ISSN (Online): 2455-3662
EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR) - Peer Reviewed Journal
Volume: 10| Issue: 12| December 2024|| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2013 || SJIF Impact Factor 2024: 8.402 || ISI Value: 1.188

THE CURRENT STATUS AND FUTURE OF ENGLISH MAJOR DEVELOPMENT IN LOCAL UNIVERSITIES AGAINST THE BACKDROP OF THE DISCIPLINE OF AREA STUDIES FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF MATERIALIST HISTORY

CHENG Hong-bo
School of Foreign Studies, Zhaoqing University, Zhaoqing, Guangdong, China

Article DOI: https://doi.org/10.36713/epra19499
DOI No: 10.36713/epra19499

ABSTRACT

From the perspective of historical materialism, the emergence and development of area studies in China have their unique historical roots and practical value. In this context, local English majors in universities face both opportunities and challenges in transforming and upgrading in the new era of socialism with Chinese characteristics. The article first introduces the decline of the United States, the rise of a new discipline, and the background and rationale of the emergence of Chinese area studies. Secondly, it proposes a discipline of "area studies with Chinese characteristics " that differs from Western area studies. Finally, the development status and prospects of English majors in local universities in serving the local social and economic growth and supporting national development strategies are interpreted in terms of talent cultivation, curriculum design, faculty, and international exchange and cooperation.

KEYWORDS: *Area Studies; Chinese Characteristics; English Major; Materialist History*

I. THE DECLINE OF AMERICA

Dialectical materialism holds that the material world is in the process of eternal change and development. Development is the result of both internal and external causes. In 2010, China developed into the world's second largest economy. This is thanks to China's internal and more than 30 years of reform and opening-up policy. China's overall national strength in the fields of economy, military, science and technology is growing, and China's international status is constantly rising. China put forward the "Belt and Road" initiative and in response to climate change, China took the lead in greenhouse gas emission reduction target. China plays a constructive mediating role in helping Iran and Saudi Arabia to restore diplomatic relations, and China's diplomatic mediation in the Russia-conflict and other international events prove China's expanding international influence in economic, cultural, ecological, diplomatic and other fields. From the perspective of the United States, especially during the first Trump administration, a series of unconventional actions of the US government have stunned its traditional allies. Under the guidance of the "America First" concept and in the face of the fact of global warming, the United States is unwilling to set the greenhouse gas emission reduction targets and assume the responsibility of a major country, and withdraw from the Paris Climate Agreement and the Kyoto Protocol. Subsequently, it withdrew from international organizations with important influence in international education, science and technology, culture and health, such as withdrawal from TPP, UNESCO, and WHO. These "withdrawal" anti-globalization actions have attracted wide attention and criticism from the international community, greatly reducing the international reputation of the United States. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Trump administration downplayed the threat of the virus, of which it lost control,leading to huge losses of life; partisan disputes contributed to the severity of quarantine measures, and inadequate public health infrastructure. In addition, the frequent school shootings, racial problems and social inequality have seriously torn the American society apart, and the international community has begun to reflect on the feasibility of the "beacon of democracy". Can it continue to "shine" on all countries in the world? Democracy is part of the American political DNA, and America is seen as the leader of the democratic world. A series of destructive speeches and deeds by the Former President of the United States Trump during his first term and after—in addition to denying the election, attacking the media, threatening retaliation and advocating political violence—render American observers concerned about American democracy "regression", and some scholars have begun to worry about American democracy "death" [1]. The riots on Capitol Hill on January 6,2021, plummeted the international image of the United States as a leader in the democratic world. A tweet by the chairman of the world-renowned Council on Foreign Relations (Council on Foreign Affairs) (Peter Haas), reflects the thoughts of the vast majority of the American elite: " What we see at this moment, I never thought that —— in the United States might happen in other capitals, but not in the United States. People elsewhere in the world will never see, respect, fear or rely on the United States as before. " [2]. Xie Changan [3] interprets the failure of western democracy from the perspective of historical materialism: the biggest characteristic of western capitalist society is to replace power with wealth.

ISSN (Online): 2455-3662
EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR) - Peer Reviewed Journal
Volume: 10| Issue: 12| December 2024|| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2013 || SJIF Impact Factor 2024: 8.402 || ISI Value: 1.188

The West has created a lot of wealth through the process of industrialization and built modern global order through global expansion. The West can dominate the vast majority of global wealth. When the economic foundation of the West changes, and the state as a political community lacks the ability to extract sufficient wealth from society, the economic costs required to sustain a liberal democratic regime cannot be guaranteed, leading to political opposition among different groups, thus resulting in what is known as political decay. Everything is subject to development and change, and the essence of development is that new things replace old ones. The inherent flaws of the American capitalist system are the fundamental cause of America's decline. China's development will not replace America's hegemonic status, but China's rise is inevitable, which is determined by the objective laws of development.

II. THE ADVENT OF A NEW DISCIPLINE

Against the backdrop of the waning international influence of the United States, China needs to steadily advance in various domestic fields and gain a deeper and broader understanding of other countries and regions in foreign relations. This will help the country formulate effective foreign strategic policies, thereby powerfully promoting the high-quality development of foreign affairs. Social existence determines social consciousness, and social consciousness is a reflection of social existence. China's further development requires research on other countries and regions in both breadth and depth, and the regional and country-specific studies with Chinese characteristics are called for. In 2011, the Ministry of Education launched the "National and Regional Studies Cultivation Base" project, and in 2012, 12 national studies cultivation bases were officially approved. In 2015, the Ministry of Education issued the "Interim Measures for the Cultivation and Construction of National and Regional Studies Bases" notice, calling on localities to deeply understand the importance of national and regional studies, actively leverage the advantages of the relevant regions and universities, and strive to provide intellectual support and talent guarantees for the country's reform and development. In 2017, the Ministry of Education issued the "Notice on the Work of National and Regional Studies in 2017", which required higher education institutions to integrate internal resources according to their own development needs and the strategic planning for the internationalization of education, leverage talent advantages, establish national and regional research centers, and focus on strengthening research on countries and regions that are under-researched and urgently needed for national strategy. In recent years, regional and national research centers, as well as various annual meetings, competitions, forums, and other collaborative developments, have sprung up like mushrooms after rain in various universities. In December 2018, the Institute of Regional and National Studies at Peking University was inaugurated. In December 2019, 42 national and regional research cultivation bases approved by the Ministry of Education, and 395 unofficially registered centers, totaling 437 national and regional research institutions, have preliminarily achieved the goal of fully covering every country and region in the world. In 2019, the "University Regional and National Studies Talent Training and Discipline Construction Alliance", initiated by Sun Yat-sen University, has now become the earliest, largest, most influential, and most brand activity in the field of regional and national studies. The alliance has formed 15 sub-projects, including the alliance annual meeting, the China Regional and National Studies 50 Forum, the China Regional and National Studies Youth 50 Forum, the National College Students Regional and National Speech Competition, the National Regional and National Studies Institutes Directors Forum, and the National Regional and National Studies Journals Chief Editors' High-Level Forum, etc., promoting the development of regional and national studies, facilitating exchanges between China and abroad, and international communication. In September 2022, the Academic Degrees Committee of the State Council and the Ministry of Education issued the "Graduate Education Discipline and Specialty Catalogue (2022)", which determined to include regional and national studies in the first-level discipline directory of the 14th interdisciplinary category. This has a landmark significance in the construction of disciplines in the field of social sciences. The inclusion of regional and national studies as a first-level discipline is not only a necessary measure in response to the needs of national strategic development but also provides a good opportunity for higher education to achieve interdisciplinary development and cultivate comprehensive talents to meet the needs of local economic and social development. In the same year, Zhaoqing University officially established the Regional and National Studies Research Center, contributing to the promotion of regional and national studies. Although there will be twists and turns on the path to development, the vigorous development of Chinese regional and national studies demonstrates it is the right step in the right direction. So long as we are full of confidence, Chinese regional and national studies will continue to develop better.

III. THE EXPLORATION OF THE NEW DISCIPLINE

As the saying goes, "lagging behind means getting beaten, and being poor means going hungry." The economic base determines the superstructure, which in turn reacts on the economic base. China has caught up in various fields including the economy, but an international discourse system has not yet been established, and international public opinion remains heavily Western-dominated. As General Secretary Xi Jinping[1] has said, "After the relentless efforts of several generations, the first two problems (getting beaten and going hungry) have been basically resolved, but the problem of 'getting criticized' has not yet been fundamentally solved." The construction of the discipline of regional and national studies cannot be separated from the construction of a discourse system, and the first step in building an international discourse system is to "take the Chinese path", "adopt the Chinese solution" and "go global," gaining more understanding, recognition, and support from the international community. This requires reshaping China's image in the international community, spreading the voice of China's confidence, self-reliance, and self-strengthening, and telling the true vision of China together with people from

[1] *Citation from page 328 of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era: Questions and Answers*

ISSN (Online): 2455-3662
EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR) - Peer Reviewed Journal
Volume: 10| Issue: 12| December 2024|| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2013 || SJIF Impact Factor 2024: 8.402 || ISI Value: 1.188

around the world to build a "community with a shared future for mankind." Objectively speaking, compared to the regional and national studies of Western countries (especially the United States), China's regional and national studies are relatively behind and cannot meet the needs of China, which is experiencing a great change unseen in a century. Of course, the current state of China's regional and national studies is determined by China's national conditions and historical factors. In fact, throughout the century of China's humiliation (1840-1949), there were never a shortage of people with the mission to save and strengthen the nation, represented by the "Reform Movement of 1898" led by Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao, Sun Yat-sen's "Xinhai Revolution," and Lu Xun's abandonment of medicine for literature to awaken national consciousness with his writing. The Communist Party of China brought dawn and hope to the Chinese nation. In the 1980s, China began to implement the reform and opening-up policy, attracting foreign investment, technology, and talent, and subsequently joining the World Trade Organization and other international organizations. These measures were all necessary steps for China to actively move towards the international community and integrate into the world. However, this integration was lopsided and unequal. Fu Ying, the chief expert of the National Global Strategy Think Tank of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, believes that the world order dominated by the United States includes three pillars: first, American or Western values; second, military alliances led by the United States; and third, the United Nations and its subsidiary organizations. This world order has never fully accepted China.Due to differences in political systems, although China has achieved economic success, it has long been excluded politically by the United States. The military alliance led by the United States even poses security pressure on China in the Asia Pacific region[2]. China's achievements have not enhanced its rightful international discourse power. Western countries, led by the United States, often use the pretext of "upholding democracy and freedom" to act as "world police" and interfere in the internal affairs of other countries at will. The slowdown of the Chinese economy has created headlines of 'Chinese economic collapse'; China has lawfully arrested individual "rioters" in Hong Kong, and Western media have reported against the facts and slandered China as a "dictatorship" government under the pretext of "destroying democracy, freedom, and violating human rights". All of this stems from the global hegemonic policy of the United States. China needs to stand on its own and strengthen itself among the nations of the world, and it is even more necessary to accelerate the construction of regional and national studies with Chinese characteristics. There should be innovation in theory and methods, and the content and essence should be different from Western regional studies. The West takes "self" as the center and "others" as the research object. Through political intervention, economic assistance, cultural infiltration, military alliances and other means, it exerts influence on other countries or regions in multiple fields and all directions to maintain and consolidate its world hegemony. The guiding ideology behind it is a zero-sum game formula of 1+(-1)=0. By contrast, China's regional and country studies aim for mutual benefit and a win-win result through reciprocal respect and cooperation, realizing 1+1>2. China's regional national studies should follow a path with Chinese characteristics, which requires the Chinese to follow their own path. Neither should they copy the western regional national studies with colonial rule and the maintenance of hegemony as the core, nor should they deviate from the main path, stay away from the core and lose Chinese characteristics. Building a community with a shared future for mankind, driving the development of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, promoting North-South and South-South cooperation, deepening and accelerating South South cooperation, and achieving global common development and well-being are the original intention and destination of China's regional and country studies.

IV. ENGLISH MAJOR AND THE DISCIPLINE OF AREA STUDIES

The cultivation of English language professionals should closely revolve around the purpose of "serving the strategic national needs" and "benefiting the local economy and society." How does the English language discipline relate to regional and national studies? In fact, the English language discipline has maintained a close connection with regional and national studies for a long time. Regional and national studies are not English literature, not history, not philosophy, and certainly not communication studies; rather, they are an interdisciplinary field that spans industries, professions, and disciplines. For example, regional and national studies involve a Cambodian language teacher collaborating with a life sciences professor who understands biotechnology to research the cultivation techniques of Cambodian fragrant rice. Similarly, a German language expert assisting a Chinese domestic automobile group in penetrating the German market, engaging in activities such as factory establishment, marketing, and sales, is also regional and national studies. The English language discipline involves various fields of English-speaking countries or regions, including politics, economy, culture, history, and society. As a tool, a foreign language can promote researchers' in-depth understanding of the natural, cultural, and historical aspects of the target countries and regions, which in turn can foster the development of regional and national studies. On the other hand, regional and national studies focus on the knowledge of the climate, geography, and society of the target countries or regions, providing a rich content knowledge system for the study of foreign language disciplines, making the development of foreign language disciplines more substantial and vivid. In recent years, many scholars have conducted effective research and exploration on the alignment of English language professional development with national and regional studies. Wang Ying [4] believes that the issue of faculty is the biggest obstacle to cultivating regional and national talents in English language programs. Wang Zhanpeng [5] suggests that the English language and literature of English language programs can work together with traditional humanities and social sciences disciplines such as political science, economics, and history to promote the construction of the regional and national studies discipline system, and the development of regional and

[2] *Citation from Fu Ying's speech at the Royal Institute of International Studies (RIIA) in the UK titled Disorder and Reconstruction of Order*

ISSN (Online): 2455-3662
EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR) - Peer Reviewed Journal
Volume: 10| Issue: 12| December 2024|| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2013 || SJIF Impact Factor 2024: 8.402 || ISI Value: 1.188

national studies will, in turn, nourish the English language discipline. Chang Junyue and Feng Guangwu [6] have analyzed the current state of English language education and regional and national education in China's universities and pointed out the prominent problems in the curriculum settings of English language programs in Chinese universities: overemphasis on language skills and neglect of knowledge acquisition; overemphasis on major countries like the UK and the US and neglect of other smaller countries. Yin Yue [7] based on the actual situation in Henan Province, proposes the concept and feasibility of a diversified foreign language education policy, providing intellectual support and talent guarantees for the "Belt and Road" initiative. Based on this, this thesis focuses on the dilemmas faced by English language professionals in the construction of English language programs at universities in Zhaoqing City in the new era under the background of regional and national studies being upgraded to a first-level discipline, and attempts to explore effective paths for the cultivation of foreign language professionals.

V. THE CURRENT STATUS AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH MAJOR IN LOCAL UNIVERSITIES

The professional development prospects of local colleges and universities serving as powerful engines for promoting national development and social progress are directly related to the development of the local economy and social stability. Against the backdrop of the "Belt and Road" initiative and the national construction of the "Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area," how to develop English majors in ordinary universities is an urgent issue to be addressed. The universality and particularity of contradictions are important contents of dialectical materialism. Each university faces the issue of how to match and adapt the development of English majors with the national development direction and the local socio-economic development, which is the universality of contradictions. However, each specific university's English major has its own actual situation, and when analyzing and solving problems, it is necessary to analyze specific issues specifically, without a one-size-fits-all approach, which is the particularity of contradictions.

1.Talent Cultivation Goal Plan Lagging behind the Reality of Social Development

The English teacher education major in Zhaoqing local universities aims to cultivate English education talents. It still focuses on training teachers with noble teacher ethics, a solid grasp of English subject knowledge, familiarity with Chinese and foreign cultural knowledge, good English proficiency, strong English teaching ability, and certain research and teaching abilities. They should have cross-cultural competence, independent learning ability, critical thinking, and innovative consciousness, and be able to perform English education teaching and educational management in middle schools, educational institutions, and other basic education fields. In recent years, the supply of English major talents has exceeded demand. On the one hand, with the decline in birth rates and marriage rates, the population base will inevitably further shrink, leading to a gradual decrease in the demand for teachers in kindergartens, primary schools, and junior high schools. On the other hand, with the rapid development and popularization of artificial intelligence, translation as a profession faces huge challenges and impacts. Faced with the increasingly severe reality of employment difficulties, English majors should reflect in a timely manner, plan for the long term, base themselves on reality, update and upgrade the existing English major talent cultivation plan, and formulate medium and long-term talent cultivation goals to provide theoretical support for graduates to find employment through multiple channels and in multiple directions. This can meet the current economic development and social stability needs while avoiding a situation where resources are stretched thin when future challenges arise.

2. Curriculum Prioritizing Language Skills Training but Neglecting Knowledge and Cultural Absorption

The core competencies[3] of the English discipline include four dimensions: language ability, cultural awareness, thinking quality, and learning ability. Language ability is the foundation of the English discipline. Cultural awareness helps students enhance national consciousness and cultural confidence. Thinking quality helps cultivate students' creative thinking and critical thinking, improving problem-solving abilities and enabling cross-cultural thinking and judgment. Learning ability helps students manage their learning, develop good study habits, and improve learning efficiency. Currently, due to the need to improve the passing rate of TEM4 (Test for English Majors Band 4) and TEM8 (Test for English Majors Band 8), the curriculum teaching system of local university English majors tends to emphasize language skills training in listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translation, and teachers also focus on improving students' English language skills. However, knowledge-based courses for English majors (solving English problems in English), such as linguistics, British and American literature, and intercultural communication, are all offered in the third year. Since the fourth year faces the tasks of graduation internship and thesis writing, only one year of professional knowledge courses in the third year is far from meeting the learning tasks and graduation requirements of the English major. Secondly, there are fewer Chinese courses set for English majors. While learning foreign languages and cultures, students also need to strengthen their in-depth understanding of Chinese culture. Spreading the Chinese voice requires "telling the Chinese story well." Only by telling the Chinese story well, can the voice of China be better spread, and regional and national studies can be better conducted. Therefore, the curriculum system urgently needs to be restructured, teaching resources optimized, and the hours of English and Chinese knowledge courses increased, achieving simultaneous progress in language skills, knowledge skills, and cross-cultural abilities. Solid language skills can promote the absorption of language knowledge, and the study of professional knowledge can

[3] *Citation from Opinions of the Ministry of Education on Fully Deepening Curriculum Reform and Implementing the Fundamental Task of Moral Education issued by The Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China*

ISSN (Online): 2455-3662
EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR) - Peer Reviewed Journal
Volume: 10| Issue: 12| December 2024|| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2013 || SJIF Impact Factor 2024: 8.402 || ISI Value: 1.188

consolidate language skills. English majors should integrate the language ability, cultural awareness, thinking quality, and learning ability in the goal of cultivating compound foreign language talents, laying a solid foundation in language and knowledge, and preparing thoroughly for regional and national studies and other disciplines.

3. Insufficient Bilingual Teaching Staff

The future demand for versatile talents will inevitably be the direction of social development. Proficiently mastering multiple languages is a necessary ability for English major students, and "second foreign language" or even "third foreign language" learning plays a crucial role in English major courses. From the perspective of regional and national studies with Chinese characteristics, promoting the "Belt and Road" construction will inevitably require foreign language talents who understand the humanities, geography, customs, and other general situations of the countries and regions along the route. The official languages of the five regions covered by the "Belt and Road," including West Asia and Southeast Asia, exceed 40 in number. However, from 2010 to the end of 2018, the languages offered by Chinese university foreign language majors only covered more than 20 of them[8]. In addition to foreign language universities offering various minor languages, many local universities have very limited second foreign language teaching staff for English majors. Except for Japanese teachers, other second foreign languages, such as French and Russian, are also official languages of the United Nations, and there are few teachers of small languages that meet the actual development needs of the local area. With a shortage of teachers, students have no other choices or room for development. This is related to China's language policy. Li Lisheng[11] believes that in the formulation of foreign language education policies, there is a lack of long-term comprehensive planning, a lack of authoritative management and guidance institutions, a single and centralized language setting, and uncoordinated development. More prominent is that the formulation of China's foreign language education policies is often a top-down model, rarely combining the actual different needs of regional economic and social development for talents, and localities have little autonomy in the formulation and implementation of foreign language education policy planning[9]. Because China's language policy is top-down, it is recommended that the state draft and formulate language policies that meet the development requirements of the "Belt and Road," allowing local universities to adjust and optimize talent cultivation plans according to actual conditions, and cultivate versatile talents who are proficient in multiple fields, majors, and regions. It is worth affirming that some local universities have adopted full English teaching in some courses of individual disciplines, but both in terms of quantity and proportion, they are relatively limited. According to the "Data Survey and Statistical Analysis of the Internationalization Development Status of Chinese Key Universities," the number of courses taught entirely in foreign languages accounts for only 2.5%[10] of the total number of courses offered. Local universities need to vigorously introduce bilingual talents that align with the overall national strategic development and meet the needs of local economic and social development. In recent years, various local universities have introduced a large number of highly educated and highly titled talents for the long-term development goals of the school, and the number of teachers has increased, but the number of teachers who can teach entirely in English or in bilingual has not increased. Therefore, we need to address the root cause of the issue rather than the symptoms. The lack of bilingual teaching staff has become a bottleneck for the healthy development of English majors and does not meet the requirements of regional and national studies for foreign language talents. The solution to this problem requires mutual coordination between the central and local governments, pooling wisdom, and finding countermeasures.

4. Weak Awareness of the Complementarity Between English Majors and Other Majors

Regional and national studies are an interdisciplinary field that covers multiple areas such as points, lines, and surfaces. Teachers of various majors need to construct a scientific understanding of regional and national studies. General Secretary Xi Jinping emphasizes that accelerating the construction of a philosophy and social science with Chinese characteristics ultimately means constructing a knowledge system that is independent and owned by China. The construction of regional and national studies involves three major systems: the construction of the discipline system, the construction of the discourse system, and the construction of the academic research system[11]. In the process of constructing these three systems, interdisciplinary approaches should be embodied, breaking down the barriers between disciplines, and first of all, adopting an open, inclusive, and cooperative attitude, from "non-cooperation" to "initiating cooperation," from "little contact" to "more contact" and "frequent contact." Disciplines under the humanities and social sciences, such as philosophy, economics, education, etc., should be connected, and social sciences should also be connected with natural sciences. Of course, this "connection" should be in the true sense to make each discipline complement each other and rely on each other, rather than for the sake of "connection." The scope of the countries and regions under study should be diversified. China has long focused its learning and research on a few major countries such as the United States, Europe, the UK, France, and Australia, neglecting research on small and weak countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Pacific Islands. With China's continuous expansion of opening up, especially the development of the "Belt and Road," the drawbacks of this "knowledge deficit" for the countries and regions along the route have become increasingly apparent. The "Belt and Road" involves more than 60 countries worldwide. Although English, as a common language, can solve communication problems, English is not the native language of many countries along the route. Being proficient in local languages is always better for in-depth understanding of local customs and taboos. Hu Wenzhong [12] attributes some of the reasons for this issue to the deficiencies in the formulation of policies and the setting of language subjects in foreign language education in our country. Specifically, this is manifested in the lack of planning and the singularity of language subjects. Therefore, in terms of research subjects, efforts should be made to cultivate "generalists" in multiple languages, and even more so to cultivate "specialists" in "comprehensive countries," "comprehensive regions," and "comprehensive fields."

ISSN (Online): 2455-3662
EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR) - Peer Reviewed Journal
Volume: 10| Issue: 12| December 2024|| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2013 || SJIF Impact Factor 2024: 8.402 || ISI Value: 1.188

5. Insufficient International Exchange Programs

For English majors to develop well, it is essential to provide teachers and students with platforms to "go global," such as studying and further education abroad, allowing the theoretical knowledge learned in domestic classrooms to be honed and forged. Zhaoqing University has previously engaged in years of faculty and student exchange visits with the University of Bolton in the UK, Anoka-Ramsey Community College, and Edgewood College in the USA, reaping significant benefits. However, due to special reasons, these projects were unfortunately terminated. It is commendable that Zhaoqing University has indeed established a good platform for students to "go global." To expand students' international perspectives and provide more opportunities to study at world-renowned universities, Zhaoqing University recommends the 2025 winter World Renowned Universities Study Abroad Program, including prestigious institutions in the USA and Japan. University has signed an exchange student exchange program agreement with the University of Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia for the fall of 2024. International exchanges are part of regional and national studies, and during these exchanges, faculty and students must not only engage in necessary academic exchanges but also go deep into the local communities of "Belt and Road" countries for field research. A significant advantage of foreign language majors is the ability to communicate in the local language, which not only closes the gap and shortens the psychological distance but also provides a personal experience and true understanding of local humanistic information. A good paradigm for how to specifically conduct field research is *FERDINAND VON RICHTHOFEN TAGEBUCHER AUS CHINA,* which is worth reflecting on and learning from. Additionally, when conducting regional and national studies, one should not forget to tell the story of China well. Telling the story of China is to better conduct regional and national studies. Of course, the story of China can be told not only by Chinese people but also by foreigners. Sometimes, when foreigners tell the story of China well, truthfully, it can achieve twice the result with half the effort. Therefore, in the process of regional and national studies, it is also important to fully utilize the resources of foreign teachers and international students, allowing them to share their genuine experiences of China with the world. Most foreign teachers sign short-term contracts with schools, and they change jobs after working for a year. The author's most profound impression is of the longest-serving Scottish doctorate Paul at Zhaoqing University (due to age reasons, Paul has retired and returned to his home country). Paul enjoys Chinese Tai Chi and could be seen practicing Tai Chi on the sports field every afternoon during his work at Zhaoqing University. The author has also had many conversations with Paul on various topics related to politics, economy, culture, and so on. The overall impression is that Dr. Paul deeply loves Chinese culture, approves of China's economic development model, and feels disappointed and helpless about the stereotypes and prejudices that Westerners hold towards China. To let the world feel the beautiful, harmonious, friendly, and vibrant China, we need more knowledgeable people from abroad like Dr. Paul, to delve deeply into China and convey the most powerful voice of China through personal experiences.

VI. SUMMARY

The development of English majors at local universities in Zhaoqing should start with regional and national studies, integrating with the actual needs of the local economic and social sustainable development. Focusing on students, we should gradually improve the talent cultivation programs, transform teaching concepts, integrate teaching resources, and research interdisciplinary talent cultivation programs that integrate English majors with other disciplines. This will provide a large number of international foreign language talents who are proficient in other languages, possess an international perspective, are capable of practical international exchanges and cooperation, and are able to conduct field research.

Fund Project: This article is a phased research result of the 2024 Quality Engineering and Teaching Reform Project of Zhaoqing University, titled *Research on the Teaching Reform and Practice of Graph Theory in Comprehensive English Curriculum from the OBE Perspective* **(Project Number: zlgc2024076)** and a phased research result of the 2024 Education Research Project of Zhaoqing Education Development Research Institute, titled *Exploration of THIEVES Reading Method in Comprehensive English Reading Curriculum from the OBE Perspective* (**Project Number: ZQJKY2024051).**

REFERENCES

1. *Vanessa Williamson, Understanding Democratic Decline in the United States, Brookings,October17,2023,https://www.brookings.edu/articles/understanding-democratic-decline-in-the-united-states/;Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt, How Democracies Die, New York: Broadway Books, 2019.*
2. *Xie Tao, Decline of American Democracy and Future of Hegemony [J]. International Forum, 2024 (5) : 4-11.*
3. *Xie Chang'an, The Logic of Political Decline in Contemporary Western Countries from the Perspective of Historical Materialism[J]. Journal of Xiamen University(Arts & Social Sciences),2024,73(04):116-125.*
4. *4.Wang Ying, Implementation Path of Ideological and Political Construction in Regional and Country Curriculum for English Major[J]. Journal of Foreign Language Research,2023(04):61-65.*
5. *Wang Zhanpeng, National and Regional Studies and the Expansion of the Disciplinary Identity of English Language and Literature[J]. Foreign Language Teaching and Research,2023,55 (02):297-306.*
6. *Chang Junyue & Feng Guangwu, Promoting Area and Country Education for National External Strategies:On the Development of the Curriculum for Area and Country Education for English Majors in Chinese Tertiary Institutions[J]. Foreign Languages in China, 2017,14 (03) :4-8.*
7. *Yin Yue, Research on He'nan Regional Diversified Policies of Foreign Language Education in the Background of One Belt and One Road[J]. Journal of Zhengzhou University of Light Industry (Social Science Edition),2016,17(03):78-82.*
8. *8.Chen Haiyan, The Implementation of Belt and Road Initiative and the Cultivation of Modern International Talents[J].China Higher Education Research,2017(06) : 52-58.*

ISSN (Online): 2455-3662
EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR) - Peer Reviewed Journal
Volume: 10| Issue: 12| December 2024|| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2013 || SJIF Impact Factor 2024: 8.402 || ISI Value: 1.188

9. *Li Lisheng,On the Necessity of Implementing Locally Diverse Foreign Language Education*
10. *Policy in the Context of Globalization and Regionalization[J].Foreign Languages in China,2011,8(04) :55-59.*
11. *10.Cheng Ying, Zhang Meiyun & Zu Yuanyuan, Statistical Analysis of Indicators of Internationalization for Key Higher Education Institutions in China[J].Journal of Higher Education,2014,35（08）：46-54.*
12. *Chen Zhiyin, A New Chapter on Chinese Philosophy and Social Sciences with Chinese Characteristics[N]. Guangming Daily,2024-9-18.*
13. *Hu Wenzhong,The Gains and Losses of Foreign Language Education Planning in China[J]. Foreign Language Teaching and Research,2001(4) : 245.*