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TRANSFORMATIVE TRANSLATION

Cross-cultural communication in the age of AI

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Making Translation Smarter

The era of generative artificial intelligence (AI) has arrived, and products such as the ChatGPT chatbot developed by U.S. research lab OpenAI, and Ernie Bot, Chinese tech giant Baidu's answer to ChatGPT, are now changing the way the translation industry works. AI translation is making breakthroughs in cross-lingual comprehension, text translation and intelligent interaction. According to a recent report issued by the Translators Association of China, all translation firms surveyed now require translators to use computer-assisted translation tools.

The development of AI translation technology has greatly accelerated the progress of the industry, making the rendering of information from one language to another more efficient. The ability of AI translation systems to process mass amounts of text in a short time is a boon for businesses and other organizations with a multilingual work environment. It is applied not only in text translation, but also in processing speech. For example, real-time interpretation services allow users to communicate via smartphone applications or online interpretation platforms while traveling abroad.

As technology has advanced, translation systems have become able to support the inter-translation of multiple languages. This means that users can smoothly switch

from one language to another through a single platform, which has greatly facilitated international communication. Since AI translation systems have self-learning and optimization abilities, the accuracy and fluency of AI translation will continue to improve through constantly learning from new corpora and user feedback, so as to provide higher-quality services to their users.

The application of AI translation technology has not only enhanced the digital transformation of the translation industry, but also presented new challenges and opportunities for translators. With the continuous progress of technology, the synergy of machine and human translation will become a new trend in the industry, with translators needing to embrace cutting-edge technologies and improve their own skills to keep pace with advancements.

Most importantly, they should be better versed in deciphering culturally laden phrases and reading between the lines for implied meaning, tasks that AI is struggling to accomplish. They are the reviewers of AI translation and trainers of AI translation tools. In the meantime, as companies continue to invest in the research and application of AI translation technology, we can expect higher efficiency and greater convenience in the future. **BR**



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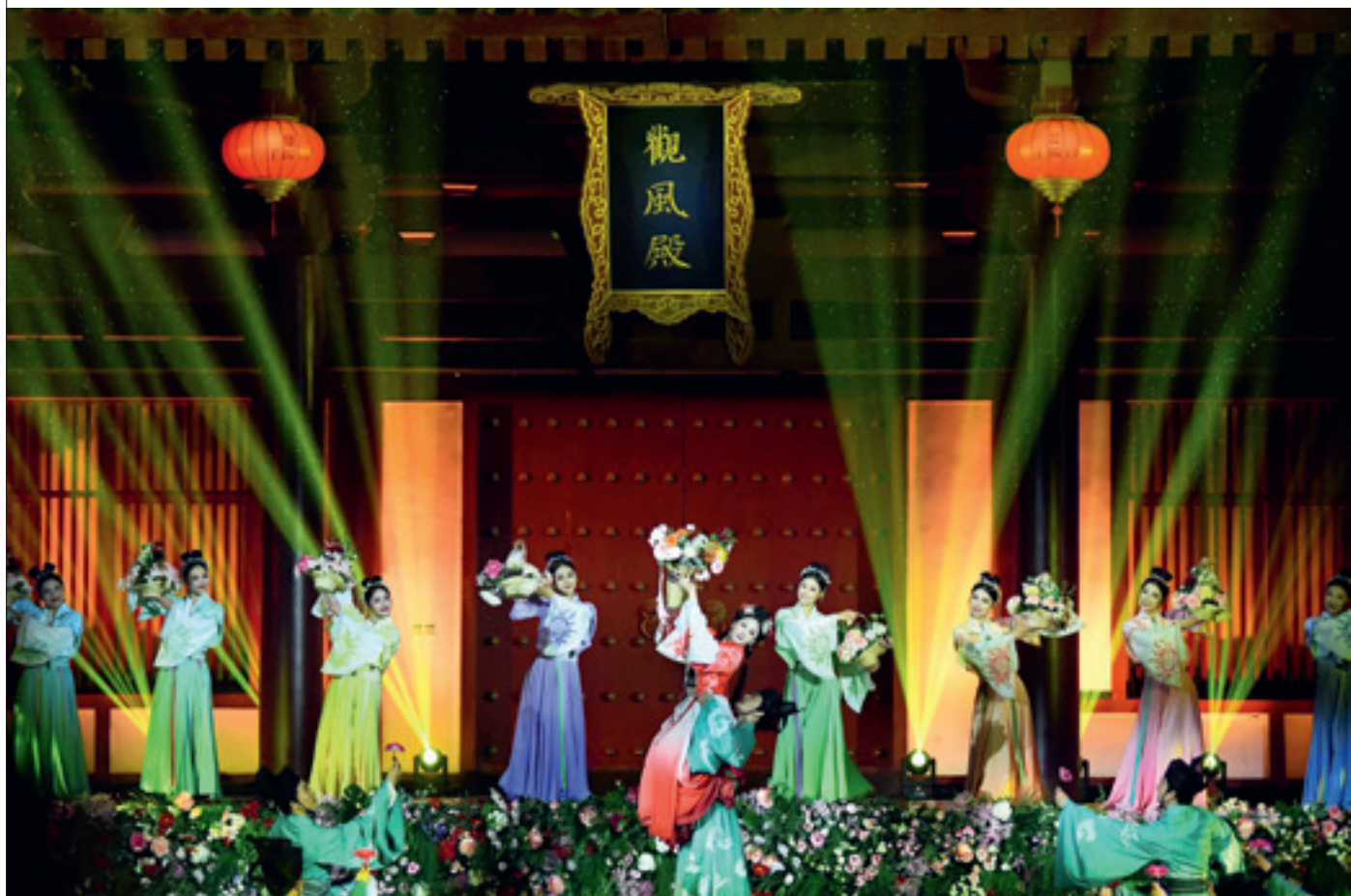
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PEONY FESTIVAL

Actors perform at the opening ceremony of the 41st Peony Culture Festival of Luoyang China in Luoyang, Henan Province, on April 1.

The festival, inaugurated in 1983, has been held in the city every spring, except for 2022, when it was postponed to the next year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The festival will be held until May 15 this year. During the festival, tourists will be able to appreciate gorgeous peony blossoms, watch folk performances in local gardens and visit famous local tourist attractions such as the White Horse Temple and the Longmen Grottoes.



City of the Future

The construction site of the headquarters of China Satellite Network Group in Xiongan New Area, Hebei Province, on March 28. In April 2017, China announced a plan to establish Xiongan New Area. The new area aims to relieve Beijing of functions not related to its status as the nation's capital, while also advancing the coordinated development of the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region.

High-Quality Development

China has made significant strides in high-quality economic and social development, especially in five major areas, namely people's wellbeing, consumption, manufacturing, infrastructure and services, according to a report released on March 31.

The report, jointly released by the Chongyang Institute for Financial Studies at Renmin University of China and cooperative think tanks from the United States, Russia, Canada and India, highlights the "compounding interest" in China's development.

The continuous accumulation of Chinese modernization can bring compounding-interest-

like development to the country, serving as a driving force for sustained economic growth and prosperity in China. The "compounding interest" of China is characterized by stability of returns, long-term accumulation and sustainability, according to the report.

The momentum of China's modernization, characterized by the development of "compounding interest," focuses on taking innovation-driven initiatives, deepening reforms, expanding opening-up and promoting green development, the report read.

China's high-quality development, fueled by compounding interest, innovation, reforms, openness and sustainability,

demonstrates its commitment to building a prosperous and harmonious society, said Mohammed Saqib, Secretary General of the India-China Economic and Cultural Council. "China is setting a remarkable example for other nations and paving the way for a brighter future for humankind."

Gas Pipeline

Construction of a natural gas pipeline project kicked off in Kuqa City in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region on March 29.

The project, spanning 2,108 km, will be executed in three phases, with the ongoing first phase covering 616 km.

Upon its completion in 2025, the natural gas pipeline network

will interconnect nine counties and cities spanning Kashgar Prefecture, Aksu Prefecture, the Mongolian Autonomous Prefecture of Bayingolin, and other prefectures. This will elevate the maximum daily gas supply capacity in southern Xinjiang from the current 27 million cubic meters to 58 million cubic meters, according to Chang Guichuan, an official with PetroChina Tarim Oilfield Company.

At present, more than 4,700 km of natural gas pipelines have been built, covering all major cities and towns in the five prefectures of southern Xinjiang.

The annual gas supply capacity of these pipelines has gradually risen to 6 billion cubic meters, and the cumulative gas supply to southern Xinjiang has exceeded 59 billion cubic meters, benefiting more than 8 million people of different ethnic groups.

This entire natural gas pipeline project is expected to encircle the Tarim Basin, and it will provide strong support for the livelihoods of people and the production activities of enterprises in southern Xinjiang.

AI Campaign

The Ministry of Education recently launched an artificial intelligence (AI) campaign to boost education, Xinhua News Agency reported on March 29.

The campaign focuses on four specific moves, which include launching a column for "AI learning" on the country's smart education platform, in which experts will discuss and teach AI technologies, and building an international exchange platform for digital education to contribute a Chinese approach to AI education.

The campaign aims to promote the integrated application

of teaching and learning through AI, improve the public's digital education literacy and skills, and standardize the scientific ethics of AI applications.

Audiovisual Users

As of December 2023, China had more than 1 billion online audiovisual users, with some 98.3 percent of its netizens using audiovisual services such as music and video streaming, according to a research report released on March 27.

The annual report on China's Internet audiovisual service development was released in Chengdu, Sichuan Province, during the 11th China Internet Audio and Video Convention.

The report shows that in 2023 alone, the size of China's market for the online audiovisual industry exceeded 1 trillion yuan (\$138 billion) for the first time, reaching a total of over 1.15 trillion yuan (\$159 billion).

By December 2023, China had some 1.55 billion short video accounts online, with more than 15 million professional livestreamers, according to the report.

Over the past two years, new audiovisual users in China have been mainly from rural areas. In 2022 and 2023, the country

recorded 299 million and 320 million rural audiovisual users on the Internet, respectively, both showing a higher year-on-year growth rate than that of the urban users in the same period, Zhou Jie, Deputy Secretary-General of China Netcasting Services Association, said during the conference.

New Discoveries

A team of Chinese scientists have completed the genetic profile of an ancient Chinese ethnic minority emperor via genome analysis, according to local archaeologists on March 28.

Emperor Wu of the Xianbei-led Northern Zhou Dynasty (557-581), also known as Yuwen Yong, was an ambitious leader who died at 36. He belonged to the Xianbei nomadic group, which originated from the Mongolian Plateau.

His skull and bones were discovered during the excavation of his tomb in 1994 and 1995. After spending six years studying DNA found in his remains, scientists led by Wen Shaoqing from the Institute of Archaeological Science at Fudan University, managed to decode key features of the emperor including the color of his hair, skin and eyes.



Flower Economy

A farmer checks the growth of moth orchids at an agricultural base in Zhangshan Village, Zhenjiang, Jiangsu Province on March 30. The base produces more than 8 million moth orchids a year, which are sold to overseas markets including Japan, the Republic of Korea and Europe.

The appearance of the Xianbei people had been a controversial topic, with some historical records indicating that the group had thick beards, blonde hair and protuberant noses. Other historical records suggested that there was no difference in appearance between Xianbei people and other people in the northeast of Asia. "Our findings are more in line with the second viewpoint," Wen stated.

Archaeologists believed research on Yuwen Yong is key to understanding ethnic integration in Chinese history, especially the integration of the majority Han population and the northern nomadic ethnic groups.

This research effort is also considered a breakthrough in archaeological studies, particularly due to the abundance of research materials available in China.



Under Construction

Workers at the construction site of the second Airbus Tianjin A320 Family Final Assembly Line Project in Tianjin Municipality on March 31. The assembly line will begin manufacturing A320 and A321neo aircraft by the end of 2026.

Telecom Sector Growth

The combined business revenue of firms in the telecommunication sector totaled 292.3 billion yuan (\$41.2 billion) in the first two months of this year, up 4.3 percent year on year, according to the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology.

Combined revenue of emerging businesses, such as big data, cloud computing, and the Internet of Things, continued to log double-digit growth.

Over the two-month period, the country's three telecom operators—China Telecom, China Mobile and China Unicom—saw their revenue from these emerging businesses increase 11.3 percent year on year to 75.76 billion yuan (\$10.67 billion), driving up the telecom sector's total revenue by 2.8 percentage points.

Specifically, revenue from cloud computing and big data jumped 17.3 percent and 30.3 percent, respectively, from the same period last year.

Drone Development

China's drone industry has witnessed robust development in recent years, with unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) used in more areas of the economy, official data shows.

The Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC) announced on March 29 there were nearly 1.27 million registered UAVs across the country at the end of 2023, up 32.2 percent year on year. Some 19,000 companies were engaged in the operation of drones, and 194,000 people held drone pilot certificates.

Civilian drones flew a total of 23.11 million hours in the country last year, an increase of 11.8 percent compared to 2022.

Drones are widely used in China in industries including agriculture, forestry and fishery, as well as entertainment and aerial photography. Some cities have started to test unmanned aerial logistics and delivery services.

To support the healthy development of the industry, the

CAAC has published guidelines on building UAV pilot zones. So far, 17 such zones and three bases have been approved.

Global Payments Currency

The Chinese currency, the renminbi (RMB) or the yuan, retained its spot as the world's fourth most active currency for payments by value in February.

The RMB's global share of payments stood at 4 percent that month, a report from the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT) said. SWIFT is a global provider of financial messaging services.

The value of RMB payments decreased 20.47 percent compared to January, while, in general, payments in all currencies decreased by 10.37 percent, the SWIFT said.

In terms of international payments excluding payments within the eurozone, the RMB ranked fifth with a share of 2.78 percent in February.

China's Hong Kong Special Administrative Region is the largest market for offshore RMB transactions, taking up 79.9 percent, followed by Britain at 5.37 percent and Singapore at 3.39 percent, the report said.

Central Business District

Beijing's central business district (CBD) is now home to 114 regional headquarters of multinational companies, according to the CBD's administration committee.

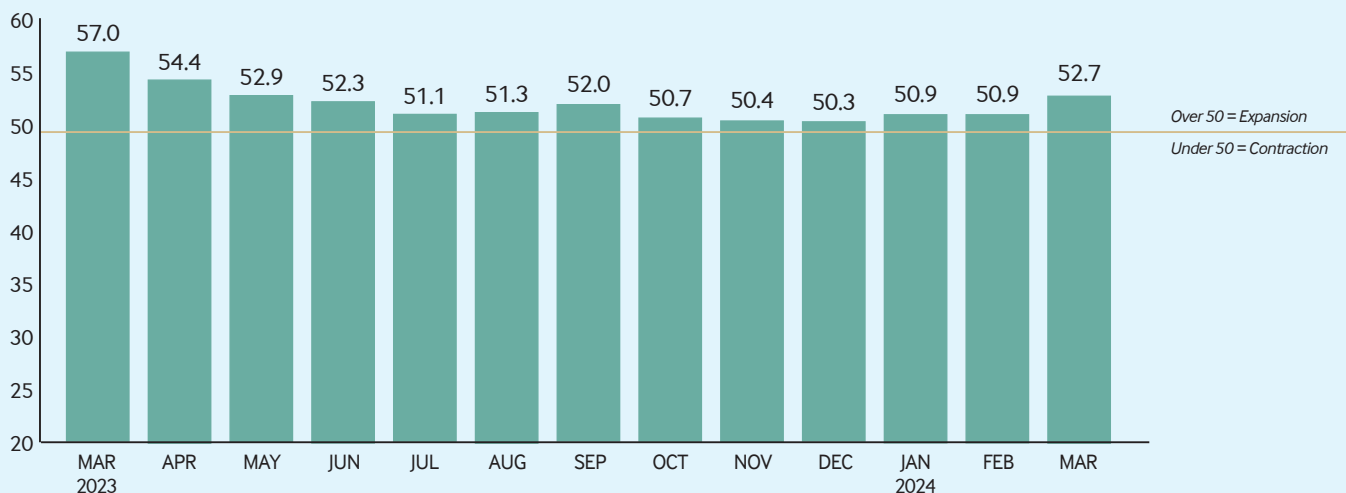
Offices of four foreign-funded enterprises, including the branches of BMW, Volvo and Toyota, have recently been registered in Beijing's CBD as regional headquarters.

Currently, nearly half of all multinationals operating regional headquarters in Beijing do so in the CBD.

With more than 10,000 foreign-funded enterprises and over 200 Fortune 500 companies, the district stands as one of China's most dynamic CBDs,

NUMBERS

China's Comprehensive Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI)



according to the administration committee.

Bond Issuances

Bond issuances in China totaled 4.71 trillion yuan (\$651.7 billion) in February, data from the People's Bank of China (PBC), the country's central bank, shows.

Specifically, issuances of treasury bonds came in at 750 billion yuan (\$103.8 billion), while local government bond issuances amounted to 559.96 billion yuan (\$77.5 billion), according to the PBC.

Financial bond issuances stood at 544.54 billion yuan (\$75.4 billion), and corporate credit bond issuances reached 683.46 billion yuan (\$94.6 billion).

Outstanding bonds held in custody were at 160 trillion yuan (\$22 trillion) at the end of February.

Outstanding External Debt

China's outstanding external debt stood at \$2.45 trillion at the end of 2023, data from the

State Administration of Foreign Exchange (SAFE), the country's foreign exchange regulator, shows.

Outstanding external debt in terms of the Chinese yuan accounted for 47 percent of the total, according to SAFE.

In terms of maturity structure, the proportion of medium- and long-term debt was 44 percent at the end of 2023, the data revealed.

Major indicators of the country's foreign debt, such as the liability ratio, debt ratio and debt servicing ratio, were within internationally recognized safe ranges, the administration said.

Medical Equipment

China's medical equipment market totaled 1.27 trillion yuan (\$175.7 billion) in market capitalization in 2023, according to the China Association of Medical Equipment. The figure was announced at the China Medical Equipment Conference, which took place in the city of Chongqing from March 28 to 31.

According to the association, the figure was 10.4 percent

higher than that of the previous year. China has remained the world's second largest single market for medical equipment.

In 2023, there were 138,000 medical equipment patent applications in China, representing 67 percent of all such patent applications in the world, the association said.

It added that the production of mid-to-high-end medical equipment saw significant growth in the country in 2023, while innovative medical equipment continued to emerge at a faster pace.

At present, more than 40 percent of high-end medical equipment in fields such as medical imaging, robotic surgery and clinical testing in China is produced domestically.

Industrialized Patents

The industrialization rate of invention patents held by Chinese enterprises has surpassed 50 percent for the first time, the China National Intellectual Property Administration (CNIPA), China's top intellectual property

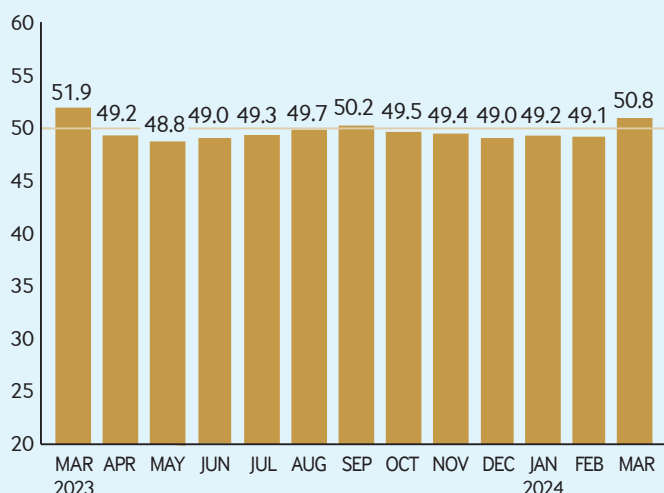
(IP) regulator, said on March 29.

The industrialization rate reached 51.3 percent in 2023, 3.2 percentage points up from the previous year. It has maintained a consistent upward trend for five consecutive years, said Ge Shu, a senior official at the CNIPA, citing data from the country's latest patent report.

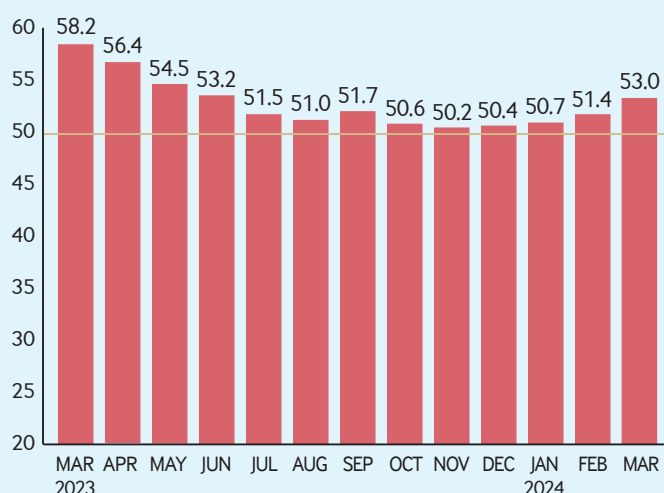
Ge highlighted that the level of patent industrialization in hi-tech enterprises had also increased. He said the industrialization rate in state-level hi-tech enterprises reached 57.6 percent in 2023, which was 1.5 percentage points higher than the previous year.

Enterprises play a crucial role in driving scientific and technological innovation as well as industrial transformation, serving as the primary source of China's patent output and commercialization. According to Ge, Chinese enterprises currently hold over 70 percent of the country's effective invention patents—with the total number held by enterprises exceeding 3 million.

China's Manufacturing PMI



China's Non-Manufacturing PMI



(Source: National Bureau of Statistics)

THIS WEEK **WORLD**



SYRIA

Rescue workers spring into action in Damascus on April 1, following an Israeli airstrike on a building housing the Iranian Embassy



THAILAND

Tourists capture memories at Pattaya's Sanctuary of Truth on March 29, one month after the nation introduced its visa-free entry policy for Chinese visitors



ZAMBIA

Residents of Livingstone perform a dragon dance on March 30 during the 2024 Livingstone International Culture and Art Festival





PAKISTAN

Pakistani military personnel lay a wreath for the Chinese nationals killed in a terrorist attack, during a farewell ceremony at Nur Khan Airbase in Rawalpindi on March 31



PALESTINE

Rescuers search for survivors in the rubble of Maghazi refugee camp in central Gaza Strip following an Israeli airstrike on March 31 that claimed the lives of at least 36 Palestinians



REPUBLIC OF KOREA

China's Sun Yingsha wins the women's singles final at the World Table Tennis Champions Incheon 2024 on March 31



THIS WEEK PEOPLE & POINTS

↓ UN ENVOY'S TENURE ENDS

Zhang Jun, outgoing Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations, bid farewell to UN Secretary General António Guterres in late March.

Zhang said representing China at the UN was “a great honor and a heavy responsibility,” as well as a highly memorable experience for him. In July 2019, Zhang presented his credentials to Guterres at the UN headquarters in New York City. Before that, he had held several positions at the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



“Currently, as the world undergoes major changes at an accelerated pace, China is in a period of significant development, boldly advancing on the path of nation-building and national rejuvenation,” Zhang said. “China firmly practices genuine multilateralism and supports the UN’s important role in maintaining peace and promoting development.”

Mood Leave

Rednet.cn
March 27

Everyone has off-days—days when they just don’t feel like going to work. However, caught up in the daily grind of work routines, most people do not have the leisure time to deal with their bad moods. This can sometimes lead to more severe mental health issues.

One Chinese company has picked up on this common dilemma. In late March, Pangdonglai, a retail chain

founded in Xuchang, Henan Province, announced the creation of a “mood leave,” which allows its employees to take 10 days off per year whenever they wish to take a break from work.

While it may be unrealistic for other companies to copy Pangdonglai’s “mood leave” policy, as every company has its unique strategies and values, this new type of sick leave has called attention to the importance of adopting a more staff-friendly approach in workplaces and protecting the mental wellbeing of employees.



Teaching AI Chinese

Lifeweek
April 1

In the year since its debut in March 2023, GPT-4, the latest model of the ChatGPT chatbot developed by American research lab OpenAI, has sent the world into a frenzied artificial intelligence (AI) boom. While millions of people worldwide are using AI to generate pictures and build apps, one question has arisen among Chinese netizens and researchers: Can AI understand Chinese?

To bridge this linguistic divide, Chinese researchers have poured great efforts into developing homegrown

“We are here because China is at the forefront of using artificial intelligence, biotechnology and renewable energy to shape the future of healthcare, and we believe that Chinese-born innovation can help millions of patients worldwide.”

Pascal Soriot, CEO of British biopharmaceutical giant AstraZeneca, in a recent interview with Xinhua News Agency

“Our research also shows that every 1 percentage point increase in the speed of China’s growth raises, on average, the level of GDP in other economies in the medium term by about 0.3 [percentage points.]”

Steven Alan Barnett, Senior Resident Representative in China of the International Monetary Fund, at the Boao Forum for Asia Annual Conference 2024 that ran from March 26 to 29

large language models that are better adapted to the Chinese writing system. Since 2016, a research team at Tsinghua University in Beijing has been working on Jiuge, a generative AI model that specializes in the generation of classic Chinese poems. Given the strict emphasis of ancient Chinese poetry on form, meter and the creation of imagery, the ability to write classic Chinese poems suggests a high level of mastery of the Chinese language. In 2017, the model beat Tsinghua's poetry society during a writing contest by scoring multiple titles including the "most popular poem."

Baidu, a Chinese search engine giant, has also come up with Ernie Bot, a large language model designed to mimic the neural networks in human brain. This type of design has enabled the chatbot to grasp not only the intrinsic logic of Chinese but also the large cultural context in which the language is situated.

Despite these very impressive breakthroughs, many industry insiders have agreed that Chinese chatbots, late to the game, are still lagging behind ChatGPT in terms of computing power. To accelerate the learning process of Chinese AI models, more energy needs to be put into developing homegrown chips and boosting domestic computing capacities, they observed.

Auntie Wang Matchmaking

Hubei Daily
March 29

Auntie Wang Matchmaking, a dating show held in a martial arts theme park in Kaifeng, Henan Province, has recently exploded in popularity on Chinese social media. Hosted by an actress dressed as Auntie Wang, a fictional character from classic Chinese literature, the show invites singles onto the stage to seek out potential partners in the crowd.

With her charismatic stage presence and down-to-earth sense of humor, Auntie Wang has transformed this previously obscure theme park into one of the

country's hottest attractions. Those who are not able to come to Kaifeng in person are calling upon park officials to organize a national tour for the show.

Data show that, at present, more than 200 million Chinese adults are single. While some people consciously choose to stay single, the vast majority of Chinese young adults still harbor the hope of one day finding love. However, the crush of life and work in a fast-paced society means that finding a partner isn't always easy.

Like many social media stars that came before her, Auntie Wang will one day be dropped from the headlines. Hopefully, the show can inspire the creation of many more fun matchmaking services for China's single population.

↓ RENOWNED WRITER DIES AT 109

Ma Shitu, an eminent writer, poet and calligrapher, passed away on March 28 at the age of 109.

Originally named Ma Qianmu, Ma was born in January 1915 in Chongqing. He started writing at 18 and published 29 titles. He served in several roles, including president of the Sichuan Provincial Writers Association and vice president of the Chinese Poetry Society.



He was widely known for his novel *Yetan Shiji* (*Ten Amazing Stories*). One of the stories was adapted into the 2010 hit action comedy movie *Let the Bullets Fly* directed by Jiang Wen. Ma continued his writing career even after reaching the age of 100. He published a book on oracle bone inscriptions when he was 107.

"Once we get beyond the language barrier, a lot of what we thought were cultural differences were really just language barrier... [and] then you start to see all sorts of commonality."

Mark Rowswell, better known by his Chinese stage name Dashan, a Canadian comedian and traditional Chinese cross-talk performer, in a recent interview with Xinhua

"Businesses must rethink their products to minimize wasteful packaging and maximize longevity and lifecycle."

António Guterres, UN Secretary General, in a video message for the International Day of Zero Waste on March 30, calling for worldwide efforts to tackle the waste crisis



Participants explore translation products during a sub-forum of the Translators Association of China annual conference in Changsha, Hunan Province, on March 31

COVER STORY

THE MODEL BUILT FOR THE FUTURE

New technologies promise exciting opportunities for the translation community By Zhang Yage

As a skill as old as language that boomed during the age of geographic discovery in the 16th century, the art of translation has undergone significant development and has been closely tied to scientific and technological progress since the latter half of the 20th century.

Currently, the rapid evolution of artificial intelligence (AI) is reshaping

the translation service industry.

“In 2023, 839 translation companies in China made use of AI-based translation technology—an increase of 251 from the year before,” Cheng Wei, Vice President of the Translators Association of China (TAC), said at the association’s 2024 conference.

Founded in 1982, the TAC represents professional translators and interpreters nationwide through its more than 7,000 institutional members, 10,000 individual members, and 18 committees covering areas including science and technology, literature and arts, social sciences, legal affairs, ethnic minority languages, translation

studies and teaching, interpreting and more. This year’s TAC annual conference took place in Changsha, Hunan Province, from March 30 to 31.

Cheng said AI-based translation technology serves not only China’s translation and interpretation community itself, but also the country’s international exchange and cooperation. “The rapid advancement in implementing the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) entails a huge