

Career-Oriented Adaptation and Optimization of University Russian Language Curricula: The Case of Beijing International Studies University

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Abstract. With the deepening of Sino-Russian economic, trade, scientific, technological, educational, and cultural cooperation, the demand for compound talents with Russian language proficiency, industry knowledge, intercultural communication, and professional practice skills continues to rise. This paper takes the Russian language major at Beijing Second Foreign Language University as an example, analyzing students' development choices and the fit between existing courses and career needs through a questionnaire survey on graduation destinations and semi-structured interviews. The results show that some students' willingness to continue their major after graduation has weakened, while their tendency to pursue further studies in other majors has increased. Existing courses still have certain shortcomings in areas such as the connection between Chinese and foreign teachers, the integration of professional scenarios, and the updating of textbook content. Based on these issues, this paper proposes optimization paths from three levels: teaching methods, course content, and professional practice. These include implementing tiered task-based teaching, strengthening the construction of professional and industry-specific Russian language content, and improving the compound curriculum system. The cultivation of Russian language talents in universities should gradually shift from single-language skills training to a compound training model that combines language proficiency, professional knowledge, intercultural communication, and professional practice, in order to improve the matching degree between the curriculum system and students' development needs and the job market.

Keywords: Russian language education, Career needs, Curriculum optimization, Intercultural teaching, Talent cultivation

1. Introduction

In recent years, cooperation between China and Russia in the fields of economy and trade, science and technology, education and culture has continued to deepen. In the first four months of 2026, the bilateral trade volume reached US\$85.241 billion, an increase of 19.7% year-on-year. At the same time, both sides continued to promote cooperation projects such as the "China-Russia Year of Education" in 2026-2027 [1]. As the scope of cooperation continues to expand, the demand for

Russian language talents in society is gradually shifting from single language ability to a composite ability that combines language ability, professional knowledge, cross-cultural communication and professional practice. At the same time, the training of Russian language talents in universities is also facing new adaptation problems. On the one hand, some students choose to pursue further studies in other majors or enter non-Russian language related industries after graduating from undergraduate studies, and their willingness to continue their major has weakened; on the other hand, China-Russia cooperation is gradually extending to the fields of digital economy, cross-border e-commerce, and technological innovation, and employers have put forward higher requirements for the industry knowledge and practical ability of Russian language talents. The traditional curriculum system, which focuses on language knowledge and language skills training, has therefore created a certain gap with the development needs of students and the job market. Based on this, this paper takes the Russian major at Beijing Second Foreign Language University as an example. By analyzing the development destinations of graduates from 2023 to 2026, the graduation intentions of students in 2027, and interview data of graduates and current graduate students, this paper examines the adaptation of students' development choices and existing courses in terms of teaching methods, course content, and professional ability cultivation. Based on this, corresponding course optimization paths are proposed to provide a reference for the adjustment of the talent training model of Russian majors in universities.

2. Research subjects and survey design

This study investigated Russian language majors at Beijing Second Foreign Language University, employing a combination of questionnaire surveys and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaires, distributed through the "Knowledge Hotspots" platform, primarily explored students' post-graduation plans, including pursuing further studies in Russian-speaking or non-Russian-speaking countries, enrolling in postgraduate programs related to Russian or other fields domestically, and pursuing careers related to or unrelated to Russian. The aim was to compare changes in students' choices regarding further education and employment across different year levels. Based on the questionnaire surveys, semi-structured interviews were conducted with seven employed graduates from the class of 2026 and three current postgraduate students. The interviews mainly covered undergraduate course experiences, adaptation to teaching by foreign teachers, the practicality of textbooks and courses, and the degree of matching between courses and postgraduate/employment needs. Questionnaire data was used to present the overall characteristics of students' development choices, while interview data was used to further analyze specific problems in course teaching, providing a basis for subsequent course adaptation analysis and optimization strategies.

3. Current status of development choices and curriculum adaptation for Russian language majors

3.1. Changes in professional continuing intentions and post-graduation development choices

The results of a questionnaire survey of Russian language graduates from Beijing Second Foreign Language University (Figure 1) show that the proportion of students going to Russian-speaking countries for further studies decreased from 24.32% in 2023 to 11.27% in 2026; the proportion choosing to pursue further studies in Russian-related majors at domestic universities decreased from 16.22% to 9.86%; and the proportion of students engaged in work directly related to Russian

language decreased from 5.41% to 1.41%. Meanwhile, the proportion of students going to non-Russian-speaking countries for further studies increased from 2.70% to 5.63%, and the proportion pursuing postgraduate studies in other majors within China increased from 0 to 15.49%.

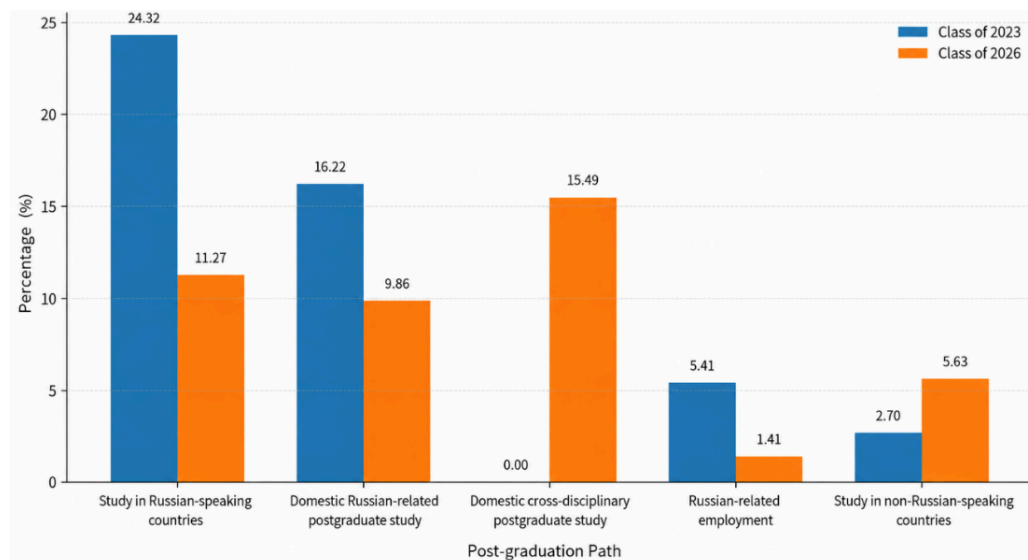


Figure 1. Comparison of the main career paths of Russian language majors from the class of 2023 and 2026. (picture credit: original)

Since this data reflects students' current intentions rather than their final graduation results, it cannot be directly compared with the actual graduation destinations of previous graduates, but it still reflects to some extent the current students' tendency to pursue cross-disciplinary development at the postgraduate level. The above results indicate that some students' willingness to continue their major after undergraduate graduation has weakened, and their development choices at the postgraduate and employment stages show a relatively obvious tendency to pursue cross-disciplinary development.

3.2. Adaptation of teaching models between Chinese and foreign teachers

According to the relevant requirements of the "Beijing Second Foreign Language University 2025 Undergraduate Training Program", the university continues to promote the internationalization of undergraduate education and teaching, and improves students' language application and intercultural communication skills by introducing Russian teachers, etc. [2]. The interview results show that foreign teachers have obvious advantages in pronunciation, oral language, the creation of a real language environment and the introduction of Russian social culture, which helps to improve the naturalness of students' language expression and their intercultural understanding. However, for students with zero foundation, if the basic stage mainly relies on Russian teaching, it is easy to affect their understanding of grammar, word form changes and syntax rules due to insufficient listening foundation; at the same time, if there is a lack of coordination between Chinese and foreign teachers in terms of teaching progress and content, it may also cause inconsistencies in the teaching focus and ability requirements of different classes.

3.3. A gap exists between course content and students' actual needs

Currently, undergraduate Russian language teaching mainly focuses on basic training such as vocabulary, grammar, sentence patterns, and text reading. This is necessary for students with no

prior knowledge to establish a language system. However, as students enter higher grades, the gap between this training and the needs for further education, employment, and practical application gradually becomes apparent.

Interview results show that although schools offer courses such as national culture, economics and trade, and translation, some courses still emphasize knowledge transmission and lack sufficient training in professional tasks. Existing textbooks also have certain limitations in terms of the timeliness of content, the authenticity of spoken language, and coverage of professional scenarios. They cover relatively little of the real-world content such as Sino-Russian economic and trade cooperation, scientific and technological cooperation, and new media.

3.4. Disconnect between language skills training and occupational needs

Sino-Russian cooperation has involved multiple professional fields such as economics and trade, energy, and infrastructure [3]. Changes in the trade structure have also placed higher demands on the professional knowledge of Russian language talents [4]. The relevant positions not only require language skills, but also require mastery of professional terminology, industry knowledge and business communication norms.

At the same time, artificial intelligence and machine translation are changing the traditional language service model, and the ability requirements for Russian language talents are gradually shifting towards professional text processing, terminology management, post-translation editing and human-computer collaboration. Related research points out that Russian language education should further transform from "language and literature orientation" to "language service orientation" [5]. Therefore, universities should strengthen the integration of language skills with industry knowledge and digital technology to improve students' ability to use Russian to complete professional tasks.

4. Core competency requirements for Russian language talents in the new era

As Sino-Russian cooperation continues to expand, the competency requirements for Russian language talents have gradually shifted from single language skills to comprehensive abilities such as language application, industry knowledge, intercultural communication, and professional practice. Solid listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translation skills remain the foundation for talent cultivation, but simply mastering language knowledge is no longer sufficient to meet the needs of real-world work scenarios. Universities should also strengthen students' information comprehension, opinion expression, and intercultural communication abilities in real-world contexts, enabling them to communicate effectively based on different communication partners and cultural backgrounds. Related research also points out that intercultural communication skills have become an important component of applied Russian language talent cultivation [6].

At the same time, Sino-Russian cooperation in areas such as trade, energy, engineering, and cross-border e-commerce is highly specialized, placing higher demands on the industry knowledge of Russian language talents. Therefore, Russian language talent cultivation needs to strengthen the integration of language skills with regional and national knowledge and professional knowledge, so that students can not only understand Russian but also use Russian to handle business, technical, and industry-related tasks [7, 8]. The development of artificial intelligence and machine translation has further changed the way language service industries work. In the future, Russian language talents will also need to possess digital abilities such as machine translation, terminology management, corpus retrieval, post-editing, and application of artificial intelligence-assisted tools [9]. Therefore, the cultivation of Russian language talents in universities should gradually form a composite ability

structure that combines language ability, industry knowledge, intercultural communication, digital technology, and professional practice.

5. Optimization path of Russian language courses under the guidance of career needs

In view of the insufficient adaptation between the existing courses and the development needs and professional requirements of students, adjustments can be made in terms of classroom teaching, curriculum system, teacher collaboration, and practical teaching. First, in classroom teaching, differentiated task teaching can be implemented, and differentiated tasks can be set according to different grades and language foundations. Related research shows that individual differences among learners will affect the effectiveness of task-based language teaching [10]. Lower grades can focus on life communication, information exchange, and basic language tasks, while higher grades can gradually increase professional tasks such as business negotiation, conference interpretation, and professional text processing, and improve the evaluation system through oral expression, case analysis, project tasks, and situational simulation. Secondly, the curriculum should maintain fundamental language training while enhancing the timeliness and professional relevance of its content. Basic Russian, reading, and listening/speaking courses should continue to focus on developing basic language skills. Building upon this foundation, specialized courses such as Business Russian, Scientific Translation, Regional and Country Studies, Cross-border E-commerce, and AI-assisted Translation can be developed based on students' career goals. Real or educational materials such as business emails, contracts, industry reports, and product descriptions should be appropriately incorporated, thus forming a curriculum structure that connects "basic language—specialized direction—professional practice." Furthermore, the complementary strengths of Chinese and foreign teachers should be further leveraged. Chinese teachers should focus on grammar, language structure, and learning strategies, while foreign teachers should emphasize pronunciation, spoken language, cultural understanding, and authentic communication training. The teaching weight of each should be adjusted according to students' language proficiency. In terms of practical teaching, a grade-level school-enterprise collaboration mechanism can be established. Lower grades should focus on enterprise awareness, professional lectures, and simulated tasks, while higher grades should focus on real-world projects such as enterprise internships, professional translation, and international business. Through joint guidance from "school teachers + enterprise mentors," any shortcomings identified in practice can be fed back into the curriculum, creating a dynamic connection between curriculum adjustments and professional needs.

6. Conclusion

Based on the survey and interviews conducted with Russian language major students at Beijing Second Foreign Language University, it is evident that some students' willingness to continue in their undergraduate major has weakened, while their inclination towards interdisciplinary development has increased. At the same time, the existing curriculum still has certain shortcomings in terms of the connection between Chinese and foreign teachers, the timeliness of textbook content, the integration of professional scenarios, and practical teaching. This indicates that the cultivation of Russian language professionals needs to further respond to changes in students' development choices and the demands of the job market. Therefore, university Russian language programs should, while maintaining basic language training, strengthen the connection between language learning and industry knowledge, digital technology, and professional applications through differentiated task-based teaching, the development of career-oriented courses, collaboration

between Chinese and foreign teachers, and university-enterprise practice. The focus of future Russian language talent cultivation should gradually shift from simply mastering language knowledge and skills to cultivating well-rounded individuals capable of using Russian to complete professional tasks, solve practical problems, and conduct cross-cultural cooperation, thereby improving the match between the curriculum system and students' development needs and societal demands.

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