

*Full Length Research Paper*

# **Research on MTI talent cultivation under language education planning-- A case study of MTI granting program at a private University in Shanghai**

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**In order to tell China's stories well, promote the Chinese voice, and show a true and comprehensive China, to enhance our capacities of international communication, our country has elevated its understanding of the regularities of international communication work to a new level. The authors recognize the close connection between the industries and propose that graduate students majoring in translation in the new era should focus on the practical requirements of international communication and actively adapt to the needs of global development. With the increasing number of institutions and students involved in the Master of Translation and Interpreting (MTI) program, there have been many challenges in its development; including talent cultivation mode, quality, and professional characteristics. This paper argues that, like other language education programs, MTI education should also consider language education planning. Based on a case study of the MTI granting program at a private university in Shanghai and using the language education planning theoretical framework proposed by Kaplan and Baldauf, the paper explores how language education policies in seven dimensions can achieve the goal of cultivating MTI talent with distinctive characteristics.**

**Key words:** Language education planning; MTI; talent cultivation.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The cultivation of MTI talents has always been an important issue in the field of language translation and communication under language education planning. With the development of globalization and the increasing frequency of multilingual communication, there is a growing demand for translation professionals who are proficient in multiple languages. The MTI program is dedicated to cultivating highly skilled and well-rounded

translation professionals for society. Against the backdrop of current global language planning, in-depth research into the methods and techniques of MTI talent cultivation is of significant importance in improving the quality and efficiency of translation and interpretation research.

In the era of globalization, language education planning has become an important part of national development and cultural exchange. Language education programs

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have been developed and implemented in various countries with the aim of cultivating talents who meet the needs of society, have intercultural communication skills and translation skills. No matter other language learners learn Chinese, or Chinese learners learn other languages, they need a set of scientific and reasonable training models and methods. Since the establishment of the MTI program in 2007, it has been implemented in 316 universities across the country, with an increasingly large scale. However, its rapid expansion has also exposed many quality problems, including uneven talent cultivation quality, problems in ideology and talent cultivation mode, and lack of distinctive professional characteristics (Zhong, 2014). In 2017, the "National Survey Report on Graduate Education and Employment of Master of Translation and Interpreting Program" showed that MTI teachers proposed suggestions such as "highlighting professional characteristics" (Cui, 2017:37). On the other hand, the difficulties encountered in the cultivation process and the unsatisfactory results have dampened the enthusiasm of teachers and students, and teachers do not know where to start improving the quality. These issues run counter to the original intention of perfecting the graduate degree cultivation mode and improving the degree system of the MTI program.

The main goal of MTI is to cultivate applied translation talent, and it should emphasize practical orientation. Practice is not only the inevitable way for MTI students to enhance their professional abilities, improve their professional ethics, and meet the needs of practical society, but also the key to teachers' improving classroom design and teaching level, and connecting schools with society (Zhang et al., 2022:64). To address these issues, this paper intends to use the theoretical framework of language education planning to analyze the talent cultivation of the MTI granting program at a private university in Shanghai. It is hoped that the cultivation mode explored by this private university can provide inspiration and reference for the cultivation of applied translation talent in the MTI program.

As an educational project to train professional talents in translation and interpretation, the research and practice of MTI talent training is of great significance. The purpose of this paper is to analyze the talent training of MTI funded projects in a private university in Shanghai under the language education plan, and to study how to better train MTI talents and improve their translation and interpretation abilities. It is hoped that the training mode explored by this private university can provide inspiration and reference for the training of applied translation talents in MTI project.

### **Overview of a private university in Shanghai and the MTI granting program**

The private university surveyed in this study is an independent college with a positioning of being an

applied technology university. The college is about to undergo independent college transformation, and after the transformation, its majors need to achieve differentiated development from those of other universities. According to the new industry layout in Shanghai and the demand for related professional talents, during the "14th Five-Year Plan" period, this private university has increased the renewal and transformation of traditional majors and focused on cultivating majors related to Shanghai's international metropolis construction and adapted to the requirements of the new era. At present, the college has formed a relatively complete discipline system and a relatively complete teaching setting for seven language majors, including English, French, German, Spanish, Japanese, Korean, and Arabic. In the past two years, the enrollment of English majors in the Foreign Languages School has shown a downward trend, and it is necessary to quickly make structural adjustments to foreign language majors according to the market, accelerate the renewal and transformation of traditional majors, and cultivate compound foreign language talents required by society. In 2021, the college successfully obtained the project of cultivating MTI translation talents from the Shanghai Municipal Education Commission, and the innovation mode of cultivating MTI translation talents was an urgent requirement for the college's transformation towards a compound and applied direction.

English majors in different background colleges should fully tap into the school's characteristics, industry demand, and subject expertise, and build English majors with school-based advantages (Shen, 2019:24). According to the research, among the colleges with MTI granting programs in Shanghai, there is no college that has established a tourism translation direction as the main direction for cultivating MTI talents. Therefore, the cultivation of MTI translation talents with a tourism translation direction has a certain characteristic development prospect, which can provide talents for Shanghai's tourism translation, promote cultural exchange and cooperation between China and the West, enhance the overseas dissemination power of Shanghai's international metropolis and the international ecological tourism island where universities are located, and promote the overseas dissemination of Chinese culture. By taking tourism translation as the main direction for cultivating MTI translation talents, it is possible to change the homogenized traditional talent cultivation, and transform it into an innovative MTI mode and overseas tourism culture dissemination mode, adhere to cultural awareness and cultural confidence, and promote Chinese culture to the world.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The term "language planning" was popularized in the 1960s. In 1969, pioneers such as Ferguson, Fishman, and Das Gupta

proposed the theoretical framework of language planning (Rubin and Jernudd, 1971), marking the formalization of language planning as a discipline, belonging to the fields of sociolinguistics or applied linguistics. There was a peak in language planning research in the 1960s and early 1970s overseas. Cooper discussed the 12 definitions of language planning given by relevant scholars in "Language Planning and Social Change," and summarized his own definition, that is, language planning is "a long-term, detailed effort and pursuit aimed at influencing the behavior of others through the acquisition, structure, and functional allocation of language symbols" (Cooper, 1989:45). This "broke down the academic barrier between language teaching and language planning, and language education planning became an important link between language planning research and language education practice" (Shen, 2017:13). Cooper then elaborated on language normalization from the aspects of status planning, corpus planning, and acquisition planning (Cooper, 1989).

Acquisition planning, also known as language education planning, mainly involves mother tongue education, second language education, and foreign language education. Kaplan and Baldauf (2014) proposed an analytical framework for language education planning, covering seven dimensions of language education policy, namely, access policy, personnel policy, curriculum policy, materials and method policy, resourcing policy, evaluation policy, and community policy.

### **MTI talent cultivation at a private university under language education planning**

Based on the theoretical framework described, combined with related research, MTI education policies, and a case study of the MTI granting program construction at a private university, this aspect explores the content of MTI education planning from seven dimensions. In 2017, the private university in question constructed an applied university foreign language talent cultivation model, and in 2018, it began implementing the "Foreign Language + Business" talent cultivation model to cultivate applied compound foreign language talents. In 2019, the university formed the characteristic talent cultivation model and curriculum system of "Foreign Language +" and "Information Technology +". In 2020, it vigorously promoted practical teaching, and built a school-enterprise integrated, collaborative education model, establishing a "Translation Direction" for English majors and constructing a practical teaching system with a translation module. In 2021, the English major of the School of Foreign Languages gradually developed towards a "Translation Major". In early 2022, it applied for a new major in translation. At present, the School of Foreign Languages has formed a distinctive foreign language talent cultivation model, established "Chinese Culture Translation" and "Tourism Culture Translation" as the two research directions for translation talent cultivation, with "Tourism Culture Translation" being a representative characteristic, and serving as the case study in this paper.

#### **Language access policy**

Language access policy refers to the types of language learners, language learning level, and time frame. The source of full-time translation master's program enrollment comes from all over the country, with candidates mainly consisting of recent university graduates and supplemented by social candidates with work experience. The duration of full-time master's degree study is generally two years. According to the author's survey, most universities' enrollment brochures clearly state that the target students for translation master's degree programs are university graduates or those with equivalent qualifications, with priority given

to those with practical translation experience in both oral and written forms, while encouraging candidates with different academic and professional backgrounds to apply. It can be seen that, in addition to English majors, students with other professional backgrounds but with good English proficiency are also welcomed by various MTI enrollment institutions. In addition to learning theoretical knowledge, translation master's programs emphasize a comprehensive understanding of language and practical skills, and cross-disciplinary candidates have an advantage in this regard as they have interdisciplinary knowledge and backgrounds, which allows them to delve deeper into a certain field of study. Considering the characteristic direction of tourism translation at the private university in question, specific requirements or a bias towards students with a tourism-related background or knowledge could be specified during enrollment.

#### **Faculty policy**

Faculty policy mainly involves the selection, employment, training, and language proficiency standards of teachers. The private university in question has advantages in discipline development, especially in Chinese-foreign translation and tourism culture translation, and the talent cultivation system for faculty is increasingly improving. Professor Wang Zhe leads the distinctive tourism culture translation team. Based on the development of a national-level quality course "Simulated Tour Guide," a Ministry of Education quality course "English for Tour Leaders," a second prize-winning project of excellent teaching achievements of the Ministry of Education "Outbound Tour Leaders (Accompanying Translator)" development and construction project, the "Fu Lei Translation Plan" project, and being a pilot unit for the "Three Visits" project of national private foreign language colleges and universities, Professor Wang promotes Shanghai's red tourism culture and Hai Pai culture, focuses on cultivating tourism translation achievements, expands tourism translation projects in new formats, and creates the "Tourism Translation" characteristic brand of the private university in question.

In addition, in the past two years, through internal training and external recruitment, the college currently has seven teachers with translation industry certificates, including Professor Wu Biyu who has senior translation reviewer qualifications, and 12 teachers who graduated from translation majors. There are six teachers who have long been responsible for English major oral and written translation courses. Many teachers have translation qualifications and practical experience, and have repeatedly served as interpreters, translators, accompanying translators, and interpreters for international major projects and international conferences. They have achieved certain results in translation talent cultivation and translation social practice.

#### **Curriculum policy**

To ensure the quality of MTI translation master's degree talent cultivation and provide high-level translation talents for the national, Yangtze River Delta region, and Shanghai tourism industry, the private university in question has designed an MTI translation master's degree program (tourism translation direction) curriculum system that reflects the characteristics of Shanghai's tourism industry, tourism text translation, tourism translation talent cultivation, and translation practice. This curriculum system highlights the professional orientation and practicality of the tourism translation direction, thereby determining the organization and content of the curriculum.

Shanghai is a famous tourist city with rich tourism resources and a strong local culture, which helps to enrich the cultural knowledge of Master of Translation and Interpreting (MTI) students in the field

of tourism. By studying these courses, MTI students can greatly enhance their knowledge and skills in the field of tourism, laying a solid professional foundation for their career in tourism translation. The course "Chinese Language and Literature" can improve the language proficiency of MTI students; enhance their ability to master the Chinese language, which is essential for excellent translators. The course is designed with a clear professional orientation, taking into account the characteristics and requirements of talent cultivation in the field of tourism translation. The course "Computer-aided Translation" can help MTI students gain proficiency in translation tools, improve translation efficiency, and provide a guarantee for the efficient training of tourism translation master students. The course "Tourism Translation" is a practical translation course that emphasizes the practical translation practice of tourism texts, similar to tourism translation internships, which reflects the practicality of the course design in tourism translation. Given the importance of cultivating the tourism translation ability of MTI students, it is recommended to introduce courses such as "Short Video Translation," "Tour Guide Voiceover," "Audiovisual Translation," "Subtitle Translation," and "Audiovisual Production" in the curriculum of MTI talent cultivation, to cultivate students' international communication abilities, empower them for future career development and cultivate applied translation talents required by the tourism industry.

#### **Methods and materials policy**

The language acquisition management framework proposed by Baldauf et al. (2008) regards the use of teaching materials and teaching methods as a whole, namely "methods and materials policy." There is no unified requirement for the use of teaching materials in MTI talent cultivation, so schools have a high degree of autonomy in choosing materials.

It is recommended to use authorized textbooks in the field, school-based textbooks, and self-compiled teaching materials. In the current stage of project cultivation, the foreign language college of a certain private university has begun to compile versions of "The Fascinating Magic City" in various languages, which will also serve as auxiliary materials for the professional courses. In addition, to cultivate students' applied translation abilities, the practical teaching under the innovative MTI talent cultivation mode will introduce "real tasks" into the classroom. The so-called "real task" teaching refers to the MTI supervisor in charge of the course applying for a standardized English translation project of a certain tourist attraction, assigning translation tasks to MTI students, and leading graduate students to participate in real translation tasks. The responsibility supervisor and the project team will ensure the quality of the translation, classify and organize the problems discovered during the translation process in a timely manner, bring them to the classroom for discussion, use them as teaching materials, lead the master's students to discover problems together, guide students to analyze and solve problems, and enhance their translation adaptation ability in real translation environments. The introduction of real translation projects into the classroom will change the traditional teaching of "passive knowledge acquisition." Students will constantly discover translation problems in translation practice, exercise their analytical abilities through extensive information gathering, and gradually improve their problem-solving abilities in seeking appropriate translation solutions.

#### **Resource policy**

Resource policy refers to the funding sources for language learning projects, which can come from various sources, including national governments, regional institutions, local governments, and even individuals. Since the project of the school is in the cultivation

stage, this part of the study will discuss the funding support for project cultivation. Whether we can get enough financial support is related to the successful completion of the project. The time for the MTI talent cultivation project of a certain private university to award the translation master's degree is three years, with 800,000 yuan provided by the municipal finance each year, totaling 2.4 million yuan in construction funds over three years. The project implementation contents include: (1) cultivation of 10 supervisors for translation master's students, with a budget of 420,000 yuan from 2022 to 2024, of which the budget for 2022 is 135,000 yuan; (2) support for key translation research projects, including the publication of works, textbooks, and papers, with a budget of 780,000 yuan from 2022 to 2024, of which the budget for 2022 is 239,000 yuan; (3) construction of one intelligent translation teaching platform, one CATTI translation test site, and one translation research workshop, with a budget of 360,000 yuan from 2022 to 2024, of which the budget for 2022 is 326,000 yuan; (4) dispatching a teacher team for study and exchange, and participating in domestic and international academic conferences, with a budget of 360,000 yuan from 2022 to 2024, of which the budget for 2022 is 100,000 yuan. These funds will guarantee the smooth development of the MTI talent cultivation project in terms of policy.

#### **Academic assessment policy**

Academic assessment refers to the clear goals and evaluation standards set during the admission stage, which includes course assessments, professional practice, thesis defense, and other aspects. Graduate students who fail to meet the assessment requirements in any aspect will receive academic warnings, deferment, streamlining, or elimination. In terms of course assessment, course learning assessments are based on the requirements of the course syllabus and are completed by the teaching faculty. If a student fails to earn sufficient credits or fails to meet the degree requirements, the relevant regulations of the private university will be followed. In terms of practical aspects, based on research conducted on similar schools, graduate students are required to complete internships for at least six months in enterprises and institutions (preferably related to the tourism industry) while also selecting topics for their thesis and creating conditions for completion. During the internship, students are required to translate materials of no less than 100,000 Chinese characters or foreign words, with a focus on tourism or related translations, considering the cultivation of specialized tourism translation talent in the college. After the internship, the internship unit will issue an internship assessment, and the students will submit their translation results. In terms of thesis assessment, students are required to pass the thesis proposal, mid-term assessment, thesis defense, and the "double-blind review" of the graduate (degree) thesis.

#### **Community policy**

Community policy refers to whether the local community participates in the school's teaching activities. In this article, the author will discuss the practical "teaching activities" that the college participates in locally in Shanghai. Practice is a very important learning stage in the cultivation of applied talents. In terms of local practical resources, Shanghai provides abundant opportunities for various translation-related practical learning. The construction of the Shanghai Free Trade Zone, the development goals of the "Five Centers" international metropolis in Shanghai, and the development strategy of the Chongming International Ecological Tourism Island have made high-quality tourism translation talents a scarce resource for Shanghai's current economic and social development. As a local university in Shanghai, the private university actively

connects with the regional economic and social development needs and supports the construction of the Chongming world-class ecological island with practical actions. It organizes students to actively participate in various translation-related social practice activities. Over the years, the school has proactively undertaken various centralized world-class volunteer service tasks in Shanghai and Chongming, forming standardized organization, project-based activities, and diverse forms of volunteer work and social practice characteristics. This has made youth volunteer service work more advanced, sophisticated, and influential. Students actively participate in events such as the Shanghai Chongming Marathon, the Women's World Tour of Chongming Island International Cycling Union, and the World Ironman Triathlon. In recent years, more than 30 students from our school participate in the Shanghai Import Expo volunteer activities every year, providing volunteer services such as translation and reception. Such practical activities have honed their translation skills. At the same time, during the MTI cultivation project stage, the college plans to introduce enterprises to the campus and establish a translation company to carry out translation business.

This includes undertaking various large-scale international conference translations, interpretation, simultaneous translation, machine translation, and other projects. These initiatives allow the college's teachers and students to have the opportunity to access various translation materials and engage in translation business during their school period, thus improving their translation level through practical experience and cultivating translation talents for society.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This article analyzes the MTI subsidy program at a private university in Shanghai using the theoretical framework of language education planning. It can be summarized from the following perspectives: deepening teaching content and methods. Private universities can broaden students' knowledge and improve their professional competence by introducing professional courses such as cross-cultural communication, translation theory, and language skills. They can also cultivate students' practical skills and problem-solving abilities through practical teaching, case analysis, and simulated translation.

### Enhancing the level of faculty

According to the theoretical framework of language education planning, private universities can improve the academic level and teaching abilities of their faculty by introducing experts and scholars in the field of translation and interpretation from both domestic and international sources. They can also promote academic exchanges and collaborative research. Additionally, private universities can actively develop and select young teachers and establish effective teacher training mechanisms to continuously improve the overall quality of the faculty.

### Expanding internship opportunities and channels

The theoretical framework of language education planning

emphasizes providing opportunities for practical language application. For the talent cultivation of MTI at private universities, this means establishing close connections with society and providing students with abundant internship opportunities. Private universities can collaborate with enterprises, translation agencies, consulates, etc., to create internship platforms for students, enabling them to practice their translation and interpretation skills in real work environments and improve their professional competence.

### Cultivating a global perspective

The theoretical framework of language education planning requires the cultivation of students' global literacy and language communication abilities. For the talent cultivation of MTI at private universities, this means developing students' sensitivity and insight towards international affairs. Private universities can introduce resources from international organizations and international exchange programs to provide a learning environment with an international perspective, cultivating students' awareness of international affairs and cross-cultural communication abilities.

## LIMITATION

There are still certain limitations to this study within the framework of language education planning theory.

### Lack of flexibility

The language education planning theory framework is usually developed at the national level to provide guidance and standards for language education nationwide. However, due to the different situations and needs of different regions and schools, applying the same framework to the talent cultivation of MTI programs in various schools may have certain inadequacies and limitations. Limitations in curriculum design. The language education planning theory framework typically sets requirements for foundational courses and specialized courses to ensure students acquire comprehensive language and translation skills. However, due to limitations in teachers and resources, it may not be possible to fully meet all the course requirements outlined in the framework.

### Insufficient internship opportunities

The language education planning theory framework advocates providing opportunities for practical language application to enhance students' translation and interpretation abilities in real-life situations. However, in

the talent cultivation of MTI programs at private universities, due to a lack of close connections and cooperation with companies and institutions, students may have limited internship opportunities. This could potentially restrict the development of their practical experience and professional competence.

## PROSPECT

In the future, the theoretical framework of language education planning will continue to play an important guiding role in the talent cultivation of MTI programs at a private university in Shanghai. The future framework of language education planning will focus more on technological integration, interdisciplinary collaboration, cross-cultural communication, and research and innovation. Private universities need to actively adapt to future development trends, innovate teaching models and methods, combine them with social needs, and cultivate more translation professionals with a global perspective and language communication abilities. At the same time, the government and society need to pay attention to and support the talent cultivation of MTI programs at private universities, providing them with better resources and development environment.

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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