

Theoretical Framework and Implementation Mechanism for Cultivating English Literacy of International Talents in the Context of the Hainan Free Trade Port

Qingling Li

Hainan Vocational University of Science and Technology, Haikou Hainan, 570216 China

Abstract: The construction of the Hainan Free Trade Port has accelerated China's integration into the global economy and increased the demand for internationalized talents capable of participating effectively in global communication and cooperation. English literacy plays a crucial role in this process as it functions as the primary medium for international exchange in fields such as trade, education, tourism, and technological cooperation. However, traditional English education models in China have often focused on examination-oriented learning and have not fully addressed the multidimensional competencies required for international talent development in globalized contexts. This paper aims to construct a theoretical framework for cultivating English literacy among international talents in the context of the Hainan Free Trade Port. Drawing upon theories of communicative competence, intercultural communication, global competence, and digital literacy, the study proposes a multidimensional model consisting of four core components: linguistic competence, intercultural communication competence, global awareness, and digital literacy. Based on this framework, a cultivation mechanism integrating policy support, higher education institutions, digital learning environments, and social practice platforms is proposed. The study further discusses practical pathways for implementing this framework, including curriculum reform, digital empowerment of language learning, cross-cultural training programs, and industry–education collaboration. The proposed model provides theoretical support for developing international talent training systems in the Hainan Free Trade Port and contributes to the broader discussion on language education in the context of globalization and digital transformation.

Keywords: Hainan free trade port; International talents; English literacy; Theoretical framework; Digital transformation

DOI:10.12417/3029-2328.26.03.031

1. Introduction

Globalization has fundamentally reshaped the landscape of international communication, economic cooperation, and cultural exchange. As the most widely used international language, English plays a vital role in facilitating global interaction and knowledge exchange. In recent decades, the importance of English literacy has expanded beyond linguistic proficiency to include intercultural communication skills, global awareness, and the ability to operate in digital communication environments [1].

The establishment of the Hainan Free Trade Port (FTP) represents a major strategic initiative aimed at enhancing China's openness and participation in global economic networks. The development of the Free Trade Port has attracted increasing numbers of multinational enterprises, international organizations, and foreign professionals. Consequently, the demand for international talents with strong English literacy and cross-cultural communication competence has grown significantly.

However, traditional English education in many regions of China has been largely influenced by examination-oriented systems, which tend to emphasize grammar knowledge and reading comprehension rather than authentic communication and intercultural competence. Scholars have pointed out that language education systems oriented toward standardized testing often fail to cultivate communicative competence and global engagement skills [2].

In the context of the Hainan Free Trade Port, the cultivation of international talents requires a new approach to English literacy development that integrates linguistic competence with intercultural understanding, global

perspectives, and digital communication capabilities. Therefore, it is necessary to establish a comprehensive theoretical framework that can guide the cultivation of English literacy for international talents in this emerging global hub. This study aims to address this issue by constructing a theoretical model of English literacy development and proposing an implementation mechanism suitable for the international talent cultivation goals of the Hainan Free Trade Port.

2.Literature Review

2.1 English Literacy and Communicative Competence

The concept of communicative competence has long been central to language education research. Hymes first introduced the idea that language competence should include not only grammatical knowledge but also the ability to use language appropriately in social contexts [3]. Building upon this perspective, Canale and Swain proposed a comprehensive model of communicative competence consisting of grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence [4]. Later research has further expanded the concept of language competence to include pragmatic abilities and intercultural communication skills. Byram argued that language learning should incorporate intercultural competence, enabling learners to communicate effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds [5]. This perspective highlights the importance of cultural knowledge, attitudes, and interpretive skills in language use.

In contemporary language education, the concept of English literacy has evolved into a broader notion that encompasses linguistic knowledge, communicative competence, cultural understanding, and the ability to engage in global communication [6]. Such an expanded view aligns with the needs of international talent development in globalized economies.

2.2 International Talent Development

International talent development has become a significant topic in higher education and economic development research. International talents are generally defined as individuals who possess global perspectives, cross-cultural communication abilities, and the capacity to operate in international professional environments [7]. Knight suggests that internationalization in higher education aims to integrate international and intercultural dimensions into teaching, research, and service activities [8]. In this process, language education plays a crucial role in enabling students to participate in global academic and professional communities.

Studies on talent development emphasize that language competence is only one aspect of international capability. Global awareness, intercultural communication skills, and digital literacy are also essential components of international competence in the modern knowledge economy [9].

2.3 Global Competence

The concept of global competence has gained increasing attention in international education research. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) defines global competence as the capacity to examine global issues, understand cultural diversity, communicate effectively across cultures, and take responsible action for collective well-being [10]. Global competence frameworks emphasize the integration of cognitive, social, and ethical dimensions of learning. In language education, global competence provides an important theoretical foundation for cultivating students' intercultural awareness and global perspectives.

Researchers have argued that language learning can serve as an important pathway for developing global competence, as it exposes learners to diverse cultures and perspectives [11]. Therefore, integrating global competence into English literacy education can enhance the effectiveness of international talent cultivation.

2.4 Digital Literacy and Language Learning

The rapid development of digital technologies has transformed the landscape of language learning. Digital literacy refers to the ability to access, evaluate, and communicate information through digital technologies [12]. In the

context of language education, digital tools such as online learning platforms, artificial intelligence systems, and interactive media have created new opportunities for personalized and collaborative learning.

Warschauer emphasized that technology can play a transformative role in language education by expanding access to authentic communication environments and facilitating global interaction [13]. Similarly, researchers have highlighted the potential of digital learning environments to support language learning through multimodal resources and adaptive learning systems. Given the growing importance of digital communication in international professional contexts, digital literacy has become an essential component of English literacy for international talents.

3.Theoretical Framework

The cultivation of English literacy for international talents requires a comprehensive theoretical framework that integrates linguistic competence, intercultural communication, global awareness, and digital literacy (in figure 1). In the context of globalization and digital transformation, language proficiency alone is insufficient to meet the demands of international communication and cooperation. Therefore, the theoretical framework proposed in this study synthesizes insights from communicative competence theory, intercultural communication theory, global competence frameworks, and digital literacy research.

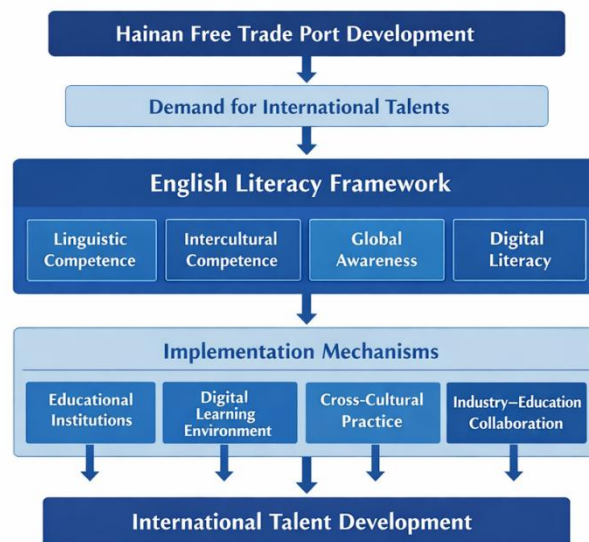


Figure 1. Conceptual framework for English literacy development of international talents in the Hainan Free Trade Port

3.1 Communicative Competence as the Linguistic Foundation

Communicative competence serves as the linguistic foundation of English literacy development. Traditional language education often emphasized grammatical knowledge and linguistic accuracy, focusing on the mastery of vocabulary and grammar rules. However, Hymes argued that effective language use requires not only grammatical competence but also the ability to use language appropriately in different social contexts [3].

Building upon Hymes' concept, Canale and Swain proposed a more systematic model of communicative competence consisting of grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence [4]. Grammatical competence refers to knowledge of lexical items and grammatical structures, while sociolinguistic competence involves the ability to use language appropriately in different social situations. Discourse competence refers to the ability to produce coherent and cohesive texts, and strategic competence refers to the ability to overcome communication difficulties through compensatory strategies.

For international talents in the Hainan Free Trade Port, communicative competence forms the fundamental basis of English literacy. International business negotiations, academic collaborations, and cultural exchanges all require effective communication in English. Therefore, cultivating communicative competence remains a central objective

of English education.

However, communicative competence alone cannot fully address the challenges of global interaction. Communication in international contexts often involves cultural differences, diverse value systems, and varying communication norms. Consequently, communicative competence must be complemented by intercultural communication competence.

3.2 Intercultural Communication Competence

Intercultural communication competence refers to the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately with individuals from different cultural backgrounds. Byram proposed a widely recognized model of intercultural communicative competence, which includes attitudes, knowledge, skills of interpreting and relating, skills of discovery and interaction, and critical cultural awareness [5].

In international communication, misunderstandings often arise not from linguistic errors but from cultural differences in communication styles, values, and expectations. For example, differences in politeness strategies, negotiation styles, and rhetorical conventions may affect the effectiveness of communication. Therefore, language learners need to develop cultural awareness and intercultural sensitivity in order to interact successfully in global contexts.

In the context of the Hainan Free Trade Port, intercultural communication competence is particularly important because the region aims to become an international hub for trade, tourism, and cultural exchange. As more foreign professionals and international organizations enter Hainan, local talents must be able to communicate effectively with people from diverse cultural backgrounds. Integrating intercultural communication training into English education can therefore enhance the ability of international talents to engage in cross-cultural collaboration.

3.3 Global Competence and International Talent Development

While communicative competence and intercultural communication competence focus primarily on communication skills, global competence emphasizes the broader ability to understand global issues and participate in international cooperation. The OECD Global Competence Framework defines global competence as the capacity to examine local, global, and intercultural issues, understand different perspectives, communicate effectively across cultures, and take responsible action for collective well-being [10].

Global competence highlights the importance of global awareness, critical thinking, and ethical responsibility in international engagement. In higher education, cultivating global competence has become an important objective of internationalization strategies. Universities increasingly incorporate global topics, international case studies, and intercultural learning experiences into their curricula in order to prepare students for global citizenship.

For international talents in the Hainan Free Trade Port, global competence provides an important conceptual framework for English literacy development. English learning should not be limited to language acquisition but should also involve understanding global economic trends, international cultural diversity, and global challenges such as sustainability and technological transformation. By integrating global competence into language education, learners can develop both communication skills and global perspectives.

3.4 Digital Literacy and Technology-Enhanced Language Learning

The rapid development of digital technologies has transformed the way languages are learned and used. Digital literacy refers to the ability to access, evaluate, and communicate information through digital technologies [12]. In the digital era, international communication increasingly takes place through online platforms, virtual meetings, and digital collaboration tools.

Warschauer emphasized that digital technologies can expand opportunities for language learning by providing access to authentic communication environments and facilitating interaction with speakers from different parts of the world [13]. Online language learning platforms, social media, and artificial intelligence-based language learning

systems enable learners to engage in personalized and interactive learning experiences.

In the context of international talent development, digital literacy has become an essential component of English literacy. International professionals often rely on digital communication tools such as email, video conferencing platforms, and collaborative software to conduct business and exchange information. Therefore, language learners must develop the ability to communicate effectively in digital environments.

Furthermore, digital technologies also support innovative approaches to language education. Intelligent tutoring systems, data-driven learning analytics, and adaptive learning platforms can enhance learning efficiency and provide personalized feedback. Integrating digital literacy into English education can therefore improve both language competence and technological competence.

3.5 Integrated Framework for English Literacy Development

Based on the theoretical perspectives discussed above, this study proposes an integrated framework for cultivating English literacy among international talents. The framework combines four core dimensions:

- a. Linguistic competence, which provides the linguistic foundation for communication.
- b. Intercultural communication competence, which enables effective interaction across cultures.
- c. Global awareness, which fosters understanding of global issues and perspectives.
- d. Digital literacy, which supports communication and collaboration in digital environments.

These four dimensions together form a multidimensional structure of English literacy suitable for international talent development in the Hainan Free Trade Port. By integrating language competence with intercultural, global, and digital competencies, this framework reflects the evolving nature of language education in the era of globalization and digital transformation.

4. English Literacy Framework and Implementation Mechanism for International Talents

Building upon the theoretical perspectives discussed above, this study proposes an integrated framework for the development of English literacy among international talents in the context of the Hainan Free Trade Port. The framework emphasizes that English literacy is not merely a linguistic ability but a multidimensional competence shaped by interactions between individual capabilities, educational systems, and broader social environments. In particular, the development of English literacy for international talents should be understood as a dynamic process influenced by policy environments, educational institutions, technological infrastructures, and practical communication opportunities. These factors jointly shape the cultivation of talents capable of engaging in global communication and international cooperation.

Within this framework, English literacy is conceptualized as a multidimensional competence consisting of linguistic competence, intercultural communication competence, global awareness, and digital literacy. Linguistic competence provides the foundational ability for individuals to use English accurately and fluently in various communication contexts. However, linguistic accuracy alone is insufficient for effective communication in international settings. Intercultural communication competence enables individuals to interpret cultural differences, understand diverse communication norms, and interact appropriately with people from different cultural backgrounds. Global awareness further expands this competence by encouraging individuals to understand global issues, appreciate cultural diversity, and engage with international perspectives. In addition, digital literacy has become an essential component of English literacy in the contemporary information society. As international communication increasingly occurs through digital platforms such as email, video conferencing, and online collaboration tools, individuals must possess the ability to communicate effectively in technology-mediated environments.

The proposed framework suggests that the development of these competencies requires the coordinated support of multiple institutional and social mechanisms. Educational institutions serve as the primary environment in which

English literacy development takes place. Universities and training institutions play a critical role in cultivating students' linguistic competence and intercultural communication abilities through curriculum design, teaching methodologies, and international exchange programs. Traditional language teaching approaches that emphasize grammar instruction and examination performance should gradually shift toward communicative and task-based learning models. Such approaches allow students to develop language skills through authentic communication activities and collaborative learning experiences.

In addition to educational institutions, digital learning environments provide important support for the development of English literacy. Advances in digital technology have created new opportunities for language learning by expanding access to authentic language resources and facilitating global communication. Online learning platforms, artificial intelligence-based tutoring systems, and interactive multimedia resources enable learners to engage in personalized and flexible learning experiences. Digital environments also allow learners to interact with speakers from different cultural backgrounds, thereby enhancing both linguistic competence and intercultural awareness. By integrating digital technologies into language education, institutions can create more dynamic and interactive learning environments that support the development of multiple competencies simultaneously.

Another important component of the implementation mechanism is the provision of cross-cultural practice platforms. Language competence develops most effectively when learners are exposed to real communication situations. Practical experiences such as international exchange programs, internships in multinational enterprises, participation in international conferences, and collaborative projects with overseas partners can significantly enhance students' ability to communicate in English within multicultural contexts. These experiences allow learners to apply their linguistic knowledge while developing intercultural sensitivity and global perspectives. In the context of the Hainan Free Trade Port, where international business and cultural exchanges are expected to increase rapidly, providing such practical communication opportunities is particularly important for cultivating internationally competitive talents.

Furthermore, collaboration between educational institutions and industry plays a crucial role in aligning language education with real-world professional requirements. Industry–education collaboration enables universities to design training programs that reflect the needs of international enterprises and global markets. Through internships, cooperative education programs, and joint training initiatives, students can gain practical experience in international professional environments. Such collaborations not only enhance students' communication skills but also help them develop professional competencies and global career awareness.

Taken together, these mechanisms form a comprehensive system for cultivating English literacy among international talents. The interaction between policy support, educational institutions, digital learning environments, and practical communication opportunities creates a supportive ecosystem for language development. Within this ecosystem, individuals can gradually develop the multidimensional competencies required for effective participation in international communication and cooperation.

In the context of the Hainan Free Trade Port, the cultivation of English literacy should therefore be understood as a systemic process involving multiple stakeholders and institutional arrangements. By integrating communicative competence, intercultural communication abilities, global awareness, and digital literacy into a unified framework, this model reflects the evolving nature of language education in a globalized and digitally connected world. Ultimately, the implementation of such a framework can contribute to the development of international talents capable of supporting the economic, cultural, and technological exchanges promoted by the Hainan Free Trade Port.

5. Conclusion

The construction of the Hainan Free Trade Port has created new opportunities and challenges for international talent development. English literacy plays a crucial role in enabling individuals to participate effectively in global communication and cooperation. This study proposes a multidimensional theoretical framework for English literacy

development among international talents, integrating linguistic competence, intercultural communication competence, global awareness, and digital literacy. Furthermore, an implementation mechanism involving policy support, educational institutions, digital learning environments, and social practice platforms is proposed. The findings provide theoretical support for improving international talent training systems in the Hainan Free Trade Port and offer insights for language education reform in the context of globalization and digital transformation. Future research may further explore empirical approaches to evaluating the effectiveness of the proposed framework and examine the role of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence in language education.

References:

- [1] Crystal,D.(2003).English as a Global Language.Cambridge University Press.
- [2] Spolsky,B.(2004).Language Policy.Cambridge University Press.
- [3] Hymes,D.(1972).On communicative competence.In J.B.Pride&J.Holmes(Eds.),Sociolinguistics.Penguin.
- [4] Canale,M.,&Swain,M.(1980).Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching. Applied Linguistics,1(1),1–47.
- [5] Byram,M.(1997).Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence.Multilingual Matters.
- [6] Kern,R.(2000).Literacy and Language Teaching.Oxford University Press.
- [7] Florida,R.(2002).The Rise of the Creative Class.Basic Books.
- [8] Knight,J.(2004).Internationalization remodeled.Journal of Studies in International Education,8(1),5–31.
- [9] Marginson,S.(2014).Student self-formation in international education.Studies in Higher Education,39(6), 1061–1075.
- [10] OECD.(2018).Preparing Our Youth for an Inclusive and Sustainable World:The OECD Global Competence Framework.OECD Publishing.
- [11] Deardorff,D.(2006).Identification and assessment of intercultural competence.Journal of Studies in International Education,10(3),241–266.
- [12] Gilster,P.(1997).Digital Literacy.Wiley.
- [13] Warschauer,M.(2004).Technology and Social Inclusion:Rethinking the Digital Divide.MIT Press.