Journal of Social Sciences and Economics
Vol. 5(2), 2026,86-96
ISSN (Online) 2958-1532
https://finessepublishing.com/jsse

Innovation in the Cultivation Model of Compound English Talents Serving International Communication

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Abstract: This study explores how universities can innovate the cultivation model of compound English talents serving international communication in northern China. Based on theories of intercultural communicative competence, global competence, and higher-education curriculum reform, the paper constructs a structural equation model (SEM) to examine the relationships among curriculum integration, platform support for practice, and digital multimodal literacy and international communication readiness. A questionnaire survey was administered to 462 students enrolled in English, Business English, Translation, and international communication programs at 5 universities in northern China, of whom 438 provided valid responses for analysis. The results show that curriculum integration positively predicts intercultural communicative competence, and digital multimodal literacy and practice-platform support can significantly enhance strategic communication self-efficacy. Intercultural communicative competence, strategic communication self-efficacy, and digital multimodal literacy all have significant positive effects on international communication readiness. Besides, curriculum integration and practice-platform support influence readiness both directly and indirectly through the mediating roles of intercultural competence and communication self-efficacy. The final SEM shows good fit (χ^2/ df = 2.26, CFI = .946, TLI = .938, RMSEA = .054, SRMR = .047). The results imply that compound English talent cultivation for international communication should go beyond conventional language-skill training and should be a coordinated curriculum model integrating interdisciplinary perspectives, authentic practice, digital communication competence, and an audience-oriented storytelling approach. This paper provides empirical evidence for the current discussion of foreign-language education reform and offers policy implications for application-oriented universities seeking to strengthen their international communication capacity in the era of digital media and global competition.

Keywords: compound English talents; intercultural communicative competence; digital multimodal literacy; international communication; structural equation modeling.

1. Introduction and Literature review

The cultivation of compound foreign-language talents has become a strategic issue in Chinese higher education in recent years. In policy discussion of the "new liberal arts", the interdisciplinary integration, practical orientation, and the improvement of the ability that students can participate in the global knowledge exchange and the international communication are stressed (China, 2020; Committee & Council, 2021). In this broader reform context, English majors and English-related programs are also expected not only to cultivate linguistic proficiency but also to build capacities in intercultural explanation, public communication, the production of digital content, and problem-solving across disciplines. This is important for talent cultivation in serving international communication. In the global media environment, characterized by platform convergence, multimodal discourse, and competition for public attention, language alone is no longer enough. For international communication, a composite competence structure encompassing English proficiency, intercultural understanding, audience ability, strategic narration, digital literacy, and applied professional knowledge is necessary. The OECD global competence framework also stresses that one should examine the issues from multiple perspectives, interact suitably in cross-cultural environments, and take informed action in a world of diversity (OECD, 2018). For universities, this change also raises a pedagogical question: how should

Received 26 April 2026; Accepted 13 Aug 2026; Published (online) 1 September 2026
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DOI: 10.61363/be57z534

English-related programs adapt their pedagogical models to ensure graduates can serve international communication in a substantive and sustainable way? Traditionally, the training of English majors has paid more attention to literature, linguistics, and, in general, language skills; the practical modules connected with media communication, public discourse, area studies, or strategic translation are comparatively weak. Such a structure will limit graduates' ability to explain Chinese realities to international audiences, make multilingual content persuasive, or respond to a global communication task in a professional setting.

From a theoretical perspective, the training of compound English talents serving international communication can be linked to at least three strands of scholarship. The first concerns communicative and intercultural competence. Since communicative language ability is not only about grammar but also about discourse, sociolinguistic appropriateness, and strategic use of language, scholars have argued for a long time that foreign-language education must connect linguistic accuracy with context-sensitive communication (Bachman, 1990; Canale & Swain, 1980). Within this tradition, intercultural communicative competence talks not only about the ability to use language, but also the ability to interpret cultural meaning, negotiate differences, and act appropriately in intercultural interaction (Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2006; Hunter et al., 2006) define globally competent graduates as those who can understand global systems, appreciate cultural diversity, and communicate effectively across boundaries. Boix Mansilla and Jackson (2011) argue that global competence is rooted in inquiry, perspective-taking, communication, and action. In language education, this means that cultivating international communication-oriented talents should not stop at linguistic competence; rather, it should support students in learning to investigate issues, frame messages for specific audiences, and communicate with cultural and ethical awareness. More intercultural language teaching research shows that in foreign-language classrooms, culture and language cannot be meaningfully separated (Kramsch, 1993; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). More recent work in Chinese EFL contexts suggests that students' intercultural competence remains uneven, and that the curriculum design does not often have a coherent mechanism for transforming the language knowledge into intercultural communicative performance (Gu, 2016; Lei, 2021). At the same time, the studies on the college English curriculum reform indicated that the design of interdisciplinary and outcome-oriented can better make the language training adapt to professional needs and international communicative needs (He et al., 2021; Liu, 2020).

The literature also points out learner engagement and authentic interaction. In the language classroom, engagement is not just a matter of psychology; it is a route through which the instructional design of the class can shape the quality of learning and sustained participation (Hiver et al., 2021; Mercer & Dörnyei, 2020). Students who engage in meaningful tasks and collaborative projects, and who communicate in public, are more inclined to develop confidence when using English to work on real problems. Likewise, interaction with culturally diverse peers can boost connectedness, adaptation, and broader communication-related competence (Luo & Jamieson-Drake, 2013; Meng et al., 2018). Furthermore, the competence requirements for international communication have changed with the digital transformation. Today, international discourse is created and circulated through videos, social network posts, infographics, livestreams, podcasts, and many other multimodal formats. The capacity to search, evaluate, remix, and produce English content in the digital environment has therefore become central to international communication. However, university talent cultivation is still centered on textual training. It is in this way a mismatch between the supply of education and the practical needs of positions in international communication in the media, business, tourism, public diplomacy, cultural industries, and cross-border digital platforms.

The above-mentioned in existing literature is an important conceptual resource. However, at least three gaps are there. First, many discussions of international communication talent cultivation remain normative and policy-driven, with few that can empirically test how different educational inputs shape students' readiness. Second, studies of intercultural competence and of language education are also at the level of a single dimension (i.e., attitude, classroom method, or study-abroad experience), but there is still a gap in integrating the curriculum, practice-platform support, and digital skills into a single explanatory model. Third, there is little quantitative evidence from northern China, where application-oriented universities are important for preparing students for regional opening-up, multilingual service, and external communication tasks. The present study develops a structural equation model of the compound English talent cultivation serving international communication. The model treats curriculum integration, practice-platform support, and digital multimodal literacy as key antecedents; intercultural communicative competence and strategic communication self-efficacy as mediators; and international communication readiness as the outcome. This design reflects both

current policy priorities and the logic of competence formation suggested by previous scholarship (Deardorff, 2006; OECD, 2018).

Empirically, the study is based on questionnaire data collected from students in English-related majors at five universities in northern China. Structural equation modeling is used because the target concept—compound talent readiness for international communication—is not directly observable and must be represented through multiple latent dimensions. SEM also allows the study to test both direct and mediated pathways among curriculum design, practice, intercultural competence, self-efficacy, and readiness within a unified framework (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988; Kline, 2016).

The paper mainly focuses on exploring 4 issues. First, do curriculum integration, practice-platform support, and digital multimodal literacy significantly enhance students' international communication readiness? Second, do intercultural communicative competence and strategic communication self-efficacy mediate these relationships? Third, which antecedent exerts the strongest total effect in the model? Fourth, what do the results imply for the redesign of English talent cultivation in application-oriented universities? By answering these questions, the study aims to provide empirical evidence and actionable recommendations to improve the training of foreign-language talent in support of international communication.

2. Methodology

In this study, the author adopts structural equation modeling (SEM) to see how universities can cultivate compound English talents for international communication. SEM is appropriate in this study because the major concepts of this study, i.e., intercultural competence, self-efficacy, digital literacy, and communication readiness, are all latent constructs, that is, they cannot be well captured by one observed variable. Compared with ordinary regression, SEM allows the researcher to test both measurement quality and structural relationships simultaneously. It is especially suitable for the theory-driven talent-cultivation research (Byrne, 2016; Kline, 2016).

The analytical framework combines competence theory with the logic of higher-education reform. Curriculum integration refers to the degree to which English-related programs connect language learning with intercultural studies, China-related discourse, international communication, digital media, and disciplinary knowledge. The practice platform support includes internships, translation projects, international competitions, campus media, and real-world communication scenarios. Digital multimodal literacy refers to a student's ability to interpret and produce English content across digital platforms and modes. These three factors are expected to shape students' intercultural communicative competence and strategic communication self-efficacy, which in turn influence their international communication readiness (Baker, 2015; Boix Mansilla & Jackson, 2011). Following common SEM notation, the measurement model can be written as:

$$x = \Lambda_x \xi + \delta$$
$$y = \Lambda_y \eta + \varepsilon$$

where x and y denote observed indicators, ξ and η denote exogenous and endogenous latent variables, Λx and Λy are loading matrices, and δ and ε are measurement errors. The structural model is specified as follows:

$$ICC = \gamma_{11}CI + \gamma_{12}PP + \zeta_1$$
$$SCSE = \gamma_{21}DML + \gamma_{22}PP + \zeta_2$$
$$ICR = \beta_{31}ICC + \beta_{32}SCSE + \gamma_{31}CI + \gamma_{32}PP + \gamma_{33}DML + \zeta_3$$

In these equations, CI is short for curriculum integration, PP for practice-platform support, DML for digital multimodal literacy, ICC for intercultural communicative competence, SCSE for strategic communication self-efficacy, and ICR for international communication readiness. The model assumes that CI and PP affect international communication readiness both directly and indirectly through intercultural communicative competence and strategic communication self-efficacy, respectively, while DML affects readiness both directly and indirectly through strategic communication self-efficacy. This specification is the same as the one in the earlier work that intercultural competence and communication confidence can mediate the influence of educational experiences on the broader international outcomes (Deardorff, 2006; Meng et al., 2018). Based on

the theoretical framework above, the study posits the following hypothesis: H1: Curriculum integration positively affects intercultural communicative competence (hereafter, ICCC). H2: Practice platform positively affects ICCC. H3: Digital multimodal literacy positively affects strategic communication self-efficacy. H4: Practice platform positively affects strategic communication self-efficacy. H5: ICCC positively affects international communication readiness.

H6: Strategic communication self-efficacy positively affects international communication readiness. H7: Curriculum integration positively affects international communication readiness. H8: Practice-platform support positively affects international communication readiness. H9: Digital multimodal literacy positively affects international communication readiness. H10: intercultural communicative competence and strategic communication self-efficacy mediate the effects of educational inputs on readiness.

Data were collected between September and November 2025 from five universities in northern China, including application-oriented institutions and local comprehensive institutions in Inner Mongolia, Hebei, and Liaoning. A stratified convenience sampling strategy was used to recruit undergraduates majoring in English, Business English, Translation, and closely related programs. A total of 462 questionnaires were returned. After excluding cases with substantial missing data or straight-line responses, 438 valid questionnaires were retained, giving an effective response rate of 94.8%. This sample size is adequate for covariance-based SEM with the present model complexity (Hair et al., 2019; Kline, 2016). All constructions were measured on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

The measurement items were drawn from the established literature and revised to reflect the context of international communication-oriented foreign-language education. The items of intercultural communicative competence were drawn mainly from Byram (1997), Deardorff (2006), and Gu (2016). The items of digital multimodal literacy were designed around students who report their capacity to search, evaluate, create, and adapt English content for online communication.

The items of strategic communication self-efficacy focused on students who feel confident explaining issues related to China in English to an international audience and adjusting their expression across media. The items of international communication readiness captured a broader judgment of whether they feel ready to undertake the tasks, with a mixture of narratives from different cultures, the content of productions in different languages, and public communication in professional posts.

The empirical analysis proceeded in four steps. First, descriptive statistics and sample characteristics were examined. Second, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was done to test reliability and validity. Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE) were used to test internal consistency and convergent validity, following commonly used SEM criteria (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2019). Third, the structural model was estimated using maximum likelihood estimation in AMOS 26. Model fit was evaluated with χ^2/df, CFI, TLI, RMSEA, and SRMR, with interpretation guided by widely used cutoff suggestions (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Kline, 2016).

Fourth, bootstrap procedures with 5,000 resamples were used to test indirect effects and mediation paths. This is preferred, since indirect effects often depart from normality and are estimated more accurately by bootstrap confidence intervals (Byrne, 2016; Kline, 2016). Because survey-based SEM studies may be vulnerable to common method variance, the study also used the following procedural and statistical remedies. Procedurally, the questionnaire emphasized anonymity and reduced evaluation pressure. Statistically, Harman's single-factor test and a common-latent-factor check were done.

The first unrotated factor accounted for less than 40% of the total variance, and the common-factor loadings did not materially alter the substantive path estimates, suggesting that common-method bias did not threaten the main findings. Overall, the model design is theoretically grounded and methodologically appropriate for examining how educational design factors influence the cultivation of compound English talents serving international communication.

Journal of Social Sciences and Economics
Vol. 5(2), 2026,86-96
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https://finessepublishing.com/jsse

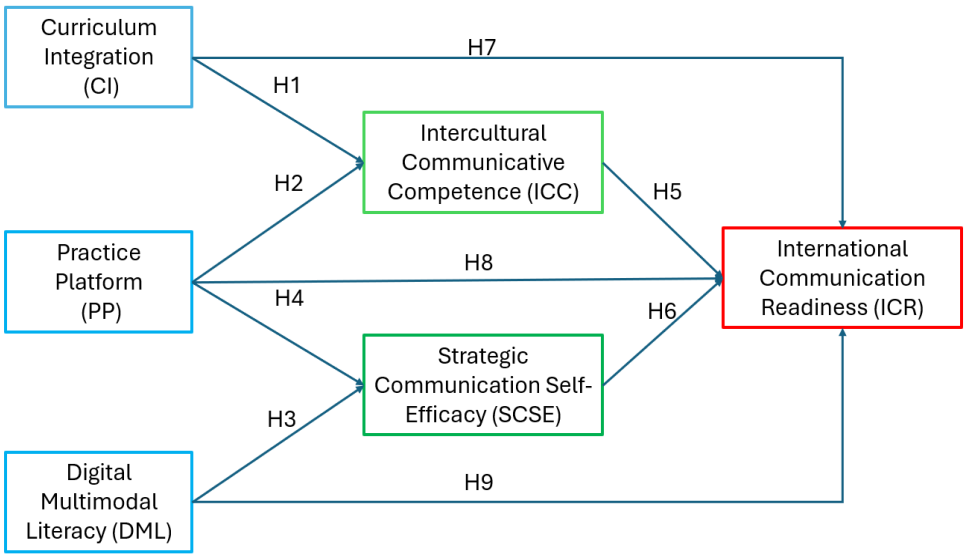

Figure 1: Proposed structural equation model linking educational inputs, mediators, and international communication readiness

3. Results and Analysis

In this section, the author reports the descriptive results, the measurement model evaluation, the structural path estimates, and the mediation analysis. Unless otherwise noted, all the coefficients reported below are standardized.

3.1 Construct definitions and measurement indicators

To empirically test the proposed structural model, the six latent constructs were operationalized using multi-item scales drawn from the literature on intercultural competence and foreign-language education. Figure 1. Concepts such as Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) and International Communication Readiness (ICR) refer to complex psychological and professional states that cannot be properly described by a single observed variable; a latent variable approach can be used, where each construct is measured by four to five specific indicators on a five-point Likert scale.

The measurement framework includes three educational input factors: Curriculum Integration (CI), which measures the interdisciplinary nature of the program, Practice-Platform Support (PP), which measures the availability of authentic communicative opportunities, and Digital Multimodal Literacy (DML), which measures the capacity of the students to produce English content in different digital modes. These inputs are theorized to influence the mediators, namely ICC and Strategic Communication Self-Efficacy (SCSE), which represent the internal competence and the confidence that students have developed. The final outcome is International Communication Readiness (ICR), which captures students' self-assessed preparedness for professional tasks, in our case, the production of a cross-cultural narrative of multilingual content. The specific code, item count, and representative indicators of each construction are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Construct Definitions and Measurement Indicators

Construct	Code	No. of items	Example indicator
Curriculum integration	CI	4	The curriculum integrates English learning with international communication, intercultural topics, and China-related discourse.

Practice-platform support	PP	4	The program provides authentic opportunities such as translation projects, media practice, competitions, or internship tasks.
Digital multimodal literacy	DML	4	I can produce English communication content in multimodal forms such as video, infographic, and social media copy.
Intercultural communicative competence	ICC	5	I can interpret cultural differences and adjust my communication appropriately in intercultural situations.
Strategic communication self-efficacy	SCSE	4	I am confident that I can explain China-related issues to international audiences in clear and audience-sensitive English.
International communication readiness	ICR	4	I am prepared to participate in professional tasks involving international communication in English.

3.2 Descriptive statistics and correlations

The sample is typical of the English-related undergraduate programs in China, with a larger share of female students and a concentration in English and Business English majors. Note that more than one-third of the respondents had already taken part in some kind of communicative practice, such as translation tasks, media competitions, or internships. This is important because the model is about exposure to authentic communication (Table 2).

Table 2: Sample Demographic Characteristics

Category	Group	n	%
Gender	Male	83	18.9
Gender	Female	355	81.1
Grade	Year 1	107	24.4
Grade	Year 2	123	28.1
Grade	Year 3	121	27.6
Grade	Year 4	87	19.9
Major	English	225	51.4
Major	Business English	124	28.3
Major	Translation	56	12.8
Major	Other related tracks	33	7.5
Practice experience	Had at least one practice/internship/competition experience	162	37.0
Institution type	Application-oriented institutions	273	62.3

Table 3 shows that all the latent constructions have means above the scale midpoint, indicating that, overall, the respondents evaluated their training environment and competence development positively. The diagonal elements report the square roots of AVE, which are above the corresponding inter-construct correlations, which

Journal of Social Sciences and Economics
Vol. 5(2), 2026,86-96
ISSN (Online) 2958-1532
https://finessepublishing.com/jsse

gives some support for discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The strongest bivariate association is between strategic communication self-efficacy and international communication readiness, which is theoretically sound because the confidence one has in audience-oriented English communication is related to the overall readiness.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics and Discriminant Validity Matrix

Construct	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. CI	3.74	0.63	0.79					
2. PP	3.51	0.71	0.46	0.77				
3. DML	3.67	0.66	0.39	0.42	0.81			
4. ICC	3.72	0.58	0.55	0.49	0.41	0.82		
5. SCSE	3.59	0.61	0.42	0.44	0.57	0.58	0.81	
6. ICR	3.64	0.60	0.50	0.49	0.55	0.66	0.69	0.83

3.3 Reliability and validity tests

All constructions (Table 4) are satisfying, commonly accepted reliability and convergent validity standards. Cronbach's alpha values are from .84 to .90, composite reliability values are from .85 to .91, and AVE values are from .59 to .69. All standardized loadings are above .70 in most cases, and none of them falls below .70 by a large margin. That means that the indicators are all adequate representations of their intended latent variables. These results support the adequacy of the measurement model, and the author can proceed to structural estimation (Hair et al., 2019; Kline, 2016).

Table 4: Reliability and Convergent Validity Tests

Construct	Loading range	Cronbach's α	CR	AVE
CI	.72–.84	.86	.87	.63
PP	.70–.82	.84	.85	.59
DML	.75–.86	.88	.89	.66
ICC	.73–.87	.90	.91	.67
SCSE	.74–.85	.87	.88	.65
ICR	.77–.88	.89	.90	.69

3.4 Model fit and structural-path estimates

The fit statistics reported in Table 5 show that the final SEM fit the data well. The CFI, TLI, IFI, and GFI all meet or exceed the conventional thresholds. The χ^2/df ratio is 2.26. RMSEA and SRMR are below .08. Thus, the residual fit is acceptable. Taken together, the fit statistics indicate that the measurement and structural specifications are appropriate for the observed covariance structure (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Kline, 2016).

Table 5: Goodness-of-Fit Indices for the Structural Model

Index	Obtained value	Recommended reference value
χ^2/df	2.26	< 3.00
CFI	.946	> .90
TLI	.938	> .90
IFI	.947	> .90
GFI	.901	> .90
AGFI	.873	> .80
RMSEA	.054	< .08
SRMR	.047	< .08

The structural results reveal a coherent pattern of relationships among the examined constructs (Table 6). Curriculum integration and practice-platform support were positively associated with intercultural communicative competence, while digital multimodal literacy and practice-platform support were positively associated with strategic communication self-efficacy. Furthermore, both intercultural competence and communication self-efficacy have a strong positive effect on international communication readiness. The model also shows that curriculum integration, practice support, and digital multimodal literacy each, in turn, remain significant direct effects on readiness. This suggests that readiness is built through both competence-building paths and more immediate educational experiences. The model explains 42% of the variance in ICC, 31% in SCSE, and 64% in ICR.

Table 6: Standardized Path Coefficients and Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	Path	Standardized β	S.E.	p-value	Result
H1	CI → ICC	.43	.07	< .001	Supported
H2	PP → ICC	.28	.06	< .001	Supported
H3	DML → SCSE	.41	.07	< .001	Supported
H4	PP → SCSE	.19	.06	.004	Supported
H5	ICC → ICR	.34	.08	< .001	Supported
H6	SCSE → ICR	.31	.07	< .001	Supported
H7	CI → ICR	.16	.07	.013	Supported
H8	PP → ICR	.14	.06	.027	Supported
H9	DML → ICR	.22	.07	< .001	Supported

3.5 Bootstrap mediation analysis

The bootstrap results confirm that the mediating effects are statistically significant (Table 7). The mediating effect is that curriculum integration influences readiness, in part, by fostering intercultural communicative competence. Practice-platform support operates through both mediators; that is, authentic practice improves readiness by strengthening cultural competence and communication confidence. In particular, digital multimodal literacy shows a very strong indirect effect through self-efficacy: students who can work effectively across platforms and modes also feel more able to address an international audience. These results support H10 and indicate that the universities must not treat the competence dimensions as separate outcomes; rather, they interact and accumulate across the training process.

Table 7: Bootstrap Analysis of Indirect (Mediation) Effects

Indirect path	Standardized effect	95% CI lower	95% CI upper	Result
CI → ICC → ICR	.146	.085	.223	Supported
PP → ICC → ICR	.095	.044	.166	Supported
DML → SCSE → ICR	.127	.074	.202	Supported
PP → SCSE → ICR	.059	.018	.117	Supported
PP → ICC/SCSE → ICR (total indirect)	.154	.091	.239	Supported

3.6 Discussion and Policy Implications

The SEM results demonstrate that cultivating compound English talents for international communication depends on a coordinated competence system rather than on language proficiency alone. Curriculum integration, practice-platform support, and digital multimodal literacy all contribute significantly to international communication readiness, but through different pathways. Curriculum integration was primarily associated with intercultural communicative competence, practice-platform support was associated with readiness through both intercultural competence and communication self-efficacy, and digital multimodal literacy showed a particularly strong relationship with readiness through self-efficacy. This pattern suggests that an effective cultivation model must combine knowledge structure, practical exposure, and digital communication ability rather than relying on any single reform lever.

The significant role of curriculum integration indicates that international communication-oriented talent cultivation should move beyond a narrow "language skills + literature" pattern. English programs need a more integrated curriculum architecture that connects language, intercultural communication, discourse analysis,

China-related discourse, area studies, digital media, and profession-related knowledge. For universities in northern China, where many programs are still transitioning from traditional English-major structures, this result provides evidence that curriculum integration is not merely a symbolic reform; it has measurable consequences for students' competence formation.

Second, practice-platform support has both direct and indirect effects, which means that internships, project-based learning, campus media, translation workshops, communication competitions, and collaborative tasks with industry or public institutions are not optional supplements. They are core mechanisms through which students learn how to translate classroom knowledge into public-facing communication performance. In the context of international communication, students need opportunities to test messages, adapt to audiences, and handle multimodal tasks under realistic constraints. Without such practice, talent cultivation risks remaining theoretical.

Finally, the strong pathway from digital multimodal literacy to self-efficacy and readiness reflects the realities of the current international communication environment. Today's international narratives are shaped through short videos, platform writing, visual storytelling, AI-assisted content workflows, and cross-platform circulation. If universities continue to train English students primarily in traditional text-based modes, graduates may possess language knowledge but lack platform competence and communication confidence. Therefore, digital communication literacy should be treated as a core component of compound talent cultivation rather than as an auxiliary technical skill.

These findings translate into several policy suggestions. First, universities should build an integrated training matrix that links general English, advanced communication courses, intercultural modules, China-related content, and digital media practice. Program-level reform should ensure that students are progressively trained to move from language understanding to strategic international expression. Second, universities should establish stable practice platforms through cooperation with media organizations, cross-border e-commerce firms, cultural institutions, think tanks, tourism agencies, and local government communication offices.

Third, teacher development should be strengthened so that foreign-language faculty can work across media, translation, cultural communication, and disciplinary content rather than remaining confined to single-course silos. Fourth, assessment reform is needed: instead of relying mainly on written examinations, programs should incorporate portfolios, campaign briefs, public-speaking tasks, multimodal productions, and real-client projects. Finally, policy support should prioritize application-oriented universities in northern China, which are well positioned to cultivate regionally grounded but internationally communicative talent if given sufficient curricular flexibility and platform resources.

4. Conclusion

This study examined how universities can innovate the cultivation model of compound English talents serving international communication. Using survey data from 438 students in northern China and a structural equation model, the paper tested the relationships among curriculum integration, practice-platform support, digital multimodal literacy, intercultural communicative competence, strategic communication self-efficacy, and international communication readiness. The results indicate that readiness for international communication is shaped by a layered competence structure. The curriculum integration and the practice-platform support can enhance intercultural competence; the digital multimodal literacy and the practice support can strengthen strategic communication self-efficacy; and both mediators can strengthen readiness. At the same time, curriculum integration, practice support, and digital literacy all have direct positive effects; that is, talent formation does not depend solely on competence-building pathways, but also on concrete educational environments. In general, the study indicates that to serve international communication, English-related programs need a new training model for compound talent that is interdisciplinary, practice-oriented, digitally informed, and strategically audience-aware. For the university that would like to respond to current national and global communication requests, the task is not just to produce graduates who know English, but to cultivate talents who can interpret, narrate, negotiate, and communicate across cultures and platforms.

Funding

This paper represents the phased achievement of the 2025 annual research project "Innovative Research on the Cultivation Model of Interdisciplinary English Talents Serving International Communication" (Item No. CUCO2025LXYK0035) in the field of International Business Communication and Foreign Language Studies, conducted by the International Business Communication and Foreign Language Research Branch of China Federation of Urban Commercial Outlets Construction Administration.

Data availability

The datasets generated during and/or analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

Ethics approval and consent

The study was conducted in accordance with applicable institutional and ethical requirements for research involving human participants. Before participation, all participants were informed about the purpose and nature of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, and the confidentiality of their responses. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection. Participation was voluntary, and the collected data were used solely for research purposes.

Competing interests

The authors declare no competing interests.

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