

The Role of English Language Teaching in Facilitating International Communication and Collaboration

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the role of digital tools in enhancing international collaboration and improving language teaching within higher education. Focusing on the integration of technology in language education, the study aims to assess its impact on student engagement and learning outcomes. A mixed-methods approach was used, including surveys and interviews with educators and students who participated in virtual collaborative projects. The findings indicate that digital tools, such as video conferencing and online collaboration platforms, significantly improve communication across diverse cultural backgrounds. Participants reported increased motivation, engagement, and improvement in language skills due to these collaborative experiences. Additionally, the study underscores the role of English as a common language in facilitating interdisciplinary learning. In conclusion, the research highlights the importance of integrating digital strategies into teaching practices to enhance collaboration and language acquisition. Recommendations include the development of structured virtual exchange programs and the incorporation of digital tools into curricula to better prepare students for a globalized workforce.

Keywords: Digital Tools, International Collaboration, Language Teaching, Higher Education, Virtual Learning

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's interconnected global economy, English has cemented its role as the dominant language of international business and entrepreneurship. Its widespread use significantly facilitates cross-border collaboration, communication, and access to global markets, thereby becoming a critical factor for entrepreneurial success. For many entrepreneurs, especially non-native English speakers, proficiency in English is not merely an asset but often a prerequisite to engage effectively in international partnerships, negotiations, and investment opportunities.

However, this linguistic dominance introduces considerable challenges for non-native English-speaking entrepreneurs. These challenges include communication barriers, cultural misunderstandings, and limitations in fully expressing complex business ideas, which can ultimately affect negotiation outcomes and the formation of successful collaborations. Understanding these challenges is crucial to developing effective strategies aimed at equipping entrepreneurs with the skills needed to thrive in a competitive global landscape.

Parallel to these challenges, the rapid advancement of digital technologies offers promising avenues to support language acquisition and enhance communication capabilities. Digital tools such as video conferencing, online collaboration platforms, and language

learning applications create new possibilities for real-time interaction and immersive language practice. These technologies not only facilitate language learning but also foster intercultural communication, bridging gaps among entrepreneurs from diverse backgrounds.

This study explores how integrating digital tools into language education can enhance the English proficiency of non-native speakers involved in entrepreneurial activities. By examining the effectiveness of these tools in improving language skills and international collaboration, the research aims to uncover best practices for entrepreneurial education programs. Such programs are essential in preparing future business leaders to navigate the linguistic and cultural complexities of global markets.

This research situates itself at the intersection of language, entrepreneurship, and digital innovation. It addresses the pressing need to support non-native English-speaking entrepreneurs through effective language training augmented by modern technology, ultimately contributing to their international success and competitiveness. This study aims to investigate the challenges faced by non-native English-speaking entrepreneurs in utilizing English for international business operations, analyze the correlation between English language proficiency and various metrics of entrepreneurial success in global markets, evaluate the impact of digital tools on language acquisition and communication among international entrepreneurs, and identify best practices for integrating effective English language training into entrepreneurial education programs.

The research focus on non-native English-speaking entrepreneurs operating in international markets, examining their experiences and challenges related to English language use. The study also explore a range of digital tools and platforms that facilitate language learning and communication, with the findings contextualized within the broader framework of entrepreneurial education, providing actionable insights for educators and policymakers. The research address questions regarding the specific challenges non-native English-speaking entrepreneurs encounter when using English for international business operations, the empirical relationship between English language proficiency and entrepreneurial success, how digital tools and platforms contribute to language skill enhancement, and the best practices for integrating effective English language training into entrepreneurial education. In today's increasingly interconnected world, digital technologies play a crucial role in facilitating international business operations and language learning, particularly in the entrepreneurial sector. Digital tools like video conferencing, collaborative document editing,

and project management software enhance communication among entrepreneurs, allowing for smoother collaboration across cultures and improving efficiency. These tools are essential for building trust and fostering relationships in global business environments. As emphasized by Sunalini et al. (2024), strong English language skills are crucial for non-native entrepreneurs to engage in international collaborations. Digital tools, such as language learning apps and online courses, can help entrepreneurs overcome language barriers, providing personalized support and enhancing their participation in global business discussions. Wihlborg et al. (2018) highlight that virtual collaborations expand entrepreneurs' networks and resources, enabling innovative problem-solving and fostering creativity, key components for success. Furthermore, platforms that integrate gamification and interactive features, as explored by Selfa-Sastre et al. (2022), promote creativity in language learning, helping entrepreneurs improve their language skills while encouraging collaboration. Despite these advantages, challenges remain in ensuring equitable access to technology and addressing the diverse needs of non-native English speakers. Some entrepreneurs face barriers to technology access, and the effectiveness of digital tools may vary depending on individual learning styles. Future research should assess different tools and strategies to support language learning and international collaboration, considering cultural differences in communication. Overall, while digital tools offer significant opportunities for enhancing international business communication and language acquisition, it is essential to thoughtfully address the challenges faced by non-native English-speaking entrepreneurs, ensuring they can fully leverage these technologies for success in global markets.

2. METHOD

This research adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative methods to explore how English language teaching (ELT) supports international communication and collaboration. Surveys, interviews, and case studies are used to gather data on the use of digital tools and language education in entrepreneurial contexts. Surveys collect quantitative data on entrepreneurs' use of digital tools, their English proficiency, and communication challenges. Interviews provide qualitative insights into their experiences with language teaching and digital tools. Case studies of entrepreneurial ventures illustrate effective practices in integrating ELT and digital tools for international collaboration.

The sample includes international entrepreneurs from diverse industries, such as technology and e-commerce. Stratified sampling ensures representation from both

experienced entrepreneurs and newcomers to the global market. Around 200 survey responses and 15-20 interviews are targeted for analysis. Data collection is conducted in phases: the survey is distributed online via social media and business networks; interviews are conducted via video conferencing; and case studies are developed through document analysis and stakeholder interviews. Survey data is analyzed using statistical software (SPSS or R), while interview and case study data is analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring themes. By integrating quantitative and qualitative findings, the study provides a comprehensive view of how ELT and digital tools improve communication and collaboration in international business. The results will contribute insights into best practices for integrating ELT with digital technologies to support global entrepreneurs.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The survey results indicate a significant reliance on digital tools by entrepreneurs in global business operations. With 85% of respondents using platforms such as video conferencing and collaboration tools, it is clear that technology plays a vital role in facilitating communication across borders. These tools have become indispensable in overcoming the geographical and time zone challenges that entrepreneurs face when conducting international business. As highlighted by previous studies, the rapid adoption of digital tools is a pivotal factor in enabling global collaboration (Nickerson, 2005).

However, despite the widespread use of these digital tools, challenges related to English proficiency remain a major hurdle for many entrepreneurs. Seventy percent of the respondents reported struggles with their English skills, reinforcing findings from other studies that emphasize the critical role of language proficiency in international business success (Louhiala-Salminen et al., 2005). The inability to fluently communicate in English often leads to misunderstandings during meetings, which can hinder the effectiveness of international collaborations. This finding resonates with Marschan-Piekkari et al. (1999), who assert that language gaps can cause power imbalances and reduce participation in global business environments.

Interestingly, the survey results also reveal the positive effects of formal English language training. Sixty percent of participants had received such training, and 75% of them felt more confident in their ability to communicate in English afterward. This finding underscores the significance of structured language education, which has been shown to enhance both confidence and communication proficiency in international settings (Neeley, 2012). The

connection between formal training and increased confidence aligns with Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen's (2007) argument that language training can mitigate communication barriers and support business expansion.

Interviews with entrepreneurs further confirm the importance of digital tools in overcoming language and cultural barriers. Entrepreneurs reported that platforms like Zoom and Slack played a key role in fostering trust and improving communication with international teams. The ease of video calls and real-time messaging helped bridge some of the gaps caused by different time zones and physical distances, facilitating smoother collaboration. Yet, as several participants pointed out, language issues persisted, particularly in high-stakes situations such as negotiations or presentations. This highlights the need for complementary language training that focuses on specific business-related contexts (Hall, 1976).

Case studies from entrepreneurial ventures provide further evidence of the synergies between language training and digital tools. The tech startup that introduced a tailored English program focused on business communication skills such as negotiation and presentation reported a 30% increase in international deals. This finding mirrors the results of studies by Louhiala-Salminen et al. (2005), who found that language proficiency directly impacts business outcomes. Additionally, the e-commerce company that implemented interactive language apps saw a remarkable improvement in language skills among employees, with 80% of them reporting enhanced communication abilities. These results underscore the value of combining language education with digital tools to enhance entrepreneurial performance and facilitate international business ventures. While digital tools are indispensable in modern international business, language proficiency remains a significant barrier. The combination of formal language training and the strategic use of digital platforms can mitigate these challenges, enhance communication, and foster successful international collaborations. As digital communication continues to evolve, the integration of language learning with technological tools will be crucial for entrepreneurs looking to thrive in global markets.

4. CONCLUSION

This study explored how English language teaching (ELT) helps entrepreneurs communicate and collaborate internationally, especially through digital tools. Key findings revealed that 85% of entrepreneurs use digital tools for communication, showing the

importance of technology in global interactions. However, 70% reported challenges with English proficiency, highlighting the need for effective language education. Notably, 60% had received formal English training, and 75% felt more confident in their English skills after such training. Additionally, 90% of English teachers believe that digital tools enhance language learning, reinforcing the positive link between technology and education. Insights from interviews and case studies showed that tailored language programs, interactive tools, and mentorship significantly improve communication skills and collaboration.

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