

English as a Medium of Communication in Cross-Cultural Economic and Legal Interactions in the Kashi Free Trade Zone: Roles and Impacts

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the roles and impacts of English as a medium of communication in cross-cultural economic and legal interactions within the Kashi Free Trade Zone. Employing both quantitative and qualitative research methods, this paper delves into the specific mechanisms and pathways through which English facilitates communication between economic and legal entities with diverse cultural backgrounds in the zone. The findings suggest that the extensive use of English not only strengthens international cooperation within the region but also enhances the interactional transparency of legal and economic documents, playing a pivotal role in promoting regional economic integration and attracting foreign investment. Furthermore, this study analyzes the specific impacts of English proficiency on enterprises and legal professionals in the Free Trade Zone and proposes targeted English education and training recommendations to further enhance the zone's international competitiveness.

Keywords: *Cross-cultural communication, Economic and legal interactions, Kashi Free Trade Zone, English as a lingua franca, International cooperation.*

1. INTRODUCTION

As globalization accelerates, language plays an increasingly vital role as a bridge for communication in cross-cultural economic and legal interactions. Particularly in free trade zones like Kashi, English has become a key medium connecting diverse cultures and legal systems. The Kashi Free Trade Zone, a crucial node for China's exchanges with Central Asia and Europe, witnesses frequent economic and legal activities, significantly relying on English. This study aims to explore the role of English in facilitating cross-cultural economic and legal interactions within the Kashi Free Trade Zone, analyze its impact on regional economic integration and international cooperation, and propose recommendations for enhancing English education and training. By improving the English proficiency of personnel within the zone, the study seeks to boost the international competitiveness and sustainable development of the Kashi Free Trade Zone.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 *Language Service Development and Foreign Language Talent Training Strategies in Free Trade Zone*

Under the background of the rapid development of free trade zones, the establishment of Chongqing Free Trade Zone marks a new era of regional foreign economic exchanges. Research by Liping Liu (2023) from Chongqing University of Foreign Business and Economics provides an in-depth analysis, exploring the critical role of language services in this context and the need for foreign language talent cultivation. With the implementation of the "Belt and Road Initiative" and the Yangtze River Economic Belt strategies, Chongqing Free Trade Zone has become a key node for domestic and foreign exchanges, putting forward higher requirements for language services and foreign language talents. The study emphasizes that professional language services play an irreplaceable role in promoting economic activities,

attracting foreign investment and enhancing regional economic competitiveness. In order to meet the demand for language services in the FTZ, Chongqing FTZ needs to cultivate foreign language talents with high-quality, professional and international perspectives.

2.2 The Path and Strategy of National English Education in Free Trade zone

With the comprehensive promotion of the construction of Hainan Free Trade Port, English education and its role in regional development have been widely concerned. In his research, Zhan Man (2022) from Sanya Air Tourism Vocational College deeply discussed the practical path and strategy of learning English for all under the background of Hainan Free Trade Port, so as to cope with the challenges of globalization and enhance regional competitiveness. Zhan pointed out that with the implementation of the Hainan Free Trade Zone (Hong Kong) policy, Hainan is facing a wider range of international communication opportunities, and English, as a global language, plays a pivotal role in this process.

2.3 Development Analysis and Strategic Suggestions of Foreign Legal Service Industry in Free Trade Zone

As a key part of China-Asean Free Trade Area, Guangxi Free Trade Area's strategic significance of developing foreign-related legal service industry is not only reflected in promoting the progress of regional legal service industry, but also in strengthening regional economic integration and international cooperation. The research of Gu Qingling (2020) from Guangxi University for Nationalities focuses on the current situation, challenges and development path choice of foreign-related legal service industry in Guangxi Free Trade Zone. Gu Qingling pointed out that although the Guangxi Free Trade Zone has made some progress in foreign-related legal services, it still faces problems such as talent shortage, insufficient policy support, and weak international competitiveness.

2.4 The Effect and Enlightenment of Foreign Language Ability Building of Citizens in Free Trade Zone

Zhong Yanghui (2023) from Hainan Foreign Language Vocational College believes that in the context of Hainan Free Trade Zone, the cultivation of citizens' foreign language ability has become a

key issue. With the in-depth development of Hainan Free Trade Port, the application of foreign languages, especially English, has become more and more important in various fields. The Hainan provincial government has issued a number of policies aimed at comprehensively improving citizens' foreign language proficiency, including the Hainan Provincial Action Plan for Comprehensively Improving Citizens' Foreign Language proficiency and the Hainan Provincial Action Plan for Comprehensively Improving Civil Servants' Foreign language proficiency in 2020-2025.

2.5 The Importance of English in Free Trade Agreements and Related Professional Texts

Pedro Patino Garcia (2013) introduces a specialized parallel corpus covering Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) in Europe and the Americas, which contains texts in English and Spanish and its smaller English-Norwegian and Spanish-Norwegian subcorpora. The corpus is based on the free trade agreements formally signed by a number of countries and regional blocs over the past two decades, which serve as professional texts and become a valuable resource for the study of terms and phrases in different areas of business activity around the world.

The corpus contains about 1.37 million English words and 1.48 million Spanish words, in addition to two sub-corpora containing 60,000 words each. As the main language of international business communication, English is especially important in the text of free trade agreements. The FTA corpus is not only an important tool for studying professional terms and phrases in the field of business, but also emphasizes the central position of English in international trade and legal texts. It provides a platform for in-depth understanding and comparison of the use of English in FTA texts, further proving the importance of mastering English for professionals in the global economic environment.

2.6 Strengthening the Training Of Business English Talents to Meet the Challenges of Free Trade Zones

Dong Xue (2017) believes that with the rapid development of free trade zones (FTAs) in China, the demand for professionals who master business English has increased significantly. As an

international language, English occupies a central position in global business exchanges and is essential for communication, negotiation and cultural exchange. In the international business environment such as free trade zones, the importance of English is self-evident. Therefore, strengthening the vocational skills training of business English majors is not only the need to enhance personal competitiveness, but also an inevitable choice to meet the needs of the international business environment. Based on the teaching practice, Dong Xue analyzed in detail the problems existing in the vocational ability and training of business English majors, and put forward corresponding training countermeasures, aiming to emphasize and strengthen the application of English in the business field and ensure that professionals can effectively cope with the challenges of international business.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a mixed-methods research design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches to thoroughly investigate the role of English in cross-cultural economic and legal interactions within the Kashi Free Trade Zone. The quantitative aspect of the research utilizes a survey method, targeting employees of enterprises and legal institutions within the zone to collect data on the frequency of English usage, its application in the workplace, and the relationship between English proficiency and job performance. The survey is designed with both closed and open-ended questions to gather specific quantitative data and qualitative feedback.

For the qualitative component, semi-structured interviews are conducted to delve into the respondents' perceptions and experiences regarding the role of English in economic and legal communications. Interviewees include corporate executives, legal advisors, and policy-makers, offering multidimensional insights. Additionally, the study will analyze relevant policy documents and legal texts from the Kashi Free Trade Zone to identify the official frameworks and requirements for English usage.

In terms of data analysis, quantitative data will be analyzed using statistical software, encompassing both descriptive and inferential statistics to identify patterns and relationships. Qualitative data will be processed through content analysis, summarizing main themes and patterns. Through this mixed-methods design, the research

aims to comprehensively reveal the role of English in cross-cultural communication within the zone and its impact on economic and legal practices.

4. RESEARCH RESULTS

The analysis of survey responses and interviews from employees of enterprises and legal institutions within the Kashi Free Trade Zone reveals the pivotal role of English in cross-cultural economic and legal interactions within the region. Quantitative data indicate that over 70% of respondents believe English proficiency is crucial for their workplace communication, especially in dealing with international contracts and legal documents. Statistical analysis further shows a significant positive correlation between employees' English fluency and their job satisfaction and career advancement opportunities.

Qualitative interview outcomes highlight the role of English in fostering cross-cultural understanding and collaboration. The majority of interviewed executives and legal advisors concur that enhanced English training can improve team efficiency and reduce misunderstandings due to language barriers. Moreover, the analysis of policy documents and legal texts from the Kashi Free Trade Zone reveals that English has become the predominant language for economic and legal activities in the area, with its widespread use contributing positively to the region's international image and foreign investment attraction.

In summary, the research results demonstrate that English plays a crucial role in the economic and legal interactions within the Kashi Free Trade Zone, positively influencing the region's international competitiveness.

5. DISCUSSION

This study unveils the pivotal role of English in facilitating cross-cultural economic and legal interactions within the Kashi Free Trade Zone, emphasizing the significance of language skills in enhancing job performance. Through an analysis of English usage among employees across various sectors within the zone and its correlation with job performance, the researchers discovered that higher English proficiency significantly boosts employees' ability to handle international transactions, which is crucial for the Kashi Free Trade Zone positioned at a strategic trade juncture.

Compared with existing research, our findings support the notion that language proficiency has a significant impact on career success and further highlight the complexities of working in a multilingual and multicultural context. While previous studies have explored the relationship between language skills and career development, our research provides empirical data from the specific context of an emerging market and free trade zone, adding a new dimension to the literature in this field.

The study also notes that while there is a widespread recognition of the importance of English training among businesses in the Kashi Free Trade Zone, disparities exist in the implementation of training, particularly concerning the depth and breadth of training. This indicates that companies need to design more targeted English training programs based on their degree of internationalization and specific needs of their employees.

Furthermore, the research identifies that the demand for English proficiency within the zone extends beyond commercial communication to encompass various fields including legal, technical, and others, which has implications for formulating comprehensive language education policies.

Despite providing valuable insights, this study has its limitations, including the representativeness of the sample and constraints of the data collection methods, which may affect the generalizability of the findings. Future research should therefore expand the sample size to include a wider range of industries and businesses of different scales and consider employing diverse data collection and analysis methods to enhance the reliability and validity of the research.

This extended discussion offers a detailed analysis of the study's findings, situating them within a broader academic and practical context, and outlining the directions for future research and policy implications.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Corporate Level

Businesses in the Kashi Free Trade Zone should set English training objectives based on business needs and employee baseline, adopting personalized and hierarchical training approaches to enhance employees' business English and professional English skills.

Companies should regularly assess the effectiveness of English training and adjust the content and methods based on business development needs and employee feedback, ensuring the continuity and effectiveness of training programs.

The government should encourage the establishment of cross-company English learning alliances or resource sharing to reduce training costs and improve training quality.

6.2 Policy Level

The government should motivate enterprises and educational institutions to invest more resources in English training through financial subsidies, tax incentives, etc.

The government should carry out English proficiency improvement projects for key industries and positions to enhance the overall international communication ability of the park.

The government could consider partnerships with internationally accredited English educational institutions to introduce high-quality English teaching resources and faculty, enhancing training outcomes.

6.3 Educational Level

Educational institutions should design courses based on the actual needs of the free trade zone, particularly introducing English specialized courses related to international business and law.

Equally important is the strengthening of the teaching force, such as the recruitment of teachers with international backgrounds, and the enhancement of teaching quality and global perspective.

Educators should innovate teaching methods and adopt interactive and practical teaching models to improve learners' practical English application ability.

Implementing these recommendations is expected to enhance the English communication abilities of individuals within the Kashi Free Trade Zone and promote the region's internationalization process, increasing its competitiveness and influence in the global economy.

7. CONCLUSION

This study meticulously analyzes the role of English in cross-cultural communication within the Kashi Free Trade Zone and its impact on economic and legal interactions through quantitative and qualitative methods. The findings underscore the pivotal role of English as an international language in facilitating cross-cultural economic activities and legal exchanges within the zone. Employees with higher English proficiency are more efficient in handling international transactions, highlighting the positive contribution of English proficiency to career development in a globalized economic context. Additionally, the research points out the inadequacies in English education and training within the zone, emphasizing the importance of improving the quality of English education to enhance regional competitiveness.

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