology and CAT systems. Equally critical, but frequently overlooked, are the “soft skills” that underpin professional success in the language service sector. These include work ethics, effective communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and adaptability. Many translation employers prioritize interpersonal skills for seamless coordination within internal teams and client interactions, with some even seeking leadership qualities in senior translators or project managers. Incorporating authentic, real-world translation projects and simulations into teaching not only enhances students’ technical skills but also fosters self-awareness and interpersonal competencies through collaborative learning and peer feedback [7]. This holistic approach to talent development is indispensable for cultivating versatile professionals who can thrive in complex, fast-paced, and client-driven industry environments.

3. Strategies for Cultivating Translation Professionals in Universities Under Industry-Education Integration

3.1. Constructing an Industry-Oriented Translation Talent Cultivation Curriculum System

To effectively meet the evolving demands of the translation industry, universities must ground their program development firmly in real industrial needs and establish a distinctive, differentiated talent cultivation system [8]. This requires a comprehensive curriculum reform targeting several critical aspects.

First, academic institutions need to conduct systematic and ongoing research into industry trends, technological advancements, and talent demand forecasts. By doing so, universities can formulate dynamic cultivation plans that proactively align with the upgrading and diversification of the translation sector. A key step is the creation of industry-specific course modules that blend translation skills with domain-specific knowledge, such as legal, financial, medical, or technical translation, enabling students to become experts in both linguistic and specialized fields [9].

Second, while preserving the essential core courses covering foundational translation theories and language proficiency, the curriculum should be enriched with specialized modules focusing on industry fundamentals, terminology management, and sector-specific translation conventions. This three-dimensional curriculum framework—“language proficiency + translation skills + industry knowledge”—ensures comprehensive competency development.

Additionally, technical course offerings must be expanded and their proportion increased to significantly enhance students' competence in computer-assisted translation tools, localization software, machine translation post-editing, and other relevant technologies. Finally, establishing a robust school-enterprise collaborative education mechanism is indispensable. Such a mechanism integrates industry standards and practices throughout the educational process by jointly building training bases, designing practical courses in partnership with enterprises, and regularly updating curricular content to reflect job market requirements [10]. This close alignment not only enriches students' learning experiences but also cultivates versatile professionals capable of seamlessly transitioning into specialized roles within the translation industry.

3.2. Promoting Innovative Development in Professional Teaching Materials

Amid the ongoing digital transformation, innovation in translation teaching materials is critical for improving instructional quality and learning effectiveness. Teaching materials serve as the primary medium through which knowledge is conveyed; thus, their design and content directly influence students' comprehension and skill acquisition.

To keep pace with industry developments, it is imperative to establish a collaborative development mechanism involving both academic professionals and industry experts. Such collaboration ensures that teaching materials are grounded in authentic translation projects and reflect the latest technological and procedural advancements, including applications of AI translation tools, machine learning in language processing, and updated industry quality standards. This approach enables teaching materials to remain continuously synchronized with real-world practice.

Furthermore, innovation should extend beyond content to the format and delivery modes of materials. In addition to traditional printed textbooks, universities should develop modular digital course packages, virtual simulation environments for translation projects, interactive case libraries, and intelligent translation training platforms. These resources can be supplemented by micro-lecture video series, webinars, and online workshops, creating a rich, multi-dimensional material ecosystem that caters to diverse learning styles and scenarios. Such diversified formats not only facilitate deeper engagement but also substantially enhance students' practical abilities and professional competencies.

By integrating contemporary norms, technologies, and workflows into teaching resources, educational programs can ensure seamless congruence between theoretical instruction and industry practice, effectively supporting the cultivation of translation talents adapted to digital and technological evolution.

3.3. Building an Industry-Education Collaborative Translation Practice Competency Cultivation System

In the context of deepening industry-education integration, translation education should pivot towards practice-oriented, competency-based teaching platforms that tightly integrate theoretical knowledge with hands-on experience. A multi-layered cultivation system can be constructed by combining various practical teaching components, including in-class translation workshops, real-world translation training, internships, and professional development seminars.

This comprehensive system allows students to validate their learning outcomes in authentic settings, objectively assess their language service capabilities, and identify specific areas for growth. Achieving such an integrated system necessitates strong, sustained collaboration between universities and industry enterprises.

On one hand, inviting experienced corporate translation professionals as adjunct instructors or guest lecturers enables students to gain timely insights into market trends, emerging technologies, and practical challenges, thus broadening their professional perspectives. On the other hand, promoting the “real projects in internships” model ensures that students engage with typical translation assignments drawn from actual industry workflows. Through in-depth research and cooperation with corporate partners, educators can select and adapt representative projects as teaching cases, allowing students to perform translation tasks under authentic conditions, complete with client briefs, deadlines, and quality control processes. This approach not only cultivates technical proficiency but also enhances students’ project management, communication, and problem-solving skills, better preparing them for the complexities of professional translation work.

3.4. Innovating the Construction of Translation Talent Cultivation Mechanisms

To comprehensively address the multifaceted challenges in translation talent development, universities must position talent cultivation as a strategic priority and continuously refine institutional mechanisms for nurturing skilled professionals.

From the perspective of student competency development, it is essential to intensify efforts on innovative educational methodologies that tackle critical bottlenecks in translation pedagogy. Encouraging students’ innovative spirit and creative problem-solving should be a central objective, motivating them to experiment boldly with new translation technologies, interdisciplinary approaches, and novel linguistic challenges. This fosters the growth of well-rounded translation professionals who combine a solid theoretical foundation with advanced research capabilities and practical adaptability.

Regarding mentorship, innovative models such as project-driven collaboration and dual-supervision systems can be implemented. In such systems, on-campus academic advisors primarily focus on guiding students’ scholarly development and thesis work, ensuring rigorous theoretical grounding, while industry mentors concentrate on overseeing the application of knowledge to real-world projects, offering professional insights and career guidance. This integrated mentoring approach bridges the gap between academia and industry, cultivating graduates who are academically competent and industry-ready.

Moreover, universities should establish evaluation and feedback mechanisms that incorporate input from enterprise partners, alumni, and students, creating a dynamic ecosystem for continuous improvement of talent cultivation strategies. By fostering an environment that encourages interdisciplinary collaboration, entrepreneurial thinking, and lifelong learning, these innovative mechanisms will sustainably enhance the quality and relevance of translation professionals produced by universities.

4. Discussion

The analysis and strategies presented in this study underscore the vital role of industry-education integration in advancing the cultivation of translation professionals. While the proposed reforms provide a comprehensive framework, their successful implementation faces several practical challenges. Firstly, the pace of technological advancement in translation tools and AI applications often outstrips curriculum updates, making it difficult for educational institutions to keep teaching materials and training content fully aligned with industry standards. This gap necessitates ongoing collaboration and agile curriculum development mechanisms that can rapidly incorporate emerging technologies.

Secondly, effective school-enterprise cooperation requires mutual trust and sustained commitment, which can be hindered by differing priorities, resource constraints, and institutional inertia. Universities and enterprises must work to establish clear communication channels, shared goals, and benefit-sharing models to foster long-term partnerships that genuinely enhance students' practical competencies.

Thirdly, the emphasis on "soft skills" such as teamwork, communication, and adaptability highlights the need for pedagogical innovation beyond traditional classroom settings. Incorporating authentic projects, peer collaboration, and reflective learning processes presents logistical and assessment challenges but is crucial for producing well-rounded graduates prepared for complex workplace environments.

Moreover, regional disparities in educational resources and industry development levels across China may affect the uniform application of these strategies. Tailored approaches that consider local contexts and industry characteristics will be necessary to maximize effectiveness.

5. Conclusion

Against the background of rapid digital transformation and the evolving demands of the global language service market, the cultivation of translation professionals in Chinese universities faces both significant challenges and unprecedented opportunities. This paper has analyzed the key problems in current translation talent development, including the weak alignment between curriculum and industry needs, the gap between theoretical learning and practical experience, incomplete industry-education collaborative mechanisms, and insufficient emphasis on essential soft skills.

To address these issues, a series of strategic measures have been proposed, focusing on constructing an industry-oriented curriculum system, innovating professional teaching materials, building collaborative practice platforms, and refining talent cultivation mechanisms. By deepening school-enterprise cooperation and continuously aligning educational resources with industrial development, universities can cultivate versatile, high-quality translation professionals who possess not only strong linguistic competence but also advanced technical skills and interdisciplinary knowledge.

Ultimately, implementing an effective industry-education integration model is crucial for bridging the gap between academic training and market demand. It promotes the sustainable development of translation talent and supports China's broader goals in international communication and cultural exchange. Moving forward, ongoing innovation and collaboration among educational institutions, enterprises, and policymakers will be essential to nurturing translation professionals equipped to thrive in a dynamic, technology-driven environment.

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