

Exploration of the Interdisciplinary Talent Cultivation Model of “Japanese +” in Guangdong Province’s Universities under the Background of Global Strategy: A Case Study of Zhaoqing University

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Abstract:

Against the backdrop of the continuous deepening of global strategies, Guangdong Province, as the forefront of China’s opening up to the outside world, is facing unprecedented opportunities and challenges for Japanese language majors in various types of universities. This article aims to systematically analyze the inevitability of the construction of new liberal arts and the integration of disciplines, and in combination with the specific ability requirements for compound foreign language talents in the national global strategy, deeply explore the construction path of core literacy for interdisciplinary talents in the Japanese major. Taking Zhaoqing University as an example, through empirical research, the key problems existing in the current interdisciplinary training process of “Japanese +” are revealed, such as the structural imbalance of the curriculum system, the insufficient interdisciplinary teaching ability of teachers, the disconnection between practical teaching and market demand, and the lack of professional attractiveness and the collaborative mechanism of the college. It also puts forward targeted countermeasures and paths such as the reconstruction of the curriculum system, the transformation of the teaching staff, the reform of practical teaching and the optimization of the collaborative mechanism of the college, providing useful references and lessons for the cultivation of “Japanese +” interdisciplinary talents in colleges and universities in Guangdong Province and even the whole country.

Keywords:

National Strategic Demand, Interdisciplinary Talent Training of “Japanese+”, Empirical Research, Innovation and Development of Foreign Language

1. Introduction

With the in-depth advancement of the country’s global strategy and the further implementation of the “Belt and Road Initiative”, China is advancing from a regional

power to a global power, which poses new challenges to the capacity structure of the country's foreign language talents. In the past, skilled talents with only a single language ability are no longer able to meet the increasingly complex world situation and the demands of cross-cultural management. In 2022, "Country and Regional Studies" was directly established as a secondary discipline under the first-level discipline of "Foreign Languages and Literatures". This is a policy orientation from the state, promoting the transformation of the foreign language discipline from a single discipline to an interdisciplinary and diversified one. The release of the "Declaration on the Construction of New Liberal Arts" by the Ministry of Education and other ministries and commissions points out that it is necessary to break through the boundaries of disciplines, deeply integrate "foreign languages +", and cultivate compound talents with a global perspective, cross-cultural communication skills and professional knowledge fields. Under this new situation, due to the window advantage of opening up to the outside world and the geographical location at the intersection of the "Belt and Road Initiative", the current situation of Japanese language majors in colleges and universities in Guangdong Province, which is in line with the training model of "Japanese language teaching", can no longer well meet the needs of social and economic construction in developing countries and localities. There is still a disconnection between the two. However, there are still problems in foreign language universities within the province, such as the mismatch between curriculum design and interdisciplinary requirements, the mismatch between faculty structure and multi-disciplinary background, and the poor cooperation among secondary colleges, which lead to the disconnection between talent cultivation and social demands as well as national development strategies [1]. Therefore, exploring the interdisciplinary talent cultivation model of "Japanese +" in different stypes of universities in Guangdong Province under the global strategy is not only an inevitable requirement for the development of foreign language teachers, but also an important direction guided by national policies.

2. National Strategies and Talent Demands under the Background of New Liberal Arts

2.1. The Inevitability of the Construction of New Liberal Arts and Interdisciplinary Integration

The construction of new liberal arts, as an important direction of China's higher education reform, emphasizes breaking down the barriers of traditional disciplines and promoting the cross-integration of humanities and social sciences with science, engineering, agriculture, medicine and other disciplines to address the complex challenges brought about by globalization and digitalization. Against this backdrop, the Japanese major can no longer merely focus on imparting language skills. It must be deeply integrated with fields such as economics and trade, law, information technology, and international relations to form a cross-disciplinary talent cultivation model of "Japanese +". This integration is not only an inherent requirement for the development of disciplines, but also a realistic response to the ability structure of foreign language talents under the promotion of national strategies. With the in-depth advancement of the "Belt and Road Initiative", Guangdong Province, as a frontier of opening up to the outside world, is increasingly in urgent need of compound talents with Japanese language proficiency and knowledge in related fields [2].

If colleges and universities still adopt the traditional “Japanese language teaching” model, it will be difficult to meet the comprehensive quality requirements of society for talents, leading to a structural disconnection between talent cultivation and employment demands. Therefore, promoting the transformation of the Japanese major from a “single skill-oriented” to a “compound ability-oriented” is an important way to realize the new liberal arts concept and an inevitable path to serve regional development and national strategies. Interdisciplinary integration not only helps enhance students’ comprehensive quality and employment competitiveness, but also benefits universities in optimizing their discipline layout and strengthening their ability to serve economic and social development through education.

2.2. Requirements for the competence of Compound Foreign Language Talents in the national global strategy

The advancement of the country’s global strategy, especially the in-depth implementation of the “Belt and Road Initiative”, has put forward higher and more comprehensive requirements for the ability structure of foreign language talents. Traditional foreign language talents mainly undertake language service work such as translation and teaching. However, in the context of global strategies, foreign language talents need to possess cross-cultural communication skills, regional and country-specific knowledge, professional industry qualities, as well as the ability to handle international affairs. Specifically for Japanese language talents, they not only need a solid foundation in the Japanese language, but also should be familiar with knowledge related to Japanese social culture, economic policies, technological development, etc., and be able to flexibly apply it in specific scenarios such as economic and trade exchanges, technological cooperation, and cultural exchanges. In addition, with the rapid development of the digital economy and artificial intelligence, “Japanese +IT” talents with certain information technology literacy have also become the new darlings of the market. As an important node of the “Belt and Road Initiative”, Guangdong Province has close cooperation with Japan in manufacturing, services, scientific and technological innovation and other fields. There is a particularly prominent demand for compound talents who are proficient in both Japanese and professional knowledge [3]. Therefore, when cultivating Japanese language talents, universities must closely integrate national strategies with local demands, and build a talent cultivation system based on language proficiency, supported by interdisciplinary knowledge, and oriented towards practical ability.

2.3. The transformation trend of the Competency Structure of Foreign Language Talents

With the acceleration of the globalization process and the development of information technology, the ability structure of foreign language talents is undergoing a profound transformation from “single language ability” to “compound comprehensive quality”. In the past, foreign language education focused on the training of basic language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, writing and translation. However, driven by the dual forces of new liberal arts and global strategies, the ability connotations of foreign language talents have been continuously expanding, covering multiple dimensions such as cross-cultural understanding, critical thinking, innovative consciousness and digital literacy. For students majoring in Japanese, they not only need to master Japanese but also possess the ability to solve problems in specific fields such as business, law, technology, and education using

Japanese [4]. This transformation reflects the shift in society's perception of foreign language talents from "instrumental" to "functional" and even "strategic" roles. Colleges and universities must follow this trend and, through means such as curriculum reconstruction, faculty optimization, and practical reinforcement, ultimately establish a three-in-one "Japanese +" talent cultivation mechanism with curriculum, faculty, and practical training as the core content, featuring "curriculum integration - faculty co-construction - practical linkage". Promote the transformation of the Japanese language curriculum model from the traditional "language teaching" to a "professional model that deeply integrates language and professional skills and cultivates students' ability-oriented capabilities", and help China become a discourse power participating in the formulation of global governance rules.

2.4. Construction of Core Competencies for Interdisciplinary Talents in Japanese Major

Building the core literacy of interdisciplinary talents in the Japanese major is a key link to adapt to the construction of new liberal arts and the strategic demands of the country. Core literacy not only includes language proficiency, but also encompasses the ability to integrate interdisciplinary knowledge, cross-cultural communication skills, innovative thinking, and practical problem-solving abilities [5]. Specifically, students majoring in Japanese should possess the following core qualities: First, a solid foundation in the Japanese language and the ability to understand Japanese society and culture; Second, master the basic knowledge and skills of at least one related professional field (such as international economics and trade, law, information technology, tourism management, etc.); The third is to possess the ability to communicate and collaborate effectively in a cross-cultural environment; Fourth, one should be capable of applying knowledge from multiple disciplines to analyze and solve practical problems, and possess a certain sense of innovation and entrepreneurship. To achieve this goal, universities need to break the disciplinary boundaries in their curriculum design and offer integrated courses of "Japanese + major", such as "Japanese Business Negotiation" and "IT Japanese", etc. Introduce "dual-qualified" teachers with interdisciplinary backgrounds in the construction of teaching staff. Strengthen cooperation with enterprises in the practical stage, establish internship bases, and promote project-based learning. Only through systematic and multi-dimensional quality construction can high-quality "Japanese +" interdisciplinary talents that meet global strategic demands be truly cultivated.

3. Empirical Research: The Current Situation of "Japanese +" Interdisciplinary Training Taking Zhaoqing University as an Example

3.1. Research Design and Methods

This study, against the backdrop of global strategy, focuses on the current situation of interdisciplinary talent cultivation in "Japanese +" at Zhaoqing University, a comprehensive local university in Guangdong Province. It adopts an empirical research method centered on questionnaire surveys to systematically examine key issues such as the cultivation structure, ability composition, resource allocation, and student feedback. The research design is centered around a structural questionnaire, aiming to reveal the characteristics and bottlenecks of the current training model through quantitative data and provide a basis for optimizing the path.

Full-time undergraduate students majoring in Japanese at the School of Foreign Languages and Cultures of Zhaoqing University, covering five grades from 2022 to 2025, distributed questionnaires through a census method, and a total of 293 valid questionnaires were retrieved. As a representative of application-oriented undergraduate institutions in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, the Japanese major of this university is actively exploring the “Japanese +” interdisciplinary model, with samples covering parallel classes of all grades, which is highly representative and typical.

The data collection process follows a systematic procedure: Firstly, a questionnaire is designed based on a theoretical framework, with multiple-choice questions as the main type, which is convenient for statistical analysis; Subsequently, the samples were distributed online through the college’s official website and class groups to ensure full coverage. The collection is uniformly carried out through the “Wenjuanxing” platform and completed within the designated time period. Finally, the data was cleaned and organized, invalid questionnaires were eliminated, and 293 valid samples were retained. Data analysis mainly relies on SPSS software for descriptive statistics, summarizing the current situation and problems from aspects such as curriculum setting, ability matching, practical participation, and teacher evaluation, to provide empirical support for subsequent conclusions and suggestions.

To verify the internal consistency reliability of the questionnaire, the author tested the version before its official distribution. Taking Japanese major students as an example, 30 questionnaires were distributed online, and the reliability of the obtained data was analyzed using SPSS software. The data shows that the Cronbach α coefficient of this questionnaire is 0.772, which is greater than the acceptable limit of 0.7, indicating that this questionnaire meets the reliability standard and the test results are relatively stable and effective.

Table 1. Results of Cronbach’s reliability analysis.

Reliability analysis		
Number of items	Sample size	Cronbach's α coefficient
22	30	0.772

3.2. Basic Information of the Survey Sample and Analysis of Main Problems

The distribution of the survey subjects across different grades is relatively balanced (the number of students from grades 21 to 25 is between 51 and 65), and the data covers the entire student population from lower grades to higher grades, demonstrating good representativeness. Among the students surveyed, approximately four in ten (40.3%) entered the Japanese major with no prior knowledge, and about two in ten (25.6%) had studied for less than a year with no prior knowledge. This indicates that the subsequent courses need to take into account the different learning needs of students with no prior knowledge and those with prior knowledge. When incorporating the “Japanese +” interdisciplinary course into the curriculum system, it is necessary to take into account the learning foundation of students with no background in a second foreign language or even those who speak minor languages. More than half (68.9%) of the surveyed students have spent seven semesters studying at school. Therefore, sufficient time has been reserved for concentrated study in the senior grades and the in-depth introduction and implementation of the “Japanese +” interdisciplinary course.

Table 2. *Statistics on the Basic Information of Survey Samples.*

Item	Options	Number of Respondents
Grade:	Class of 2021	61
	Class of 2022	65
	Class of 2023	56
	Class of 2024	51
	Class of 2025	62
Duration of Japanese study before entering university:	Beginner (no prior experience)	118
	Less than 1 year	75
	1-2 years	53
	2-3 years	35
	More than 3 years	12
Focused study period at university (excluding internships):	6 semesters	41
	7 semesters	202
	8 semesters	50
	Other (please specify)	0

3.3. Analysis of the Current Situation of Curriculum, Faculty, Practice and Collaborative Mechanism

3.3.1. Structural imbalance in the curriculum system, presenting a pattern of “fragmentation” and “platformization”

Survey data shows that there is a serious temporal misalignment and insufficient systematicness in the curriculum design. 74.1% of interdisciplinary courses are offered in the first to fourth semesters, during which students have a weak foundation in Japanese and find it difficult to effectively absorb professional knowledge. In terms of the number of courses, 60.7% of the students reported that only 1 to 4 related courses were offered, making it impossible to build a coherent knowledge system. More importantly, the degree of course integration is low. 57.7% of the courses are entirely taught by Japanese teachers of the same major, resulting in as many as 75.1% of students believing that the teachers “cannot effectively combine Japanese with cross-disciplinary knowledge”, and 55.3% of students feeling that “the connection points of knowledge are vague”. The courses show a tendency of “patchwork” where “language” and “major” are simply combined.

3.3.2. The severe insufficiency of interdisciplinary teaching capabilities among the faculty has become the core bottleneck for the transformation

The teaching staff is the biggest shortcoming of the current reform. Data shows that students’ satisfaction with teachers’ personal qualities is acceptable (totaling 70.3%), but their evaluation of their interdisciplinary teaching ability is extremely low, with only 2.0% of students believing that teachers “mostly possess” this ability. The problem is specifically reflected in the fact that 77.5% of the students pointed out that the teacher “only focuses on the output of the Japanese language and neglects the logical explanation of cross-disciplinary knowledge”. 75.1% of the students believe that teachers “are not familiar with the industry demands and job standards across different professional fields, and the teaching content is disconnected from practical applications.” This profoundly reveals the common predicament that traditional language teachers face in their interdisciplinary transformation in terms of knowledge structure, industry experience and teaching methods.

3.3.3. Practical teaching is significantly disconnected from market demands, and student participation is low

Although 80.9% of the students confirmed that the school provided a practical platform, 48.8% of them thought that the platform “existed but was few”. The data on practical participation rate confirms the scarcity of resources: only 30.4% of students have participated in interdisciplinary practices multiple times, while the combined proportion of those who have not participated and those who want to participate but have no opportunity is as high as 24.9%. This indicates a huge gap between the supply of practical opportunities and the urgent needs of students. Meanwhile, 79.2% of the students’ career plans have covered interdisciplinary fields, but among them, 41.0% of the students “have not yet clarified their direction”, reflecting that practical teaching has failed to effectively help students connect with and clarify the specific job demands of emerging markets such as the digital economy and technical translation.

3.3.4. Insufficient professional appeal and the absence of a collaborative mechanism within the college

The investigation has revealed deeper systemic contradictions. Firstly, the quality of the student source for the major is facing challenges. As high as 88.4% of the students’ first choice is not a Japanese major, which poses a potential threat to their professional identity and learning initiative. Secondly, the cooperation among colleges is not smooth. Only 28.3% of the students are “very familiar” with the situation of cross-disciplinary cooperation. However, students have a strong willingness for reform. 75.4% of the students support in-depth cross-college cooperation and list “the school’s resource input” (48.5%) and “the systematicness of cross-disciplinary courses” (45.0%) as the most important success factors, highlighting the current substantial deficiency in resource integration and top-level design.

4. Problem Countermeasures and Optimization Paths

4.1. Curriculum System Reconstruction: From Fragmentation to Systematization

In response to the fragmentation and summarization of the curriculum system, it is necessary to reconstruct the training program based on the framework of “language foundation + professional modules + ability expansion”. Extend interdisciplinary courses to higher grades to ensure that students have a solid foundation in Japanese before engaging in professional integration learning, thus forming a two-way empowerment of “progressive language proficiency + deepening of professional knowledge”. Secondly, interdisciplinary bridging courses should be added. For instance, guiding courses such as “Japanese Economy” and “International Finance” should be offered in lower grades to help students establish a professional cognitive framework. In the senior grades, practical courses such as “Japanese + Major” case analysis and industry simulation training are added to enhance the ability to integrate knowledge. In addition, it is necessary to break the model of simply superimposing “language” and “professional” courses, and develop truly integrated courses to enable students to truly apply the knowledge they have learned to practice [6]. For instance, the “International Business Negotiation” course can simultaneously train the language application ability in business scenarios and cross-cultural communication skills, while the “International Trade Practice” course can combine the core vocabulary of business Japanese with the analysis of the business operation system of Japanese

enterprises. Through modular and progressive course design, a three-dimensional course system of “basic layer - integration layer - expansion layer” is formed to solve the problem of fragmented knowledge.

4.2 Transformation of the teaching staff: From a single-language type to an interdisciplinary dual-teacher type

The transformation of teaching staff is the core driving force for promoting the interdisciplinary training of “Japanese +”. In response to the current issue of insufficient interdisciplinary capabilities among teachers, it is necessary to establish a three-dimensional teacher development mechanism featuring “internal training + external recruitment + school-enterprise collaboration”.

Firstly, implement the project to enhance the capabilities of teaching staff and promote the transformation of teachers through the model of “enterprise secondation + interdisciplinary research and training”. For instance, teachers are required to participate in practical activities in economic and trade as well as IT enterprises to accumulate industry experience. At the same time, “dual-qualified” teachers should be introduced, and priority should be given to recruiting teachers with interdisciplinary backgrounds or practical experience in enterprises, in order to alleviate the problem of “insufficient professional depth” among existing teachers. Secondly, a cross-college collaboration mechanism should be established, and a joint teaching and research group composed of the Japanese Language College and the colleges of Economics and Trade, History, etc. should be set up. Cooperation should be deepened through forms such as “joint teaching” and “co-construction projects” [7]. In addition, a cross-disciplinary resource platform should be established to integrate teaching resources such as case libraries and textbooks, in order to address the issue of limited teaching effectiveness caused by the “lack of supporting resources”. By taking multiple measures, a cross-disciplinary dual-qualified teaching staff with strong language skills, profound professional qualities and rich industry experience will be gradually formed.

4.3. Practical Teaching Reform: From Disconnection to Alignment with Industry Demands

The reform of practical teaching should be oriented towards industry demands and build a progressive system of “basic practice - professional practice - comprehensive practice”. Strengthen the basic practical links, offer courses such as “Japanese Pronunciation Training” and “Japanese Conversation” for lower grades, and consolidate the language foundation through forms such as role-playing and Japanese short play performances. Deepen professional practice and design modular practical projects of “Japanese + Major” for senior students. For instance, cooperate with cross-border e-commerce enterprises to carry out “Japanese Live-streaming Sales Training”, allowing students to apply interdisciplinary knowledge in real working scenarios. Secondly, build a “demand-oriented” practice system, and jointly develop targeted internship programs such as “Japanese + Business” and “Japanese +IT” with enterprises to ensure the matching degree between practical positions and career plans. Moreover, a “dual-mentor” guidance mechanism has been established, where Japanese language teachers and enterprise experts jointly design practical tasks. For instance, the “localization engineering” standards are integrated into technical translation practices, and the “cross-cultural negotiation” scenario is embedded in business practices. In addition, students are encouraged to obtain professional certificates such as the “Japanese Business Proficiency Test (BJT)” and the

“Translation Qualification Certificate” to enhance their employment competitiveness. Through systematic reform, the transformation of practical teaching from “simulated environment” to “real workplace” and from “single language training” to “compound ability cultivation” should be achieved.

5. Conclusions

This study takes Zhaoqing University as an empirical sample and systematically analyzes the practical predicaments and optimization paths of “Japanese +” interdisciplinary talent cultivation in local universities under the background of global strategy. In response to core issues such as low curriculum integration, a single faculty structure, and the disconnection between practical teaching and the market, a collaborative training model centered on “systematic curriculum reconstruction, construction of dual-qualified teachers, and demand-oriented practice” has been proposed. This model aims to achieve a deep integration of language skills and professional knowledge, effectively enhancing the career adaptability and international competitiveness of talents.

Based on this conclusion, subsequent research can further explore classified and differentiated “Japanese +” training paradigms in light of the different positioning and resource endowments of characteristic universities, foreign language universities and comprehensive universities in Guangdong Province, providing theoretical and practical references for finding a new interdisciplinary foreign language talent cultivation path that suits the characteristics of different universities and serves regional strategies.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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