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Language Capital for Vocational Education in the Belt and Road

Initiative: A Retrospect and Prospect

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Abstract: China's "Belt and Road Initiative" (B&R) was launched in 2013. The field of International Chinese Language Education has gradually clarified a new objective: To cultivate versatile Chinese language talents to serve "The Belt and Road". Meanwhile, "Chinese Plus Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)", which aims to develop Mandarin-speaking professionals, as a new integration mode between "International Chinese Language Education" and "Vocational Education" has increasingly attracted attention. This article first reviews and analyses the policies and documents related to "Chinese Plus TVET" under the Belt and Road and summarizes its notable progress in teaching practices, platform collaboration, and material development over the last decade across three stages: the exploring period (2013-2015), the experimenting period (2016-2020), and the normalizing period (2021-2023). However, challenges remain in talent cultivation, including insufficient demand investigation, incomplete talent training plans, and insufficient research on the application of educational resources. To address these challenges and seize the opportunities of the upcoming decade of the Belt and Road, this article explores the transformation of "Chinese Plus TVET" into a new stage. It proposes educational strategies such as differentiation based on regional differences, localization of talent cultivation models, and deepening hybrid teaching modes. It aims to provide references and inspiration for related educational institutes and teachers.

Keywords: "The Belt and Road", Technical and Vocational Education and Training, TVET, International Chinese Language and Education, Chinese Language Teaching for Business

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标题: “一带一路”倡议下语言赋能职业教育: 回顾与前瞻

摘要: “一带一路”倡议于2013年启动之后, 国际中文教育领域逐渐明确了培养复合型中文人才以服务“一带一路”的目标。作为“国际中文教育”与“职业教育”融合的一种新模式, “中文+”职业技能教育(Chinese Plus Technical and Vocational Education and Training, TVET)旨在培养专业人才, 日益受到学界关注。本文首先回顾和分析了“一带一路”背景下与“中文+”职业技能教育相关的政策文件, 并总结了其在过去十年(探索期: 2013-2015年; 试验期: 2016-2020年; 常态化期: 2021-2023年)三个阶段中在教学实践、平台协作和教材建设方面取得的显著进展。然而, 其在人才培养方面仍面临挑战, 包括需求调研不足、人才培养方案不完善、教育资源应用研究不足等。为应对这些挑战并抓住“一带一路”未来十年的机遇, 本文探讨了将“中文+”职业技能推向新阶段的策略, 提出了基于地域差异的差异化发展、人才培养模式本土化、深化混合教学模式等教育策略, 以期在国际中文教育及相关事业提供参考与启示。

关键词: “一带一路”; 职业技能教育; “中文+”职业教育; 国际中文教育; 商务汉语教学

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1. Introduction

According to UNESCO (2002), the term “Silk Road” (Die Seidenstrasse) was first named by German geologist Baron Ferdinand von Richthofen in the 19th century¹. It refers to an ancient and extensive trade and communication network linking China with Eurasian countries with a history spanning thousands of years. The ancient Silk Road, as depicted in Zhang Ji’s poem “The Song of Liangzhou”, during the Tang Dynasty was not merely a trade route but also a bridge for cultural exchange and mutual understanding across Eurasia. This historical legacy strongly resonates with the modern Belt and Road Initiative (B&R), which seeks to revive and expand these connections in the contemporary global context. In 2013, a modern “Silk Road” was

¹ The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO] (2002)

The silk roads project “Integral study of the silk roads: roads of dialogue” 1998-1997. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000159189>

initiated by the Chinese government—The Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st-century Maritime Silk Road (“The Belt and Road” or “B&R”). This initiative aims to promote communication in the economy, politics, and culture between China and other countries all over the world. By 2023, 150 countries and over 30 international institutes had established cooperative ties with the Chinese government across various fields under B&R¹. This extensive network has significantly increased the demand for language professionals, particularly those proficient in Chinese, to facilitate communication and collaboration across diverse fields (Bai and Chen, 2024; Chen, 2023).

The Belt and Road Initiative has significantly increased the demand for language professionals, thereby providing more opportunities for the field of International Chinese Language Education (Lu, 2016), especially in promoting the development of “Chinese Plus Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)”. TVET is an educational area that focuses on the youth and adult groups, aiming to develop their vocational knowledge and skills². Moreover, the definition of “Chinese Plus” was officially introduced at the 13th Confucius Institute Conference by the Chinese Government in 2018, which highlighted that the Confucius Institute as a public educational organisation under the Chinese Ministry of Education should be improved as China’s most important language and communication brand and international platform. On this platform, “Chinese Plus” projects should also be actively conducted with regional differences and set up some language courses such as traditional Chinese medicine, business, or other skills³. Thus far, a new integration of “Chinese Plus TVET” has increasingly gained attention in public discourse. Wu and Liu (2020) stated that “Chinese Plus” is taking the Chinese language as a core and integrating it with different industries. The concept of “Chinese Plus TVET” has emerged and developed under the B&R. It is not only a specific language training project supported by the Chinese government but also a new mode of cultivation for compound Mandarin talents. “Chinese Plus TVET” aims to cultivate more Chinese language talents with vocational skills through a combination of language and vocational education to better serve society.

“Chinese Plus TVET” has achieved remarkable progress as a subfield of International Chinese Language Education. The first section of the article reviews the key policies and documents regarding the promotion of the Chinese language under the implementation of B&R in exploring, experimental, and normalising stages during the past decade. Meanwhile, it highlights pivotal turning points such as essential conferences and educational activities and accomplishments in the resource’s construction of “Chinese Plus TVET”. However, as a new field, some issues may not be easily avoided (Sun & Wang, 2025). The article illustrates three main issues of “Chinese Plus TVET” under B&R: the lack of research on talent demand in different areas, the ongoing need for the talent cultivation mode of “Chinese Plus TVET”, and the insufficient

¹ Chinese Government (2023). *What is “The Belt and Road”?* <https://www.yidaiyilu.gov.cn/z/221226-1/index.shtml>

² The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO] (2002)

The silk roads project “Integral study of the silk roads: roads of dialogue” 1998-1997. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000159189>

³ Chinese Government (2018, December 4). *The opening ceremony of the 13th Confucius Institute conference and a speech.* https://www.gov.cn/guowuyuan/2018-12/04/content_5345736.htm

application and practice of new teaching resources and educational productions. The year 2023 marks the tenth anniversary of the Belt and Road, and the World Chinese Conference (2023) held at the end of the year once again underscored the importance of "Chinese Plus TVET". In 2024, more cooperation on collaborative development and joint talent cultivation of "Chinese Language Plus Intelligent Logistics" and other majors was also established at the 2024 World Chinese Language Conference. With the growing global influence of the B&R Initiative, it is imperative to address these challenges and devise actionable strategies to advance "Chinese Plus TVET" in the coming decade.

2. The Decade Past: Exploring, Experimenting, Normalising

This section examines key policies and achievements in each phase. Over the past decade of B&R implementation, the development of "Chinese Plus TVET" could be categorised into three distinct periods. The first period, spanning from 2013 to 2015, represents the exploring phase. During this time, the Chinese government introduced foundational documents at a macro level, establishing a strategic direction for International Chinese Language education. Then, in the second experimental period (2016-2020), national institutes of education published documents to promote "Chinese Plus TVET" talent cultivation and language education forms. In the third normalizing period from 2021 to 2023, more detailed and targeted policies and documents have been issued to confirm the objectives and regular actions. Meanwhile, significant progress has been made in establishing standards, fostering cooperation, developing resources, and building platforms for "Chinese Plus TVET".

2.1. The Exploring Period (2013-2015)

In 2013, Chinese President delivered speeches when visiting Kazakhstan and Indonesia that first proposed the Belt and Road Initiative to establish an innovative cooperation model known as "The Silk Road Economic Belt" ("The Belt") and jointly construct the 21st-century Maritime Silk Road ("The Road")¹. This initiative has become widely known as the "Belt and Road" or "B&R". B&R was an initiative and notion inspired from the ancient Silk Road to improve economic communication at the beginning. Then, in 2015, the *Vision and Actions on Jointly Building Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road* was issued, symbolizing the official launch of the Belt and Road. This policy not only addressed economic and political communication but also underlined person-to-person exchanges in diverse areas such as culture, art, technology and education. For instance, the Confucius Institute was an important platform for language and culture communication; its position and function were focused on once again. At the end of 2015, the 10th Confucius Institute Conference was held, which took "Serving the new needs of the Belt and Road by Confucius institutes" as one of the most essential topics. From 2013 to 2015, the government explored and proposed new goals from a national strategic perspective, providing a new direction for developing International Chinese Language Education: Serving the B&R (Zhou, 2021). This shift was driven by the

¹ Xinhua Net (2019, April 26) *This is the brief history of "The Belt and Road"*. https://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2019-04/26/c_1124418156.htm

growing demand for multilingual professionals to support economic and cultural exchanges along the B&R, aligning language education with China's national strategy (Liu, 2020; Li, 2024). Overall, the exploring phase laid the groundwork for integrating Chinese as a foreign language education with the broader B&R framework.

2.2. The Experimenting Period (2016-2020)

Following the launch of the B&R initiative, in the mid of 2016, the Chinese Ministry of Education issued another important document, *“Educational Actions on Jointly Building and Promoting the Belt and Road Initiative”*, aiming at strengthening educational cooperation among the B&R countries¹. The policy stressed that related departments should act to support the Confucius Institute, cultivate high-level language talents, and deepen international education cooperation. In fact, before the concept of “Chinese Plus” was first mentioned at the 2018 Confucius Institute Conference, some practical teaching activities and similar programs about language and vocational training emerged. In 2016, a unique “Confucius Institute” facing the field of Vocational Education named “Luban Workshop” was established by Tianjin Bohai Vocational Technology College and Ayutthaya Technical College together. “Luban Workshop” is a specific educational brand in Tianjin, which is also an innovation of vocational education. It means developing the Chinese as foreign language learners who are familiar with Chinese technologies, products and standards under the international vocational education system (Lyu, et al., 2017). Then, at the 2018 Confucius Institute Conference, Confucius Institute's “Serving the B&R” function was emphasized again, including cultivating talents for joint ventures, providing professional services such as translation and logistic consultation, and promoting cooperation in language and culture exchanges of person-to-person². After that, cultivating the compound Chinese language through the “Chinese Plus” program has become a spotlight, and the programs and cultivating modes like “Luban Workshops” acquired the government's focus and support. From 2016 to May 2019, there were 8 Luban workshops established in Asia, Africa, and Europe, which trained 4,000 people in 17 majors, such as mechanics, automobiles, and catering³. A Luban Workshop was set up under the Belt and Road to promote international cooperation and train more students who are good at Chinese Language and Vocational skills, which inspired the attempt to integrate Mandarin and vocational education.

At the same time, vocational education gained further attention as the Chinese Ministry of Education issued the *“National Implementation Plan for TVET”* in early 2019⁴. Other new attempts of “Chinese Plus TVET” at integrating International Chinese Language and Vocational Education supported by more and more policies are emerging. In late 2020, the first base of the Centre for International Cooperation on “Chinese + Vocational Education and Training (TVET)” was launched in Nanjing, China⁵. It aims to integrate Chinese

¹ Chinese Ministry of Education (2016, July 15). *Educational actions on jointly building and promoting the Belt and Road initiative*. https://www.moe.gov.cn/srcsite/A20/s7068/201608/t20160811_274679.html

² Chinese Government (2018, December 4). *The opening ceremony of the 13th Confucius Institute conference and a speech*. https://www.gov.cn/guowuyuan/2018-12/04/content_5345736.htm

³ Xinhua Net (2019, April 26) *This is the brief history of “The Belt and Road”*. https://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2019-04/26/c_1124418156.htm

⁴ Chinese Ministry of Education (2019, May 8) *National implement plan for TVET*. https://www.moe.gov.cn/srcsite/A07/zcs_zhgg/201905/t20190517_382357.html

⁵ Centre for Language Education and Cooperation (2020, November 9) *China's first center for international cooperation on “C*

language and vocational education to cultivate more compound Mandarin talents. At that time, the future of “Chinese Plus TVET” appeared to be progressing as expected. Unfortunately, at the end of 2019, there was a global pandemic outbreak because of the COVID-19 virus. Most industries were affected seriously, and the International Chinese Language Education which closely depends on the international environment also suffered a major setback and challenge. After several months of recovery and adaptation, online education has become mainstream since 2020. Whether active or passive, the attempt at a new integration talent cultivation mode of language and vocational education “Chinese Plus TVET”, and the adjustment of a new teaching approach both have actively promoted the transformation of International Chinese Language education.

2.3. The Normalising Period (2021-2023)

To meet the need for new “Chinese Plus TVET” talent cultivation, the first important step is to confirm the standards and requirements of talent. During 2021-2023, the Centre for Language Education and Cooperation of China, an organization affiliated with the Chinese Ministry of Education, published a series of standards. In 2021, Chinese Proficiency Grading Standards for International Chinese Language Education was issued to refine¹ the traditional six levels for Chinese as a foreign language and proposed three levels and nine bands. In December 2023, the World Chinese Language Conference was held, and one of the parallel forums, “Chinese + TVET”, was also held. At the conference, several standards for language for specific vocational purposes also be released successively: Chinese Proficiency Standards for Vocational Education, Chinese Language Proficiency Standard for International Tour Guides, Skills Standards for International Preschool Chinese Teachers, Chinese Proficiency Standards of Information and Communication Technology, and Chinese Proficiency Standards for Marketers of Information and Communication Technology². These targeted standards enhance Mandarin proficiency and vocational skills for “Chinese Plus TVET” learners, fostering interdisciplinary Chinese language professionals to serve various countries.

In this stage, the cooperation mode has improved. CLEC launched a new brand of language program, “Chinese Language Workshop,” based on Tianjin’s “Luban Workshop” in 2021, which spread and improved the cooperation mode of Mandarin and vocational education to the world. According to Xinhua Net³, 26 “Chinese Language Workshops” have been built in 19 countries. In addition, some new “Chinese Plus TVET” corporate bases have also been declared⁴, such as 20 vocational colleges cooperating with North Africa in 2023

hinese + TVET” launched. <https://www.chinese.cn/page/#/pcpage/article?id=375>

¹ Chinese Ministry of Education (2021). *Chinese proficiency grading standards for international Chinese language education*. https://www.moe.gov.cn/jyb_sjzl/ziliao/A19/202111/W020211118507389477190.pdf

² Centre for Language Education and Cooperation [CLEC] (2023, December 8) *Chinese Language proficiency standard for international tour guide and other 3 vocational Chinese proficiency standards released*. <http://www.chinese.cn/page/#/pcpage/article?id=1675&page=2>

³ Xinhua Net (2023, December 15) *A first Chinese workshop held in Ethiopia*. https://www.news.cn/world/2023-12/15/c_1212316048.htm

⁴ Certificate for Teachers of Chinese to Speakers of Other Languages [CTCSOL] (2023, November 21) *The first batch of the North Africa international alliance for innovation in Education “Chinese + Vocational Skills” base construction unit selected list*. <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/1Q168OKBEFlcHV6Vipofg>

(CTCSOL, 2023; Liang, 2023). These projects or bases are all built in more organized and normalizing approaches rather than single and separated cooperation modes as before. Meanwhile, in the speech by Chinese President at the 3rd Belt and Road Forum, he encouraged related departments to continuously conduct the “Luban Workshop” mode and program and promote international cooperation in vocational education in the future, which provides a clearer orientation for the developing orientation of “Chinese Plus TVET”.

Additionally, teaching resources were also key achievements in this stage. Several five-year action plans, such as the “Chinese Language Plus Vocational Skills” Teaching Resource Development Action Plan (2021-2025)¹, were also issued by CLEC in 2021, which are used for guiding to make good use of teaching resources, especially digital resources. From September 2023, New Silk Road “Chinese + Vocational Skills” coursebooks were published and experimented in schools for several months. They combine the professions and vocational skills with Specific and occupational purposes with six majors: Logistics Management, E-commerce, Computer Networking Technology, Hotel Management, Mechatronics, and Automotive Service Engineering Technology; three levels: elementary, intermediate, and advanced. The series of practical coursebooks include supporting PowerPoints, photos, videos, audio, model courses, etc., which showed the “Digitalization” and “Internationalization” trends². Moreover, there are more online comprehensive service platforms appeared, such as “Chinese Language + Vocational Education Service”, “Silk Road International Education Centre” and “Smart Classroom” programs, which provide language test resources, online courses, study in China, cooperation projects, etc. All in all, from 2021 to 2023, except for the influence of COVID-19 in 2022, the “Chinese Plus TVET” has gradually stepped into the normalization of talent standards, cooperation mode, teaching resources, and service platforms (Su and Yang, 2024).

3. The Decade to Come: Issues and Strategies

During the past ten years of implementing B&R, “Chinese Plus TVET” has gone through attempts, setbacks, and successes. With the B&R moving to the next ten years, new opportunities and challenges will arise on the road. This part will illustrate the current issues of “Chinese Plus TVET” under B&R: insufficient demand investigation, incomplete talent training plans, and insufficient research on the application of educational resources. Then, the study proposes targeted strategies: differentiation based on regional differences, localisation of talent cultivation models, and deepening hybrid educational models for the future.

¹ Centre for Language Education and Cooperation of China [CLEC] (2021, December).

Teaching resource development for international Chinese language education action plan (2021-2025). <https://www.chinese.cn/uploads/file/20220125-1643092124627370.pdf>

² Centre for Language Education and Cooperation [CLEC] (2021). *The development and application guide of digital resources for international Chinese language education*. <https://www.chinese.cn/uploads/file/20220125-1643092029188364.pdf>

3.1. The Issues of “Chinese Plus TVET” under B&R

3.1.1. Insufficient Demand Investigation

Demand is the motivation for development. It may not be denied that B&R has created more international cooperation opportunities and employment positions, which generates more demand for high-level Chinese language talent. Therefore, understanding the learners’ needs to use the Chinese language in real vocational contexts, as well as the social and market demand for “Chinese Plus” talents, becomes the first focal point (Xiao, Liao, and Xu, 2021). He and Yu (2023) believe that the traditional single-language talent mode may not meet increasing market needs; therefore, it needs to be transferred into multi-disciplinary forms urgently. They took Southeast Asia as an example and used web crawlers and database technology to collect and analyse the local job market needs based on the corpus of over 14,000 “Chinese Plus” talent recruitment information. They found that Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand were the top three countries with higher social needs for language talents in Business services, wholesale and retail trade, and the financial industries. Additionally, Li and Liu (2023) also investigated the social needs of “Chinese Plus” through interviews among teachers and students in Southeast Asia. They found that engaging in occupations with Mandarin was one of the three main internal motivations, while other common reasons were interests and studying in China. Li (2023) believes the orders between language and vocational skills of “Chinese Plus TVET” should be arranged based on authentic workplace needs. In this context, investigating both the learners’ needs and the employment market demand for “Chinese Plus” talents in different industries and districts is vital. It could significantly optimise the talent development model and facilitate the creation of targeted teaching materials and adjustment of teaching methods. However, in current studies, only a few researchers focus on the analysis of demand in the job market and mainly study in similar areas with more Mandarin learners such as in Southeast Asia. Meanwhile, studies concentrate on area differences in the social needs of “Chinese Plus” talents, which are much fewer relatively.

3.1.2. Incomplete Talent Training Plans

The existing talent training plans for “Chinese Plus TVET” are still not complete and lack a systematic approach and theoretical guidance. Li, Li, and Ma (2023) divided China’s “Talent Cultivation Mode” in higher education into two questions: What kind of talents should be developed? How to develop talent? Based on this, Li et al. (2023) suggested the concept of the “Chinese Plus TVET” talent cultivation mode: develop the talents who can master technology, Mandarin, and culture, and they stressed the importance of cross-cultural ability, compound, and localization for the talents. As a new field, “Chinese Plus TVET” talent standards have just been built in recent years through the series “Standards”, however, these standards or cultivation goals are not widely spread and gained consensus yet. For the talent-developing methods, in the past decade, the government and person-to-person institutes have made a lot of attempts within the language institutes, universities, enterprises, and governmental departments in curriculum design, teaching methods, cooperation modes, teacher training, and so on. For example, some researchers study the training mode of professional Chinese language talents in some specific areas (Zhen and Guo, 2023). Nevertheless, these specific training schemes were lack of systematic and theoretical guidance. Concretely, some details of talent cultivation mode

should be considered: whether the curriculum design is scientific, whether the length of the courses is suitable, whether the content of courses is targeted, whether teaching methods are effective, whether cooperation modes lead to mutually beneficial outcomes, and how to conduct teacher training, etc.

3.1.3. Insufficient Research on the Application of Educational Resources

Another challenge is the lack of empirical study and teaching practice of emerging “Chinese Plus TVET” educational resources by practitioners and learners. According to the achievements shown above, in recent years, many teaching resources about “Chinese Plus TVET” have been generated, which include coursebooks, online and offline teaching and learning platforms and materials. However, the application and practice of using these teaching resources are in their infancy, and most practice activities and studies are exploring how to create more cooperation or teaching resources to achieve an increase in quantity. Therefore, the quality and effectiveness of teaching resources are waiting to be examined in the process of the application. Zhao and Tao (2023) investigated the situation of applying the teaching resources in 15 companies that conducted “Chinese Plus TVET” projects. The main issues include a lack of systematic textbooks, impractical, too difficult, and lack of supporting materials. Although more and more textbooks are published, the involved industries and areas are limited at this stage, let alone the application. Some studies focus on the role of instructors in this issue. Wu et al. (2023) discussed the interplay between textbooks of “Chinese Plus TVET” and International Chinese language teachers. They believe good coursebooks may improve the teachers’ professional ability; in turn, teachers’ teaching experience may complete these resources, which motivates the improvement of “Chinese Plus TVET”. Some other researchers focus on the transformation of teaching methods. Sun and Jiang (2023) argued that traditional International Chinese Language teaching approaches do not distinguish the needs and goals of learners, which may not adapt to the teaching of “Chinese Plus TVET” because most of the learners need to improve language and skills goals in the short term. Despite the growing quantity of teaching materials, ensuring their effective utilisation by teachers and learners, as well as optimising the role of digital platforms, remains a crucial challenge.

3.2. Strategies for Developing “Chinese Plus TVET” under B&R

3.2.1. Differentiation Based on Regional Differences

To effectively address the insufficient demand investigation in “Chinese Plus TVET”, differentiation strategies should be developed based on regional features, social needs, and learners in implementing districts of “Chinese Plus TVET”. Firstly, a comprehensive analysis of regional characteristics should be conducted because different geographic and cultural regions require tailored approaches. For example, some Sino-sphere countries such as Japan and Vietnam have a strong cultural foundation in Chinese characters, making it easier to integrate Chinese language education into vocational training. Also, other countries like Germany, with well-established TVET systems, can serve as references for structuring “Chinese Plus TVET” programs. Understanding different histories, cultures, economic backgrounds, and international cooperation under B&R in different areas may help to better integrate the Chinese language and Vocational Education. These regional characteristics also support the investigation of local social and market needs for “Chinese Plus TVET” talents.

Then, it is essential to conduct in-depth market research to identify the real vocational contexts where Chinese proficiency is required. Researchers found that some Chinese employees improving their English rather than local clerks learning Mandarin, which highlights the “authentic” needs in “Chinese Plus TVET” (Li, 2023). It emphasised the importance of understanding authentic workplace needs rather than making broad assumptions. More field research based on area studies should be conducted in the future to figure out the diverse needs. Besides, learners’ backgrounds and traits also need to be paid attention to.

Finally, differentiating learner needs is key to ensuring the success of “Chinese Plus TVET” programs because learners’ motivations and goals can vary significantly. Specifically, “Chinese Plus TVET” learners’ motivations seem to be dynamic. For instance, some learners aim to learn the Chinese language to fulfil immediate job requirements through the “Chinese Plus TVET” project while some of them may turn to a longer-term aim of learning Mandarin. It will affect talent development plans issued by institutes. Therefore, an adjustable, sustainable and flexible talent cultivation mode based on various learners needs to be considered. By systematically analysing regional differences, employment market trends, and learners’ vocational and language needs in different places, this differentiation strategy will be more targeted to enhance the alignment between talent cultivation and actual industry requirements, ultimately optimising the development of “Chinese Plus TVET” under B&R.

3.2.2. Localisation of Talent Cultivation Models

To address the lack of a systematic talent training plan, localized talent cultivation models should be developed based on differentiated and common issues on areas, workforce demands, and learners’ features. Localisation in International Chinese Language Education refers to optimising strategies for adapting local conditions to meet the local multiple educational needs (Li, Chen, and Óscar, 2022).

For example, curriculum design should be adapted to local industries and policies. Li and Zhuang (2023) discussed the path of the Chinese language in the national education system of African countries. They indicated that many political issues in African countries may not be avoided. Moreover, livelihood issues, conflict of languages, complicated linguistic environments, and educational equality all influence localisation. A localized approach means designing flexible and industry-oriented curricula that comply with local educational policies and labor market demands. For example, in regions where manufacturing or tourism dominates, Chinese Plus TVET courses should integrate technical skills relevant to these industries while ensuring language proficiency. In addition, developing localized and specialized teaching materials and textbooks that can fully reflect local industries and cultures. Furthermore, cooperation models between stakeholders should be more structured and mutually beneficial. It might encourage learners to consistently learn knowledge in Chinese Plus TVET programs and build systematical talent cultivation mechanisms. Finally, localized teacher training is crucial. To decrease the costs of moving the teachers across different countries, a more sustainable approach would be to train local educators in both Mandarin and vocational expertise to ensure long-term talent cultivation within the local context.

By integrating curriculum adaptation, localized teaching materials, structured cooperation models, and localized teacher training, the systematic development of “Chinese Plus TVET” can be enhanced to meet both

theoretical standards and practical workforce needs. This approach ensures that talent cultivation aligns with local industries, policies, humanistic environments and long-term economic demands, addressing the current inadequacies in training plans and improving the overall sustainability of “Chinese Plus TVET” under B&R.

3.2.3. Deepening Hybrid Educational Modes

To enhance the effectiveness of “Chinese Plus TVET” educational resources, it is crucial to deepen hybrid teaching and learning modes, integrating online and offline approaches to improve teaching quality and learner engagement. Although there has been development in educational resources, such as coursebooks and online platforms, studies and teaching practices on their effectiveness in real-world applications remain limited. Deepening a hybrid educational mode could provide potential solutions by strategically selecting resources, enhancing pedagogical techniques, and encouraging autonomous learning practices.

For instructors, the first key lies in identifying teaching objectives and material selection to align with both language acquisition and vocational skills training. Beyond simply using existing resources, instructors could also actively create or develop multiple materials that cater to real-world vocational needs based on an in-depth understanding of learners’ needs and teaching content. The practicality of teaching content emphasizes the courses should not only teach Mandarin but also equip learners with communication strategies, industry-specific terms, cross-cultural knowledge and workplace problem-solving skills. Moreover, to strengthen the pedagogical innovation. For example, technology-assisted teaching methods should be applied such as digital simulations and interactive exercises, which can further enhance instructional effectiveness. Finally, regularly collecting teaching feedback and assessing learning outcomes to refine teaching strategies and improve curriculum effectiveness is also important.

For learners, developing learning autonomy is crucial in both in-person and online learning settings. Unlike conventional general Chinese language courses, “Chinese Plus TVET” often requires learners to acquire specific vocational skills as well as the Chinese language within a limited time, making self-guided study a necessary supplement to classroom instruction. Learners could try to use more digital platforms to enhance learning efficiency. That is because some useful tools can help learners especially those who do not have authentic language environments, to interact with multimedia activities, simulated workplace situations, and collaborative tools. Promoting an active approach to learning not only enhances knowledge retention but also prepares students with skills for lifelong learning.

Ultimately, by optimizing teaching resources, refining pedagogical approaches, and fostering independent learning for instructors and learners, a hybrid educational model can ensure the quality and applicability of “Chinese Plus TVET” programs.

4. Conclusion

“Chinese Plus TVET” is an emerging concept and language training mode in the field of International Chinese Language Education. It was generated in the background of the Belt and Road with a final objective to serve society. In the past ten years of implementation of B&R, the demand for language talent has grown increasingly diverse, highlighting the need to explore the interplay between B&R and Chinese Plus TVET.

This article simply made a conclusion of developing monuments of Chinese Plus TVET within a decade and discussed current issues in demand investigation, training plan, and resources application. The final strategies proposed have not been tested and need more empirical research in the future. All in all, pursuing an effective and sustainable development path for “Chinese Plus TVET” will contribute to both individual career growth for learners and broader global connectivity.

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