Language in academia
What can we learn from research in International Business and bibliometrics?

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Presentation outline

- Presentation of my research in three distinct areas to understand the role of Language in academia
  - Language in International Business (HQ subsidiary relationships)
  - The impact of foreign language use on thoughts, feelings and behaviour
    - [http://www.harzing.com/research/the-international-research-process](http://www.harzing.com/research/the-international-research-process)
  - Research into the quality and impact of academic research and bibliometrics
- This is not a traditional research seminar, I present my findings mainly to provide a framing for discussion
- Feel free to ask questions as we go along
Before we start –
A show of hands please

- Who speaks a language other than English as their native language?
- Has anyone published articles in a language other than English?
- Has anyone used work published in a language other than English in their English-language work?
- Do you ever keep quiet at a conference because you are not confident enough to speak up in English?
- Do you ever feel frustrated because you cannot express yourself as well as you would wish in English?
- I would say yes to all five!

1. Research into Language in International Business
1. Research into Language in International Business: 3 key issues

- The impact of country-of-origin
- Solutions to the language barrier
- Power and power-authority distortion


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<tr>
<th>Language Management in Multinational Companies</th>
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<tr>
<td>Language competencies, policies and practices in multinational corporations: A comprehensive review and comparison of Anglophone, Asian, Continental European and Nordic MNCs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Babel in business: The language barrier and its solutions in the HQ-subsidiary relationship</td>
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<td>Hablas vielleichte un peu la mia language?: A comprehensive overview of the role of language differences in headquarters–subsidiary communication</td>
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<th>The language barrier and its implications for HQ-subsidiary relationships</th>
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<td>From dramatic struggle to legitimized indifference: Expatriates’ host country language learning and its impact on the expatriate-HCE relationship</td>
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<td>Why and how does shared language affect subsidiary knowledge inflows? A social identity perspective</td>
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<td>Language in International Business: A Review and Agenda for Future Research</td>
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1a. Research into Language in International Business

- The impact of country-of-origin
- Solutions to the language barrier
- Power and power-authority distortion

1a. Language in IB:
MNC country-of-origin influences language policies

1a. Language in academia: Country-of-origin influences attitude to English

- Nordic, Dutch & Germanic countries
  - Generally higher ELS (Nordic, Dutch, Germanic)
  - High level of pragmatism as national language never played a role on the world stage (Nordic, Dutch)
  - Language is generally seen as just a means of communication and rhetorical skills are not normally highly valued (Nordic, Dutch, Germanic)
  - Generally less hierarchical societies (Nordic, Dutch, Germanic)

- Latin countries (+ East Asian)
  - Generally lower ELS
  - National language used to play an important role both generally and specifically in academia (French, Spanish, Greek, Japanese)
  - Language is seen as being at the core of culture and rhetorical skills are seen as very important
  - Generally more hierarchical societies

1b. Research into Language in International Business

- The impact of country-of-origin

- Solutions to the language barrier
  - Power and power-authority distortion
1b. Language in IB: Solutions to overcome the language barrier

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<th>Informal day-to-day solutions</th>
<th>Bridge individuals</th>
<th>Structural solutions at organizational level</th>
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<td>7. Non-native locals</td>
<td>12. Controlled language</td>
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<td>8. Parallel information networks</td>
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<td>13. Corporate language</td>
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- We all use the informal day-to-day solutions; other solutions are also common in academia.
- Bridge individuals are particularly important in the academic world (see next slide).
- Corporate language in the academic context can be interpreted as the use of English as a scientific language of choice.


1b. Language in academia: The importance of bridge individuals

Language nodes
- Multi-lingual academics living in their own home country
- E.g. in my English-language PhD I covered the German literature on expatriation, until then unknown outside Germanic countries

Expatriates
- Anglophone academics in other countries
- Do not be arrogant, be respectful of local knowledge and practices

Inpatriates
- Non-Anglo academics in Anglo countries
- Has always been common for PhD students
- Increasingly common for academics (e.g. Middlesex, more than three quarters of staff are non-native English speakers)
- Can all be part of parallel information networks and as such are important facilitators of information exchange
1c. Research into Language in International Business

- The impact of country-of-origin
- Solutions to the language barrier
- Power and power-authority distortion

1c. Language in IB and Academia:
Power and power-authority distortion

- Language is closely related to power, both in business and in academia
  - English can be a “neutral” choice when countries have historic power relationships (e.g. Sweden/Finnland)
  - English can be a way to escape historic or current power relationships (e.g. Taiwan)
  - (Academics from) small countries with better English language skills can have more “academic power” than bigger countries
  - (Academics from) multi-lingual countries have powerful position
- Power/authority distortion (Harzing & Feely, 2008)
  - Can distort relationship between senior and junior academics, including PhD supervisor and PhD student
  - This is more problematic in countries with more hierarchical relationships (see earlier country-of-origin discussion)
2. Research into Foreign Language Use & Attitudes
From inter-personal to intra-personal

My research has investigated whether foreign language use influences attitudes. Attitudes have cognitive (thoughts), affective (feelings) and conative (behaviour) aspects. There are at least three mechanisms that can explain this influence:

- **Cultural accommodation**: Using a foreign language may lead the user to accommodate to some of the cultural values embedded in that language.
- **Foreign language anxiety**: The feeling of tension and apprehension associated with foreign language use might lead to general feelings of negativity and fear of exploitation.
- **Cognitive load**: Increasing the use of resources to allow for linguistic processes sacrifices resources available for thinking and decision tasks, leading to more or less (conflicting theories) deliberate decision-making.

My research so far has mostly focused on the cultural accommodation effect, but I am currently doing a pilot study for a new project that will look at the impact of all three mechanisms on cooperation vs competition in detail.
My publications on foreign language use and attitudes

The Interaction Between Language and Culture: A Test of the Cultural Accommodation Hypothesis in Seven Countries

https://harzing.com/blog/2018/06/language-effects-in-international-mail-surveys

Does the Use of English-language Questionnaires in Cross-national Research Obscure National Differences?

Rating versus ranking: What is the best way to reduce response and language bias in cross-national research?*


Response Style Differences in Cross-National Research
Dispositional and Situational Determinants

Cultural Accommodation and Language Priming
Competitive versus Cooperative Behavior in a Prisoner’s Dilemma Game

https://harzing.com/blog/2017/01/compete-or-cooperate-does-it-depend-on-the-language

2a. The impact of foreign language use on thoughts

International mail surveys: Do people respond in a way that reflects the cultural assumptions embedded in the language of the questionnaire (cultural accommodation) (Harzing et al., 2005)?

- Data collection in 24 countries, major cultural groups: Anglo, Scandinavian, Germanic, Latin European, East European, East Asian, South (East) Asian, Latin American
- Strictly matched respondents: 16 students in Business, 50% received English questionnaire, 50% received native language questionnaire, 3200 respondents in total
- Language influences responses, but mainly on questions related to cultural values
- English-language questionnaires underestimate differences between countries, i.e. narrowing of perspectives
- Second study with MBA students showed that language effects are less strong if scenario questions with ranking of alternative answer options are used rather than Likert scale rating (Harzing & collaborators, 2009)

https://harzing.com/blog/2018/06/language-effects-in-international-mail-surveys
2b. The impact of foreign language use on feelings

- Does language influence the way in which people feel (positive or negative) about certain concepts?
- Small pilot study in Taiwan in 2013 asking for positive and negative feelings about business-related concepts in English and Mandarin
- Concepts clustered into two groups
  - Cooperation, leadership, trust, and team
  - Risk, time, competition, shareholders
- The former were evaluated more positively in Mandarin, the latter more positively in English, suggesting cultural accommodation
  - Is the spread of English as a lingua franca associated with a more positive attitude towards Anglophone business concepts and/or research topics?

2c. The impact of foreign language use on behaviour

- Choice between collaboration and competition
  - Setting: two businesses in a prisoner’s dilemma setting
  - Setting high or low price
- Dutch students behave less cooperatively when responding in English
  - But only if they had lived in an Anglophone country for at least three months
- Will academia become more competitive by internalisation of Anglophone values?

3. Research into Quality & Impact of Academic Research and Bibliometrics

3a. Research into Research Quality and Research Evaluation

- General themes of my research in this field
  - Academic referencing and creation of myths
  - Editorial board diversity
  - Predatory open access journals
    - https://harzing.com/blog/2016/04/strange-journal-invitations-popping-up-in-my-inbox-every-day
  - Ranking of journals and academics
    - https://harzing.com/blog/2017/10/to-rank-or-not-to-rank
3a. My publications on Research Quality and Research Evaluation (2002-2016)

- Are our referencing errors undermining our scholarship and credibility? The case of expatriate failure rates
- Australian Research Output in Economics and Business: High Volume, Low Impact?
- Google Scholar as a new source for citation analysis
- When Knowledge Wins: Transcending the Sense and Nonsense of Academic Rankings
- Practicing what We Preach: The Geographic Diversity of Editorial Boards
- Of Journal Editors and Editorial Boards: Who Are the Trailblazers in Increasing Editorial Board Gender Equality?
- Disseminating Knowledge: From Potential to Reality—New Open-Access Journals Collide With Convention

3b. Recent work into data sources for research evaluation

- Critique of Thomson Reuters’ Web of Science
  - Inappropriate categorization of articles: https://harzing.com/blog/2017/03/is-isi-misunderstanding-the-social-sciences
  - Complete inability to disambiguate East Asian academics: http://www.harzing.com/blog/2016/05/health-warning-might-contain-multiple-personalities
- Use of Google Scholar to create a more level playing field for:
  - Non-Anglophone researchers: https://harzing.com/blog/2016/06/do-google-scholar-scopeus-and-the-web-of-science-speak-your-language
  - [In a ranking of Dutch academics in Economics & Business] women, management academics, and academics outside the top universities: https://harzing.com/blog/2016/07/proof-over-promise-a-more-inclusive-ranking-of-academics
- Introduction of Microsoft Academic as a new data source [three articles]:
  - https://harzing.com/blog/2017/06/microsoft-academic-is-one-year-old-the-phoenix-is-ready-to-leave-the-nest

Document categories in the ISI Web of Knowledge:
Misunderstanding the Social Sciences?

Health warning: might contain multiple personalities—
the problem of homonyms in Thomson Reuters Essential
Science Indicators

A preliminary test of Google Scholar as a source for
citation data: a longitudinal study of Nobel prize winners

Google Scholar, Scopus and the Web of Science:
a longitudinal and cross-disciplinary comparison

hIa: an individual annual h-index to accommodate
disciplinary and career length differences

Proof over promise: towards a more inclusive ranking
of Dutch academics in Economics & Business

Microsoft Academic (Search): a Phoenix arisen
from the ashes?

Microsoft Academic: is the phoenix getting wings?

Microsoft Academic is one year old: the Phoenix is ready
to leave the nest

3c. Diffusion of non-English scholarship: democratisation?

+ Web of Science/ISI mainly covers English-language journals
  published from the USA/UK, BUT:
  + Articles in LOTE (Languages other than English) are picked up
    in Google Scholar
  + Google Scholar also covers many English-language journals that
    are non-ISI listed, oftentimes published from outside North
    America or the UK

+ However, the responsibility lies with publishers
to ensure Google Scholar can parse their website
  + Please don’t blame Google Scholar or
    (even worse) Publish or Perish (i.e. me)
    for not covering your publications
  + Publish or Perish, see:
    + https://harzing.com/blog/2017/11/publish-or-perish-version-6
3c. Jean-Francois Chanlat: Google Scholar/PoP

+ 100+ publications, 4432 citations
+ Top 20 most cited publications include only one publication in English (#19)
+ Only 2 publications in top-10 and 6 in top-20 are published in journals

3c. Jean-Francois Chanlat: Web of Science

+ Only 6 publications reported, only 22 citations in total
+ Two articles in French journals, two in Portuguese, two in English (representing 21 of the 22 citations)
+ This general pattern is similar for many non-Anglo researchers, compare the citations:
  + Gerard Charreux: 3660 (GS) vs. 10 citations (ISI), one of top-30 publications in English
  + Guerreiro Ramos: 4379 (GS) vs. 32 citations (ISI), five of top-30 publications in English
  + Fernando Preses Motta: 4837 (GS) vs. 5 citations (ISI), none of top-30 publications in English
3c. GS vs Scopus vs WoS
Disciplinary comparison (1)


3c. GS vs Scopus vs WoS
Disciplinary comparison (2)

Conclusions

- Poor English-language skills are a definite barrier to publication in English-language journals
  - The best solution is probably using bridge individuals
- Country-of-origin strongly influences attitudes towards English language hegemony
- Language skills have a strong impact on power relationships between countries and individuals
- Exclusive use of English might lead to a narrowing and homogenisation of perspectives
- Non-English scholarship is visible in Google Scholar/Publish or Perish

Thank you!