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A Study on the Demand and Training Pathways for Cross-Border English Livestreaming Talents in the Blind Box Industry in Dongguan City

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Abstract: The rapid rise of cross-border e-commerce live streaming has spawned a highly specialized new composite role: the cross-border English live streamer. As a core manufacturing hub responsible for nearly 85% of China's total trendy toy production capacity, the blind box industry in Shipai town, Dongguan, Guangdong province, currently faces a severe structural shortage of qualified talent. The fundamental crux of this issue is a structural mismatch between existing talent supply and specific job competency requirements—specifically, a significant gap between merely "being able to speak English" and "being able to livestream in English effectively." This paper focuses on the essential core competency transformation required for cross-border English live streamers: moving from basic English language proficiency to strategic English utilization in sales engagement, cross-cultural communication, and ultimate sales conversion. Based on an in-depth diagnosis of the unique characteristics of blind box product live streaming and five core job competencies, this study systematically constructs a comprehensive cultivation plan. This proposed plan features two key curriculum modules, including specialized "English Application Training in Live Streaming Contexts," alongside a three-tier progressive practical training system and a multi-faceted process-oriented evaluation mechanism. Furthermore, a tripartite collaborative cultivation operation model involving a "University-Enterprise-Industry Association" partnership is designed. This innovative framework aims to shift the traditional teaching logic from the mere accumulation of disciplinary knowledge to the targeted generation of job-specific competencies, thereby providing a highly practical paradigm for local universities to precisely serve regional characteristic industries.

Keywords: cross-border e-commerce; live streaming; english education; talent cultivation; blind box

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1. Introduction

Research Background and Problem Statement: In the era of the digital economy, cross-border e-commerce and live streaming e-commerce are rapidly integrating. According to the China New E-commerce Development Report, China's cross-border e-commerce import and export volume reached 2.63 trillion yuan in 2024, a year-on-year increase of 10.8%. The penetration rate of live streaming e-commerce rose from 4.9% in 2019 to 37.8% in 2024. In April 2026, six ministries, including the Ministry of Commerce, jointly issued a document proposing innovative overseas channels like "National Pavilion + Live streaming" and urging enterprises to enhance their localization capabilities. Cross-border live streaming has thus evolved from a supplementary marketing tool into a strategic pathway for accessing global markets [1].

Shipai, Dongguan, is the core hub of China's trendy toy (also called art toy) industry [2]. Nearly a quarter of the world's anime derivatives and nearly 85% of China's trendy toys are manufactured in Dongguan; Shipai Town alone accounts for approximately 30% of the city's total trendy toy output value. By 2024, the total output value of the trendy toy

industry cluster in Shipai Town reached 15.506 billion yuan. Blind box products, characterized by strong IP attributes, high emotional added value, and inherent content demonstrability, are highly compatible with the cross-border live streaming medium.

Blind box products and cross-border live streaming are a natural fit. The core consumer logic of blind boxes lies in the "surprise brought by uncertainty" and the "emotional experience of the unboxing moment," making them a live streaming category with immense content display value. However, this very product specificity dictates that the demands placed on live streamers for blind boxes are far higher than those for general merchandise. The streamer must vividly present the blind box's IP story in English on camera, precisely create a suspenseful atmosphere during unboxing, flexibly respond to audience inquiries about the probability of obtaining a "secret/hidden" figurine, and effectively convert viewers' impulsive desire for "one more box." This ability to "sell emotion and surprise in English" constitutes the core competency of cross-border live streaming talent in the blind box industry. The cross-border English live streaming role requires not merely the ability to "speak English," but the integrated capability to use English to articulate product value, connect with overseas consumers' emotions, and facilitate instant transaction conversion in real-world live streaming scenarios [3]. Talent cultivation for e-commerce live streaming in higher education commonly suffers from issues such as lagging curricula, weak practical components, and superficial university-enterprise collaboration. Similarly, research indicates a prominent contradiction in cultivating composite talents for cross-border e-commerce: "What schools teach, enterprises don't need; what enterprises need, schools can't teach." This disconnect between "composite job demands" and "singular talent supply" is particularly acute in the niche area of cross-border blind box live streaming, forming the core problem of this paper.

2. Job Competency Requirements

2.1. An Analysis of the Unique Characteristics of Live Streaming for Blind Box Products

Blind boxes differ from general commodities, presenting three specific challenges for live stream sales. First, the implicit nature of product value. Consumers do not know the exact item they are purchasing. This means the streamer cannot merely describe the product's appearance and function. Instead, they must construct the "value of anticipation" through language, convincing consumers that the unknown itself is worth paying for. Second, emotionally driven consumption motives. Blind box consumption heavily relies on IP identification, the achievement of completing a series, and a sense of community belonging. The streamer needs to convey the designer's philosophy, character stories, and the scarcity appeal of the "secret" figurine in English. Third, the instantaneity of the conversion point. The purchase decision in blind box live streaming is extremely short, often triggered impulsively at the "unboxing moment." The streamer must use precise language within seconds to heighten the audience's emotions to a peak, completing the critical conversion from viewing to ordering.

2.2. Diagnosis of Core Job Competencies

English narrative competency in blind box live streaming contexts is the competency most emphasized by enterprises across various relevant materials. The "standardized expression" ability cultivated in traditional foreign trade English or Business English programs often fails to meet the unique demands of blind box live streaming [4]. The streamer needs to transform "opening this box" into an emotional experience full of suspense and anticipation in English. Enterprises report that graduates' biggest shortfall is not their foundational English, but their inability to create atmosphere and convey emotions through language during live streams. The essence of blind box live streaming is "selling surprise," and the core narrative task is using English to push the audience's emotions to a peak at the moment of unboxing.

The ability to cross-culturally convey the blind box IP story is a specific requirement that distinguishes the blind box category from general goods [5]. The core value of blind box products is attached to IP characters and story systems, and IP stories are deeply

culturally rooted. Cross-border marketing professionals must possess the ability to adjust communication strategies based on the cultural characteristics of different target markets. Possessing only linguistic skills without cross-cultural strategic thinking is a major reason why current graduates struggle to fill cross-border e-commerce roles. A blind box streamer must be adept at flexibly transitioning the narration of IP stories across different cultural contexts.

The ability for real-time English responses during live streaming interactions is a defining feature distinguishing live streaming from pre-recorded content. High-frequency interactive questions in blind box live stream rooms have distinct category characteristics, such as "What are the odds of getting the secret one?", "Can I choose the color?", "Is this series limited?". Streamers need to establish a rapid response mechanism tailored to the blind box category, maintaining fluent English interaction without being able to predict audience questions. This is especially crucial for handling sensitive questions like the probability of obtaining a "secret" figurine with poise.

The ability to employ English strategies for sales conversion is the key competency linking live streaming content to sales outcomes. Even students with fluent expression often lack effective linguistic strategies at the critical moment of prompting a purchase decision [6, 7]. For example, "We've only got 30 boxes of this series left tonight" simultaneously states a fact and creates urgency, which is fundamentally different from a simple "Buy now."

The ability to output blind box product knowledge in English serves as the foundational support for all the aforementioned competencies. Exporting enterprises widely express a hope that university talent possesses an in-depth understanding of the industry and the professional ability to articulate product knowledge. For blind box streamers, this requires not only a solid grasp of the product's IP story, design philosophy, materials, craftsmanship, and collectibility, but also the ability to naturally integrate this knowledge into live English interactions [7]. This skill—professionally discussing content in English—demands that product cognition and language expression be cultivated in an integrated manner throughout the learning process, rather than as separate components to be learned individually and later assembled.

3. Cultivation Pathway Design: A Systematic Plan from "Speaking English" to "Using English"

Having identified the job competency requirements for cross-border blind box live streaming, the core challenge lies in systematically designing instruction to transform a learner with foundational English skills into a versatile talent capable of narrating blind box stories, conveying the excitement of unboxing surprises, and facilitating instant conversions within a cross-border live streaming environment [8].

3.1. General Approach to Cultivation Pathway Design

Traditional cultivation models for Business English or Cross-border E-commerce follow a disciplinary knowledge logic: language, business, and e-commerce knowledge are taught independently [9, 10]. Students might learn business correspondence in class but never practice expressing the excitement of unboxing a blind box in English in front of a camera. They may grasp concepts of cross-border e-commerce but lack the English skills to respond to an overseas consumer's query about the probability of a "secret" figurine. This "knowledge stacking" model inevitably leads to the outcome of "being able to speak English but unable to sell blind boxes in English." To address this core issue, this paper proposes three design principles.

First, a competency-based curriculum driven by job-task requirements. Instead of starting from a subject system, determine training objectives, course content, and training methods inversely based on the real "task performance" needs of the target job. "What competencies the job requires" dictates "what to cultivate," and "how it is used on the job" dictates "how to practice it in teaching." This means the starting point for the entire

cultivation plan design is a systematic analysis of job tasks, not a deductive derivation from a body of disciplinary knowledge [11].

Second, industry-education integration driven by authentic scenarios. The core competencies for cross-border English live streaming—contextualized expression, real-time interactive response, and cross-cultural conversion strategies—are highly context-dependent and practically generative. They cannot be effectively formed through traditional classroom lectures; they must be generated and internalized through repeated practice in authentic industrial settings. Industry-education integration is not an "add-on" or "decoration" but a necessary vehicle and fundamental pathway for competency development [12].

Third, competency-focused design with blind box characteristics integrated throughout [10]. All English training tasks, simulation cases, and practical projects within the cultivation plan will use blind box products as material, ensuring the process of competency development is itself a process of deepening understanding of the blind box industry.

3.2. Curriculum System Restructuring: From Disciplinary Logic to Competency Logic

Curriculum Design: Centered on the five core job competencies, two curriculum modules are constructed, each explicitly oriented towards the transformation to "being able to use" rather than "being able to pass an exam."

Module 1: English Application Training in Live Streaming Contexts. This is the core module of the entire curriculum system, directly targeting the critical transformation phase from "speaking English" to "using English." The course content is organized around authentic speech act tasks in cross-border live streaming. The specific teaching content comprises four progressive levels [13].

Level 1: Training on English narrative for product selling points. This is the core segment for realizing the transformation from "transmitting information" to "stimulating action." Learners practice transforming statements like "This blind box is finely crafted" into emotional narratives such as "The moment you open it, you'll feel that long-awaited joy of finally meeting something you've been expecting." Training methods include selling point extraction workshops, English narrative rewriting exercises, and comparative evaluation presentations.

Level 2: Training on flexible responses to real-time audience questions [14]. A categorized response script library is established based on high-frequency question types appearing in real TikTok live streams (product detail inquiries, price objections, shipping timelines, probability of hidden figurines, etc.). Learners then undergo simulation training for response speed and accuracy.

Level 3: Training on English strategies for sales conversion. Learners study English expressions for conversion tactics such as limited time, limited quantity, social proof, and authority endorsement, and apply them comprehensively in simulated live streams.

Level 4: Training on adjusting cross-cultural communication styles. Based on user characteristics in different markets (e.g., North America, Southeast Asia, Europe), learners practice adjusting speech pace, humor style, interaction rhythm, and the intensity of emotional expression [10].

Module 2: Integrated Practical Project. This is a key segment for the integrated application of cross-cultural English output abilities. Organized as a project-based course, students form small groups of 4-5. Under the joint guidance of enterprise mentors and university instructors, they complete the entire process from product selection and planning, writing English scripts, and rehearsing in the live stream room, to executing the formal live stream, and conducting post-live stream reviews. Differentiated live streaming plans are designed for various product series or target markets (e.g., North America, Southeast Asia). Group members can rotate roles, allowing each learner to gain hands-on experience in different positions such as streamer, co-host, and operations manager [15].

3.3. Three-Tier Progressive Practical Training System

Cross-border English live streaming competency is highly context-dependent. The practical training design must establish a progressive pathway from simulation to real-world roles.

Tier 1: On-Campus Simulation Training. Conducted in university-based live streaming rooms using actual blind box products provided by Shipai enterprises. The focus is on practicing English fluency and the blind box script framework, with a duration of 6-8 weeks [16].

Tier 2: On-Campus Real-Market Live Streaming. Utilizing real social media accounts and genuine product samples provided by the university's startup incubation platform or partner enterprises, learners conduct scheduled English live streams targeting real overseas users. The primary task at this stage is gaining real interaction experience [17]. Learners engage with unpredictable overseas audiences, addressing genuine comments and questions, responding to authentic product inquiries, and managing unexpected situations such as lulls, negative comments, or technical connection issues. Simultaneously, learners begin analyzing real-time backend data, including viewer count, interaction volume, product click-through rate, and new followers, to adjust strategies based on data feedback during the live stream. After each session, a systematic data review and script optimization is conducted, leading to an improvement plan for subsequent streams. This creates a rapid iteration cycle of "Live stream → Review → Improve → Re-Live stream."

Tier 3: On-Site Corporate Practical Training. Learners are placed in partner trendy toy enterprises located in Shipai, where they undertake cross-border English live streaming and related tasks such as writing live stream scripts, advising on product selection, and compiling daily data reports within the enterprise's real business environment. Guidance is provided jointly by enterprise mentors and university instructors, with weekly joint university-enterprise reviews. The primary objective of this tier is for learners to achieve comprehensive professional adaptation within a real organizational setting. This includes coordinating shift schedules with overseas time zones, managing personal routines, collaborating effectively with product selection and traffic acquisition teams, maintaining stable performance under high-intensity and high-frequency work rhythms, and deepening their understanding and emotional connection to the trendy toy industry. Additionally, this tier evaluates person-organization fit, enabling enterprises and learners to conduct mutual assessments and selections, effectively reducing post-hire turnover rates [5, 8] (As shown in Figure 1).

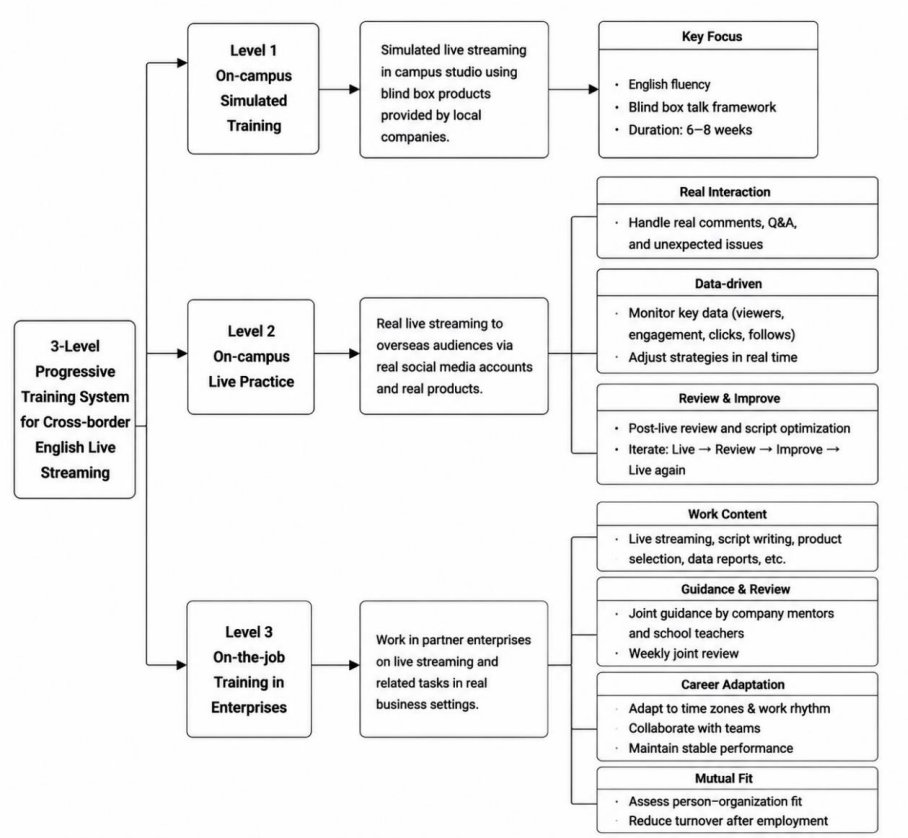

Figure 1. 3-Level Progressive Training System for Cross-border English Live Streaming

3.4. Construction of a "University-Enterprise-Industry Association" Collaborative Cultivation Mechanism

The effective implementation of any talent cultivation plan relies on the synergistic cooperation of all stakeholders. Cultivating cross-border English live streaming talent requires a collaboration mechanism between universities, enterprises, and industry associations, characterized by clear responsibilities, complementary resources, and smooth feedback channels [7].

Core Functions and Collaborative Division of Labor among the Three Entities: University Side: Main Cultivation Base and Theoretical Support. The university is responsible for the systematic design of the talent cultivation plan, foundational skills training, and overall quality control. Specifically, this involves reversely designing the curriculum based on job competency requirements to ensure dynamic alignment between teaching content and industrial needs; constructing on-campus simulation live stream rooms to provide a safe training environment for learners transitioning from the classroom to real-world practice; forming a joint teaching team of university faculty and enterprise mentors, involving enterprise mentors in course instruction and practical training guidance; and establishing learner portfolios and competency tracking databases to record and analyze the entire process of learners' competency development [11].

Enterprise Side: Provision of Real-World Positions and Competency Validation. Shipai trendy toy enterprises are the core employers of cross-border English live streaming talent and assume three roles in the collaborative cultivation model [16]. First, as providers of practical training resources, they supply universities with actual blind box products, real live streaming accounts, back end data permissions, and live stream script templates, ensuring on-campus training is supported by authentic materials. Second, as hosts for on-site practical training, they provide the Tier 3 positions, enabling learners to achieve professional adaptation and competency internalization in a real business environment. Third, as validators of cultivation quality, they conduct practical

assessments of learners' competency performance during the on-site training phase, providing terminal feedback for optimizing the talent cultivation plan.

Industry Side: Platform Building and Standard Setting. Industry associations and industrial alliances act as bridges and aggregators in the collaborative cultivation model. First, they build information exchange platforms between universities and enterprises, regularly publish reports on industrial talent needs, and guide universities in adjusting the scale and direction of cultivation. Second, they take the lead in formulating competency standards for the cross-border English live streaming position, providing an industry benchmark for curriculum development and competency assessment. Third, they organize industry competitions and exchange events, such as cross-border live streaming skills competitions and forums on trendy toy industry globalization, broadening the industrial perspective of faculty and students. Fourth, they coordinate multiple enterprises to form a pooled training resource base, providing large-scale position supply for universities, addressing the limited capacity of individual enterprises [14].

4. Conclusion and Outlook

Cross-border English live streaming serves as a pivotal channel for the globalization of the Shipai Dongguan blind box industry. The primary talent challenge lies not in a mere numerical shortage but in a structural mismatch between competency supply and job demand—the gap between "speaking English" and "using English effectively." From a person-job fit perspective, this paper has analyzed the composite competency requirements of the role and proposed a comprehensive cultivation pathway design. This includes curriculum modules focused on "English Application Training in Live Streaming Contexts," which fundamentally shift the teaching organization logic from disciplinary knowledge accumulation to job competency generation; a three-tier progressive practical training system enabling learners to transition gradually from simulation to real-market practice and from classroom to workplace; a multi-faceted process-oriented evaluation mechanism that shifts the assessment focus from "ability to pass exams" to "ability to perform on the job"; and a closed-loop "University-Enterprise-Industry Association" tripartite collaborative cultivation model, ensuring the dynamic updating and sustainable operation of the cultivation plan.

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