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

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Presentation outline

- My presentation does not represent a “non-Anglo” perspective
- This not because I do not think it is important. However:
  - I was educated in English in the Netherlands and spent 19 years out of my 25 year career in Anglophone countries (UK, Australia, UK)
  - We need a variety of perspectives and inputs
- I will apply my own research in three distinct areas to the topic of our panel to provide a framing for our discussion
  1. Language in International Business (HQ subsidiary relationships)
     + http://www.harzing.com/research/language-in-international-business
  2. The impact of foreign language use on thoughts, feelings and behaviour
     + http://www.harzing.com/research/the-international-research-process
  3. Research on the quality and impact of academic research and bibliometrics
     + http://www.harzing.com/research/quality-and-impact-of-academic-research
1. Research into Language in International Business

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


- Language Management in Multinational Companies
  - Language competencies, policies and practices in multinational corporations: A comprehensive review and comparison of Anglophone, Asian, Continental European and Nordic MNCs
- Babel in business: The language barrier and its solutions in the HQ-subsidiary relationship
- Hablas vielleicht un poco la mia language? A comprehensive overview of the role of language differences in headquarters–subsidiary communication
- The impact of language barriers on trust formation in multinational teams
- Why and how does shared language affect subsidiary knowledge inflows? A social identity perspective
Language in IB:
MNC country-of-origin influences language policies

High importance of national language worldwide

Anglophone countries

High English language skills

Low importance of national language worldwide

Low English language skills

Nordic countries

East Asian countries

Continental European countries


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 (Dutch, Germanic)
  - Generally less hierarchical societies (Nordic, Dutch, Germanic)

- Latin countries (+ East Asian)
  - Generally lower ELS
  - National language used to play an important role world-wide and 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. Language in IB:
Solutions to overcome the language barrier

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<th>Informal day-to-day solutions</th>
<th>Bridge individuals</th>
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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
- Corporate language in academic context is 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. 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 “neutral” choice when countries have historic power relationships (e.g. Sweden/Finland)
- 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 a 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

My research has investigated whether foreign language use influences attitudes

- Attitudes have cognitive (thought), 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 planning to start a new project that will look at all three mechanisms in detail (provided I can get funding for it 😊)
My publications on foreign language use and attitudes

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

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?

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

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

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 & collaborators, 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: UC 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)
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
  - So is the spread of English as a lingua franca associated with an adoption of 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 research quality & impact and bibliometrics

- General themes of my research
- Academic referencing and creation of myths
- Editorial board diversity
- Predatory open access
- Ranking of journals and academics

- Recent work in Scientometrics
  - Use of Google Scholar to create a level playing field for:
    - The Social Sciences and Humanities
    - Non-Anglophone researchers
    - Critique of Thomson Reuters’ Web of Science

My publications on Research Quality and Research Evaluation (2002-2013)

- Are our referencing errors undermining our scholarship and credibility? The case of expatriate failure rates
- Ranking journals in business and management: a statistical analysis of the Harzing data set
- Google Scholar as a new source for citation analysis
- Arbitrary decisions in ranking studies: A commentary on Xu, Yalcinkaya, and Seggie (2008)
- Explaining geographic diversity of editorial boards: the role of conference participation and English-language skills
- Practicing what We Preach
  - The Geographic Diversity of Editorial Boards
- Disseminating Knowledge: From Potential to Reality—New Open-Access Journals Collide With Convention

Of Journal Editors and Editorial Boards: Who Are the Trailblazers in Increasing Editorial Board Gender Equality?

Towards a European multilingual field - EURAM 2016
My publications on Google Scholar vs. Web of Science (2013-2016)

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

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

A longitudinal study of Google Scholar coverage between 2012 and 2013

HtA: 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

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

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

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
  - Don’t blame Google Scholar or (worse) Publish or Perish (i.e. me) for not covering your publications
  - Publish or Perish, see: http://www.harzing.com/resources/publish-or-perish/tutorial
Jean-François Chanlat: Google Scholar/PoP

- 100+ publications, nearly 4,000 citations
- Top-10 most cited publications in French or Portuguese, only 2 of which published in journals

Jean-François Chanlat: Web of Science

- Only 7 publications, only 9 citations
- Two book chapters, two articles in French, two in Portuguese, one in English (with 8 citations)
- General pattern is similar for many non-Anglo researchers, compare citations:
  - Gerard Charreux: 3660 (GS) vs. 18 (ISI), one of top-30 publications in English
  - Guerreiro Ramos: 4379 (GS) vs. 32 (ISI), five of top-30 publications in English
  - Fernando Preses Motta: 4837 (GS) vs. 5 (ISI), none of top-30 publications in English
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!

Any questions?