



## The role of the Russian language in the professional training of specialists for the implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative

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### Abstract

One of the problems that specialists and companies face when implementing the Belt and Road Initiative in the Russian Federation is the lack of language skills in communication with Russian specialists. This primarily applies to student youth, who will have to take the most active part in the implementation of the plans, which weak professional and language training can slow down. The purpose of the study is to determine the role of the Russian language in the professional training of specialists for the implementation of the Belt and Road initiative. The leading research method was the analysis method, which helped establish the main stages in the development of the teaching the Russian language in China; the current state of teaching the Chinese Russian language is determined; the Belt and Road Initiative is considered as a socio-political and historical-philosophical problem of the modern world. Analysis of the Belt and Road Initiative as a socio-political and historical-philosophical problem has demonstrated not only great opportunities in the implementation of the project, but also the problems and contradictions that must to be resolved to obtain mutual benefits for all participating countries.

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*Keywords:* international relations; cooperation; Silk Road; economic crisis; pandemic.

## 1. Introduction

The Belt and Road Initiative was put forward in the 2010s by the People's Republic of China (PRC) and became a proposal to combine the projects of the Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st Century Maritime (Silk Road Economic Belt, 2015). In September and October 2013, President Xi Jinping proposed a strategic concept for the construction of the New Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. The Belt and Road Initiative is a cooperation development concept that builds on the bilateral multilateral mechanisms that exist between China and the countries concerned through existing and effective platforms for regional cooperation and borrowing the

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historical symbols of the ancient Silk Road. Raising the banner of peaceful development, actively developing an economic partnership with countries along the line, the initiative together with other countries creates political trust, economic integration, cultural integration of a community of interests, a community of destiny and a community of responsibility. The idea of the Belt and Road Initiative is not new, it has deep historical roots. One of the problems that specialists and companies face when implementing the Belt and Road Initiative in the Russian Federation is the lack of language skills in communication with Russian specialists. This primarily applies to student youth, who will have to take the most active part in the implementation of the plans, which weak professional and language training can slow down.

In the process of professional and language training of Russian language specialists in China and the natural language environment of Russia, Chinese students studying Russian have difficulties in adapting to the Russian environment, in overcoming cultural shock and language barriers during intercultural communication, as well as in solving private tasks of practice, due to the individual language readiness of students and practice situations (Köksal & Genç, 2019). A collision with a different worldview and attitude that goes beyond the framework of one's national culture often creates a feeling of discomfort among the participants in communication. “All the subtleties and all the depth of the problems of interlanguage and intercultural communication become especially evident, and sometimes simply perceived, when comparing foreign languages with their own and foreign culture with their own, which is more familiar” (Ter-Minasova, 2000).

Facing the national culture of another nation, people experience a state of cultural shock, “which is understood as the awareness of a sharp divergence of material or spiritual cultures of two peoples, manifested in the conditions of personal direct contact with representatives of another culture and accompanied by misunderstanding, inadequate interpretation or direct rejection of a foreign culture with positions of their culture” (Prokhorov & Sternin, 2006). Adaptation of students to a new culture takes place in several stages: the initial optimistic mood from meeting with everything new and unusual is replaced by a feeling of disappointment, the appearance of difficulties in communication. “Lack of intercultural knowledge and skills can lead to communication failures in communicating with the interlocutor. A person speaking a foreign language must learn to understand why people of a different culture act in a certain way in each particular communicative situation” (Kryuchkova & Moshchinskaya, 2012).

In his work “Culture Shock: Communication of Chinese Students with Bearers of Russian Culture”, Jian Tang writes that “only gradually do Chinese students understand that a foreign culture has rules of behaviour in various situations, and this is really important when entering another culture. Observations have indicated that Chinese students who come to study Russian in Russia understand that the behaviour of representatives of Russian culture differs in many respects from their usual behaviour. While studying Russian in China, most students have some kind of romantic idea of Russia. Getting into the Russian language environment in the country of the target language, Chinese students experience a real culture shock (Popova & Tang, 2014).

## **2. Analysis of the stages of development of the teaching activity of the Russian language in China**

### *2.1. Early teaching of Russian in China*

The history of teaching Chinese Russian dates back to the Kangxi period of the Qing dynasty. At the time, Emperor Kangxi was considering strengthening the exchange between China and Russia. To educate his Russian translators, Lifan Yuan opened the Russian Language Institute in 1708. This is arguably the first Russian school in the history of China, which is almost 300 years old. Initially, the

Institute of the Russian Language relied mainly on Russian businessmen and missionaries. In 1862, Tongwen Guan was established, which at first was only taught in English, then the Russian Language Institute was merged with Tongwen Guan. Tongwen Guan became the first government-run multilingual foreign language school in modern Chinese history. In 1900, due to the Battle of the Eight Allied Forces, Tongwen Guan was forced to suspend its work and in 1902 the school became part of Beijing University. The Russian Language Institute has existed for 154 years, and Tongwen Guan has been working for 40 years, they have trained a large number of diplomatic translators for modern China, especially the Russian Language Institute has grown the first batch of Russian diplomatic translations in modern China and occupies an extremely important place in the history of Russian education and diplomacy in China.

During the same period, the Qing government also opened the Shanghai School of Translators, Guangzhou Tongwen Guan, and Ziqiang School in Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Hubei. All of them have Russian language courses, which are designed to train translators. Tongwen Guan was transformed into a Translation School in 1903, and then it became independent. The teaching requirements of the School of Translation are already higher than those of the previous Institute of the Russian Language, here teaching is conducted mainly in foreign languages, and at the same time, it pays attention to the important role of the mother tongue in teaching foreign languages. Trained students can read and translate foreign books after graduation and can do translation and dictionary work. This idea provided a valuable experience for the further study of foreign languages. Especially since 1870, China has had frequent diplomatic contacts and the number of people studying abroad has increased dramatically, which has accelerated the process of learning a foreign language in China, which is also facilitated by the teaching of Russian.

## *2.2. Teaching Russian before and after the founding of new China*

After the victory of the October Revolution in Russia, Marxism spread to China, and at that time the Kuomintang and the Communist Party realised that in order to study Soviet revolutionary theory and experience, they needed to train a group of people who understand Russian. In 1920, Chinese Marxists founded the Foreign Languages Society in Shanghai and started teaching Russian. In 1921, a specialty in the Russian language was created at Shanghai University. In the late 1930s and early 1940s, the Communist Party established a number of non-professional Russian language classes in Yan'an. Most of the Russian textbooks of this period were compiled by teachers from Russian newspapers. Conversational textbooks are focused and mostly written with regard to the situation at home and abroad and everyday life. The grammar textbook uses Russian Grammar edited by Liu Zezhong (Tse-jong, 1949).

Understanding the importance of training people in foreign languages, the Central Committee of the Party in April 1944 renamed the School of the Military Council of the Russian Language into the Yan'an School of Foreign Languages. School characteristics: 1) clear learning objectives; 2) setting up courses in accordance with the learning objectives to determine the content of the curriculum; 3) emphasis on practical training in listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translating; 4) flexible teaching methods, not limited by form. These school establishment experiences have gained valuable experience for the establishment of new foreign language schools in New China. Along with changes in the internal political situation, the teaching of the Russian language also developed: firstly, mass teaching of the Russian language flourished, and secondly, specialised teaching of a foreign language developed. According to incomplete statistics, by 1949, Russian specialties were opened in 13 schools in China.

A country's foreign language teaching policies are often closely linked to a country's foreign policy, economic and trade exchanges, and technological development. At the beginning of the founding of the People's Republic of China, due to the diplomatic alliance of China with the Soviet Union and economic assistance from the Soviet Union, scientific and technical information was mainly from the Soviet Union. Furthermore, many Soviet experts were hired, so Russian became the most urgently needed language at that time. Teaching the Russian language also developed rapidly.

On June 30, 1949, Chairman Mao Zedong appealed to the Chinese people to “learn from the Soviet Union” in the article “On the People's Democratic Dictatorship” (Zedong, 1969). The Central Committee of the Party decided to create a special school for teaching Russian talents to fully train Russian talents for nation building. In October of the same year, the Beijing Specialised School of the Russian Language was officially established (in 1955 it was renamed the Beijing Russian Institute, currently the predecessor of the Beijing University of Foreign Languages) and is part of the Compilation Bureau of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party. The Specialised School of the Russian Language in Beijing received great support and care from the leadership of the party and the state. Mao Zedong personally introduced the name of the school. In December, the Shanghai School of the Russian Language was opened at the East China People's Revolutionary University (currently the predecessor of the Shanghai University of Foreign Languages). That was the starting point for an active introduction of Russian education in New China.

In the 1950s, Sino-Soviet relations were in a golden age: Russian became a language with a special status, Russian schools were established in various cities of China, and Russian specialties were created in general education universities. In 1950, Russian faculties were established in 19 colleges and universities. In the 1950s, the All-China Meeting on Teaching the Russian Language and the Conference on Teaching Methods were established; the All-China Leading Commission on the Russian Language was created, which led the work on organising large-scale educational and research activities in the field of the Russian language in the country (Tenchurina & Li, 2016). However, due to pressing needs and time constraints, many schools have not formulated a formal curriculum. Vague learning objectives, inadequate teaching experience and a shortage of teaching materials all hindered the healthy development of Russian language education. The quality of teaching at that time was far from meeting real needs.

To sum up the achievements of the education of the Russian language during this period, in 1951 the first nationwide conference on the Russian language was held in Beijing. Participants believed that although several Russian schools have been established in different regions over the past two years, there are still problems in many areas that need to be urgently addressed. In 1952, the State Council and the Military Commission jointly issued the “Decision on a specialised school of the Russian language throughout the country” (Antipovsky et al., 1980). The document contains detailed provisions and requirements for the principles and objectives of teaching, student sources. Also, since this year, the education of the Russian language in China has been rapidly developing, and the quality of education has also significantly improved. Seven specialised schools of the Russian language have been established throughout the country. The faculties of the Russian language and the first foreign language, Russian, were created in general education universities. Russian language classes are also offered in secondary schools and the maximum class hours are 13.3% of the total class hours.

In 1953, China started implementing its first five-year plan. Under the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Mutual Assistance, the Soviet government dispatched a considerable number of Soviet experts to assist China in economic construction, and all social departments urgently needed to add a large number of high-level Russian translations. At that time, the Ministry of Higher Education held a second national conference on teaching Russian. At the meeting, several decisions were made on some of the main issues of teaching Russian at that time. In 1954, the Instruction on the All-Chinese

Teaching of the Russian Language was published, approved by the Council of State Administration” (Antipovsky et al., 1980). “Instruction” defines the learning objectives, curriculum and teaching methods for each school and university, and also directs the education of the Russian language towards systematisation and unification. For example, the task of a specialised school of the Russian language is to train personnel for translation and teachers of the Russian language, the task of the Russian language department of the university is mainly to train teachers of the Russian language in secondary schools, and qualified universities can prepare talented researchers of Soviet literature. All colleges, universities of the Russian language must create postgraduate studies subject to the conditions.

The first half of the 1950s was a year of the rapid development of Russian language education in China. With the help of Soviet experts and the efforts of a huge number of Russian language teachers, the learning plan, the curriculum, and textbook compilation were completed one by one, the young teachers gradually grew. In 1951, China sent the first batch of 375 foreign students to the Soviet Union, including 136 graduate students. Thereafter, many foreign students were sent to the Soviet Union every year, and in 1956 the highest number was nearly 2,100, accounting for 86% of the total number of students sent that year. By the end of 1956, there were about 2,000 professional Russian language teachers at universities. From 1953 to 1956, more than 12,000 students studied at the Russian language faculty of specialised schools and general education universities, education in the Russian language trained a large number of high-quality specialists who provide important personnel support in the political, economic, cultural, and diplomatic spheres of New China.

In the late 1950s, with the deterioration of Sino-Soviet relations, the scale of education of the Russian language in China started to decline. In 1957, the Chinese government began to urge Russian language students to switch to other languages. The originally established Russian language colleges were also replaced by foreign language colleges, and students from other language specialties were recruited. The number of students studying Russian was gradually decreasing. Since the foreign language classes established in secondary schools at that time were Russian or English, the education of the Russian language was still of a certain scale. According to statistics, in 1964, among students studying a foreign language in secondary schools, Russians still accounted for 67% of the total number of students, among students studying a foreign language at universities – 46%, studying English and other foreign languages – 54 %. Due to the influence of the Cultural Revolution from 1966 to 1976, teaching foreign languages in China was almost interrupted. In the period after the Cultural Revolution, colleges and universities resumed the enrolment of students, but the scale of admission to Russian specialties declined.

### *2.3. Teaching Russian after China's reform and opening up*

After 1978, foreign language teaching, especially English, developed rapidly in China. In the mid-to-late 1980s, teaching Russian developed to a certain extent with the normalisation of Sino-Soviet relations. In 1984, the State Education Commission sent a delegation led by Hu Menhao, Dean of Shanghai Foreign Languages University, to the Soviet Union. The delegation visited fifteen educational and research institutions. The delegation held a series of scientific discussions with scientists and professors from the Soviet Union, which was the first contact between the Russian pedagogical community in China and the Soviet Union in 25 years. During the meeting, the delegation also had a conversation with the Secretary General of the World Russian Society. On behalf of the organisation, the Secretary General expressed the hope that the Chinese Educational and Research Society of the Russian Language will join the World Russian Society as a representative of the Chinese teachers of the Russian language. In 1985, the World Russian Society made a decision to

officially accept the Chinese Educational and Research Society of the Russian Language as a member of the organisation.

In 1986, Professor Wang Fuxiang from the Beijing University of Foreign Languages led a delegation to attend the annual meeting of the World Russian Society in Budapest and was elected a member of the presidium. In 1987, Russian language departments at Chinese colleges and universities conducted the first nationwide Russian language test, the goal of which was to understand the current state of student teaching and learning at the basic stage of Russian language learning and to provide a more robust framework for curriculum development. In 1987, China sent a delegation to take part in the 6th Russian International Olympic Competition for primary and secondary school students in Moscow, all 10 Chinese players received gold medals.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, when Russia, other CIS countries and China became closer to political, economic, cultural, and diplomatic exchanges and collaboration, cooperation in various fields continued to expand and deepen, especially from the late 1980s to the mid-1990s. Sino-Russian cross-border trade prosperity has led to a short-term lack of Russian language talent, with large numbers of Chinese enrolled in universities and “crash courses” to learn Russian again. But soon, due to economic and other reasons for Russia, the popularity of Russian education dropped again.

In 1992, the State Education Commission established the Committee for the Teaching of Foreign Languages and set up a Russian group to perform the tasks of researching, advising, guiding, and servicing Russian education. The 1990s were a transitional and critical period for the transformation of the Russian language education model, the establishment of curricula, teaching methods, professional development and discipline planning were deepened and standardised to varying degrees. By the end of the 1990s, Russian language education continued to develop slowly and steadily: many colleges and universities added and restored specialties of the Russian language, but the number of students did not significantly increase.

According to statistics, in 1999 there were more than 60 universities in China offering specialties in the Russian language, and the number of students studying at various universities was about 7,000. Due to the Sino-Russian Joint Statement in 1992 and the Joint Statement of Russia and China in 1994, China and Russia established a new type of relations between the two countries, and cooperation between the two parties in politics, economics, science and technology, culture, and national defence is gradually consolidating (Tsengpei, 2019). In 1996, both sides moved the “constructive partnership” between the two countries as a “strategic partnership for cooperation in the 21st century” and decided to create a China-Russia Committee for Friendship, Peace, and Development, which includes representatives from all walks of life in the two countries. With the deepening of Sino-Russian relations and the recovery of the Russian economy, the demand for Russian talents in various fields in China gradually increased, and the development of the Russian language started generating new development.

### **3. The current state of teaching Chinese Russian**

History has entered the 21st century. In the international environment of the new era, English is a universal language, still dominating the teaching of a foreign language in China. How to research a strategy that is in line with China's diplomatic strategy, is appropriate for China's political and economic development, and contributes to our foreign language teaching? The path of healthy Russian language learning is an important challenge facing most Russian language teachers in China. Currently, there are more than 100 colleges and universities in China offering specialties in the Russian language, and more than 20,000 students study in various types of Russian education, more than 120 colleges and universities offer public courses in the Russian language. The number of pupils

studying Russian in secondary school has increased and recovered. In recent years, the number of students studying in Russia has been steadily increasing. Every year hundreds of government officials travel to Russia to study, and the number of people who spent their funds in Russia has also exceeded 10,000.

Nowadays, the scale of training of educational personnel of the Russian language in China continues to grow, and the level and model of teaching are becoming increasingly perfect, testing and assessment systems are being improved, international exchanges and cooperation are constantly strengthening and expanding, international scientific conferences of the high-level Russian language are held frequently, and the education of the Russian language entered a period of healthy and rapid general development. Internationally, the education of the Russian language in China also has a significant position and is widely recognised. Currently, the Chinese Association of Teachers of Russian Language and Literature (CATRLL) is the Vice President and Secretary of the World Russian Society. In recent years, more than 10 Russian scientists in China have won the Pushkin Medal, Russian National Friendship, or other Russian awards for outstanding achievements in education.

In 2006 and 2007, the “National Year” was held in China and Russia, and the frequency of cultural and educational exchanges between the two sides significantly increased. Opportunities for the exchange of foreign students and teachers between universities in the two countries have increased significantly, and the implementation of joint projects has also immensely improved. In 2009, China and Russia opened the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations and held the “Russian Year” in China. On September 10, the Russian CCTV channel officially opened. In recent years, cooperation between the member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation in many areas has gradually consolidated. The 12th World Russian Congress will also be held in China in 2011. All this provided unprecedented opportunities for the development of Russian education. Admittedly, it also raised requirements and set new tasks.

After many years of practical accumulation, teaching Russian in China has developed a complete set of teaching methods. Although some of the methods are very practical and effective, most of the teaching methods are backward and fail to meet the needs of students and society. Currently, foreign language teaching in China is mainly based on teaching English, and the share of teaching Russian is getting smaller and smaller, which is due to social and political factors. The degree of state and individual recognition of the language they learn often depends on the political and economic factors of the country in which the language is being studied. Due to the collapse of the Soviet Union, political turmoil and economic recession in the CIS countries, the influence of Russian-speaking countries in the world has sharply decreased, which led to a significant decrease in the psychological and social awareness of Chinese students. All this greatly influences the motivation and interest of Russian language learners in learning the language and significantly affects the number and importance of Russian language learners. But the main problems of Chinese modern Russian education are also closely related to internal factors.

Firstly, most of the teaching of a foreign language in China is based on performance indicators and tests, which are used as indicators to assess the quality of teaching. Therefore, teachers focus on vocabulary, sample sentences and teaching grammar in practice, while ignoring the development of the full use of students' language skills like listening, speaking and reading (Kırmızı & Kömeç, 2019). At the same time, the teacher's attitude, level, emotional state and ability to control have a great impact on students. Many students study Russian for the purpose of passing exams and believe that learning Russian will not be of great importance for their future work and study, so they do not pay attention to learning Russian and cannot arouse their interest. Secondly, most of the textbooks used in teaching the Russian language in China are old versions, they do not keep pace with the development situation in Russia and cannot meet the needs of modern political and economic development, and also cannot

serve political and economic development. The use of outdated textbooks will remove people's enthusiasm for learning Russian, and textbooks are very different from each other and cannot be used consistently, which makes learning Russian very difficult.

Thirdly, the methods and means of teaching the Russian language in China are seriously rare. Due to the influence of conventional foreign language teaching, Russian language teaching has long been the only teaching method, and it is still teacher-centred. Students in the Russian faculty cannot have newspapers, magazines and television programmes, as students in the English faculty. The study of the Russian language can only rely on communication between the teacher and the students, this situation seriously affects the interest and motivation of students, leading to ineffective student learning. Fourthly, since the founding of New China, China has trained a considerable number of high-quality Russian teachers, but with the deterioration of Sino-Russian relations, the education of the Russian language has found itself in a difficult situation. Russian is not appreciated and is gradually being replaced by English. Although Russian language teaching has made significant progress in recent years, there are still drawbacks.

2019 is a landmark year in the history of Sino-Russian relations: the two countries will celebrate the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Russia and the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the Sino-Russian Committee on Humanitarian Cooperation. Over the past 70 years, Sino-Russian educational exchanges have played an important part in fostering mutual understanding and friendship between the two countries and peoples. Especially in the 20 years since the establishment of the Sino-Russian Humanitarian Exchange Mechanism, Sino-Russian cooperation in education has developed profoundly, providing important support for cooperation and exchanges in other areas. Supported by various policies, the number of Chinese students studying in Russia is increasing from year to year.

According to Russian statistics, from 2000 to 2001, the number of Chinese students studying in Russia was 6,100; according to the latest data, about 30,000 Chinese students study in Russia. In terms of the number of Chinese students studying abroad, it is second only to Kazakhstan. In 2007, during the “Chinese Year” in Russia, 7 Confucius Institutes were opened in Russia. As of 2019, there are 19 Confucius Institutes and 5 Confucius classes in Russia. In China, 35 Russian cultural centres have been created by Russia. The number of schools and students studying and discovering Russian and Chinese has increased. Relevant statistics show that there are currently 153 universities in China offering specialisation courses in the Russian language, and about 150 universities offering general Russian language training. In primary and secondary schools, 83 secondary schools offer Russian language courses and 6 primary schools offer Russian language courses. The Sino-Russian Humanitarian Exchange Mechanism has greatly facilitated cooperation between Chinese and Russian universities. Currently, China and Russia have jointly established 11 university alliances, as well as two regional university alliances in northeast China and the Russian Alliance of the Far Eastern Siberian University, the upper and middle reaches of the Yangtze River in China, and the Federation of Universities in the federal district along the Volga River in Russia. In the process of professional and language training of students in China and the natural language environment of Russia, Chinese students studying Russian have difficulties in adapting to the Russian environment, in overcoming cultural shock and language barrier during intercultural communication, as well as in solving particular problems of practice due to the individual language readiness of students and practice situations.

A collision with a different worldview and attitude that goes beyond the framework of one's national culture often creates a feeling of discomfort among the participants in communication. “All the subtleties and all the depth of the problems of interlanguage and intercultural communication become especially evident, and sometimes simply perceived, when comparing foreign languages with



the native and foreign culture with theirs, which is familiar to them” (Ter-Minasova, 2000). Facing the national culture of another nation, people experience a state of cultural shock, “which is understood as the awareness of a sharp divergence of material or spiritual cultures of two peoples, manifested in the conditions of personal direct contact with representatives of another culture and accompanied by misunderstanding, inadequate interpretation or direct rejection of a foreign culture with positions of their culture” (Prokhorov & Sternin, 2006). Adaptation of students to a new culture takes place in several stages: the initial optimistic mood from meeting with everything new and unusual is replaced by a feeling of disappointment, the appearance of difficulties in communication. “Lack of intercultural knowledge and skills can lead to failures in communicating with the interlocutor. A person using a foreign language must learn to understand why people of a different culture act in a certain way in each particular communicative situation” (Kryuchkova & Moshchinskaya, 2012).

#### **4. The Belt and Road Initiative as a socio-political, historical, and philosophical issue of the modern world**

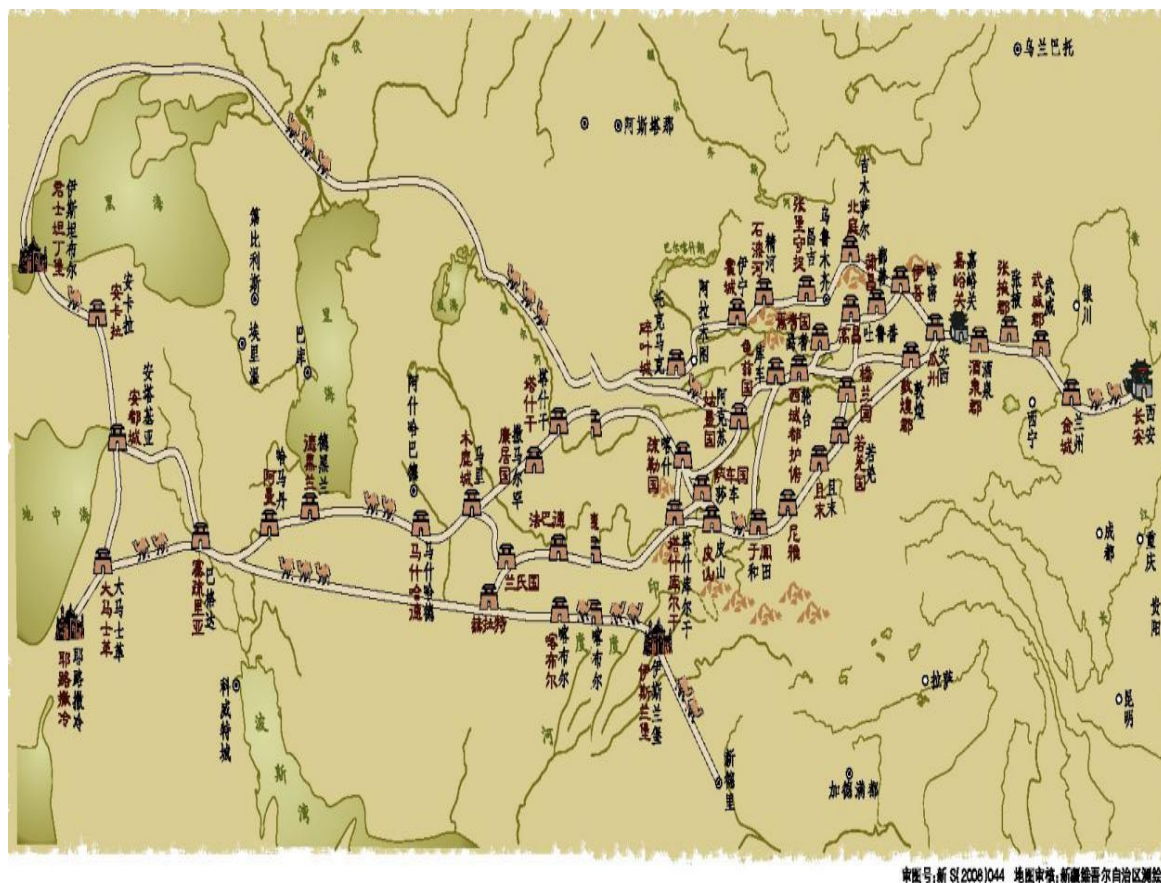
##### *4.1. Historical roots of the Belt and Road Initiative*

Over 2,000 years ago, hardworking and courageous people on the Eurasian continent explored many trades and humanitarian routes linking the civilisation of Asia, Europe, and Africa, and later called it the Great Silk Road. For millennia, the Silk Road associated with "peaceful cooperation, openness and inclusiveness, mutual knowledge, mutual benefit and mutual advantage" has contributed to the progress of human civilisation, has been an important link that contributes to the prosperity and development of countries along the line, a symbol of exchange and cooperation between East and West, historical and cultural heritage common to all countries of the world.

The Great Silk Road, which was not built or promoted by the Chinese, was only created after foreigners needed Chinese silk. Therefore, while looking through ancient Chinese books, it was not possible to find the term “Silk Road”. Around 1860, the German geographer Lichgofen travelled to Central Asia to propose the concept of the Silk Road. During the expedition, he compared Chinese history and suggested that such a Silk Road existed around the 2nd century BC. Since then, Silk Road has received worldwide recognition. The Silk Road was first discovered by Zhang Qian during the time of Emperor Wu of Han and was known as “air travel”, but at that time Zhang Qian did not open the western land for trade. To defeat the Huns, Wu of Han wanted to send Zhang Qian to the region of present-day Afghanistan in order to contact Yuezhi (Laufer, 1917), but Zhang Qian was captured by the Huns for ten years, and then fled, came to Bactria (Gankovsky, 1982), and found Yuezhi. But Yuezhi is already familiar with life here and does not want to fight anymore. Zhang Qian did not reach the goal and returned.

In 73 AD, eastern Han, when Ban Chao re-discovered the western region, which is isolated for 58 years, and this route was first extended to the European Roman Empire, in 166 AD, the ancient Roman Empire, King Anton sent an envoy to Luoyang to meet Hanhuang Di, marking the beginning of cultural exchanges between China and the West, Eastern and Western diplomatic relations were officially established, this route was officially opened for the first time and extended to Europe. Since then, countries and regions along the Silk Road have continued to thrive in silk, fur, jade, jewellery, spices, and other goods, and cultural, religious, and other humanitarian exchanges have become increasingly active, not just as a trade route between Asian countries and Europe, but also as a path of friendship between every country in Eurasia and China, as well as for communication between East and West. Since then, a trade road was developed that crossed the northern part of Eurasia, in contrast to the Chaimagu road in the south, which began from Chang'an (modern Xi'an), Luoyang, through the Western embankments of the rivers to Dunhuang. From Dunhuang, the division into north and south

begins: the southern road from Dunhuang through Lulan, Khotan, Yarkand, through the modern Pamir to Yuezhi, the Parthian kingdom, to the west to the Seleucid State, Daqin (Daqin is the ancient Chinese name of the Roman Empire or, depending on the context, the Middle East, especially Syria); the northern road from Dunhuang to Turfan, Kucha, Shule, through the modern Pamir to Davan, to the west through the Parthian kingdom to Daqin (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** The trade road that crossed the northern part of Eurasia – the Maritime Silk Road

The Maritime Silk Road of the East China Sea was formed during the time of Qin Han, about 200 AD. BC. Initially, the sea route passed along the coast of the Liaodong Peninsula and the Korean Peninsula to the south, and then through the Tsushima Strait to the northern part of the Japanese archipelago. The Sui and Tang dynasties, with the joint efforts of the Chinese and Japanese, were followed by the emergence of several sea routes crossing the Yellow Sea and the East China Sea. Through these sea routes, not only did Chinese goods arrive in Japan and the Korean Peninsula, but also Chinese culture spread widely, including Confucianism, a system of laws, Chinese hieroglyphs, clothing, architecture, and even martial arts, tea customs.

The Maritime Silk Road in the South China Sea was also formed during the Qin Han era, as evidenced by exotic items such as African ivory found in the Pearl River Delta region during the South Vietnam period (203-111 BC). In 111 BC, Emperor Han Wu's army destroyed the South Empire of Vietnam, which directly controlled the portals of the South China Sea. With a powerful state power, the great Han Wu expanded overseas traffic, opening the first direct ocean route from the southern coast of China to the Indian Ocean, to the eastern coast of the present Indian Peninsula and Sri Lanka. This route is clearly documented in the book of the Han Dynasty “Han Shu Geographical Journal”.

The Roman Empire also expanded rapidly at the western tip of Eurasia. After the death of the Egyptian king Ptolemy in 30 BC, the Romans entered the Indian Ocean through the Red Sea and began to move eastward. In the 1st century AD, the Romans mastered and used the Indian Ocean monsoon law to successfully cross the Indian Ocean right between the Red Sea and India, rather than just sailing along the Indian Ocean coastline as they once did. Some merchants from the Roman Empire even travelled to the southeast coast of the Indian Peninsula to build trading fortresses. In Greek maritime literature, created in the second half of the 1st century AD, *Periplus of the Eritrean Sea* describes a route from the Red Sea to the southern tip of the Indian Peninsula (Schoff, 1912).

The Han Chinese spread from east to west, and the subjects of the Roman Empire sailed from west to east and finally docked on the Indian Peninsula, leading to the maritime Silk Road stretching to the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea. It was the first sea route in world history across the Indian Ocean and the longest route on earth at the time. The South China Sea, together with the overland Silk Road through Central Asia, forms two major transport arteries connecting East and West.

The Belt and Road Initiative, launched by President Xi Jinping in 2013, is considered one of the most significant and promising international projects in the modern world. The Belt and Road Initiative is a combination of two projects: the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, whose goals, according to the Chinese leader, include consolidation of economic integration in the region, removal of barriers to trade and investments, the establishment of single transport infrastructure, strengthening the importance of national currencies, increase in the level of cooperation in the humanitarian sphere (The Belt and Road Initiative, 2017). The result of this long-term project should be the creation of a Eurasian economic zone, which will connect the states of the East and West through the Central Asian region and will be used in the future to supply goods to Europe. It is planned that the initiative put forward by President Xi will become a platform for the coexistence and harmonious development of both states and entire civilisations. Politically and culturally independent, they will be economically interdependent (Mikhalev, 2016).

In March 2015, China published an official document entitled “Vision and Action to Promote the Joint Construction of the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road”, which emphasises that the Belt and Road Initiative is a systematic project in the implementation of which it is necessary to adhere to the principles of reciprocity in doing business and in the general development of the member states (Vision and action..., 2015). China's International Initiative is aimed at improving existing and creating new trade routes, transport and economic corridors connecting more than 60 countries. These routes are as follows:

- Northern (China – Central Asia – Russia – Europe (to the Baltic Sea));
- Central (China – Central and Western Asia – Persian Gulf and Mediterranean Sea);
- South (China – Southeast Asia – South Asia – Indian Ocean).

Project “21st Century Maritime Silk Road”:

- from the seaports of China through the South China Sea to the southern Pacific Ocean;
- from the seaports of China through the South China Sea to the Indian Ocean and further to Europe.

The Silk Road Economic Belt and the proposed main routes (Figure 2).



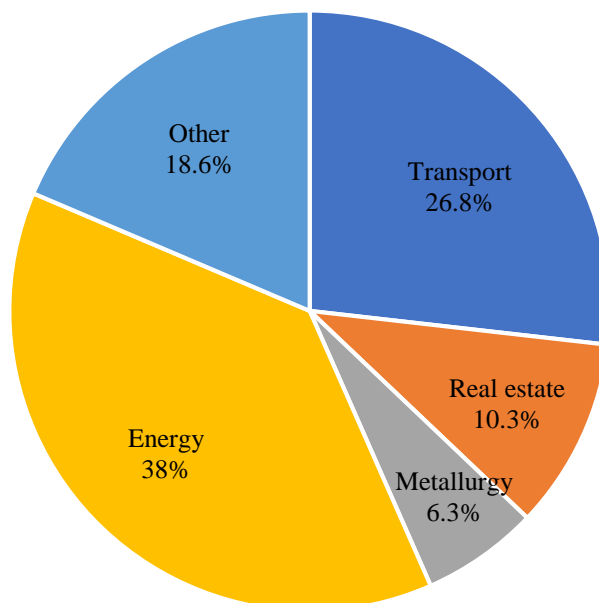
**Figure 2.** Projected main routes of the Silk Road Economic Belt

This project includes six international economic corridors: the China-Mongolia-Russia Economic Corridor; New Eurasian Continental Bridge; Economic Corridor “China – Central Asia – Western Asia”; Economic corridor “China – Indochina Peninsula”; Economic Corridor “China – Pakistan”; Economic corridor “Bangladesh – China – India – Myanmar”. The seventh route is the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, which acts as a separate initiative and, in conjunction with the Silk Road Economic Belt project, forms the Belt and Road Initiative.

The main tasks of the project:

- strengthening of regional economic cooperation;
- creation of a unified trans-Asian transport infrastructure;
- elimination of investment and trade barriers;
- increasing the role of national currencies;
- consolidation of humanitarian cooperation.

The volume of investments and the amount of construction contracts (structures and infrastructure) within the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative from 2013 to 2018 are presented in the diagram (Figure 3).



**Figure 3.** Investment in the construction of the Belt and Road Initiative

Source: (Central Asia..., 2019).

Up to 38% of investments are expected to be invested in the energy sector, 26.80% are planned to be spent on transport, 10.30% are expected to be spent on real estate and infrastructure, metallurgy will take 6.30% and other investments will amount to 18.60% (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Investment in energy

OTHER 18.60%	Sum, billion USD	Share in the total volume, %
Utilities industry	15.81	2.60%
Agriculture	13.5	2.20%
Logistics	13.32	2.20%
Technology	11.66	1.90%
Chemical industry	11.32	1.80%
Tourism	8.86	1.40%
Finance	8.55	1.40%
Entertainment, recreation	8.49	1.40%
Healthcare	3.01	0.50%
Other industries	19.72	3.20%

In 2015, two financial giants were created to finance projects under the initiative: the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank with a capital of 100 billion USD and the Silk Road Fund, whose authorised capital is 40 billion USD. The main financial mechanism for the implementation of the economic belt and the sea route is the provision of loans by Chinese financial institutions for the implementation of infrastructure projects. One of the main conditions is the use of Chinese equipment, goods, services, and labour. At the first international forum of the Belt and Road Initiative, held in

Beijing (May 2017), it was announced that in the coming years the volume of Chinese investments in countries that have joined the Initiative will increase to 150 billion USD. Participants of the second international forum of the Belt and Road Initiative, held in Beijing (April 2019), 283 agreements were signed for a total amount of over 64 billion USD (International experts assessed..., 2019).

63% of the world's population lives in the territory through which the routes will pass; more than 100 countries and international organisations have already joined the Initiative; more than 40 of them signed agreements on cooperation with China (Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Iran, Turkey, etc.) (Table 2). China has invested over 50 billion USD in the economies of countries along the borders of the Belt and Road Initiative member states since 2013. In 20 countries (Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, etc.) Chinese enterprises created 56 zones of trade and economic cooperation, 180 thousand jobs, about 1.1 billion USD in tax revenues to the budget, 2.95 billion USD in direct non-financial investments of Chinese enterprises in the economy of 43 member states. With 61 countries, China has signed 952 contracts for the performance of contract work in the country, 156 new contracts for the performance of contract work abroad, more than 50 million USD negotiated amount of each of the contracts, with 34.07 billion USD for a total amount of contracts.

**Table 2.** List of countries on China's cooperation in the construction of the Belt and Road Initiative

Part of world	Number of signatory countries	Countries that signed agreements
Asia	36	Azerbaijan, Armenia, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bahrain, Brunei, East Timor, Vietnam, Georgia, Indonesia, Iraq, Iran, Kazakhstan, Cambodia, Qatar, Kyrgyzstan, Kuwait, Laos, Lebanon, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, United Arab Emirates, Oman, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkey, Uzbekistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, South Korea
Africa	37	Algeria, Angola, Burundi, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Djibouti, Egypt, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Cape Verde, Cameroon, Kenya, Republic of Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Libya, Mauritania, Madagascar, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Seychelles, Senegal, Somalia, Sudan, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Chad, Ethiopia, South Africa, South Sudan
Europe	26	Austria, Albania, Belarus, Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Hungary, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Romania, North Macedonia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine, Croatia, Montenegro, Czech Republic, Estonia
Oceania	9	Vanuatu, Niue (New Zealand), New Zealand, Cook Islands (New Zealand), Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tonga, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji
Northern America	11	Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Grenada, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, Cuba, Panama, El Salvador, Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica
Southern America	7	Bolivia, Venezuela, Guyana, Suriname, Uruguay, Chile, Ecuador

#### 4.2. Internal economic and social reforms in deepwater areas

At present, the stage-by-stage characteristic of the PRC economy, which is directly related to the professional training of young personnel, is a "three-phase" superposition, the so-called "third period", when the growth rates pass into a period of shift, determined by the objective laws of economic development. The new structural adjustment is facing a painful period, which is an active choice of the

PRC to accelerate the transition to economic development. The previous period of stimulating policy was a necessary stage for resolving deep contradictions that arise at the present stage. In this context, after the beginning of the 18th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party, the Party Central Committee proposed a new strategy: to accelerate the pace of reform and openness for the member states, consolidate reforms, reorient economic development, achieve a "soft landing" of the national economy from rapid growth to normal smooth growth, support sustainable and stable development. This requires the coordination of both domestic and international resources and markets to search for new drivers of economic development and growth points. From the "grope for stones, if you get across the river" strategy during the early reform period to proactive response and proactive striking, it is all a reflection of historical change, the progress of the era, the courage and bravery of decision-makers. Therewith, it reflects the complexity of the problems, the scale of the difficulties, the severity of the challenges, and the seriousness of the tasks set.

After the global financial crisis of 2008, the global industrial structure entered a period of deep restructuring, the global economic recovery slowed, the growth of developed countries became weak, and the rate of economic growth continued to decline. The decline in industrial production in the world, the manufacturing industry entered a recession cycle. Industrialised countries, which previously had global competitive advantages in the industry, are currently dominated by structural imbalances, and developing countries have increased global industrial competition. Countries barely bounced back from the 2008 financial crisis when faced with even more dire circumstances caused by the global pandemic.

In the context of a global pandemic, the world economy is entering a critical period of transformation and modernisation. At present, the new disease caused by the COVID-19 virus has spread to almost all countries. At the beginning, the pandemic had a local impact only on the stock exchanges of China, where trading volumes began to decline from January 21, 2020 (World financial markets..., 2020). But already on January 27, against the background of an increase in the number of cases, the drop affected the FTSE 100 and European stock exchanges (Global markets slide..., 2020). In countries with a high percentage of cases, the pandemic has led to the closure of many businesses, as well as a sharp increase in demand for everyday products. COVID-19 has been a major blow to the economies of many countries, trade, and financial systems. The phenomenon of the impact of the pandemic on the life of society and its consequences are increasingly called the "coronacrisis" in the media. Along with this, global capital flows and the growth of financial assets slowed down, foreign investment in advanced economies dropped. Countries that previously focused on the flow of capital abroad began to pay attention to the domestic national regions, which led to a sharp decline in global capital flows across borders. Capital market turbulence in emerging and developing economies has intensified.

In general, the return on investment has decreased, and a decline in economic growth is observed, which seriously inhibits the growth of world trade. The depression continues, the export situation deteriorates sharply, and the export of world trade in goods and services is undergoing a deep correction. In this situation, China is open to foreign trade. The Belt and Road Initiative strategy needs to be revised. Despite the complexities associated with the pandemic, the process of regional economic integration should gradually accelerate around China, ASEAN, Central Asia, South Asia, and other resource-rich developing countries and regions whose potential is still enormous. Therewith, it is necessary to intensify the development of the initiative through the cooperation of countries within the framework of training professional personnel capable of meeting the needs of the Initiative in crisis situations.

"The growing threat to energy security is largely intended to be resolved by the unprecedented complex international Belt and Road Initiative, which has begun to be implemented based on Chinese

investments” (Borisov, 2019). As it is carried out mainly with Chinese funds by Chinese contractors, more than 80 countries and international organisations immediately announced their participation. They account for 63.1% of the world's population, 58.1% of the world's oil reserves, 79.9% of natural gas and 54.2% of coal (Borisov, 2019). According to Chinese customs statistics, over 2003-2013, crude oil imports to China increased from 91 million tons per year to 282 million tons in 2013, exceeding 200 million tons in 2009. Sources of crude oil imports are mainly concentrated in the Middle East and Sudan in Africa. 80% of crude oil imports pass through the Strait of Malacca, and external dependence has reached 58%. At present, the international oil market is under the influence of international politics, which has led to great instability in the supply of crude oil from importing countries, and the safety of crude oil imports is highly contested. In particular, China is over-dependent on crude oil imports in the Middle East and the Strait of Malacca. With the unstable situation in the Middle East and US intervention in the South China Sea, China's energy security is seriously challenged and potential threats are intensifying, the opening of new crude oil supplying countries or regions, the opening of new secure pipelines, and the diversification of crude oil imports are already important strategic problems to be solved.

Since the Obama administration, the United States has embarked on what it refers to as “return to Asia” rebalancing strategy, with the intention of containing China's development space and impetus for development by implementing several new initiatives in areas such as diplomacy, military, security, trade, and more. Such as the implementation of “smart power” diplomacy, the strengthening of “US and Japanese security”, an attempt to attract Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, Australia, and other countries to the conclusion of “small NATO”, built a “chain of three islands” around East China and a “crescent” encirclement from Japan to Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan, created a buzz about war between sea and air, offshore operations, proposed agreements on the Trans-Pacific Partnership outside APEC, intends to continue to dominate the Asia-Pacific economic landscape and hold back China's development”. Adhering to the five principles of peaceful coexistence, promoting the democratisation of international relations, promoting multipolarity in the world and promoting multilateral security mechanisms, etc., the new Chinese leadership put forward a new concept of security in Asia and the Asian dream, and also led the “spirit of the Silk Road, peaceful cooperation, openness and inclusiveness, mutual learning and mutual benefit”. Therewith, China is gradually building inclusive and multi-level channels of international dialogue and cooperation mechanisms that can translate these new ideas and mechanisms of dialogue and cooperation into reality and drive global strategic concepts such as the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road.

The problems in the implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative are also related to the current international situation associated with the crisis caused by the planetary pandemic COVID-19. The problem of the pandemic has highlighted all the pros and cons of healthcare organisation by the government of many countries. During the crisis period, the Chinese experience helped the countries understand the importance of cooperation and mutual assistance with China, which immediately informed WHO about the epidemic, presented the genome of the new coronavirus, and began to conduct international anti-epidemic cooperation at the expert level. Although China bought time for the rest of the world, containing the epidemic in the country, individual countries nevertheless tried to declare the PRC in their troubles. In June 2020, US Secretary of State Michael Pompeo announced that the EU and the US have created a new permanent political consultation format to discuss the threat from China. In response to the “Chinese threat theory”, China should not only strengthen its propaganda interpretation, but also use practical actions to show the world that China's peaceful rise is not detrimental to the interests of other countries and does not pose a threat to any country.



### 4.3. Russian and European experts on the Belt and Road Initiative

On February 13, 2019, the 19th expert session of the Coordination Club of the Free Economic Society of Russia was held at the Russian Newspaper media centre (Belt and Road..., 2019). The experts discussed how Russia should strengthen its positions on the Silk Road, use the opening opportunities with maximum benefit, minimise the risks that arise in connection with the implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative, given that consolidating partnership with China and strengthening the Eurasian Economic Union remain Russia's priority areas. With regard to pairing, S. Uyanayev (2015), Deputy Director of the Institute of Far Eastern Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, noted that "there are serious contradictions between the Russian project of the Eurasian Economic Union and the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative; the Belt and Road Initiative is focused on broad free trade zones, while the Eurasian Economic Union, on the contrary, makes provision for the protection of the Union's internal markets from external players and a tariff-free zone only for member states... Therewith, in the future, this initiative can contribute to the development of Siberia, the Far East, the Volga region, and other Russian regions through which the Silk Road crosses" (Uyanaev, 2015).

S. Uyanayev (2015) believes that Russia can win as a country providing transit of goods through its territory. "Due to the fact that an essential part of the project is the creation of the Trans-Eurasian container bridge, which has begun to be built along the China-Kazakhstan-Russia-Europe route, not only can its Russian section be modernised, but also the transit flows can be increased, which will give an impetus to the development of the adjacent regions" (Uyanaev, 2015). However, along with the advantages of creating a land transcontinental bridge from China to Europe, there are obvious disadvantages for Russia. "This refers to a decrease, if not a loss, of carriers' interest in the Siberian and Far Eastern sections of the Trans-Siberian route, since the route through Kazakhstan is more profitable for China both in terms of tariffs and time. At present, out of 14 well-known China-Europe routes, 10 pass through the Sino-Kazakh checkpoint Alashankou-Dostyk, leaving the Trans-Siberian route only in the region of Kurgan, Chelyabinsk, Magnitogorsk. A separate issue is the loss of the Trans-Siberian route to China's railways in terms of technical condition" (Uyanaev, 2015).

While domestic researchers generally positively assess the Belt and Road Initiative and are optimistic about the long-term prospects for its implementation, many Western authors assess the Chinese project critically and view it as evidence of the Celestial Empire's aspiration for world economic hegemony (Ploberger, 2017). D. Kozlov (2018) notes that researchers J. Sidaway and C. Woon, drawing parallels with German imperialism at the end of the 19th century, see in the ideas of the new Chinese initiative a renewed version of imperialism and postcolonialism. A more neutral analysis of the place of the Belt and Road Initiative in Xi Jinping's foreign economic policy is given in the article by P. Ferdinand (2016). It is also necessary to note the publication of A. Ghouri (2016), whose article investigates the legal and political aspects of Chinese investments in Pakistan within the framework of the China-Pakistan economic corridor. This study is based on an analysis of recent developments related to the progress of the initiative in the countries along which the main economic corridors of the Belt and Road Initiative pass (Liyan & Miaorhan, 2017).

## 5. Conclusions

Analysis of the Belt and Road Initiative as a socio-political and historical-philosophical problem has displayed not only great opportunities in the implementation of the project, but also the problems and contradictions that need to be resolved in order to obtain mutual benefits for all participating countries. The identified problems in the implementation of the Chinese initiative put forward the primary task of training highly qualified personnel, "bringing interdisciplinary specialists with an

international vision and an innovative approach to a new professional level”. The Belt and Road Initiative has inherited, on the one hand, the open, inclusive, and eclectic spirit of the Great Silk Road and therefore bears a resemblance to the Great Silk Road; on the other hand, since the policy of the Belt and Road Initiative emerged in the context of a new era, the initiative exceeding the traditional Silk Road has become an urgent necessity.

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## “Tek Kuşak - Bir Yol” projesinin uygulanması için uzmanların mesleki eğitiminde Rus dilinin rolü

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### Özet

Rusya Federasyonu'nda “Tek Kuşak - Tek Yol” projesini uygularken uzmanların ve şirketlerin karşılaştığı sorunlardan biri de Rus uzmanlarla iletişimde dil becerilerinin olmamasıdır. Bu, öncelikle, yetersiz mesleki ve dil eğitimiyle yavaşlatılabilen, özetlenen planların uygulanmasında en aktif rolü üstlenmesi gereken öğrenci gençleri için geçerlidir. Makalenin amacı, “Tek Kuşak - Bir Yol” projesinin uygulanmasına yönelik uzmanların mesleki eğitim sürecinde Rus dilinin rolünü belirlemektir. Önde gelen araştırma yöntemi, yazarların Çin'deki Rus dilinin öğretim faaliyetinin gelişiminde ana aşamaları oluşturdukları analiz yöntemiydi; Çin Rus dilinin öğretilmesinin mevcut durumu belirlendi; “Bir Kuşak - Bir Yol” projesini modern dünyanın sosyo-politik ve tarihsel-felsefi bir sorunu olarak değerlendirdi. Sosyo-politik ve tarihsel-felsefi bir sorun olarak “Tek Kuşak - Tek Yol” girişiminin analizi, sadece projenin uygulanmasında büyük fırsatlar değil, aynı zamanda tüm katılımcı ülkelerin karşılıklı oyunlarını elde etmek için çözülmesi gereken sorunlar ve çelişkiler gösterdi.

*Anahtar sözcükler:* uluslararası ilişkiler; işbirliği; «İpek yolu»; ekonomik krizi; pandemi

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