



**ENGLISH LANGUAGE – BARRIER OR TRIGGER FOR  
INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS AND COMMERCE**

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## Introduction:-

- Good communication is indispensable when doing business in the 21st Century.
- Language lies at the heart of international business (IB) activities, yet language as a key construct in the field of IB has not been sufficiently articulated or theorized.
- It is connected to the fact that most corporations operate worldwide. Multinational companies can encounter many problems when maintaining its global coordination. They often face linguistic and cultural differences. Undermining language management significance has a direct impact on International businesses and commerce.
- In today's era of cut throat competition, people face several challenges to survive and excel in their respective fields. Amongst all the challenges communicating in English language is majorly faced by various individuals in the organizations. English is the language of trade and industry

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- In India, English is not used only for the utilitarian purpose but also for the International business and commerce. It works as the Business Language as well as the Lingua Franca, which means that it is required to carry out the business and also to communicate with people of different cultures as India is a multi-cultural and multi-lingual country.
- It is no more working as the status language of the elite class or the educated class of the society, rather it is working as an instrument to bring success in life.
- To grow and prosper in all the spheres of International business and commerce and become more visible in the global world, the knowledge of English language has become an important criterion.

## Language Management in International Business Corporations:

The importance of language management in multinational companies has never been greater than today. Multinationals are becoming ever more conscious of the importance of global co-ordination as a source of competitive advantage, and language remains the ultimate barrier to aspirations of international business.

Before attempting to consider language management strategies, companies will have to evaluate the magnitude of the language barrier confronting them and in doing so they will need to examine it in three dimensions.

1. The Language Diversity
2. The Language Penetration
3. The Language Sophistication

The awareness of language management is especially vital for companies who want to stay competitive on the market. This forces businesses which operate with a variety of different countries to overcome those barriers with good language management strategies.

To handle the co-ordination burden corporations try implementing new methods. One of them is creating departments that help with language management, for instance: Total Quality Management, Virtual Organizations, Human Resource Management, Global Sourcing, Co-Design, Concurring Engineering, Corporate Culture, Extended Enterprise Management, Systems Integration, Centralized Treasury Management. These departments help to maintain good language management

## **Use of different strategies by multinational companies to ensure good language management**

Language Management is defined as 'the extent to which the company is able to satisfy its language needs through prudent deployment of a variety of language management tools including for example language training and expatriation

The list of the most popular language management strategies used in the companies is the following:

- Using local agents to solve language problems
- Creating culturally and/or linguistically adapted websites;
- Using linguistic audits;
- Using professional translators/interpreters;
- Translating promotional, sales and/or technical material;
- Offering language training and cultural briefing schemes, including online language learning;
- Encouraging cross-border staff mobility;
- Language Nodes

### **The Impact of language barriers on International Companies:**

- The impact of the language barrier cannot be evaluated using simple measures such as dollars spent on interpreters or days lost in translating documents. Instead the true cost has to be seen in terms of the way it distorts and damages relationships
- These in turn then impose pressures and constraints on the strategies pursued by the company and the organizations and systems they consequentially adopt In summary however, it is worth noting that the language barrier triggers a whole range of negative consequences.
- In addition to the above consequences language barrier also affects the International Business in the following way:

### **Buyer / Seller Relationships:**

- Companies facing the prospect of globalizing will sense a greater cultural distance and will be aware of greater uncertainty about markets that don't share their language and salespersons working in their second language will appear less able, less credible, less likeable and ultimately less persuasive.
- As a consequence, companies will in general have more success selling to countries that share their language

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### **Joint Ventures:**

- Whenever the host country and the parent country do not share the same language, the parent will inevitably feel an increased sense of uncertainty and will prefer an entry method where risk can be shared.
- Thus joint ventures will be likely where there is language difference. Joint ventures between partners where only one of the partners has an international language will end up working in that language.
- Subsequently, as a consequence of power through communication, the partner with that language might start to dominate the relation-ship, which will pose increasing pressure on the JV

## Conclusion

- Communication is the main factor that enables transfer of information, performance in negotiations and daily activities when doing business. It is also a part of company's identity; therefore, good language management is so important.
- International communication faces many obstacles that are related to culture differences and the variety of languages in the world. Improperly managed communication entails the consequences in form of lost opportunities, mistrust, anxiety, uncertainty, and most importantly it has a financial impact
- In some cases the lack of sufficient knowledge in a language can lead to misunderstandings which in turn leads to big losses in money, losing potential clients, causing decrease of company's turnover and even bankruptcy.
- Language interfaces in these businesses will trigger problems of miscommunication, uncertainty, mistrust and conflict and unless these problems are professionally managed, they will bring detrimental consequences for the business and its relationships. Linguistic fragmentation results in depressed economic performance for whole countries.



## Conclusion...

- It would be naïve to think that the same impact would not be felt by linguistically fragmented companies. So the challenge facing these businesses is how to manage their language problems effectively.
- The secret therefore, would seem to be to understand the language barrier well and to mix and match the solutions into a blend that is right for the company context. But even understanding the problem is a challenge