

Analysis of Polish Chinese Language Learning in Chinese and Iranian Universities

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Abstract: At present, there are 4 universities, 2 Confucius Institutes and some language institutions in Iran that carry out Chinese language teaching. Some universities in China also continue to add Persian majors to jointly train foreign language talents for the construction of the "the Belt and Road". How to stimulate interest and set correct goals for language learners from both countries; How to solve the confusion in learning, understand the knowledge and culture of the language target country, etc. In response to the above problems, a sampling questionnaire survey was conducted on language learners from both countries to analyze the problems existing among domestic Persian language learners and Iranian Chinese language learners, and propose countermeasures. This study has reference value for promoting the promotion of Chinese language teaching abroad, and also provides reference for the reform of small language teaching.

1. Brief Introduction to the Offering of Persian Language Majors in Chinese Universities

According to the collected materials, Persian has been widely spread in our country for a long time. Dr. Liu Hui from Shanghai International Studies University, in his article "A Study of Persian Historical and Religious Texts in China in the Last Twenty Years" (2020), summarized the research status of existing Persian historical and religious texts. It can be seen that domestic Persian scholars' research on Persian historical texts mainly focuses on Mongolian and Yuan history, and there is also mention of the Persian manuscripts currently found in Xinjiang. Overall, there is still a lack of research in this field. Professor Xu Wenkan from the Institute of Literature and History at Fudan University, in his article "A Brief Discussion on the Spread of Iranian Language and Persian in China" (2021), described the dissemination and use of Persian language in various historical periods in China, as well as its impact on various ethnic groups that speak Turkic and Mongolian. The content is detailed and will not be elaborated here.[1]

After the establishment of the People's Republic of China, China gradually strengthened its contacts with countries such as Afghanistan and Iran. In order to meet diplomatic needs, Peking University opened the first Persian language program in China in 1957. At that time, Persian teachers were scarce and teaching materials were scarce, so it was necessary to rely on Russian to assist Persian teaching.[2] Professor Zhang Hongnian, the older generation of Persian scholar in China, was a Russian major, and later began to study Persian, and translated and published a large number of Persian literature works. Afterwards, as more and more Persian language scholars such as Professor Ye Yiliang and Professor Zeng Yansheng joined the Persian language teaching team at Peking

University, the Persian language textbooks were gradually filled in, providing rich language materials for domestic Persian language learners and laying a solid foundation for the development of the Persian language profession. Afterwards, with the increasing demand for Persian language learning, Shanghai International Studies University, Communication University of China, Beijing International Studies University, University of International Business and Economics, and Xi'an International Studies University followed closely and opened their own Persian language majors. The specific opening situation is shown in the table 1.

Table 1: The specific opening situation

Serial Number	School Name	Opening time (year)	Professional situation
1	Peking University	1957	recruit students
2	Luoyang Foreign Language College	-	recruit students
3	Shanghai International Studies University	1997	recruit students
4	Beijing International Studies University	2009	recruit students
5	Communication University of China	2000	revoked
6	Xi'an International Studies University	2012	recruit students
7	University of International Business and Economics	2014	recruit students
8	Beijing Second Foreign Language Institute	2016	recruit students
9	Tianjin Foreign Studies University	2017	recruit students
10	Guangdong University of Foreign Languages and Trade	2017	recruit students
11	Shihezi University	2017	recruit students
12	Hebei University of Foreign Languages	2017	recruit students
13	Jiangxi Vocational College of Foreign Languages and Trade	2017	recruit students
14	Linxia Vocational and Technical College	2017	recruit students
15	Xinjiang Normal College	2017	revoked
16	Jilin International Studies University	2018	recruit students
17	Beijing Language and Culture University	2022	recruit students
18	Zhejiang Yuexiu Foreign Language College	2022	recruit students

Note: The opening date of the Persian language program at Luoyang Foreign Language College is unknown and will not be discussed here.

The Persian language major is gradually being offered in domestic universities, and so far 18 universities have offered Persian language majors. Currently, 16 universities are enrolling normally. In March 2015, with the release of Vision and Action to Promote the Joint Construction of the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, the blueprint of the "the Belt and Road" initiative was outlined, and the principles, framework ideas, cooperation priorities and cooperation mechanisms were established. In July 2015, the United Nations Security Council unanimously passed the Iran nuclear agreement, opening a new chapter in international relations. China has further deepened its ties with Iran and carried out extensive cooperation in various fields.[3] At that time, Persian talents were scarce, and the employment and development prospects of students were very broad. In 2017, seven domestic universities opened Persian majors at the same time,

actively responding to the "the Belt and Road" initiative. In May 2018, US President Trump announced that the United States would withdraw from the Iran nuclear agreement, which led to sanctions on Iran and a sluggish domestic economy. Many Chinese companies withdrew from Iran, leading to a decrease in market demand for Persian speaking talents. Some universities have changed their enrollment from consecutive years to alternate years, and some universities have withdrawn their Persian language majors due to changes in their target positioning. Overall, the opening of Persian language majors in domestic universities is still in a progressive state. In recent years, some universities have established cooperative relationships with Iranian higher education institutions, allowing students to study in Iran for one academic year during their study period. For example, Beijing International Studies University has established cooperation with the University of Tehran in Iran, and Xi'an International Studies University has established cooperation with Gazwenkhomeini International University in Iran. The exchanges between universities in China and Iran have become increasingly extensive.

2. Brief Introduction to the Offering of Chinese Language Majors in Iranian Universities

From February 14 to 16, 2023, President Leahy of President of Iran will pay a state visit to China to further promote the implementation of the China Iran comprehensive cooperation plan. In the joint statement between the People's Republic of China and the Islamic Republic of Iran (full text) released on February 16, 2023, it was mentioned that "in the field of education and cultural cooperation... both parties agree to strengthen Chinese and Persian language education, and are willing to send international students and teachers to each other..." This provides more resources and a good environment for promoting Chinese language teaching in Iran. At the same time, it also provides better job prospects and more practical professional fields for language learners in both countries.

Table 2: The specific situation

Serial Number	School Name	Opening time (year)	Professional situation
1	Shahid Behesiti University	1996	recruit students
2	Confucius Institute at the University of Tehran	2009	Chinese Elective Course
3	University of Isfahan	2012	recruit students
4	Alam Tabatabai University	2013	recruit students
5	Semnan University	2013	Revoked in 2017
6	University of Tehran	2015	recruit students
7	Confucius Institute at Mazandaran University	2019	Chinese Elective Course

There are currently three ways to learn Chinese in Iran: universities, Confucius Institutes, and private institutions. In order to enhance exchanges and cooperation between China and Iran in various fields, Shahid Behshti University first opened the Chinese language major in Iran in 1996. In the early stages of its establishment, there were many problems such as lack of experience in Chinese language teaching, shortage of teachers, and insufficient student resources. Until 2009, when the University of Tehran and Yunnan University jointly established the Confucius Institute, no other university in Iran conducted Chinese language teaching. The Chinese language program at the University of Tehran mainly relies on the Confucius Institute for Chinese language teaching, while the Confucius Institute is responsible for social Chinese language teaching. In 2013, with the proposal of the "the Belt and Road" initiative, the number of universities and social institutions offering Chinese majors in Iran has gradually increased. The specific situation is as follows table 2.

Overall, in recent years, the promotion of Chinese language teaching in Iran has been continuously expanding, and the number of learners has shown an upward trend. Some schools, such as Semnan University, are unable to continue offering professional or non-continuous enrollment due to issues with teaching staff. At the same time, some private institutions in Iran have also opened Chinese language training courses for social personnel, such as the Dehkhoda School and Citizen language school, providing great convenience for Chinese language enthusiasts.

3. Analysis of the current learning situation of Persian language learners and Chinese language learners

With the construction of the "the Belt and Road", China Iran exchanges are increasing. In response to the language learning situation of Persian language majors in domestic universities, a questionnaire is created and distributed among universities, aiming to understand the learning situation of Persian language from the perspective of learners, identify problems, and propose targeted countermeasures, providing reference for the reform of small language teaching, and promoting cultural exchange between China and Iran. The survey was conducted in April 2022, and 112 valid questionnaires were collected. Among them, 71% of the participants were Persian speaking students in universities and 29% were graduates of Persian language majors in universities. The questionnaire is generally divided into three parts: understanding of Iran before learning Persian, problems and changes in learning Persian, and changes after learning Persian. At the same time, questionnaires were distributed to Iranian Chinese language learners to understand their learning situation and provide reference suggestions for Chinese language promotion. A total of 107 valid questionnaires were collected. The questionnaire is generally divided into three parts: understanding of China before learning Chinese, problems and changes in learning Chinese, and changes after learning Chinese.

3.1. Learners do not have a sufficient understanding of the target country of the language they are learning before school

The questionnaire for domestic universities shows that about 62% of learners do not know Iran before learning Persian, 35% of learners have little understanding, and only 3% of learners have a good understanding of Iran; The questionnaire for Iranian Chinese language learners shows that about 52% of learners had no knowledge of China before learning Chinese, while 40% had little understanding. It can be seen that when learners choose Chinese or Persian majors, some students may choose passively (due to major adjustments, etc.) and lack understanding of the language target country, which will inevitably have a certain impact on the learning motivation of Persian in the later stage.

Countermeasures: ① In the early stages of learning, it is necessary to offer courses such as professional introduction and country overview, and lectures can also be used to help students understand the language and target country situation; ② Deeply understand learners' learning motivation, help them cultivate learning interest, establish learning goals, and make good plans; ③ Recommend excellent online resources to learners and learn about language target countries through media and other means.

3.2. Common issues among learners during the learning process

The questionnaire for domestic universities shows that about 70% of learners have problems with Persian listening and oral communication when learning Persian; 71% of learners feel that domestic learning resources and channels are not yet sufficient; 21% of learners have difficulty understanding due to significant cultural differences between China and Iran. The questionnaire for Iranian Chinese

learners shows that about 80% of them have difficulties with Chinese pronunciation, grammar, listening, and other aspects when learning Chinese; 72% of learners are interested in traditional Chinese folk culture during the learning process, followed by tourism, literature, technology, etc. It can be seen that in the process of learning Persian or Chinese, learners from both countries have common learning problems, and cultural differences are also important factors affecting language learning.

Countermeasures: ① Currently, the mainstream teaching materials used by Persian language majors in domestic universities are the "Persian Language Tutorial" compiled by Professor Li Xiang of Peking University as an introductory basic textbook for learners, and the Persian language reading and listening textbooks published in recent years are used in conjunction, with good results. However, for other language courses such as economics, writing, phonetics, etc., there is still a blank space. The same applies to the situation of Chinese language textbooks in Iran. Considering the significant religious and cultural differences between China and Iran, and the relatively complex structure of Chinese language, multiple factors need to be considered when writing textbooks. Overall, there is a shortage of available resources for textbooks, which urgently requires construction. In addition, foreign teachers can be hired to help learners solve knowledge problems, and cooperation between Chinese and Iranian universities can also be used to provide context for learners. Scholars from China and Iran can translate excellent literary works, appreciate and learn from each other, and also help learners understand cultural differences. In recent years, some young Iranian sinologists have studied the translation of excellent Chinese classics, such as "The University" and "The Art of War", which have been translated and published in Iran, continuously contributing to the promotion of Chinese language. In addition, the involvement of film and television works from both countries can bring direct assistance to learners. Currently, the film and television resources of both countries are less involved in each other's countries. The creation of social platforms provides an environment for learners to learn from each other, which helps to enhance the friendship between the two peoples.

3.3. Persian spreads the Chinese voice, and the promotion effect of Chinese is good

The questionnaire for domestic universities shows that after learning Persian, with the construction of the "the Belt and Road", about 80% of the learners are optimistic about the future development of China-Iraq cultural exchanges; About 75% of learners are more inclined to work in Persian related fields after graduation. The questionnaire for Iranian Chinese learners shows that after learning Chinese, about 95% of learners have an increase in their liking for China; 75% of learners are willing to help more Iranians objectively understand China. It can be seen that the promotion effect of Chinese language teaching in Iran is good, and Persian language learners have a sense of patriotism and shoulder the mission of being a foreign language learner. According to the Iranian Student News Agency, Iran's Minister of Education Nuri recently stated that starting from 2024, Chinese language courses will be included in Iran's national basic education system to meet the needs of Iranian students for learning Chinese. In recent years, embassies in China and Iran have continuously held various Persian and Chinese language competitions, aiming to enhance learners' confidence in learning, deepen communication and interaction between learners of the two countries, and jointly promote foreign language education work between the two countries, achieving significant exchange results.

4. Conclusion

In recent years, Chinese and Persian majors have gradually been added to universities in Iran and China, and the friendly interaction between the two countries has continuously injected fresh impetus into learners. Persian learners in China and Chinese learners in Iran have common learning problems in language learning, and they also share the willingness to serve the construction of the "the Belt and

Road". In various fields, there is still a huge research space, and foreign language learners need to shoulder their mission and jointly build bridges for friendly exchanges between China and Iran.

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