

The Challenges of Exporting to English-Speaking Countries: Experiences from Non-Anglophone Business Owners

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Abstract

This study examines the obstacles encountered by non-Anglophone business owners when exporting to Anglophone countries, thus contributing to the body of knowledge regarding international trade barriers. It employs a qualitative methodology, adopting an interpretive paradigm to explore the multifaceted nature of human behavior and experiences within this context. The data collection methods encompassed semi-structured interviews, participant observations, and thematic analysis of concrete case studies derived from authentic experiences. This study investigated a range of challenges, including linguistic barriers, cross-cultural variations, marketing adaptation strategies, divergent customer expectations, and regulatory compliance issues. This approach elucidates the impediments faced by non-Anglophone business proprietors and delineates their strategies for overcoming these obstacles. The findings identify the key factors influencing export success and provide empirically grounded recommendations for non-Anglophone business owners seeking to enhance their export capabilities in the Anglophone markets. This study contributes to the literature on international entrepreneurship and cross-cultural business practices and offers insights that may inform international trade practitioners and policymakers.

Keywords: cross-cultural business, English-speaking countries, export barriers, international trade, interpretive paradigm, language barriers, linguistic barriers, miscommunication, misinterpretations, multicultural, non-Anglophone business owners, resource-based theory, thematic analysis

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Problem

Current international trade strategies that focus on exports present significant growth opportunities for organizations seeking to expand their businesses beyond domestic markets (Kaskelainen, 2018). Anglophone nations, such as the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia, are particularly attractive markets because of their consumer bases and strong economies (Calikoglu, 2018). However, non-Anglophone business owners face distinct challenges when navigating English-speaking markets (Roshid, 2018; Talukder & Barner-Rasmussen, 2024). Linguistic barriers constitute a fundamental obstacle for non-Anglophone business owners seeking to penetrate Anglophone markets (Alali, 2019; Iriskulov et al., 2021). Communication challenges manifest across various aspects of export operations, including negotiations, marketing, advertising, customer service, and supply chain management (Sharma, 2018). These language-related issues can hinder effective communication, potentially leading to misunderstandings and misinterpretations that ultimately obstruct business transactions and development (Brannen et al., 2016).

Cross-cultural disparities also play a crucial role in shaping business processes and interactions in English-speaking countries (Barnawi & Al-Hawsawi, 2017). Cultural nuances significantly influence marketing strategies, consumer behavior, business etiquette, and relationship-building practices. Non-Anglophone business owners may encounter difficulties adapting their products, marketing messages, and business practices to align with the cultural expectations and preferences of Anglophone consumers (Schroedler, 2018). These cultural challenges can affect market access, consumer acceptance, and long-term success in the target markets. Despite the significance of these challenges, there is a lack of in-depth research exploring the experiences of non-Anglophone business owners exporting to English-speaking countries. The existing literature focuses on general challenges or linguistic hurdles that non-Anglophone business owners face, but lacks a detailed exploration of this specific market context (Hannibal & Madsen, 2021). This study aims to address this gap by

providing comprehensive insights into the obstacles that non-Anglophone business owners encounter and the strategies they employ to overcome them.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

This study investigates the multifaceted challenges that non-Anglophone business owners encounter when exporting to Anglophone markets. In an increasingly globalized economy, export-oriented strategies present significant growth opportunities for businesses. However, linguistic barriers pose substantial impediments to non-Anglophone business proprietors (Ujiie, 2023). These include communication difficulties, cross-cultural disparities, and linguistic nuances, which impede effective market access and business success. A comprehensive understanding of these challenges and strategies for overcoming them is crucial for non-Anglophone business owners to fully capitalize on opportunities in Anglophone markets (Li et al., 2022).

Although extensive research has been conducted on global business practices and export strategies, few studies have specifically addressed the experiences of non-Anglophone business owners exporting to English-speaking countries. Existing scholarship predominantly focuses on the general export challenges or linguistic barriers faced by non-native English speakers in various contexts. For instance, Alali (2019) examined the challenges experienced by non-native English speakers in multilingual and multicultural work environments. Similarly, Tien and Ngoc (2019) explored various modes of international market entry, such as franchising, foreign direct investment, and licensing, and analyzed the associated barriers, benefits, and success factors. However, there remains a significant gap in the literature regarding the specific obstacles exporters face when linguistic barriers are a primary concern. This research gap necessitates a focused exploration of the unique experiences, perspectives, and strategies employed by non-Anglophone business owners in Anglophone markets. A nuanced understanding of the hurdles business owners face can provide valuable insights for policymakers, practitioners, and academics. This knowledge can inform the development of effective support mechanisms and strategies to facilitate successful export ventures in English-speaking countries, thereby contributing to a broader field of international business and cross-cultural entrepreneurship.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The primary aim of this study is to investigate the linguistic challenges that non-Anglophone business owners encounter when exporting goods to Anglophone markets. Specifically, the researcher sought to

- a. identify and analyze linguistic barriers, including verbal and written communication difficulties, translation processes, and interpretation issues.
- b. examine the impact of cross-cultural English communication on various aspects of business operations, including marketing strategies and customer engagement practices, for non-Anglophone business owners targeting Anglophone markets; and
- c. explore and evaluate the strategies, methodologies, and technological tools employed by non-Anglophone business owners to effectively mitigate linguistic barriers in their interactions with Anglophone customers, suppliers, and business partners.

1.4 Research Questions

To address the aforementioned objectives, the researcher will investigate the following research questions:

- a. What are the primary linguistic obstacles that non-Anglophone business owners encounter when exporting to English-speaking countries, and how do these barriers manifest in various business contexts?
- b. How does the need for English communication across diverse cultural contexts influence marketing and customer interaction strategies for non-Anglophone business owners targeting Anglophone markets?
- c. What specific strategies, techniques, and technological solutions do non-Anglophone business owners employ to overcome linguistic barriers and facilitate effective communication with Anglophone customers, suppliers, and business partners?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study offers significant contributions to various stakeholders in international business, particularly focusing on the challenges faced by non-Anglophone business owners when exporting to English-speaking markets. It provides critical insights into the multifaceted challenges non-Anglophone business proprietors encounter in Anglophone export markets. It elucidates the linguistic barriers, cultural disparities, and effective strategies for overcoming these obstacles. These findings will support informed decision-making, help refine marketing

strategies, and potentially enhance overall export performance (Ye, 2024). Policymakers stand to gain a deeper understanding of the specific challenges that non-Anglophone business owners face in international trade. This study's insights can inform the development of targeted policies and programs designed to support business owners, such as language acquisition initiatives, cultural adaptation support mechanisms, and improved access to market intelligence. These interventions can foster a more inclusive economic growth environment and expand global trade opportunities for non-Anglophone business owners (Walby, 2018).

This study offers valuable insights and practical information to practitioners, including export consultants and business advisors, to guide non-Anglophone business owners in their export endeavors. It will also provide a deeper understanding of effective communication strategies, cultural adaptation techniques, and methods for establishing robust relationships between anglophone partners and consumers. Practitioners can leverage this knowledge to provide tailored consultancy services, thereby enhancing clients' export capabilities and increasing their likelihood of success (Chabowski et al., 2018; França & Rua, 2017). In the academic sphere, this study makes a significant contribution to the fields of international business, cross-cultural management, and linguistic barriers in global trade. By specifically examining the experiences of non-Anglophone business owners exporting to English-speaking countries, this study addresses this gap in the literature. These findings can serve as the foundation for extending theoretical frameworks, developing new conceptual models, and identifying future research directions related to linguistic obstacles, cultural adaptation processes, and international business strategies. This research enriches scholarly discourse and enhances the understanding of the complex challenges that non-Anglophone business owners face in global markets (Pudelko et al., 2022).

1.6 Research Structure

In this study, the researcher followed a conventional research structure comprising of several key sections.

Section 1 (Introduction) provides a comprehensive overview of the research, including the study's background, problem statement, objectives, and research questions. It outlines the challenges faced by non-native English-speaking businesses in Anglophone markets, aims to address these issues, and highlights the significance of this research in facilitating international trade through improved communication strategies.

Section 2 (Literature Review) critically examines the extant literature on international trade, encompassing export marketing, the significance of exports, export motivations, English language challenges, and relevant theoretical frameworks.

Section 3 (Methodology) delineates the research design by employing a qualitative approach through semi-structured interviews and participant observations to explore business proprietors' lived experiences. The researcher also elucidates the sampling strategy, providing a rationale for the utilization of purposive sampling to select participants directly involved in exporting to anglophone markets.

Section 4 (Findings) presents the research outcomes, describes the results of the data synthesis, and elucidates the study's key findings.

Section 5 (Discussion) juxtaposes the findings with existing literature and theoretical frameworks, highlighting both congruencies and discrepancies. The researcher also discusses practical implications for business proprietors and policymakers.

Section 6 (Conclusions) synthesizes the key findings and offers recommendations for non-native Anglophone business owners. In addition, the researcher describes the limitations of the study and proposes future research directions.

This research structure ensures a systematic and comprehensive exploration of the challenges faced by non-Anglophone exporters in English-speaking markets. It will contribute to the body of knowledge in international business, and potentially inform the development of AI-driven solutions to address these challenges.

2. Literature Review

This chapter presents a comprehensive review of existing literature relevant to the challenges faced by non-Anglophone business owners when exporting to Anglophone countries. The review examines key themes, including language barriers, cultural differences, regulatory complexities, and market adaptation strategies. It begins by exploring the broader context of international trade and globalization, then narrows its focus to the specific obstacles encountered in Anglophone markets. The chapter also investigates successful strategies employed by non-Anglophone exporters to overcome these challenges. By synthesizing findings from various studies, this literature review aims to provide a solid foundation for understanding the multifaceted nature of

cross-linguistic and cross-cultural business expansion.

2.1 Export Marketing

In the evolving context of global commerce, export strategies have become a critical component of enterprises seeking to expand beyond their domestic markets. Maheswari and Gunavathi (2024) conceptualized exports as the transfer of goods or services produced in one nation to buyers in another nation. As one of the most established forms of economic transfer and growth, exports facilitate large-scale transactions between countries. This fundamental element of international trade presents many opportunities for firms to access new markets and diversify their revenue streams (Sinta et al., 2023). However, the export process is multifaceted and requires meticulously orchestrated strategic steps. The initial phase of international market selection commences with market identification, where firms evaluate potential foreign markets based on various factors such as market size, growth potential, and cultural congruence (Fulton et al., 2021). This preliminary step was followed by a comprehensive market analysis involving extensive research to assess the demand for products or services in the target market. Product adaptation is a crucial consideration for market identification and analysis. Organizations must demonstrate flexibility and cultural sensitivity by modifying their offerings to align with the target market's specific needs and preferences. This adaptation process may encompass localizing packaging, labeling, and marketing materials to conform to local customs, linguistic requirements, and regulatory frameworks (Gordon & Williams, 2020). As they tailor products to new markets, exporters must navigate through the intricate global shipping logistics domain. Such navigation requires a thorough understanding of shipping and transportation methodologies, customs clearance procedures, and documentation requirements (Kabak et al., 2018). Concurrently, exporters must ensure compliance with trade regulations, procure the necessary export licenses, and adhere to export control laws (Whang, 2021).

Once they have addressed logistical and compliance factors, exporters can focus on market entry strategies. These may include direct sales to consumers, collaboration with agents or distributors, or leveraging e-commerce and digital platforms to reach international audiences (Singh & Mondal, 2019). Regardless of the chosen approach, effective marketing and sales initiatives are paramount to attracting and retaining customers in new markets. Communication plays an important role in these complex processes. Exporters must adeptly navigate linguistic barriers and cultural disparities to negotiate and interact successfully with foreign customers, partners, and suppliers (Daramola et al., 2024). This communication requires not only linguistic proficiency but also cultural intelligence and adaptability. Exporting is a complex and dynamic endeavor that demands meticulous planning, astute market assessment, thoughtful product customization, efficient logistical coordination, and effective cross-cultural communication (Gregory et al., 2019). Success in international markets relies on understanding local market nuances, tailoring products or services accordingly, and building strong and enduring relationships with customers and partners across borders. In doing so, firms position themselves to capitalize on the numerous opportunities that international trade presents in an increasingly interconnected global economy.

2.2 Significance of Exporting

International trade with exports as its fundamental component plays a pivotal role in the global economy. As a primary catalyst for economic growth, employment generation, and business expansion, it serves as the cornerstone of contemporary commerce (Hoekman, 2018). The substantial contribution of international trade to the global GDP illustrates the importance of exports.

At the macroeconomic level, exports constitute a critical component of a nation's GDP and trade balance. Numerous empirical studies have established a positive correlation between export activities and GDP growth, lending support to the proposition that exports significantly contribute to economic development (Cetulean & Tănase, 2024; Dashkov, 2023; Khan et al., 2024). In addition to macroeconomic considerations, exports are crucial to individual enterprises. Access to international markets provides a pathway for diversification, expansion, and enhanced profitability for businesses across the spectrum, from small- and medium-sized enterprises to multinational corporations. This global reach enables firms to tap into previously unexplored customer bases, establish new distribution channels, and gain competitive advantages in the global marketplace (Appleton, 2019).

Export activities are linked intrinsically to job creation and economic development. As companies expand their operations to serve international markets, they often require an increase in their workforce, thereby generating additional employment opportunities in their home countries (Salehi & Jamshidi, 2022). This market expansion strengthens economic activity and improves living standards (Nouri & Boujelbene, 2022). For non-Anglophone business proprietors, high proficiency in English is paramount for success in the global market (Rattan, 2024). In their endeavors to penetrate Anglophone markets, these business owners must navigate not only the complexities

inherent in international trade, but also the linguistic and cultural nuances associated with English-speaking markets. A comprehensive understanding of the role of exports in the broader economic landscape provides a critical context for examining the unique challenges faced by these entrepreneurial entities (Reddy et al., 2023). This multifaceted significance of exporting underscores the importance of studying and addressing the barriers non-Anglophone business owners face in their efforts to expand to English-speaking markets. By elucidating these challenges and potential solutions, research in this area can contribute to more inclusive and effective global trade practices, ultimately benefiting both businesses and the global economy.

2.3 Motives for Exporting

In the dynamic realm of international commerce, enterprises are propelled toward export activities by a diverse array of motivations, each shaped by the specific objectives and circumstances of the exporting entity (Makaya, 2024). The prospect of market expansion is central to the aspirations of many exporters. Firms can access a substantially larger consumer base by penetrating overseas markets and creating new avenues for sales growth and revenue generation (Paul et al., 2017). This global reach not only enables businesses to mitigate dependence on a singular domestic market, but also provides a robust strategy for diversifying revenue streams, thereby fostering a more resilient business model.

The potential for accelerated growth and enhanced profitability is another potential incentive for firms to embark on export initiatives. Exporters are well-positioned to capitalize on market opportunities abroad, particularly in regions where the demand for their products or services surpasses that of their domestic market. Such expanded market access can translate into significantly higher revenue, and ultimately improve financial performance (Tien & Ngoc, 2019). Exporting also offers companies the opportunity to achieve economies of scale in their production process. Catering to a larger global customer base allows firms to increase their production volumes, leading to substantial cost reductions through improved efficiency and effective resource utilization and enhancing overall competitiveness in both domestic and international markets (Arkolakis et al., 2021; Roy & Roy, 2024). For enterprises possessing unique products, cutting-edge technologies, or specialized expertise, exporting presents an opportunity to leverage these distinctive assets on a global scale. By entering export markets, such firms can differentiate themselves from their domestic competitors and establish niches in international markets (Efrat et al., 2018). Moreover, exposure to diverse global markets can catalyze innovation and drive continuous improvement, further strengthening a company's competitive position (Niskhodovska, 2024). Risk diversification is another compelling rationale for firms to pursue exports. In an increasingly volatile global economy, reliance on a single market can render businesses vulnerable to local economic downturns or market fluctuations. Companies can create a more balanced portfolio of customers and reduce their exposure to regional economic risk by distributing their operations across markets (Mawdsley et al., 2018).

Additionally, exporting can serve as an effective strategy for companies that grapple with an excess production capacity. Shiamwama et al. (2022) point out that businesses with underutilized assets or resources can leverage export markets to maximize operational efficiency. By tapping into international demand, companies can utilize idle capacity to improve their overall performance and resource utilization (Levinthal & Wu, 2024; Shiamwama et al., 2022). Motivations for exporting are as diverse as those in the global marketplace. Whether driven by the quest for new customers, pursuit of economies of scale, desire to leverage unique competitive advantages, or need to mitigate risks, companies that successfully navigate the complexities of international trade can reap significant rewards (Benabed, 2024; Sinta et al., 2023). As the global economy continues to evolve, these multifaceted motivations will likely continue to propel businesses to a global stage, shaping the future of international commerce. Understanding these diverse motivations for exports is crucial for both international business practitioners and researchers. It provides a foundation for developing effective export strategies and policies, and offers insights into the complex decision-making processes that drive firms to engage in international trade.

2.4 English Language Challenges in Exporting

Linguistic barriers have emerged as formidable obstacles, particularly for non-Anglophone business owners venturing into English-speaking markets. These language-related challenges, as Subramaniam et al. (2021) aptly noted, can become significant impediments in the context of exporting, potentially undermining the most promising business ventures. The foundation of successful international trade lies in effective communication, a competency that becomes exponentially more critical when navigating foreign markets (Pimonratanakan et al., 2022; Subramaniam et al., 2021). As Pimonratanakan et al. (2022) emphasized, clear and precise communication is indispensable for cultivating relationships, negotiating contracts, and comprehending the nuanced needs of customers in overseas markets.

The impact of language barriers on export activities manifests in several ways. The most immediately apparent are the communication difficulties that arise between exporters and their foreign counterparts. Harkusha and Vasylieva (2022) highlight how these linguistic gaps can severely hinder effective verbal exchanges between exporters and their foreign customers, suppliers, and partners. The consequences of such barriers are far from being realized. Disparities in language proficiency often lead to misunderstandings, misinterpretations, and ineffective information exchange (Harkusha & Vasylieva, 2022). These issues permeate through the fabric of business operations, complicating transactions, impeding negotiation processes, and hampering the overall relationship building essential for long-term success in foreign markets (Ribeiro & Ferro, 2020; Shamsi et al., 2020). Language barriers also pose challenges beyond verbal communication. As Helmich et al. (2017) observed, language is inextricably intertwined with culture, and linguistic barriers often reflect deeper cultural differences that profoundly influence export transactions. Misunderstandings arising from cultural nuances and norms can lead to inappropriate behavior, unintentional offenses, or ineffective marketing approaches (Helmich et al., 2017). Francioni et al. (2017) argued that effective exporting requires not only linguistic proficiency, but also cultural sensitivity and adaptability. Successful exporters must be able to tailor their communication and marketing strategies to align with their target market's cultural preferences.

The repercussions of language barriers also extend to consumer perceptions and satisfaction. Customers may experience frustration or reluctance in interacting with exporters who struggle to communicate effectively in their language (Maheswari & Palanivelu, 2024). This linguistic disconnect can create an impression of unprofessionalism or a perceived lack of commitment to the market. Moreover, inadequate language skills can erode customer confidence and loyalty, potentially leading to lost business opportunities (Aichhorn & Puck, 2017; Rana & Shaikh, 2024). To navigate these linguistic challenges, non-Anglophone business proprietors must recognize that overcoming language barriers does not merely involve mastering vocabulary and grammar. Overcoming of language barriers requires a holistic approach encompassing cultural understanding, adaptability, and commitment to effective communication (Dalbergenova & Akhmetova, 2024; Rao, 2024). By addressing these challenges, exporters can bridge the linguistic divide, forge stronger relationships with international partners and customers, and ultimately unlock the full potential of the global markets. The English language challenges faced by non-Anglophone exporters represent a complex and multifaceted issue that goes beyond simple translations. It encompasses cultural intelligence, communication strategies, and market adaptations. Understanding and addressing these challenges is crucial for developing effective export strategies and policies, particularly for businesses and policymakers focused on facilitating international trade in an increasingly globalized economy.

2.5 Other Challenges of Exporting

In the evolving landscape of global commerce, businesses venturing beyond their domestic borders face myriad challenges, regardless of their linguistic or cultural backgrounds (Gowda HG & Kritika, 2024; Tenzer et al., 2017). As firms navigate this complex terrain, they encounter obstacles that can significantly affect their export endeavors. The most prominent hurdles are trade barriers and tariffs, which create a dynamic and uncertain environment for exporters (Dür et al., 2019; Kinzius et al., 2019). This volatility can hinder market access and substantially increase export costs, thus necessitating constant strategic adaptation. Cultural differences present another significant challenge for exporting landscapes. Exporters must understand the local customs and tailor their products and marketing strategies accordingly. This cultural sensitivity is not merely a nicety, but a necessity for success in diverse global markets (Vescovi, 2022). Additionally, the processes of market selection and entry mode determination add complexity to export operations. Factors, such as market size, growth potential, competitive intensity, and entry barriers, influence these crucial decisions (Brouthers et al., 2022; Lin & Ho, 2019). Logistics and supply chain management are essential components of successful export operations (Gregory et al., 2019). Exporters often face specific barriers, such as transportation, customs, documentation, and supply chain coordination. Addressing these obstacles is crucial for optimizing efficiency and maintaining competitiveness in international markets (Venkatesh et al., 2020). Financial constraints also pose significant challenges, particularly for smaller firms (Revindo et al., 2024). Exporting often requires substantial financial resources, and access to adequate financing can present barriers to firms seeking to expand globally (Abaidoo et al., 2021; Andreasen et al., 2024).

In a competitive global market landscape, exporters must contend with both domestic and international rivals already established in the target markets (Amoah et al., 2022). Success in these environments requires understanding customer preferences, adapting products to local tastes, and offering value-added services (Mayer, 2021). Moreover, navigating the complex regulatory and legal frameworks of different countries adds another layer of difficulty, involving compliance with various customs procedures, trade documentation requirements,

intellectual property rights, and export control regulations (Hassan & Bhatti, 2023). Political and economic instability in target markets poses a significant risk to export operations. Export disruptions may arise from geopolitical tensions, changes in government policies, and economic crises, all of which can significantly affect export transactions (Shams et al., 2024; Sui, 2019). As companies embark on their export journeys, they must navigate this complex landscape through agility, foresight, and strategic planning. Successful international trade demands a robust understanding of these multifaceted challenges and the ability to adapt and innovate in the face of a constantly evolving global business environment. This comprehensive view of export challenges provides valuable insights for both practitioners and researchers in the field of international business and contributes to more effective export strategies and policies.

2.6 Addressing Language Barriers in Exporting

Extant research has identified several effective strategies for mitigating language barrier challenges in export operations.

- **Language Education and Training:** Language education and training are crucial for exporters. Therefore, they must invest in programs to improve their employees' linguistic proficiency and intercultural communication skills (Lin & Ho, 2019). By prioritizing language training and recruiting bilingual personnel, exporters can effectively overcome language barriers in global markets (Fox et al., 2019; Sathiya, 2024).
- **Translation and Interpreting Services:** Expert translation and interpreting services facilitate effective communication in international business contexts (Kovbatiuk et al., 2024). These services enable non-Anglophone business professionals to interact with customers, negotiate contracts, and cultivate robust business relationships (Fu & Chen, 2019).
- **Bilingual Employees:** Recruiting employees with language skills pertinent to their target markets offers a competitive advantage in communicating efficiently with foreign customers and partners and ensuring cultural appropriateness (Lou et al., 2019; Riggs, 2024).
- **Technology-Enabled Translation Tools:** Oskoui and Mirzaeian (2023) noted that technological advancements have led to the adoption of machine translation tools, computer-aided translation systems, and artificial-intelligence-driven language assistants in the export sector. Such tools can assist exporters in translating documents, websites, and other communication materials, thus providing expeditious and cost-effective linguistic support (Oskoui & Mirzaeian, 2023; Welch & Welch, 2018).
- **Collaboration with Local Partners:** Kumar (2023) highlights the role of collaboration with local partners in overcoming language barriers. Engaging local partners or distributors with linguistic and cultural expertise can facilitate communication between local customers and suppliers (Kumar, 2023). Local partners can provide insights into language nuances, cultural norms, and business practices, thereby promoting effective communication and enhancing market understanding (Grzeszczyk, 2015; Simabur, 2024).
- **Cultural Adaptation:** Scholars have emphasized the need to understand local cultural values, norms, and customer preferences (Kim, 2019). Appropriate adaptation of marketing techniques and product service offerings is crucial for success in foreign markets (Kamath, 2021). Localization efforts, including the utilization of Anglophone employees or collaboration with local partners, enable cultural understanding and improve business operations (Li et al., 2022).

Although these solutions offer significant benefits, they present challenges. Investing in language training and recruiting bilingual staff can be resource-intensive and time-consuming (Hashemian et al., 2024). Substantial financial resources may be required to provide comprehensive language-training programs for employees. Additionally, identifying qualified bilingual employees with requisite language skills and industry knowledge can be challenging (Siddiqui et al., 2024). Cultural adaptation necessitates a profound understanding of the target market, which can be particularly challenging for non-Anglophone business professionals to grasp and respond effectively to cultural nuances, because cultural differences can be complex and constantly evolving (Helmich et al., 2017). Furthermore, localization efforts incur additional expenses for product modification, packaging, and marketing. Although these strategies offer promising solutions to language barriers in export, their implementation requires careful consideration of resource allocation, time investment, and potential challenges. Future researchers could focus on evaluating the effectiveness of these strategies in various contexts and exploring innovative approaches to address language barriers in international trade.

2.7 Theoretical Framework

Several theoretical perspectives offer valuable insights into the challenges that non-Anglophone business owners face when exporting to English-speaking countries (Manosuthikit, 2018):

2.7.1 Cultural Theory

Cultural theory provides a framework for understanding the challenges that arise from cultural differences in the international business context. It emphasizes the significance of cultural norms, values, and practices in shaping business behavior, decision-making processes, and consumer preferences (Edgar & Sedgwick, 2017; Zhang et al., 2017). This perspective is invaluable for examining how cultural disparities between non-Anglophone firms and Anglophone markets influence market entry strategies, product localization efforts, marketing communication, and consumer perceptions. Orra (2020) posited that cultural theory offers scholars the opportunity to examine the intricacies of cultural adaptation, and proposes methods for overcoming cultural barriers in international commercial collaborations. Researchers have investigated the adaptation of products and marketing strategies to local cultures, the role of cultural intelligence in cross-cultural communication, and the influence of cultural factors on trade relationships (Sánchez-Hernández et al., 2021).

2.7.2 Internationalization Theory

Internationalization theory offers a comprehensive framework for analyzing how companies expand globally and exploring the motivations, strategies, and challenges involved in entering foreign markets (Narula & Verbeke, 2015; Narula et al., 2019). This theoretical approach helps researchers to investigate decision-making processes, market selection criteria, and the effects of language and cultural barriers on business owners' international ventures. By examining various market entry modes and the impact of institutional factors on export activities, this theory provides valuable insights into navigating the complexities of global expansion (Li et al., 2021; Oliveira et al., 2018).

2.7.3 Resource-Based Theory

The resource-based theory examines a firm's resources and capabilities as potential sources of competitive advantage (Barney et al., 2021). This approach can be applied to investigate the resources and competencies that non-Anglophone business owners can leverage to compete effectively in English-speaking markets, despite linguistic barriers. It provides an opportunity to examine the assets, networks, and capabilities that business owners use to overcome challenges, gain market access, and establish a competitive position in their target markets. Scholars have explored language management and cultural diversity as unique resources in international markets (Abaidoo et al., 2021; Subramaniam et al., 2021). These theoretical perspectives provide analytical lenses for examining various issues, including language barriers, cultural differences, internationalization processes, cross-cultural management, and resource utilization in international business (Mabillard et al., 2023). The integration of diverse theoretical perspectives allows for a comprehensive analysis of complex dynamics and facilitates the development of actionable recommendations to enhance the export performance of non-Anglophone firms.

In this study, cultural theory served as the primary theoretical framework. This selection is appropriate because the study focuses on the challenges that non-Anglophone business owners encounter when exporting to English-speaking countries. Edgar and Sedgwick (2017) and Zhang et al. (2017) demonstrated that cultural theory provides a robust framework for analyzing the influence of cultural variance, adaptation strategies, and the impact of cultural norms and practices on a firm's operations. By applying this theory, it is possible to examine cultural issues, communication strategies, and the development of the cultural intelligence necessary for effective engagement with Anglophone markets. This theoretical approach has the potential to uncover the complexities of cultural diversity and help non-Anglophone business owners overcome cultural barriers and improve export performance.

2.8 Gaps in the Literature

While the extant literature provides valuable insights into the challenges non-Anglophone business owners face when exporting to English-speaking countries, several research gaps remain.

- **Limited Geographical Scope:** Most studies focus on a restricted number of specific regions or countries, resulting in a paucity of comprehensive research covering a wide range of non-Anglophone business contexts and experiences across multiple Anglophone markets (Mabillard et al., 2023).

- **Lack of Innovative Solutions:** While the literature delineates the challenges, there is a notable gap in the research into innovative and effective solutions that non-Anglophone business owners employ to overcome these obstacles (Turko et al., 2021).
- **Impact of digital technology:** In an increasingly digitalized global economy, the impact of digital technologies and online platforms on international trade, specifically in the context of non-Anglophone exporters, remains relatively unexplored (Aksenov, 2023; Arnim & Mrozewski, 2020).
- **Intersectionality:** There is often a lack of perspective in the literature regarding how ethnicity and other forms of diversity intersect with the challenges and strategies of non-anglophone business owners. A more nuanced understanding can be obtained through a thorough examination of these intersections (Jain et al., 2021).
- **Long-term Outcomes:** Many studies have primarily focused on immediate challenges and strategies, leaving a research gap in exploring the long-term outcomes and sustainability of non-Anglophone businesses in English-speaking markets (Jiao et al., 2022).
- **Policy Impact:** Despite the recognition of government policies and trade agreements, few researchers have examined the direct impact of specific policies and agreements on the export experiences (Hannan, 2016; Njinyah, 2018).
- **Comparative Studies:** Comparative analyses comparing the experiences of non-Anglophone business owners with those of their Anglophone counterparts can provide valuable insights into competitive dynamics (Alessandria & Choi, 2017).

Addressing these gaps in future research will contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by non-Anglophone business owners when exporting to English-speaking countries. Such insights can lead to the development of effective strategies and policies to support their success in international markets. Furthermore, future researchers could benefit from employing mixed-method approaches, longitudinal studies, and cross-cultural comparative analyses to comprehensively address these gaps. Additionally, investigating the role of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and blockchain in mitigating language and cultural barriers could provide valuable insights for both practitioners and policymakers in the field of international trade.

3. Methodology

This chapter describes the methodology and techniques used in this research. It explains the research design, data collection methods, data analysis techniques, and limitations of the study.

3.1 Research Philosophy and Justification

This study adopted an interpretive paradigm as its philosophical foundation. Interpretivism aligns with the qualitative nature (Kovbatiuk et al., 2024) and seeks to understand the subjective experiences and perspectives of non-anglophone business owners. This approach acknowledges that individuals construct their own realities and that context plays a crucial role in shaping these perspectives (Cebul, 2024). In this study, we explored challenges and potential solutions within a diverse sociocultural environment. Interpretivism is particularly apt because it facilitates in-depth investigation, recognizes the influence of culture and language, and underscores the importance of context-specific knowledge (Foster, 2016). This philosophical approach enables nuanced qualitative data analysis and comprehensive exploration of the research questions (Brush & Sobolewska, 2018).

3.2 Research Design and Approach

The researcher employed a qualitative design to capture and address the challenges and barriers faced by non-Anglophone business owners when exporting to English-speaking countries. A qualitative approach was selected because of its capacity to provide a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study (Basias & Pollalis, 2018). Qualitative research enables researchers to meticulously examine and evaluate business professionals' experiences, perspectives, and strategies, offering insights into the intricacies and nuances of language barriers, cultural differences, and the communication difficulties encountered during export activities. Qualitative research is ideal for this study because it yields rich, context-specific insights into non-Anglophone business owners' experiences, perceptions, and strategies (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). It emphasizes the understanding of social phenomena from the participants' perspective. Additionally, qualitative research facilitates the collection of comprehensive narratives and statements that are critical for understanding the complexity of the challenges encountered (Oranga & Matere, 2023).

This study highlights the effectiveness of qualitative methods in capturing the complexity and depth of

interpersonal interactions, providing valuable insights that quantitative research instruments may not fully elucidate. In this study, the researcher deemed it appropriate to collect and collate qualitative data through in-depth interviews. The researcher conducted interviews with business professionals involved in export activities in markets where English is the primary language, despite their limited proficiency in English. This methodological approach allows for a nuanced exploration of the linguistic, cultural, and strategic challenges non-Anglophone business owners face in their export endeavors. By employing qualitative methods, the researcher aims to uncover not only the barriers they encounter, but also the innovative strategies they employ to overcome these obstacles in their pursuit of success in Anglophone markets.

3.3 Sampling Strategy and Justification

Purposive sampling was employed to select non-Anglophone business owners with relevant experience in exporting to English-speaking countries. Purposive sampling aligns with the qualitative nature of the research, focusing on individuals capable of providing productive and insightful information about the challenges, strategies, and experiences associated with exporting to Anglophone markets (Benoot et al., 2016; Campbell et al., 2020).

3.3.1 Justification for Purposive Sampling

- **Relevance and Expertise:** Purposive sampling enables the researcher to select participants who are directly engaged with the phenomenon under study (Bakkalbasioglu, 2020). The researcher selected non-Anglophone business owners who exported to English-speaking countries based on their expertise and direct experience in the subject matter.
- **Rich Data Collection:** Because the researcher aims to gain deep insights into the challenges faced by these business owners, purposive sampling ensures the selection of individuals with relevant experience (Ames et al., 2019). This strategy facilitates the collection of rich, detailed, and contextualized data, which are crucial for achieving research objectives (Gungor et al., 2023).
- **Maximized Variation:** Purposive sampling allows the researcher to strategically select subjects to maximize the variation in perspectives and experiences (Nyimbili & Nyimbili, 2024). This variation can encompass different industries, countries of origin, levels of success in exporting, and approaches to overcoming challenges. By including diverse perspectives, researchers can achieve a more comprehensive understanding of the research phenomenon.
- **Efficiency:** Purposive sampling is an effective recruitment method that ensures the inclusion of participants with relevant experience (Bakkalbasioglu, 2020). This approach prevents the inclusion of individuals whose experiences are not directly related to research objectives (Ames et al., 2019).
- **Access to Target Population:** Non-Anglophone business owners who export to English-speaking countries form a specific population group. Purposive sampling ensures that the researcher reaches the target population efficiently (Stratton, 2024), facilitating detailed research on specific challenges and strategies.

3.3.2 Sampling Population

The sample population was comprised of non-Anglophone business owners with first-hand experience exporting to Anglophone markets. This population comprises diverse industries, businesses, and cultural backgrounds. The researcher selected the sample population according to the following criteria.

- **Experience:** Participants must be actively involved in export activities in English-speaking countries. This criterion ensures that the knowledge gained is based on real-world experience and provides practical and context-specific information regarding the challenges of the export process.
- **Language Proficiency:** The researcher did not require the participants to be proficient in English. This criterion is crucial to ensure that their experiences reflect the genuine challenges posed by language barriers, allowing the study to capture unfiltered insights into how business owners navigate the international market without English language proficiency.

This sampling strategy enables researchers to focus on the specific challenges and strategies that non-Anglophone business owners employ to navigate Anglophone markets, providing a rich and nuanced understanding of their experiences and the barriers they face in international trade.

3.3.3 Sampling Procedure

The researcher employed multiple methods to identify and recruit participants for the study. These methods

encompassed networking within relevant business associations, leveraging industry contacts, and utilizing online platforms that non-Anglophone business owners frequently use. The implementation of diverse recruitment channels enhances the probability of obtaining participants who meet specified research criteria (Ekwoaba et al., 2015). Through this multifaceted approach to participant recruitment, the researcher aimed to ensure a representative sample of non-Anglophone business owners engaged in export to English-speaking markets.

3.3.4 Sample Size

The researcher initially contacted 30 non-Anglophone business owners who were exporting to English-speaking markets. Of these, 15 consented to participate in this study. The remaining 15 declined because of various factors, including privacy concerns, lack of interest, and time constraints. The adoption of purposive sampling is further justified because it aligns with the study objectives and is essential for obtaining in-depth insights from non-Anglophone business owners with direct experience in exporting to Anglophone countries. This technique ensures that diverse perspectives and experiences are captured. It also highlights challenges and strategies in this specific context.

3.3.5 Justification of Sampling Approach

The purposive sampling method is justified for this research because it aligns with the study objectives and is essential for gaining comprehensive insights from non-Anglophone business owners with direct experience exporting to English-speaking countries. This technique enables focused and in-depth exploration of the challenges and strategies involved. Moreover, the purposive sampling approach allows the selection of information-rich cases that can provide detailed data on the phenomena under study. By focusing on participants with relevant experience, the researcher delves into the nuances of language barriers, cultural challenges, and adaptive strategies employed by non-Anglophone business owners in Anglophone markets. This sampling strategy, combined with the qualitative research design, facilitated a thorough exploration of the research questions and contributed to a nuanced understanding of the challenges non-Anglophone business owners face in their export endeavors to English-speaking countries.

3.4 Data Collection Methods

The data collection process integrates both primary and secondary data sources, which is essential in qualitative research to comprehensively address research objectives and questions (Whitehead & Whitehead, 2021). The researcher employed multiple techniques to enhance the reliability and validity of the acquired data. The researcher implemented triangulation (see Figure 1), a methodological approach involving the utilization of diverse data sources, such as interviews, observations, and secondary materials, to augment the credibility of the research findings through cross-verification (Vivek et al., 2023). In addition, the researcher considered member checking as a validation strategy. As Birt et al. (2016) described, this technique involves soliciting participant feedback on their own responses to ensure accuracy and provide opportunities for clarification when necessary.

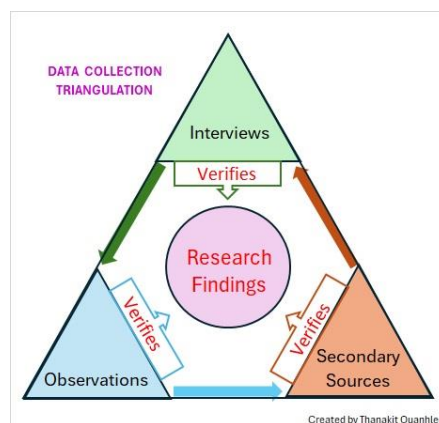


Figure 1. Data Collection Triangulation

3.4.1 Primary Data Collection Methods

In-depth Interviews: Semi-structured in-depth interviews were employed as the primary data collection method in this study. This approach facilitated the elicitation of participants' insights, experiences, and perspectives in their own words. The researcher conducted the majority of the interviews in business proprietors' offices, with some taking place in their respective conference rooms. To ensure authentic expression and minimize language barriers, the researcher conducted interviews in the participants' native languages, including Lanna, Isan, Paktai,

and Thai. The researcher used an interview guide comprising open-ended questions to explore various aspects of participants' experiences, including linguistic barriers, cultural differences, communication strategies, and effective practices. Each interview lasted approximately 30–40 min.

Participant Observation: While not the primary data collection method, participant observation serves as a complementary approach, providing valuable contextual information about participants' experiences. This method involves observing participant interactions within the corporate environment and during export-related activities. Participant observation offers nuanced insights that interviews alone may not have been fully captured (Jorgensen, 2020). Using this method, the researcher documented the participants' nonverbal cues, body language, and interpersonal dynamics, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the implicit barriers and adaptive strategies in their communication processes.

3.4.2 Secondary Data Sources

To provide comprehensive contextual information on exports to Anglophone markets, the researcher incorporated secondary data sources, including industry reports and business publications, focusing on exports and cross-cultural business relationships. These sources served a dual purpose: to supplement the literature review and corroborate the findings of the primary interviews. The integration of these secondary sources enhances the depth and breadth of the research, offering a more holistic perspective on the subject matter.

3.4.3 Data Collection Process

Upon identification of the 15 consenting participants, the researcher initiated a systematic data-collection process. The procedure is as follows.

- **Informed Consent:** The researcher provided participants with detailed consent forms to elucidate the research purpose, methodologies employed, and their rights as study subjects. These forms ensured voluntary participation and agreement with the use of the information provided for research purposes.
- **Interview Scheduling:** Upon receipt of signed consent forms, each participant indicated their preferred interview time, facilitating a schedule that accommodated both participants and us.
- **Interview Conduct:** The researcher utilized an interviewer's guide to maintain consistency across interviews while allowing for flexibility in exploring emergent themes. Throughout each interview, the researcher documented both verbal and nonverbal responses to capture a comprehensive range of data.
- **Participant Confidentiality:** To ensure anonymity and protect participant privacy, the researcher assigned each subject a unique identifier ranging from "Participant 1" to "Participant 15." The researcher applied this coding system consistently throughout the data collection and analysis process.

This structured approach to data collection ensured methodological rigor, while maintaining the ethical standards of the research.

3.5 Data Analysis

In this qualitative study, the researcher employed thematic analysis, a methodological approach that is particularly well-suited to exploring complex phenomena. Systematic identification, examination, and elucidation of recurrent patterns within the data corpus characterize this analytical technique. The method facilitated an in-depth exploration of participants' multifaceted perspectives and experiences. The analytical process commenced with an immersive reading of the interview transcripts, a crucial step that enabled the development of a holistic understanding of the participants' narratives and the interpretation of their responses through a nuanced lens (Gerson, 2020). This initial phase of data familiarization laid the groundwork for subsequent stages of the analysis. The coding process, a pivotal component of thematic analysis, involves the meticulous labeling of data segments that exemplify specific concepts, principles, or themes (Cruzes & Dyba, 2021). The researcher scrutinized the interview notes and identified recurring phraseologies, thought patterns, and formulations, which the researcher then systematically coded. These preliminary codes serve as building blocks for the emergence of broader themes, providing a structured framework for organizing and interpreting rich qualitative data.

As the analysis progressed, the researcher discerned overarching themes and expansive patterns that encapsulated clusters of related codes, and reflected the underlying semantic and latent content within the data (Clarke & Braun, 2017). This stage necessitated a rigorous comparative analysis of the codes, an assessment of their interrelationships, and an iterative process of theme refinement and redefinition. The researcher continuously reviewed and refined the themes, cross-referencing them with the entire dataset to ensure that they accurately represented the participants' lived experiences (McMahon et al., 2022). By transcending individual

themes, the interconnections and trends that permeated the thematic landscape were explored. This meta-analytical approach involved examining the thematic network, identifying prevalence patterns among specific participant cohorts, and elucidating the relationships between themes and overarching research questions. To enhance the validity and credibility of the findings, the researcher implemented a rigorous data validation process that incorporated participant feedback through theme reviews and annotations (Coleman, 2022). The analytical process resulted in a narrative synthesis that combined the identified themes. It captures the essence of the barriers and challenges that non-Anglophone business owners face and the strategies they use in their export ventures in English-speaking markets. Throughout the analytical journey, the researcher maintained methodological rigor, meticulously documented decisions, and engaged in reflexive practices to mitigate potential bias (Johnson et al., 2020). This reflexivity, characterized by an awareness of positionality and its potential influence on the analytical process, ensured that the findings emerged organically from the data, unencumbered by preconceived notions or subjective interpretations (Goldstein, 2017).

3.6 Ethical Considerations

In this study, the researcher maintained an unwavering commitment to ethical principles, prioritizing the protection of participants' rights, well-being, and dignity, while preserving the integrity of the research process (Favaretto et al., 2020). Central to these ethical considerations was the procurement of informed consent, with all participants signing a comprehensive form delineating the research objectives, methodologies, potential risks, benefits, and right to withdraw without repercussions (Kadam, 2017). Equally crucial was the safeguarding of participants' confidentiality, which approached meticulous attention (Turcotte-Tremblay & Sween-Cadieux, 2018). To this end, the researcher anonymized all collected data, assigned participants alphanumeric identifiers, and either eliminated or modified any potentially identifiable information in the published study to ensure privacy (Morehouse et al., 2024).

The protection of participants' data was of paramount importance throughout the research process (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). The researcher implemented rigorous measures to secure all documented information, including storage under the participants' assigned identifiers and placement in a secure repository exclusively accessible to the primary researcher. Upon successful completion of the project, the researcher permanently expunged all the collected information, honoring the commitment to ethical conduct and participant privacy. Through these comprehensive measures, the researcher not only adhered to the highest standards of ethical behavior, but also fostered an environment of trust and respect between the participants and us, thereby underpinning the credibility and integrity of the research findings.

4. Findings

This section presents the findings of the interviews conducted with a diverse cohort of non-Anglophone business owners engaged in export activities in English-speaking countries. The objective is to elucidate the challenges they encounter, their impact on export operations, and the strategies employed to mitigate these obstacles.

4.1 Linguistic Barriers to International Commerce

Extant research has demonstrated that linguistic limitations significantly influence individuals' experience of global trade (Repkine & Song, 2017). Effective communication is integral in facilitating international business transactions. Practitioners in this domain frequently encounter linguistic barriers, which present substantial challenges.

In the context of these interviews, "challenges" encompass the myriad difficulties, impediments, or dilemmas that participants face due to linguistic barriers and disparities in their business activities. These linguistic differences underscore the multiple obstacles encountered when interacting with Anglophone customers, partners, and stakeholders (Sahadevan & Sumangala, 2021).

4.1.1 Communication Discrepancies

"Communication discrepancies" refer to the inability to exchange information effectively between two or more parties due to misinterpretation or inaccurate message conveyance of messages (Boiarsky, 2016). In the context of exporting to English-speaking countries, linguistic barriers frequently engender misunderstandings between non-Anglophone business owners and their Anglophone business counterparts. These discrepancies can manifest in various stages of the export process, including negotiations, contract formulation, and routine business correspondence. Consequently, they may lead to ambiguities, errors, and impediments that hinder seamless business operations. Participant 6 provided the following salient example.

"Given that Isaan is the primary language in our organization, language obstacles pose significant challenges in our daily interactions. ... We recently encountered

some problems with an American distributor where language differences led to a misunderstanding regarding our product specifications. ... “ - Participant 6

4.1.2 Semantic Misalignments

"Semantic misalignment" refers to the cognitive process of comprehending or interpreting information in a manner that deviates from its intended significance or purpose (Wehrmeyer, 2020). In the context of exporting to Anglophone nations, non-Anglophone business owners may experience semantic misalignment when interpreting textual instructions or cultural nuances conveyed by English-speaking counterparts. These misalignments can arise due to linguistic barriers, divergent cultural backgrounds, or insufficient familiarity with idiomatic expressions and metaphors. Such misalignments may lead to inaccuracies, misunderstandings, or legal disputes that could impede the efficacy of export endeavors.

The issue of ‘semantic misalignment or misinterpretation of legal terminology’ presents a significant challenge for business owners with limited English proficiency, as they encounter difficulties in comprehending legal terms or commercial contracts drafted in English. Such misinterpretations can potentially result in legal conflicts, contractual breaches, or non-compliance with local regulatory frameworks. Participant 14 provided an illustrative example.

"...a significant portion of important documents and regulations are presented in English, and that is where the challenge lies. ... It is not easy for us to navigate legal jargon and terms, especially because English is not our first language. These delays and misunderstandings directly impact project timelines and finances.” – Participant 14

4.1.3 Precision in Technical Communication

The accurate conveyance of technical information presents a particular challenge for non-anglophone business owners. Such information often encompasses complex concepts, detailed specifications, and specialized terminology. The ability to comprehend, avoid jargon, or elucidate technical terms is especially critical for individuals with diverse linguistic competencies. Inaccurate transmission of technical information can result in misunderstanding and potentially lead to significant adverse consequences. Participant 2 articulated that linguistic barriers in English impede the effective communication of technical product information and increase the likelihood of errors.

"The most prominent challenge is language.... This obstacle can make it quite difficult for us to effectively communicate technical information and project details. Language differences often lead to misunderstanding and misinterpretation. In our case, these language obstacles occasionally made it difficult to convey crucial technical information to our American counterparts. It is a headache." – Participant 2

4.1.4 Articulation of Brand Identity and Market Presence

Non-Anglophone business owners often encounter difficulties effectively articulating their product brands' distinctive qualities in international markets. Key challenges include ensuring that the brand message accurately represents corporate values, identity, and essence. Another challenge is selecting appropriate vocabulary that resonates with the target audience and crafting engaging slogans and taglines. Finally, maintaining consistent brand messaging across various marketing channels is crucial. Participant 3 provided the following illustrative examples of fashion brands:

"..... This language obstacle has been a significant hurdle for us. Our team mainly communicates in Thai, which makes it difficult to convey the intricate details of our fashion collections, particularly when trying to explain the essence of our brand to a British customer. Because we speak different languages, accurately representing our fashion collections' unique qualities and creative vision became challenging and troublesome.” – Participant 3

4.2 *The Impact of Linguistic Barriers on International Commerce*

The influence of linguistic barriers on international commerce refers to the ramifications that arise when language disparities in the business environment impede effective communication (Tenzer et al., 2021).

4.2.1 Disruptions to Product Delivery and Production Processes

Non-Anglophone business owners encounter challenges in efficiently coordinating and managing production processes when expanding into Anglophone markets. Linguistic barriers can significantly impair communication

with suppliers, manufacturers, or logistical partners in the target country. Misinterpretations or inadequate communication can lead to interruptions or inaccuracies in the manufacturing process, thereby affecting the production schedules. Participant 1 explained the impact of linguistic barriers on product development and delivery timelines as follows:

"This often causes uncertainty and delays in the production process. It is important to acknowledge that language hurdles have sometimes slowed the growth of our businesses. Because of these problems, misunderstandings have disrupted our production and delivery schedules. It has hurt not only our performance but also our image as a reliable service provider." – Participant 1

4.2.2 Implications for Consumer Safety and Corporate Reputation

Linguistic barriers can have profound implications for consumer safety, particularly for product labeling and safety instructions. For instance, inaccurate labeling or misidentification of allergens in food packaging poses significant risks to consumers. Participant 4 provided the following illustrative example of a food allergen.

"..... It is important to do this because some customers have food allergies, such as reactions to nuts or seafood. It is crucial that chemical names are correct because they have a direct effect on human health and safety. Incorrect English leads to misunderstandings and inaccurate interpretations of our products, ultimately hurting our image in the market." – Participant 4

4.2.3 Diminished Customer Acquisition Potential

Linguistic barriers can significantly impede a company's capacity to attract customers to foreign markets. These obstacles can hinder marketing initiatives, impair understanding of consumer needs, and restrict engagement with prospective buyers. Participant 9, who represented a cultural travel enterprise, provided the following illustrative example.

"... Language barriers also make it harder for us to tell potential customers about rich cultural experiences. One of the best things about our tours is the cultural experience we offer. You know.... When there is a language barrier, it can be difficult to correctly describe the unique aspects and highlights of these experiences. This causes our businesses to lose opportunities to meet and talk to potential customers." – Participant 9

4.2.4 Forfeiture of Business Opportunities

Linguistic barriers can adversely affect a company's ability to conclude deals successfully or capitalize on opportunities, potentially impacting future expansion prospects. Effective communication plays a pivotal role in business negotiations and partnerships. Participant 15, representing an electronics company, provided the following example.

".... miscommunication of product specifications. It's quite a mess, I must say. Resolving such situations requires additional time and resources, leading to delays and costs. It is undeniably a headache. ... It has caused us to miss out on potential business deals. It is truly frustrating that misunderstandings prevent us from seizing important opportunities. Moreover, some of our client relationships have become strained."- Participant 15

4.3 Efficacious Strategies for Mitigating Linguistic Challenges

The term "strategies, approaches, and techniques for mitigating challenges related to linguistic barriers" encompasses various methodologies for addressing communication difficulties arising from language disparities (Squires et al., 2019).

4.3.1 Translation of Critical Information

The translation of critical data refers to the systematic conversion and adaptation of essential business-related information from a non-English language to English (Abalkhail, 2018). This process is crucial for non-Anglophone business owners to convey product descriptions, marketing materials, legal documents, and other relevant information accurately. Participant 6 provided the following example of using translation services to facilitate document conversion:

"Implementing a language training program for our team members to strengthen

their language proficiency is a priority... We also require professional translation services for crucial documents, such as product specifications and design preferences, with certification for accurate translation." – Participant 6

4.3.2 Utilization of Interpretation Services

Interpretation services involve engaging competent linguists to facilitate effective communication between individuals from diverse linguistic backgrounds (Kovbatiuk et al., 2024). Interpreters serve as linguistic intermediaries, enabling the effective conveyance of ideas, requirements, and intentions from proprietors to anglophone stakeholders involved in the export process. Participant 5 provided the following example of engaging with the services of an interpreter for significant meetings:

"... To address this challenge, we recognize the need for additional English language training and learning for our team members who are not native English speakers. I would like to call this investing in English skills. ... Another approach is to use translation tools and hire interpreters for important client meetings." – Participant 5

4.3.3 Collaboration with Bilingual Professionals

Establishing partnerships with bilingual individuals proficient in both their native language and English can significantly enhance export efforts. These individuals function as linguistic intermediaries and provide support during the export process. Participant 10 collaborated with the bilingual educators.

"... We took some robust measures. First, we invested in English-language training programs for our employees. Second, we have partnered with bilingual educators who can help bridge the language gap and ensure accurate communication with American educators." – Participant 10

4.3.4 Implementation of Language Acquisition Programs

Language acquisition programs are structured educational initiatives designed to facilitate the acquisition of a new language or enhance existing linguistic competencies. These programs are particularly crucial for non-Anglophone business proprietors to overcome linguistic barriers and achieve success in exporting. Participant 7 explained that they invested in these programs as follows:

"I believe it's crucial to invest in learning and practice. I think it would be beneficial to send employees to additional language trainings. Therefore, I sent employees additional training and classes on weekends. I have also invested in equipment such as language translators for my employees to use." – Participant 7

4.3.5 Engagement of English Language Instructors

Qualified English language instructors can provide business proprietors and their employees with specialized expertise in teaching English. These instructors can offer tailored support to enhance their English language proficiency in professional environments. Participant 12 implemented this approach as follows.

"We held meetings where everyone offered their opinions, and together, we determined the most interesting and effective solution. In our case, most employees felt they needed an English teacher to come to teach in the office for approximately two hours every day after work hours. Additionally, we had to introduce an external agent to help us translate various documents...." – Participant 12

4.3.6 Utilization of Audiovisual and Multimedia Resources

Incorporating audiovisual and multimedia resources can enrich language acquisition for non-native English-speaking business owners by introducing diversity, interactivity, and practical applications into the learning process. Participant 13 used the following method.

"Firstly, I have a language training program for all my employees. Improving their English skills is essential for enhancing their communication with American clients and prospective students. Another method I employed to overcome these language barriers is audiovisual and multimedia materials. You know? Sometimes, pictures or videos can convey messages more effectively than words." – Participant 13

Overall, participants discussed various techniques, drawing on personal experiences, to demonstrate their efficacy in overcoming linguistic barriers, enhancing communication skills, and achieving success in Anglophone markets. By employing a combination of methods, organizations can improve their ability to communicate effectively, gain a more comprehensive understanding of their customers' needs, and overcome the complex obstacles created by linguistic disparities.

These findings highlight the diverse challenges that non-Anglophone business proprietors face in exporting to English-speaking countries and the variety of strategies they employ to overcome these obstacles. The experiences that participants shared underscored the significance of addressing linguistic barriers in international commerce and the potential for success when business proprietors implement appropriate measures.

5. Discussion

In this section, the researcher examines the complexity and implications of the findings derived from the thematic insights gleaned through interviews and participant observations. The discussion delineates the consistency of these findings with the extant literature and elucidates both the congruent and divergent themes. The researcher explores the practical implications for businesses and policymakers, as well as directions for future research. This discourse serves as an intellectual nexus in which theory and empirical evidence converge to offer insights and contribute to a broader dialogue on cross-cultural business practices.

5.1 Congruence Between Findings and Extant Literature

The insights garnered in this study demonstrate remarkable congruence with a corpus of earlier scholarly works. These similarities underscore the alignment between research results and existing knowledge, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of this topic. These findings corroborate the literature that recognizes the significant influence of linguistic barriers on international commerce. Both this research and the extant literature emphasize the criticality of effective communication for the success of export enterprises. They highlight that linguistic barriers pose substantial challenges to non-Anglophone business proprietors, impeding their ability to negotiate, communicate with partners, and convey technical information accurately (Fox et al., 2019; Shamsi et al., 2020).

Furthermore, the findings are consistent with the existing academic research that acknowledges the impact of cultural disparities on business practices and customer loyalty. These findings and previous studies underscore the necessity for non-Anglophone business proprietors to adapt their marketing strategies, product offerings, and customer interactions to align with the cultural norms prevalent in Anglophone markets. Cultural differences can influence consumer behavior, preferences, and choices throughout the purchasing process, and business proprietors must understand these cultural nuances and address them effectively to achieve successful exports (Helmich et al., 2017; Vescovi, 2022). The findings also align with existing academic literature, which highlights the strategies employed by non-Anglophone business proprietors to overcome linguistic barriers and cultural differences. Both this and previous studies emphasize the importance of translation and localization, engaging multilingual employees, utilizing technology-enabled tools, and establishing partnerships with local entities. Many scholars recognize that employing these strategies is a pragmatic approach to enhancing communication, promoting cross-cultural understanding, and increasing export success (Efrat et al., 2018; Oskoui & Mirzaeian, 2023).

These findings contribute to the literature by providing additional insights and practical applications. The researcher addressed the issues faced by non-Anglophone business proprietors by examining their experiences in diverse Anglophone markets and exploring innovative strategies to overcome these challenges. The findings augment existing knowledge and provide a comprehensive analysis of the barriers, tactics, and prospects that non-Anglophone business proprietors encounter when exporting to English-speaking countries (Shamsi et al., 2020; Subramaniam et al., 2021).

5.2 Divergences Between the Findings and Extant Literature

While there is substantial congruence between the findings and current literature on linguistic barriers in international trade, several noteworthy differences and nuances emerge.

- In this study, the researcher employed qualitative data derived from interviews to capture the authentic experiences of non-Anglophone business proprietors, providing a nuanced perspective on their complexities. This approach enriches existing literature by offering concrete examples of miscommunication, misinterpretation, and challenges in effectively conveying technical information and brand identity.

- Although the literature acknowledges the existence of linguistic barriers, a comprehensive analysis of the specific strategies employed by non-Anglophone business proprietors is often lacking (Aichhorn & Puck, 2017; Brem, 2020; Tenzer et al., 2017). In contrast, this study presents findings obtained from direct interviews with participants, deepening the understanding of linguistic challenges by providing examples of strategies that participants utilized to overcome these obstacles.
- This study underscores the significance of accurately translating critical information, including product descriptions and legal documents (Brelsford et al., 2018; Colina et al., 2021). Furthermore, the results emphasize the importance of localization efforts and understanding linguistic subtleties and jargons. This element transcends mere awareness of linguistic barriers and explores pragmatic approaches that non-Anglophone business proprietors employ to adapt their communication strategies to predominantly Anglophone markets (Kumar, 2023).
- The findings provide insights into the specific approaches that participants employed to surmount linguistic barriers, including the utilization of translation services and the engagement of translators. However, most existing researchers have discussed these solutions and their general importance without delving into their specific implementation (Gambier & Doorslaer, 2016; Shamsi et al., 2020).
- The study highlights the pragmatic strategies that business owners utilize to overcome linguistic barriers, such as employing translation services, engaging professional translators, collaborating with interpreters, implementing language training programs, employing bilingual liaisons, and utilizing audiovisual materials. Although researchers often discuss the importance of overcoming linguistic challenges, real-world applications are frequently lacking (Bunch et al., 2020).

5.3 Theoretical Contributions of the Findings

The research findings make significant theoretical contributions that align with and extend the existing theoretical perspectives in the domains of international business, intercultural management, and linguistic barriers. These findings offer valuable insights that contribute to the development and refinement of theoretical frameworks.

5.3.1 Corroboration of Cultural Theory

The findings of this study provide substantial support for cultural theory and offer insights into the intricate relationship between culture and international business practice. As cultural theorists have posited, the challenges that non-Anglophone business proprietors in the Anglophone market face are deeply rooted in cultural differences that extend far beyond linguistic barriers (Grosse, 2023). The experiences of the participants clearly illustrate how cultural norms, values, and practices significantly influence business interactions, decision-making processes, and market reception in cross-cultural contexts.

This research reveals that successful adaptation to Anglophone markets requires more than linguistic proficiency, which necessitates a nuanced understanding of the cultural subtleties that shape business etiquette, consumer preferences, and communication styles. This requirement aligns with Mandal's (2021) assertion that culture acts as the "collective programming of the mind," which distinguishes members of one group from another. The strategies employed by non-Anglophone business proprietors to overcome cultural barriers, such as partnering with local agents and investing in cultural training, underscore the practical application of cultural intelligence (Sharma & Makhija, 2024). Furthermore, difficulties reported in conveying brand identity and technical information across cultural boundaries impact the concepts of high- and low-context communication styles, highlighting the need for culturally sensitive communication strategies in international business (Meng & Wang, 2024). The findings also reinforce Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's (2020) model of national cultural differences, particularly in how non-Anglophone business proprietors navigate relationship-building, time orientation, and individualism versus collectivism in Anglophone markets. The challenges and adaptations described by participants in areas such as marketing, negotiation, and customer service reflect the multidimensional nature of cultural differences, as outlined in the model (Kenesei & Stier, 2016).

Moreover, the results of this study align with recent developments in cultural theory, which emphasizes the fluid and evolving nature of cultural interactions in the globalized business environment (Saeed et al., 2023). By providing empirical evidence of how cultural factors shape the experiences of non-Anglophone business proprietors in Anglophone markets, this study not only supports existing cultural theories, but also extends their application to the specific context of language-based challenges in international trade. These findings contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the interplay between language, culture, and business practices, reinforcing the critical importance of cultural theory in international business research and practice.

5.3.2 Integration with Internationalization Theory

The research findings align with internationalization theory by elucidating the motivations, decisions, and challenges associated with foreign market entry (Narula & Verbeke, 2015; Narula et al., 2019). These findings illuminate the decision-making processes and market selection strategies of non-Anglophone business proprietors expanding to Anglophone countries. This integration enhances the understanding of the linguistic barriers and cultural differences that influence business owners' internationalization trajectories.

5.3.3 Corroboration of Resource-Based Theory

The results of this study support resource-based theory by illuminating the diverse resources and competencies of non-Anglophone business proprietors that enable them to compete effectively in Anglophone markets (Barney et al., 2021). These findings highlight the various assets, networks, and skills business owners leverage to overcome obstacles and establish a robust competitive position. This study provides insights into the application of resource-based theory in the context of non-Anglophone business proprietors, particularly concerning their capacity to effectively manage linguistic barriers and cultural diversity (Abaidoo et al., 2021; Subramaniam et al., 2021).

5.3.4 Novel Perspective on Linguistic Barriers

The findings of this study offer a unique and original perspective on the challenges that linguistic barriers pose in the context of international trade, particularly for non-anglophone business proprietors. In this study, the researcher examined specific aspects of linguistic barriers and provided a more nuanced understanding that diverged from the general discourse in academic literature.

5.3.5 Contribution to Academic Discourse

This study makes a significant contribution to academic discourse on language in the context of international trade. The researcher not only discusses pertinent issues, but also identifies effective strategies that business proprietors employ. A comprehensive view of language in its cultural context coupled with real-world examples further enhances the value of research.

6. Conclusion

In this study, the researcher examines the linguistic challenges encountered by non-Anglophone business proprietors of international commerce. The study elucidates the interrelationship between linguistic barriers and cultural disparities, particularly in the context of exports to Anglophone countries. The researcher employs qualitative data through interviews, aligning with extant literature that emphasizes the significance of effective communication and adaptability in navigating diverse linguistic environments to achieve success in global trade. These findings reveal novel insights into the specific strategies employed by non-Anglophone proprietors. The comprehensive analysis of these strategies diverges from the existing literature by presenting the practices of non-Anglophone business proprietors, such as the utilization of translation services, localization efforts, and technology-based tools. Theoretical contributions to international business, intercultural management, and linguistic barriers are characterized by integration with internationalization and resource-based theories. By offering a distinctive perspective on linguistic challenges in international trade and supporting it with empirical evidence, the researcher enhances the academic discourse.

Strategic recommendations emphasize the importance of English language proficiency and cultural adaptability for global trade success. The researcher also recognizes the necessity for comprehensive English-language training and learning programs as well as an understanding of the nuances of intercultural communication. While acknowledging these limitations, including the restricted sample size, the researcher proposes future research directions to address these issues. These include exploring multiple perspectives, examining long-term effects, analyzing policy implications, conducting comparative studies, investigating technological advancements, performing sector-specific analyses, and studying cross-generational education. These findings not only delineate the challenges that non-Anglophone business proprietors face, but also provide practical solutions and theoretical insights. This study serves as a valuable resource for businesses aiming to develop strategies and understand the benefits of English language proficiency in the dynamic landscape of international trade.

6.1 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher proposes the following strategic recommendations for non-Anglophone business proprietors to effectively navigate the complex transformational journey of global trade.

- **Prioritize English Language Proficiency:** Invest in comprehensive English language acquisition programs for business proprietors and employees. Such investment is crucial for effective communication, negotiation, and understanding of industry-specific terminology in Anglophone markets.
- **Emphasize Cultural Adaptation:** Develop a nuanced understanding of the cultural norms and expectations prevalent in Anglophone markets. Incorporate cultural awareness of organizational processes and strategies to enhance business efficacy and success in international trade.
- **Utilize Professional Linguistic Services:** Engage professional translation and interpretation services for critical documents, meetings, and negotiations to ensure accurate and culturally appropriate communication.
- **Leverage Technological Solutions:** Explore and implement technology-based tools such as translation software and language acquisition applications to support linguistic development and communication.
- **Establish Strategic Partnerships:** Collaborate with bilingual individuals or local partners who can facilitate bridging linguistic and cultural gaps in target markets.
- **Invest in Localization Strategies:** Adapt marketing materials, product descriptions, and business strategies to align with local linguistic nuances and cultural preferences in Anglophone markets.
- **Foster Continuous Learning and Adaptation:** Cultivate a culture of continuous learning and adaptation within the organization, encouraging employees to enhance their linguistic competencies and cultural understanding.

6.2 Research Limitations

This study acknowledges several limitations:

- **Limited Sample Size:** The study's sample size is relatively modest, potentially constraining its ability to fully represent the diversity of non-Anglophone business proprietors. Such limitations may affect the generalizability of the results, because the experiences and perspectives of those who declined to participate may differ.
- **Focus on Anglophone Countries:** This study concentrates on the challenges of exporting to English-speaking countries, and may not encompass the obstacles encountered in countries where languages other than English predominate.
- **Interpretive Research Approach:** While the interpretive research approach acknowledges the subjective nature of human experience, it may introduce biases in the process of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. A researcher's perspective and biases could potentially influence the objectivity of the study.
- **Reliance on Self-Reported Data:** This study depends heavily on information gathered through interviews, particularly self-reports, which may be subject to recall bias or social desirability effects. Participants may be inclined to respond in a socially favorable manner rather than address their challenges or experiences.
- **Limited Scope:** This study may not capture all the intricacies and nuances that non-Anglophone business proprietors encounter. The researcher did not comprehensively assess external factors, such as government policies, trade agreements, and market dynamics, which can significantly influence export success.
- **Focus on Linguistic Barriers:** Although the researcher concentrated on the difficulties that non-Anglophone business proprietors face due to linguistic barriers, the researcher may not have adequately examined the complex cultural components they encounter.

6.3 Future Research Directions

Future research regarding the challenges that non-Anglophone business proprietors face when exporting to Anglophone countries could expand current understanding and consider emerging issues.

- **Gender and Diversity Perspectives:** Examine how gender, ethnicity, and other forms of diversity intersect with the challenges and strategies of non-Anglophone business proprietors. Such examinations could lead to a more comprehensive understanding of how these factors influence export performance and provide insights into tailoring support mechanisms for diverse business owners.

- **Long-Term Outcomes and Sustainability:** Investigate the long-term outcomes and sustainability of non-Anglophone businesses in Anglophone markets. Understanding the factors contributing to long-term success, market survival, and growth can inform strategies and policies for supporting sustainable export ventures.
- **Impact of Policies and Agreements:** Assess the direct effects of specific government policies and trade agreements on the export experiences of non-Anglophone business proprietors. These assessments can help to elucidate the effectiveness of existing policies and identify opportunities for improvement.
- **Comparative Studies:** Conduct comparative studies that contrast the experiences of non-Anglophone business proprietors with those of their Anglophone counterparts. Such studies can provide valuable insights into the competitive dynamics of international trade, highlighting the differences in market entry strategies, marketing approaches, and business performance.
- **Technological Advances:** Explore the role of emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, and language processing tools, in overcoming linguistic barriers and improving communication among non-Anglophone business proprietors.
- **Sector-Specific Analysis:** Conducting in-depth research in specific industries to identify sector-specific linguistic challenges. Different sectors may face unique linguistic difficulties, and understanding these differences can lead to tailored solutions.
- **Cross-Generational Studies:** Investigate how generational differences affect linguistic challenges in international trade. Explore the communication dynamics between younger and older business professionals and their adaptability to evolving linguistic trends.

These future research directions can contribute to a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by non-Anglophone business proprietors when exporting goods to Anglophone countries. This knowledge can help develop more effective strategies for overcoming linguistic barriers and enhancing success in the international trade arena.

This study provides valuable insights into the linguistic challenges faced by non-Anglophone business proprietors in international trade, particularly when exporting to Anglophone countries. By identifying key barriers, effective strategies, and areas for future research, this study contributes to both the academic discourse and practical applications in the field of international business. The findings and recommendations presented here can serve as valuable resources for businesses, policymakers, and researchers seeking to understand and address the complexities of the linguistic and cultural barriers to global trade.

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No additional data are available.

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