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On Construction of a Four-Pillar Talent Development Framework for International Business English Major

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Abstract

Amid the complex global business landscape shaped by initiatives like the Belt and Road and the rise of digital trade, there is an urgent demand for compound international business English talents. This study addresses the drawbacks of current talent training, such as homogenized objectives and disconnected theory and practice, and constructs a four-pillar talent training mode. Centered on four core competencies (English knowledge and competence, business knowledge and competence, information literacy and competence, professionalism and career competence), the mode optimizes training objectives, curriculum systems, teaching methods, faculty teams, and career support. It also establishes a diversified evaluation mechanism to realize closed-loop improvement. This study provides a practical framework for cultivating high-quality international business English talents, bridging the gap between academic education and industry needs.

Keywords

Four-Pillar Talent Training Mode, Business English Major, English Knowledge and Competence, Business Knowledge and Competence, Information Literacy and Competence, Professionalism and Career Competence,

1.Research Background

Increasingly complex business environment, such as vigorous development of the Belt and Road Initiative and cross-border e-commerce, growing integration of the global economy and the advancement of digital trade, have generated a compound demand for high-level, innovative, and versatile international business English talents, who are expected to possess not only advanced language proficiency but also cross-cultural communication skills and expertise in digital business practices. However, the current education system faces several issues that require innovative and reformative approaches based on sound principles and models.

2.Major Existing Problems

2.1Homogenized Training Objectives and Low Curriculum-Demand Alignment

Existing training objectives show little distinction from other English major specializations, tending toward

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homogeneity. The traditional business English training model, which emphasizes "language over business" and "theory over practice", is difficult to meet the demand. The previous curriculum may not adequately align with the practical demands of international business, resulting in a mismatch between graduate skills and corporate needs.

2.2 Limited Teaching Resources and Insufficient Faculty with Practical Experience

Educational institutions lack sufficient teaching resources, such as modern instructional facilities and international business case databases. Faculty members often lack hands-on experience in international business, limiting their ability to provide genuine industry insights and guidance[6]. Students, in turn, lack practical operational and international business experience, which undermines their competitiveness in the job market. [2]

2.3 Inadequate Career Planning and Superficial University-Industry Integration

Students may not receive sufficient guidance and assistance in career planning and employment preparation. Cooperation between universities and enterprises often remains superficial in both form and content, lacking depth and substantive engagement. [4]

3. Definition of Core Concepts

3.1 English Knowledge and Competence: The Cornerstone of Intercultural Communication

This dimension transcends traditional general English teaching, focusing on specific language use in business contexts. It includes: the ability to use English accurately, appropriately, and effectively in specific scenarios such as negotiations, presentations, reports, and correspondence; the critical ability to interpret and construct business discourses; and deep intercultural awareness and adaptability to navigate cultural differences in global teamwork [5].

3.2 Business Knowledge and Competence: The Cognitive Core of Professional Practice

This dimension ensures students gain a systematic theoretical understanding of core areas of international business operation (e.g., international trade, marketing, finance, management, international business law). The focus is on transforming knowledge into the ability to solve practical business problems, including business analysis, strategic thinking, market evaluation, risk management, basic financial decision-making.[6]

3.3 Information Literacy and Competence: The Enabling Engine for the Digital Age

This dimension is crucial in the era of the digital economy. It encompasses: the ability to utilize digital tools and platforms (e.g., big data analytics software, CRM systems, cross-border e-commerce platforms) for market research, customer management, and business operations; the ability to effectively filter, evaluate, integrate, and present multimodal business information; and the understanding and application of emerging trends such as digital trade, social media marketing, and business intelligence. This serves as the key bridge

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connecting language, business, and modern technology.

3.4 Professionalism and Career Competence: The Vital Safeguard for Sustainable Development

This dimension focuses on students' comprehensive soft skills and professional ethics. It includes: professional ethics, integrity, and social responsibility; teamwork, leadership, and project management skills; lifelong learning ability and adaptability; and clear career planning awareness and personal brand management. [3] This ensures graduates can not only secure "employment" but also achieve high-quality "career development," becoming responsible business practitioners.

4. Core Construction of the Four-Pillar Mode

4.1 Training Objective Reconstruction: Four-aspect Competence Orientation

This study tends to reconstruct the training objectives, consisting of four-aspect competence such as English knowledge and competence, business knowledge and competence, information literacy and competence, professionalism and career competence.

Professional language knowledge and competence dimension focuses on "accurate and appropriate communication and efficient expression in business contexts". It emphasizes the professional adaptability and cross-cultural adaptability of language.[5]

Talents of international business major are expected to systematically master the core terminology systems in fields such as international trade, international finance, and cross-border e-commerce, and proficiently identify and apply business stylistic features in oral and written business communication. They are supposed to achieve fluent application of "listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translating" in typical business scenarios; be able to accurately capture key terms and potential demands in business negotiations; clearly elaborate on business plans and effectively resolve cross-cultural communication conflicts; quickly and accurately understand professional texts such as international financial statements and trade agreements; independently complete standardized documents such as cross-border contracts and various reports; achieve conversion of business documents, balancing professional accuracy and cultural adaptability so as to avoid business risks caused by language and cultural differences.

Business knowledge and competence dimension centers on constructing "full-chain practical" business competence objectives and the breaks the fragmented teaching dilemma of business knowledge and forms progressive objectives of "theoretical cognition - process mastery - practical implementation".

Through the study, it is expected to construct a complete knowledge framework covering international trade practice, international finance, cross-border e-commerce operation, cross-cultural management, and international business law, and clarify the logical connections between various modules. Students should possess practical competence in key links of the entire international business chain. Moreover, they are supposed to put forward reasonable suggestions for international business activities based on business data and market trends, analyze and solve international business problems[6].

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Information literacy and competence dimension adapts to "data-driven and intelligent" trend of international business in the digital economy, and takes "information tool application - data processing and analysis - information security and compliance" as the main objective line.

Talents are expected to achieve proficiency in using common digital tools for international business — communication tools, data analysis tools and operation tools. They should possess the ability to collect, analyze, and apply business big data —obtain market data through international databases, use data analysis models to explore the consumption characteristics of target markets, and provide data support for cross-border e-commerce product selection and international marketing strategy formulation. They should also be aware of information security and ensure the compliance of business information collection, storage, and use, and avoid information security risks.

Professional literacy and competence dimension focuses on sustainable career development capabilities and forms a three-dimensional objective of "ethical bottom line - professional skills - development potential"[6].

Talents are expected to establish a firm awareness of integrity in international business, strictly abide by international trade rules and business ethics, and eliminate behaviors such as commercial fraud and false advertising; respect the business ethics norms of different countries. They should possess strong cross-border team collaboration capabilities, stress resistance, and time management capabilities. It’s better if they form a sense of lifelong learning, actively track international business policies, technological changes, continuously update the knowledge system, and adapt to the dynamic changes of the international business environment.

It is necessary to emphasize that the these four dimensions do not exist independently, but form a logical chain of "basic support - core application - technical empowerment - literacy guarantee": English ability is the basic carrier to ensure the accurate transmission of business information; business knowledge is the core content to clarify the scenario and goal of language application; information literacy is the technical empowerment to improve the efficiency and accuracy of business activities; professional literacy is the guarantee to ensure the compliance and sustainability of business behaviors.

4.2 Curriculum System Design: Modular Integration

The curriculum system is the core carrier for the implementation of the Four-Pillar mode. It is necessary to break the traditional predicament of separation between language and business, and disconnection between theory and practice. Thus a modular curriculum system should be constructed. Each module is relatively independent yet deeply interconnected, and through the hierarchical design of "foundation layer - integration layer - practical layer", a closed-loop training from knowledge input to ability cultivation is realized. [1]

English knowledge and competence module may include courses like series of Business English Listening, Speaking, Intensive Reading, Extensive Reading, Writing, Translation (from primary levels to advanced levels); Cross-cultural business communication.

Business knowledge and competence module may include courses like Introduction to International Business, International Trade and Practice, Economics, Fiance, Business Management, Business Laws and Regulations, Business Negotiation, Cross-Border E-Commerce Operation.

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Information literacy and competence module may include courses like Fundamentals of Computer Application, Basic Data Statistics.

Professional literacy and competence module may include course like Business Ethics and Legal Basics, Career Planning and Development.

It is necessary to note that these courses are divided into three layers and are carried out in different terms in students' lives. Accordingly, different colleges and universities may choose different courses under the guidance and principles of modular integration in curriculum system design.

The foundation layer focuses on the core knowledge input of the four dimensions, laying a foundation for subsequent integrated application. The curriculum setup balances international universality and professional pertinence.

Integration layer courses are the core feature of the "Four-Pillar" model. Through cross-dimensional integration of "language + business + information + literacy", scenario-based integrated courses are created to solve the limitations of single-course ability training. Courses are oriented to "real business tasks", taught in bilingual or full English, and some courses embed international certification knowledge points. [5]

Practical layer courses focus on "achievement output", and through project-based and case-based teaching, link the real needs of enterprises to realize the comprehensive application and improvement of four-dimensional competence. The curriculum setup is deeply connected with international professional scenarios and certification standards, enhancing students' international employment competitiveness.

4.3 Teaching Mode Innovation: Scenario-Based Empowerment

To better achieve the teaching objectives, teachers are encouraged to integrate the required knowledge, skills and qualities into several related and progressive modules, which are connected by business scenarios, to ensure that students learn a bit, master a bit, and apply a bit.[5]

Business language foundation module breaks through "mute Business English" and master accurate expressions in several high-frequency business scenarios, such as quotation letters, meeting minutes, negotiation opening remarks, etc. Systematically, these scenarios are roughly divided into foreign trade process (inquiry - offer - counter-offer - contract signing), enterprise operation (meetings - reports - recruitment - training), and customer maintenance (reception - follow-up - complaint handling). This aims to advance in sync with the practical business skills module, transforming language learning from memorizing words and practicing sentence patterns to learning expressions to complete business tasks.

Practical business skills module may largely be divided into Foreign Trade, Foreign Trade Documents and Following Group, Cross-Border E-Commerce Group, and Business Reception Group according to position requirements. Students form groups voluntarily, and each group focuses on one professional skill first and then they can switch their groups and tasks. For each specific program in these modules, a complete circle of assignments are designed before class, in class and after class. Before class, students are assigned small business tasks to better prepare them for the coming in-class assignments. In class, teachers focus on group mutual evaluation and analysis with emphasis on correction of some mistakes and appropriateness the pro-

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gram. After class, teachers make detailed comments and summary of students' assignments and prepare for development of programs in next round.

Information knowledge and competence module takes information acquisition and screening as the basis and try to form a closed loop via classroom, campus, and off-campus scenarios. In this module, teachers may adopt a three-stage system using the form of mini-lecture, module-specific and scenarios and projects. Teachers may divide the projects into several stages and smaller tasks, such as information retrieval in both languages to achieve multi-channel, high-precision and cross-language; effectively classifying information and standardizing statistics of data in combination with business scenarios; using logical analysis and professional knowledge to extract business insights from data; using data visualization tools to convert analyzed business data into clear tables, trend charts, bar charts, etc; choosing appropriate presentation forms according to business scenario needs.

Career development literacy module tends to cultivate core workplace literacy, such as business etiquette, cross-cultural communication, and team collaboration and stimulate students' entrepreneurial awareness and master the core logic of low-cost entrepreneurship. Practically, teachers may take cross-border e-commerce small projects as the carrier, decompose the four entrepreneurial links of product selection - pricing - promotion - after-sales service.

Teachers may invite some enterprises regularly to share real workplace stories in a combination of online and offline methods, such as how to deal with cultural taboos of foreign customers and etiquette details in business emails. Teachers may also jointly create business scenarios with staffs in enterprises and students form groups to play roles, solve problems in English, and focus on assessing communication logic, etiquette norms and emotional management. It is also practical to require students to have a business dressing day once a month, and add detailed training such as business handshake and business card exchange in class to cultivate professional habits. All the above-mentioned methods try to integrate practical business skills, language proficiency, and workplace literacy into entrepreneurial ability, realizing the aim of applying what has been learned.

More importantly, a two-week training program may be deliberately designed to integrate comprehensive business English skills in some core courses, such as International Business, International Trade, etc. This acts as the integration carrier. In this program, teachers use mock cross-border software and program to help students carry out all the full-chain operations of cross-border e-commerce, so that they can apply what they learn earlier in previous modules into practice, enhance their comprehensive skills and qualities, cultivate their team spirit and may possibly help them have deeper understanding of the future career development.

4.4 Faculty Team Construction: Dual-Qualification Cultivation

The faculty team serves as the core pillar of talent cultivation in the business English major, and their professional literacy and practical capabilities directly determine the quality of talent training. Building a "dual-qualification" faculty team with solid language teaching competence and rich practical business experience is a key path to connecting classroom teaching with industry needs and cultivating compound business English talents, which requires systematic construction through the two-way efforts of in-school training and off-campus intellectual introduction. [5]

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A regular mechanism for temporary enterprise postings may be established, with 3-5 core backbone teachers selected each year to take full-time temporary positions in leading foreign trade enterprises and benchmark cross-border e-commerce companies for 3-6 months. They are fully involved in core business links such as international order negotiation, overseas market expansion, cross-border logistics coordination, and foreign trade document preparation to accumulate first-hand practical business experience. Simultaneously, a hierarchical and classified professional training system may be built, organizing teachers to participate in national-level research seminars on improving business English teaching capabilities, cross-border e-commerce industry qualification certification training, and collaborating with industry associations to develop customized training courses. These courses focus on the dual improvement of "English language proficiency + practical business skills", ensuring that teachers possess both solid language teaching foundations and cutting-edge business industry knowledge.

Furthermore, standards for the introduction and management of part-time teachers may be formulated to accurately recruit some high-quality and off-campus faculty resources as part-time teachers or counselors, such as regional executives of multinational enterprises, senior foreign trade practitioners, and international business negotiation experts. They may be required to have more than 5 years of practical experience in cross-border business and outstanding English communication skills. Part-time teachers participate in curriculum system design, teach practical courses such as Cross-border E-commerce Practice and International Business Negotiation, and regularly deliver full-English practical lectures covering cutting-edge topics such as overseas market risk avoidance, cross-border payment operation skills, and international business etiquette norms. They also guide students in practical training on real enterprise projects, achieving seamless connection between classroom teaching and industry practice.

4.5 Career development support: seamless full-cycle system

It is expected to build a full-cycle career development support system covering "in-school cultivation - graduation connection - career tracking" to facilitate the seamless transition of students from campus to workplace. The cultivation of professionalism and career competence must span all four undergraduate years, forming a full-cycle system of "Enlightenment - Exploration - Preparation - Transition." [3] Teachers aim to help establish professional awareness and preliminary career planning through seminars and industry lectures, facilitate career assessments, company visits, and short-term workshops linked to course modules to explore individualized development paths, deeply refine professional skills and employability through integrative projects, preparation for industry certifications, and mock interview workshops.

Teachers may focus on career capability improvement, offer special training courses for authoritative professional qualification certificates such as BEC (Business English Certificate) and TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication), and assign senior teachers to provide examination guidance and practical training in business scenarios to strengthen students' core competitiveness in job hunting; set up a professional career guidance center, regularly carry out special training on resume optimization, business English interview skills, workplace etiquette, etc., and provide personalized career planning suggestions combined with the development trends of cross-border e-commerce and foreign trade industries; build an alumni resource connection platform, integrate high-quality alumni enterprise resources, and provide students with internship referrals, full-time position recommendations and industry dynamic information sharing services; establish

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a graduate career development tracking mechanism, collect employment data and post competency requirements through regular research and industry feedback, and dynamically adjust talent training programs and curriculum settings to ensure that teaching content is accurately matched with market demands.

5. Evaluation Mechanism: Diversified and Internationally Oriented

The evaluation system establishes multi-dimensional criteria centered on the "Four-Pillar" competencies. It covers the four key dimensions: English communication, business practice, digital application, and professionalism. The system ensures strict alignment between evaluation content and training objectives, enabling the precise assessment and valid verification of the cultivation outcomes of the "four-aspect competence." A dynamic implementation process is designed where multiple evaluation methods and agents work in synergy. It integrates performance assessment, formative assessment, summative assessment, and third-party assessment, correspondingly engaging faculty, students, intelligent platforms, enterprises and/or organizations as multiple evaluating agents. The synergy between diverse methods and agents forms a comprehensive, objective, and dynamic evaluation network that spans the entire talent cultivation cycle.

It tries to establish a dynamic “Evaluation-Diagnosis-Improvement” cycle mechanism. It all starts with collecting multi-source evaluation data, and then analyzes competency gaps, curriculum effectiveness, and teaching mode issues, generating diagnostic reports for individuals and groups for further improvement.

Targeted Intervention:

For Students: Provide personalized competency enhancement suggestions and push relevant learning resources.

For Faculty: Provide feedback on teaching effectiveness and guide the development of "dual-qualification" capabilities.

For Curriculum & Model: Offer empirical evidence for adjusting modular courses and optimizing scenario-based teaching.

Social Feedback Loop: Continuously feed employer evaluations and industry trend analysis back into the training objective reconstruction and curriculum system design phases to ensure the forward-looking nature of education.

6. Conclusion

This study addresses the prominent problems in current talent training, such as homogenized objectives, inadequate practical teaching, and superficial university-industry integration, and constructs a systematic Four-Pillar talent training mode. Centered on the four core competencies of English, business, information literacy and professionalism and career, the mode optimizes the entire training system from training objectives, curriculum design, teaching methods, faculty construction to career support, and establishes a diversified evaluation mechanism with a closed-loop improvement function. This mode effectively breaks the traditional separation of language and business teaching, enhances the alignment between talent cultivation and industry needs, and provides a practical and operable framework for cultivating high-quality, innovative, and versatile

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international business English talents. Future research can further explore the dynamic optimization of the mode in combination with regional industrial characteristics and technological development trends to better adapt to the evolving demands of the international business environment.

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