

A Study on the Reform Strategy of Logistics English Teaching Against the Background of the Belt and Road Initiative

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ABSTRACT

With the construction and development of the Belt and Road Initiative, the demand for professional logistics English talents in China's logistics industry is expanding. Colleges and universities should optimize their logistics English teaching mode to meet the demand for logistics English talents. This paper first analyzes the demand for English talents in China's logistics industry, as well as the problems existing in the process of training logistics English talents in colleges and universities. Based on the demand and problem analysis, this paper explores the reform strategy of logistics English teaching in colleges and universities, and puts forward specific strategies such as setting new teaching goals, improving teachers' professional quality, strengthening school and enterprise cooperation, optimizing textbooks and teaching methods, etc., so as to provide reference for promoting the construction and cultivation of high-level English talents in China's logistics industry.

Keywords: *The Belt and Road Initiative, Logistics English, Reform strategy.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The Medium-term and Long-term Plan for the Development of Logistics Industry (2014-2020) released on September 12, 2014 clarified the fundamental and strategic position of logistics industry in the development of the national economy. The logistics industry has become an important industry in China, known as the accelerator of economic development as well as an important support channel for China to expand its foreign economy.[1] At present, with the implement of the Belt and Road Initiative, the relevant countries and regions along the Belt and Road have generated greater logistics demand, which not only provides more opportunity for the further development of China's logistics industry, but also puts forward new and higher requirements. It can be predicted that with the deepening of the Belt and Road Initiative, China's international trade industry will prosper, and the logistics industry, as a bridge of international trade, will also further develop, thus the demand for relevant professionals, especially logistics English talents will increase. However, it is a pity that at present, the training of

logistics English talents does not get enough attention in China.[2] Logistics English talents have become one of the 12 types of talents in short supply in China. Colleges and universities are the backbone to solve the shortage of logistics talents and provide a large number of talents for the logistics industry.

2. ANALYSIS OF LOGISTICS TALENTS DEMAND AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF THE BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE

With the construction and development of the Belt and Road Initiative, the demand for international logistics is increasing rapidly, and the demand for professional logistics English talents in China's logistics industry is further expanding. Generally speaking, high-level logistics English talents need to have the following characteristics.

2.1 Demanding Talents with Proficiency in English

There are 65 countries and regions along the Belt and Road, mainly including Mongolia in East Asia, 10 ASEAN countries, 18 countries in West Asia, 8 countries in South Asia, 5 countries in Central Asia, 7 countries in the Commonwealth of Independent States and 16 countries in Central and Eastern Europe. Among the countries and regions along the Belt and Road, there are 53 official languages and thousands of unofficial languages. The language resources are rich and the context is complex.[3] So China demands talents with proficiency in English to interact with countries along the Belt and Road and facilitate national interaction in the areas of policy, infrastructure, trade, investment and popular support. At present, most schools in China only take English as a compulsory foreign language course for logistics management majors, and the requirements for English are not high. Generally, they only need to pass CET-4. As a result, English talents in the logistics industry are generally not qualified, and high-level English talents who master two or more languages can not meet the international logistics needs.

Therefore, a high-level logistics English talent needs to have proficiency in English first. In addition, considering the diversity of languages in countries along the Belt and Road, professional logistics English talents also need to have a certain level of second or third language proficiency.

2.2 Demanding Talents with Complex Professional Knowledge and Ability

In addition to English language proficiency, qualified logistics English talents should bear a diversified knowledge system, be familiar with logistics management knowledge such as warehouse management, procurement management, transportation management, distribution management, supply chain management, logistics system design. They should know international financial accounting and international trade expertise, and get familiar with customs declaration, import and export business, trade terms, international goods transportation and insurance and other aspects of knowledge.[4] Therefore, logistics English talents should not only have a proficiency in English, but also have complex professional knowledge and ability. Only in this

way can they be competent for the modern and complex international logistics work.

2.3 Demanding Talents with International Vision and Cross-cultural Communication Ability

There are many countries along the Belt and Road, with each country bearing geographical and cultural differences. Cultural differences are the biggest differences among countries along the Belt and Road, so cultural exchanges and cooperation is an integral part of building the Belt and Road Initiative.[2] Taking culture as a bridge can better lead the exchange and cooperation of different fields, stratum, and religions along the line. In order to carry out efficient logistics economic and trade exchanges between these countries with different cultures, English talents in the logistics industry should undertake the language communication task to bridge the cultural gap. To complete this work better, relevant logistics English talents need not only to master professional knowledge, but also to be familiar with the cultural connotation of different countries, having an international perspective, as well as high cross-cultural communication skills.

3. PROBLEMS IN LOGISTICS ENGLISH TEACHING AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE

Colleges and universities are the backbone to solve the shortage of logistics talents and provide a large number of talents for the logistics industry. However, at present, there exist some problems in the process of training logistics English talents in colleges and universities.

3.1 Plight of the Weak Faculty

It is difficult for college logistics teachers to be competent in bilingual teaching and to cultivate high-quality logistics English talents. International Logistics is a relatively new discipline, and it is also a relatively new field for most logistics teachers. At present, the awkward situation facing the logistics major in our country's colleges and universities is: Most colleges and universities lack teachers with proficiency in English language and logistics discipline, that is, teachers with both English and logistics teaching skills are scarce. Most of the experienced teachers in logistics are not good at English and do not have a good

understanding of English and western culture. They can not keep up with the new developments in foreign-related logistics, such as bilingual customs declaration, logistics translation, small-language logistics, bilingual cross-border e-commerce logistics, etc. Also, they are also not competent in bilingual teaching, which makes it difficult for students to grasp the most advanced knowledge in international logistics. Although young teachers have a high level of English and a solid theoretical foundation in international logistics, they lack practical skills and industry working experience, so it is difficult to effectively carry out bilingual logistics professional teaching. For many reasons, the construction of bilingual logistics professional courses in domestic universities does not go smoothly, leading to the prominent problem of training English talents in this industry, especially logistics English talents.

3.2 Lack of Practical Logistics English Textbooks and Logistics English Training

At present, the logistics English textbooks used by colleges and universities are basically translated from some chapters of the relevant logistics professional curriculum textbooks, and some are directly pieced together from articles related to the logistics field. The main content emphasizes the basic theoretical knowledge of logistics. Logistics English belongs to English for Special Purposes, which has strong applicability and practicality, but nowadays logistics English textbooks used in colleges and universities mainly introduce theoretical knowledge related to logistics activities. Although they cover a wide range of topics, they are not practical.[5] Besides, some textbooks are compiled by domestic English teachers or experts. These textbooks generally have stiff grammar, boring reading, and, like ordinary English textbooks, lack the guidance of logistics cases. They do not offer sufficient logistics English practice. When faced with logistics practical operation problems, especially the translation of relevant English documents, students feel awkward. Logistics English is a highly practical and practical course. Choosing a suitable textbook is not easy. A good textbook should provide a large number of case studies and scenario demonstrations in addition to professional vocabulary and terminology, so as to consolidate students' professional knowledge, and improve their ability to express, understand, and analyze logistics issues in English.

3.3 Lack of Innovative Teaching Methods

Most college logistics English classes are traditional teacher-centered cramming teaching. English teachers adopt traditional teaching methods: explaining vocabulary, translating text, explaining grammar and reading aloud. In this traditional teaching class, although students can master some translation skills and some English vocabulary for logistics majors to a certain extent, students' learning enthusiasm cannot be mobilized, which is not conducive to cultivating students' learning Initiative. Secondly, in classroom teaching, teachers usually focus on theoretical knowledge and involve relatively few professional practical applications. Therefore, students are lack of participation and enthusiasm. In the survey and interview on the course, most students reported that the logistics English classroom was dull, and it was difficult to stimulate their learning interest. Students hope to participate in more activities and increase interaction in classroom teaching.

4. REFORM STRATEGIES FOR LOGISTICS ENGLISH TEACHING UNDER THE BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE

Based on demand analysis of logistics talents and the existing problems in the process of training logistics English talents in colleges and universities, this paper explores the reform strategy of current college logistics English teaching against the background of the Belt and Road Initiative.

4.1 Clarifying the Teaching Objectives of Logistics English

The requirements for professional English of logistics specialty are as follows: students can understand the industry vocabulary and professional terms related to logistics specialty; students can understand and make dialogues and statements related to the logistics industry, and use English skills and logistics expertise to conduct daily conversation, reception and business communication; students can translate and respond to business letters such as logistics procurement, logistics transportation, customer complaints, and correctly analyze and solve various practical problems in logistics work with the help of dictionaries or online resources.[6] Based on these, the teaching objectives of the logistics professional English curriculum should aim at cultivating students' ability to apply logistics professional

knowledge and English communication skills, so that students can master various air and maritime customs declaration knowledge and the work process of international logistics operation.

4.2 Strengthening Cooperation Between Schools and Enterprises

As mentioned above, English talents in the logistics industry belong to application-oriented vocational talents. According to the relevant provisions of the Guiding Opinions of the Ministry of Education, the cultivation of application-oriented vocational talents should be oriented to the needs of enterprises. Therefore, when colleges and universities establish the logistics English talent training mechanism, they should take the initiative to strengthen cooperation with international logistics enterprises and jointly carry out relevant teaching activities, such as formulating training objectives, revising talent training programs, opening relevant courses, compiling bilingual teaching materials, conducting quality evaluation, etc., so as to give full play to the effectiveness of collaborative education between universities, industries and enterprises, establishing a talent training mechanism oriented to the needs of enterprises, and providing logistics English talents required by enterprises.

4.3 Emphasizing the Cultivation of Logistics English Talents' Translation Ability

In addition to the basic knowledge of logistics, students majoring in logistics should also strengthen vocational English courses such as "Comprehensive English", "Logistics English", "Business English Translation" (including translation and interpretation), "Bilingual Business Negotiation", "Contract Signing", "Goods Declaration and Inspection", and basic English courses such as English listening, speaking, reading and writing. Chinese colleges and universities can help students improve their English level by adding or strengthening English listening, speaking, reading and writing on the basis of traditional courses, and increasing the practical training of logistics English translation (including translation and interpretation), so as to improve their ability to solve logistics professional problems in English as much as possible, and make them become qualified English talents required by international logistics enterprises.

4.4 Cultivating Professional Logistics English Teachers

At present, the training of logistics English translation talents is the weakest link in the training of logistics English talents. The reason for this is that there are few teachers qualified for logistics translation teaching.[4] Without qualified teachers, it is impossible to train students. Therefore, teacher cultivation is the first step. Relevant colleges and universities should strengthen cooperation with international logistics enterprises, specifically through on-the-job training, joint running of schools, joint construction of majors, targeted high-quality training and other ways to improve the English translation (including translation and interpretation) teaching ability and teaching quality of logistics management teachers in China's colleges and universities. The following practice can be helpful:

First, the school can arrange young teachers with a good foundation of English to take a temporary job in international logistics enterprises and receive training in the Foreign Language Department or Foreign Language College to strengthen English ability, while improving the practical ability and industry experience of logistics English translation; Second, the school should hire experienced enterprise personnel with the ability and experience of international logistics operation and logistics English translation to offer courses and lectures in colleges and universities; Third, colleges and universities should strengthen the communication with enterprises, arrange instructors to take students to relevant international logistics companies for internship, and carry out the dual management of schools and enterprises, so that students can apply what they have learned into practice.

4.5 Optimizing Teaching Materials and Teaching Methods

The study of logistics English should be guided by the employment demand. First of all, from the perspective of the practical information content of the current logistics English textbooks, the textbook version should be reasonably selected. While considering the systematization and refinement of professional knowledge, teachers should pay more attention to the practicality of practical English skills, and the combination of logistics professional English and practice should be highlighted. Secondly, teachers should actively strengthen

communication with domestic and foreign first-class logistics enterprises to understand the demand for logistics English in actual logistics work. Thirdly, teachers should effectively supplement the content of the current logistics English textbooks according to the actual demand, increase the proportion of various listening, speaking and translating teaching content related to the actual work, and realize the reasonable optimization of the logistics English textbooks. Fourthly, the government should actively call on the colleges and universities and logistics enterprises to pay more attention to logistics English, so as to invest more manpower and funds to complete practical content of logistics English textbooks across the country, and realize a close connection between the content of logistics English textbooks and the needs of actual work. Finally, in the teaching process, teachers should make full use of modern educational technology and advanced language teaching environment, such as the campus network platform, website, WeChat and other modern teaching methods, strengthen the interaction and communication with students, and help students learn the logistics professional English course. Teachers should make full use of multimedia teaching courseware to help students have a clearer understanding and mastery of the course content. Teachers should periodically play short videos of logistics English for students, assist in creating typical logistics English dialogue scenes, and guide students to imitate dialogues. In addition, students should also be guided to participate in extracurricular video oral training, and strive to improve their English listening and speaking ability.

5. CONCLUSION

In order to optimize the strategy for logistics English teaching in China against the background of the Belt and Road Initiative, this paper first analyzes the demand for English talents in China's logistics industry, as well as the problems existing in the process of training logistics English talents in colleges and universities. Based on this, this paper then explores the reform strategy of logistics English teaching in colleges universities, and puts forward specific suggestions such as setting new teaching goals, cultivating professional logistics English teachers, strengthening school and enterprise cooperation, optimizing textbooks and teaching methods, etc., so as to provide reference for promoting the construction and cultivation of high-level English talents in China's logistics industry.

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