

Integrating Business Discourse into English Language Teaching: A Theoretical Exploration

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Abstract

This study explores the theoretical foundations of integrating business discourse into English Language Teaching (ELT), with a particular focus on how authentic business communication practices can enrich linguistic competence, foster professional readiness, and bridge the gap between academic English instruction and the communicative demands of global business environments. Given that English has become the dominant language of international business, the urgency of this study lies in the need for ELT to adapt its frameworks to better prepare learners for workplace realities and cross-cultural professional interactions. The scope of the study is primarily conceptual, as it develops theoretical insights into how business discourse can be systematically incorporated into ELT curricula. While it highlights pedagogical models and curriculum design implications, it does not evaluate empirical classroom applications or measure learner outcomes, thereby positioning its contribution as a theoretical exploration rather than a practical implementation. Central questions guiding the discussion include how business discourse can be systematically embedded into ELT and what theoretical models best support the fusion of linguistic and professional competencies. Methodologically, the research employs a qualitative and theoretical approach, drawing on literature from applied linguistics, business communication, and pedagogy. Through synthesis and discourse analysis, the study constructs a conceptual model for embedding business discourse into ELT and highlights potential pedagogical strategies for curriculum development. The findings suggest that incorporating business discourse into ELT enhances communicative competence, professional readiness, and cross-cultural adaptability, thereby positioning learners to succeed in increasingly globalised professional contexts. Looking ahead, the study identifies the need for future research to empirically test the integration of business discourse into ELT classrooms. This includes investigating learner outcomes, assessing the effectiveness of curriculum design, and exploring the role of digital platforms and tools in supporting business-oriented language learning.

Keywords

Business Discourse, English Language Teaching, Business Education, Business Interaction, Professional Communication.

Introduction

The growing dominance of English as the global language of international business cannot be overstated. Statistics reveal that approximately 1.5 billion people speak English worldwide, with a significant proportion using it as a second language in professional settings (Rao, 2019). This trend highlights the need for English learners to gain both language skills and familiarity with global business discourse practices. Consequently, English language teaching (ELT) must evolve to address these needs, preparing students to navigate the complexities of international business communication.

Despite the growing importance of English in business, a gap persists between traditional ELT methods and the communication needs of the business world. Conventional ELT often prioritises grammar and vocabulary acquisition, focusing on general language skills rather than the specialised language required in business settings (Bondarchuk *et al.*, 2024). This misalignment can hinder learners' ability to engage effectively in real-world business scenarios, where nuances in language and context are critical. For instance, the ability to negotiate, present ideas, and collaborate with colleagues from diverse linguistic backgrounds requires a deep understanding of business discourse, which is often overlooked in standard language curricula (Piekkari *et al.*, 2014). This reality calls for an integration of business discourse into ELT, enabling learners to develop skills that are directly applicable to their future careers. For example, case studies have shown that students who engage in role-playing scenarios based on real business situations demonstrate significantly improved communication skills compared to those who rely solely on traditional learning methods (Ahmad, n.d.).

To bridge this gap, ELT programmes must incorporate practical applications of English communication skills that reflect the complexities of the business world. This can be achieved through the use of case studies, simulations, and project-based learning, which encourage students to apply their language skills in realistic contexts (Bondarchuk *et al.*, 2024). This enables educators to create a curriculum that improves language skills while fostering critical thinking and problem-solving for success in international business.

The integration of business discourse into English Language Teaching (ELT) is paramount in aligning educational outcomes with the realities of the workplace. As highlighted by Azhari and Satimin (2024), employers increasingly seek graduates who possess not only linguistic competence but also an understanding of the specific communicative practices prevalent in their respective industries. Effective communication in English, particularly in a business context, is no longer a mere advantage but a requisite for career success, as noted by Simonsen (2022), who emphasises the need for tailored language education that reflects workplace demands.

Furthermore, integrating authentic business discourse enhances learners' cross-cultural adaptability, an essential trait in today's globalised job market. Zhao and Wang (2020) argue that exposure to real-world business scenarios enables students to develop critical intercultural communication skills. By incorporating case studies, role-plays, and simulations based on actual

business situations, educators can provide students with practical experiences that prepare them for the challenges they will face in their careers (Fong, 2020).

Al-Tamimi (2025) reveals that a significant percentage of employers in Saudi Arabia cite communication proficiency as a primary criterion in hiring decisions. This trend underscores the necessity for ELT programmes to evolve and incorporate elements of business discourse, thereby enhancing the employability of graduates.

The primary aim of this research is to theoretically explore the systematic integration of business discourse into English Language Teaching (ELT) curricula. The study seeks to enhance learners' communicative competence in business contexts, addressing the challenges highlighted by Zagan-Zelter and Zagan-Zelter (2010). Key questions driving the conversation revolve around the systematic integration of business discourse into English Language Teaching (ELT) and the theoretical frameworks that effectively combine linguistic skills with professional competencies.

Literature review

Ishchuk and Ishchuk (2023) delve into the intricacies of cross-cultural business communication, highlighting its linguistic and cognitive dimensions. They argue that effective workplace communication transcends mere language proficiency; it requires an understanding of cultural nuances and cognitive frameworks that influence how messages are constructed and interpreted. The authors emphasise that successful communication in a multicultural workplace hinges on the ability to adapt language and style to suit diverse audiences, thus promoting inclusivity and collaboration.

Huili *et al.* (2024) focus on the role of culture in negotiation processes, particularly how Chinese culture-specific terms impact cross-cultural negotiations. Their research underscores the importance of cultural depth in business communication, revealing that misunderstandings often arise from cultural differences in interpreting language. By exploring the nuances of specific cultural terms, the authors demonstrate that effective negotiation requires not only linguistic skills but also cultural competence, enabling negotiators to bridge gaps and foster mutual understanding.

Darics and Clifton (2019) discuss the application of discourse analysis as a management tool, particularly in the context of business presentations. They highlight that effective presentations are characterised by clarity, coherence, and engagement, which are essential for conveying complex information. The authors advocate for the incorporation of applied linguistics principles into business practices, suggesting that understanding discourse structures can enhance the effectiveness of presentations. This approach encourages presenters to be mindful of their audience's expectations and cultural backgrounds, thereby increasing the likelihood of successful communication.

The intersection of language and culture in cross-cultural interactions is further examined by the aforementioned authors. They collectively argue that language is not merely a tool for communication but also a cultural artefact that shapes perceptions and behaviours. In this regard, understanding the cultural context of language use is crucial for fostering positive interactions in diverse business environments. This perspective aligns with the growing recognition of intercultural competence as a key asset in global business communication.

The reviewed articles collectively underscore the significance of applied linguistics in enhancing business communication practices. Darics and Clifton (2019) assert that applied linguistics provides valuable frameworks for analysing and improving communication strategies within business contexts. They advocate for a more systematic integration of linguistic theories into business education, thereby equipping future professionals with the analytical skills necessary to navigate complex communication scenarios.

Madhu (2019) supports this notion by presenting a pilot study that explores the integration of applied linguistics and business communication. The study highlights the potential benefits of incorporating linguistic insights into business curricula, suggesting that such an approach can lead to more effective communication training. By fostering an understanding of language structures and their practical applications, educators can better prepare students for the demands of the business world.

Effective communication in the workplace is paramount. Fitria (2019) emphasises that Business English serves as a critical component of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), equipping economic students with the necessary linguistic tools to navigate professional environments. The study underscores the importance of context-specific language skills that facilitate clear and effective interaction among colleagues and clients.

Negotiation is a vital aspect of business discourse, requiring not only linguistic proficiency but also cultural awareness. Bratanych and Vyshnevskaya (2018) advocate for a competency-based approach to teaching ESP and Business English, suggesting that learners should engage in role-plays and simulations that reflect real-world negotiation scenarios. This approach fosters both language skills and strategic thinking necessary for successful negotiations.

The ability to present ideas effectively is crucial in business settings. The literature reviewed indicates that teaching presentation skills should be integrated into the curriculum, enabling students to convey information persuasively. Nault (2006) highlights the need for culturally sensitive presentation techniques, as global business interactions often involve diverse audiences.

Understanding cultural nuances is essential for effective communication in international business contexts. Ushioda (2013) discusses the significance of motivation in language learning, particularly in relation to cross-cultural competencies. This highlights the need for educators to incorporate cultural education into their teaching practices, fostering students' ability to navigate diverse business environments.

Finney (2002) proposes a flexible curriculum model that adapts to the evolving demands of the global landscape, advocating for a dynamic approach that incorporates business communication skills within ELT frameworks. This model supports the integration of authentic materials and scenarios that reflect real-world business contexts, thereby enhancing learners' engagement and applicability of their language skills.

Conversely, Lahey (2017) addresses the complexities of equipping educators to teach academic language effectively while ensuring it meets the expectations of professional environments. The challenges identified include the disparity between academic language proficiency and the practical communication skills required in business settings, highlighting the necessity for a curriculum that bridges this gap.

Methods

This study employs a qualitative approach to investigate the importance of incorporating business discourse into English Language Teaching (ELT), which is essential for equipping learners to address the communication challenges of contemporary business environments. The research integrates policy analysis, a literature review, and comparative case studies of various language teaching methodologies, ensuring students acquire the tools needed to succeed in an increasingly globalized landscape. The methodology is designed to provide in-depth insights into the alignment of educational practices with the demands of the workplace.

A comprehensive literature review analysis was conducted to emphasise the theoretical exploration of integrating business discourse into ELT, underscoring its significance in fostering linguistic competence and professional readiness. These approaches examine educational practices with workplace realities, cross-cultural adaptability, and employability. Additionally, approach analyses were conducted to evaluate education's diverse learning landscape.

The analysis emphasizes the alignment of educational methods with workplace realities, enabling educators to enhance learners' cross-cultural adaptability and employability, which in turn contributes to the development of a more skilled and prepared workforce. By combining qualitative secondary data with insights into the regional education context and curriculum dynamics, this research provides practical recommendations for improving English Language Teaching (ELT) and its theoretical frameworks.

Result and Discussion

Theoretical Integration in English Language Teaching

The integration of business discourse into English Language Teaching (ELT) represents a significant opportunity to enhance communicative competence and professional readiness among learners.

Business discourse, characterised by its specific vocabulary, conventions, and communicative strategies, provides a contextualised framework that can enrich the language learning experience. Molina Martínez and Calderón Gutiérrez (2013) argue that by embedding business competencies within language instruction, educators can foster a more relevant and engaging learning environment. For example, students exposed to real-world business scenarios—such as negotiations, presentations, and report writing—are likely to develop a more nuanced understanding of both language and context, thus improving their overall communicative competence.

The incorporation of business discourse aligns with the principles of communicative language teaching (CLT), which emphasises interaction as a means of language acquisition. Kyrpychenko *et al.* (2021) highlight that teaching professional discourse not only enhances language skills but also prepares students for the specific communicative demands of the business environment. This is particularly relevant in a globalised economy where English serves as a lingua franca in many business contexts. For instance, case studies involving multinational corporations can provide learners with insights into cross-cultural communication, thereby equipping them with the skills necessary to navigate diverse business landscapes.

In addition to improving language proficiency, the integration of business discourse into ELT can significantly contribute to students' professional readiness. Pengnate (2013) suggests that employing a Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach allows learners to simultaneously acquire subject knowledge and language skills. This dual focus is particularly beneficial for business students, who need to master both the technical language of their field and the practical skills required for effective communication. For example, a course that combines business English with project management principles can prepare students to articulate their ideas clearly and persuasively in a professional setting.

The application of business discourse in ELT can be supported by various curriculum frameworks that facilitate practical application. Teece (2011) discusses the importance of dynamic capabilities in curriculum design, which can be adapted to integrate business discourse effectively. A curriculum that incorporates real-world business projects, simulations, and role-plays not only engages students but also allows them to apply their language skills in authentic contexts. Such experiential learning opportunities are essential for developing the critical thinking and problem-solving skills that are highly valued in the business world.

Developing an effective curriculum framework for integrating business discourse into ELT requires a careful consideration of both pedagogical strategies and learner outcomes. A successful curriculum should be designed to facilitate the seamless integration of language skills with business knowledge, thereby ensuring that students are well-prepared for the demands of the professional world. One potential framework could involve a modular approach, where different aspects of business discourse are introduced progressively throughout the course. For instance, initial modules could focus on foundational language skills, while subsequent modules could delve into more complex business concepts and communication strategies.

Incorporating project-based learning is another effective strategy for curriculum design. By engaging students in real business projects, educators can provide opportunities for learners to apply their language skills in a practical context. This approach not only enhances motivation but also encourages collaboration and critical thinking. For example, students could work in teams to develop a marketing plan for a hypothetical product, requiring them to conduct market research, write reports, and present their findings—all while utilising appropriate business language and discourse conventions.

Assessment strategies within this curriculum framework should also reflect the integration of business discourse. Traditional language assessments may not adequately measure students' ability to communicate effectively in a business context. Therefore, incorporating assessments that evaluate students' performance in real-world tasks, such as presentations or negotiations, can provide a more accurate reflection of their communicative competence. This aligns with the findings of Kyrpychenko *et al.* (2021), who emphasise the importance of authentic assessment in developing professional discourse skills.

Furthermore, incorporating technology into the curriculum can enhance the learning experience by providing access to a wealth of resources and tools that facilitate the study of business discourse. Online platforms can host simulations, webinars, and interactive activities that allow students to practise their skills in a dynamic environment. This not only makes learning more engaging but also prepares students for the increasingly digital nature of modern business communication.

Pedagogical Implications in Developing Professional Skills

In the contemporary educational landscape, the integration of authentic workplace communication into English Language Teaching (ELT) has become increasingly essential. This is largely due to the demands of a globalised workforce that requires not only linguistic proficiency but also the ability to navigate complex intercultural interactions. Simões (2020) emphasises the importance of preparing students for the global workplace by employing classroom strategies that develop both English and intercultural communication skills. For instance, role-playing exercises that simulate real-life business scenarios, such as negotiations or presentations, can provide students with practical experience in a controlled environment. Such strategies not only enhance linguistic skills but also foster the confidence needed to engage in authentic workplace discourse.

Moreover, the use of authentic materials—such as business reports, emails, and case studies—can significantly enrich the learning experience. Charatwattananich, Kewara, and Surasin (2020) conducted a study that demonstrated the effectiveness of employing authentic materials in an English training programme within a workplace context. Their findings revealed that students who engaged with real-world materials exhibited improved language skills and a greater

understanding of professional communication nuances. By incorporating these materials into the curriculum, educators can bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, thus preparing students for the realities of the workplace.

Another effective strategy involves collaboration with industry professionals to create a curriculum that reflects current workplace practices. This could include guest lectures, workshops, or project-based learning opportunities that allow students to engage directly with experts in their fields. Such initiatives not only enhance the relevance of the curriculum but also provide students with networking opportunities that can be invaluable as they transition into the workforce (Jumanazarova, 2025). By fostering partnerships between educational institutions and businesses, ELT programmes can ensure that their offerings are aligned with industry needs, thereby enhancing student employability.

The incorporation of technology in the classroom can facilitate the integration of authentic workplace communication. Online platforms can be utilised for virtual meetings or collaborative projects, mirroring the digital communication tools prevalent in many workplaces today. This approach not only familiarises students with the tools they will encounter in their professional lives but also encourages the development of digital literacy skills, which are increasingly important in the modern job market (Kamalovna, 2024).

Lastly, ongoing assessment and feedback mechanisms are crucial in ensuring that students are not only acquiring linguistic skills but are also able to apply these skills effectively in professional contexts. Regular formative assessments that focus on both language use and professional skills can help educators identify areas for improvement and adapt their teaching strategies accordingly. This dynamic approach to assessment aligns with the findings of Bobyreva, Pomortseva, and Zorina (2020), who advocate for a balance between theoretical knowledge and practical skills in training programmes.

While the integration of professional skills into ELT is beneficial, it is not without its challenges. One significant hurdle is the potential conflict between linguistic goals and the development of professional competencies. Teachers often face the daunting task of ensuring that students achieve a certain level of linguistic proficiency while simultaneously preparing them for the complexities of workplace communication. Tahir (2018) highlights that teachers' beliefs play a crucial role in how they navigate this balance, as they must reconcile their instructional goals with the realities of their students' needs.

The pressure to meet curriculum standards for language proficiency can lead educators to prioritise grammatical accuracy and vocabulary acquisition over the practical application of language in professional settings. This focus on linguistic goals may result in a curriculum that lacks authenticity and fails to prepare students for real-world communication challenges. As noted by Kamalovna (2024), a holistic approach that incorporates both language and skill-centred methodologies is essential for addressing this imbalance. Educators must be equipped with the

tools and resources to design curricula that reflect the interconnectedness of language and professional skills.

The diverse backgrounds and varying levels of proficiency among students can complicate the implementation of integrated approaches. In a classroom where students have different experiences and expectations, tailoring instruction to meet individual needs while maintaining a focus on professional skills can be particularly challenging. Bobbyreva *et al.* (2020) suggest that differentiated instruction strategies can help address these disparities, allowing educators to cater to the specific linguistic and professional development needs of each student.

Another challenge lies in the assessment of both linguistic and professional skills. Traditional assessment methods may not adequately capture students' abilities to communicate effectively in a professional context. Therefore, educators must explore alternative assessment strategies that evaluate not only language proficiency but also the application of communication skills in real-world scenarios. This may involve the use of performance-based assessments, peer evaluations, or self-assessments that encourage students to reflect on their communication practices (Simões, 2020).

Finally, the ongoing professional development of educators themselves is crucial in overcoming these challenges. Teachers must be equipped with the latest pedagogical strategies and insights into workplace communication to effectively integrate professional skills into their teaching. Continuous training and collaboration among educators can foster an environment of shared learning and innovation, ultimately benefiting students as they prepare for their future careers (Jumanazarova, 2025).

Professional and Global Relevance

In the contemporary landscape of global business, the ability to communicate effectively across cultures has become a fundamental skill. Integrating business discourse into English Language Teaching (ELT) equips learners with the necessary tools to navigate these complex environments. According to Starke-Meyerring (2005), the challenges posed by globalization necessitate a framework for global literacies in professional communication programmes. This framework emphasises the importance of understanding not only the language but also the cultural nuances that underpin business interactions. For instance, a study conducted by Louhiala-Salminen and Kankaanranta (2011) highlighted that global communicative competence encompasses not just linguistic proficiency, but also the ability to engage in culturally appropriate ways.

The integration of business discourse prepares students for real-world applications of their language skills. The curriculum can include case studies from multinational corporations, role-playing exercises, and simulations that mimic actual business scenarios. Such pedagogical strategies have been shown to enhance learners' confidence and competence in professional settings. For example, a survey by Amirovich *et al.* (2021) found that students who participated in

business-focused ELT programmes reported a significant increase in their ability to communicate effectively in diverse professional contexts. This aligns with the growing demand for graduates who are not only proficient in English but also adept at handling the intricacies of global business communication.

The incorporation of authentic materials, such as business reports, emails, and presentations, into the ELT syllabus can provide learners with a realistic understanding of the language used in professional environments. This approach not only aids in vocabulary acquisition but also familiarises students with the conventions and expectations of business communication. As Sperti (2019) notes, the use of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) in multilingual settings further underscores the necessity for learners to adapt their communication strategies to suit various cultural contexts. Therefore, by integrating business discourse into ELT, educators can significantly enhance the employability of their students in a globalised job market.

The role of ELT in fostering cross-cultural adaptability cannot be overstated. In an increasingly interconnected world, the ability to understand and navigate cultural differences is essential for professional success. As highlighted by Louhiala-Salminen and Kankaanranta (2011), global communicative competence includes not only linguistic skills but also an awareness of cultural nuances that can impact communication. This is particularly relevant in business settings, where misinterpretations can lead to misunderstandings and conflicts. Therefore, integrating cross-cultural training into the ELT curriculum is vital for preparing learners to operate effectively in diverse environments.

One effective approach to promoting cross-cultural adaptability is through the use of interactive and experiential learning activities. These activities can include group projects that require collaboration with peers from different cultural backgrounds, thereby encouraging students to engage with diverse perspectives. A study by Amirovich *et al.* (2021) found that such collaborative learning experiences significantly enhance students' cultural awareness and sensitivity. This is crucial in business contexts, where understanding the cultural backgrounds of colleagues and clients can lead to more effective communication and stronger professional relationships (Bin-Armia, 2025).

Additionally, incorporating discussions on cultural norms, values, and practices into the ELT curriculum can further enhance learners' cross-cultural adaptability (Bin-Armia, 2019). For instance, case studies that explore successful international businesses often reveal the importance of cultural intelligence in achieving success. By analysing these cases, students can learn how to adapt their communication styles to fit different cultural contexts, thus improving their ability to work in global teams (Bin-Armia, 2024). As Sperti (2019) notes, the ability to mediate across cultures is a valuable skill in today's globalised world, and ELT can play a pivotal role in developing this competency.

Furthermore, the use of technology in ELT can also facilitate cross-cultural learning. Virtual exchanges and online collaborations with learners from different countries can provide students

with real-time opportunities to engage with diverse cultures. These experiences not only enhance language skills but also foster an understanding of global perspectives. Starke-Meyerring (2005) emphasises that such technological integration in ELT can help bridge cultural gaps and prepare learners for the realities of a globalised workforce. By embracing these innovative teaching methods, educators can significantly enhance the cross-cultural adaptability of their students.

In conclusion, integrating business discourse into English Language Teaching is essential for preparing learners for the demands of globalised professional environments. By focusing on both linguistic proficiency and cultural adaptability, ELT can equip students with the skills necessary to thrive in diverse business contexts. As the world continues to globalize, the importance of such educational strategies will only increase, making it imperative for educators to adapt their teaching methodologies accordingly.

Conclusion

The present study has sought to illuminate the theoretical foundations of integrating business discourse into English Language Teaching (ELT), emphasizing its potential to reshape both pedagogical approaches and learner outcomes in increasingly globalized contexts. At the heart of this inquiry lies the recognition that English, as the lingua franca of international business, carries communicative demands that extend beyond traditional academic instruction. In tracing how authentic business communication practices can enrich language education, this study underscores several key findings that together point to the transformative role of business discourse in ELT.

First and foremost, the integration of business discourse has been shown to enhance not only linguistic competence but also professional readiness and cross-cultural adaptability. By drawing on authentic communicative practices rooted in professional environments, learners gain exposure to the nuances of negotiation, presentation, and intercultural exchange. Such exposure builds the ability to navigate real-world contexts with greater fluency and confidence. This reorientation of ELT, from a purely academic focus toward workplace realities, highlights the necessity for the field to evolve in step with global professional demands. Without such evolution, ELT risks producing learners who may be proficient in academic English yet ill-prepared for the communicative complexities of business and organizational life.

The implications of these findings extend deeply into both policy and pedagogy. Curriculum innovation emerges as a central priority, requiring educators and institutions to embed business discourse systematically within ELT programs. Doing so not only aligns curricula with professional realities but also bridges the long-standing gap between academic language instruction and the expectations of employers in international markets. Furthermore, the study stresses the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration in realizing these changes. Language educators, applied linguists, and business professionals each bring unique expertise that, when combined, can generate more

robust and practical pedagogical frameworks. Such collaboration ensures that curriculum design is not only theoretically sound but also responsive to the evolving communicative practices of global business.

While this research has contributed a theoretical foundation, it also points toward fertile ground for future investigation. Empirical studies are urgently needed to test how business discourse integration functions in actual classroom settings and to measure its impact on learner outcomes. Equally important is the assessment of curriculum effectiveness across diverse educational and cultural contexts, as what succeeds in one setting may require adaptation in another. Moreover, in an era increasingly defined by digital platforms, future research must examine how technology can support business-oriented language learning. From virtual simulations of workplace communication to AI-driven feedback systems, digital tools hold significant potential to enhance the accessibility and effectiveness of such pedagogical models.

In conclusion, the study reaffirms the urgency of embedding business discourse into ELT as a means of fostering linguistic, professional, and intercultural competencies. By advancing curriculum innovation, promoting interdisciplinary collaboration, and laying the groundwork for empirical inquiry, this research opens pathways for ELT to more fully prepare learners for the communicative demands of global business environments.

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