

Analysis of Language Service Needs in International Ice and Snow Events and Countermeasures: Taking the Asian Winter Games in Heilongjiang Province as an Example

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Abstract

With the rapid development of global ice and snow sports and the continuous improvement of internationalization, international ice and snow events have emerged as significant platforms to showcase the prowess of various countries' ice and snow sports and cultural allure. This paper aims to explore the demand for language services in such events and conducts a case study, taking the Heilongjiang Asian Winter Games as an example. Addressing the current issues of talent shortage and the limited diversity of training modes for language service talents in China's international ice and snow sports events, this paper proposes strategies for cultivating language service talents accordingly.

Keywords

International Ice and Snow Events; Language Service; Demand Analysis; Countermeasure Research.

1. Introduction

Hosting international sports events can improve the level of social civilization in a region, enhance residents' awareness, and significantly contribute to the region's international profile. With the successful hosting of numerous international sports events such as the Beijing Winter Olympics, Chengdu Universiade, and Hangzhou Asian Games, sports events hosted in China have become increasingly popular both domestically and internationally, receiving widespread attention and praise at home and abroad. The successful international events have gained significant popularity for the 2025 Harbin Asian Winter Games. As an international ice and snow culture venue, Harbin is deeply loved and admired by tourists.

2. The Multifaceted Role of International Ice and Snow Sports Events in Promoting Economic Growth, Cultural Exchange, and Social Development for Host Cities

2.1. Promoting Regional Economic Development

Large-scale sports events have become a consensus in social development for their significant economic value-added. The concept of using sports as a platform to promote economic and trade development has gained widespread attention and recognition. International sports events can comprehensively attract various regional industries, creating an event-centric linkage that transforms them into temporary resource allocation centers. These events expand employment opportunities, boost the development of the tertiary industry, and bring high-value economic development opportunities to the region. Heilongjiang, a major province for ice and snow, is gradually forming a new pattern of coordinated and integrated development. This

pattern is based on ice and snow tourism, focuses on branded ice and snow sports events, is led by sports innovation, and breaks through in the ice and snow sports manufacturing industry, significantly promoting industrial upgrading in the region.

2.2. Accelerating Regional Internationalization

Large-scale sports events, notably international ones, can significantly upgrade urban infrastructure, accelerate industrial modernization, and enhance a city's comprehensive service capabilities. As a result, hosting such events is a crucial indicator of a region's ability to align with international standards. In the information era, the highly advanced modern network can swiftly disseminate information about international sports events globally, drawing worldwide attention to the events and their host cities. This attention, in turn, can serve as a catalyst for a region's internationalization process, positioning it as a condensed source of influential and captivating information in society.

2.3. Promoting the Prosperity of Regional Cultural Industries

In the 21st century, with globalization accelerating, cultural strategies have emerged as a crucial factor for regions to establish their presence globally. As more regions focus on strengthening their cultural influence, international sports events play a pivotal role in fostering the integration of competitive sports culture and traditional culture. During these large-scale events, displays of local traditional culture often intersect with competitive sports culture, creating opportunities for cultural exchange and planning. Hosting such events can rapidly disseminate local culture, attracting both domestic and foreign tourists through diverse activities showcasing folk culture, food culture, and tourism culture. This, in turn, revitalizes local tourism, attracts investments, fosters new industrial clusters, and drives the prosperity of cultural industries.

2.4. Enhancing the International Influence of the Region

Hosting ice and snow sports events can quickly draw domestic and foreign media's attention to the events and the host region, enhancing the global influence of ice and snow sports events, promoting the construction of excellent sports facilities in the region, shaping the regional brand characteristics, and expanding the international popularity of the region. Launching a series of promotional activities focusing on local unique culture through international sports events can enhance the cultural strength of the region.

In the context of the revitalization of Northeast China in the new era, Harbin's hosting of the 9th Asian Winter Games in 2025 presents numerous opportunities and challenges. The main opportunities lie in promoting the development of ice and snow tourism, advancing ice and snow sports, improving Harbin's infrastructure, and fostering a high-quality ice and snow economy. The challenges include staging an exciting and memorable Asian Winter Games while adhering to the principles of simplicity and thrift, organizing the competition schedule, ensuring smooth, orderly, and efficient work on all sides, optimizing the urban environment, creating a positive social atmosphere, and coordinating promotional efforts for the Asian Winter Games. Among these, the internationalization of sports events demands not only hardware facilities for hosting international events but also software facilities—the guarantee of language services. High-quality language services play a significant role in broadening the scope of sports events, promoting sports development, and enhancing regional image building. Therefore, cultivating successful language service talents is crucial for the successful hosting of international sports events.

3. Language Services

3.1. The Concept of Language Services

The concept of language services originated from the 1992 Barcelona Olympics, which saw the establishment of a language service department with the aim of providing translation information and competition updates for all event participants and spectators, and facilitating effective communication during the Olympic events. Initially, people's understanding of language services was limited to solely translation services, encompassing both spoken and written forms. However, with the proposal of the 'Belt and Road' initiative, the scope of language services has evolved beyond the mere translation from one language to another. It now also includes cross-cultural communication. The Translators Association of China clarified in the '2016 Report on the Development of China's Language Service Industry' that the language service industry aims to promote cross-language and cross-cultural exchanges. It provides services and products for cross-language and cross-cultural information transformation, as well as related research and consulting, technology development, tool application, asset management, education and training, and other specialized services in the modern service industry.

Modern language services encompass translation services and localization services, language technology tool development, language teaching and training, and related consulting services. They have become an integral part of the global industrial chain. The sports language involved in sports events is a specialized language in a particular field. In the context of sports events, rigorous sports terminology is required, while general-purpose language is needed for peripheral services around the event. Therefore, individuals providing language services at events must not only possess professional knowledge and terminology specific to the event, but also understand the cultures carried by different languages and employ appropriate and accurate language to complete information transmission and communication.

3.2. The Importance of Language Services

The internationalization of cities, regions, and even countries is impossible without language services. National strength is closely related to the level of linguistic diversity and international communication, which is a hallmark of successful internationalization. Therefore, providing internationalized language services is a necessary guarantee for hosting international sports events. Quality language services are crucial for elevating the international standing of sports events. They ensure the smooth progress of international events and can effectively respond to emergencies, such as injury management and unforeseen circumstances. Additionally, they facilitate cultural understanding and integration, promoting communication and exchange between diverse cultures.

(1) Language Services as a Bridge

Large-scale international events inherently rely on language services, serving as a crucial bridge that determines the success of hosting international sports events. English, recognized as the official working language in these events, is involved in all aspects from before, during, and after the game. In the pre-match routine, for instance, language services are indispensable for event information dissemination, athlete and coach registration and certification, and reception, etc. During the competition, they are required for athlete identity verification, lottery drawing, competition organization, refereeing, results announcements, and various other aspects. Post-competition interviews, press conferences, and prize distributions also rely heavily on language services. Furthermore, language services cover a wide range of areas, including hotel reception, transportation, medical rescue, equipment maintenance, communication, external liaison services, media broadcasts, and audience guidance, both inside

and outside the venue. These services ensure smooth communication among athletes, judges, and spectators from all over the world, thus facilitating the smooth progress of the event.

(2) Language Services as a Guarantee

The "Belt and Road" initiative strives to foster interconnection, particularly cultural interconnection, where language services play a pivotal role as a guarantee. Large-scale international events, encompassing participants from diverse countries and ethnicities, require language services that carry cultural connotations. These services facilitate effective communication and exchange across cultures, mitigating cultural clashes and fostering a deeper understanding and recognition of local cultures. When a region's culture and economy aim to "go global," it essentially seeks to expand its global reach, achieve seamless integration with the international community. In this endeavor, language services serve as the foundation and guiding force in realizing this vision.

(3) Language Services as a Resource

Language services are both cultural and economic resources capable of generating economic benefits. They refer to actions and activities that involve providing assistance to others or society through the utilization of language and text. In international sports events, the quality of language services can significantly affect the success of the event. In the information era, a country's language capabilities are directly proportional to its ability to obtain, accumulate, utilize, and protect information resources, as well as to develop international space and compete globally. The successful pursuit and maintenance of international exchanges and etiquette heavily rely on robust linguistic capabilities. Already, language capabilities have a profound influence on various aspects of a country, including technological innovation, economic development, cultural construction, and national security. Therefore, language service capabilities are closely tied to a country's core interests, serving not only as cultural resources but also as essential economic resources.

3.3. Issues in Language Services

Language services in China have a comparatively late development, and there is a lack of awareness of their importance. Currently, there is a shortage of language service talents and a monotonous talent cultivation model, which hinders the effective communication and promotion of ice and snow sports events on the international stage.

(1) Lack of Language Service Talents

Ice and snow sports in China have a late development, and the number of required professional technicians is limited. Furthermore, the language proficiency of Chinese sports talents is relatively low, especially when it comes to foreign languages. Consequently, there are even fewer professional technicians who can communicate proficiently in foreign languages. Currently, there are only a handful of Chinese ice- and-snow sports judges with international referee qualifications who can fluently communicate in English. This results in a relatively small voice for China on the international stage, which is not conducive to the further development of ice and snow sports in the country.

Driven by the 2022 Winter Olympics, ice and snow events and activities in various regions of China have grown increasingly diverse, featuring numerous unique projects. However, due to a lack of language service capabilities among project staff, the absence of high-quality language service partners, and insufficient development and construction of language products, cross-cultural communication skills are lacking in project implementation and promotion. This may even lead to "cultural shock" and hinder the internationalization of ice and snow projects. Furthermore, most front-desk service personnel and event volunteers have little understanding of ice and snow sports events and lack professional knowledge, preventing them from providing high-quality language services. This, in turn, affects the internationalization level of regional ice and snow sports events. Additionally, there is a shortage of language

teachers who possess professional knowledge of ice and snow sports. Most language teachers have limited understanding of ice and snow sports and are reluctant to shift their talent training objectives from traditional general language ability cultivation to "language + professional skills". Their lack of learning motivation and inadequate teaching abilities result in insufficient language service talent cultivation capabilities for international ice and snow sports events.

(2) The monotonous cultivation model of language service talents

Currently, the cultivation of language service talents predominantly relies on universities. However, most universities still adhere to traditional academic talent cultivation objectives. Language teaching primarily focuses on imparting linguistic and cultural knowledge, with curricula dominated by language, translation, and cultural courses. This results in an emphasis on basic language skills while neglecting the development of communicative abilities in language application and professional fields. Consequently, the current cultivation model hardly meets the country's demand for linguistically competent professional translators. Although a few universities have introduced composite talent cultivation models, such as "Language + Computer", "Language + Tourism Service", and "Language + Business Management", few have attempted the "Language + Ice and Snow Sports" model. Additionally, issues like low discipline development, inadequate professional teaching staff, and insufficient discipline construction have contributed to a monotonous cultivation model for language service talents in international ice and snow sports events, which fails to keep pace with the increasing demand for such events.

4. Strategies for Cultivating Language Service Talents

The promotion of globalization and integration is the fundamental driving force for talent cultivation, and the lack of language service talents, which is the greatest obstacle to the internationalization of winter sports events, makes it especially crucial to cultivate professional language service talents and high-quality service providers. Therefore, in cultivating language service talents for winter sports events, it is necessary to first clarify 'who to cultivate' and then devise an appropriate cultivation plan. The reserve of human resources is not only the key to providing quality language services but also a strong guarantee for the internationalization of winter sports events, playing an important role in improving the level of internationalization.

4.1. Establishing international talent cultivation goals and completing top-level design

The core issue in enhancing language service capabilities for the internationalization of winter sports events is building a professional team, necessitating international language service talents. Therefore, all regions should clarify the need to cultivate language service talents for winter sports and formulate goals that align with national and regional needs, based on the "National Medium and Long-Term Education Reform and Development Plan (2010-2020)". Specifically, we must cultivate winter sports talents with professional knowledge, foreign language proficiency, cross-cultural understanding, and communication skills. This goal should be integrated into university and relevant department talent cultivation systems. Additionally, a diversified cultivation model aligned with international goals should be formulated to improve language service capacity and address talent scarcity. Cultivating comprehensive, professional, innovative, and applied language service talents is a long-term, systematic project. To achieve this, we must establish clear goals, design a comprehensive cultivation model, and form a system to meet winter sports internationalization needs, cultivating competitive talents and continuously improving language service capabilities.

4.2. “Government-University-Industry-Enterprise” Collaboration to Achieve Diversification of Talent Cultivation Models

As a foundation for fostering high-quality talents, universities play a crucial role in talent cultivation in China. Specifically, international language service talents for winter sports events differ in cultivation methods from traditional academic talent cultivation, and relying solely on universities cannot fully satisfy the current national and regional demands. It is necessary to leverage the educational resource advantages of ‘university+’ to promote cooperation between governments and universities, as well as universities and enterprises, and supplement these efforts with short-term industry training programs. By employing diverse talent cultivation models and a hierarchical approach, we can enhance the capacity to cultivate language service talents for winter sports events.

(1) Adopting a collaborative talent development approach through the promotion of the ‘government-university-industry-enterprise’ model

Universities should leverage their talent cultivation capabilities and academic platforms to boost the production of language service talents. Since the establishment of the Master of Translation and Interpreting (MTI) program in 2007 in China, universities have been able to formulate scientific talent cultivation plans based on regional characteristics, national and regional development needs, students’ personal development, and language learning patterns. By introducing English translation master’s programs focused on winter sports and expanding related course offerings in winter sports English, universities can expand the pool of language service talents. Through cooperation between governments and universities, as well as collaborations between universities and enterprises, translation and internship bases for talent cultivation can be created, providing more practical opportunities for students. The construction of these bases can attract students to participate in language service activities for winter sports events, effectively enhancing their translation practical abilities, professional ethos, and qualities, fulfilling the need for high-level international language service talents. Meanwhile, the cooperation model between governments, universities, and enterprises can enrich teaching resources and fully consider the relationship between national needs, personal development, and learning patterns in curriculum design and teaching content arrangements. This forms a scientific and efficient teaching plan, improves the cultivation capacity of winter sports talents, and cultivates high-level compound translation talents with expertise in “foreign language + winter sports”. Additionally, the talent cultivation goals of existing sports colleges and universities should focus on internationalizing language services for winter sports events. This involves establishing a scientific curriculum system that nurtures students’ ability to think internationally and master cross-cultural communication skills. The curriculum should integrate professional knowledge with an emphasis on the instrumental nature of English. By doing so, we aim to cultivate more professionals in winter sports with an international perspective and proficiency in international rules, enabling them to enhance China’s voice on the international sports stage, better promote Chinese culture, and tell China’s story.

(2) Relying on government, industry, and enterprises to construct a multi-level talent cultivation model

Regional governments, relevant sports event management departments, and enterprises can introduce educational resources, such as language courses and training materials, from universities and social language service institutions. Relying on projects undertaken by the government, industry, and enterprises, we can enhance the service capabilities of language service personnel for winter sports events through various training models, including short-term training courses, translation workshops, and professional language translation projects. By leveraging multiple channels and mechanisms, we can diversify the enhancement methods. Additionally, a multi-level scientific talent cultivation mechanism should be established to

provide varying levels of language service talent cultivation channels. This mechanism should encourage more people to participate in winter sports activities and meet the demand for language service talents of different levels in international winter sports events, from core competition technicians to peripheral service personnel. At the same time, a talent resource pool should be set up, along with language service norms and standards. Furthermore, a scientific and effective selection mechanism for language service teams should be implemented, taking into account professional talents' language service capabilities, especially their cross-cultural communication abilities, as evaluation indicators. This will ensure the quality of the language service talent team. Ultimately, an effective cultivation and operation mechanism for language service personnel in winter sports events should be established, thereby forming inheritable and referential service norms and standards for winter sports. This will ensure the sustainability of talent cultivation and improve the effectiveness of language service talent cultivation.

4.3. Utilizing modern technological means to achieve curriculum resource sharing

The development of technology has provided modern teaching methods and tools. Therefore, in the process of cultivating language service talents for winter sports events, it is essential to fully utilize online high-quality courses and adopt a blended teaching approach combining online and offline methods. This approach ensures that all aspects of teaching are open, diverse, and innovative. By leveraging open resources on the internet and new media, we can introduce domestic and international high-quality MOOC/SPOC teaching resources into the teaching process. This not only compensates for the lack of professional knowledge among training teachers, but also allows learning to transcend the limitations of time and space, thereby enhancing students' autonomy in learning. Furthermore, leveraging internet + technology in talent cultivation enables the development of online specialized courses. These courses achieve cross-disciplinary, cross-departmental, cross-school, and cross-level resource sharing with "government-school-industry-enterprise" courses outside the campus. This integration and optimization of high-quality teaching resources lays the economic foundation for talent cultivation, ensures the basic needs of talent cultivation, expands efforts in this area, and cultivates globally competent talents who can proficiently use foreign languages to grasp foreign development trends and conduct international exchanges. This ultimately meets the language service needs of various winter sports events.

4.4. Strengthening the construction of the teaching staff and achieving the sharing of teachers' resources

Teachers are the core of talent cultivation, and strengthening their construction is vital to ensuring the quality of education. Given the current shortage of language teachers for winter sports events, we must address this issue by enhancing both teachers' capacity for cultivating talents and the ability of regional language service talents. To achieve this, it is necessary to raise language teachers' awareness of international talent cultivation, shift from traditional single-language teaching, and improve their ability to impart both professional and general language knowledge. We should formulate effective incentives to motivate teachers' self-directed learning, strengthen their evaluation to ensure their centrality in talent cultivation, and encourage them to participate in academic exchanges, overseas visits, and training programs. This will help them update their knowledge base, explore new teaching modes, and improve their teaching skills. Additionally, the "double teacher" model, combining online and offline methods, can facilitate the sharing of quality course resources across universities and departments. Through collaborative efforts of government, schools, industries, and enterprises, we can implement the "double mentor" system in MTI talent cultivation, effectively enhancing students' professional knowledge, theoretical level, practical translation abilities, professional

qualities, and cognitive skills, ultimately improving their language service capabilities. Truly achieving multi-resource cooperation among the government, industry, and schools, we aim to foster the co-construction of professions and skills. By maximizing the benefits of shared teachers' resources, we enhance the cultivation of language service talents for winter sports events, fulfilling the needs of international events and propelling winter sports to the global stage.

5. Conclusion

As globalization accelerates, improving the quality of language services for winter sports events is crucial, with a focus on enhancing the cultivation of language service talents. To achieve this, we should set clear talent cultivation goals, utilize university resources, promote collaboration between government, universities, industries, and enterprises, adopt diversified cultivation models, and integrate quality teaching and teacher resources. This will help cultivate professional technicians in the field of sports-related foreign language services. As a result, the internationalization level of China's winter sports events will be greatly enhanced, meeting the demand for language service talents in the country and region.

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