

Research on the Situational Teaching Mode of Cross-Border Marketing English in Higher Vocational Colleges from the Perspective of New Media

Xinxin Zhang

Shanghai Bangde Vocational College, Shanghai 200444, China

Copyright: © 2026 Author(s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY 4.0), permitting distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is cited.

Abstract: The rapid development of cross-border e-commerce, social media marketing, and live-streaming commerce has substantially changed the language requirements of frontline marketing positions. Employees are now expected to introduce products through live broadcasts, create short-video content, respond to overseas consumers in real time, and handle complaints across cultural and linguistic boundaries. However, Cross-Border Marketing English instruction in many higher vocational colleges remains strongly dependent on textbooks, teacher explanation, vocabulary memorization, and written examinations. The language input and classroom activities provided by conventional teaching often fail to correspond to the communicative situations and operational tasks encountered in the workplace. To bridge this gap, this essay proposes a situational teaching model supported by new media resources. The model integrates authentic digital materials, task-driven classroom activities, online and offline learning, role-play, iterative production, and competence-oriented assessment. It is organized around the complete learning process of pre-class exposure, in-class situational practice, and after-class extension. The analysis suggests that a new-media-supported situational model can strengthen students' context-specific language competence, improve their participation and confidence, and narrow the gap between curriculum content and workplace requirements.

Keywords: New media; Higher vocational education; Cross-Border Marketing English; Situational teaching; Vocational talent cultivation; Cross-border e-commerce

Online publication: August 31, 2026

1. Introduction

The development of digital technology has transformed the organization, communication patterns, and talent requirements of cross-border marketing, which is increasingly conducted through social media platforms, short-video applications, online marketplaces, live-streaming channels, and instant messaging tools. A salesperson may need to introduce a product in a live broadcast, respond to dozens of comments within a few minutes,

explain shipping policies, address a dissatisfied customer, or negotiate a bulk order through an online chat interface. These tasks require not only grammatical knowledge but also speed, flexibility, cultural awareness, persuasive ability, and familiarity with digital communication conventions as well as new media operating skills.

Against this background, English education for cross-border marketing majors in higher vocational colleges faces an important challenge. As a core practical course, Cross-Border Marketing English is expected to prepare students for the communicative duties of customer service representatives, livestreaming presenters, social media operators, and product promoters. Talent cultivation in cross-border e-commerce should be oriented toward the abilities required by specific occupational positions rather than toward general theoretical knowledge alone ^[1]. Also, the importance of constructing job-oriented curricula for higher vocational foreign-related majors should be emphasized ^[2].

In practice, however, classroom instruction often remains textbook-centered. Wang points out that practical teaching reform in cross-border e-commerce-oriented Business English needs to move beyond conventional knowledge transmission and strengthen the connection between learning activities and enterprise tasks ^[3,4]. The problem lies in the imbalance between declarative knowledge and practical performance. For example, my student Wang Ting could understand a model dialogue well and got a high score on the CET -4 test but was still unable to respond naturally when an overseas buyer asked an unexpected question and complained about the quality of a wool sweater during her internship period.

This paper examines the current problems of Cross-Border Marketing English teaching in higher vocational colleges and proposes a situational teaching model from the perspective of new media. The purpose is not to propose a fixed teaching formula but to offer a practical framework for curriculum reform and vocational talent cultivation.

2. Current problems in Cross-Border Marketing English teaching

2.1. Mismatch between teaching content and workplace communication

Many existing coursebooks continue to focus on relatively formal forms of business communication, the topics of which remain useful, but they do not fully represent the communicative environment of contemporary cross-border marketing ^[5]. New-media technology can enrich vocational English situational teaching, but its value depends on whether digital resources are integrated into meaningful learning tasks ^[6]. If students are exposed only to formal textbook dialogues, they will have difficulty interpreting abbreviated expressions, informal questions, consumer humor, product reviews, and emotionally charged complaints. Some Business English materials do not adequately reflect the language and operational features of cross-border marketing posts ^[7].

Another problem is that textbook examples frequently present communication as orderly and predictable. A customer asks a question, a salesperson gives a correct answer, and the interaction ends successfully. Real online marketing is less stable, where consumers may ask several questions at once, misunderstand product information, or post negative comments publicly. A marketing employee must decide what to say, how to say it, and how quickly to respond. Therefore, students need opportunities to practice not only ideal conversations but also incomplete, ambiguous, and conflict-oriented situations.

2.2. Teacher-centered classroom organization

In many traditional classes, teachers remain the primary speakers and organizers, which may be efficient

for transmitting information, but it does not provide enough time for students to develop spontaneous communication skills. The problem is particularly serious in large classes. If a class contains dozens of students, each learner may have only a few minutes to speak during a traditional lesson. In my class, I noticed that group work and role-play can increase participation, but only a few confident students dominate the conversation, while less proficient learners remain silent or simply read prepared sentences. So careful preparation, clear instructions, suitable materials, and effective monitoring are important; without these conditions, group work and role-play can become superficial.

Wu's study of the adaptation period of higher vocational graduates indicates that students may experience considerable difficulty when they enter cross-border e-commerce enterprises, especially when actual communication is faster and less predictable than classroom exercises^[8]. Gao also identified low participation in oral English classes as a common issue in vocational education^[9]. It is understandable that students in vocational colleges often have weak academic language foundations, so they may fear making mistakes in front of other classmates. If the classroom provides no linguistic support and evaluates performance only through accuracy, learners will surely avoid active participation. Consequently, the course fails to cultivate the confidence and risk-taking ability required in digital marketing work.

2.3. Superficial use of new-media resources

In recent years, many instructors in my university have begun to use short videos, live-stream recordings, social media posts, and online store pages. Students watch a video or read a post, after which the teacher explains some vocabulary. The resource may make the lesson more interesting, but it does not necessarily change the learning process. And the central issue is the lack of task-based integration. Students may observe how a professional presenter introduces a product, but they are not required to create their own product pitch. They may read a customer complaint, but they do not have to draft and revise a response. In this situation, new media remains an input channel rather than becoming a context for production and problem-solving.

Tan describes the use of new-media resources in vocational English teaching as fragmented when materials are collected without a systematic sequence or clear learning objectives^[10]. Fragmentation can create another difficulty: students encounter large quantities of diverse content but do not know which expressions, strategies, and skills they are expected to master. A coherent curriculum should therefore connect each digital resource to a specific occupational task, language objective, performance criterion, and follow-up activity.

2.4. Idealized situational simulation

Situational teaching is not automatically authentic simply because students are assigned roles. Some classroom simulations reproduce fixed dialogues with little room for negotiation. Students may memorize their lines and perform them once, but they do not have to make decisions or respond to changing information. A lack of authenticity reduces the transfer value of situational simulations in vocational Business English teaching^[11].

Authentic workplace tasks usually include constraints. A seller may have limited stock, a delivery delay, an unhappy customer, a platform rule, or a pricing restriction. A live-stream presenter may need to continue promoting a product while answering an unexpected question. These complexities should be introduced gradually into classroom situations. Otherwise, students may develop confidence in rehearsed performances but remain unable to transfer their language knowledge to unpredictable interactions.

2.5. Assessment that favors knowledge recall

Assessment is another major source of mismatch. A competence-oriented course should assess what students can do with English. Relevant evidence may include a recorded product presentation, a social media caption, a simulated customer-service exchange, a complaint-resolution message, a group marketing campaign, or a live response to an unexpected question. Shen argued that practical Business English courses require assessment systems that reflect actual performance rather than relying exclusively on traditional written tests^[11]. A balanced assessment system should retain a limited knowledge test while putting substantial weight on preparation, participation, task performance, collaboration, revision, and final products.

3. A new-media-supported situational teaching model

3.1. Theoretical foundation and design principles

The proposed model is based primarily on situated cognition theory. Brown, Collins, and Duguid argue that knowledge is closely related to the contexts and activities in which it is developed and used^[12]. From this perspective, language is not merely an abstract system of grammar and vocabulary, but also a tool for participating in social practices.

The model follows five principles. First, authenticity should be emphasized. Materials should reflect real or carefully adapted workplace communication, including different tones, platform conventions, and consumer responses. Second, task orientation should replace isolated language drilling as the central organizing principle. Each lesson should be connected to a practical task, such as presenting, writing, negotiating, responding, or resolving a complaint. Third, progressive support is necessary. Students should move from observation and guided imitation to semi-structured production and finally to open-ended performance. Fourth, multimodal integration should be encouraged. Students need to understand how words interact with images, video, gestures, timing, product demonstrations, and platform design. Fifth, reflection and iteration should be built into the learning process. Students should receive feedback, revise their work, and compare different solutions rather than treating a single performance as the final result.

3.2. Pre-class exposure to authentic materials

The first stage takes place before class. Instructors select and adapt materials from overseas social media platforms, online stores, recorded live streams, company websites, customer-review pages, and enterprise cases. Materials should be short enough for focused study and should serve a clearly defined teaching purpose. For example, a 60-second live-stream segment may be used to examine product introductions and calls to action, while a series of customer comments may be used to study response strategies.

Pre-class tasks should require active observation rather than passive viewing. Students may be asked to: identify frequently used product-promotion expressions; classify expressions according to function; and draft a possible response to a customer comment. Students can submit brief notes, vocabulary lists, screenshots with annotations, or short audio responses through the college's online learning platform. Guided pre-class learning can help students enter the classroom with basic familiarity with the topic and reduce the time spent on initial explanation^[13]. What's more, pre-class preparation also allows teachers to identify common difficulties before class.

3.3. In-class task-driven situational practice

The second stage is the core of the model. Class time is organized around a practical scenario rather than around the sequential explanation of a textbook unit. Students work in small groups and assume different roles, such as livestream host, overseas customer, customer-service representative, buyer, warehouse coordinator, or social media operator. The teacher first reviews the expressions identified in the pre-class task and demonstrates how to organize a product pitch. Students then analyze a short authentic video and identify its opening, product benefits, evidence, price information, and closing call to action. In groups, they prepare a short presentation for a selected product. One student acts as the host, another as the customer, and another as the operations assistant who provides information about stock or delivery. After the first performance, the teacher or classmates introduce an unexpected question, such as whether the product is suitable for a particular user, whether a discount is available, or how long delivery will take. The presenting group must respond without simply reading a script.

Task design should move from controlled to open practice. At the initial level, students can receive phrase banks, sentence frames, model structures, and information cards. At the intermediate level, they can choose among several expressions and organize their own responses. At the advanced level, they should respond to incomplete information and unexpected developments. As students often have highly varied English backgrounds, this sequence is particularly important in higher vocational education.

3.4. After-class iterative practice

The third stage extends learning beyond the classroom. Students produce a practical artifact related to the situational task. Possible assignments include writing a social media caption, recording a 60-second product pitch, or preparing a bilingual product description.

The key feature is iteration. Students first submit a draft or initial recording. Peers use a simple rubric to comment on clarity, tone, organization, persuasiveness, and language accuracy. The teacher then provides targeted feedback. Peer feedback should be carefully structured. Students can be given questions such as: Is the product benefit clear? Does the opening attract attention? Is the language suitable for the target customer? These questions make feedback more useful than simply saying that a piece of work is “good” or “incorrect.”

3.5. Competence-oriented assessment

Assessment should correspond to the three stages of learning. One possible structure is to allocate 20 percent to pre-class preparation, 35 percent to in-class task performance, 25 percent to after-class practical products, and 20 percent to a final knowledge test. The precise distribution may vary according to institutional requirements, but practical performance should represent a substantial proportion of the grade. Assessment criteria may include task completion, language appropriateness, message clarity, interactional flexibility, cross-cultural awareness, digital presentation: whether the student uses platform-appropriate formats, timing, captions, or visual elements, collaboration and professionalism, and revision ability.

4. Practical considerations for implementation

4.1. Developing double-qualified teachers

The effectiveness of the model depends heavily on teacher competence. Instructors need knowledge of English pedagogy as well as an understanding of cross-border marketing workflows. They should be familiar with

product listings, platform rules, customer-service procedures, livestreaming operations, and common consumer concerns.

Vocational colleges can support teachers through short-term industry attachments, enterprise visits, and professional training. Teachers may shadow live-commerce teams, observe customer-service departments, or participate in the production of social media content. Inviting enterprise practitioners to co-design scenarios can improve authenticity and help teachers understand current occupational expectations^[14]. Guo emphasized the importance of developing double-qualified teachers for cross-border e-commerce programs^[15]. Such cooperation should be continuous rather than limited to a single guest lecture.

4.2. Constructing and updating a resource bank

A structured resource bank is essential for systematic implementation. Materials should be organized according to task type, language function, platform, target market, and difficulty level. Possible categories include product promotion, customer consultation, complaint resolution, short-video copywriting, live-stream interaction, social media campaigns, order negotiation, logistics explanation, and after-sales service.

Each resource should be accompanied by teaching information, including learning objectives, recommended student level, key vocabulary, cultural notes, possible questions, suggested tasks, and assessment criteria. Materials should also be dated and reviewed regularly. Digital marketing changes rapidly, and platform conventions that are popular today may become outdated within a short period.

4.3. Integrating cross-cultural communication

Cross-cultural awareness should be integrated into language tasks rather than treated as an isolated theoretical unit. Students can compare how customers from different markets express dissatisfaction, ask for discounts, use humor, or interpret advertising claims. Teachers can explain that an expression that sounds friendly in one cultural context may seem overly direct or ambiguous in another.

Cultural instruction should remain specific and evidence-based. Students should not be encouraged to rely on simplistic national stereotypes. Instead, they should learn to observe the individual customer's language, communicative purpose, and expectations. In complaint-handling scenarios, for instance, the key issue is not to assume how all customers from one country behave but to identify the customer's emotional state and respond respectfully and effectively.

5. Conclusion

The development of social media marketing, short-video promotion, live commerce, and instant customer communication has created new requirements for Cross-Border Marketing English in higher vocational colleges. Situational teaching should be regarded as a flexible curriculum-development process rather than a fixed package. Colleges need sustained institutional support, teacher-enterprise cooperation, regular professional development, updated resource management, and assessment policies that value practical performance. When these conditions are gradually established, Cross-Border Marketing English can become more closely connected with real occupational practices.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

References

- [1] Yu X, Zhang T, Wang M, et al., 2023, Research on Cultural Communication Strategies in English Language Marketing of Cross-border E-commerce Enterprises: A Case Study of TikTok Platform. *Modern Business Management*, (7): 55–57.
- [2] Huang R, 2025, Analysis and Development Prospects of Short Video Applications in New Media for Cross-border E-commerce Marketing. *China Storage & Transportation*, (1): 74–75.
- [3] Wu Y, Yang X, 2024, Research on the Application of New Media Marketing Methods in Cross-border E-commerce. *Modern Business Research*, (12): 107–109.
- [4] Yu X, 2024, Exploration of the Application and Practice of New Media Marketing Strategies in Cross-border E-commerce. *Marketing World*, (23): 62–64.
- [5] Wang R, Zhao C, 2020, Exploring Teaching Models of E-commerce English in Universities under the Background of Cross-border E-commerce. *Journal of Jiangxi Electric Power Vocational and Technical College*, 33(7): 72–73.
- [6] Zhang S, 2024, Research on Marketing Strategies of Cross-border E-commerce Platforms in the New Media Environment. *National Circulation Economy*, (10): 49–52.
- [7] Wang X, Cai B, 2020, Approaches to Applying Short Videos in New Media for Cross-border E-commerce Marketing. *Public Investment Guide*, (14): 80–81.
- [8] Yu Y, 2020, Research on the Application of New Media Marketing Methods in Cross-border E-commerce. *Modern Marketing (Lower Edition)*, (9): 75–76.
- [9] Chen J, 2025, Teaching Model of E-commerce English in Universities Based on Cross-border E-commerce. *English Square*, (11): 88–91.
- [10] Yuan Y, 2021, Research on Teaching Models for Business English Talent Cultivation in Universities under the Background of Cross-border E-commerce—A Review of “Practical Tutorial of E-commerce English.” *Tropical Crops Journal*, 42(4): 1286.
- [11] Zhang S, 2022, Analysis of Reform Measures for E-commerce English Teaching in Universities under the Background of Cross-border E-commerce. *Journal of Chifeng University(Chinese Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition)*, 43(7): 108–111.
- [12] Zhang X, 2017, Research on Business English Talent Demand and Teaching Models in the Context of Cross-border E-commerce. *Journal of Hubei Correspondence University*, 30(13): 168–170.
- [13] Yan Z, 2020, Reform of Business English Practical Teaching in Universities under the Background of Cross-border E-commerce. *Marketing World*, (52): 60–61.
- [14] Zhu Z, 2022, Research on Reform Strategies for E-commerce English Teaching in Universities from the Perspective of Cross-border E-commerce Markets. *Overseas English*, (10): 154–155 + 157.
- [15] Wen L, 2020, Exploration of Practical Teaching Models for Cross-border E-commerce Courses in Business English Majors—Taking Neijiang Normal University as an Example. *Overseas English*, (24): 183–184.

Publisher's note

Bio-Byword Scientific Publishing remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.