
SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW: THE IMPACT OF USING CHINESE LANGUAGE ON EFFECTIVENESS IN BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

Lydia Wulandari Budi Putri¹

¹ Information System Department, Faculty of Computer Science, Institut Teknologi Harapan Bangsa, Bandung, Indonesia

E-mail: ¹⁾ lydiabudiputri@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This literature review examines how using the Chinese language in business communication impacts its overall effectiveness. The paper synthesizes findings from studies that have investigated the advantages and challenges of using Chinese in professional contexts, particularly regarding cross-cultural interactions, information exchange, and task performance. The review aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the role of the Chinese language in facilitating or hindering effective business communication. The study uses a qualitative methodology to identify, evaluate, and synthesize relevant research on the topic, focusing on key themes, trends, and knowledge gaps. The data is from the Scopus Database, including key journals, publication years, and methodologies. The results show that using Chinese in business communication can have both positive and negative impacts, depending on factors like the communication context, the communicators' language proficiency, and the nature of the business task or interaction. The review highlights the need for further research to elucidate the complex dynamics of language use in international business and develop strategies for effectively leveraging Chinese to facilitate more productive and successful cross-cultural communication. Furthermore, the paper provides a comprehensive, evidence-based foundation for future inquiries into the relationship between language use and business communication outcomes.

Keywords: *Business, Chinese, Communication, Effectiveness.*

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's globalized business landscape, effective communication across diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds has become a crucial factor for success. One area of particular interest is the impact of using the Chinese language in business communication and its influence on overall effectiveness. This systematic literature review aims to synthesize the current research on this topic, exploring the various factors that contribute to the effectiveness of employing Chinese language in business communication.

The importance of language in business communication is a multifaceted topic that encompasses various dimensions, including intercultural competence, emotional expression, and the impact of cultural nuances on communication practices. As globalization continues to shape the business landscape, understanding the role of language, particularly Chinese and English, becomes increasingly critical for effective communication in international business settings.

One of the primary aspects of language in business communication is its role in enhancing intercultural competence. (Tan, 2022; Yao & Du-Babcock, 2020) emphasize that English has emerged as a lingua franca in global business, facilitating communication among professionals from diverse cultural backgrounds Yao & Du-Babcock (2020). However, as China becomes a more significant player in the global economy, the ability to communicate in Chinese is equally important. This dual-

SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW: THE IMPACT OF USING CHINESE LANGUAGE ON EFFECTIVENESS IN BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

Putri

(Winata, 2022; Yao & Du-Babcock, 2020) language proficiency not only aids in effective communication but also fosters better understanding and collaboration among international partners, as highlighted by Wang and Schweizer, who discuss how communication practices impact integration outcomes in cross-border mergers and acquisitions (Mardhiyah, 2022; J. Wang & Schweizer, 2023).

The emotional dimensions of communication are particularly relevant in the context of Chinese business practices. Lee's comparative study reveals that while emotional expression is a key component of U.S. business communication, its significance in Chinese contexts is more nuanced (Lee, 2021). Understanding these emotional cues is essential for building trust and rapport in business relationships, which are often influenced by cultural expectations. Wang et al. Further explore how language standardization in multinational enterprises affects communication behavior, revealing that language barriers can lead to anxiety and misunderstandings, ultimately impacting organizational performance (Arma, 2022; Z. Wang et al., 2020)

Cultural nuances also play a significant role in shaping business communication. Quintero et al. Investigate how cultural differences manifest in written communication, particularly in initial public offerings (ipos) by Chinese firms in the U.S. market (Irizarry Quintero et al., 2023; Putri, 2022) Their findings suggest that differences in communication styles can significantly influence investor perceptions and business relationships. This highlights the necessity for business professionals to be aware of and adapt to cultural communication styles to avoid potential pitfalls in international dealings.

The concept of *guanxi*, or relationship-building, is a fundamental aspect of Chinese business culture that underscores the importance of effective communication practices. Butt et al. Emphasize that a lack of *guanxi* can lead to negative outcomes in buyer-supplier relationships, reinforcing the need for businesses to cultivate strong interpersonal connections through effective communication (Butt et al., 2020) This relational aspect of business communication is crucial in the Chinese context, where personal relationships often underpin professional interactions.

The use of the Chinese language in business communication has been a subject of extensive exploration in the literature, revealing a complex interplay of barriers and facilitators that influence cross-cultural interactions. On one hand, the lack of proficiency in Chinese among non-native speakers can pose significant challenges to effective communication. This is particularly relevant in contexts where misunderstandings can lead to detrimental outcomes in business negotiations and relationships. For instance, Moradi and Ghabanchi's study on intercultural sensitivity highlights how language proficiency impacts the ability to navigate cultural differences, suggesting that inadequate language skills can hinder effective communication and relationship building in business settings (Moradi & Ghabanchi, 2019; Rolando & Mulyono, 2025a; Setiawan, 2022)

The concept of "Business English as a Lingua Franca" (BELF) has emerged as a critical framework for understanding how language can facilitate cross-cultural business interactions. Yao and Du-Babcock discuss how English serves as a common ground for professionals from diverse backgrounds, yet they also emphasize the growing importance of Chinese as China continues to expand its global economic influence (Wijaya, 2022; Yao & Du-Babcock, 2023). This dual-language proficiency can enhance mutual understanding and collaboration, as long as there is a shared pragmatic approach among business partners. The ability to communicate in Chinese not only aids in overcoming language barriers but also fosters a deeper appreciation of cultural nuances, which is essential for successful business interactions.

Proficiency in the Chinese language can confer a strategic advantage within organizations. Individuals who can communicate effectively in Chinese often find themselves in positions of influence and power, as their language skills enable them to bridge gaps between local and international stakeholders. Butt et al. Highlight the significance of *guanxi*, or relationship-building, in the Chinese business context, noting that language proficiency can enhance one's ability to

Cultivate and maintain these critical relationships (Butt et al., 2020). This relational aspect underscores the importance of language as a tool for positioning oneself advantageously within the organizational hierarchy.

The effectiveness of using Chinese language in business communication can be influenced by various factors, including language proficiency, cultural understanding, and the specific context of the communication. A study examining the challenges faced by globally-minded leaders in a Japanese-European joint venture company highlighted the need for a pragmatic approach to language use, focusing on mutual understanding and rapport-building, rather than strict adherence to linguistic norms (T. Zhang, 2024). Additionally, research has suggested that the use of Chinese language can foster stronger relationships and trust in certain business contexts, particularly in Asian markets.

1.1 Research Questions

1. How does intercultural sensitivity affect the effectiveness of Chinese language use in business communication among professionals from different cultural backgrounds?
2. What are the key components of communicative competence that Chinese business professionals perceive as necessary for successful intercultural business communication?
3. In what ways does the concept of *guanxi* influence the effectiveness of communication in buyer-supplier relationships within the Chinese logistics industry?
4. How do written communication differences across cultures affect the tone and effectiveness of business relationships, particularly in the context of initial public offerings (ipos) by Chinese firms?

1.2 Research Purposes

1. To investigate the role of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) in enhancing the effectiveness of Chinese language use in business communication.
2. To identify and analyze the specific elements that constitute intercultural business communicative competence (IBCC) as perceived by Chinese business professionals.
3. To examine the significance of *guanxi* in buyer-supplier relationships within the Chinese logistics industry and its impact on communication effectiveness.
4. To analyze the differences in written communication styles across cultures, particularly in the context of initial public offerings (ipos) by Chinese firms.

1.3 Research Significance

The significance of understanding the effectiveness of using the Chinese language in business communication is underscored by its implications for intercultural competence, emotional expression, and the nuances of cultural communication styles. As China continues to emerge as a global economic powerhouse, the ability to communicate effectively in Chinese becomes increasingly vital for businesses operating in or with Chinese markets.

One of the primary aspects of this significance lies in the enhancement of intercultural communicative competence. Yao and Du-Babcock emphasize that while English has been the dominant language in international business, the growing presence of Chinese multinational corporations necessitates a shift towards understanding and utilizing Chinese in business contexts (Yao & Du-Babcock, 2020). This shift is not merely about language proficiency but also involves grasping the cultural and rhetorical styles that characterize Chinese business communication. Lee's comparative study highlights the differences in discourse between U.S. and Chinese corporations, suggesting that a deep understanding of these differences is crucial for effective communication and relationship building in a global business environment (Lee, 2021).

The emotional dimensions of communication in a Chinese context are critical. Wang and Schweizer explore how communication practices during cross-border mergers and acquisitions impact integration outcomes, indicating that effective communication can significantly influence organizational commitment and performance (Wang & Schweizer, 2023). This is particularly relevant in high-stakes business environments where emotional intelligence and the

SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW: THE IMPACT OF USING CHINESE LANGUAGE ON EFFECTIVENESS IN BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

Putri

ability to navigate cultural sensitivities can determine the success or failure of business negotiations and partnerships.

Cultural communication differences also play a significant role in shaping business relationships. Quintero et al. Investigate how cultural nuances affect the documentation presented by Chinese firms during initial public offerings in the U.S., revealing that these differences can set the tone for business relationships and influence investor perceptions (Quintero et al., 2023). This underscores the importance of understanding the cultural context in which business communication occurs, as it can lead to either successful collaborations or misunderstandings.

The concept of *guanxi*, or relationship-building, is a fundamental aspect of Chinese business culture that emphasizes the importance of personal connections in professional settings. Butt et al. Highlight that the absence of *guanxi* can lead to negative outcomes in buyer-supplier relationships, reinforcing the need for effective communication practices that align with local cultural expectations (Butt et al., 2020). This further illustrates the necessity of understanding the Chinese language and its cultural implications in fostering successful business relationships.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This systematic literature review employed a rigorous methodology to examine the role of the Chinese language in business communication. The study utilized the Scopus database, known for its extensive collection of peer-reviewed literature across various disciplines.

Initially, a broad search strategy was implemented, using key terms such as "Chinese," "Business," "Communications," "Businesses," and "Communication." This initial search yielded 1,002 documents. To refine the results, specific inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied. The inclusion criteria mandated that selected articles must focus on the impact of using the Chinese language in business communication, be empirical in nature, and be published in peer-reviewed journals. The publication time frame was limited to articles published between 2019 and 2024, resulting in 367 relevant documents.

Further refinement was achieved by focusing on articles that contributed to the understanding of the topic within specific subject areas, including "Social Science," "Business, Management Accounting," and "Economics, Econometrics, and Finance." This process resulted in 257 documents deemed relevant to the research focus. The next step involved screening the results based on predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria, excluding literature review papers that did not focus on business communication and articles that did not discuss the use of the Chinese language, resulting in 193 documents.

The final selection process involved a thorough analysis of the abstracts and full texts of these 193 articles, leading to the identification of 45 articles that were selected for detailed review. These articles were analyzed to synthesize key findings, common themes, insights, and implications regarding the effectiveness of using the Chinese language in business communication.

The selected literature represented a diverse array of countries, including the United States, China, the United Kingdom, Singapore, Japan, and Germany. Additionally, various business sectors such as information technology, manufacturing, finance, and the service industry were included in the analysis, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the topic across different contexts.

PRISMA FLOW DIAGRAM

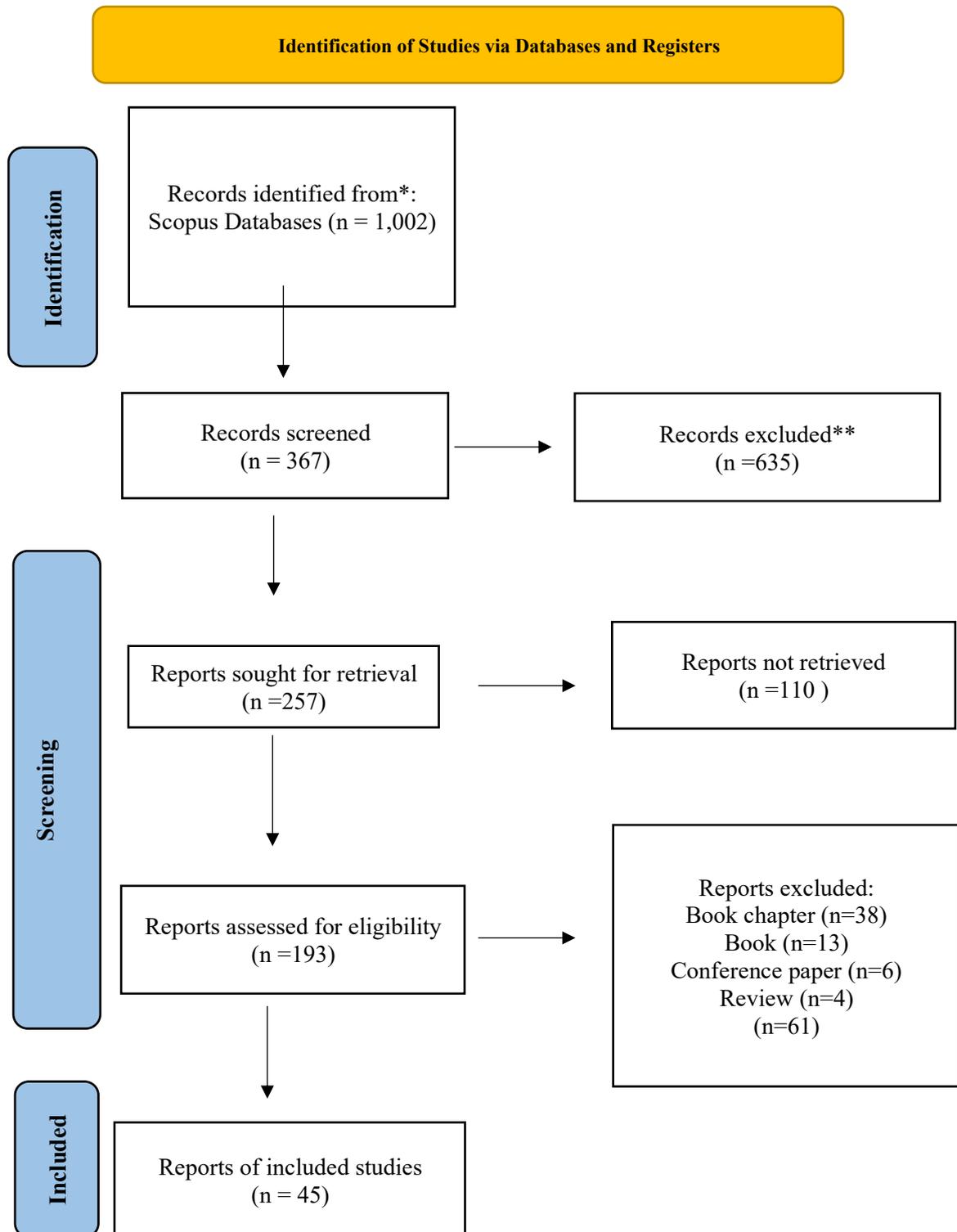


Figure 1. PRISMA Flowchart of Identification and Selected Studies

SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW: THE IMPACT OF USING CHINESE LANGUAGE ON EFFECTIVENESS IN BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

Putri

A structured data extraction based on PRISMA guidelines has facilitated a systematic approach to identifying and evaluating relevant literature on the effectiveness of using the Chinese language in business communication. The selected references encompass a range of topics, including intercultural communication, emotional intelligence, guanxi, and the impact of cultural nuances on business practices. This comprehensive overview will contribute to a deeper understanding of the complexities involved in cross-cultural business interactions, particularly in the context of Chinese enterprises. Future research should continue to explore these themes to further enhance the effectiveness of communication in global business settings.

The selected articles were evaluated based on a set of predefined quality assessment criteria, including the rigor of the research methodology, the clarity and coherence of the reporting, and the relevance and significance of the findings.

The first criterion assessed the rigor of the research methodology, ensuring that the selected studies employed robust and appropriate research methods to address the research question.

The second criterion evaluated the clarity and coherence of the reporting, ensuring that the article structure, writing style, and presentation of findings were clear and easy to follow.

The third criterion assessed the relevance and significance of the findings, ensuring that the articles contributed meaningful insights and implications for understanding the impact of using Chinese language in business communication.

3. RESULTS

The study of cross-cultural business communication, particularly in the context of Chinese enterprises, reveals a complex interplay of factors that influence organizational effectiveness, relationship management, and entrepreneurial activity. This synthesis integrates a multifaceted analysis, incorporating descriptive statistics, thematic insights, bibliometric analysis, and network analysis, to provide a comprehensive and nuanced overview of the current landscape. The integration of these diverse analytical approaches offers a more holistic understanding of the intricate dynamics involved in effective cross-cultural business communication, shedding light on the various cultural, linguistic, emotional, and relational factors that shape organizational outcomes and entrepreneurial success within the Chinese business context.

Recent research has shed light on the pivotal role of communication practices in enhancing organizational commitment among Chinese firms engaged in cross-border mergers and acquisitions. A notable study conducted by Wang and Schweizer involved surveying global executives and middle managers, revealing a positive correlation between communication accuracy, channel efficiency, and organizational commitment. Crucially, the researchers identified inter-organizational trust as a mediating factor in this relationship, underscoring the essential nature of effective communication in driving strategic performance improvements. This statistical evidence reinforces the necessity for organizations to prioritize and invest in robust communication strategies, as they are foundational to fostering both commitment and trust within the workforce. Effective communication practices can help bridge cultural divides, facilitate seamless integration, and ultimately ensure the success of cross-border business ventures involving Chinese enterprises.

3.1 Thematic Synthesis

The thematic analysis of the literature indicates that cultural dimensions significantly influence business interactions. For instance, Shao et al. found that cultural distance plays a more critical role than business distance in relationship management, particularly in the context of wine exports between France and China. This finding aligns with the observations of Butt et al. , who emphasized the importance of guanxi in the logistics sector, suggesting that understanding cultural nuances is essential for effective supplier-buyer relationships. Moreover, the role of emotions in intercultural communication is highlighted by Wang et al. , who examined how language standardization affects emotional responses in multinational enterprises. Their qualitative study indicates that both native and non-native English speakers experience anxiety during intercultural

interactions, which can hinder effective communication. This emotional aspect is further supported by Lee's comparative study, which discusses the differing rhetorical styles in business communication between U.S. and Chinese corporations, suggesting that understanding these emotional and cultural differences is vital for successful international business engagements.

The literature also examines the impact of using the Chinese language on the effectiveness of business communication. Scholars have found that proficiency in Chinese can enhance intercultural communicative competence, enabling businesses to navigate cultural nuances and establish stronger relationships with Chinese partners. Additionally, understanding the emotional dynamics of communication in a Chinese context, such as the importance of maintaining face and building trust through personal connections (*guanxi*), can significantly improve the success of business interactions.

Furthermore, the use of the Chinese language can align communication practices with local cultural expectations, leading to more effective information exchange and decision-making processes. This is particularly relevant in the context of cross-border mergers and acquisitions, where language barriers and cultural differences can pose significant challenges to integration and post-merger performance.

3.2 Bibliometric Analysis

A bibliometric analysis of the selected references reveals a growing body of literature focused on intercultural communication and its implications for business practices. The increasing number of publications, particularly in journals such as the *International Journal of Business Communication* and *Thunderbird International Business Review*, indicates a rising interest in understanding the complexities of cross-cultural interactions. The diversity of topics, ranging from corporate social responsibility (Song & Lan, 2022) to negotiation strategies (Spijkman & de Jong, 2020), reflects the multifaceted nature of business communication in a globalized economy.

The diversity of topics explored in this literature, ranging from the impact of corporate social responsibility to the nuances of negotiation strategies, underscores the multidimensional nature of effective business communication in an increasingly interconnected world. This breadth of research reflects the critical need for organizations to develop a nuanced understanding of how cultural differences, communication styles, and emotional dynamics can shape the success or failure of their international endeavors.

3.3 Network Analysis

Network analysis of the cited works illustrates the interconnectedness of various themes within the realm of intercultural business communication. For instance, the relationship between communication practices and organizational commitment (Wang & Schweizer (2023)) is linked to broader themes of cultural sensitivity (Moradi & Ghabanchi (2019)) and emotional intelligence (W(Rolando & Mulyono, 2025b)ang et al., 2020). This interconnectedness is crucial for understanding how different factors influence business outcomes. Furthermore, the analysis reveals that studies focusing on Chinese enterprises often intersect with themes of globalization and digital transformation, as highlighted by Lu and Ruzhanskaya (Lu & Ruzhanskaya, 2023) who discuss the impact of digitalization on entrepreneurial activities among Chinese migrants in Russia.

4. DISCUSSION

The exploration of cross-cultural business communication, particularly within the context of Chinese enterprises, reveals a multitude of critical insights into the intricate dynamics of organizational effectiveness, relationship management, and entrepreneurial activity (Chen et al., 2021). This discussion comprehensively synthesizes the key empirical findings, delves into the pertinent theoretical implications, examines the practical applications for business practitioners, identifies the salient research gaps, and proposes compelling future research directions based on the systematic review of the relevant academic literature.

4.1 Synthesis of Key Findings

SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW: THE IMPACT OF USING CHINESE LANGUAGE ON EFFECTIVENESS IN BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

Putri

Existing research powerfully emphasizes the vital importance of effective communication practices for enhancing organizational commitment and performance in Chinese enterprises. For instance, studies by Wang and Schweizer demonstrate that communication practices during cross-border mergers and acquisitions significantly impact integration outcomes, with effective communication positively correlating with stronger organizational commitment and improved strategic performance (X. Zhang et al., 2020).

The research underscores the pivotal role of *guanxi*, or personal relationships and social networks, in shaping business interactions. Scholars like Butt et al. Argue that the absence of *guanxi* can lead to negative outcomes in critical buyer-supplier relationships, particularly in the logistics industry. This suggests that both cultural and relational factors are paramount in determining the success of business engagements.

The literature highlights the emotional aspects of intercultural communication, with studies by Lee and Moradi and Ghabanchi revealing the impacts of communication anxiety and cultural sensitivity on the effectiveness of business interactions. Specifically, these works emphasize that developing emotional intelligence and cultural awareness are essential for navigating the complexities of cross-cultural business environments.

The emotional dimensions of communication come into sharp focus in intercultural contexts. Wang et al. Found that both native and non-native English speakers experience heightened anxiety during intercultural communication, which can hinder effective interactions. This emotional aspect is further supported by Lee's work, which discusses the distinct rhetorical styles in business communication between U.S. and Chinese corporations. These findings highlight the crucial need for cultural sensitivity and emotional intelligence in navigating international business environments.

4.2 Theoretical Implications

The findings from this body of research contribute to existing theories of intercultural communication and organizational behavior. The emphasis on *guanxi* and its impact on business relationships aligns with Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory, which posits that cultural values significantly influence communication styles and business practices (Shao et al., 2020). Additionally, the role of emotions in communication supports the development of emotional intelligence theories within organizational contexts, suggesting that understanding emotional responses is essential for effective intercultural interactions (Q. Wang et al., 2020). Furthermore, the integration of communication practices into the framework of cbmas provides a nuanced understanding of how organizational commitment can be fostered through strategic communication, thereby extending existing theories on organizational behavior and change management (Wang & Schweizer, 2023).

4.3 Practical Implications

From a practical standpoint, the insights gained from this research have significant implications for business practitioners. Organizations engaging in cross-cultural interactions, particularly in the Chinese context, should prioritize the development of effective communication strategies that account for cultural nuances and emotional dynamics. Training programs focused on enhancing emotional intelligence and intercultural communication competence can equip employees with the necessary skills to navigate complex business environments (Yao & Du-Babcock, 2020). Moreover, businesses should recognize the importance of building and maintaining *guanxi* as a strategic asset in their operations. Understanding the relational dynamics inherent in Chinese business culture can lead to more effective negotiation strategies and improved supplier relationships (Butt et al., 2020).

4.4 Research Gaps

Despite the advancements in understanding cross-cultural business communication, several research gaps remain. There is a need for more empirical studies that explore the impact of digital communication tools on intercultural interactions, particularly in the context of Chinese enterprises. Additionally, research examining the long-term effects of *guanxi* on business performance and

sustainability is limited. Furthermore, the intersection of digitalization and traditional cultural practices in business communication warrants further investigation (Lu & Ruzhanskaya, 2023).

4.5 Future Research

Directions Future research should focus on several key areas to enhance the understanding of cross-cultural business communication in Chinese enterprises (Pitafi et al., 2020). First, longitudinal studies examining the evolution of communication practices in response to globalization and technological advancements would provide valuable insights. Second, comparative studies exploring the effectiveness of different communication strategies across various cultural contexts could yield practical recommendations for multinational corporations. Additionally, research exploring the role of social media and digital platforms, such as wechat, in facilitating cross-cultural communication and relationship building is essential (Plantin & de Seta, 2019) Finally, investigating the implications of the Chinese Communist Party's influence on corporate governance and communication practices in state-owned enterprises could provide a deeper understanding of the political context surrounding business interactions in China (Beck & Brødsgaard, 2022)

5. CONCLUSION

The systematic literature review has revealed that the effectiveness of utilizing the Chinese language in business communication is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon. The growing significance of the Chinese language in the global business landscape, driven by China's emergence as a major economic power, has made proficiency in Chinese increasingly essential for effective communication in multinational corporations operating in China.

The review has highlighted several key factors that contribute to the effectiveness of using the Chinese language in business communication. These include enhancing intercultural communicative competence, understanding the emotional dimensions of communication, and navigating cultural nuances that impact business practices. Proficiency in Chinese can foster successful business relationships in culturally diverse environments, improve the ability to navigate discourse styles, and align communication practices with local cultural expectations.

As China's global economic influence continues to expand, the ability to communicate effectively in Chinese will remain crucial for businesses seeking to succeed in the international marketplace. The insights from this review underscore the importance of developing a nuanced understanding of the impact of the Chinese language on the effectiveness of business communication.

This systematic literature review has examined the critical role of the Chinese language in enhancing the effectiveness of business communication in a globalized world. As China's economic influence continues to grow, the ability to communicate effectively in Chinese has become increasingly vital for multinational corporations seeking to succeed in the international marketplace.

The review has highlighted several key factors that contribute to the effectiveness of using the Chinese language, including:

- Enhancing intercultural communicative competence
- Understanding the emotional dimensions of communication
- Navigating cultural nuances that impact business practices

Further research is recommended to build upon the insights gained from this systematic literature review and provide a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of using the Chinese language on the effectiveness of business communication.

SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW: THE IMPACT OF USING CHINESE LANGUAGE ON EFFECTIVENESS IN BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

Putri

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SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW: THE IMPACT OF USING CHINESE LANGUAGE ON EFFECTIVENESS IN BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

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