English in Global Commerce - Understanding its Role, Benefits, and Impediments

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Abstract—In the modern global business landscape, English has risen as the primary universal language. Utilising English for international business interactions brings numerous benefits. It not only improves understanding and collaboration amongst teams of varied language backgrounds but also facilitates enterprises in enlarging their global connections and reaching a wider range of global markets. By unifying communications in English, the decision-making process becomes more coherent and streamlined, propelling the company's overall efficiency. Nevertheless, heavy dependence on English is not without its challenges. Subtle cultural differences in translation might lead to misunderstandings, possibly hampering collaboration. A strong leaning towards English could also sideline non-native speakers, unintentionally putting those less fluent in the language at a disadvantage.

Keywords—global business communication, lingua franca, cross-cultural collaboration, English-mediated interactions, language barriers in business.

1. INTRODUCTION

The globalized nature of business in the 21st century has necessitated effective communication across diverse cultures and languages. Amidst this linguistic diversity, English has emerged as the lingua franca in international business settings. It also serves as a common language that facilitates communication and collaboration. This dissertation explores the advantages and pitfalls of using English as a lingua franca in business contexts. By delving into various aspects, this study provides a comprehensive understanding of the complexities associated with this phenomenon. English as the lingua franca in business has gained significant traction in recent years due to the interconnection of the global economy. According to Mikasa (2021), An overview of the research conducted over the past ten years in the subfield of ITSELF (interpreting, translation, and English as a lingua franca) regarding the effects of the global growth of English as a lingua franca (ELF) on conference interpreting is given in this chapter (Mikasa, 2021). Many multinational companies, regardless of their home country, adopt English as the primary language for communication. This trend has sparked academic interest in understanding the impact of this linguistic dominance on various aspects of business operation and interaction. English has several benefits as the universal business language since it promotes cross-border cooperation, trade, and communication. Its widespread application expedites negotiations, improves efficiency, and promotes intercultural understanding. However, there are also dangers, such as miscommunication, cultural insensitivity, and unequal access to opportunities, so it is important to take language dynamics in the context of global business seriously.

The primary aim of this study is to critically examine the advantages and pitfalls of employing English as the lingua franca in business settings. This research aims to shed light on the multifaceted nature of language use in international business by conducting an in-depth analysis. Its implications for cross-cultural communication. Identify the advantages of using English as a common language in international business communication. Analysing the challenges and pitfalls associated with language barriers and miscommunication in English medications in English-medicated business interactions. Exploring strategies and best practices to mitigate the challenges of language diversity in global business environments.

1.1. Rational of the study

The rationale for this study lies in the critical need to understand the implications of using English as the Lingua franca in business. It is to be considered its widespread adoption. Addressing this topic is essential for business,
policymakers, and academics, as it directly affects global trade, corporate strategies, and international relations. Its advantages foster effective international trade, collaboration, and cultural exchange. However, its pitfalls help businesses navigate linguistic challenges, ensuring smooth operations and fostering successful relationships. According to Turmudi (2020), the study holds significant importance in fostering effective communication and collaboration in the global business landscape. By identifying the advantages and pitfalls of English as the lingua franca, this research can inform business leaders, educators, and policymakers about the challenges multinational teams face. Additionally, it can guide the communication competencies (Turmudi, 2020).

This investigation examines the intricacies of using English as the common language in global business settings, weighing its merits and challenges, as well as its influence on intercultural communication. The study seeks to offer significant perspectives to the fields of business, linguistics, and global communication. By evaluating various aspects, this research aspires to provide guidance on best practices, policies, and tactics to bolster effective business communication. Employing English as the worldwide language brings benefits, including improved communication and more efficient global partnerships. It establishes a shared platform for negotiation and commerce. On the downside, there are issues like cultural misinterpretations and the overshadowing of specific regions, which could disadvantage speakers who are not native to English. A thoughtful approach and an appreciation for cultural nuances are crucial to successfully address these obstacles.

2. **Literature Review**

Businesses operate globally today's globalized world, interacting with partners, clients, and consumers from various linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Any successful company endeavor must be able to communicate across these disparities efficiently. Being the most frequently spoken language in the world, English has become the main language of commerce. A language chosen as a common communication medium amongst speakers whose native tongues differ is referred to as a lingua franca. The benefits and drawbacks of adopting English as the standard language in corporate settings are examined in this literature overview. This review offers important insights into the complications of language use in the international business sector by looking at previous research and academic articles.

![Figure 1. Conceptual Framework](image)

**1.2. Advantages of using English as the Lingua Franca in Business**

Despite the advantages, pitfalls are associated with the extensive use of English in the business world. One of the main challenges is the potential loss of cultural diversity within an organization. According to Lopez (2022), the language of commerce in today's globalised world is, without a doubt, English. In several businesses, English is the most widely utilized language. Over the past few years, an increasing number of global businesses have made English their corporate linguistic to facilitate statement between varied locations and departments (Lopez, 2022).

According to Nurmi (2020), When English becomes the dominant language, there is a risk of cultural homogenization, where unique cultural perspectives and practices may be overshadowed or lost. This can lead to a
lack of diversity in thought, potentially hindering creativity and problem-solving. Different cultural viewpoints often contribute to innovative ideas. English as the lingua franca in business has become increasingly prevalent in our globalized world (Nurmi, 2020). This trend is not without its reason, as English has numerous advantages as the common language in international business communication. According to Suebwongsuwan (2020), English links companies with different language and cultural backgrounds. It facilitates the efficient sharing of ideas and information, dismantling barriers to communication and promoting cooperation between multinational teams. Businesses that speak English as their first language get access to a larger market. Because English is frequently used as the primary language in international business talks and transactions, being proficient in the language can lead to chances for international trade, investment, and partnerships. Having a common language simplifies internal processes within multinational corporations. From creating standardized documentation to conducting training sessions, using English ensures consistency and efficiency across different branches and departments (Suebwongsuwan, 2020). Companies that speak English well will have an advantage in the global economy. They can efficiently interact with a larger clientele, meet a range of customer demands, and modify their marketing tactics to appeal to a worldwide audience, all of which will eventually result in a rise in market share and earnings. English is the dominant language in academic research and technological advancements. By adopting English, businesses can easily access the latest innovations, research findings, and industry developments, facilitating continuous learning and innovation within their organization. Proficiency in English enhances the employability of individuals in international markets. It enables businesses to hire skilled professionals from various countries, creating a diverse and talented workforce that can drive innovation and creativity.

2.2. Pitfalls and Challenges of Using English as the Lingua Franca in Business

Due to globalisation, there is a growing trend of companies expanding their operations overseas. Initiating a venture in an overseas territory presents language differences as a significant hurdle, and numerous enterprises are looking into the introduction of a uniform business language.

Ujiie (2020) posits that while English acts as a common communication tool, its usage does not necessarily lead to clear understanding. Communication challenges can emerge from distinct accents, dialect differences, and varying degrees of fluency. Additionally, there is an inherent connection between language and cultural practices. Misinterpreting certain phrases or cultural signs can cause cultural misunderstandings, potentially harming both interpersonal relationships and business transactions. Making English the exclusive language for communication might induce feelings of exclusion among those not fluent in it, affecting their self-assurance and their involvement in conversations (Ujiie, 2020). Solely depending on English may result in companies overlooking subtle cultural distinctions, thus bypassing opportunities for tailoring to the local market. Those not fluent in English may find it challenging to articulate complex concepts or feelings, leading to a lack of richness in crucial business exchanges. Consistently communicating in a language that isn't one's first can be cognitively demanding, potentially affecting employee well-being and causing fatigue. While designating English as the principal corporate language has many merits, it is crucial for companies to understand its potential drawbacks. It becomes essential to counter these challenges by investing in cultural familiarity initiatives, language education, and advanced communication resources. The path to an integrated global business environment lies in balancing the advantages of a unified business language with the requirement for diverse, culturally mindful communication. The benefits of utilizing English as the main business language are vast, including increased market reach, improved teamwork, and streamlined international exchanges. However, challenges like cultural misunderstandings and uneven language skills can hinder effective communication. To truly capitalise on the advantages of English as the global business medium, companies must identify and overcome these obstacles.

Research Question

Q1: What are the key advantages of using English as the lingua franca in international business communication? How do these advantages contribute to global business success?

Q2: What are the common pitfalls and challenges multinational companies face when implementing English as the primary language for business operations?

Q3: How do cultural differences affect the perspective and implementations of English as the lingua franca in different regions?
3. Method

This chapter focuses on the structure & models used by a researcher while performing research. Proper choices of technique & tools are important to complete the research successfully. Apart from that, the relevant data is important for completing the research. This chapter can be helpful for a successful outcome of the research.

![Research Onion](Source: Saunders et al., 2019, p. 108).

As cited by Bhat, Silllalee & Kandasamy (2023), to reach the aim of the research, adopted by a combination of mixed methods, research onion is needed. The research onion has many layers that describe the importance of implementing an effective methodology. The adopted methodology is an inductive approach. The use of dynamic understanding between philosophy & history & promotion of multi-disciplinary factors helps in emphasizing the importance of philosophical perspectives (Bhat, Silllalee & Kandasamy, 2023).

Research philosophy is the part where the examination, conduction & composition can be discussed. The research philosophy is based on the theories & the ideas, which are used in the research. While performing the research, the researcher focused on the four research philosophies primarily: Positivism, Interpretivism, Realism, and Pragmatism.

![Research philosophy](Source: Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020).

Justification for choosing the research philosophy: The philosophy has four major subdivisions. This particular study has been clarified with the help of Positivism. The observation & the related thoughts have been used in this part of the research. According to Alharahsheh & Pius (2020), positivism is generally focused on observing reality with society, which leads to the product of generalization (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020).
3.1. Research Approach & Design

The research approach helps a researcher to construct the format of their study. The research approach is a part where the researcher can elaborate on the findings & the information that are collected from different kinds of sources based on the topic. The research approach has two main subdivisions, namely inductive approach & deductive approach.

Justification for choosing the research approach: The researcher has used a deductive approach for the study. A deductive approach is a logical method of reasoning in which a conclusion is derived from general principles or facts. It starts with a broad area of theory & then uses specific observations or evidence to reach a specific & relevant conclusion. It is also associated with formal logic & is characterized by its emphasis on certainty & the preservation of truth.

3.2. Data collection method

Data methodology refers to the systematic approach & technique used to collect, analyze & interpret data. It includes data collection methods, data storage & many more. This part of the research plays an important role during analysis.

3.3. Quantitative and qualitative data

Quantitative data analysis is a research technique to collect numerical & statistical information from a set of data. It encompasses the interpretation of numerical information through surveys, experiments, or measurements. For this,
the researcher uses statistical techniques to analyze patterns, relationships & trends within the data. This method is crucial in fields like economics, psychology & natural science. Qualitative data analysis involves interpreting non-numerical information like text, visual data & many more. In this method, the researcher employs methods like thematic analysis.

![Figure 6. Data Collection Method](image)

3.4. Data analysis technique

Data analysis techniques encompass a diverse range of methods designed to interpret, examine, and derive meaningful insights from datasets. These methods can be broadly categorised into statistical procedures, machine-learning algorithms (MIL), and qualitative approaches. MIL are a more recent addition to the analyst's toolkit. These algorithms, which include predictive modelling and classification techniques, are designed to identify patterns within large datasets. Unlike statistical methods, MIL continuously refines its outputs as more data is fed, leading to improved accuracy over time. Qualitative approaches, on the other hand, deal with non-numerical data. Techniques like thematic analysis or content analysis delve deep into textual or visual data, aiming to capture underlying motivations, emotions, or patterns. This approach offers a nuanced understanding, shedding light on the 'why' behind the data. Effectively applying these techniques is crucial. Properly analysed data can reveal hidden insights, reinforce existing theories, or even lead to new discoveries. However, the road from collecting data to gleaning meaningful results is intricate. It's essential that researchers choose the most suitable technique based on their specific objectives and the nature of the data. Only with meticulous analysis can raw data be transformed into actionable, credible findings.

3.5. Sample Selection

It is necessary to choose a sample size because the entire population cannot be taken as the sample of research. Here in this research, the surveyor has selected 50 samples. In this research, the researcher uses a random sampling method for choosing the samples.

4. Results

Data collected by survey & analysed by quantitative data analysis are important for successful completion of the research. There are 13 questions, and the researcher has collected 50 samples in total. Moreover, the questions have focused on the concerned topic & that helps the researcher to collect data accordingly.
4.1. Quantitative analysis (Survey)

What is your job title/position?

![Job title distribution](image1)

Figure 7. Job title of the respondent

This figure highlights that an estimated 34% of the respondents agreed to the entry-level, whereas 30% agreed to the senior management level.

In which industry does your company primarily operate?

![Industry distribution](image2)

Figure 8. Industry to which your country primarily operates

In this figure, nearly 36% of the respondents agreed that their company depends on finance on a primary basis. Apart from that, the consecutive percentages are 34% on technology & 20% on healthcare.

Number of years employed in the current company or industry

![Years of employment distribution](image3)

Figure 9. Number of years employed in the current company

This figure highlights that approximately 36% of the respondents are having 0-2 years of experience. Apart from that, nearly 30% of the respondents have both 3-5 years & 6-10 years of experience.

How often do you use English in your business communications?
In this figure, approximately 40% of the respondents are using English a frequent intervals for business communication. Apart from that, nearly 28% of the respondents are using this language either always or on an occasional basis.

Do you agree that English as a common language has made international business collaborations easier?

In this figure, nearly 40% of the respondents strongly agree that the use of English as a common language has made international business collaboration easier. Apart from that, nearly 36% agree that it has made international business collaboration easier.

Has using English in business communications broadened your company’s global reach?

This figure highlights that nearly 56% of the respondents agree that the use of the English language in business communications broadened the company's global reach. Apart from that, nearly 22% of the respondents opted no or not sure in answering this.

Do you believe that English proficiency gives a competitive advantage in the global market?
This figure depicts that nearly 34% of the respondents agree that English proficiency gives a competitive advantage in the global market. Apart from that, approximately 26% remain neutral.

Have you ever experienced miscommunication or misunderstandings due to varying levels of English proficiency?

This figure depicts that approximately 64% of the respondents agree that, yes, there are some misunderstandings due to varying levels of English proficiency.

Do you feel that relying solely on English might overlook the cultural nuances and values of non-English speaking regions?

This figure highlights that nearly 28% of the respondents strongly agree that, yes, English might overlook the cultural nuances & values of non-English speaking regions.

Has there been a situation where the use of English as the primary language led to a missed business opportunity?
Figure 15. The use of English as the primary language led to a missed business opportunity

In this Figure, nearly 44% of the respondents agree that, yes, the use of English as the primary language led to a missed business opportunity. Apart from that, approximately 34% of the respondents opted for NO.

Does your company provide training programs to improve employees' English proficiency?

Figure 16. The company provide training programs to improve employees' English proficiency

In this graph, nearly 66% of the respondents opted yes, for the company should provide training programs to improve employees' English proficiency.

Do you believe the training has been beneficial in enhancing business communications?

Figure 17. Is the training has been beneficial in enhancing business communication

In this graph, nearly 36% of the respondents agree that the training program is beneficial in enhancing business communication.

Would you support initiatives to introduce multi-language proficiency in your business to cater to specific regions or clients?
Figure 18. Introduction of multi-language proficiency in the business to cater to specific regions or clients

In this diagram, nearly 40% of the respondents agree with the introduction of multi-language proficiency in the business to cater to specific regions or clients. Apart from that, approximately 32% opted to agree strongly.

5. DISCUSSION

In an interconnected and globalised era, the pivotal role of a universal language in business is more prominent than ever. Over 1.5 billion individuals globally speak English, making it a frontrunner for international dialogues. By opting for English in business environments, it is possible to streamline communication, leading to enhanced efficiency in transactions. Such proficiency often accelerates decision-making and facilitates swifter problem resolution. A significant proportion of business-oriented materials, ranging from research papers to educational resources, are available in English. This provides professionals proficient in the language with direct and timely access to the latest developments and knowledge in their sectors. Across six countries, English is acknowledged as the primary professional dialect, not just a mere language skill, but an essential prerequisite in the recruitment processes (Nielsen, 2019).

English's inherent neutrality makes it a favoured medium for bridging cultural divides. When adopted as the common medium of communication, it sidesteps any inadvertent cultural favouritism, thus minimising potential misunderstandings. The widespread usage of English can bring about a uniformity in varied industries. Such standardisation fosters the emergence of universally accepted terminologies and practices, which in turn simplifies and harmonises international operations. For enterprises operating predominantly in English, there is a distinct advantage when navigating the global marketplace. They can negotiate, engage, and communicate more efficiently with partners and clients from various corners of the world. Furthermore, companies that have English as their foundational operational language are magnets for global talent. Top-tier professionals, especially those from diverse linguistic backgrounds, often prefer employers offering a comfortable linguistic environment for their day-to-day operations. By focusing their operations predominantly in English, companies can also drastically cut down on costs associated with translation and interpretation—savings that are paramount for large-scale multinational entities. Today, the gradual shift towards a more English-centric mode of communication on a global scale is not just a trend but also a necessity. Regular interactions in English in the workplace have proven time and again to be indispensable for the smooth and efficient running of organisations (Nielsen, 2019).

Lopez (2022) further underscores that in today's complex web of international businesses, English indisputably holds the reins as the primary language of commerce. A growing number of enterprises, big and small, are gradually aligning with the idea of English as their chief communication tool, especially to bridge the gap between varied departments and facilitate unhindered dialogues across their branches worldwide. Yet, an overemphasis on a single language, no matter how universal, can eclipse the rich tapestry of local cultures and dialects. Such overshadowing might inadvertently lead to instances of cultural insensitivity, jeopardising potentially fruitful business relationships. An unwavering focus on English might also diminish the motivation to delve into other languages, presenting challenges when interacting with truly multilingual entities. While the advantages of anchoring business communications in English are undeniable, it is equally important to acknowledge and address the challenges it brings to the fore, including cultural oversights, proficiency disparities, and the looming threat of diluting cultural and linguistic richness. Balancing the global embrace of English with a deep-rooted respect for linguistic diversity is the need of the hour in today's globalised landscape.
Clear, concise, and effective communication, coupled with seamless team collaboration, stand tall as the most pronounced benefits of integrating English into business operations. A consistent language framework inherently supports international transactions, fostering a climate of understanding, reducing ambiguities, and dramatically lowering the chances of misinterpretations. English proficiency is increasingly perceived as a golden ticket in the global job market, paving the way for a plethora of opportunities and acting as a bridge for knowledge exchanges on an international scale. Companies adept in English can also expand their reach, tapping into previously inaccessible markets. Digital assets, be it websites, promotional materials, or detailed product documentation penned in English, invariably strike a chord with a vast global audience, thus bolstering clientele and driving revenues. On an organisational level, a unified language ethos fosters an atmosphere of camaraderie, invigorating the spirits of employees, and furthermore the cause of collaborative endeavours. Even with a wealth of research on the merits and demerits of English as the global business language, there is a discernible gap in understanding its far-reaching implications, especially concerning the nuances of linguistic diversity and the broader socio-economic dynamics of language primacy. Addressing this void is imperative, ensuring strategies are not just about efficient communication but also about preserving the essence of linguistic and cultural diversity in the world of business.

6. CONCLUSION

The adoption of English as the primary language for business dealings has become notably common in the contemporary era. This evolution brings with it both merits and challenges which enterprises and professionals have to adeptly manage to enable effective communication and collaboration across various linguistic and cultural divisions. A principal merit of utilising English as the principal language in commerce is the improvement in communication and comprehension amongst varied teams. Mastery in English lets individuals from myriad cultural origins work together coherently. Thus, it eases the dissemination of notions, acumen, and specialisation, nurturing ingenuity and originality within global firms. By eliminating language hindrances, employing English as a universal language supports a more inclusive professional milieu, wherein all members can engage in dialogues and decision-making activities irrespective of their first language. An additional substantial benefit is the fiscal advantage linked with a unified language in global business dealings. Enterprises that designate English as their dominant language can make their operations more coherent and diminish translation expenses. This uniformity makes the processes of negotiations, contracts, and legal commitments more straightforward, paving the way for fluid business dealings and minimising the probability of misconceptions. Thus, enterprises can cater to a wide-ranging audience and set a worldwide footprint more efficiently by interacting in English, thereby drawing international clientele and associates. However, despite these advantages, there are certain pitfalls linked with the dominant use of English in the business realm. One of the principal concerns is the potential erosion of cultural diversity within firms. There exists a risk that unique cultural insights and customs might get overshadowed or vanish as English emerges as the dominant tongue. This phenomenon is referred to as cultural uniformity. Such a scenario might lead to a deficit in diverse thought, which might hinder originality and troubleshooting since inventive notions often emerge from the fusion of varied cultural viewpoints. Differences in language proficiency among employees might also result in disparities at work. Those who are not fluent in English might struggle to convey their insights or viewpoints effectively, leading them to potentially be sidelined from discussions and decision-making activities. Such linguistic discrepancies can hinder teamwork, negatively impacting the overall efficiency of the enterprise. Whilst the usage of English as the global business language offers numerous merits in terms of fiscal efficiency, worldwide outreach, and communicative effectiveness, enterprises should remain cognizant of potential pitfalls. Companies should advocate for linguistic variety and provide their personnel with the necessary tools and means to hone their English communication abilities. By embracing comprehensive communication tactics, like language enhancement programmes and translation amenities, challenges arising from linguistic differences can be mitigated, ensuring every employee has a fair opportunity to partake in and prosper in the international commerce landscape. The key lies in balancing the advantages of a common business tongue with the conservation of cultural plurality.
References


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