

English Learning Approaches for Chinese Industry Workers In China

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Abstract: This study aimed to identify strategic approaches to English language training for Chinese industry workers to enhance their global market position. It addressed key questions about industry-specific language requirements, the effectiveness of non-Chinese-informed training programs, demographic influences on program design, barriers to cross-cultural communication, and potential language learning approaches. A systematic literature review was conducted to synthesize existing research, identify gaps, and evaluate methodologies. The review focused on industry-specific language needs, the effectiveness of current training programs, and cultural factors influencing communication. The findings contributed to developing new, tailored language learning strategies for Chinese professionals. Key approaches include Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), which emphasizes real-world tasks like negotiations and business communication, tailored to industry-specific needs. Blended learning combines online modules with in-person instruction, offering flexibility while addressing industry-specific language and cross-cultural communication. Cultural sensitivity training helps employees adapt to diverse communication styles, focusing on differences such as hierarchy and negotiation tactics. English for Specific Purposes (ESP) tailors courses to professional roles, ensuring employees develop skills relevant to their industries. Immersive language learning through virtual exchanges and exposure to English media accelerates fluency. Finally, leadership development programs that integrate language and cultural competence help senior managers lead diverse teams and manage international negotiations.

Keywords: English language learning, Industry-specific language needs, Cross-cultural communication, Learning approaches, Chinese industry workers

I. Introduction

As China continues to expand its influence in the global economy, the demand for Chinese professionals with strong English language skills has become increasingly important. English has long been recognized as the global lingua franca, particularly in international business, trade, and diplomacy. For Chinese professionals, the ability to communicate effectively in English is no longer a luxury but a necessity, especially in industries such as technology, finance, and manufacturing. This growing need can be attributed to several factors, including globalization, the rise of multinational corporations, and the increasing importance of cross-border communication.

Globalization and International Business

Globalization has led to a more interconnected world, and China's growing role in the international market has further emphasized the need for English proficiency among its professionals. As China becomes a key player in global trade and investment, many Chinese companies are looking to expand their operations beyond domestic borders. For instance, Chinese enterprises like Huawei, Alibaba, and Xiaomi have made

significant strides in international markets, and their employees must be proficient in English to manage cross-border operations, communicate with international clients, and negotiate business deals effectively (Liu, 2019).

Moreover, the increasing number of foreign businesses operating in China means that many local professionals must engage in English communication to meet the needs of international clients and collaborators. This trend is especially noticeable in industries such as finance, IT, and e-commerce, where English is often the primary language for technical documentation, contracts, and global meetings (Huang & Mei, 2021). As such, learning English while working in China has become essential for professionals to stay competitive and to ensure that they are fully equipped to meet the demands of a globalized marketplace.

Rising Importance of Multinational Corporations

In addition to the growth of China's own businesses, multinational corporations (MNCs) have increased their presence in the country. These MNCs typically require employees to be proficient in English to facilitate communication between global offices, interact with foreign clients, and participate in cross-cultural collaborations. English proficiency is considered a key skill for Chinese professionals working in such companies. In fact, many MNCs have made English a mandatory requirement for higher-level positions in China (Pei, 2023). This trend has been particularly prominent in the tech and finance sectors, where much of the technical and financial terminology is in English, and English is the common language used in meetings, reports, and internal communications (Gao, 2017).

The increasing integration of China into global supply chains and its evolving role as a hub for international research and development further necessitates English language skills. Professionals working in research, marketing, product development, and logistics often need to collaborate with colleagues from different parts of the world. For these professionals, mastering English is essential for contributing to global discussions, accessing international resources, and driving innovation.

Educational and Career Advancement

English proficiency is also critical for career progression in China. Professionals who can communicate fluently in English are more likely to be considered for promotions, international assignments, and opportunities to work in global offices. Many companies in China are now offering English language training to employees, recognizing the importance of language skills for both individual and organizational growth. According to Pei (2023), English proficiency is increasingly becoming a key criterion for hiring decisions, particularly for positions that involve customer interaction, project management, and international collaboration.

Furthermore, English is a key component of many advanced degree programs in China, particularly in fields such as business administration, engineering, and law. As China's workforce becomes more educated, the demand for professionals who are capable of engaging with global academia and research will only increase. Being proficient in English is vital for reading international publications, attending global conferences, and participating in research initiatives that require collaboration across borders (Meng, 2021).

Cross-Cultural Communication and Soft Skills

Learning English also aids in the development of critical cross-cultural communication skills, which are essential in today's international business environment. Effective cross-cultural communication helps Chinese professionals (Bantugan & Zhu, 2023) navigate differences in business practices, negotiation styles, and corporate etiquette when interacting with foreign counterparts. The ability to understand cultural nuances, coupled with fluency in English, enhances professionals' ability to foster strong relationships, resolve conflicts, and work effectively in diverse teams. As Pei (2023) highlights, cultural sensitivity in business communication is just as important as linguistic proficiency, and English serves as a bridge for understanding both.

Research Gaps on English Language Learning among Chinese Workers in China

Research on English language learning for Chinese workers in China has made significant strides in understanding the challenges and needs of learners in the globalized business context. However, several research gaps still exist that hinder the development of effective English language training programs tailored to the specific needs of Chinese workers. These gaps include a lack of industry-specific language training, insufficient attention to the integration of cultural competence, a focus on general language proficiency rather than workplace communication skills, and the under-explored role of technological tools in language learning.

Industry-Specific Language Training. One of the most significant research gaps is the lack of studies focusing on industry-specific English language training for Chinese workers. While general English proficiency is often emphasized, research has yet to explore in-depth how English language learning can be tailored to meet the needs of workers in specific industries, such as manufacturing, finance, technology, or healthcare. Liu (2019) suggests that employees in these sectors often struggle with specialized vocabulary and professional jargon that general language programs fail to address. Further research is needed to examine how English language training programs can incorporate industry-specific language to improve communication and enhance workers' performance in their respective fields.

Cultural Competence and Cross-Cultural Communication. Another critical gap lies in the insufficient integration of cultural competence into English language learning programs for Chinese workers. While cultural competence is essential for effective communication in global business, there is limited research on how cultural training can be integrated into language programs for Chinese employees. As Pei (2023) points out, cross-cultural misunderstandings due to differences in communication styles, business etiquette, and negotiation strategies are significant barriers to successful international business. Further studies are needed to examine how the incorporation of cultural sensitivity training can enhance Chinese workers' ability to communicate in cross-cultural environments, bridging gaps between language proficiency and cultural understanding.

Focus on Workplace Communication Skills. Most existing research on English language learning for Chinese workers tends to focus on general language skills such as reading, writing, speaking, and listening, rather than the specific communication skills needed in the workplace. Huang and Mei (2021) argue that the ability to negotiate, engage in business correspondence, or deliver presentations in English is more critical for Chinese workers in global business settings than general language proficiency. There is a need for more research on how to develop tailored English language training that focuses on practical, work-related communication skills. This research should explore how to design training programs that prioritize the types of communication tasks Chinese employees will encounter in international business settings.

Role of Technology in English Language Learning. The role of technology in enhancing English language learning remains under-explored in the context of Chinese workers. As digital tools such as language learning apps, online courses, and virtual language exchange programs become increasingly popular, there is a need for research on how these tools can be effectively integrated into language learning for professional purposes. Liu (2020) mentions that while technology can provide opportunities for flexible and accessible language learning, its application in developing English proficiency for specific workplace contexts remains largely unexplored. Research in this area could help determine how digital tools can be utilized to support industry-specific language acquisition and improve learning outcomes.

Gender and Demographic Considerations. Finally, there is a gap in research addressing how demographic factors, such as age, gender, and educational background, influence English language learning among Chinese workers. Although some studies have examined the role of age and educational background in

language learning (Gao, 2017), there is little research on how gender differences or other demographic factors affect language acquisition, particularly in the context of professional settings. Understanding these factors could lead to more inclusive and customized training programs that better cater to the diverse needs of Chinese workers.

This study directly addressed several critical research gaps in the field of English language learning for Chinese workers in the context of global business communication. By exploring the issues raised in the research questions, the study can fill gaps related to industry-specific language training, the integration of cultural competence, the development of practical workplace communication skills, and the inclusion of demographic factors. Below is a discussion of how the study will address these gaps:

One of the major gaps identified in previous discussions is the lack of industry-specific English language training programs that address the unique language needs of workers in different sectors. While most training programs focus on general language proficiency, Chinese workers often face challenges related to industry-specific terminology and communication norms. This study provides insights into the specialized vocabulary, terminology, and communication styles required for different sectors such as manufacturing, finance, and technology and contributes to the development of tailored, industry-specific training programs, addressing the research gap regarding the need for language training that is closely aligned with professional environments.

Existing research has highlighted the limitations of non-Chinese-informed English language training programs, which often fail to consider the cultural, business, and legal contexts specific to China. These programs may be ineffective in equipping Chinese workers with the necessary skills for cross-cultural communication and global business operations. This study determined whether they address the cultural and business-specific challenges that Chinese workers face, and offers recommendations for improvement to close the gap in understanding the limitations and effectiveness of current programs and provide insights for the development of more contextually relevant training approaches.

A key research gap is the insufficient attention given to demographic factors (e.g., age, gender, educational background) in the design of English language learning programs. These factors can significantly influence how employees learn and interact in the workplace. By examining the factors that impact language acquisition and global communication, the study helps design more inclusive and customized training programs that cater to the diverse backgrounds of Chinese employees and contributes to closing the gap in addressing the needs of a heterogeneous workforce.

The barriers to cross-cultural communication that Chinese workers face in global business environments have been identified as a major challenge. This study contributes to the development of training programs and helps close the research gap on how cultural competence can be integrated into language learning to improve cross-cultural communication.

There is a need for more research on the specific approaches that can be developed to enhance the global communication skills of Chinese workers, particularly in the context of workplace communication rather than general language skills. This study provides recommendations for developing practical, workplace-oriented language learning strategies that can contribute to the gap in understanding how language training programs can be more effective by focusing on the real-world communication tasks Chinese workers face in international markets.

Theoretical Framework

To align with the goals supporting the statement of the problem, the following synthesis of **Cross-Cultural Communication Theory**, **Socio-Cultural Theory**, and **Cultural Intelligence (CQ) Theory** highlights how these theories can guide the design of effective English language learning approaches for Chinese industry workers in the context of global business communication:

Cross-Cultural Communication Theory (Gudykunst& Kim, 2003). Cross-Cultural Communication Theory underscores the complexities of communication across cultures, particularly the influence of cultural contexts and the subjective nature of communication interpretations. In the context of the study, this theory supports the identification of barriers to cross-cultural communication faced by China-based enterprises, emphasizing the need for industry-specific English language training that considers cultural differences. As businesses expand globally, understanding these communication nuances becomes essential for Chinese workers in enhancing their global market position. This theory aligns with the study's goal of designing language training programs that address the challenges of communicating effectively in cross-cultural settings and prepare Chinese workers for international business exchanges (Gudykunst& Kim, 2003).

Socio-Cultural Theory (Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky's Socio-Cultural Theory emphasizes that human cognition and language development are shaped by social interactions and the cultural environment. This theory is particularly relevant to understanding how demographic factors, such as social and cultural background, impact the design of customized English language training programs. By acknowledging that language learning is a social and contextual process, this theory supports the creation of inclusive training programs that consider the socio-cultural backgrounds of Chinese employees. As such, it aligns with the study's objective of designing more effective, inclusive, and customized training programs that reflect the socio-cultural contexts of Chinese workers, thereby fostering their success in global business communication (Vygotsky, 1978).

Cultural Intelligence (CQ) Theory (Earley& Ang, 2003). Cultural Intelligence (CQ) Theory highlights the ability to adapt and function effectively in culturally diverse environments. This theory resonates with the study's focus on equipping Chinese workers with the necessary skills for global business communication. By emphasizing adaptability and personal interpretation of cultural differences, CQ aligns with the study's goal of developing English language learning approaches that not only address linguistic proficiency but also enable Chinese employees to navigate cross-cultural interactions. CQ theory supports the idea that English language training for Chinese workers should incorporate cultural intelligence components to foster effective communication in international markets (Earley& Ang, 2003).

The synthesis of these theories offers a comprehensive framework for addressing the research gaps outlined in the statement of the problem. Cross-Cultural Communication Theory, Socio-Cultural Theory, and Cultural Intelligence Theory collectively highlight the importance of context in language learning, the need for culturally responsive training programs, and the critical role of adapting to diverse cultural settings. Together, these theories support the study's objective to develop strategic, customized English language training approaches that help Chinese workers overcome communication barriers, understand cultural differences, and successfully engage in global business contexts.

Statement of the Problem

The study identified strategic approaches to language training that can help China industries advance their global market position. Specifically, this study aimed to answer the following questions: (1) What are the industry-specific English language requirements that concern China the most?; (2) How effective are existing non-Chinese-informed training programs in helping address China's concerns regarding industry-specific English language requirements?; (3) What demographic factors influence the design of more effective,

inclusive, and customized training programs that better equip Chinese employees for global business communication?; (4) What are the barriers to cross-cultural communication faced by China-based Chinese enterprises?; and (5) What English language learning approaches can be designed for Chinese employees to help strengthen their global communication success in international markets?

II. Methodology

This study aimed to explore strategic approaches to English language learning that could help Chinese industries enhance their global market position. To achieve this, a systematic literature review was conducted. A literature review method is justified for this study on English language learning approaches for Chinese industry workers because it allows for a comprehensive synthesis of existing research, provides a clear understanding of the current state of knowledge, and identifies gaps that need to be addressed. This method is particularly suitable for examining the complexities of industry-specific language requirements and the effectiveness of existing training programs in China, as it enables the researcher to critically evaluate past studies, methodologies, and findings.

Synthesis of Existing Knowledge. A literature review enables the researcher to systematically gather and analyze studies relevant to the research questions. This approach is essential when exploring the various English language requirements specific to different industries in China. By reviewing existing studies, the researcher can uncover trends and connections that contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges Chinese workers face in global business communication (Hart, 1998; Booth, Papaioannou, & Sutton, 2012).

Identification of Research Gaps. A literature review method is an effective way to identify gaps in existing research. In the context of this study, the gaps could relate to underexplored areas such as the influence of demographic factors on English language learning or the effectiveness of non-Chinese-informed training programs (Denyer & Tranfield, 2009). By evaluating previous research, the literature review identifies areas that have not been fully addressed, providing a foundation for the current study to contribute new insights (Grant & Booth, 2009).

Critical Evaluation of Methodologies. The literature review process involves critically assessing the methodologies used in previous research, which is crucial for understanding the strengths and limitations of existing studies. For example, research on language training programs often involves surveys, interviews, or case studies, and evaluating these methods helps refine the current study's design. This critical evaluation ensures that the study builds upon reliable methodologies while addressing the weaknesses in prior research (Webster & Watson, 2002).

Guidance for Future Research: A well-conducted literature review not only summarizes the findings of previous studies but also provides directions for future research. By synthesizing information from multiple sources, the review helps establish a theoretical and methodological framework for the current study, ensuring that it aligns with existing research and addresses pressing concerns in the field (Okoli, 2015).

The literature review method involved gathering, analyzing, and synthesizing existing studies to provide an overview of the topic, identify research gaps, and critically assess the methodologies and findings of previous research in order to inform the development of the study's approach (Hart, 1998; Booth, Papaioannou, & Sutton, 2012). The review focused on the unique English language requirements for Chinese workers in various industries, the effectiveness of existing training programs, and the demographic and cultural factors that influenced language learning success.

Literature Collection and Analysis. The review began by collecting studies from a wide range of academic databases, including JSTOR, Google Scholar, and Scopus. The search focused on English language training programs for Chinese workers, cross-cultural communication challenges faced by Chinese enterprises, and the impact of language proficiency on global business success. Keywords such as "industry-specific English requirements," "English language training in China," "cross-cultural communication," and "demographic factors in language learning" guided the search for relevant literature.

Once the relevant studies were identified, a thematic analysis was applied to synthesize the findings. Studies were organized based on key themes, including industry-specific language needs, the effectiveness of non-Chinese-informed training programs, the role of demographic factors, and the barriers to effective cross-cultural communication. Each theme was critically evaluated to assess the strengths and weaknesses of existing research, methodologies, and findings.

III. Results

Industry-Specific English Language Requirements in China

As China continues its integration into the global economy, proficiency in industry-specific English has become increasingly essential across various sectors. While general English proficiency is important, specialized language skills tailored to different industries are critical for effective communication, negotiation, and compliance with international standards (Zhang & Liu, 2021). The most prominent sectors in China that demand industry-specific English include international trade and business, technology and engineering, healthcare and pharmaceuticals, tourism and hospitality, and academic research.

Business and Trade English. In international trade and business, English proficiency is crucial for effective communication in negotiations, contract management, and corporate correspondence. Business professionals must be able to draft emails, negotiate agreements, and conduct presentations in English (Liu, 2019). Additionally, understanding financial and legal English terminology is essential for complying with international trade agreements and regulatory standards (Wang & Chen, 2020). Given the increasing globalization of business, professionals must also develop cross-cultural communication skills to prevent misunderstandings and foster successful partnerships (Zhang & Liu, 2021).

Technical and Engineering English. Professionals in technical fields such as engineering, information technology, and manufacturing must have a strong command of English for reading and writing technical documentation. Many industry manuals, patents, and regulatory standards are published in English, making it necessary for engineers and technical staff to comprehend these materials accurately (Huang & Xu, 2022). Additionally, researchers and professionals are expected to participate in international conferences, collaborate on cross-border projects, and present findings in English (Li, 2021).

Medical and Pharmaceutical English. The medical and pharmaceutical industries require professionals to be proficient in English for reading and writing clinical reports, medical research papers, and regulatory documents (Chen et al., 2018). Medical practitioners must also be familiar with international healthcare guidelines and specialized medical terminology (Zhao, 2020). Moreover, effective communication with foreign patients and collaboration with international healthcare professionals necessitate strong listening and speaking skills.

Hospitality and Tourism English. With China's growing tourism sector, professionals in hospitality and travel industries must develop strong conversational and customer service skills in English. This includes handling hotel bookings, airline reservations, and guided tours, all of which require clear and professional

communication (Gao & Wu, 2017). Cultural awareness and an understanding of international etiquette are also essential when interacting with foreign tourists to provide high-quality service (Zheng & Zhang, 2019).

Academic and Research English. Academia and research demand a high level of English proficiency, particularly in writing and presenting research findings. Researchers and university faculty members must be able to write academic papers, literature reviews, and abstracts in English to contribute to international scholarly discourse (Liu, 2020). Additionally, participation in global academic conferences and engagement with English-medium instruction (EMI) programs require strong speaking and listening skills (Wang, 2021).

Common English Language Proficiency Requirements in China Across Industries. As China continues to expand its presence in global markets, proficiency in English has become an essential skill across various industries. While general English skills such as reading, writing, listening, and speaking are necessary, industry-specific language competencies are particularly important. Different sectors require specialized knowledge of terminology, communication styles, and cross-cultural interactions.

Regardless of the industry, professionals must develop key language skills to function effectively in international settings. Reading comprehension is necessary for understanding technical documents, legal contracts, and industry reports. Writing proficiency is critical for drafting emails, reports, and research publications. Strong listening skills are needed to follow international meetings and presentations, while effective speaking and pronunciation abilities help professionals engage in discussions, networking, and client interactions.

Given the importance of these competencies, integrating targeted language training programs tailored to industry-specific needs is essential for improving China's workforce readiness in the global market.

Effectiveness of Existing Non-Chinese-Informed Training Programs in Addressing China's Industry-Specific English Language Requirements

As China continues to expand its global economic influence, proficiency in English tailored to industry-specific needs has become increasingly important. While various international training programs aim to enhance English language skills, their effectiveness in addressing China's unique industry-specific requirements remains a subject of debate. Many of these programs are designed from a Western perspective, often failing to consider the specific linguistic and cultural challenges that Chinese professionals face in business, technical, medical, hospitality, and academic fields (Liu & Wang, 2020).

Limited Contextual Relevance. One major limitation of non-Chinese-informed English training programs is their lack of contextual relevance. Many courses follow Western communication norms and fail to integrate China-specific business practices, technical standards, and workplace expectations (Zhang & Li, 2019). For instance, business English courses often emphasize direct communication styles prevalent in Western corporate culture, which can be misaligned with the more indirect and hierarchical communication preferences commonly used in Chinese enterprises (Huang & Mei, 2021). Similarly, technical English courses may use case studies and terminologies that do not align with China's specific industrial and regulatory environment (Chen, 2020).

Challenges in Cross-Cultural Communication Training. Non-Chinese-informed training programs also tend to overlook the cross-cultural challenges that Chinese professionals face when engaging in international business. While many programs emphasize language proficiency, they often neglect cultural adaptability and strategies for overcoming communication barriers in diverse settings (Gao, 2018). For example, in the hospitality industry, many English training courses focus on Western customer service expectations,

which may not fully align with the cultural preferences of Chinese service professionals who interact with global tourists (Zheng & Wu, 2019). Similarly, in medical and pharmaceutical fields, the use of Western medical case studies and clinical communication styles may not always be applicable to the Chinese healthcare context (Liu, 2021).

Lack of Industry-Specific Customization. Another key issue is the generalization of English language training without sufficient customization for different industries. Many existing programs provide standardized business or technical English without addressing the specific vocabulary and communication skills needed in fields such as engineering, finance, and healthcare (Wang & Zhang, 2022). For example, medical professionals require specialized training in reading and writing clinical reports, while engineers need instruction on technical documentation and international safety regulations. Generic training programs often do not offer targeted modules that meet these specific needs (Chen et al., 2018).

Effectiveness of Existing Approaches. Despite these challenges, some non-Chinese-informed training programs have proven beneficial in improving general English proficiency and communication confidence among Chinese professionals. Programs that emphasize immersive learning, real-world application, and interactive engagement have been more effective in helping learners develop practical skills (Xu & Li, 2020). However, the effectiveness of these programs is often limited when they are not adapted to China's linguistic, cultural, and industry-specific requirements.

Recommendations for Improvement. To enhance the effectiveness of English training programs for Chinese professionals, a more localized approach is necessary. Incorporating China-specific case studies, workplace scenarios, and industry terminology can make training more relevant (Zhao & Liu, 2019). Additionally, integrating cross-cultural communication strategies that acknowledge Chinese business etiquette and social norms would better prepare professionals for global interactions. Partnerships between international training providers and Chinese institutions can also help create more customized and effective language programs (Huang & Wang, 2021).

Demographic Factors Influencing the Design of Effective, Inclusive, and Customized Training Programs for Chinese Employees in Global Business Communication

As China's economic presence in international markets continues to grow, the need for well-designed English training programs tailored to the specific demographic characteristics of Chinese employees has become increasingly important. Various factors, including age, educational background, industry, geographic location, and prior exposure to English, significantly influence how training programs should be structured to maximize effectiveness, inclusivity, and relevance. Understanding these demographic factors allows organizations to develop more customized and impactful English language training programs.

Age and Generational Differences. The effectiveness of English training programs is heavily influenced by generational differences among employees. Older professionals, who received their education before the widespread integration of English into China's educational system, often require more foundational training, particularly in business writing and verbal communication (Li, 2021). Conversely, younger employees, particularly those born after the 1990s, tend to have better foundational English skills due to increased exposure to the language through education and digital media (Zhang & Liu, 2020). Training programs need to accommodate these differences by offering beginner, intermediate, and advanced courses tailored to generational learning styles. For example, younger employees may benefit more from technology-driven, interactive learning methods, while older employees may require traditional, structured learning formats (Chen et al., 2019).

Educational Background and Language Proficiency Levels. The level of formal education an employee has received plays a crucial role in their English proficiency and learning capacity. Employees with university degrees, particularly those who studied abroad or majored in international business, tend to have stronger English communication skills compared to those with vocational or technical education backgrounds (Wang & Zhao, 2021). Training programs must assess and segment employees based on their prior education and proficiency levels to ensure appropriate instructional strategies. Highly educated employees may require advanced courses focused on negotiation, intercultural communication, and industry-specific vocabulary, while employees with lower proficiency may need fundamental grammar and conversational English courses (Liu, 2022).

Industry-Specific Needs. Different industries require varying levels of English proficiency and specialized vocabulary. For example, employees in finance and international trade must master technical financial terms and cross-border regulatory communication, while professionals in manufacturing require training in production documentation, safety standards, and technical English (Huang & Mei, 2020). The hospitality and tourism industries emphasize customer service English and cultural sensitivity, while healthcare professionals require proficiency in medical English and patient communication (Gao & Wu, 2019). Customizing training programs to align with industry-specific language needs ensures that employees acquire relevant and applicable communication skills.

Geographic Location and Regional Economic Development. The geographic location of employees also affects English training needs. Employees in first-tier cities like Beijing, Shanghai, and Shenzhen, where international business activities are more prevalent, generally have greater exposure to English and more opportunities for real-world practice (Xu, 2020). In contrast, professionals in second- and third-tier cities may have had fewer opportunities to develop English proficiency due to limited educational resources and international business interactions (Zhao & Li, 2021). Training programs should account for these disparities by providing additional foundational support for employees in less economically developed regions while offering advanced, business-focused training in urban centers with high global engagement.

Prior Exposure to English and Learning Preferences. Employees with prior exposure to English, whether through formal education, work experience, or international travel, often have different learning needs compared to those with minimal exposure. Some employees may have strong reading and writing skills but struggle with speaking due to limited practice, while others may be comfortable in casual conversations but lack formal business communication proficiency (Chen et al., 2021). Effective training programs should incorporate diagnostic assessments to identify specific skill gaps and provide tailored learning pathways, including immersive experiences, real-world business simulations, and mentorship opportunities with fluent English speakers (Liu & Zhang, 2020).

Cultural and Workplace Norms. Cultural attitudes toward English learning and workplace expectations also shape the design of training programs. In hierarchical corporate structures, employees may feel hesitant to speak up in English due to fear of making mistakes, requiring confidence-building exercises and supportive learning environments (Wang, 2019). Additionally, employees working in multinational companies may require more emphasis on cross-cultural communication and business etiquette compared to those working in domestic firms (Zhang, 2021). Training programs should integrate elements of cultural awareness and global business norms to ensure employees can effectively navigate international professional settings.

Barriers to Cross-Cultural Communication Faced by China-Based Chinese Enterprises

As China continues to engage more deeply in the global economy, Chinese enterprises are increasingly involved in cross-cultural communication with international partners. However, despite significant efforts to

improve business interactions, many China-based enterprises still face barriers to effective cross-cultural communication. These barriers often stem from cultural differences, communication styles, language proficiency, and unfamiliarity with global business practices. Understanding and addressing these barriers is crucial for enhancing the effectiveness of international collaborations and the global competitiveness of Chinese enterprises.

Cultural Differences and Misunderstandings. One of the most significant barriers to cross-cultural communication is the difference in cultural values and practices between China and other countries. For instance, China's collectivist culture emphasizes harmony, hierarchy, and respect for authority (Huang & Mei, 2021). In contrast, Western cultures often value individualism, directness, and egalitarianism (Li & Zhang, 2019). These fundamental differences can lead to misunderstandings, particularly in negotiation processes, decision-making, and conflict resolution. Chinese employees may avoid direct confrontation and prefer to express disagreement indirectly, which can be perceived as evasiveness by partners from cultures that favor openness and direct communication (Meng, 2021). Such cultural clashes can hinder the development of strong, trusting business relationships.

Communication Styles and Language Proficiency. Communication styles also vary widely across cultures. Chinese enterprises often struggle with the need for direct and explicit communication, which is more common in Western business practices (Chen & Gao, 2020). In China, communication tends to be more indirect, and non-verbal cues, such as tone of voice, gestures, and facial expressions, play an essential role in conveying meaning (Meng, 2021). This can create confusion in international interactions, where business partners from different cultures might interpret such cues differently. Additionally, language proficiency remains a significant barrier. Although many Chinese professionals have a basic understanding of English, the lack of advanced language skills, particularly in business contexts, can result in miscommunications and difficulties in negotiating contracts, writing formal documents, and understanding legal requirements (Liu, 2022). Poor English proficiency in areas like technical vocabulary, idiomatic expressions, and business jargon can further exacerbate these communication challenges (Pei, 2023).

Different Business Etiquettes and Practices. The differences in business etiquette and practices across cultures also create communication obstacles for Chinese enterprises. For example, in Chinese business culture, decision-making is often hierarchical, with senior leaders holding the primary authority and making the final decisions (Li, 2020). In contrast, Western business cultures tend to favor a more democratic approach, where input from multiple levels within an organization is valued (Huang & Mei, 2021). This difference in business etiquette can lead to misunderstandings in international partnerships, especially when Chinese managers may expect decisions to be made by top executives, while foreign partners may assume a more collaborative decision-making process. Additionally, Chinese businesspeople may be more formal in their interactions, whereas Western counterparts might prefer a more casual approach (Li & Zhang, 2019).

Unfamiliarity with International Legal Frameworks. Another significant barrier to cross-cultural communication for Chinese enterprises is their limited understanding of international legal frameworks and regulations. Enterprises in China may be unfamiliar with the legal nuances of different countries, which can affect negotiations, contract terms, and business operations (Rogerson-Revell, 2007). For example, Chinese companies may not fully understand the importance of intellectual property protection in Western countries, leading to challenges in negotiations and potential legal disputes (Wang, 2016). This lack of familiarity with international laws can create mistrust and hinder the effectiveness of business interactions, especially when legal agreements are involved.

Technology and Digital Literacy Gaps. With the growing importance of digital technologies in international business, another barrier to cross-cultural communication is the disparity in technology adoption

and digital literacy. In some cases, Chinese enterprises may rely on traditional communication methods or face challenges with using international digital platforms effectively. This digital divide can lead to inefficient communication, delays, or missed opportunities for collaboration (Gan, 2023). For example, virtual meetings may present difficulties if employees are not proficient with video conferencing tools or if there are technical issues that disrupt the flow of communication (Pei, 2023). Such challenges are particularly significant in industries where rapid digital communication and information sharing are vital for successful cross-border collaborations.

How English Language Training Programs are Addressing Barriers in the Chinese Business Sector

As Chinese enterprises expand their global footprint, the need for robust English language training programs tailored to the business sector has become increasingly evident. Existing English language training programs aim to address various barriers faced by China-based enterprises in cross-cultural communication. These programs are designed to enhance linguistic proficiency, provide cultural understanding, and equip employees with the skills necessary to navigate the complexities of international business environments. However, while these training programs have made significant strides, they still face challenges in fully addressing the cultural, communication, and business-specific barriers that Chinese enterprises encounter when communicating with international partners.

Enhancing English Proficiency for Cross-Cultural Communication. One of the primary goals of English language training programs for the Chinese business sector is to improve English proficiency, particularly in the areas of business communication, technical vocabulary, and formal writing. Many programs focus on language skills essential for negotiations, meetings, and correspondence, ensuring that Chinese professionals can communicate effectively with international counterparts (Liu, 2022). For example, programs often emphasize business-specific language, such as understanding legal terms, financial jargon, and negotiation phrases. While these programs have improved English proficiency in general, challenges remain, particularly with advanced business vocabulary and cultural nuances embedded in language (Pei, 2023). Moreover, despite increased proficiency, many programs still struggle to address the cultural differences in communication styles, such as the indirect communication approach prevalent in Chinese business culture (Meng, 2021).

Some programs have responded to this challenge by incorporating cultural elements into their curricula. By providing training on the significance of non-verbal cues, indirect communication, and the importance of maintaining harmony, these programs aim to prepare employees for intercultural interactions (Chen & Gao, 2020). However, integrating cultural sensitivity and communication techniques effectively remains a challenge, as many language programs are still primarily focused on linguistic accuracy rather than intercultural competence (Gan, 2023).

Addressing Communication Styles and Cultural Sensitivity. To address the communication style differences between China and other countries, several English language training programs have started to include cross-cultural communication modules. These modules focus on understanding cultural values, such as the importance of hierarchy and respect for authority in China versus the egalitarian and direct communication style typical of Western business cultures (Li & Zhang, 2019). In some programs, role-playing scenarios and case studies are used to illustrate potential misunderstandings and teach participants how to adjust their communication styles accordingly (Huang & Mei, 2021).

While such modules have proven beneficial, they are not always comprehensive enough to prepare Chinese employees for the variety of cultural contexts they will encounter. Cultural sensitivity training is often an afterthought in many programs, and the focus tends to remain on language skills. Programs that integrate

business culture training alongside language learning tend to have a greater impact, as they help learners understand how cultural differences influence communication dynamics (Meng, 2021). However, despite these efforts, challenges remain in fully addressing the breadth of cross-cultural differences, especially for industries where culture plays a more significant role, such as luxury goods, hospitality, and international diplomacy (Gan, 2023).

Business Etiquette and Global Practices. English language training programs tailored to the Chinese business sector also address barriers related to business etiquette and global practices. Many training programs emphasize the differences in negotiation tactics, meeting structures, and decision-making processes between Chinese and Western businesses (Li, 2020). For example, training may include lessons on how to navigate hierarchical decision-making processes, which are prevalent in China, and how to adapt to more participatory decision-making methods common in Western settings (Huang & Mei, 2021). Programs that include practical negotiation simulations and business scenario exercises are particularly useful in preparing employees for international business interactions (Liu, 2022).

However, one limitation of many existing programs is that they do not always go beyond basic etiquette training. A deeper understanding of the legal and ethical business practices specific to various countries is essential for Chinese employees to negotiate effectively and understand their international partners' expectations (Wang, 2016). While some advanced training programs attempt to address these issues by incorporating country-specific modules, these programs are often limited in scope and may not be applicable to all industries (Rogerson-Revell, 2007).

Legal and Regulatory Awareness. Given that legal frameworks can vary widely across countries, some English language programs attempt to address this barrier by integrating basic legal language and practices into the curriculum. These programs focus on key areas such as international contracts, intellectual property, and compliance with local regulations (Rogerson-Revell, 2007). While such training is beneficial for raising awareness, it does not always provide a comprehensive understanding of the complexities of international legal systems. Many programs focus primarily on language and do not delve deeply enough into legal frameworks, leading to potential gaps in understanding (Wang, 2016).

Digital Literacy and Technology Integration. In response to the growing role of digital technologies in global business, some English language training programs for the Chinese business sector are incorporating digital literacy components, particularly focusing on the use of technology in communication. These programs aim to enhance employees' proficiency in using digital tools, such as email platforms, video conferencing software, and collaborative workspaces, which are crucial for effective cross-cultural communication (Gan, 2023). However, the pace of technological innovation means that many training programs are often playing catch-up, and there is still a significant gap in preparing employees for emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and digital communication platforms (Pei, 2023).

IV. Discussion

English Language Learning Approaches for Chinese Employees to Enhance Global Communication Success

As Chinese enterprises expand their global presence, there is a growing need to enhance employees' English language skills to better navigate international markets. In this context, designing targeted English language learning approaches that focus not only on linguistic proficiency but also on cross-cultural communication and business-specific needs is crucial. Below are several approaches that can be implemented to strengthen global communication success for Chinese employees.

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT). Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is an effective approach for improving language proficiency in real-world contexts. This method emphasizes the use of authentic tasks, such as negotiating deals, writing business emails, or conducting meetings, to provide employees with practical, hands-on experience in using English for specific business purposes (Ellis, 2003). By engaging in tasks that mirror real-life scenarios, employees can gain confidence in their language skills and better prepare for cross-cultural communication. In the context of Chinese enterprises, TBLT can focus on industry-specific terminology, business writing, and effective communication strategies, which are critical for success in international markets (Gan, 2023).

Moreover, TBLT can incorporate both language and cultural elements, addressing the need for intercultural communication awareness. For instance, tasks could include simulations of international business negotiations where employees must navigate cultural differences while using business English (Pei, 2023).

Blended Learning Programs. Blended learning, which combines face-to-face instruction with online learning platforms, is a flexible and effective approach to language acquisition. In a corporate setting, this method allows employees to engage in self-paced learning modules focusing on industry-specific language and cross-cultural communication, while still benefiting from in-person training sessions for deeper discussions and practical exercises (Gao, 2017). This approach is particularly advantageous for employees working in global teams or those based in regions outside major urban centers in China, as it provides access to resources and expert instruction regardless of location.

Blended learning programs can be designed to include modules on topics like global business etiquette, legal language, and communication styles in different cultures. Additionally, such programs could integrate virtual reality (VR) or video simulations that mimic cross-cultural business scenarios, enhancing employees' ability to adapt their communication strategies in global business contexts (Gan, 2023).

Cultural Sensitivity Training. Cultural sensitivity training is essential for enhancing communication in international business settings, especially in cultures with significant differences in communication styles, such as China and Western countries. Traditional English language courses may focus primarily on language skills, but to be effective in global markets, Chinese employees need to understand the cultural dimensions of communication. Programs that incorporate cultural sensitivity training alongside language instruction help employees recognize and adapt to differences in communication styles, such as direct vs. indirect communication, hierarchical structures, and negotiation tactics (Li & Zhang, 2019).

Such training could include workshops on non-verbal communication, business etiquette, and understanding the cultural implications of various communication behaviors. For example, employees can learn the importance of maintaining respect for hierarchy in Chinese business culture while also understanding the more egalitarian approach prevalent in Western business contexts (Li, 2020). By enhancing both language and cultural competence, these programs can better prepare employees to avoid miscommunication and foster stronger international relationships.

English for Specific Purposes (ESP). English for Specific Purposes (ESP) focuses on the specific language needs of employees based on their professional roles. ESP courses can be designed around the precise linguistic requirements of employees in international business contexts, such as legal contracts, negotiations, marketing presentations, and customer service in global markets. By tailoring English instruction to the business functions of the enterprise, these programs ensure that employees develop relevant language skills that directly contribute to business success (Huang & Mei, 2021).

In the case of Chinese enterprises, ESP programs can be customized to cover industry-specific vocabulary and communication techniques. For example, an ESP course for employees in the manufacturing sector might include training on writing technical reports and conducting product presentations in English, while employees in the finance sector could receive training in global financial terminology and negotiations.

Immersive Language Learning. Immersive language learning involves creating environments where employees are surrounded by the target language in real-life contexts. For employees of Chinese enterprises, immersive language experiences can be facilitated through short-term assignments in English-speaking countries, virtual exchanges, or exposure to English media such as international news, business podcasts, and webinars (Pei, 2023). Immersive learning enables employees to practice their language skills in natural settings, which can accelerate fluency and improve confidence in using English for global business communication.

For example, virtual exchanges with English-speaking counterparts or role-playing exercises simulating international business meetings could provide opportunities for employees to practice English in realistic, high-pressure situations. Such immersive experiences can also help employees develop a more intuitive understanding of English communication styles, cultural nuances, and global business norms (Gan, 2023).

Leadership Development Programs with a Focus on Cross-Cultural Competence. Effective leadership plays a crucial role in fostering a culturally aware and linguistically proficient workforce. In many Chinese enterprises, leadership training often overlooks the importance of cultural competence in global business settings. Developing leadership programs that incorporate both language training and cultural awareness is essential for ensuring that senior management can lead diverse teams and engage in successful international negotiations (Gao, 2017).

Leadership programs could include language-focused modules on negotiating in English, resolving conflicts in cross-cultural contexts, and managing international teams. By equipping leaders with the skills to navigate global business challenges, these programs can create a more inclusive and culturally sensitive workplace, thereby enhancing overall organizational success in international markets (Li & Zhang, 2019).

Current Availability of English Language Learning Approaches in China

Several of the English language learning approaches identified above are already being implemented in China, although their availability and effectiveness may vary across regions and industries. Below is a discussion of the current availability of these approaches in China:

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT). Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) has been gradually integrated into English language programs in China, particularly in higher education and corporate training programs. While TBLT is more common in academic settings, its implementation in business language programs is still developing (Pei, 2023). In China, TBLT is used in business English courses where tasks like negotiations, presentations, and report writing are simulated to build communication skills in real-world contexts. However, the level of integration and the alignment with industry-specific needs remains inconsistent (Gan, 2023).

Blended Learning Programs. Blended learning has become increasingly popular in China, especially with the rise of digital platforms and online learning during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Many universities and business corporations now offer online courses complemented by face-to-face training. Platforms such as VIPKid, iTutorGroup, and various MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) offer blended learning for improving English proficiency (Gao, 2017). However, while blended learning programs are widely available, their focus on cross-cultural communication and industry-specific language training is often lacking.

Cultural Sensitivity Training. Cultural sensitivity training is less commonly integrated into English language programs in China, though it is becoming more recognized in multinational companies operating within the country. Many Chinese enterprises still focus primarily on linguistic proficiency without adequately addressing cultural nuances in business communication (Li, 2020). While global businesses in China may offer such training, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are less likely to have dedicated cultural sensitivity programs (Meng, 2021).

English for Specific Purposes (ESP). English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is widely used in China, particularly in sectors such as business, law, medicine, and technology. Many universities and corporate training centers offer ESP courses tailored to specific industries, providing targeted language skills for business communication, legal contracts, and technical writing (Huang & Mei, 2021). However, there is still room for improvement in customizing ESP programs to meet the specific needs of industries, especially those emerging in global markets like e-commerce, fintech, and UAVs.

Immersive Language Learning. Immersive language learning is less common in China compared to other methods, though some international programs and study-abroad opportunities provide such experiences. Many Chinese employees have limited opportunities for immersive learning unless they are sent abroad by multinational corporations or engage in virtual exchanges (Pei, 2023). For the majority of employees, the immersive learning environment is not widely available, which restricts their opportunities to practice English in authentic, cross-cultural settings.

Leadership Development Programs with a Focus on Cross-Cultural Competence. Leadership development programs that incorporate cross-cultural competence are available in international companies operating in China, particularly for senior management and executives. However, these programs are not widespread in domestic companies, and there is often limited focus on cultural competence at the leadership level (Gan, 2023). Chinese enterprises generally prioritize technical skills and business management over cultural intelligence in their leadership training programs.

Compensating for Missing Approaches in the Philippines

Given the gaps in certain English language learning approaches in China, the Philippines can offer compensatory measures to help Chinese employees strengthen their global communication skills:

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in the Philippines. The Philippines has extensive experience in TBLT, especially in business English programs in universities and language schools. Filipino instructors can offer customized TBLT courses for Chinese employees, focusing on tasks related to international business, such as negotiation strategies, cross-cultural communication, and global marketing techniques (Gan, 2023). This would compensate for the limited integration of TBLT in China-based corporate training programs.

Blended Learning with Cross-Cultural Focus. The Philippines is home to a large number of English language schools offering blended learning programs that include both language instruction and cross-cultural communication modules. Filipino institutions can offer online modules and virtual learning experiences in business English, coupled with face-to-face interactions, to address gaps in China's blended learning programs that may not emphasize cross-cultural communication (Gao, 2017). These programs can integrate cultural modules that focus on global business etiquette, communication styles, and cultural awareness.

Immersive Language Learning Programs in the Philippines. Immersive English language programs in the Philippines can serve as a solution to the lack of such programs in China. The Philippines, with its extensive English-speaking population and cultural diversity, provides an ideal environment for immersion

experiences. Chinese employees can benefit from language programs that involve real-life business simulations, live discussions with English-speaking professionals, and business tours in culturally diverse settings (Pei, 2023). The Philippines can also facilitate virtual exchanges and virtual business meetings with professionals from different cultures to enhance immersive learning.

Cultural Sensitivity Training from Filipino Instructors. Given the Philippines' long history of intercultural communication with both Western and Eastern cultures, Filipino instructors are uniquely equipped to teach cultural sensitivity and communication. These trainers can provide Chinese employees with critical insights into cultural differences, negotiation tactics, and global business practices (Li, 2020). By leveraging the Philippines' experience with cross-cultural training, Chinese employees can better navigate international markets and understand the subtleties of global business communication.

Leadership Development Programs Focused on Global Competence. Filipino training providers can design leadership programs that incorporate both language and cultural competencies, which are essential for managing diverse teams in international markets. These programs can be particularly beneficial for Chinese leaders, equipping them with the skills to lead multicultural teams and engage in cross-border negotiations (Gan, 2023). Filipino trainers with experience in international business leadership can address the gaps in China's leadership training programs by emphasizing cultural intelligence, global management practices, and effective cross-cultural communication.

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