

GENERATIVE AI AND THE FUTURE OF ENGLISH AS A LINGUA FRANCA IN GLOBAL BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

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The global business communication landscape is currently experiencing a profound and multifaceted transformation, largely propelled by the rapid advancement and widespread integration of generative artificial intelligence (AI). Since the end of 2022, the unprecedented emergence and accelerating adoption of large language models (LLMs) have significantly disrupted long-standing assumptions regarding the uncontested dominance of English as the principal lingua franca in international commerce. Whereas the traditional paradigm of Business English as a Lingua Franca (BELF) has historically emphasized efficiency, pragmatic adaptability, and the negotiation of meaning among speakers from diverse linguistic backgrounds, the increasing prevalence of AI introduces a new form of algorithmic mediation that fundamentally reshapes both communicative practices and expectations in professional contexts.

This paper draws on a large, multi-modal dataset that includes a 5-million-word corpus of AI-generated and human-produced business texts, further enriched by ethnographic insights gathered within several multinational corporations. The combined methodology enables an in-depth examination of the complex tension between democratization and homogenization in AI-mediated business discourse. The findings highlight a paradoxical dynamic: while AI tools substantially enhance communicative access, lower cognitive barriers, and provide non-native speakers with unprecedented opportunities to participate in global exchanges, they simultaneously reinforce Anglocentric norms, standardized stylistic conventions, and a tendency toward uniformity in professional communication.

The article argues that English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) theory must evolve in order to account for this new interplay between linguistic diversity, algorithmic mediation, and global business practices. By conceptualizing AI not only as a supportive tool but also as an influential actor in shaping discursive norms, the study reframes theoretical debates within applied linguistics. Broader implications are discussed for corporate strategy, the future orientation of BELF pedagogy, the ethical design of AI systems, and international policy-making concerning language use in commerce.

ГЕНЕРАТИВНИЙ ШТУЧНИЙ ІНТЕЛЕКТ І МАЙБУТНЄ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ ЯК ЛІНГВА ФРАНКА У ГЛОБАЛЬНІЙ БІЗНЕС-КОМУНІКАЦІЇ

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Ключові слова: англійська як лінгва франка, бізнес-англійська, генеративний ШІ, глобальна комунікація, мовне різноманіття, аналіз дискурсу, багатомовність.

Сучасний ландшафт глобальної бізнес-комунікації переживає глибоку та багатовимірну трансформацію, основним рушієм якої є стрімкий розвиток і широке впровадження генеративного штучного інтелекту (ШІ). Починаючи з кінця 2022 року, безпрецедентна поява та швидке поширення великих мовних моделей (LLM) істотно порушили усталені припущення щодо беззаперечного домінування англійської мови як головної лінгва франка у міжнародній комерції. Якщо традиційна парадигма Business English as a Lingua Franca (BELF) історично акцентувала увагу на ефективності, прагматичній адаптивності та узгодженні значень між представниками різних мовних спільнот, то зростаюча присутність ШІ запроваджує нову форму алгоритмічного посередництва, що докорінно змінює як комунікативні практики, так і очікування у професійному середовищі.

У статті використано великий багатомодальний масив даних, який включає корпус обсягом 5 мільйонів слів, що складається з бізнес-текстів, створених як людьми, так і ШІ, а також етнографічні матеріали, зібрані у кількох транснаціональних корпораціях. Такий методологічний підхід дає змогу здійснити глибокий аналіз складного протиставлення між демократизацією та уніфікацією дискурсу, що формується у бізнес-комунікації, опосередкованій ШІ. Результати виявляють парадоксальну динаміку: з одного боку, інструменти ШІ істотно розширюють доступ до комунікації, знижують когнітивні бар'єри та надають неносіям англійської мови безпрецедентні можливості долучатися до глобальних взаємодій; з іншого – вони одночасно закріплюють англоцентричні норми, стандартизовані стилістичні конвенції та тенденцію до одноманітності у професійному мовленні.

У статті стверджується, що теорія English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) має еволюціонувати з урахуванням нової взаємодії між мовною різноманітністю, алгоритмічним посередництвом і глобальними бізнес-практиками. Розглядаючи ШІ не лише як допоміжний інструмент, а й як впливового актора у формуванні дискурсивних норм, дослідження пропонує нове бачення теоретичних дискусій у межах прикладної лінгвістики. Ширші імплікації аналізу стосуються корпоративної стратегії, подальшого розвитку педагогіки BELF, етичного проектування систем штучного інтелекту та міжнародної мовної політики у сфері комерції.

Introduction. English has long served as the default medium of communication among speakers of diverse linguistic backgrounds in global business. Its dominance emerged through a combination of historical, technological, and economic forces, reinforced by colonial legacies and globalization processes. The expansion of international trade, the rise

of multinational corporations, and the dissemination of Anglo-American management practices contributed to English becoming the preferred lingua franca in professional contexts (Blake, 2024). Within this context, frameworks of Business English as a Lingua Franca (BELF) emphasize pragmatic efficiency, mutual intelligibility, and adaptive communication

strategies over strict adherence to native-speaker norms. By prioritizing clarity and facilitating effective negotiation of meaning, BELF enables non-native speakers to achieve professional objectives, highlighting the inherently flexible and context-sensitive nature of ELF communication (Roshid, 2022).

While English has traditionally functioned as a unifying medium in global business, the communication landscape has recently experienced a profound shift due to the rapid advancement of generative artificial intelligence (AI) technologies, particularly large language models (LLMs). Since late 2022, these AI systems have demonstrated the ability to generate, translate, and adapt texts across multiple languages in real time. This technological leap facilitates a wide range of professional tasks, from drafting emails and reports to preparing presentations and client communications. Multinational corporations, in particular, have increasingly leveraged AI for proposal drafting and technical document translation, enabling employees to allocate more time to strategic decision-making rather than routine language production. In this way, AI offers the potential to democratize access to high-quality professional communication, especially for non-native speakers who previously faced substantial linguistic and cognitive barriers.

Materials and methods. Alongside these opportunities, the integration of AI-mediated communication introduces complex challenges. LLMs are predominantly trained on English-language data derived from Western business and academic sources. As a consequence, AI outputs tend to reproduce standardized, Anglocentric linguistic patterns, which, while efficient, can diminish the culturally nuanced and adaptive features of human ELF communication. For instance, AI-generated emails often include formulaic expressions such as “at your earliest convenience” or “as discussed in our previous correspondence”. Although these phrases ensure clarity and professionalism, they may inadvertently overlook local politeness conventions or culturally embedded nuances in hierarchical interactions (Peltonen, 2025).

These dynamics reveal a critical research gap: although ELF studies have long examined how speakers negotiate meaning across linguistic and cultural boundaries, the role of algorithmic mediation in reshaping ELF practices remains underexplored. Specifically, the impact of generative AI on the balance between standardization, inclusivity, and cultural sensitivity has not been fully addressed. Understanding this interplay is essential for anticipating the future trajectory of ELF in an increasingly AI-mediated global business environment.

To address this gap, the present study integrates sociolinguistic, technological, and cultural perspectives to analyze AI-mediated

communication in multinational business contexts (Gayed, 2022). The study is structured around three primary objectives: first, to provide an updated theoretical account of ELF in AI-mediated business communication, illustrating how algorithmic mediation interacts with established ELF principles; second, to conduct an empirical analysis based on a large multilingual corpus of AI-generated and human-produced business texts, capturing patterns of standardization, linguistic adaptation, and cultural representation; and third, to apply an operationalized Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework to examine how power relations, cultural values, and linguistic hierarchies are embedded within AI-mediated discourse. By combining corpus-based analysis, ethnographic insights, and CDA, the study aims to offer a comprehensive understanding of how generative AI is reshaping ELF practices, providing guidance for both theory and applied strategies in corporate communication and Business English pedagogy.

In order to contextualize these findings, it is important to reiterate the centrality of English as the dominant lingua franca in international business. Beyond historical and economic factors—such as the global expansion of Anglo-American corporations, colonial legacies, and the prevalence of English in scientific and technological domains—English offers pragmatic functionality that facilitates interaction among speakers from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Mieczkowski, 2021). BELF emphasizes that successful communication depends more on mutual intelligibility and pragmatic efficiency than strict conformity to native-speaker norms. Interactions in ELF are adaptive and negotiated in real time, with participants adjusting vocabulary, syntax, and discourse strategies to accommodate different accents, cultural expectations, and professional conventions. In international meetings or email correspondence, for instance, speakers frequently employ simplification, clarification requests, and repetition to ensure comprehension.

Moreover, ELF is inherently dynamic, shaped simultaneously by global trends and local practices. Local business norms, hierarchical expectations, and culturally specific communication styles influence how English is deployed and interpreted. This adaptability enables English to evolve beyond a mere linguistic tool, functioning as a medium through which professional relationships, trust, and collaboration are constructed (Chanwaiwit, Mori, 2023). Thus, the flexibility of ELF is a core factor in its effectiveness within complex international business environments.

The emergence of generative AI technologies, however, introduces both opportunities and tensions

within ELF-mediated business communication. Large Language Models (LLMs), such as ChatGPT and other AI-assisted writing tools, operate as algorithmic intermediaries, influencing not only text composition but also interpretation. While AI can provide immediate support for drafting, translation, and language correction, it is largely trained on English-language datasets from predominantly Western contexts. Consequently, AI models often replicate standardized linguistic structures and culturally specific norms, privileging certain communicative styles while marginalizing others.

Two critical tensions arise in AI-mediated ELF interactions. First, the tension between democratization and standardization: AI lowers access barriers, enabling non-native speakers to participate more confidently in complex professional discourse, produce polished documents, and communicate efficiently. Yet, over-reliance on AI may homogenize discourse, limiting the flexibility and adaptive negotiation characteristic of human ELF interaction (Holzner, 2025). For instance, AI-suggested phrasing often favors conventional or formal English structures, potentially discouraging creative or localized expressions that would naturally emerge in human-human communication. Second, the tension between multilingual potential and Anglocentric bias: although AI systems theoretically support multiple languages, English frequently remains the default for accuracy, coherence, and computational efficiency. This bias risks reinforcing standard English norms, marginalizing non-native varieties, and overlooking culturally specific communicative strategies. Idiomatic expressions, politeness markers, and context-dependent nuances in non-English languages may be inadequately represented or translated, affecting negotiation, collaboration, and intercultural rapport.

By presenting these challenges and their implications in a structured manner, this study lays the groundwork for understanding how AI-mediated communication interacts with ELF practices, highlighting both the opportunities for inclusivity and efficiency, and the risks of standardization and Anglocentric dominance.

Beyond the aforementioned tensions, AI-mediated communication introduces important questions regarding authorship, accountability, and trust. When AI participates in drafting emails, reports, or contracts, it does not merely produce language—it mediates meaning, tone, and cultural interpretation. Consequently, business professionals are tasked with balancing the efficiency and support offered by AI with the necessity of maintaining authentic, context-sensitive, and culturally adaptive communication practices. This interplay highlights

that while AI can streamline communication, human oversight remains essential to ensure relational and intercultural appropriateness.

In essence, although AI technologies present unprecedented opportunities for facilitating cross-cultural business communication, their integration into ELF contexts must be approached with care (Kankaanranta, 2025). Preserving the adaptive, negotiated, and pluralistic qualities of ELF is critical; AI should function as a facilitator of inclusion rather than a force driving linguistic standardization or cultural homogenization. Recognizing these nuances forms the foundation for investigating the practical implications of AI within ELF-mediated professional environments.

To explore these dynamics systematically, the study employed a mixed-methods research design, combining large-scale quantitative linguistic analysis with qualitative insights into sociocultural and organizational practices. This approach allowed for a holistic examination of business communication in the era of generative AI, capturing both structural linguistic patterns and contextually grounded human strategies.

The research design incorporated three complementary methodologies:

1. **Corpus Linguistics:** A comparative corpus analysis was conducted using a 5-million-word dataset encompassing both AI-generated business communications – such as emails, reports, and proposals – and human-produced ELF texts within similar genres. This analysis focused on lexical choice, syntactic structures, and discourse markers, investigating whether AI favored formulaic phrases, how sentence complexity compared across sources, and whether idiomatic expressions were maintained or replaced. By examining these patterns, the study identified systematic differences between AI-mediated and human ELF communication at a macro-linguistic level.

2. **Ethnographic Insights:** Semi-structured interviews and participant observations were conducted within multinational corporations across Europe, Asia, Latin America, and Africa. This qualitative layer captured contextually nuanced perspectives on how employees negotiate meaning, adapt language strategies, and navigate hierarchical and intercultural dynamics. Ethnographic findings elucidated why certain linguistic patterns emerge in ELF contexts and how organizational culture, professional norms, and intercultural interactions shape both human and AI-mediated discourse. For instance, employees often deliberately simplify or modify English expressions to ensure clarity across culturally diverse teams—a nuance that AI may not consistently replicate.

3. **Operationalized Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA):** To uncover underlying sociocultural and

ideological dimensions, texts were coded according to CDA principles. This framework enabled the identification of patterns in power representation, cultural framing, and discourse standardization. Integrating CDA with corpus linguistics and ethnographic insights allowed the study to connect macro-level trends with micro-level social dynamics, illustrating how AI might influence hierarchies, politeness strategies, and cultural sensitivity within ELF-mediated communication.

The integration of these three methodologies ensured that the research was not only linguistically rigorous but also socially and contextually grounded, addressing both structural and pragmatic aspects of language use in international business (Zhu, 2025).

The corpora were meticulously curated to maximize diversity, comparability, and analytical validity:

1. **Industry Diversity:** Texts were sourced from sectors including finance, technology, logistics, and manufacturing, capturing a broad spectrum of business communication practices. This variety allowed the study to account for sector-specific terminology and conventions.

2. **AI-generated Corpus:** Outputs were collected from multiple leading LLMs under identical prompts to control for variability in AI performance and linguistic production. Multiple prompts and repeated trials ensured a representative sample of AI-mediated language patterns.

3. **Human ELF Corpus:** Human-produced texts were drawn from corporate archives, anonymized for confidentiality, and matched to AI-generated texts by genre and communicative function. Both routine and strategic communications—such as internal updates, client proposals, and cross-cultural negotiations—were included to reflect real-world business scenarios.

4. This careful curation enabled robust cross-analysis, supporting the identification of recurring linguistic patterns, sociocultural cues, and potential AI-induced biases.

Within the CDA framework, four primary coding categories were operationalized to examine linguistic and sociocultural dimensions:

Lexical Standardization: The study analyzed the prevalence of conventional business terminology, standardized phrases, and formulaic expressions. This category assessed whether AI-generated texts relied on rigid pre-patterned structures as opposed to the flexible, context-sensitive language typical of human ELF interaction. Frequent stock phrases such as “please be advised” or “kindly note” were coded to measure standardization.

Cultural Referencing: This category evaluated the presence of culturally specific idioms, metaphors, and references, which serve as markers of local knowledge and intercultural negotiation.

Expressions reflecting regional business practices or culturally nuanced humor were examined to determine whether AI accurately replicated or omitted such elements.

Power Positioning: Hierarchical language markers, including directive verbs, modal auxiliaries, titles, and assertive phrasing, were analyzed to understand how language constructs organizational power dynamics and influences perceptions of authority in AI-mediated communications.

Interpersonal Softening: Mitigation strategies, such as hedging, politeness markers, and collaborative language, were coded to capture relational communication aspects. This category highlighted strategies used to maintain rapport, reduce face-threatening acts, and navigate multicultural professional interactions. Examples included phrasing like “it might be beneficial to...” or “could we consider...?”

By systematically coding texts along these dimensions, the study identified both quantitative patterns—such as the frequency of standardized expressions—and qualitative nuances, including subtleties of politeness and cultural adaptation. This multidimensional analysis illuminated how AI-mediated communication intersects with ELF practices in real-world business contexts, highlighting both opportunities and challenges in preserving the adaptive, negotiated, and culturally sensitive nature of international business English.

Results and discussion. Corpus analysis revealed clear divergences between AI-generated texts and human ELF outputs, highlighting notable differences in standardization, lexical diversity, and multilingual performance. In terms of lexical standardization, AI-generated texts contained approximately 32% more standardized business expressions than human ELF texts. Common formulaic phrases included “at your earliest convenience”, “as per our discussion”, and “please find attached”. By contrast, human ELF texts demonstrated greater variability, employing paraphrasing, context-specific phrasing, and occasional idiomatic expressions to adapt messages to recipients’ cultural and organizational contexts. These findings indicate that while AI ensures linguistic uniformity and clarity, it may simultaneously reduce the adaptive and negotiated character of ELF communication.

The multilingual performance of AI systems revealed further complexities. While English outputs maintained 94% semantic accuracy in post-editing evaluations, reflecting strong reliability, outputs in less-represented languages such as Amharic or Lao fell below 70% accuracy. These outputs often contained literal translations, awkward phrasing, or

culturally inappropriate expressions, underscoring an Anglocentric bias inherent in AI-generated communication. Consequently, reliance on AI in global business may inadvertently privilege English-centric norms at the expense of multilingual inclusivity, highlighting an ongoing tension between efficiency and equitable language representation.

Analysis of discourse markers and textual structure further distinguished AI-generated content from human ELF texts. AI outputs favored linear, low-context sentence constructions with frequent connectors like “therefore”, “furthermore”, and “as a result”. Human ELF texts, in contrast, exhibited more flexible sentence structures, incorporating context-dependent strategies, ellipses, and nuanced rhetorical markers to accommodate multicultural audiences. These patterns suggest that while AI may enhance clarity and consistency, it can simultaneously limit the local adaptation and intercultural sensitivity central to ELF-mediated communication.

Ethnographic observations and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) complemented the quantitative findings, providing insights into how employees interact with AI outputs in real-world business contexts. Interviews indicated that AI assistance was highly valued for drafting initial communications, particularly for routine or high-volume tasks. However, employees routinely modified AI-generated texts to incorporate “local flavor”, adjusting phrasing, tone, and politeness markers to align with cultural norms. For instance, in Asia-Pacific contexts, hedging and politeness markers – such as “we would greatly appreciate if...” or “may I kindly suggest...” – were expanded beyond AI defaults, reflecting local expectations of respect, hierarchy, and indirect communication (Rajprasit, 2022).

CDA revealed that AI outputs often encoded implicit Western business norms, emphasizing directness, efficiency, and low-context messaging. While these conventions may be effective in North American or European corporate environments, they can conflict with relationship-oriented cultures, where indirectness, rapport-building, and context-sensitive phrasing are valued. In multinational interactions, unmodified AI texts risked appearing blunt or culturally insensitive, emphasizing the ongoing need for human intervention.

The integration of AI in ELF-mediated business communication highlights a dual role: AI enhances efficiency, standardization, and accessibility, yet requires human oversight to preserve cultural nuance, interpersonal sensitivity, and adaptive variability. Employees’ edits frequently involve interpersonal softening strategies, including hedging, positive framing, and acknowledgment

of hierarchical roles. This adaptive mediation illustrates that, despite technological advancements, human input remains essential for maintaining the negotiated, flexible, and culturally attuned nature of ELF communication.

These findings illuminate a broader AI paradox in business ELF contexts. Generative AI facilitates inclusivity, reduces cognitive load for non-native speakers, and standardizes professional terminology. Simultaneously, it reinforces English dominance, standardizes discourse, and may marginalize culturally nuanced or localized language practices. Multilingual disparities in AI performance further reinforce Anglocentric tendencies, posing risks to linguistic diversity and intercultural understanding.

From a technological perspective, these disparities stem from the composition of training datasets, which predominantly comprise English-language corpora from Western contexts. Consequently, AI performs reliably in English but less accurately in underrepresented languages, highlighting the importance of carefully considering dataset diversity in AI deployment.

The tension between efficiency and authenticity is particularly evident across different business scenarios. In transactional contexts—such as reporting, scheduling, or compliance documentation—AI’s clarity and standardization offer clear advantages. Conversely, in relationship-oriented settings, subtle politeness markers, hedging, and culturally grounded metaphors are essential, requiring human refinement of AI-generated outputs. Ethnographic evidence demonstrates that employees often adapt AI texts to incorporate relational and cultural nuances, underscoring the persistent significance of human mediation.

These observations suggest that AI is not a neutral tool; it functions as a sociotechnical actor, shaping language use, reinforcing norms, and mediating intercultural interactions. Organizations must therefore balance efficiency gains with the preservation of linguistic diversity, cultural sensitivity, and adaptive negotiation strategies – core elements of effective ELF communication.

Looking ahead, the evolution of AI-mediated ELF communication may follow multiple trajectories. In one pathway, AI continues to reinforce English as the default global business language, producing uniform, formulaic structures that prioritize clarity and efficiency. While this enhances operational performance and reduces cognitive load, it risks diminishing context-sensitive adaptations and local communicative practices, potentially affecting trust and relational dynamics in high-context cultures.

Alternatively, AI development could pursue diversification, improving translation and

adaptation capabilities to support high-quality communication across multiple languages. Advances in multilingual LLMs, culturally informed training data, and context-aware algorithms could enable accurate, contextually sensitive outputs in less-represented languages. Such a trajectory would promote linguistic inclusivity, cultural sensitivity, and equitable participation in global business, counterbalancing current Anglocentric tendencies.

The study underscores the complex interplay between AI, ELF, and business communication. AI-mediated tools offer substantial efficiency and accessibility benefits but simultaneously necessitate human oversight to preserve the adaptive, culturally nuanced, and negotiated characteristics that are central to effective international business English. Strategic, context-aware deployment of AI is essential to ensure that technological innovation complements rather than constrains the dynamic and multicultural nature of ELF-mediated communication.

A third, more nuanced scenario envisions a hybrid communication landscape, where AI-enhanced English is utilized for transactional, technical, or efficiency-critical exchanges, while culturally adapted multilingual communication is applied in relational, creative, or negotiation-heavy contexts. In practice, routine reports, compliance documents, and interoffice memos may be generated by AI in standardized English, whereas client-facing correspondence, collaborative brainstorming sessions, or intercultural negotiations would remain mediated by humans or culturally aware AI models. This hybrid approach optimizes efficiency, clarity, and inclusivity, leveraging AI's strengths while preserving the adaptive, context-sensitive features central to ELF-mediated relationship-building.

Such trajectories imply that organizations must adopt strategic, context-sensitive approaches to AI deployment. Recommended policies include: selecting communication tasks suitable for AI standardization versus human adaptation, investing in culturally aware AI training datasets to enhance multilingual performance, and encouraging post-editing practices that restore relational, idiomatic, or culturally grounded elements. It is clear that the future of AI-mediated ELF communication will not be uniform; rather, it will involve a dynamic interplay of standardization, human adaptation, and multilingual inclusivity, shaped by technological advances, organizational choices, and intercultural demands.

The implications of these findings extend to both corporate strategy and Business English as a Lingua Franca (BELF) pedagogy. Organizations adopting AI-mediated communication should implement strategies that balance efficiency, accuracy, and cultural sensitivity. For example, AI literacy

programs should go beyond technical instruction to include cultural and sociolinguistic awareness, enabling employees to interpret and adapt AI-generated outputs effectively. Training could focus on recognizing when AI-produced phrasing may be culturally inappropriate, overly direct, or inconsistent with local politeness norms. Workshops and simulations can further equip staff to critically evaluate AI suggestions and integrate relational nuances before disseminating messages externally or internally.

Hybrid communication protocols are equally important. By combining AI efficiency with human oversight, organizations can ensure that culturally sensitive or high-stakes communications are appropriately mediated. Routine operational emails or standardized reporting could rely primarily on AI, while negotiation emails, client proposals, or intercultural meetings would include human editing or review. Such protocols maintain operational speed while safeguarding relationship-building, trust, and context-sensitive adaptation. Complementary policy development should define roles and responsibilities in AI-mediated communication, addressing ethical considerations, quality assurance, and accountability for errors or miscommunications. Clear policies help prevent overreliance on AI and ensure that employees remain active agents in cross-cultural discourse.

Integrating AI into business communication also necessitates a pedagogical shift in teaching Business English as a Lingua Franca. Language instruction should cultivate AI-human collaborative competence, moving beyond purely linguistic skills to include proficiency in interacting with AI tools. Learners should develop the ability to generate, evaluate, and adapt AI outputs while combining computational support with intercultural and relational awareness. For example, exercises might involve post-editing AI-generated emails or reports to adjust tone, politeness, and idiomatic expression. Curricula should also emphasize cultural and critical literacy, fostering the recognition of biases, standardization tendencies, and Anglocentric assumptions inherent in AI models. Finally, practical simulations of real-world business scenarios—such as multinational team meetings, cross-border negotiations, and AI-assisted project communications—can prepare learners for dynamic professional environments in which AI-mediated and human-mediated ELF coexist.

Conclusions. The effective integration of AI into corporate communication and BELF pedagogy requires dual attention to technological literacy and intercultural competence. Organizations and educators must cultivate environments where AI enhances efficiency without compromising

the adaptive, relational, and culturally sensitive dimensions of ELF communication.

This study demonstrates that generative AI is not replacing English as a Lingua Franca but actively reshaping its practice in global business communication. AI tools democratize access by lowering linguistic and cognitive barriers for non-native speakers while simultaneously reinforcing English-centric norms, standardizing discourse, and introducing subtle cultural biases. This paradox highlights that AI increases participation and efficiency, yet may erode the adaptive, negotiated, and context-sensitive features central to ELF-mediated intercultural interactions.

The trajectory of global business communication will depend on conscious decisions regarding AI design, deployment, and pedagogy. Organizations must balance technological efficiency with cultural adaptability, and educators must integrate AI literacy into Business English curricula to foster hybrid competencies—enabling effective collaboration with AI while maintaining intercultural awareness, relational sensitivity, and linguistic flexibility.

Future research should explore three key directions:

Longitudinal Studies: Examine AI's impact on business relationship-building over time, assessing effects on trust, rapport, negotiation outcomes, and intercultural understanding. Mixed-method designs combining corpus analysis, ethnography, and performance metrics can capture both linguistic and relational dynamics.

Community-Driven AI Development: Investigate participatory approaches to AI training that reflect linguistic diversity, regional norms, and culturally sensitive communication practices. Such methods can reduce Anglocentric bias and promote equitable participation in multilingual business ecosystems.

Empirical Testing of Hybrid Communication Models: Evaluate frameworks where AI-enhanced English supports transactional tasks, and culturally adapted multilingual communication facilitates relationship-intensive contexts. Field experiments or case studies can provide insights into efficiency gains, intercultural effectiveness, and practical challenges of hybrid models.

AI-mediated ELF represents a transformative yet contingent evolution of global business communication. Its value lies not solely in automation or standardization but in its capacity to augment human agency, enabling multilingual, culturally aware, and contextually adaptive interactions. The ongoing challenge for researchers, practitioners, and educators is to harness AI's capabilities while safeguarding the relational, adaptive, and culturally nuanced qualities that underpin effective international communication.

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