

Study on the Effect of Foreign Language Education on the Development of Regional Economy^{*}

Li Zhijuan, Chen Qiang
Changchun University, Changchun, China

With the needs of global economic integration and personal development, the enthusiasm of the people for learning foreign languages has increased. Foreign language economics has become a new growth point for China's economic development. Foreign language education has also played a positive role in the development of China's regional economy. Therefore, this study takes the local characteristics as a starting point, and is dedicated to improve the quality of talents, and make foreign language education better serve the development and construction of the regional economy.

Keywords: language economics, foreign language education, regional economy

Introduction

As the development of the economy of the society, foreign language as a communication bridge gets more and more important; it does an important influence on human's live and economic activities; the using of language has elements of the nature of economics. For a long time, language and economic development are closely related. Without language, economic activities cannot be carried out. Under the influence of global integration, the language shows its infinite charm in cross-cultural economic exchanges. At the same time, as a new cross-cutting subject, language economics is increasingly concerned by linguists and economists. The economics of language is based on the western theory of human capital and the economics of education. It mainly studies the relationship between language and economy. Like other economic resources, language also has economic characteristics such as value, utility, cost, and benefits. Since then, it has opened the prelude to the study of language economics.

The Relationship Between Language and Economy

The Value of Language in the Economy

Language was first studied by the American scholar Ja. Cob Mmchak, and it was introduced in 1965 and was continuously improved by other scholars. The main view of economics of language holds that language is a kind of human capital, and learning language is an economic investment in human capital (Drucker, 2016). The

^{*} Fund project: The project of Jilin Provincial Education Department: The Current Situation Evaluation and Improvement Measures of Foreign Language Vocational Education Services on the Regional Economy Development (JJKH20170510SK).

Li Zhijuan, master, lecturer, Foreign Language College, Changchun University, Changchun, China.

Chen Qiang, master, professor, Foreign Language College, Changchun University, Changchun, China.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Qiang Chen, Foreign Language College, Changchun University, Changchun 130022, China.

use of language reflects economic value. The economic value of language is divided. The using of language has elements of the nature of economics.

In general, the core of the study of linguistic economics is the value, utility, cost, and effectiveness of language in the economy. The economic value of language mainly refers to the actual use status, frequency, language change of language in different periods of social economic life, and the economic value also includes people's evaluation of language and the resulting language policy (Chapple & Montero, 2016). Driven by language policies, people have gained certain economic benefits from language learning.

Economic Development Determines Language Needs

Since language and economy are inseparable, economic development plays a decisive role in the formation of language in human society. Generally speaking, language itself has no value, but how to choose the using of language reflects the value of the language economy which is depending on the degree of usage of the language in various tasks, occupations, and activities of various departments and the relationship between supply and demand (Huang, 2016). World-class languages such as English and French are spreading divergence of various scientific, technological, and cultural information with their unique cross-regional strengths, which play an important role in economic development (Huo, 2016). This is the inevitable result of the strong economic strength of western developed countries today. Therefore, language learning is also a crucial link and means of economic development.

The Practical Needs of Foreign Language Education for Economic Development

The Characteristics of Language

Language is the main tool for obtaining information, disseminating information, and accumulating information. As a window, it can reflect the economic, cultural, and technological conditions of a region. As a bridge, it can enable people to communicate with each other across borders, nations, and cultures. At present, the signing of international official documents requires English, French, and Spanish. China's trade with Japan, South Korea, Europe, and other countries and regions is also very frequent (Sonntag, 2016). Languages have become more and more closely integrated with economic development.

The Requirements of Globalization of the Knowledge Economy

With the globalization of the knowledge economy, the development of science and technology is changing with each passing day and international competition is becoming increasingly fierce. After joining the WTO, China has also integrated into the world economy extensively, accelerating the pace of scientific and technological development, and participating in international cooperation and competition on a greater scale and at a deeper level. Knowledge and talents are the key to winning the competition in the new era. It is precisely the need of the society for the knowledge economy and the thirst for related professionals that makes people fully understand the necessity of foreign language learning. The Chinese government also attaches great importance to the training of foreign language talents. Foreign language education is the platform for building integration into the international community. It is a bridge for learning, communication, cooperation, and development between countries.

The Need for Personal Development

Language meets different levels of social needs in the labor market and will achieve different economic benefits. The development of the economy requires more and more talents. In this regard, individuals' learning

of foreign languages is a positive response to the development trend of globalization and the knowledge economy, and is also a result of the supply and demand orientation of the labor market. For individuals to further realize their social values and adapt to the new living environment and cultural environment, they must continue to learn to meet the needs of society (Kaneva & Untura, 2016). In addition, some colleges and universities in our country are also seeking ways to cultivate multidisciplinary applications. This not only cultivates a variety of foreign language talents, but also sets up a “professional + language” training model which links language learning with market economy needs.

The Role of Foreign Language Education in the Development of Regional Economy

The Impact on the Import and Export Trade

The selective strengthening of language education in the region can enhance regional economic and trade development and expand the introduction of foreign investment. Through language learning, you can gain a deeper understanding of the country’s culture and background, and understand business rules and trade habits, and reduce losses such as technical regulations and product specifications (Kadochnikov, 2016). Therefore, the application and emphasis on the foreign language economy will also accelerate the transition from extensive growth to intensive growth in the region’s trade, increase added value, improve product quality and economic efficiency, and reduce trade frictions and disputes.

Pulling Foreign Capital and Promoting Regional Economic and Technological Development

Foreign language education has provided relevant foreign language talents, improved the quality of practitioners in the region, broadened their horizons, and promoted foreign exchanges which were conducive to the diversified development of the market, and were conducive to the introduction of foreign investment and learning advanced management and technology. For example, with the opening up of Jilin Province and the growth of foreign trade and the development of foreign economic and technological cooperation, the demand for compound foreign trade talents has been increasing, and the demand for foreign language talents has gradually increased. This trend has greatly promoted the growth of foreign language consumption in Jilin Province. Currently, the scale of foreign capital utilization in Jilin Province is relatively small; the industrial composition of foreign investment is not reasonable; the investment in the tertiary industry is relatively small; and the gap between the investment environment and the coastal developed cities is widening. Foreign language education helps to improve the investment environment and increase investment.

Providing More Employment Opportunities

Another positive significance of the English economic development is that it can provide more employment opportunities for the region. With the strengthening of foreign language education, various types of foreign language training institutions, import and export trading companies, foreign-funded enterprises and translation agencies will increase steadily. The employment opportunities provided by them can effectively relieve the pressure on employment in the society, maintain social stability, and make significant contributions to the economic growth of the region.

Promoting the Prosperity of Cultural Markets in the Region

Combining regional characteristics with the development of foreign language education in the region can serve as a new growth point for the local cultural market. Economic activities such as various types of language learning books, electronic equipment (electronic dictionaries, video machines, and so on), audiovisual materials,

examination materials, training institutions, and so on have made great progress due to foreign language education. On the one hand, it can expand educational resources, and on the other hand, it can promote the prosperity of cultural markets in the region.

Promoting the Development of Tourism in the Region

In the field of tourism, foreign languages play an irreplaceable role, and the tourism economy can even be called a foreign language economy. In addition to the region's unique tourism advantages, foreign language education can cultivate more talents for compounded foreign languages to promote regional tourism resources, attract more overseas tourists through multilingual exchange, further stimulate the overseas tourism market, and promote regional tourism development. Taking Jilin Province as an example, in 2017, the number of tourists entering Jilin Province was 1,484,300. Tourism has become an important platform for Shandong Province to drive economic growth and expand its opening up. Taking Changchun, Jilin Province as an example, due to its geographic location and historical reasons, Qingdao has also conducted more education in Korean, Japanese, and German than English. Language exchange has brought more overseas tourists. With the increase in the overall number of overseas tourists, tourism industry in Qingdao has received a large proportion of tourists from Japan, South Korea, Europe, and the United States every year, and the structure of tourists has also diversified. This has greatly promoted the tourism economic development in Changchun and Jilin.

Conclusion

This paper researches the relationship among language, economy and the practical needs of foreign language education for economic development, the role of foreign language education in the development of regional economy to study the effect of foreign language education on the development of regional economy, which make the society get a better development for the economy.

References

- Chapple, K., & Montero, S. (2016). From learning to fragile governance: Regional economic development in rural Peru. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 44, 143-152.
- Drucker, J. (2016). Reconsidering the regional economic development impacts of higher education institutions in the United States. *Regional Studies*, 50(7), 1-18.
- Huang, W. (2016). Cultivation research of innovation-type foreign language talents under the regional economic development background. *International Education, Economics, Social Science, Arts, Sports and Management Engineering Conference*. Yinchuan, China.
- Huo, C. (2016). A study on the demand of foreign language talents based on regional economic development. *Journal of Service Science & Management*, 9(2), 119-124.
- Kaneva, M., & Untura, G. (2016). Innovation indicators and regional growth in Russia. *Economic Change & Restructuring*, 50, 1-27.
- Kadochnikov, D. V. (2016). Languages, regional conflicts and economic development: Russia. In *The Palgrave handbook of economics and language* (pp. 538-580). London: Palgrave Macmillan UK.
- Sonntag, S. K. (2016). Languages, regional conflicts and economic development in South Asia. In *The Palgrave handbook of economics and language* (pp. 489-512). London: Palgrave Macmillan UK.