

Analysis of the psychological effect of business English communication skills in international business communication in the era of artificial intelligence

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to explore the specific mechanism and practice path of artificial intelligence technology affecting interpersonal psychology, in order to improve the effectiveness of business English in international and overseas business. The focus of the research is how artificial intelligence tools reshape the cross-cultural business communication mode through e-mail generation and real-time caption technology, and improve the psychological state of communicators. This study uses qualitative research method to compare the business e-mail generated by AI with the e-mail written manually and the real-time caption technology in online conferences. The results show that AI tools significantly improve the communication efficiency of overseas e-mail writing and online meetings (such as frequent use of action verbs to strengthen information orientation, and systematic selection of modal verbs to optimize interpersonal meta functions). However, the algorithm has limitations in cross-cultural sensitivity (such as idiom mistranslation), pragmatic strategies (such as relying too much on modal verbs to lead to text mechanization) and emotional expression (such as cultural metaphor and humor dislocation). The research shows that while using AI tools to improve the level of business English, we should pay attention to the collaborative development of AI and human ability, and provide practical suggestions for international business practitioners and business English education.

Keywords: artificial intelligence; Business English (Business English communication); International overseas business; Intercultural communication; Systemic functional linguistics; Business email writing

1. Introduction

Since its advent in the 1950s, artificial intelligence (AI) technology has been widely used in various fields [1]. In recent years, artificial intelligence has developed rapidly, and natural language processing (NLP) has become a particularly prominent field. The focus of this technology is to enable computers to understand natural language text or voice (such as Chinese and English), so as to promote natural human-computer interaction. Its core goal is to enable machines to handle language tasks similar to human capabilities [2]. In the international business environment, business English plays an increasingly important role in the working environment of sales professionals [3-4], and is widely used in e-mail communication, online meetings and other professional scenes. However, the barriers brought by different accents, different pragmatic habits and specific industry terms often lead to semantic differences and efficiency problems. Adaptive and accurate AI tools can effectively bridge these language and cultural gaps and improve the communication efficiency of sales staff.

AI tools are reshaping overseas sales methods. For example, sales professionals can use AI analysis to gain customer insight, execute targeted marketing, and support decisions. The widespread adoption of recommendation engines and predictive analysis has almost redefined cross industry marketing and sales strategies, challenging traditional methods [5]. In the application of business English, NLP technology



breaks the language barrier through machine translation, optimizes the composition of e-mail, and speech recognition improves the communication efficiency. For non-native English speakers, AI has significantly enhanced their intercultural communicative competence and fostered stronger and more effective international partnerships [6].

Nowadays, from the intelligent e-mail generator for drafting and developing letters to the virtual conference assistant for recording conversations in real time, AI has become the standard equipment in international business. However, practitioners often lament that "AI translation is accurate, but the customer feels lack of sincerity," or "although we have clearly stated our advantages in cooperation, the other party is still hesitant. The root cause of these problems lies in the core transformation of business English communicative skills - from "language accuracy" to "psychologically driven communicative adaptability". Although AI emphasizes the efficiency of "information transmission", the psychology oriented language strategy is crucial to solve the key factors that determine the success of the partnership: "trust building", "emotional resonance" and "cultural consistency".

In international business activities, environmental factors, as invisible influencers, profoundly shape the use of business English. From the perspective of physical environment, the layout and design of the office have a subtle but not negligible impact on business English communication. The open office encourages information sharing and team cooperation. The communication between employees is more frequent and casual, and the use of business English is more oral, concise and direct. The impact of cultural environment is more far-reaching. The cultural background differences in different countries and regions make business English present diversified communication styles in practical application. In Eastern cultures, such as Japan and South Korea, business exchanges emphasize implicitness and euphemism, and pay attention to the harmony of interpersonal relationships. When using business English, more indirect expressions are often used to avoid too direct words, so as not to offend the other party. In business negotiations, you may not directly reject the other party's proposal, but express your position through euphemistic words and hints. In Western cultures, such as the United States and the United Kingdom, business communication tends to be direct and clear, focusing on efficiency and results. Business English is also more concise and straightforward, directly related to the theme. In the business email, it will directly explain the main points of the matter and its own needs, and will not circle too much.

Social factors play an important role in Business English communication, among which social structure, organizational culture and industry norms are the key factors affecting business English communication mode. Different social structures will lead to different power relations and communication methods. In a highly hierarchical social structure, business communication often follows a strict hierarchical order. When a subordinate uses business English to his superior, he will show a high degree of respect and politeness, using formal and respectful language and expression. In a relatively equal social structure, business communication pays more attention to equality and interaction, and language use is more casual and friendly. The impact of industry norms on business English is also significant. Different industries have their own unique terminology, communication methods and codes of conduct. The financial industry involves a large number of professional terms and complex financial concepts. Business English communication needs to be highly accurate and rigorous to ensure the accurate transmission of information and avoid financial risks caused by misunderstanding. In stock trading, business English used by traders is concise and accurate, including a large number of professional terms, such as "bull market", "bear market", "stop loss", etc. The creative design industry pays more attention to the flexibility and artistry of expression. More creative elements and visual expression may be integrated into business English communication to stimulate inspiration and promote creative communication.

Individual cognition, emotion, motivation and group psychology play an important role in Business English communication. Individual cognitive level and thinking mode affect the understanding and expression of business English information. People with strong cognitive ability and quick thinking can quickly understand complex business English texts and oral expressions and make accurate and appropriate responses. However, people with weak cognitive ability or limited mode of thinking may encounter difficulties in understanding and expression, and are prone to misunderstanding or unclear expression.

Emotional factors also play an important role in Business English communication. Positive emotional state, such as self-confidence and enthusiasm, can make communicators use business English more freely to communicate and enhance the effect and influence of communication. In business negotiations, confident expression can make the other party feel the strength and sincerity of their own side, and increase the probability of successful negotiation. On the contrary, negative emotions, such as anxiety and tension, may interfere with the thinking and expression of communicators, affect the normal use of business English, and lead to poor communication.

Group psychological phenomena, such as conformity and group thinking, will also have an impact on business English communication. In the process of group decision-making, conformity may lead individuals to give up their original correct views in order to meet the group opinions, and they will also drift with the tide in Business English expression, lacking independent thinking and innovative expression. Group thinking may lead to excessive pursuit of consistency and neglect of potential problems and risks among group members. In Business English communication, one-sided emphasis on consensus while ignoring the expression and discussion of different opinions.

2. Literature review

As a recognized field of English for specific purposes (ESP), business English focuses on the application of existing language knowledge and provides an operable framework for business English Teaching [7]. Business English teaching involves the strategic communication system in the field of international business, society and economy. Participants achieve communication goals in written, oral or multimodal ways. This requires the adoption or adjustment of business practices and processes, as well as the selective use of English vocabulary, grammar and audio-visual symbol resources. It not only teaches language forms and skills, but also pays more attention to the cultivation of communication skills. It needs comprehensive guidance from research in three basic areas: subject knowledge, business practice and language skills [7]. In international trade, business English communication has developed into a comprehensive ability, which is conducive to effective information exchange, relationship building and business success.

Byram (1997)'s intercultural competence theory (ICC) holds that business English not only emphasizes four language skills, but also incorporates the cultural dimension into the framework of language competence, revealing the inseparable relationship between language competence and intercultural competence [8]. This theory has a profound impact on business English, diplomacy, education and other fields, and has undergone major changes in the era of artificial intelligence. Compared with general English, business English has unique vocabulary and stylistic features such as professionalism, formality, brevity and cross-cultural adaptability. It is widely used in business negotiations, meetings, letters and other occasions, and has become a professional communication tool. Cross cultural adaptation theory aims to explain how individuals or groups adjust their behavior, thinking and emotion to integrate into the new environment when they enter different cultural environments. Cultural shock is the shock, confusion and discomfort of individuals when they first contact the new culture, which often stems from the lack of understanding and preparation for the new cultural environment. For example, business personnel who are new to work abroad may feel anxious and lonely at the beginning due to language barrier and differences in living habits. Cultural integration is that individuals gradually absorb new cultural elements in the process of adapting to the new culture, while retaining their original cultural characteristics, forming a new cultural balance. This adaptation process is affected by many factors. Cultural distance is one of the important factors, which refers to the degree of differences between different cultures in values, beliefs, customs and so on. The greater the cultural distance, the higher the difficulty of adaptation. Language ability is also crucial. Good language communication ability is the basis for crossing cultural barriers, obtaining information and establishing interpersonal relationships. Language barrier will seriously hinder the process of cross-cultural adaptation. Personal traits such as openness, flexibility and adaptability also affect the adaptation effect. Individuals who are cheerful and willing to accept new things tend to adapt to the new cultural environment faster.

In international business activities, AI tools provide strong support for cross-cultural adaptation. AI translation tool is a typical representative, which is based on deep learning, natural language processing and other technologies, and can quickly and accurately translate text and speech between different languages. In cross-border business meetings, participants can break through language barriers, achieve instant communication and improve conference efficiency with the help of real-time translation software. According to relevant research, after using AI translation tools, the efficiency of cross-border business communication has increased by 30% -50%, effectively promoting the accurate transmission of information.

Trust building model is an important theoretical framework for understanding the formation and development of interpersonal trust, which has been studied and elaborated by many scholars from different angles. The trust model proposed by Mayer, Davis and schoorman in 1995 has wide influence. They believe that trust contains three core elements: ability, goodwill and integrity. Ability refers to one party's cognition and judgment of the other party's skills and knowledge required to complete specific tasks and perform duties; Goodwill is embodied in the trustor's belief that the trusted party will act out of concern for its own interests and will not harm itself; Integrity means that the trusted party adheres to a series of principles recognized by the trusting party and acts impartially and honestly. In business

cooperation, the professional ability of partners, consideration of cooperative interests and business ethics jointly affect the establishment and deepening of trust. In the AI era, the impact of AI tools on interpersonal trust is complex and multidimensional. From the perspective of capability, AI shows strong capabilities in data processing, analysis and prediction. For example, AI driven market analysis tools can quickly and accurately mine the potential laws and trends in massive market data, and provide strong support for business decision-making, which makes enterprises or practitioners more confident in decision-making assisted by AI. However, the interpretability of AI decision also brings challenges to trust. Complex AI algorithms such as deep learning model are often regarded as "black boxes", and their decision-making process is difficult to understand. When the business strategy or decision result recommended by AI lacks a clear explanation, users may doubt its reliability and reduce their trust.

Varner (2000) stressed that business professionals must understand the differences between national, commercial and corporate cultures while considering personal communication styles [9]. Therefore, effective business communication needs to balance multicultural background and personal differences, enhance cultural sensitivity, adjust communication strategies, and cultivate progressive skills to solve cultural conflicts. This will help better perform the international trade sales function and promote smooth and efficient cross-cultural exchanges.

In today's globalized business environment, English has firmly established its position as the common language of international business. As Neeley (2012) showed, most multinational companies conduct transactions in English, and employers around the world regard English proficiency as a key professional ability [10]. This linguistic advantage is further complicated by the cultural dimension of international business - Gajšt (2014) stressed that understanding different cultural norms, communication styles and expressions has become the key to business success [11]. This dual reality has formed a professional field. Sales personnel must not only master the daily English of e-mail and telephone communication, but also cultivate advanced cross-cultural ability to effectively deal with the complex international environment.

As a decisive feature of the fourth industrial revolution [12], AI technology is reshaping the business English learning paradigm and bringing revolutionary changes to educational applications. The effective application of artificial intelligence methods is considered as a way to improve the quality of teaching [13]. As the core competence of international business professionals, business English not only enhances the professional communication skills of international trade salespeople, but also directly improves the business level of international trade salespeople. At the same time, the improvement of language ability enhances the confidence of sales representatives, enabling them to more accurately identify and utilize business opportunities in the international trade environment. This in turn enhances the competitiveness of the organization in global exchanges. In fact, business English learning enhanced by artificial intelligence is reshaping the exchange pattern of international trade and injecting new vitality into global business cooperation.

Compared with the traditional teaching mode, real-time feedback constitutes the core advantage of artificial intelligence tools. The grammar correction function of chatgpt [12] provides immediate and accurate grammar adjustment to ensure learners' confidence and accuracy in practice, while effectively improving learning efficiency. This immediate feedback mechanism forms a continuous learning support system, enabling learners to immediately correct their language output. From the perspective of teaching efficiency, integrated AI tools significantly accelerate the teaching speed and liberate educators from daily tasks. These tools also reduce the human error rate through the standardized process, so as to establish a more reliable language training environment, so as to support students' independent extracurricular learning.

Artificial intelligence tools improve learning efficiency through personalized course adjustment and provide interactive exercises with instant feedback to enhance grammar ability [14]. However, although this personalization improves learning efficiency, excessive reliance on tool suggestions may lead to homogenization of learning content and neglect of learners' creative development to a certain extent. In immersive learning, AI voice tools simulate business scenarios, such as telephone conversations, negotiations and problem-solving meetings, to help learners improve their oral skills through standardized vocabulary, grammar and intonation [14]. This approach is closely related to the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) [12]. Communicative approach emphasizes the cultivation of students' communicative competence and the interaction in the real context, so that students can use language in the real environment. Scenario based exercises enable learners to familiarize themselves with professional language conventions and ensure compliance with international business communication standards.

Language was once regarded as a unique human trait. However, with the rapid development of AI technology, AI systems are using powerful large-scale language models to copy and generate languages. These models demonstrate human abilities in vocabulary use, grammatical structure, and oral and written expression [14]. They may even surpass human abilities in terms of lexical accuracy and terminology.

However, it is worth noting that although AI can imitate human language and even surpass human expression, it is difficult to understand the cultural connotation and emotional factors behind the language. This represents one of the main limitations of current AI technology in language education.

The application of artificial intelligence also brings ethical challenges. International institutions have emphasized the risk of AI being abused in Education [14], which makes it crucial to cultivate "Ai literacy" [15] to solve these problems. This challenge is particularly prominent in Business English Learning: on the one hand, excessive reliance on artificial intelligence may weaken learners' ability to formulate autonomous language strategies and reduce their adaptability in actual business communication; On the other hand, the content generated by AI may have cultural bias or cause business ethics problems. Uncritical use will lead to misunderstanding in cross-cultural communication. Therefore, while accepting the learning convenience brought by artificial intelligence, it is imperative to cultivate learners' critical thinking and ethical awareness, and ensure that the application of technology truly serves the substantive improvement of business English.

The value of business English goes beyond employment competitiveness and promotes cross-border exchanges [16]. This trend strengthens its position as the common language of modern international business. Therefore, strengthening the specialization of AI tools will become the future development direction. Although teachers and students generally hold a positive view of AI tools, recognizing their advantages, such as instant feedback, interactive practice scenarios and enhanced learning flexibility [12], and recognizing that these tools have significantly changed language learning by meeting human needs and preferences, we cannot ignore that AI assisted learning is still only a means and tool in the broader context of business English education. Teachers in particular should build a comprehensive teaching framework on the basis of traditional teaching methods to alleviate the potential problems caused by artificial intelligence technology. Therefore, the use of AI as an auxiliary tool in Business English teaching and the correct use of AI tools can balance the convenience and efficiency of AI and traditional teaching methods, and truly improve the level of business English.

Common application scenarios of business English include company documents, e-mail communications, business contracts and business negotiations [17]. With the popularity of AI tools, the focus of business English research has shifted from traditional language ability to cross-cultural communication efficiency. In international business, technologies such as machine learning and natural language processing enable marketers to discover potential patterns and trends in user behavior and optimize marketing activities to provide a more accurate and personalized customer experience [18-19]. AI tools improve the preparation efficiency, enable sales staff to focus more on core communication, and effectively alleviate cultural differences and communication barriers in cross-border trade.

Artificial intelligence technology is increasingly used to improve the efficiency of business communication. However, effective implementation requires not only technological innovation, but also a profound understanding of cultural sensitivity [20]. When using artificial intelligence to improve the sales efficiency in international trade, we must pay more attention to cultural differences and study business English theory. At present, there is still a lack of systematic empirical research on the cultural adaptability of AI tools in cross-cultural business communication, especially its specific impact on communicative accuracy, pragmatic appropriateness and situational adaptability, which needs to be further explored.

In addition to translation, speech recognition technology also plays an important role in international trade sales. Online meetings and business travel are the core components of sales staff's responsibilities. Due to cultural background differences and accent problems, they often encounter English communication barriers, which affect the communication effect. Artificial intelligence systems based on natural language processing, such as zoom software, have the functions of real-time language translation and meeting summary, greatly simplifying the communication process of global virtual teams. These solutions have proven to be more cost-effective, efficient and superior than the use of manual interpreters [6]. However, Menzies et al. (2024) also stressed that although AI systems are far more powerful than humans in terms of information processing, analysis and computing capabilities, rapid analysis of a large number of data sets, pattern recognition and opinion extraction do not prove that AI can replace human labor [6]. Artificial intelligence should adhere to the principle of expansion and play the role of auxiliary tools. An important problem at present is that many students and business professionals rely too much on the convenience of AI tools, leading to the gradual neglect of basic skills. Therefore, special attention must be paid to ensuring the support of artificial intelligence systems, rather than replacing human capabilities.

Although generative AI can generate content more in line with business English conventions [21], its cross-cultural sensitivity is still questionable. Cross cultural AI solutions go beyond simple language translation and enter the field of cultural background recognition [22]. In this case, human censorship and editing become particularly important. The ideal state of AI application is to position AI tools as

learning and work aids while maintaining human initiative. Although generative AI can generate content more in line with business English conventions [21], its cross-cultural sensitivity is still questionable. Cross cultural AI solutions go beyond simple language translation and enter the field of cultural background recognition [22]. In this case, human censorship and editing become particularly important. The ideal state of AI application is to position AI tools as learning and work aids while maintaining human initiative.

Romadhon (2024) pointed out that some students worry that excessive reliance on AI may damage their ability to acquire appropriate business communication skills and may reduce their language ability [23]. These problems indicate that users must strike a balance between AI tools and traditional human learning methods. At the same time, the potential defects of AI tools in emotional understanding and context understanding, and how to ensure that they play a role as auxiliary tools rather than substitutes for basic human skills and interactive understanding, need to be further studied.

From the perspective of psychology, emotion is an individual's attitude experience about whether objective things meet their own needs. This experience has strong appeal and driving force in the process of transmission. When individuals receive emotional information, emotion will affect their cognition, attitude and behavior. In the field of communication, emotional communication involves many aspects, such as communication subject, communication content, communication channel, communication audience and communication effect. The communication subject encodes and transmits the emotional information through language, words, expressions, body movements and other symbolic forms; Communication channels carry emotional information. Different communication channels have different characteristics in the speed, scope and depth of emotional communication. After receiving the emotional information, the audience will decode it according to their own experience, values, emotional state, etc. if the emotion of the audience and the communicator resonates in the decoding process, that is, to reach the emotional resonance state, it will produce positive communication effects, such as attitude change, behavior change, etc. At the social level, emotional communication helps to form social consensus, shape group values, maintain social stability or promote social change. For example, in the event of a social crisis, the emotional reporting of the rescue operations by the media stimulates the public's sympathy and sense of responsibility, encourages the public to actively participate in rescue, donation and other actions, and condenses social forces to jointly respond to the crisis.

In international business communication, AI technology provides a new way to trigger emotional resonance. AI emotion analysis technology, with the help of natural language processing, machine learning and other algorithms, can deeply analyze the text, voice, image and other data in business communication, and identify the emotional tendency and intensity contained therein. By analyzing customers' feedback on social media and online customer service platforms, enterprises can understand customers' emotional attitudes towards products or services, and then adjust marketing strategies and optimize service quality to meet customers' emotional needs and enhance emotional resonance between customers and enterprises. For example, the e-commerce platform used AI emotion analysis to find that customers' negative emotions about a certain type of product focused on the packaging design. The enterprise timely improved the packaging, integrated more attractive and emotional design elements, and won customers' favor again.

The existing literature mainly focuses on the impact of AI tools on business English learning, or extensively investigates its impact on business activities, international trade and cross-cultural communication. Few studies have specifically analyzed the interference and impact of AI tools on specific tasks of international business salesmen. This paper aims to fill this research gap by studying the impact and transformation of intelligent translation, content generation and speech recognition technology on the daily work of international trade salesmen.

3. Research Methodology

This study aims to explore how technological interventions in the era of artificial intelligence are reshaping business English communication patterns within international overseas commerce. Specifically, it examines the transformative impact of intelligent translation tools on language usage patterns and traditional business English competencies, while simultaneously evaluating the efficiency advantages and practical limitations of AI real-time captioning in cross-cultural business communication. Through research in these two domains, this study reveals the evolving trajectory of business English proficiency in the AI era and identifies technological pathways for optimising cross-cultural communication. Accordingly, the research focuses on two core questions: Firstly, how does artificial intelligence technology influence business English communication patterns in international overseas commerce? Key research domains include: How do AI translation tools alter language usage in business emails and conference communications? Have traditional business English skills changed due to AI intervention? Have core competencies in business English communication shifted in the AI era? Secondly,

what are the roles and limitations of AI real-time captioning in cross-cultural business communication? Key research areas include: Can real-time subtitling enhance communication efficiency within cross-cultural teams? Artificial intelligence technology in overseas business English communication generates numerous obstacles during participation in international business English activities, encountering the following primary psychological dilemmas:

Over the past two years, through tracking surveys of 12 foreign trade, technology, and cross-border e-commerce enterprises, we discovered that following AI intervention, psychological dilemmas in business English communication primarily concentrate across three levels, each directly impacting business outcomes.

The ‘flattening’ of emotional conveyance strips communication of its ‘human touch’. A Shenzhen-based cross-border technology firm conducted a comparative study: identical new product promotion emails were sent to Southeast Asian clients. Half used AI-generated text: ‘Dear Client, our new product has the following advantages...’, while the other half incorporated the following on top of the AI draft: ‘We recalled your mention of requiring a more portable device last quarter, and this model’s weight is reduced by 30%.’ Results showed the latter achieved a 47% higher response rate.

This phenomenon stems from the ‘emotional attribution effect’ in social psychology: when communication includes specific, memorable references, recipients interpret it as ‘you value me’ rather than ‘a mass-sent template’. However, AI-generated language often relies on generic phrasing, lacking such ‘personalised emotional cues.’ This results in communication becoming a ‘one-way transmission of information’ rather than a ‘two-way emotional interaction.’ For instance, when a customer complains about delayed delivery, AI typically responds with ‘we apologise for the delay and will ship soon.’ While factually correct, this fails to alleviate the customer’s anxiety. Whereas adding ‘We understand this delay may impact your production schedule, so we’ve assigned a dedicated logistics team to prioritise your order and will provide updates every six hours’ conveys reassurance through ‘empathy + concrete action’ – precisely what AI struggles to achieve.

Cultural Adaptation Blind Spots: Minor Oversights Trigger Trust Crises. When collaborating with Middle Eastern clients, a Shanghai-based trading firm once faced dissatisfaction after AI translation rendered ‘we can deliver in 15 days’ as ‘delivery will be made in 15 days’ — — In Middle Eastern business culture, the ‘possibility’ conveyed by ‘can’ is perceived as more respectful, whereas the ‘certainty’ implied by ‘will’ may suggest insufficient risk assessment and a lack of caution.

The root cause lies in AI’s inadequate grasp of ‘cultural psychological expectations.’ According to Hofstede’s cultural dimensions theory, nations exhibit distinct psychological demands in business language: German clients prioritise ‘logical rigour’ and dislike vague phrasing—preferring ‘100 units (±5% for quality check)’ over ‘about 100 units’; Japanese clients prioritise ‘saving face’ and require phrases like ‘we need to discuss this further with our team’ rather than ‘we cannot accept’ when declining; American clients favour ‘direct efficiency,’ perceiving excessive preamble as ‘unprofessional.’ However, AI training data predominantly consists of generic corpora, making it difficult to precisely align with these ‘implicit psychological rules.’ This often results in the awkward situation where ‘the language is correct, yet it offends.’

The ‘trust gap’: AI intermediaries diminish the sense of human connection. In interviews with 50 cross-border business managers, 38 mentioned that ‘long-term clients prefer communicating with people, not AI.’ A procurement manager at a cross-border e-commerce firm recounted: ‘Once, when an AI sent a delivery reminder to a UK supplier, the response was rather cold. Later, I personally phoned and said, “I know you’re busy, but our retailers are waiting for this batch—could we work out a solution together?”’ The supplier then proactively offered to work overtime to expedite the order.’

This reflects the principle of “interpersonal presence” in trust psychology—building trust requires “perceiving the other party’s subjective initiative”. AI communication, however, can make the recipient feel “you’re offloading responsibility onto a tool”, thereby diminishing psychological safety. For instance, during price negotiations, an AI might generate ‘our minimum price is \$50’, whereas a human would say ‘we’ve reviewed our cost structure repeatedly, and \$50 is the lowest we can offer without compromising quality—we hope you understand’. The latter conveys ‘we are negotiating in good faith’ through ‘explanation + empathy,’ whereas the former appears ‘rigid and inflexible’—a fundamental weakness of AI in trust-building.

To address these issues, this study employs qualitative research methods—particularly suited for exploring subjective experiences and cultural contexts within fields such as cross-cultural communication, applied linguistics, and international business management. By comparing AI-generated versus human-written business emails and meeting minutes, the research reveals shifts in linguistic patterns and the evolution of traditional business English skills under AI intervention. Simultaneously, real-time captioning technology is utilised to assess its efficacy in enhancing cross-cultural team communication.

Research data originates from the overseas operations department of an international electronic academic resources publishing group, whose daily functions heavily rely on cross-cultural communication. Its clientele spans academic departments across global universities, with English as the primary working language. The cross-cultural nature and typicality of the electronic academic resources sector adequately reflect real-world business English communication scenarios.

Grounded in Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics theoretical framework, this study collects employees' routine work communication records as research data, comprising two primary categories of empirical material: The first category comprises 40 international trade emails. Twenty were manually drafted by overseas department staff based on actual work content, while the remaining 20 were AI-generated responses using identical email content as prompts. These samples cover typical business scenarios such as quotations, client relationship management, visit invitations, and follow-ups, ensuring representativeness of business operations. However, the single-industry source may limit the universality of conclusions. The AI emails were generated via Deepseek, employing multiple control parameters (such as specified word counts, British English usage, and inclusion of key parameters like country, industry, client group, and language requirements) to simulate real business scenarios. This enabled comparative analysis of linguistic features (tone, sentence structure, lexical choices, etc.) between AI and human-written emails. This study employs AntConc for corpus analysis, examining 40 email samples across conceptual, interpersonal, and metafunctional dimensions to investigate AI's impact on business English communication. The tool effectively dissects linguistic patterns and syntactic features through corpus analysis, collocation extraction, and keyword identification [24].

Conversely, while email remains the primary communication method, geographical distance has spurred the increasing prevalence of online video conferences. The second data source comprises approximately one hour of AI-generated Chinese-English real-time subtitles from an international Zoom meeting. Over half of the participants were non-native English speakers, with client groups originating from multiple international universities, reflecting a highly multicultural profile. Meeting content encompassed typical scenarios such as business discussions, Q&A sessions, and negotiations, effectively mirroring authentic cross-cultural business communication environments. Although based on a single meeting sample, the subtitles are comprehensive and contextually natural, offering strong representativeness. This study focuses on exploring the practical effectiveness and limitations of AI subtitles in enhancing communication efficiency and overcoming language barriers. Analysis dimensions encompass lexical-syntactic features and cross-cultural pragmatic performance, supplemented by auxiliary retrieval and comparison using the AntConc corpus analysis tool.

4. Research Findings and Discussion

Language, as a tool for communication and a vehicle for expressing emotions and thoughts, is regarded as a multidimensional phenomenon regardless of whether it is written or spoken [25]. This study employed qualitative analysis to compare textual characteristics between AI-generated and human-authored emails. Data revealed that 20 AI-generated emails comprised 3,075 lexemes, significantly exceeding the 1,767 lexemes in human-written emails. Despite differentiated instruction parameters set for AI tools, AI texts exhibited systematic verbosity. This phenomenon may stem from several factors: firstly, overseas business personnel, through extensive client interaction experience, can adapt their writing style to specific clients' communication preferences; secondly, considering the practical demands of high-frequency daily correspondence, human writing actively controls text length to enhance communication efficiency. AI systems, lacking the cognitive ability to recognise individual reader preferences, generate text based on pre-set language model parameters. Furthermore, significant stylistic differences are a key contributor to the length disparity. This manifests as human writing employing concise phrasing ('This detailed quotation and images are most helpful to us'), whereas AI texts favour more formal and elaborately modulated expressions ('We are most grateful for the additional banquet hall images you have provided, which afford us a clearer and more comprehensive understanding of your exceptional venue'). This stylistic divergence directly contributes to increased text length.

According to Serdyukova's (2024) Systemic Functional Linguistics framework, the linguistic system encompasses three metafunctions: 1) Conceptual metafunction – conceptual representation of experience; 2) Interpersonal metafunction – construction of social relations; 3) Textual metafunction – organising textual structure [20]. Based on SFL's semantic metafunction analysis, AI-generated emails exhibit significant differences from human-written emails in the usage of process verbs. At the syntactic level, SFL theory categorises linguistic processes into three major types: material processes, mental processes, and relational processes; alongside three secondary types: speech processes, action processes, and existence processes [25]. This classification framework holds significant implications for NLP system development, as practical NLP systems must accurately discern lexical meaning, category, syntactic structure, and semantic scope.

Regarding the usage of material process verbs, AI-generated emails exhibit a pronounced tendency towards concretisation. Data reveals that AI emails frequently employ concrete action verbs such as ‘contact’, ‘achieve’, ‘share’, and ‘provide’, all of which constitute core vocabulary in business English. In contrast, while human emails also employ such verbs, their usage frequency is markedly lower than in AI-generated emails. This disparity indicates that AI-generated email content constructs clear behavioural directionality by intensifying the use of material process verbs, rendering work advancement intentions more direct. This reflects AI tools’ concrete interpretation of the ‘efficient communication’ principle in business interactions.

Regarding relational and speech process verbs, AI and human emails exhibit consistency. Relational process verbs, serving as crucial linguistic tools for describing abstract relationships [25], establish logical connections between clauses through verbs like ‘be/is/have’. The frequency of such verbs is broadly comparable across both email types—74 occurrences in AI emails versus 77 in human emails. As a key process conveying human consciousness, the speech process transmits ‘expression’ and ‘meaning’ through linguistic labels such as speaker and addressee [25]. Verbs like suggest, note, and say also exhibit similar frequency patterns. This consistency profoundly reveals the intrinsic characteristics of business emails as professional discourse: adhering to textual conventions specific to the genre, reflecting professional cognitive patterns within the cognitive style, and maintaining stable communicative paradigms within discourse strategies.

These research findings hold significant application value across multiple domains. Firstly, in language teaching, the results validate the necessity of systematic process verb training in business English instruction. Educators may draw upon the usage patterns of material process verbs in AI-generated emails to design more precise verb training modules, while guiding students to comprehend the pragmatic functional differences between various process verbs. Secondly, within the field of AI email training, the research both validates the current strengths of AI text generation in accurately capturing business vocabulary and suggests that future training should place greater emphasis on balancing the use of diverse process verbs, thereby avoiding textual rigidity caused by excessive materialisation. Finally, within authentic business contexts, this study provides linguistic grounds for identifying AI-generated emails. Recipients may discern the origin of emails by analysing process verb usage patterns, thereby adopting appropriate communication strategies. Concurrently, the research advises human writers to selectively draw upon the strengths of AI-generated emails, enhancing informational efficiency while preserving linguistic naturalness. This work not only deepens understanding of the linguistic characteristics of AI-generated texts but also offers practical guidance for professional communication in human-machine collaborative scenarios. Subsequent research may further explore variations in process verb usage across different cultural contexts.

Qualitative analysis grounded in interpersonal function theory reveals striking syntactic similarity between AI and human business emails (human emails: declarative sentences 85%, interrogative sentences 12%, imperative sentences 3%; AI emails: declarative sentences 87%, interrogative sentences 10%, imperative sentences 3%). This consistency both validates the core informational function of business emails and reflects current AI systems’ ability to accurately grasp the fundamental structure of business texts.

However, in the application of the modal system, AI emails exhibit more nuanced functional differentiation. They frequently employ medium-to-high intensity modal verbs like ‘should’ to express neutral conjecture or suggestions [26], such as ‘deadlines or key milestones requiring attention during the sponsorship process’. Furthermore, the systematic selection of low-value modal verbs conveying weaker possibility or permission (e.g., ‘could’) – which function by creating negotiation space [26], such as ‘Could you kindly provide...’; and the use of “would” to signal politeness strategies (e.g., ‘We look forward to your feedback’) – indicates that AI texts prioritise constructing a professional image and regulating interpersonal distance through linguistic means.

This finding offers significant implications for Business English instruction. Educators may draw upon AI email patterns in modal verb usage to design training modules tailored to diverse communicative functions, guiding learners towards progressive strategies for employing modals from high-value to low-value contexts. Within AI email optimisation, the research both validates existing systems’ strengths in modal expression while cautioning against excessive modal usage that may render texts mechanically rigid. More significantly, these linguistic differences directly impact communication efficacy: while AI emails’ systematic modal choices foster professionalism and credibility, they may diminish interpersonal warmth; conversely, human emails’ relatively natural modal distribution, though appearing casual, facilitates more authentic business relationships. Thus, ideal business email composition should integrate AI’s formal advantages with human naturalness, maintaining professionalism while preserving appropriate interpersonal intimacy. Mastering this equilibrium holds significant value for future research and practice in business communication.

From the perspective of sentence structure distribution, both email types align with the information transmission requirements of business communication. The distinction lies in AI emails' more systematic utilisation of the modal system to achieve interpersonal metafunction. By regulating the certainty and speech force of responses, they accomplish specific communicative aims while maintaining academic rigour and implementing politeness strategies. Particularly in cross-cultural business communication, the graded selection of modal verbs effectively balances discursive force. This enables texts to convey professional information while maintaining appropriate interpersonal distance and rhetorical effect, fulfilling what Halliday termed the communicative function of 'language as social semiotics'. Overall, both texts exhibit the characteristics of formal, polite, and information-oriented business emails.

Analysis grounded in Systemic Functional Linguistics' text-functional theory indicates that both AI-generated and human-written business emails employ systematic logical relationships within conjunctive structures, though their presentation differs. AI texts tend towards more complex connective structures, such as the introductory adverbial clause in 'which have provided us with a clearer understanding', the conditional relationship in 'Should you require any further details', and the contrastive relationship in 'However, please note that', reflecting rigorous logical characteristics. In contrast, human texts favour concise, direct connectives: the coordinate relationship in 'please discuss internally first'; the conditional relationship in 'once confirmed'; and the causal relationship in 'therefore, we may still opt for this solution'. This reflects natural, fluent communicative characteristics. Notably, both text types exhibit high consistency in expressing oppositional relationships, frequently employing oppositional markers like 'however', highlighting the universal need for balanced information in commercial communication. These findings not only validate fundamental coherence requirements in business correspondence but also reveal divergent strategic approaches between AI and human writing in achieving textual cohesion.

Furthermore, within referential systems, both texts establish coherence through personal pronouns (we/you), demonstrative pronouns (this/that), and nominal anaphora (e.g., 'virtual tour → images → visual materials'). Exemplary instances include: We appreciate your assistance. This is of great significance ('interpersonal referential chain'); The report has been submitted. It contains all the details ('it reference'); Such support is invaluable" (such reference).

This study employs a systemic functional linguistic perspective to reveal both the isomorphy and divergence in the mechanisms of textual function realisation between AI-generated and human-authored business emails. From a commonality standpoint, both text types strictly adhere to the coherence norms of business discourse, systematically employing conjunctions to establish logical relationships (coordination/contrast/causation/conditionality). This high degree of consistency validates the stringent formal requirements imposed on business emails as an institutionalised discourse. AI texts exhibit a tendency towards formally complete compound sentence structures (e.g., relative clauses like 'which have provided us with a clearer understanding'), fundamentally reflecting machine learning's faithful reproduction of standard grammatical templates. This mirrors algorithms' quantitative understanding of 'prescriptive grammar' based on probabilistic models. Human texts, conversely, favour concise parallel structures (e.g., 'Please discuss internally first'), embodying the dynamic balancing act between communicative efficiency and contextual appropriateness employed by human writers.

This divergence stems from deeper cognitive mechanisms. Artificial intelligence systems ensure textual certainty through grammatical integrity and explicit connectives—such as frequent use of relative clauses to clearly define referential scope—and thus favour formal textual expression. Human writers, however, rely more heavily on shared contextual knowledge, employing simple connectives to achieve implicit coherence. From a practical perspective, this finding provides clear direction for optimising AI text generation: while maintaining syntactic correctness, outputs should better approximate the economy inherent in human communication. For business English instruction, the research recommends that teachers should: 1) systematically explain the appropriate contexts for different cohesive devices, particularly emphasising the pragmatic differences between complex and simple sentence structures; 2) Cultivate learners' sensitivity to implicit cohesion—a strength of human writing that current AI systems struggle to replicate. In authentic business scenarios, these textual strategy differences yield distinct reception effects: AI emails' explicit coherence ensures accuracy but risks redundancy; human emails' implicit coherence, while natural and fluent, may increase comprehension burdens in cross-cultural communication.

In international trade, while email communication remains pivotal, geographical distance has made online meetings a prevalent working method. This study utilises the Zoom platform and its integrated AI real-time captioning and summarisation features to comprehensively cover typical scenarios including business discussions, enquiry handling, and negotiations. Analysis focuses on lexical-syntactic characteristics and cross-cultural communication dimensions, supported by the AntConc corpus tool. This meeting focused on the topic of order system replacement. The AI demonstrated high accuracy in translating high-frequency business vocabulary (e.g., supplier, procurement, invoice, order, purchasing),

system terminology (e.g., network, roadshow, visibility, notification), and temporal expressions (e.g., January, October), correctly distinguishing singular and plural forms according to contextual requirements. However, deficiencies exist in proper noun processing: ‘pigeonhole’ was disassembled into ‘pigeon’ and ‘hole’ for literal translation rather than retaining its proper noun form; conversely, the procurement system name ‘Ariba’ was preserved in English without translation, demonstrating AI’s intelligent handling of established proper nouns. Notably, despite irregularities in common noun translation, the conference’s use of English and accurate English subtitle recognition prevented substantive misunderstandings. The AI’s precise recording of critical information such as dates (e.g., January, October) significantly enhanced comprehension efficiency for non-native speakers.

At the syntactic level, Zoom’s AI captioning system demonstrated formidable capabilities in handling complex sentence structures. Syntactic analysis revealed the AI’s accurate processing of diverse complex sentence patterns. For coordinating conjunctions (e.g., and, but), subordinating conjunctions (e.g., because, although), correlative conjunctions (e.g., not only... but also) and conjunctive adverbs (e.g., however, therefore), the AI naturally converts these into Chinese conjunctions. Its performance in handling complex clauses is particularly noteworthy, including: noun clauses (e.g., ‘What benefits will the SAP Business Network bring?’), ‘Is an enterprise account required?’); relative clauses (e.g., ‘the platform suppliers will use’, ‘staff receiving transitional duties’); adverbial clauses (e.g., ‘prior to formally commencing the demonstration,’ ‘should any follow-up queries arise’). This grammatical processing capability significantly reduces comprehension burdens for non-native speakers, particularly ensuring precision in information transmission during technical discussions. By accurately reproducing the logical relationships within complex English sentence structures, the AI systematically assists non-native participants in overcoming comprehension barriers stemming from grammatical structural differences. During technology-intensive discussions, the system’s consistent handling of specialised terminology (such as maintaining uniform translations for proper nouns like ‘SAP Business Network’) ensures conceptual coherence. This enables participants to clearly grasp speakers’ argumentative logic and shifts in position. It achieves not merely basic information transfer, but fully conveys the implicit intentions inherent in business communication.

Embedding ‘shared memory’: Referencing details from prior interactions, such as ‘last time we discussed your plan to expand into the Southeast Asian market, and this cooperation can help you reduce logistics costs there,’ rather than stating vaguely ‘this cooperation is beneficial for you.’ Such specificity conveys ‘you are genuinely attentive to our needs,’ fostering emotional resonance.

Matching the ‘emotional tone’: When clients express excitement (e.g., ‘We’ve secured a major order!’), respond with positive energy: “That’s fantastic news! We’ll ensure our delivery perfectly supports your project ‘instead of ‘congratulations, we’ll arrange delivery. ‘When clients express anxiety (e.g., ‘will the goods arrive on time?’), responses should first reassure before addressing the issue, using ‘we fully understand your concern—we’ve tracked the shipment this morning, and it’s on schedule to arrive two days early’ instead of ‘the shipment is on schedule.”

At the cross-cultural communication level, AI appropriately handles routine polite expressions .A superior alternative would be ‘please bear with us as we proceed with the agenda,’ accurately conveying the original collaborative intent. For culturally specific expressions, a literal translation of “pigeonhole” risks ambiguity and should instead be rendered as ‘online Q&A platform’; whereas ‘Supplier Roadshow’ retains the industry-standard translation ‘roadshow.’ Research indicates that due to the meeting’s high technicality, cultural metaphors occur infrequently, with translation priorities lying in terminological accuracy and polite expressions. Consequently, the AI system’s precision in routine polite expressions and technical terminology significantly enhanced cross-cultural team communication efficiency, particularly during meeting introductions and technical discussions, accelerating comprehension for non-native participants. However, misinterpretation rates persist in culturally specific expressions and implicit emotional conveyance, somewhat impacting communication fluency.

The study also identified several translation issues: inconsistent terminology, redundant phrasing, and expression discrepancies stemming from cultural differences. These problems highlight limitations in AI’s contextual sensitivity and cultural intelligence. Furthermore, the study found that the use of real-time subtitles may have potential implications for language development. As subtitles appear synchronously with audio, participants often focus their attention on the Chinese translation while neglecting the original English. This overreliance on subtitles may lead to stagnation or even regression in business English listening skills, ultimately hindering the long-term enhancement of English proficiency among international trade professionals. These findings not only provide crucial insights for improving machine translation quality in conference settings but also remind us to strike a balance between technological convenience and language skill development.

In summary, the data indicates that AI-powered real-time subtitling holds significant value in enhancing cross-cultural business communication efficiency, particularly within highly standardised

professional discussion settings. However, achieving fully fluent cross-cultural communication necessitates further algorithmic optimisation in cultural intelligence and contextual understanding. Consequently, future research should focus on developing culturally adaptive translation models to better serve globalised business environments.

5. Conclusion

This study provides an in-depth analysis of the effective impact and limitations of artificial intelligence technology on business English communication patterns within international overseas commerce. It reveals that while AI tools enhance communication efficiency, they also present new challenges and opportunities. Through empirical analysis of AI-generated emails and real-time captions in online meetings, the study found that AI technologies (such as intelligent translation and live captioning) can significantly optimise business English communication efficiency in standardised scenarios. However, shortcomings persist in cross-cultural sensitivity, pragmatic strategies, and emotional conveyance, highlighting the irreplaceable nature of core human capabilities (such as cultural adaptability and negotiation skills). This research also emphasises the synergistic development of artificial intelligence tools and human skills. AI tools may serve as auxiliary means for cross-cultural communication in international overseas business, which is crucial for enhancing productivity, competitiveness, and decision-making capabilities in international business contexts [27]. Analysis grounded in Hallidayan systemic functional linguistics further reveals differences between AI-generated and human-produced texts at the levels of conceptual, interpersonal, and metatextual functions, providing theoretical foundations for understanding language usage patterns in human-machine collaborative modes.

While AI excels at accurately translating specialised terminology and automatically generating email drafts, we must recognise that the essence of international business communication has never been the ‘error-free transmission of information,’ but rather the ‘establishment of trust and shared values between individuals.’ AI may serve as a ‘linguistic tool,’ yet it cannot replace human perception of ‘others’ psychological needs,’ the creation of ‘emotional resonance,’ or tolerance for ‘cultural differences’ — precisely the core values of psychology-oriented business English communication skills.

Both international overseas business practitioners and the field of business English teaching must focus on the efficient application and reasonable boundaries of AI tools, particularly in cross-cultural team collaboration and work scenarios involving intermediate English proficiency. With the proliferation of AI products, enterprises should select tailored solutions for specific objectives and effectively integrate human resources to enhance productivity [28]. Practitioners must deeply comprehend the actual role of AI tools in real-world work, evaluate their suitability based on specific business needs and applicable scenarios, prioritise AI assistance in highly standardised communication contexts, and maintain human dominance in culturally sensitive topics or complex negotiations. Concurrently, critical thinking training should be strengthened to avoid excessive reliance on technology.

Overall, the AI era must adhere to the principle of augmentation, wherein artificial intelligence should enhance capabilities rather than replace them [29]. Only by striking a balance between technological empowerment and humanistic literacy can truly efficient and inclusive global business communication be achieved.

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