

Cultivating Multilingual Reporting Competencies in International Journalism Education: A Case Analysis

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ABSTRACT

"With the deepening of globalisation, strengthening international communication capacity and effectively communicating China's stories to the world have become critical missions. Currently, relevant education in China lacks sufficient integration of language skills, journalistic practices, and cross-cultural literacy, with practical teaching requiring enhancement. Therefore, this paper explores models and case studies for cultivating multilingual reporting capabilities in international journalism education. It proposes a tripartite curriculum system integrating "language-journalism-cross-cultural" dimensions. It outlines pathways to enhance practical skills through diverse scenarios such as on-campus simulations, off-campus internships, and project-based competitions. The aim is to advance the cultivation of international journalism talent in China."

KEYWORDS

Multilingual reporting competency; International journalism and communication; Curriculum system; Digital tools

1 Introduction

In the era of globalisation, transnational and cross-cultural journalism serves not only as a nation's external image promotion but also as a bridge for global cultural communication and cooperation. Building this bridge requires a large number of journalists proficient in reporting across multiple languages, enabling them to convey China's stories to audiences of diverse cultural backgrounds and thereby secure a voice in international news discourse. Strengthening multilingual reporting capabilities is essential for building an international discourse system commensurate with China's comprehensive national strength and advancing the Belt and Road Initiative. It requires cultivating cultural ambassadors who are proficient in foreign languages, knowledgeable about the media industry, and well-versed in the relevant countries and regions. Against this backdrop, this paper explores pathways for cultivating multilingual reporting competencies within international journalism education. Through theoretical and practical analysis, it seeks viable training methodologies, aiming to provide valuable insights for institutions optimising talent development programs and contributing perspectives to the construction of international journalism education paradigms.

2 The composition and practical requirements of multilingual reporting competence in international journalism education

2.1 Core components of multilingual reporting competence

First is language application ability. Journalists should understand, be familiar with, and proficiently apply a foreign language, ensuring concise, clear, and well-structured expression during news interviews. Second, possessing strong cross-cultural narrative skills is also crucial. Different regions of the world possess distinct cultures and values, so that the same event may be viewed differently by people from different cultural backgrounds. Journalists equipped with these cross-cultural narrative skills should know how to effectively tell a story within a specific cultural context and how to evoke resonance. Third, the ability to deeply analyse global issues is also vital. News events unfolding globally often intertwine complex political, economic, social, and historical elements, all interconnected in intricate ways^[1]. Merely presenting the surface of an event through various languages and formats is insufficient. Multilingual reporting demands that journalists conduct in-depth investigations within the linguistic sphere of target countries, grasping the origins, driving forces, and influencing factors of these complex events to provide authoritative analysis for audiences. Beyond this, multilingual reporting capabilities require journalists to master various news production tools while leveraging mainstream communication platforms and social media in target countries and regions to disseminate and promote news content. This significantly enhances news production efficiency and dissemination speed, enabling news to generate impact truly.

2.2 The practical demand for multilingual reporting in international journalism

As the world grows increasingly diverse and interconnected, the scope of international news coverage extends far beyond major powers. News organisations worldwide are actively dispatching correspondents and establishing websites across the globe, creating a substantial need for specialised journalists proficient not only in common languages like English but also in local dialects. Currently, significant challenges exist in both education and talent supply, manifested as follows: First, translation majors possess strong listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translation skills but lack training in news interviewing, writing, and editing techniques. They also lack an understanding of news production processes and standards. Journalism majors primarily focus on Chinese or English news interviewing and writing, remaining unfamiliar

with and inadequately equipped for non-universal languages ^[2]. Second, there is a lack of comprehensive understanding of the national conditions in countries where less commonly taught languages are spoken. Learners' knowledge of these countries is often confined to literature and history, with limited awareness of their current political and economic landscapes, social conflicts, and other contemporary issues. Without sustained attention to these areas, producing in-depth international reporting becomes challenging. Furthermore, upon entering international news organisations after graduation, most students require significant time for retraining to adapt to the work environment and intensity effectively, and to engage in the fast-paced demands of international news reporting.

3 Building a multilingual reporting competency development model in international journalism education

3.1 Establishing a tripartite curriculum framework integrating "language - journalism - cross-cultural studies"

In international journalism education, cultivating students' multilingual reporting competencies requires restructuring course design and instructional content by embedding language learning directly into practical journalism production tasks. Students must use their acquired foreign language to complete the entire workflow—from identifying news leads, conducting on-site interviews, verifying information, to drafting articles. Language instructors assess accuracy and authenticity in foreign language usage, correcting grammatical and lexical errors, while journalism faculty guide students on reporting standards and professionalism. This approach enables students to learn language through application and master journalism through authentic language use, effectively bridging the gap between linguistic proficiency and journalistic practice ^[3]. The curriculum must also systematically cultivate cross-cultural thinking. When discussing political or economic events in a specific region, instructors should guide students to explore the historical roots, social structures, and value systems underlying these events. Simultaneously, students should analyse how local media reports and evaluate such events. Furthermore, dedicated segments within news reporting practice should train students' cross-cultural communication sensitivity. This includes designing dialogue strategies for interviewees from diverse cultural backgrounds and avoiding unintentional cultural taboos in questioning and expression. Through such sustained training, students learn to observe and think from others' cultural perspectives.

3.2 Enhancing multilingual reporting skills through diverse scenarios

First, leverage on-campus training to strengthen students' multilingual reporting capabilities. This requires establishing a highly realistic multilingual news simulation newsroom equipped with workstations, communication devices, and multilingual news source systems simulating different countries and regions. Working in teams, students first rapidly and accurately identify and evaluate news leads in the target language. They then design interview outlines based on these leads while anticipating potential cultural communication barriers. Next, they conduct simulated interviews and draft reports in the target language. Finally, they publish the finished pieces on simulated cross-border social media platforms or news websites in the target language and engage in simulated interactions with "audiences." This process not only hones students' language application and journalism skills but also immerses them in the pressures, pace, and collaborative models of international news work, laying a solid foundation for their professional careers.

Second, universities should actively establish long-term internship agreements with renowned international news agencies like Reuters and AFP in China, as well as multilingual news channels of China Global Television Network (CGTN). Senior students should be arranged in batches to intern at these institutions, directly participating in real international news projects under mentor guidance. Interns can monitor social media posts, official statements, and media coverage in local languages from incident sites. Leveraging their linguistic strengths, they can swiftly translate and synthesise information while contributing to the drafting of Chinese or English news flashes and alerts. This hands-on experience provides unparalleled training in mental resilience, professional judgment, and comprehensive adaptability.

Third, universities can collaborate with multiple media organisations to host annual "Multilingual International News Reporting Competitions." Themes could include climate change, public health, or the digital economy. Students would independently contact overseas sources for cross-cultural interviews, culminating in the submission of a complete report. This process not only hones students' independent learning and news writing skills but also heightens their awareness of global issues and deepens their analytical capabilities.

3.3 Enhancing multilingual reporting efficiency and quality through digital tools

International news reporting involves vast amounts of multilingual information. Journalists must swiftly sift through and verify content from social media, news websites, and databases across different languages. To address this practical need, educators should integrate and teach students to use a suite of practical digital tools in their curricula. This includes instructing students in advanced multilingual search engine techniques and social media monitoring tools to efficiently track news hotspots and public sentiment trends across global regions. Priority should be given to training students in professional computer-assisted translation software and terminology management tools, teaching them how to leverage technological solutions for handling unique typographical requirements across languages. Mastering these tools allows students to redirect their focus toward more creative endeavours, such as in-depth analysis and reporting strategy

development. Secondly, text analysis software can be employed to conduct preliminary proofreading of students' multilingual drafts, identifying grammatical errors and inappropriate word choices while providing revision suggestions. Following the news release phase, students are trained to use cross-media data analysis platforms to track and measure the dissemination effectiveness of their multilingual news products across regional platforms^[4]. They learn to interpret data reports, analyse metrics such as readership, comment sentiment, and audience geographic distribution, thereby refining their news selection, expression methods, and release strategies.

4 Case analysis and insights on cultivating multilingual reporting competencies in international journalism education

Xi'an International Studies University has achieved remarkable success in cultivating multilingual international communication professionals. Its multilingual edition of Xi Jinping: The Governance of China has been integrated into university textbooks and classrooms, synchronised with teaching and research, forming a cluster of courses covering 27 language majors. From May 25 to 28, 2025, the "Seeing China in Xi'an: Seeking Innovation and Quality" research activity for overseas experts was hosted by the Xi'an Municipal Party Committee Publicity Department and China Radio International. During this event, students Dong Xiaoting, Liang Zhiyuan, and Mao Hanyang from the School of Journalism and Communication at Northwest University actively participated. They were responsible for tasks including interview documentation, simultaneous broadcasting, bilingual interpretation, video production, and editing for visiting guests, completing numerous original English and Chinese reports. Their work was published on platforms such as the "China Radio International Shaanxi Channel" Douyin account and the "Guochuan Plus" video channel, garnering widespread attention and acclaim.^① Over the past five years, the university has cultivated over 3,000 multilingual international communication professionals.^② Students' language application skills have been strengthened, enabling them to create multilingual content with precision while deeply analysing global events through regional knowledge. Their capabilities across all core dimensions of multilingual reporting have been enhanced.

This case study reveals that educators and the industry must establish a systematic curriculum integrating language learning, journalism training, and national context awareness to cultivate high-calibre multilingual international journalism professionals. This approach enables students to directly apply foreign languages for research, discussion, and summarisation of relevant policy positions during their studies, fostering deep cognitive understanding^[5]. In this regard, Xi'an International Studies University organised a simulated United Nations General Assembly, providing students with volunteer service opportunities at major diplomatic events. Students directly communicated with foreign guests, conducted interviews, and performed translations on-site, ultimately producing complete news articles. This process honed their language application skills and significantly enhanced their cross-cultural communication abilities.

5 Conclusion

In summary, cultivating multilingual reporting competencies in international journalism education requires establishing a trinity curriculum integrating "language-journalism-cross-cultural" dimensions. This should be reinforced through diverse practical scenarios to strengthen real-world skills, while actively leveraging digital tools to enhance communication efficiency and quality. The case of Xi'an International Studies University demonstrates that deeply integrating multilingual study of national strategic texts with journalism training, combined with multi-tiered practice blending simulation and real-world scenarios, can cultivate the required talent. Looking ahead, as artificial intelligence technology advances and the global communication landscape evolves, cultivating multilingual reporting capabilities must increasingly emphasise the integrated application of emerging technologies and the synthesis of interdisciplinary knowledge.

About the Author

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① Data source: <https://xwxy.xisu.edu.cn/info/1245/10534.htm>.

② Data source: http://paper.jyb.cn/zgjyb/html/2024-09/10/content_144751_17796054.htm