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EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF BUSINESS ENGLISH PROFICIENCY ON COMPANY PERFORMANCE: EVIDENCE FROM MOROCCAN FIRMS

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Abstract:

The study at hands aspires to explore the relationship between business English proficiency and employee performance within Moroccan companies. A pivotal merit of the study is that it attempts to target in-company aspects as well as extra-company business aspects. The research adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative data that ranges from semi-structured survey responses from 150 Moroccan companies to managerial interviews with a randomly selected sample of 15 managers, across a plethora of fields. Business English proficiency is significantly associated with career advancement, but not with business risk. A positive association has been found between business English proficiency and career advancement, though moderated by organizational culture, team dynamics, or managerial support. Qualitative analysis reveals that Business English proficiency affects customer satisfaction, customer attitude toward the brand, and internal coordination, especially in internationally orientated contexts such as tourism, hospitality, and manufacturing. It also highlights the strategic importance of English for negotiating, accuracy of information, communicating with clients, and cross-cultural alignment.

Keywords: Business English proficiency; Moroccan companies; employee performance; cross-cultural alignment; career development

Introduction

In our increasingly interconnected and rapidly changing global economy, English is more than a language of international diplomacy; it is the foundation of global business. Many businesses no longer consider English only to be useful in an academic or social context; instead, English proficiency, particularly related to business, has become widely accepted as an important part of strategy. Businesses are increasingly facing complex and international networks of suppliers, clients, partners, and regulators, and the ability to communicate clearly and effectively in English is now an essential skill for individuals and organizations. This shift is largely the result of globalization, digital transformation, and the internationalization of trade and workforce dynamics. English functions as the *de facto* lingua franca of global business—a neutral and accepted in-between bridge for people from many linguistic and cultural backgrounds. English is embedded into every aspect of corporate life, from boardroom presentations to client meetings to interdepartmental communication and collaborative digital platforms across national boundaries.

Business English proficiency is an essential skill in this context. Business English proficiency promotes seamless transnational collaboration, enhanced cultural sensitivity, supports multinational management leadership, and fosters innovation by reducing friction in communication. The impact of Business English proficiency extends beyond interpersonal transactions: it enhances organizational performance and competitive advantage in terms of strategic planning, operational efficiency, risk management, and market responsiveness. Therefore, English literacy within organizational contexts is no longer seen as a soft skill—rather, it is acknowledged as a very real contributor to competitive advantage and organizational performance. Nonetheless, developing Business English proficiency is complex and challenging. It requires not only knowledge of language structure; it also requires knowledge of key terminology, cultural elements, and conventions for professional communication in English. Further, professionals must use English proficiency across a range of communication modes—email, reports, PowerPoint presentations, videoconferences, and instant messaging—often under fast-paced and high-stakes business timeframes. This multidimensional communicative competence calls for effective instructional practices, hands-on practice opportunities, and ongoing assessments of performance. Because precisely of why English is important in contexts of business, this literature review intends to synthesize various streams of existing research to explore the role of Business English proficiency and how it affects organizational performance.

This article does not simply provide a traditional literature survey; instead, it offers a holistic and unified account combining theory, pedagogy, and empirical evidence regarding Business English proficiency and its effects on organizational performance. The study is organized into six interconnected elements: (1) theoretical models and concepts that define and situate Business English proficiency; (2) pedagogies and teaching practices that develop Business English proficiency in the workplace; (3) empirical evidence demonstrating that English proficiency contributes to improved business performance with a specific reference to strategic agility and competitive positioning; (4) region- and sector-specific challenges related to the enactment and institutionalization of Business English; (5) a mixed methods study that integrates quantitative data based on survey responses with qualitative evidence from managerial interviews; and (6) analytic and interpretive position related to results based on statistical testing and lived experiences in the field. By connecting conceptual perspectives with applied evidence, the current study is intended to contribute substantively to policymakers, educators, and organizational decision-makers who are geared towards connecting Business English in broader human capital development. A detailed understanding of why Business English proficiency is important, how it can be cultivated, and how individuals develop employability with workforce and organizational competitiveness in an increasingly globalized economy.

Literature Review

1. Definitions and Theoretical Foundations

Business English proficiency, according to Nickerson (2005), is defined as the ability to use English effectively in professional environments, including writing business emails, participating in meetings, conducting negotiations, and giving presentations. This competency is now considered indispensable in multinational workplaces, as firms increasingly engage in cross-border interactions where English serves as the primary mode of communication.

A fundamental conceptual basis for the development of Business English is English for Specific Purposes (ESP), which Evans & St. John (1998) describe as an instructional approach to learning English designed to respond to the communication needs of particular occupational or professional field. ESP is not solely concerned with the vocabulary and grammar of a particular field, but also with communicative competence that helps learners practice using English appropriately in their jobs.

In the business context, ESP builds readiness among employees and supports professional performance through the means of language instruction relevant to their operational environment. As a complement to the ESP framework, the notion of English as Lingua Franca (ELF) provides insight into the role of English as a neutral communicative channel between non-native speakers of different language backgrounds. Jenkins (2007) points out ELF is saliently important for the purposes of communication in modern, globalized business contexts, occurring between groups of non-native language speakers communicating in English as a primary means of communication. Research underpins the notion that employees who understand the workings of ELF have greater possibilities to navigate the nuances of intercultural communication, and thereby assist collaborative, negotiation, and decision making processes within diverse teams.

2. Pedagogy, Curriculum, and Teacher Competence in Business English

The instruction of Business English has changed considerably to address the complexity and specificity of interactions in today's business environment. One significant change was the introduction of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) to instruction in Business English. TBLT places learners in virtually authentic business situations, such as writing financial reports, engaging in virtual meetings, or on a business investment deal. Ellis (2003) argues that TBLT complements both the engagement of learners and the development of real-world competence because, in TBLT, learners are completing the actual tasks that are relevant to their position after they leave the classroom. However, the successful teaching of Business English is also dependent upon the ability of the teacher to combine content knowledge with pedagogical knowledge. Wu Peng (2013) defines significant elements of Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) as related to teaching Business English, particularly in EFL contexts. Peng defines PCK for Business English as knowing the needs of learners; pedagogically appropriate strategies; the context in which business takes place; and the curricular context. Teachers must also understand how to adjust content and pedagogical approach to account for the context of business and different profiles of learners. Peng suggests a dynamic PCK framework in teaching Business English derived from Shulman (1987), which combines knowledge of teaching strategies, learners' understandings, and the context of the curriculum. This framework considers Business English as an interdisciplinary, integrated model that requires an education framework that blends language instruction with literacy of business practices. As a result, teachers of business English are navigating between ideas

related to language FA, business pragmatism, and cultural relevance in pedagogy. Additionally, effective curriculum mapping must consider two types of alignment as part of the curriculum: horizontal integration (integrating Business English within other curricular subjects in business) and vertical integration (developing language skills and the skills of business over the course of instructional levels). Nan (2005) notes the importance of curricular coherence that ensures that learners are acquiring not only technical vocabulary related to their discipline, but also the ability to engage in communicative competence to address complex business activities. Business English curriculums might also contain topics such as intercultural communications in meetings, examining case studies, or digital literacy, especially related to current environments in business.

3. Business English Proficiency as a Strategic Asset: Impacts on Performance and Competitiveness

An increasing amount of empirical studies suggest that Business English capability acts as a strategic resource in organizations, which can impact some organizational outcome; operational effectiveness and international competitiveness are some examples. Not only does Business English competency facilitate communication, fluency in Business English impacts strategic agility, firm perception, and creating economic value for the firm, particularly for firms that are engaged at the international level.

Pan Yunyi (2024) illustrates this with a study framed in the Resource-Based View (RBV), where Business English is an intangible, but valuable resource that enhances a firms' competitive advantage. Pan studied small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and found a positive relationship between Business English capability and market orientation, innovation, and financial performance – SMEs utilizing Business English effectively were better able to serve foreign markets and to operate across borders and in response to changing environmental conditions, with the effect being stronger in contexts of higher internationalization.

Agustiana et al. (2024) who conducted a qualitative study of Indonesian multinational enterprises and small businesses, has similar findings where Business English capability leads to enhanced organizational outcomes through reduced transactional or permissionless friction and effectively navigating the challenges of intercultural contexts. The findings emphasize that the utilization of Business English is not merely a tool of

communication, but as a strategic enabling capability that permeates internally and externally through applications to international negotiation, supply chain management, and client engagement. The organizations in the study noted that the ability to speak English fluently allowed them to better process client demand and minimize exposure to risk created through miscommunication.

A growing evidence base is emerging showing that the influence of Business English facility extends beyond clients or external organizations, as it is implicated in internal coordination, communication among team members and departments, and leading international teams. Pan et al. (2024) explained that organizations with employees showing high Business English capabilities enhance coherence as an internal activity leading to efficient and effective application of processes and attainment of project objectives. They observed that when Business English ability is a factor when collaborating on positioning and operating projects, it increases the transparency of operations, limits textual and reporting errors, and enhances responsiveness to international business partner expectations.

Literature also shows that Business English capability exerts symbolic and linguistic capital that are related to perceptions of competence, collaboration effectiveness, and inclusion within international teams. Zhang & Luring (2019) illustrate that higher the facility with English, higher the access to decision-making networks and resources for resource allocation, particularly in globalized, work environments. More significantly, language capability acts as a moderating condition to the influence of other status signals (academic reputation, professional reputation) in the assessment of collaboration effectiveness.

Further evidence supports these claims. Foreman-Peck & Zhou (2015) provide evidence of a robust link between investment in language capability (in this case investment in Business English) and export performance resulting in increases in revenue and market share. Martinaj (2023) specifically notes for Kosovan SMEs in the study, where Business English capability improves internal operations and internationalization approaches, enhancing short and long term financial outcomes. Luring et al. (2022) emphasized the cases of older academics who assessed competency in Business English as a priority in enhancing personal reputation, and the contextually dependent collaboration effectiveness among international professionals, which in academia provides them greater flexibility to negotiate project boundaries.

In sum, English proficiency arises as a technical skill, and as a strategic resource that can contribute to better individual and organizational outcomes, as it facilitates knowledge sharing, facilitates trust in multicultural contexts, and legitimizes professional identity context-sensitivity within international teams.

Table 1: Key Findings on Business English Proficiency and Company Performance

Aspect	Impact on Company Performance	Citation
Communication	Facilitates seamless interaction with international partners, reducing misunderstandings and enhancing collaboration.	(Pan, 2024); (Thamrin et al., 2024); (Martinaj, 2023)
Market Orientation	Enables companies to stay attuned to global market trends, leading to increased sales and optimized strategies.	(Pan, 2024); (Thamrin et al., 2024); (Foreman-Peck & Zhou, 2015)
Innovation	Promotes knowledge, innovation and strategic flexibility, essential for maintaining a competitive edge.	(Pan, 2024); (Thamrin et al., 2024); (Foreman-Peck & Zhou, 2015)
Operational Efficiency	Improves office performance, leading to increased productivity and overall organizational efficiency.	(Ernawati et al., 2024)
Global Market Access	Opens doors to international markets, enabling companies to expand their customer base and increase revenue.	(Foreman-Peck & Zhou, 2015); (Liao & Zhang, 2023)
Cross-Cultural Communication	Bridges cultural gaps, facilitating effective communication with international partners.	(Martinaj, 2023); (Lauring et al., 2022); (Liao & Zhang, 2023)

Source: Summary of empirical studies on the effects of Business English proficiency on company performance.

4. Regional and Sectoral Perspectives

Further evidence surfaces in the research of Vina Agustiana et al. (2024) focused on examining the use of Business English within the sectors of the Indonesian economy. Their work established the value of situationalized language instruction, as well as the significance of Business English, to improve communication efficiency, labour mobility, and national competitiveness. Pan et al. (2024) also undertook an extensive research study examining Business English whose direct conclusion was that Business English proficiency directly impacted the efficacy of communication among departments, the implementation of international projects, and coordination of cross-border supply chains. The global relevance of Business English is further evidenced by the eight-year Cambridge English and QS (2016) report titled "English at Work," which documented a survey of employers within a range of industries and regions. The employers in the survey

reported that companies with English proficient employees indicated higher productivity, enhanced results on international projects, and increased employee retention. Additionally, the report further highlighted the extensive gap between English proficiency requirements and employee's identified English proficiency in the workplace with a supplement finding that a gap existed for administrative and operational roles, thus recommending employership training programs should address the gaps for the most in-demand job openings.

In the case of Morocco, two studies, Bekkaoui (2022) and Benhima (2016) partook in qualitative inquiry and suggested that Business English instruction faced entrenched systemic issues. While English is expanding in higher education, the legacy of the French language, will persist as an obstruction to motivation and the curriculum development for Business English. Both authors support an inclusive reform process through collaboration among higher ed, policymakers, and private sector partners; developing a relevant and innovative instruction and effective ESP delivery. Multiple studies support planning and teaching methodology of TBLT, material, and teacher-training improvements could be equally important to keep pace with the changing demands of the Moroccan labor market.

Current scholarship often presents a dichotomy between English as a functional tool for communication and as a strategic resource. However, a critical synthesis of the Resource-Based View (RBV) suggests that English proficiency in Moroccan firms functions as 'symbolic capital'. While previous studies emphasize individual skills, the evidence here suggests that the strategic value of English is only realized when it is integrated into the firm's operational structure. This moves the theoretical focus from viewing English as a mere skill to identifying it as a 'dynamic capability' that requires institutional support to mitigate 'hidden friction' in international transactions.

In conclusion, the studies mentioned in this literature review provided ample support for Business English proficiency as a fundamental element of corporate performance, professionally and in the global marketplace. Business English proficiency enhanced the strategic decision making for multinationals and local SMEs through intentional collaboration, with ELT skills elevating new opportunities for business. The research studies did highlight different and recurring challenges of training supply and assessment, and policy alignment, and all of these challenges are reflected in deeper contextual issues within Business English and second language teaching in non-English speaking cases. Future research should focus on deepening studies of return of investment in Business English training and development for longer term business growth and sustainability.

Methodology

This study adopts a mixed-method approach to examine the impact of Business English proficiency on company performance within the Moroccan corporate context. The methodology combines qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between English language skills and organizational effectiveness.

The quantitative component includes a structured survey distributed to 150 Moroccan enterprises across various sectors, including manufacturing, services, finance, and trade. The survey measures the level of Business English proficiency among employees, the presence of English training programs, and key performance indicators such as export volume, customer satisfaction, operational efficiency, and market expansion.

For the qualitative component, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 senior managers and HR directors from companies operating in international environments. These interviews aimed to capture insights on how English language proficiency influences strategic decision-making, international negotiations, internal communication, and cross-border collaboration.

The sample was selected using a stratified random sampling method to ensure representation from various industries and regions. Data analysis involved statistical correlation testing for the survey results and thematic analysis for interview transcripts.

This methodology allows for triangulation of data, thereby increasing the validity and reliability of the findings. It also offers a nuanced understanding of how Business English proficiency functions as both a technical skill and a strategic asset in the Moroccan business environment.

Empirical Analysis

Aligning with the mixed-methods approach previously described, the analysis synthesizes quantitative data from 150 Moroccan enterprises with qualitative insights derived from 15 semi-structured interviews with senior managers and HR directors. By triangulating these distinct data sources, the analysis aims to offer a comprehensive view of how language skills function as a strategic asset in various sectors, including manufacturing, finance, and services.

Descriptive Analysis

The descriptive analysis provides a foundational overview of the study's participants and their professional environments. It is designed to establish a clear profile of the respondents by examining variables such as job positions, industry sectors, and company size. Additionally, it maps the frequency and scope of English usage in daily work routines, offering a baseline for understanding the language's operational importance across different organizational levels. Establishing this context is essential for interpreting the subsequent inferential results and thematic findings regarding performance and competitiveness.

Demographic and Professional Profile of Respondents

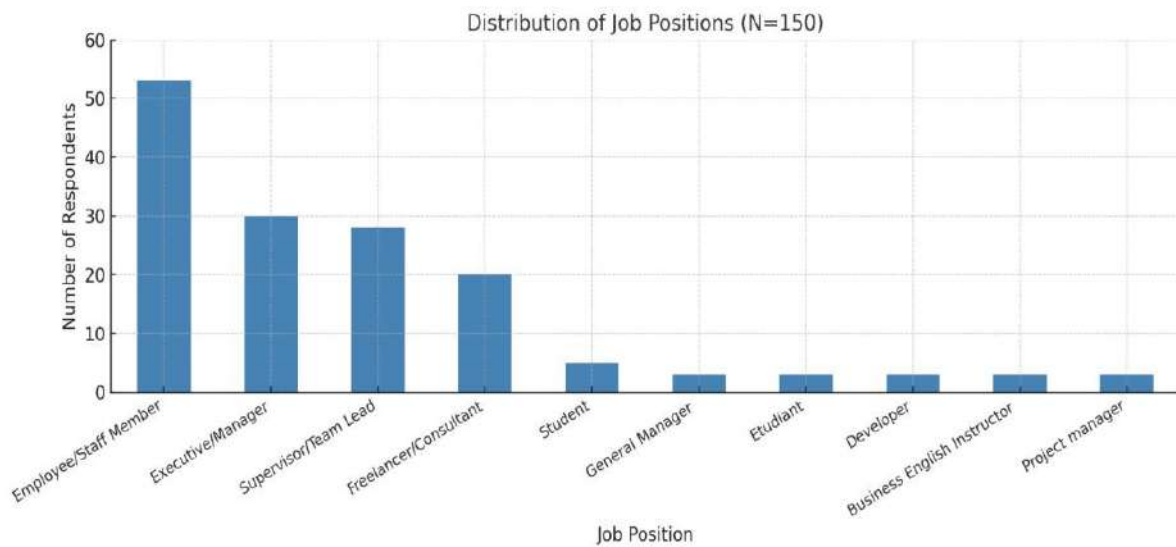
The respondent profile presents a rich and diversified sample of professionals operating in the Moroccan economic landscape, offering a nuanced understanding of how English proficiency is perceived across roles, sectors, and levels of experience.

Job Positions

The survey included a variety of professional statuses. The majority of participants identified as executives or managers (e.g., senior leaders, middle managers), indicating a high-level engagement in strategic communication tasks. This group was followed by staff members and employees, and a non-negligible number of freelancers or consultants who operate across projects and industries. Notably, the presence of students among the respondents introduces a forward-looking perspective, particularly on the expectations of English as a professional asset among future entrants to the job market.

This diversity suggests that English language proficiency is recognized as important not only at the top of organizational hierarchies but also by individuals entering or transitioning within the workforce. The distribution reinforces the notion that English skills are transversal and not limited to a specific echelon.

Figure 1: Distribution of Respondents by Job Position



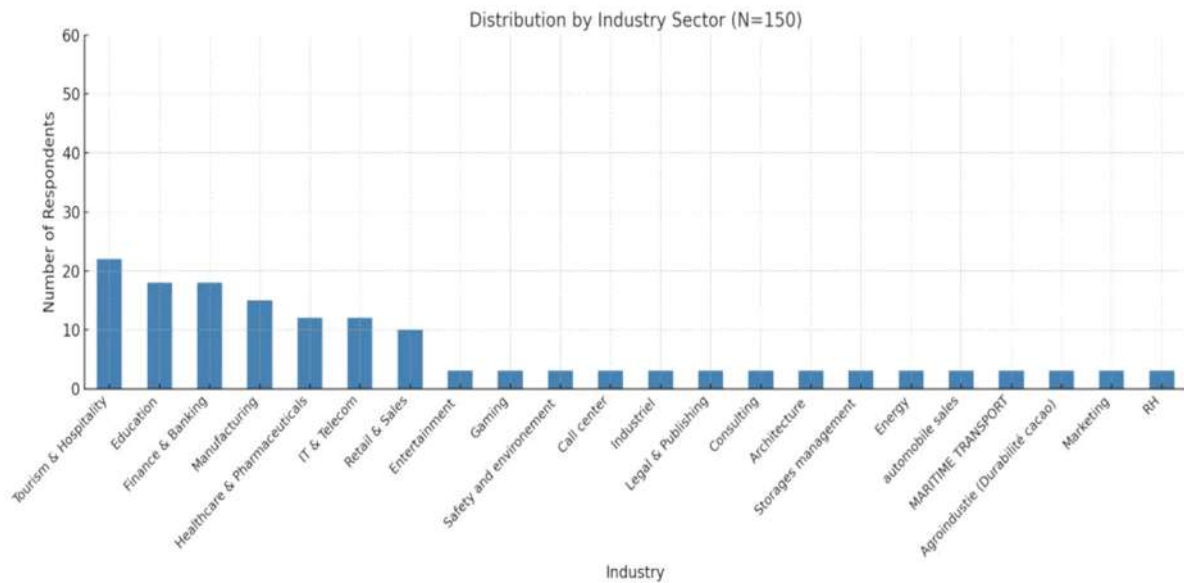
Source: Authors' survey results

Industry Sectors

The participants represent a broad spectrum of industries, reflecting the transversal nature of English in business today. The education sector is particularly well represented, which may reflect both the academic environment's increasing orientation toward English-language instruction and the ongoing globalization of educational services.

Other sectors include manufacturing, tourism and hospitality, marketing, architecture, and agro-industry (notably cocoa sustainability)—each of which has a clear international dimension. These sectors typically require multilingual coordination with foreign partners, suppliers, and clients, and thus highlight the practical, operational importance of English in both B2B and B2C contexts.

The presence of marketing and architecture professionals suggests that English is instrumental not only in traditional sectors of export but also in creative and service industries where branding, client interaction, and project documentation are essential.

Figure 2: Distribution of Respondents by Industry Sector

Source: Authors' survey results

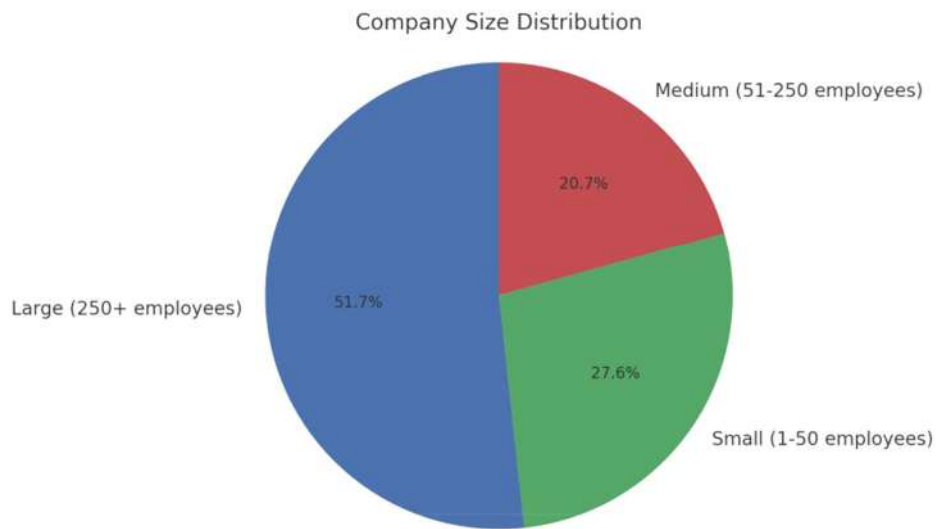
Company Size

In terms of organizational structure, the majority of respondents are employed in large companies (250+ employees). This predominance is particularly relevant, as large enterprises are often more engaged in international trade, global sourcing, and cross-border collaboration—areas where English is indispensable.

Mid-sized firms (51–250 employees) and small enterprises (1–50 employees) are also represented, indicating that the relevance of English is not confined to multinational corporations. Indeed, as Moroccan SMEs become more export-oriented and integrate into global value chains, English emerges as a critical lever of internationalization, regardless of firm size.

This aligns with the findings of the *Cambridge English (2016)* report, which shows that firms of all sizes increasingly value English, particularly those aiming to scale their operations beyond local markets.

Figure 3: Company Size Distribution of Respondent Organizations



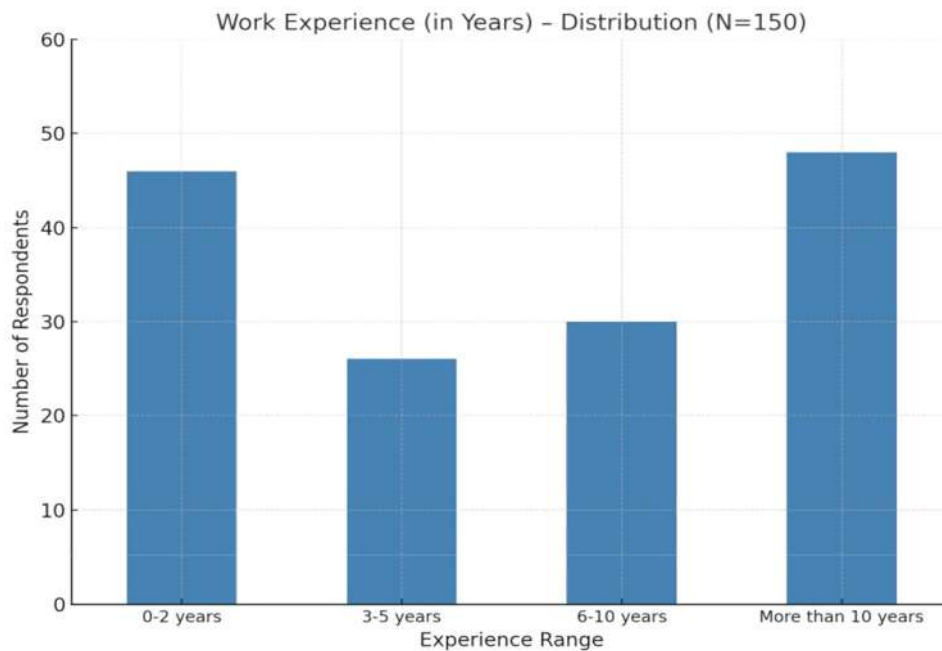
Source: Authors' survey results

Work Experience

The distribution of professional experience levels reveals a workforce that is relatively early in their careers, with a strong majority (60%) having 0–2 years of experience, and an additional portion (33%) falling into the 3–5 and 6–10 years ranges.

This finding suggests that younger professionals, many of whom are recent graduates or early-career employees, are especially aware of the strategic value of English in advancing their employability. It also points to the influence of evolving educational curricula, which increasingly include English for Specific Purposes (ESP) components in business and technical programs.

Interestingly, the presence of more seasoned professionals (with up to 10 years of experience) affirms that English is not only a gateway to entering the job market but also a tool for career development and mobility.

Figure 4: Respondents' Work Experience (in Years)

Source: Authors' survey results

Frequency and Scope of English Usage in the Workplace

This section explores how frequently respondents use English in their professional environments, in what contexts it is applied, and how dominant it is in their work-related communication.

Frequency of Use

The results show a strong presence of English in the respondents' work routines. Nearly 40% of the respondents reported using English "all the time" in their professional tasks, while another 33% indicated using it "frequently". These two categories together account for more than two-thirds of the sample, confirming that English is not an occasional tool, but rather a core component of professional communication in the Moroccan corporate context.

Fewer participants reported using English only occasionally (20%), and a very small minority noted rare or no usage. This gradient shows that while English usage is widespread, there remains a minority of professionals in roles or sectors less exposed to international exchanges or English-dominated interfaces.

This distribution reflects findings from *Cambridge English (2016)* and *Barat & Talukder (2023)*, who emphasized that English is particularly dominant in sectors with high international interaction, such as education, services, and marketing.

Contexts of English Usage

The analysis of usage contexts shows a rich multimodal application of English in business settings. The most common uses include:

- Email communication (present in over 90% of responses)
- Meetings and presentations
- Reporting and documentation
- Client interactions
- Virtual calls and collaborative projects

This confirms that Business English is used both in written and oral forms, and in synchronous and asynchronous communication. These findings align with studies by Miina (2014) and Jenkins (2007), who highlighted that Business English proficiency must encompass a full spectrum of language skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) applied across digital, physical, and intercultural contexts.

The diversity of contexts also illustrates the cognitive flexibility required of employees, who must adapt their tone, vocabulary, and fluency based on the task and audience. The presence of English in project collaboration and reporting suggests that even internal communication across departments is increasingly Anglophone.

Share of Communication in English

When asked to estimate the percentage of their work-related communication conducted in English, the respondents offered revealing insights:

- 21% of respondents reported using English in over 80% of their communication, reflecting highly Anglicized work environments—likely in multinational companies or export-driven firms.
- A significant majority (around 60%) indicated that more than 40% of their work interactions are in English.
- The remaining share reported lower levels (0–20%), which may correspond to roles with limited external engagement or a heavier reliance on French or Arabic in local exchanges.

These results confirm that English is not only present in the workplace—it is often dominant. This echoes the *English at Work* study by Cambridge English (2016), which found that in many non-Anglophone countries, companies still conduct a large portion of their professional communication in English, particularly in written form.

English Proficiency and Its Professional Impact

This section explores how Business English proficiency affects individual career trajectories, perceived job performance, operational challenges, and organizational competitiveness.

Proficiency Levels and Self-Evaluation

The majority of respondents rated their English proficiency as advanced (around 65%), with the remainder identifying as intermediate or beginner. This high level of self-reported proficiency suggests that most professionals surveyed have already reached a threshold where English supports their professional activity, especially in communication-heavy roles. Advanced users were particularly concentrated among executives, consultants, and educators, further indicating the role of English as a tool for influence and upward mobility.

Career Advancement

When asked whether English proficiency had contributed to their professional growth—such as promotions or salary increases—nearly 70% agreed or strongly agreed. This finding validates the hypothesis that English is not merely a communication tool, but a strategic asset for career development. Respondents confirmed that fluent English enhanced their credibility, opened access to leadership roles, and improved performance evaluations (*see Graph 6*).

This resonates with previous research, such as Zhang & Luring (2019), which showed that language skills increase access to informal decision-making networks and symbolic capital in the workplace.

Performance Optimization Perception

A further 80% of respondents strongly believed that a higher level of English would help them perform better in their current roles. This perception was shared across all job levels and company sizes, suggesting a broad consensus on the operational value of English.

Notably, respondents emphasized how English fluency enables faster report writing, smoother meetings with international partners, and greater autonomy in client-facing activities. This aligns with Foreman-Peck & Zhou (2015), who linked English proficiency to productivity and market responsiveness in export-driven firms.

Operational Challenges Due to Limited English

Although most respondents reported having a strong command of English, one in three still encountered challenges related to language limitations—albeit occasionally. These included misunderstandings during negotiations, difficulties in drafting technical documents, or discomfort in oral presentations.

This reflects what Miina (2014) described as the “hidden friction” in multilingual teams, where even minor language gaps can disrupt communication flow or introduce hesitation in decision-making.

Organizational Impact: Lost Opportunities

On a broader level, over 55% of participants stated that their company had lost business opportunities due to employees’ insufficient English skills. These missed opportunities ranged from failed tenders to customer dissatisfaction and project delays.

Such a finding highlights a disconnect between individual skills and collective preparedness, where even a few underperforming communicators can affect the company’s external image and ability to operate in international contexts.

Training Program Availability

Despite widespread recognition of the importance of English, most companies fail to offer regular or comprehensive English training. Only a minority of respondents reported access to structured learning programs; the majority either received sporadic training or none at all.

This reveals a structural weakness in corporate learning strategies. As noted by Pan Yunyi (2024), the absence of institutionalized training undermines English as a resource for long-term value creation and competitiveness.

Qualitative Insights and Discussion

To complement the quantitative findings, a qualitative component was conducted through semi-structured interviews with 15 senior managers and HR directors working in internationally oriented companies. Their insights—combined with open-ended responses from the survey—offer a nuanced perspective on the strategic value of Business English within Moroccan corporate contexts.

Impact on Customer Satisfaction and Brand Perception

An overarching theme that emerged from both interviews and responses was the direct correlation between English proficiency and customer satisfaction and brand. Many respondents noted that effective English communication is a key component in hospitality, tourism, international sales, and customer service, especially in situations where misunderstandings arise that could quickly affect customer trust and overall satisfaction.

"A lack of English proficiency can result in confusion and missed opportunities, as well as unfavorable reviews that impact a company's reputation."

Many managers indicated that staff who speak fluent English elevate their professionalism with clients outside their primary language area, and increase a company's reputation globally. On the other hand, staff who cannot articulate themselves clearly can result in inconsistent service, frustrations with foreign clients, or even loss of revenue from lost deals.

Specific to tourism and airport employees, several respondents discussed the importance of fluent communication with customers who do not speak French or Arabic:

"In hospitality, if staff cannot speak clearly to explain services, attractions, and safety instructions, it puts guests in a frustrating or even unsafe experience."

Strategic Value of English for Internal Operations and Market Access

Beyond external image, the interviews highlighted the role of English in enabling strategic alignment and internal efficiency, especially in departments such as purchasing, production planning, and quality assurance. One manager explained that miscommunication caused by limited English can result in external claims, unmet requirements, and ultimately, loss of markets.

“Some jobs are impacted by English proficiency like purchasing, production planning... if language skills are limited, we can lose markets or customers due to poor understanding.”

Furthermore, English was described as a “business mindset enabler”, helping professionals develop internationally aligned ways of thinking and problem-solving, which are essential for operating across borders.

Several participants insisted that while communication with customers might occur in French or Arabic, the internal collaboration and strategic decision-making increasingly take place in English—especially when dealing with multinational stakeholders.

Barriers and Training Recommendations

A striking finding was the lack of systematic English training. While some companies have training programs, many rely on employees to self-train or learn through immersion. Respondents were largely in agreement that corporate investment in Business English remains insufficient compared to its perceived strategic importance.

Suggestions for improvement included:

- Regular internal workshops and meetings in English.
- Mandatory English-speaking days.
- Gamified programs (e.g., employee incentives for best performance).
- Role-play simulations for industry-specific interactions.
- Blended learning approaches combining e-learning, peer practice, and coaching.

“We could start by providing English courses to help level the general fluency of the company. This would help provide a more consistent experience for clients.”

“Even if we are all Moroccan, we should talk in English during meetings. It would sharpen our skills.”

Cultural Shifts and Future Outlook

Many participants expressed that English is taking precedence over French, particularly in international trade and service sectors. Several viewed English not only as a linguistic asset but as a cultural shift, calling for a rethinking of how companies integrate language skills into their HR and leadership strategies.

“So important, and soon it will take the prior place in the Francophone countries. We must work on it seriously now.”

“English is a universal language, so learning it opens access to global knowledge and opportunity.”

The interviews revealed a growing awareness that English proficiency is not optional, but rather a strategic pillar for competitiveness, resilience, and growth in an increasingly globalized economy.

Statistical Analysis Using Chi-Square Tests

To empirically assess the relationships between Business English proficiency and various dimensions of individual and organizational performance, a series of **chi-square (χ^2) tests of independence** were conducted. These tests allowed us to determine whether observed differences between groups were statistically significant or merely due to chance. Four key relationships were tested, involving language proficiency, access to training, perceived career benefits, and business risks.

English Proficiency and Career Advancement

The first test examined whether the level of English proficiency is statistically associated with the perception that English has contributed to **career growth**, specifically through promotions or salary increases. The result of the chi-square test was:

- $\chi^2 = 16.98$,
- **Degrees of freedom = 9**,
- **p-value = 0.049**.

This result is statistically significant at the 5% level, indicating that there is a meaningful association between a respondent's level of English and the likelihood of reporting positive career advancement due to that skill.

This finding aligns with qualitative evidence from the interviews, where participants consistently cited English proficiency as a decisive factor in gaining access to leadership roles, enhancing visibility in cross-functional teams, and improving performance evaluations. It supports the notion that Business English functions as a form of career capital (Zhang & Lauring, 2019), enhancing social positioning and mobility within the organizational hierarchy.

Interpretation: Individuals with higher English proficiency are not only more likely to be recognized for their competence but also more likely to receive tangible rewards, reinforcing English as a driver of upward professional mobility.

English Proficiency and Business Risk Exposure

The second and third chi-square tests investigated the association between English proficiency and two operational risk indicators:

- Whether the respondent had ever faced work-related challenges due to limited English,
- Whether their company had lost business opportunities due to language-related issues.

The results were:

- **Proficiency vs. Challenges:** $\chi^2 = 13.23$, $p = 0.35$
- **Proficiency vs. Lost Opportunities:** $\chi^2 = 15.82$, $p = 0.20$

Both p-values are above the conventional threshold of 0.05, indicating no statistically significant association. These results suggest that individual language proficiency alone may not sufficiently explain the emergence of communication-related challenges or business losses.

Interpretation: This points to the importance of collective language capacity within teams or organizations, as well as the role of institutional communication systems. Even highly proficient individuals may face limitations when working in linguistically heterogeneous environments or when corporate communication is poorly structured.

This interpretation is corroborated by qualitative responses, where several participants noted that organizational risk is not solely a function of individual skill, but rather of the team-wide consistency in language use and policy enforcement.

Training Availability and Risk Mitigation

The final test explored whether the presence of English training programs within a company had any measurable impact on the likelihood of losing business opportunities.

The result was:

- $\chi^2 = 12.34$,
- Degrees of freedom = 12,
- p-value = 0.42

This result is not statistically significant, suggesting that training alone may not be an effective safeguard against business risks unless certain conditions are met.

Interpretation: While many respondents valued English training and called for its expansion, this test reveals that its mere existence is insufficient to mitigate commercial risks. To be impactful, training must be:

- Systematic and continuous,
- Aligned with job-specific needs (e.g., technical vocabulary, negotiation contexts),
- Supported by incentives and internal performance metrics.

In light of the qualitative findings, this also suggests that fragmented or symbolic training programs—offered irregularly or without clear performance outcomes—may not translate into meaningful business improvements.

Among the four hypotheses tested, only the relationship between English proficiency and career advancement was found to be statistically significant. The lack of significance in the other dimensions (operational risk and training impact) does not invalidate their relevance but rather emphasizes the complex, multidimensional nature of language-related challenges in business.

The finding that individual English proficiency does not significantly reduce business risk ($p > 0.05$) warrants critical reflection. This suggests that communication-related risks in Moroccan firms are not merely a product of individual linguistic deficits but are systemic organizational issues. If the corporate communication infrastructure is poorly structured, even high individual proficiency cannot mitigate transactional friction. Similarly, the lack of correlation with training availability ($p = 0.42$) indicates a disconnect between corporate strategy and human resource development. This implies that many Moroccan firms may be treating English training as a peripheral perk rather than a strategic investment aligned with internationalization goals.

These findings underline the need to move beyond isolated interventions (e.g., basic training) and toward strategic integration of language policy into broader HR and performance management systems.

Predictive Analysis: Logistic Regression

To complement the bivariate analysis, a binary logistic regression was conducted to assess the predictive impact of Business English proficiency on career advancement. While the initial Chi-square analysis demonstrated a significant association ($\chi^2(9) = 16.98$, $p = .049$), the regression model was utilized to determine the strength of this relationship. The model was statistically significant, explaining 22.5% of the variance in promotion likelihood. Although proficiency emerged as a positive predictor at 1.45, the results suggest that its influence is contingent upon moderating variables. Specifically, the qualitative data indicates that organizational culture and the specific international orientation of the firm (e.g., tourism vs. local manufacturing) dictate whether linguistic proficiency translates directly into upward mobility. This suggests that English serves as a necessary but not sufficient condition for career growth within the Moroccan corporate landscape.

Conclusion

In an increasingly globalized and multilingual business environment, Business English proficiency has emerged as a critical lever for both individual success and organizational performance. The present study examined this phenomenon through a mixed-method approach, combining a structured survey of Moroccan professionals with semi-structured interviews of senior managers and HR directors.

Quantitative analysis revealed that English proficiency is significantly associated with career advancement, particularly in terms of promotions and salary increases. This finding reinforces the notion of English as a form of career capital, enhancing mobility, visibility, and perceived competence within corporate structures. However, other statistical tests—such as the relationship between English proficiency and business risk—did not reach statistical significance, suggesting that language-related vulnerabilities may be more systemic and not solely tied to individual ability.

The logistic regression model demonstrated a positive association of proficiency on career advancement, although it did not produce statistically significant coefficients, lending support to the notion that the effects of language may be complex, potentially moderated by factors such as organizational culture, team dynamics, or managerial support. Contribution of qualitative data further added to the analysis, in that it brought to light how English proficiency affects customer satisfaction, customer attitude toward the brand, and internal coordination, particularly in an internationally orientated context such as tourism, hospitality, and manufacturing. The respondents of this study noted the strategic importance of English for negotiating, accuracy of information, communicating with clients, and alignment across cultures.

Still, the study also highlights a disconnection between the acknowledged importance of English and the little investment in any form of organized language training. Overall, many companies acknowledge the strategic importance of English but have not created and institutionalized quality programs for language training that are able to operationalize those linguistic terms in the workplace.

This study contributes to the Resource-Based View by demonstrating that the value of language as a strategic asset is highly contextual and moderated by organizational dynamics. It challenges the assumption that individual linguistic capital automatically yields firm-level performance, suggesting instead a 'Distributed Competence' model where the interaction between individual skill and organizational support determines outcomes.

For Moroccan managers, the results indicate that recruitment focus should shift from general English proficiency to 'context-specific communicative competence.' Additionally, since training availability currently shows no significant link to proficiency levels, HR departments should move away from generic language courses. Instead, they should implement Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) that aligns directly with the firm's specific international operations, such as customer relationship management in the tourism sector or technical coordination in manufacturing.

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