Analysis of the Characteristics of Cross-cultural Communication in Cross-border E-commerce Live Streaming Texts: A Case Study Based on Amazon and Alibaba International Station

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Abstract

With the acceleration of global market integration, cross-border e-commerce live streaming has emerged as a new form of international trade, yet scholarly research on its cross-cultural communication remains limited. This study examines live streaming practices on Amazon and Alibaba International Station to analyze the cross-cultural characteristics of live streaming texts. Effective communication in this context requires anchors to possess solid cultural knowledge, adaptable communicative skills, and an open, inclusive mindset. Drawing on these findings, the paper proposes targeted optimization strategies: strengthening cultural awareness training, localizing live streaming content, and refining both linguistic and non-verbal communication strategies. These measures aim to enable practitioners to better meet the demands of diverse cultural markets, enhance communication effectiveness, and ultimately strengthen competitiveness in the global marketplace.

1   Introduction

With the development of globalization and digital technologies, cross-border e-commerce has become an indispensable component of international trade. Within this landscape, cross-border e-commerce live streaming has emerged as a transformative marketing model, offering global consumers immersive shopping experiences while simultaneously unlocking new market expansion channels for enterprises. As Cao Wei (2022) demonstrates, this format significantly enhances product visibility, sales, and consumer seller interactivity. Platforms such as Amazon and Alibaba International Station exemplify this trend, leveraging live streaming to foster trade and cross-cultural exchange.

Despite this rapid growth, scholarly analysis of cross-cultural communication dynamics in live streaming remains underdeveloped. Tailoring content and interactions to diverse cultural audiences poses critical challenges, including linguistic barriers and cultural misinterpretations (Li & Sun, 2023). Consequently, anchors must navigate varying cultural expectations—ranging from communication styles to non-verbal cues—to ensure effective engagement.

This study delivers practical value by equipping cross-border e-commerce practitioners with actionable insights derived from textual analysis of live streaming, thereby enhancing market adaptation and sales performance. Academically, it contributes to the emerging scholarship on cross-cultural communication in live streaming by establishing foundational frameworks for future research.

Through a comparative analysis of live streaming texts on both platforms (structure, language, and non-verbal elements), this study seeks to address the following questions: (1) How do cross-cultural traits manifest across streaming segments (openings, product showcases, interactions, promotions, closings)? (2) How do verbal features reflect cultural distinctions? (3) What evidence-based strategies can enhance the effectiveness of cross-cultural communication?

2   Theoretical Framework of Cross-cultural Communication in Live Streaming

2.1   Connotation of Cross-border E-commerce Live Streaming Texts

Cross-border e-commerce live streaming texts refer to the sum of verbal expressions, interactive content, and forms of information transmission in the process of real-time product display and sales. They include opening remarks, product introductions, interactive dialogues, promotional expressions, and closing remarks, forming a complete communication system.

From the perspective of information transmission, live streaming texts have dual attributes: commerciality and communicativeness. Commerciality requires the accurate conveyance of product information and the stimulation of purchase intention, while communicativeness emphasizes establishing emotional connections with the audience through language adaptation n (Li & Sun, 2023). The integration of these two attributes determines the effectiveness of cross-cultural communication.

2.2   Cross-cultural Communication Theories Related to Live Streaming

2.2.1   High-context and Low-context Culture Theory

Hall's theory of high- and low-context cultures suggests that in high-context cultures (such as Eastern cultures), information transmission relies more on contextual cues and implicit expression, whereas in low-context cultures (such as Western cultures), information is primarily conveyed through explicit language. This difference is directly reflected in live streaming texts: those on Alibaba International Station tend to be more concise, emphasizing contextual implication, while those on Amazon are generally more detailed, prioritizing explicit expression.

2.2.2   Cultural Dimensions Theory

Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory provides a framework for analyzing textual adaptation. In individualistic cultures (represented by Western countries), live streaming texts often focus on personal experience and emotional resonance; in collectivist cultures, they emphasize professional authority and group identity. This explains why Amazon anchors frequently share personal experiences, whereas Alibaba International Station anchors highlight product parameters and corporate strength.

2.3   Challenges of Cross-cultural Text Communication

The language barrier is the primary challenge. The translation of professional terms and cultural symbols may lead to information distortion. For example, the Chinese expression "cost-effectiveness" is difficult to translate directly into English and is often rendered as "value for money" in live streaming contexts.

Cultural cognition differences also affect communicative effectiveness: humor that resonates with Western audiences may be difficult for Eastern audiences to understand, while the implicit expressions

favored in Eastern cultures may appear vague to Western audiences. In addition, differences in consumption concepts lead to divergent emphases in text expression: Western audiences tend to focus on individual needs, while Eastern audiences place greater emphasis on social recognition.

3   Analysis of Text Features in Cross–border E-commerce Live Streaming

3.1   Text Type and Structural Features

3.1.1   Opening Remarks

Amazon anchors often use a friendly, enthusiastic, and personalized opening style. For example, Madison Leroy says, *"Hey guys, it's Madison Leroy here. And we are going to do a 'what I eat in a day.' I am super excited about this…"* This opening greets the audience personally, shares her excitement and the live streaming theme, quickly bridging the gap and creating a relaxed, friendly atmosphere, reflecting the Western cultural emphasis on personal expression and building close relationships.

By contrast, Alibaba International Station's opening remarks are more functional. They usually directly state the purpose of the live streaming and the main content, such as *"Welcome to our live stream. Today we will introduce our new microphone products."* This concise expression aligns with the efficiency-oriented characteristics of Eastern commercial culture.

3.1.2   Product Introduction

Amazon's product introduction focuses on scenario-based description. Anchors combine products with daily life scenes to trigger resonance, such as *"This yoga mat is perfect for morning practice. Its non–slip surface keeps me stable even when I sweat."* This method transforms product features into life experiences, which are easily accepted by Western audiences.

Alibaba International Station's product introduction emphasizes professional parameters. It usually lists materials, specifications, and technical indicators, such as *"This product is made of 18K PVD gold, with a size range of 6–9, and the minimum order quantity is 3 pieces."* This expression meets the needs of Eastern business customers for accurate information.

3.1.3   Interaction Session

Amazon's interaction covers a wide range, including not only product-related questions but also life topics. For example, when introducing skincare products, anchors may discuss daily skincare habits with the audience, which is conducive to building a community atmosphere.

Alibaba International Station's interaction is mainly business-oriented. The topics focus on product customization, order processes, and after-sales service, such as *"If you have questions about the production cycle, please leave a message and we will reply."* This type of interaction is efficient and directly serves transactional purposes.

3.1.4   Promotion and Marketing

Amazon live streaming usually attracts consumers through time-limited discounts, promo codes, and highlighting price advantages. For example, when introducing Beats Studio Buds headphones, it emphasizes: *"Right now, they're 33% off, so you're getting them for just under $100"* and also mentions the product's popularity: *"Over 10,000 of these have been purchased in the last 30 days and people love them."* Such strategies leverage consumers' herd mentality to prompt purchases.

Alibaba International Station focuses more on the product's overall advantages and its appeal to business customers when conducting promotional marketing, highlighting cost-effectiveness, customization

services, and comprehensive after-sales guarantees. For example, when introducing jewelry products, it mentions: *"Our products are made of 18K PVD gold, and we can also make them in 14K PVD. We have different sizes—6, 7, 8, 9. The MOQ is 3 pieces per style."* This reflects the Eastern business culture's emphasis on integrity, quality, and long-term service.

3.1.5   Closing Remarks

Anchors on Amazon often end their sessions with emotion, focusing on building long-term connections with the audience. For example, Madison Leroy says: *"Thank you for watching me on Bravo. And if you need any other help, you know where to find me."* Through expressions of gratitude, anticipation of future interaction, and offering assistance, she strengthens the emotional bond with the audience, reflecting the Western cultural emphasis on interpersonal relationships and personal emotional communication.

The closing remarks on Alibaba International Station are relatively simple and mainly focus on business. For example: *"Thank you for watching our live stream. Thank you for your time."* This simply and directly thanks the audience for watching, without much emotional expression, focusing more on the commercial purpose of the live stream and reflecting the pragmatic and efficient style of Eastern culture.

3.2   Analysis on Language Characteristics

3.2.1   Directness and Indirectness

In Amazon live streams, anchors combine direct expression with indirect introduction. For example, Madison Leroy directly states her opinion on a product: "I think that this recipe definitely needs avocado. It's one of my favorite additions." She also conveys information indirectly by sharing personal experiences, such as mentioning her "75 hard" challenge when introducing food: "Y'all know I've been doing 75 hard. So, we are day 4 right now..." This natural transition makes the content more appealing and approachable.

By contrast, Alibaba International Station's live stream texts are more direct and product-oriented, focusing on information delivery. For instance: "This is our basketball jersey. As you can see, it's sleeveless." Such straightforward expression emphasizes clarity and efficiency in communication.

3.2.2   Conciseness and Comprehensibility

Amazon live stream texts are colloquial and casual, easy to understand but sometimes slightly lengthy. For example, when Madison Leroy shares daily trivialities and answers viewer questions, her language is natural but can appear scattered: "How often do I wash my hair? Like three times a week, you know? I've been doing a lot of Pilates, so like, I don't get as sweaty as I would when I was like lifting a bunch of weights."

In contrast, Alibaba International Station's language is concise and precise, focusing on key points. When introducing production time, an anchor explains: "For one to five pieces, it takes about 7 days; for 6 to 100 pieces, it takes about 10 days; for 100 to 10,000 pieces, it takes about 15 days; and for more than 10,000 pieces, it can be negotiated." The use of specific data and simple expressions allows customers to clearly understand production times for different order quantities.

3.2.3   Humor and Seriousness

Amazon live streams frequently incorporate humor. Anchors employ witty language to create a relaxed atmosphere and enhance audience interaction. For instance, Madison Leroy humorously comments on her homemade food: "This is going to get stuck all in my teeth. Okay, and this is it. I know it's not like pretty, but come and try this for real."

In contrast, Alibaba International Station's live stream texts adopt a more serious tone, emphasizing product introduction and business communication. For example: "Our company is a modern sportswear enterprise integrating research and development, processing, and trade. We specialize in producing sportswear such as basketball jerseys, dresses, and baseball uniforms." Such formal and rigorous language highlights professionalism and reliability.

4   Optimization Strategies for Cross-cultural Text Communication

4.1   Cultural Awareness Training and Enhancement

Strengthening the cross-cultural knowledge base of anchors. Systematic cross-cultural training courses should be conducted for cross-border e-commerce live streaming anchors, covering cultural values, customs, religious beliefs, consumer psychology, and other aspects of different countries and regions. For example, in Amazon live streaming targeting the European and American markets, anchors need to understand that Western consumers value individualism and emphasize how products meet personal needs and highlight individuality. In contrast, in Alibaba International Station live streaming targeting the Asian market, it is important to recognize that Asian consumers value collectivism and family values, and product introductions can focus on how to bring convenience and benefits to families or teams. Through training, anchors can avoid misunderstandings or offenses caused by cultural ignorance during live streaming and better communicate and interact with audiences from different cultural backgrounds.

Cultivating the cross-cultural sensitivity and adaptability of anchors. Anchors should be encouraged to continuously accumulate cross-cultural communication experience in live streaming practice and improve their sensitivity to different cultural signals. For example, when the audience shows specific culturally related emotions or reactions during live streaming interaction, the anchor can quickly perceive and respond appropriately. At the same time, anchors need to have the ability to flexibly adapt to different cultural scenarios, adjusting their live streaming style and language according to the cultural characteristics of the target market in a timely manner. For instance, in more conservative cultural regions, the anchor's attire and language should be relatively formal and cautious; while in more open and lively cultural regions, the anchor can adopt a more relaxed and humorous live streaming style.

Establishing a cross-cultural feedback and learning mechanism. A feedback platform should be created for anchors to collect timely audience input on their cultural performance during live broadcasts. Cross-cultural experience-sharing sessions should be regularly organized among anchors, where they can learn from each other's successes and mistakes in different cultural markets. For example, a successful Amazon US anchor can share techniques on leveraging American pop culture elements, while an anchor targeting the Middle Eastern market on Alibaba International Station can share experiences on respecting local cultural taboos and gaining viewer trust. This mechanism collectively elevates the anchors' cross-cultural communication abilities.

4.2   Localization and Differentiation of Live Streaming Content

In-depth study of target market cultural needs. Before live streaming, in-depth market research should be conducted on the target markets of Amazon and Alibaba International Station to understand local consumers' hot topics, cultural highlights, festivals, popular trends, and so forth. For example, during live streaming on Amazon's UK station coinciding with traditional British festivals such as Christmas or Easter, the live streaming content can incorporate relevant festival elements, launching festival-specific products or holding festival-themed promotional activities to attract consumer attention and participation. At the same time, attention should be paid to local consumers' special requirements and preferences for

product functions, quality, packaging, etc., integrating these cultural needs into the product display and introduction to make the products more aligned with the cultural expectations of the local market.

Creating localized live scenes and cases. Based on the cultural background and consumption scenarios of the target market, live streaming scenarios with local characteristics should be created. For example, in Alibaba International Station's live streaming targeting the Southeast Asian market, a live streaming background with Southeast Asian flair can be set up, using local characteristic decorations, traditional costumes, and so on, to create a strong regional cultural atmosphere. In addition, during the live stream, local success or user stories can be shared to make the audience more resonant. For instance, when introducing a smart home product, a story of how a local family improved their quality of life through the use of the product can be told, allowing the audience to intuitively feel the fit between the product and local life.

Differentiated product positioning and promotion. Product positioning and promotion strategies should be tailored to different markets based on cultural differences. In Western markets like Amazon, where consumers value innovation and technology, emphasis should be placed on a product's high-tech features, unique design, and cutting-edge functionality. In emerging or traditional markets, the focus should be on practicality, cost-effectiveness, and durability. Live broadcast content should be adjusted to showcase real-use effects, ease of operation, and after-sales service guarantees accordingly. This differentiated approach meets the diverse needs of consumers across cultural markets and enhances product competitiveness.

4.3   Optimization of Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication

Expressing and translating language accurately. Precise, clear, and understandable language should be used during live streaming. For Amazon live streaming targeting non-native English-speaking audiences, anchors should avoid overly complex or obscure words and expressions, instead using simple sentences and common vocabulary for product introduction and interaction. At the same time, for important information such as product parameters, usage instructions, and promotional activities, accurate multilingual subtitles or explanations can be provided to ensure audience comprehension. In Alibaba International Station's live streaming, for audiences with different language backgrounds, professional multilingual anchors or translators can be equipped to conduct real-time language conversion and communication, eliminating language barriers and improving communication effectiveness.

Using non-verbal symbols effectively. Non-verbal symbols should be fully utilized to enhance the appeal and affinity of the live stream. The anchor's body language, facial expressions, eye contact, and other non-verbal behaviors play an important role in cross-cultural live streaming. For example, positive body language such as smiling and nodding can convey a friendly and enthusiastic attitude, bridging the gap with the audience, while appropriate gestures when introducing products can help the audience better understand product features and usage methods. In addition, the background music and product display props in the live stream should be selected and matched according to the cultural preferences of the target market. For example, in live streaming targeting the Latin American market, lively and passionate background music can be chosen to create a warm atmosphere; while in live streaming targeting the Nordic market, simple and elegant product display props can be selected to meet the aesthetic needs of Nordic minimalist culture.

Adjusting the communication style flexibly. The communication style should be adapted to the preferences of different cultural audiences. In direct communication cultures like Western countries, a concise style should be used on Amazon, quickly moving to product introductions and promotions. In more reserved Asian cultures, emphasis should be placed on politeness and indirectness on Alibaba International Station, interacting with viewers first before product introductions. Culturally specific expressions or humor that may cause misunderstandings should be avoided.

5   Conclusion

This study has analyzed the cross-cultural communication characteristics of Amazon and Alibaba International Station's cross-border e-commerce live streams. The findings reveal distinct approaches: Amazon favors direct, relaxed, and emotionally expressive communication, aligning with Western individualism, whereas Alibaba International Station emphasizes formality, professionalism, and product-information completeness, reflecting Eastern collectivism and rigor. These differences are evident in both linguistic style and non-verbal elements (e.g., body language, spatial distance).

Effective cross-border live streaming therefore necessitates anchors' cross-cultural competence, which requires cultural knowledge, adaptive communication skills, and inclusive attitudes. Cultural training and strategic adjustments can significantly enhance the effectiveness of live streams and audience satisfaction. Accordingly, this study proposes optimization strategies focused on cultural awareness training, content localization, and refined linguistic and non-verbal communication strategies to boost global competitiveness.

Future research should broaden sample diversity, conduct rigorous analyses of non-verbal elements (visuals, sound, body language), explore the integration of AI and digital humans for enhanced communication, and investigate culturally specific consumer behaviors to inform more precise marketing strategies. Overall, this study provides critical insights for practitioners and researchers navigating the cross-cultural complexities of global e-commerce live streaming.

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