NAVIGATING LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY AND LEADERSHIP DYNAMICS: THE EFFECTS OF COMPREHENSIVE BUSINESS ENGLISH COURSES ON LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES

Cao Yawen
Cheng Yanping
Zhang Peibin
Wu Weifeng
Foreign Languages Department, Guangdong Technology College,
China.

Nor Saidi Mohamed Nasir
Faculty of Business Innovation and Technology,
Universiti Melaka,

Corresponding Author's Email: caoyawen1206@qq.com

ABSTRACT

Language proficiency's profound impact on leadership dynamics is a burgeoning area of study in contemporary organizational discourse. This conceptual thesis explores the intricate relationship between comprehensive Business English courses and leadership strategies. It delves into how language proficiency, cultivated through comprehensive Business English courses, shapes communication styles, facilitates cross-cultural leadership, and overcomes barriers. The literature review underscores language's role as a communication tool, investigates language barriers' influence on leadership, and elucidates the integration of language training within leadership development, particularly through comprehensive Business English courses. The thesis navigates through the challenges of language-related barriers in leadership and proposes future research avenues. Concluding with an emphasis on fostering a language-integrated approach to leadership, this thesis highlights the critical role of language, as honed by comprehensive Business English courses, in nurturing globally astute and effective leaders.

Introduction

1.1. Background and Rationale

In today's globalized and interconnected world, effective leadership and proficient communication are essential components of success for organizations operating across diverse cultures and markets. As businesses expand their operations internationally, the ability to navigate language barriers and lead diverse teams becomes increasingly crucial. The intersection of language proficiency and leadership dynamics presents a compelling area of study that has garnered growing interest in recent years. Hence, the comprehensive Business English courses, generally covering a wide range of language skills, are specifically tailored for business contexts. This type of course is designed to enhance English language proficiency in various business-related areas such as business communication, negotiation, presentation skills, writing business correspondence, and more. This thesis aims to delve into the effects of comprehensive Business English courses on leadership strategies, shedding light on the symbiotic relationship between language skills and effective leadership.

1.2. Research Objectives

The primary objective of this thesis is to explore how comprehensive Business English courses can influence leadership strategies within diverse organizational contexts. By examining the ways in which language proficiency intersects with leadership dynamics, this research seeks to contribute to the existing literature on leadership theories and development, such as Servant Leadership Theory, Resource-Based View (RBV), Social Identity Theory, and more. In addition, this thesis will become a theoretical beacon of comprehensive business English curriculum design.

1.3. Significance of the Study

This study holds significance for both theoretical and practical domains. The theoretical implications lie in bridging the gap between language studies and leadership theories, enriching our understanding of how language proficiency can shape leadership approaches. On a practical level, the insights drawn from this research could inform leadership development programs and organizational training initiatives, fostering more effective cross-cultural leadership and communication. In turn, this will also promote the improvement of classroom design and teaching objectives for business English majors in colleges and universities. On the basis of previous studies and theories, the author is committed to providing theoretical guidance to the application and teaching practice of business English. Furthermore, compared with other English courses, like the integrated Business English courses, the comprehensive Business English courses can provide learners with a thorough grounding in English language skills required for effective communication in business settings.

1.4. Scope and Limitations

While this thesis aims to provide a comprehensive exploration of the effects of comprehensive Business English courses on leadership strategies, it is important to acknowledge certain limitations. The study will focus on a conceptual analysis and synthesis of existing literature, rather than empirical research. Therefore, the findings and insights generated will be based on the current body of knowledge. Due to the development of the times and the progress of the economy, however, the general business model and

the business strategy taken by leaders in each era are completely different. Therefore, this thesis needs to make progress in the study of practicability and the application of business English in this era. In any case, this is also the characteristic and limitation of all conceptual theses.

1.5. Definition of Key Terms

To ensure clarity and consistency throughout this thesis, several key terms require definition. The main topic "Comprehensive Business English courses" refers to language training programs that encompass a wide range of business-oriented language skills. Main courses involved include Business Listening and Speaking, Business Writing, Business Translation and Interpretation, etc. Another rudimentary expression "Leadership strategies" in this thesis pertains to the methods and approaches employed by leaders to guide teams and organizations. Then, the phrase "Language proficiency" denotes the level of competence in utilizing a language for communication, especially in professional contexts.

Literature Review

1.5. Language Proficiency and Leadership
2.1.1. Language as a Communication Tool in Leadership

Language serves as a potent communication tool in leadership contexts, enabling leaders to convey visions, goals, and strategies effectively. Fluent communication fosters mutual understanding between leaders and followers, aligning efforts toward common objectives. Leaders skilled in linguistic nuances harness language to inspire, motivate, and guide teams, ultimately cultivating a cohesive organizational culture (Rabiul et al. 2023). Great leadership is attracted not by command, but by deep trust in communication, which induces an involuntary following and an unwavering cooperation. A leader with multilingual skills is easier to set the credibility in the workplace, and has more diversified thinking and leadership skills, which can give employees more understanding and help. Mr. Sean Patrick Hopwood, CEO of Day Translations, states that an employee-centric management style should be at the marrow of leadership goals (Biggs et al. 2023). So in a nutshell, multilingualism offers leaders the following benefits: (1) Excellent research and investigation ability. (2) Wider opportunities for professional advancement. (3) Strong social cohesion. (4) Ability to integrate global resource opportunities.

2.1.2. Impact of Language Barriers on Leadership Effectiveness

Conversely, language barriers can hinder leadership effectiveness. Misinterpretations and misunderstandings arising from linguistic limitations can impede clear communication. Such barriers undermine leaders' ability to articulate their vision, establish rapport, and provide guidance. Language gaps, especially in cross-cultural settings, erode trust and may result in disengagement among followers (Morrison et al., 2020). The term language barriers refer to a situation where leaders and employees use different languages or terminologies when communicating, resulting in poor or even wrong information delivery. For example, the leader may use technical terms that the employee may not understand, or the employee may use a dialect or slang that the leader may not understand. Also, people from different cultures deal with problems in different ways, with some people placing more emphasis on politeness and respect, while others place more emphasis on direct expression. These are all possible manifestations of language barriers.

1.6. Business English Courses and Leadership Development

1.6.1. Overview of Comprehensive Business English Courses

Comprehensive Business English courses offer a structured approach to developing language skills tailored to business and leadership contexts. These courses immerse participants in real-world scenarios, equipping them with language proficiency essential for effective communication. Training encompasses written and spoken language, emphasizing negotiation, presentation, and cross-cultural communication skills (Han, 2021). In China, Business English is a major approved by the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China in March 2007 to cultivate composite English talents. Business English major aims to cultivate students with solid basic English skills, broad international vision, specialized international business knowledge and skills, master the basic knowledge and theories of economics, management, law and other related disciplines, and have strong cross-cultural communication ability and high humanistic quality. A composite, applied business English professional who can skillfully use English to engage in business, economy and trade, management, finance and other work in an international environment. Comprehensive Business English courses focus on the organic integration of language, culture and business. While consolidating students' basic knowledge of English language, students are required to master the cultural knowledge of English-speaking countries, cross-cultural knowledge and business knowledge, so as to further lay the language foundation for cultivating global leaders.

1.6.2. Theoretical Framework for Language-Based Leadership Training

A theoretical framework underpins language-based leadership training. Language proficiency is integrated with leadership theories, emphasizing how linguistic competence enhances leadership effectiveness. The framework posits that comprehensive language training augments leaders' communication strategies, enabling them to tailor their language to different contexts, inspire followers, and navigate cultural complexities (Winther & Larsen, 2022). The theoretical framework of leadership development is as follows: First, trait theory, holding that leadership is an inborn trait and that only those who are born with these traits can become leaders. These traits include decisiveness, confidence, creativity, and risk-taking. However, this theory has been shown to be flawed because it cannot explain why some people are born with these traits while others are not. Second, behavioral theory. Leadership is determined by how people behave and act on problems. This theory emphasizes that leaders should possess specific behaviors and skills, such as communication skills, decision-making skills, and interpersonal skills. This is a more practical theory because it provides a concrete way to develop leadership. Third, situation theory. Leadership is determined by the interaction between the leader and the situation. This theory emphasizes that leaders should be able to adapt to different situations and make decisions and behaviors accordingly. This is a more flexible and comprehensive theory because it takes into account multiple factors in different contexts. The above three theories are based on proficient language ability.

The development of business English training industry is not achieved overnight, and its development cannot be separated from the development of society. In 2023, most of the business English training industry has the operational capability, and the competition within the industry is also intensifying. According to the statistics of relevant national departments, the current development trend of the domestic business English training industry can be summarized into three aspects: (1) The standard construction of training is being accelerated. With the development of the market, the management of the industry is also facing certain improvement, and various new institutions are also

being established one after another. Strict examination and approval of party membership and management not only ensure the quality of training institutions, but also improve the development level of the business English training industry (Newstead et al., 2020). (2) The teaching content is constantly innovating. Business English courses have been standardized, and the teaching content has become more competitive. Students can choose their favorite teaching forms and methods. (3) The training industry service effect is better. With the development of the market, the business English training industry has constantly improved its services and service quality to meet the needs of students at different levels, and enhance the core competitiveness of enterprises based on service.

1.7. Leadership Strategies and Skills

1.7.1. Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership was put forward as a term by James Mac Gregor Burns in 1978. Burns, a political sociologist, tried to link the roles of leaders and employees. He describes a leader as someone who tries to motivate employees to better achieve a common goal. For Burns, leadership is very different from dominance, because leadership should not be considered in isolation from the needs of employees. Transformational leadership refers to the ability of a leader to motivate his followers to achieve self-transformation and guide the organization to change in order to meet various challenges and seize opportunities during the period of organizational change (Becker et al., 2022).

The basic focus points of transformational leadership include: inspirational motivation, idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Leaders with these attributes often have strong values and ideals, and they are successful in motivating their employees to transcend their personal interests and work together for the greater purpose of the team (Loyless, 2023).

1.7.2. Situational Leadership

Being developed mutually by behaviorist Paul Hussey and Doctor Kenneth Hartley Blanchard, situational leadership is a practical leadership skill centered on the leader. It enables the leader to timely adjust his or her leadership style by judging the readiness of the leader according to different situations, so as to achieve the best effect of implementation influence, so as to enable the leader to guide employees to achieve good work performance, improve subordinates' satisfaction, and achieve team growth.

Situational leadership model divides the state of employees into four stages: The first stage is R1, employees have no ability nor confidence; The second stage is R2, employees are not capable, but willing and confident; The third stage is R3, where the employees are capable but not confident; The fourth stage is R4, where employees are capable, willing and confident. Different from the traditional trait theory of leadership, it not only emphasizes the cultivation of leaders' behavioral ability, but also emphasizes that leaders should be taught according to their aptitude (Wuryani, 2021). The three skills of situational leadership are: diagnosis of employees' mind, flexibility to change leadership styles and strategies.

1.7.3. Cross-Cultural Leadership

In an era when there are few countries in terms of global trading markets, business leaders face unprecedented challenges. The emergence and vitality of the knowledge economy requires business leaders to keep pace with the time and become alarm of the global economy. The world's economic leaders are rightly those who make guided decisions. They are able to coordinate practitioners from

different countries, different time zones, and different cultural backgrounds to work towards a common goal, so as to maximize profits in a market that is unified and has distinct needs from all regions. This is cross-cultural leadership. Nevertheless, cultural exchanges are becoming more frequent and cultural changes are inevitable (Rao-Nicholson, 2020). How will Chinese business leaders face the impact of this global trend? When the collectivist organizational form is confronted with individualism and self-consciousness, when the modest and gentle Asian culture is met with the outward-looking European and American background, has the cultural difference greatly weakened the leadership of entrepreneurs? Cross-cultural leadership plays an increasingly important role in such dilemmas.

1.8. *Previous Studies on Language Training and Leadership*

Previous studies underscore the positive impact of language training on leadership competencies. Language proficiency enhances leaders' ability to engage followers, articulate expectations, and resolve conflicts. Effective communication, fostered by language training, correlates with higher leadership effectiveness and follower satisfaction (Gaur, 2022). Nowadays, with the increasing number of overseas mergers and acquisitions by Chinese companies, the need for business skills to adapt to a multicultural environment is becoming more and more obvious (Lu et al., 2022). On the other hand, foreign managers of foreign enterprises in China are also eager to "understand" their Chinese subordinates from a cultural level, so as to make management more efficient. These demands make language-related leadership courses have a huge market. For example, Berlitz is promoting its GLT-Global Leadership Training program in China.

It started in 2009 when Berlitz came up with the idea of giving a GLT course in Japan. Since 2010, it has conducted experiments in Japan and received good feedback from many companies. Based on the successful experience in Japan, the institute began to gradually invest resources and budget to promote GLT courses in China. Students generally fall into two categories, the first being incumbent business people, especially managers, who want to succeed in a multicultural corporate environment. The other group includes students who have plans to go abroad and want to adapt to the foreign culture first. The former, in particular, are eager to learn new skills to manage their current companies when they find that the old ways of managing do not apply in a multicultural corporate environment. GLT courses teach a set of skills including foreign languages and intercultural communication. For those with business communication needs, how to express English in interviews with foreign media and what to say in English when motivating subordinates need to be gradually trained. Therefore, language training courses for leadership can not only consolidate English knowledge and learn English communication skills, but also acquire values and interpersonal networks in the context of globalization.

Conceptual Framework

1.9. *Theoretical Relationship between Language Proficiency and Leadership*
1.9.1. *Language Proficiency as a Leadership Enabler*

Language proficiency stands as a pivotal enabler of effective leadership. Leaders endowed with strong language skills possess the ability to articulate their visions persuasively, facilitating clearer communication with followers and stakeholders. Proficient language usage equips leaders with the tools to convey complex ideas, inspire engagement, and foster rapport—a cornerstone of impactful leadership interactions. No matter to subordinates or peers, leaders with good language skills can convey information and tasks more efficiently, so that others can clearly understand their intentions, and

will not cause the trouble of lagging work. At the same time, leaders with good language ability can avoid taboos in language and avoid bringing unpleasant experiences to others (Lam, 2021). Good language skills should be inspiring, powerful and informed. The French comic writer Moliere once said that language is the instrument given to human expression, whilst that the non-communicative role of language is as important as its communicative role. More than any other social custom, language creates greater barriers between groups. More than anything else, it assimilates individuals into a certain super-tribe and prevents individuals from escaping to another group, which is where leadership comes in. As a result, leaders had best be fluent in multiple languages.

1.9.2. Language Proficiency and Charismatic Leadership

Language proficiency forms a cornerstone of charismatic leadership—a style rooted in the leader's magnetic persona and persuasive communication. Leaders proficient in language artfully weave narratives that captivate and inspire followers. Charismatic leaders who undergo comprehensive Business English courses harness language to craft compelling narratives, infusing their messages with emotional fervor that mobilizes and galvanizes followers toward shared objectives. A charismatic leader, in particular, one on whom people rely and are willing to act in accordance with planned plans, is the one who can effectively navigate through essential challenges, attain final goals in a distinctive manner, and bring peace and prosperity to the nation. As a result, language talent, specifically "rhetoric," is a true material indication of a leader's performance.

It was also reported that the employment of certain language strategies could represent the speakers' beliefs or positions on certain issues or parties. For example, three former US presidents' usage of pronouns at important occasions, such as victory celebrations and inauguration speeches, represented various images of the leaders. Barack Obama, for example, used 'we' to refer to all Americans and underline the significance of unity, but Donald Trump used 'we' to refer to the country as opposed to foreign nations, which clearly demonstrated discrimination. For George W. Bush, the pronoun "we" referred to all election-winning politicians. Charismatic leaders used 'metaphor' as a special device twice as much as general ones. A speech with good substance but little rhetorical concern—for example, the use of incorrect difficult-to-understand, unpleasant, unappealing word choices—may not only have no impact on audience interest but may also undermine the dependability of the contents that the speaker wanted to convey (Rungrojsuwan, 2022).

1.9.3. Language as a Reflection of Leadership Identity

Language proficiency extends beyond functional utility, acting as a mirror that reflects a leader's identity and credibility. Leaders, who bridge language barriers, convey authenticity and competence, reinforcing followers' trust and belief in their leadership. Language becomes an integral part of a leader's personal brand, shaping perceptions and influencing the effectiveness of leadership strategies (Guthrie et al., 2021). Communication ability is a very rudimentary social magic weapon. Excellent leadership is not obtained by appointment, but by deep trust formed in communication, which leads to a kind of involuntary following and unconditional cooperation. If you have good communication and language skills, you will have the ability to build strong teams, the ability to turn talent into performance, and you will realize the importance of good leadership and language skills. On the one hand, good leaders have the ability to engage in difficult conversations and hold others accountable, which is a necessary condition of great leadership. Language, on the other hand, is a two-way street, and good leaders convey strength and inspiration through their words. The British scholar Milton in Paradise Lost

has a famous saying: "The mind is in its place, only in a thought; Heaven to hell, hell to heaven." The same goes for language usage.

1.9.4. Language's Role in Overcoming Cultural Barriers

Language proficiency transcends linguistic competence, becoming a conduit for cultural sensitivity in international business communication. Leaders fluent in diverse languages, fostered by comprehensive Business English courses, navigate cross-cultural intricacies with finesse. The ability to switch seamlessly between languages demonstrates respect for diverse cultures and signifies a commitment to effective cross-cultural engagement. Such leaders bridge communication gaps, cultivate understanding, and facilitate smoother collaboration across global teams (Verluyten, 2020).

Language proficiency serves as a key mechanism for overcoming cultural barriers. Leaders versed in multiple languages are adept at understanding and appreciating cultural nuances, enabling them to avoid potential pitfalls in communication. These leaders leverage language as a bridge, fostering open dialogue and mutual respect among team members from various cultural backgrounds (Squires et al., 2020) This inclusive approach dismantles barriers, promoting harmonious cross-cultural interactions. It is often encountered as a cultural barrier that if there is no business English course, Chinese business people will follow the oriental tradition of using euphemism and long pleasantries in the process of business negotiations to express politeness and respect. However, in English, this will be interpreted as vague and then lead to a woeful predicament.

1.9.5. Verbal and Non-verbal Communication Implications

Language proficiency significantly influences leaders' communication styles. Beyond mere verbal expression, proficient language users grasp the intricacies of non-verbal cues, ensuring their messages resonate holistically. Leaders with comprehensive Business English training master the art of effective para-language, incorporating tone, pitch, and gestures to enhance communication clarity and emotional resonance. This nuanced approach amplifies leaders' ability to convey empathy, assertiveness, and authority, fostering stronger connections with followers. The significance of nonverbal communication cannot be overstated. Nonverbal communication can be used to supplement what is communicated orally. For example, if we talk about serious issues but our faces are not serious, the people around us will have less faith in what we are saying. Facial expressions are publicized self-images that provide a glimpse of one's inner image and are intimately tied to concepts such as self-esteem, status, and dignity. The importance of nonverbal communication is equal to that of verbal communication. This is due to the fact that the two collaborate in the communication process. Nonverbal communication actually emphasizes, repeats, complements, and replaces verbal communication, making it easier to interpret. When verbal and nonverbal communication are unbalanced, one will believe in nonverbal communication. According to a UCLA study conducted by Professor Albert Mehrabian, 55 percent of language is accounted for by the body, 38 percent by tone of voice, and only 7 percent by our actual words. A person's emotions, such as sadness, happiness, disappointment, and grief, can be expressed to the person who observes them through facial expressions. Many research come to the same conclusion: nonverbal signals have a significant 'impact' on determining the proper one and the other is communication." For example, if nonverbal clues are not "parallel" to the rhythmic pattern expressed, the decoder may question the speaker's honesty and motivation (Ibrahim et al., 2022).

1.10. Comprehensive Business English Courses as Catalysts for Leadership Growth

1.10.1. Business English Acquisition and Leadership Competencies

Comprehensive Business English courses emerge as transformative catalysts for leadership growth. These courses cultivate language acquisition within a business context, equipping leaders with the linguistic arsenal to articulate visions, negotiate effectively, and engage in persuasive communication. By enhancing language competencies, these courses amplify leadership competencies, offering a unique avenue for growth. Compared with general English courses, business English is more professional and purposeful, and is a language tool specifically for international trade. First of all, business English is complicated and changeable. The practical application of business English will be changed with the development of economy and trade, and many words in daily English have been given new meanings in business one. The word "premium," for example, literally means "extra cost," but in a business context it means "insurance payment" or "the difference between the forward rate and the recent rate." In addition to the polysemy of the word, business English is more formal, professional, accurate and appropriate. At the same time, the corporate management concepts of English-speaking countries such as Europe and the United States are also retained in business English, which is worth learning. Finally, comprehensive business English courses not only learn knowledge that is generally applicable to the business environment, but also learn how to use the language flexibly in the volatile business environment. For example, the language used in foreign trade talks is more colloquial, while more rigorous and formal sentences are used in written documents, official documents and reports of business management. Therefore, in general, comprehensive business English courses serve the above characteristics of business English, and can help business English better integrate into enterprise management.

1.10.2. Developing Cross-Cultural Leadership through Language

Language proficiency catalyzes the development of cross-cultural leadership capabilities. The significance of business English courses for cross-cultural leadership is also reflected in the following aspects: First, in business communication, understanding the culture and values of the other side is the key to improve the communication effect and establish a good relationship. Second, business English communication needs to take into account the accuracy, quality, intonation, level and accent of language use. Facilitate leaders to choose appropriate expressions and skills to communicate with others. Third, in addition to negotiation, social etiquette is also a very important aspect. Etiquette rules are disparate in different countries and regions. For instance, business people in some countries prefer to build personal relationships, while others focus more on business interests. To take a more precise example, Chinese business culture is more focused on "drinking", while American business people are oblivious. Fourth, the differences between Chinese and Western business cultures and commercial laws must be taken into account. Understanding your colleagues' cultural background and values can build trust and respect for them. It is also an opportunity to develop good leadership and management skills. Understanding the various needs of different cultures can lead to a wider range of resources and business opportunities. Therefore, business English courses, as one of the important courses for English majors, can greatly strengthen students' intercultural communication ability through the teaching of business knowledge, business language and cross-cultural communication (Perdana, et al., 2022). The emergence of business English courses helps to break the barriers of language and culture, promote international exchanges and cooperation, and improve students' international vision and competitiveness.

1.11. Leadership Strategies and Their Language-Dependent Nature

1.11.1. Language nuances in Transformational Leadership

Once leaders recognize the power of language, they can leverage both differences and similarities to make an achievement. As professor Jonah Berger, an expert in natural language processing from Wharton, explains in his book Magic Words, that certain words, when used wisely at the right time, can do more to change minds, engage audiences, and drive action than others.

In the workplace, for example, using agreed-upon jargon like "strategic alignment" as preferred by startup founders, "omni-channel" as preferred by retailers, and personal pronouns that teams as a whole prefer, like "we" or "I" rather than the more distant "they" can also increase the efficiency of the conversation, bring us closer together and promote a sense of belonging to the community. Such a practice can strengthen reliability among members of the organization, and even increase the likelihood of promotion.

1.11.2. Communication Styles in Situational Leadership

The situational leadership theory, suggesting that leaders should adapt their leadership style based on the situation and the development level of their employees, also depends on language proficiency. For instance, when a company newly sets up a department, the growth of a team generally goes through four stages: formation period, turmoil period, standardization period and maturity period, and the four different periods should adopt distinct leadership styles (Mahapatra & Jain, 2023). At the beginning of the entry stage, employees are relatively unfamiliar with the working environment, and their business ability is relatively low. They do not know how to work, but they have a high willingness to work, and they want to try more when they have the opportunity. They are easy to take risks without realizing it. At this stage, leaders should adopt a directive style, assign specific tasks, and often respond to their needs. Generally, employees have learned some simple business skills and gained some abilities after 3 to 6 months in the job. At the same time, their confidence and enthusiasm have declined. So leaders should give more support and praise to stimulate them. After 6 months to 3 years of entry, employees have rapidly improved business skills and a relatively complete understanding of the business, but they are afraid of failure now. Leaders do not need to interfere too much, but trigger motivation. Finally, senior employees, who have strong working ability, can carry out some types of work independently. Leaders can give full play to them.

1.12. Cases about Leadership Training through Language

Universities all over the world have also set up a lot of business English courses for training business management talents. For example, Liaoning University of Foreign Business and Economics in China offers business English courses on the national higher intelligence education platform. With job hunting and workplace content as the main line and real business corpus as the material, the training of basic business English vocabulary and listening and speaking skills is placed in the context of business. On the basis of teaching basic business vocabulary and business knowledge, the cultivation of business English communicative skills is emphasized. The purpose is to enable students to understand and master basic business concepts, to make students comprehensively understand business knowledge and the differences between Chinese and Western cultures, and to improve the application ability of using English as a communication language in business communication (Li et al., 2021).

Furthermore, there is another example, SAF overseas elite program -- the University of Pennsylvania Online Innovation and Leadership Business English course, the course content mainly

includes the elements of leadership, leadership style, the discussion of famous leaders, the cultivation of innovative thinking, the discussion of innovative products, independent innovation design and so on. During the three-week course, live lectures will be delivered by Penn professors from 8:00-9:00 PM (Beijing time) Monday to Friday; There is also a Guest Lecture and a Conversation Hour session each week. In addition to class, there are about 1-2 hours of homework per day, such as word matching, reading comprehension, idea discussion, etc., including 3 audio assignments, all of which are done on Penn's Canvas website. Such curricula emphasize the language nuances that underpin various leadership styles, equipping leaders with the linguistic tools to enact transformational, situational, and cross-cultural leadership approaches.

Methods

1.13. Business English Courses and Leadership Strategies
1.13.1. Pedagogical Approaches to Leadership Language Development
1.13.1.1. Immersive Language Learning for Leadership Contexts

Immersive language learning is a cornerstone of leadership training within comprehensive Business English courses. This approach engulfs learners in authentic language environments, enabling them to immerse themselves in the language of leadership. Through simulations of real-world business scenarios, leaders confront challenges they might encounter, fostering a deeper understanding of language's role in strategic decision-making. Immersive language learning allows leaders to practice articulating visions, making persuasive arguments, and negotiating adeptly in cross-cultural settings.

In order to become fluent in a foreign language, learners need to develop an intuitive sense of language, just as they have an intuitive sense of their mother tongue. Most people don't even know what the grammar rules are in their native language, but every word comes out naturally when they speak. Language intuition is the result of language acquisition. Immersive learning is the way language is acquired. Through this method, learners simply contact constantly with the language, exposing to the language all the time, such as watching source language TV shows, reading original books, browsing global sites and so on. The principle of immersive learning is to come across the knowledge many times and understand it in a lot of different situations. As Stephen Krashen said, "The way we acquire language is the same: by understanding information." In the process of immersive learning, learners will be exposed to a variety of scenarios. Each time they see a piece of knowledge and succeed in understanding it, their intuition is honed. As a result, the learner will develop a clear intuition and will naturally know how to use the knowledge.

There are assorted of types of immersive business English learning, such as the simulation of business activities in business English courses, the full English class by professional tutors, the continuous training of learners' listening, speaking, reading and writing skills in business English courses, and the explanation of culture and business knowledge, etc, which will have a great impact on learners in a subtle way.

1.13.1.2. Role of Simulations and Role-Play in Leadership Training

The role-play approach, first proposed by Fannihaftel and GeeShaftel in 1967, is to explore perceptions, attitudes, values, interpersonal problems and problem-solving strategies by acting out situations and discussing performance. British English teaching expert Harmer pointed out that role-play is one of the most commonly used communicative classroom activities, which is conducive to improving oral fluency and is more suitable for training students learning English for special purposes. Ellis and Johon

defined it in Business English Teaching as: role-playing participants are assigned a specific role and this specific role strictly stipulates that participants should try their best to put aside their own ideas and attitudes and think and deal with problems from the perspective of the role.

Simulations and role-play exercises emerge as potent tools in cultivating leadership language skills. These pedagogical strategies enable leaders to step into various roles in advance and engage in authentic business scenarios. By assuming diverse roles, leaders gain insights into different communication dynamics and decision-making processes, enhancing their ability to adapt language to specific leadership contexts. Such exercises facilitate the acquisition of negotiation techniques, active listening, and cross-cultural sensitivity—critical components of effective leadership.

First, role-play provides students with different "social experiences" in the classroom. Performers experience different people's situations and emotions by taking on different roles. Narrow the distance between teaching content and actual work and life. By assigning jobs and roles, students can recognize various social positions such as general manager, marketing manager, secretary, and salesperson. In different positions, students are required to grasp language skills, teamwork traits, decision-making strategies and task scheduling abilities. They can use a large number of useful sentences and words in practice to improve their oral communication, experience the roles they play and improve themselves. Secondly, compared with the traditional teaching mode, the more relaxed learning atmosphere of role playing will attract more students to participate. Role-players are encouraged to express themselves in correct and fluent spoken English. They learn to negotiate, even compromise, and finally reach an agreement with others.

Finally, it can improve students' value judgment ability. In a problem-solving scenario, students face many conflicting values and complex opinions and choices. As such, role-play requires students to analyze any potential solutions and outcomes from the responsibilities of the role being played. After repeated comparison and consideration, the most suitable scheme is selected. It can train students to think properly, comprehensively and systematically. In conclusion, role-play is essential for training and developing competent and potential leaders.

1.14. Developing Linguistic Diversity in Leadership Teams

Language barriers, ranging from communication gaps to misinterpretations, can hinder leaders' ability to convey strategies and visions clearly. These challenges are accentuated in global contexts where diverse linguistic backgrounds converge, underscoring the need for comprehensive Business English courses that address language intricacies. While comprehensive Business English courses offer a path to leadership language proficiency, challenges persist. Language barriers can impede communication flow and hinder leadership effectiveness.

To surmount language barriers, organizations can adopt targeted strategies that enhance communication efficacy. Encouraging leaders to engage in language training fosters confidence and competence. Organizations can implement targeted training that emphasizes both language skills and cultural competence. Additionally, the integration of translation tools and cross-cultural communication training can aid in overcoming language barriers, fostering mutual understanding among diverse teams. Organizations can also implement cross-cultural training that emphasizes understanding cultural contexts and adapting language use accordingly. Promoting linguistic diversity within leadership team's bolsters adaptability and fosters innovation. Organizations should actively seek leaders proficient in multiple languages, enabling effective communication with global stakeholders. Encouraging existing leaders to acquire additional language skills aligns with the evolving landscape of

business. Diverse language competencies enrich leaders' abilities to navigate cultural nuances and seize international opportunities, ultimately driving organizational success.

1.15. Cross-Disciplinary Approaches to Language-Driven Leadership

The future of research in language-driven leadership lies in cross-disciplinary collaborations. Collaborative efforts between linguists, psychologists, and business scholars can unravel the intricate connections between language, cognition, and leadership behavior. Such approaches can uncover how linguistic choices shape leadership identity and its impact on organizational outcomes. Integrating sociolinguistic theories can further illuminate language's role in power dynamics within organizational contexts.

Longitudinal studies tracking language's evolving role in leadership offer a dynamic perspective on leadership development. By observing leaders over time, researchers can discern patterns in language acquisition, adaptation, and its influence on leadership efficacy. Exploring how language proficiency nurtured through comprehensive Business English courses leads to sustained leadership effectiveness provides insights into the enduring impact of language on organizational leadership.

1.16. Fostering Language Awareness for Global Leadership Roles

Global leadership roles demand a heightened language awareness that transcends linguistic boundaries. Organizations navigating diverse markets recognize the strategic advantage of leaders proficient in multiple languages. Comprehensive Business English courses, combined with targeted language training, equip leaders to thrive in cross-cultural settings. Such leaders understand the nuances of languages, tailor their communication to local sensitivities, and foster connections that drive global business success. Language becomes a catalyst for forging international partnerships, fueling innovation, and enhancing organizational resilience. In the future, Business English will continue to develop as a pith major. And its high time to establish language awareness for International leadership roles. There are also certain paths that must be taken: (1) Introduce the application of advanced technology. The development of digital training technology helps to enhance the English level of learners and further improve the market competitiveness. (2) Improve the quality of education. Universities and training centers should focus on designing a more efficient curriculum system for teaching students according to their aptitude, improving the quality of the curriculum and improving the English level of learners. (3) Focus on communication with corporate customers. Universities and training centers should pay attention to communication with corporate customers, understand the needs of enterprises, and provide effective English training services for enterprises, so as to better serve all learners and improve visibility.

Conclusion

1.17. Recapitulation of Key Concepts

Throughout this thesis, we've delved into the intricate interplay between language proficiency and leadership dynamics. Language, as a tool for communication and cultural understanding, emerges as a pivotal enabler of effective leadership. Comprehensive Business English courses serve as catalysts, bridging the gap between language proficiency and leadership strategies. Leaders fluent in language navigate challenges, articulate visions, and negotiate cross-cultural complexities with finesse. This

exploration underscores the integral role of language in leadership's efficacy and influence.

1.18. Implications for Leadership Theory and Practice

The findings presented in this thesis have significant implications for both leadership theory and practice. The fusion of language proficiency with leadership strategies expands the boundaries of leadership theories. The exploration in this thesis highlights the connection between language nuances, leadership behaviors, and organizational success. These insights enrich leadership development programs by emphasizing the integration of comprehensive language training, enabling leaders to navigate diverse environments adeptly.

1.19. Encouraging a Language-Integrated Approach to Leadership

In light of the research undertaken, advocating a language-integrated approach to leadership emerges as an imperative. Organizations seeking to foster effective leadership must prioritize language proficiency as a core competency. Encouraging leaders to undergo comprehensive Business English courses empowers them to communicate persuasively, connect authentically, and lead inclusively. By nurturing linguistic diversity and fostering cultural sensitivity, organizations pave the way for a new era of globally astute and impactful leaders.

In conclusion, this thesis underscores the profound significance of language proficiency in shaping leadership dynamics. By recognizing language as a driving force in effective leadership, we pave the way for leaders who bridge cultural divides, inspire innovation, and orchestrate organizational success. As we navigate a globally interconnected business landscape, the integration of language becomes not just a choice but a strategic imperative for visionary leadership.

References

Becker, L., Coussement, K., Büttgen, M., & Weber, E. (2022). Leadership in innovation communities: The impact of transformational leadership language on member participation. *Journal of Product Innovation Management*, 39(3), 371-393.

Biggs, A., Johnston, S., & Russell, D. (2023). Leadership and communication: how to assess executive skills. *Journal of Business Strategy*.

Gaur, S. K., Gupta, D., Kapoor, S., & Pal, A. (2022). Effective Communication Is A Key Tool For Success, To Achieve This How To Overcome Barriers In Communication. *NeuroQuantology*, 20(17), 65.

Guthrie, K. L., Beatty, C. C., & Wiborg, E. R. (2021). *Engaging in the leadership process: Identity, capacity, and efficacy for college students*. IAP.

Han, H. (2021, November). Research on the Design and Evaluation of Comprehensive Business English Course under the Blended Teaching Mode Based on Teachermate. In *2021 2nd International Conference on Information Science and Education (ICISE-IE)* (pp. 940-943). IEEE.

Ibrahim, N. A. N., Abdul Rani, N. S., Jamri, M. H., Bakar, M. H., Abdul Wahab, S., Mahbob, M. H., & Kahar, N. (2022). The importance of non-verbal communication in organizations. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 12(6), 1841-1851.

Lam, V. (2021). The Relationship of Team Cultural Intelligence, Language Proficiency, Team Trust, Transformational Leadership and Team Creativity in Global Virtual Teams.

Li, S. C., Poon, A. Y., Lai, T. K., & Tam, S. T. (2021). Does middle leadership matter? Evidence from a study of system-wide reform on English language curriculum. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 24(2), 226-243.

Loyless, L. H. (2023). Competence in virtual communication: Remote transformational leadership. *Public administration review*.

Lu, J. G., Swaab, R. I., & Galinsky, A. D. (2022). Global leaders for global teams: Leaders with multicultural experiences communicate and lead more effectively, especially in multinational teams. *Organization Science*, 33(4), 1554-1573.

Mahapatra, R. R., & Jain, A. K. (2023). Situational Leadership Theory: An Extension and a Test of Global Organizational Prescriptions. In *Globalization, Human Rights and Populism: Reimagining People, Power and Places* (pp. 623-640). Cham: Springer International Publishing.

Morrison-Smith, S., & Ruiz, J. (2020). Challenges and barriers in virtual teams: a literature review. *SN Applied Sciences*, 2, 1-33.

Newstead, T., Dawkins, S., Macklin, R., & Martin, A. (2020). The virtues project: An approach to developing good leaders. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 167, 605-622.

Perdana, R. C., Yuliana, A., Suyoso, Y. A., Agustino, M. R., & Sari, R. (2022). Cross-Cultural and Inter-Cultural Leadership Approaches in Asian and Western Countries. *Business Innovation and Entrepreneurship Journal*, 4(4), 321-325.

Rabiul, M. K., Shamsudin, F. M., Yean, T. F., & Patwary, A. K. (2023). Linking leadership styles to communication competency and work engagement: evidence from the hotel industry. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights*, 6(2), 425-446.

Rao-Nicholson, R., Carr, C., & Smith, S. (2020). Cross-cultural leadership adjustment: A strategic analysis of expatriate leadership at a British multinational enterprise. *Thunderbird International Business Review*, 62(6), 675-687.

Rungrojsuwan, S. (2022). Language and Leadership: Key Linguistic Attributes and Devices Reflecting Charismatic Leadership of King Rama IX of Thailand. *rEFLections*, 29(2), 381-401.

Squires, A., Sadarangani, T., & Jones, S. (2020). Strategies for overcoming language barriers in research. *Journal of advanced nursing*, 76(2), 706-714.

Verluyten, S. P. (2020). Cultural biases in intercultural business communication courses and how to avoid them. In *Exploring the Rhetoric of International Professional Communication* (pp. 191-209). Routledge.

Winther, H., & Larsen, M. H. (2022). Moving leaders. *Organizational Aesthetics*, 11(1), 159-179.

Wuryani, E., Rodlib, A., Sutarsib, S., Dewib, N., & Arifb, D. (2021). Analysis of decision support system on situational leadership styles on work motivation and employee performance. *Management Science Letters*, 11(2), 365-372.