The use of English as lingua franca: a study on attitudes of non-native speakers towards English speakers in a professional context.

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Abstract

Version française

Les changements observés dans le monde du travail ces 10 dernières années ont montré une tendance à la globalisation des échanges, ce qui a influencé et modifié les principes de communication. L’anglais occupe désormais une place importante dans le monde professionnel et sa maîtrise en tant que BELF, Business English as lingua franca, est devenu un élément clé, facteur de réussite. Dans ce contexte multiculturel, il est intéressant d’étudier l’aspect humain, les comportements des différentes parties prenantes influencées par ces changements communicationnels. L’empreinte linguistique peut-elle, comme le souligne Fiedler (2011), être considérée comme « [...] a language of communication without necessarily being a language of identification. » donc facteur d’interprétation voire d’incompréhension ou, au contraire dépasser le statut de simple outil de communication pour interagir culturellement avec ses interlocuteurs. Autrement dit, l’influence culturelle de l’anglais est-elle trop forte ou pouvons-nous dépasser ces barrières linguistiques.

Cet article tente d’identifier les attitudes des non natifs anglais envers les anglophones natifs dans une situation professionnelle. Pour cela j’ai choisi de mener une étude auprès de professionnels, sur la base de questionnaires quantitatifs.

Version anglaise

Changes in the world of work over the last 10 years have shown a trend towards exchanges globalization, which has influenced and changed the communication principles. English took up an important place in the professional world and the mastery of BELF, Business English as lingua franca, has become a key element of success. In this multicultural context it is interesting to study the human aspect, the stakeholders’ behaviors affected by these communicational modifications. Can the linguistic imprint, as Fiedler points out (2011), be considered as "[...] a language of communication without being white necessarily a language of identification."? Which means that it can be a source of misunderstanding even interpretation or, conversely overcome the status of simple communication tool to become a real intercultural interaction with its stakeholders. In other words, the English cultural influence seems too strong to communicate or can we overcome these language barriers. This article attempts to identify the attitudes of non-English native towards native English speakers in a professional context. For this I chose to conduct a study asking professionals, based on surveys.

Keywords: attitudes, BELF, cultural influence, interpretation, language barriers, multicultural context, native speakers, non-native speakers, professional context.
1. Introduction

Today the working world is confronted with two major problems, on one hand it has to adapt itself to an opening of markets on the international, on the other hand a mix of cultures within companies. How, while exchanges become increasingly important and include a large number of actors, professional communicators adapt themselves to these new working conditions.

In this context of globalization of the exchanges the adoption of a single language to communicate quickly seems inevitable. The use of English is leading in global companies.

To cope with increasing competition and an explosion of trade in cultural goods, goods and people worldwide, companies must now expand and open up international markets. These changes result in the meeting of several cultures within the same company. In order to adapt to this new cohabitation, leaders are implementing a modification of internal practices policy. One of them is to make the choice of a referent language for communication between employees, namely: English. A choice that is not a coincidence, in fact that language is predominant as spoken by over 375 million people as a first language, 375 million more use it as a second language. (British Council, 01.08.2014.) It is the official language in more than fifty countries outside its home country, England. These are mostly members of the Commonwealth, former colonies or former British protectorates. The international scope of companies and provide a special place on the world market since the use of a single language, moreover practiced by a large number of stakeholders, broadens its communicational scope and increase the sale opportunities.

Stakeholders have different reactions for the same situation, it depends on their culture, on their experiences.

The question is to know what are the different attitudes adopted by non-native English speakers when they converse with native speakers.

For this we will need to identify these professional exchanges in terms of talk, the issues that come up on relationships, the quality of feedbacks.

Through an empirical study with a quantitative approach, I will try to grasp all the element which influence the communication between professionals, in other words non-native and native English speakers. For this, I will elaborate a questionnaire which put the professional into a situation and ask him how he felt to have a feedback and his opinion on his behavior.

I have chosen to lead my research through 3 points of view which are: cultural, anthropological and social, in the aim of having a wide range of disciplines and confront views as diverse as possible. First we will explain the terms used, then through a state of the art we will compare the different perspectives of scientific authors who submit different ideas on the subject. Finally, in light of these different opinions and based on a quantitative survey on 12 professionals working on a multicultural context, I will offer my opinion.
2. Theoretical background

This section proposes an overview of earlier research related to the use of Business English as Lingua Franca and tries to bring out hypotheses about how attitudes are influenced at work through the use of BELF.

2.1 Definition of the terms and principles

According to the website <http://www.grammar.about.com>, English as lingua franca (ELF), is define as “a marginal language (a type of lingua franca) used for purposes of basic communication by people with no common language.”, moreover it is described as “The teaching, learning, and use of the English language as a common means of communication (or contact language) for speakers of different native languages.”

The author Alan Firth gives a complete definition, he describes ELF as a "contact language between persons who share neither a common native tongue nor a common (national) culture, and for whom English is the chosen foreign language of communication” (Firth, 1996).

In a professional context ELF is adapted and called Business English as a Lingua Franca (BELF). Louhiala-Salminen, Charles & Kanraanranta (2005) give a complete definition of BELF;

“BELF refers to English used as a neutral and shared communication code. BELF is neutral in the sense that none of the speakers can claim it as her/his mother tongue; it is shared in the sense that it is used for conducting business within the global business discourse community, whose members are BELF users and communicators in their own right – not non-native speakers or learners.”

In other words, BELF means the use of English as a language for the workplace, that is to say: a common language to exchange in a work context.

Hence, BELF is, to my mind, a part of communication process. Communication according to Wolton, is an exchange between a transmitter and a receiver, a message is linking the two of them. It is clear that consumers want messages are addressed to them in their own language. The global media landscape is probably destined to become, increasingly, multilingual, streaming on the Internet is amplifying the process. A distinction is made between multilingualism and plurilingualism. France, for example, is a multilingual country, as many languages are spoken, but it's a monolingual state, French is the only official language. Multilingualism is an individual nature. The multilingualism is when someone masters several languages. Information and communication technologies helped to diversify the access mode to knowledge, however the differences between cultures can hinder the sharing of this knowledge. Arifon (2003) describes the evolution of society in the European context through the study of Western societies and their relation with access mode to knowledge. Each nationality interprets in its own way events, signs which tends to create different interpretations. To this are added the stereotypes we have, consciously or unconsciously, and alter our judgment.
Through the analysis of a Franco-German conference, Arifon explains that the recurrence of stereotypes that we perceive the others and the representation that we have of ourselves at the heart of the difficulty of relations and communication between different cultures.

To go farther with plurilingualism, Melo-Pfeifer (2008) in her article evokes what she calls a “multilingual science” which have 4 main characteristics:

- a bilingual reciprocal;
- a bilingualism / multilingualism based on mutual understanding;
- bilingualism / multilingualism based on mutual understanding, but where some participants interact in English;
- The adoption of a lingua franca.

(Melo-Pfeifer (2008)

We will see later if those principles appear in real contexts.

We first discuss of the spoken language within the company, then the development of BELF and to finish we will try to identify the influence of BELF within the company in terms of professional relationships and behaviors of employees.

2.2 English as a tool

By leading a project based on an online quantitative survey, Kankaanranta and Louhiala-Salminen (2010) try to reflect communicative situations. They chose to focus on Swedish and Finnish professional, because in another study they found that their way of communication are totally different (e.g. Louhiala-Salminen, Charles, & Kankaanranta, 2005).

After interviewing international business professional, the study shows that:

- Adaptation always based on context (high contextualization);
- English use is only for work.

Indeed, the authors’ work focus on everyday BELF communication at work. They explain that the use of English as a lingua franca became really important and play a key role in the business field. Exchanges become international and employees have to perform in this context. Exchanges across the world are constantly increasing since the last 10 years, this evolution impact on business professionals. The mastery of English in a professional context has become a non-negligible advantage to open up to international business. Adaptation to each context would play a key role in the use of English at work.

Moreover, in a context of companies managing multicultural teams, English use is considered as a communication tool which is not to be neglect, nevertheless the language spoken at work is usually different from the written language.
2.3 The significance of the behavior

A study of Evans (2013) in the Hong Kong industry sector reveals employee behavior concerning languages. Written communication is mostly in English, emails are for foreign customers and English considered as universal language to communicate. In a communicative oral way rules change, English is no longer at the center, employees and executives - mastering more languages other than their mother tongue - adapt to the customer, speak their language in a face to face meeting is a way to put them at ease, to show them that the company "understands" this term makes sense in terms of culture, “ideo”, values and standards.

In its book, Björkman (2013), explains that non-native speakers using ELF tend to have an excessive politeness and have a “preference for safe topic”, so is that the same schema in a different context, such as professional one?

Evans (2010) examines the exchanges within the business only in a linguistic perspective: English is used for business without respecting the culture and history of the language. Considered as pure communication tool, companies encourage their employees to master this language as it promotes communication internationally.

The study of Nickerson (2009), on the interaction of language in multilingual business context, agree with Evan’s conclusion. Indeed, through a needs analysis on a multinational Corporation, Multilingual Ltd., Nickerson (2009) find out that there is a dissociation between the English language and its culture itself. Indeed, this fact is only inherent to the non-native speakers, use the English is only a way to interact with partners and customers. The cultural aspect is relegated to the background, the English is just a material to provide information.

The study of Anita Wolfartsberger and Wu Vienna (2009) on BELF speakers’ interactions, how they manage to reach a specific goal, shows that recurrent phenomenon appears during exchanges. Wolfartsberger (2009) explains that:

BELF speakers […] have developed specific practices for lingua franca interactions, taking into account the requirements of this special form of communication. A prominent form in which these strategies occur is appealing for help to a sub-group of interlocutors by code-switching into one's mother tongue and thus indicating the need for collaboration. In such word-search help situations, the interlocutors in my data are attentive and prepared to provide lexis help whenever necessary.

In a multicultural team, many phenomenon happened, mutual assistance appears between all the members to move project forward, training is essential to be in the best condition we can also see that in her study the individuals have prepared some vocabulary in case of lack.
2.4 The culture influence

Concerning the cultural aspect then, employees and partners automatically adapt what they say and how they express it depending on their interlocutors, it is a part of their job.

To rectify these problems, the author gives some key point to success in business communication, have a better understanding in the role that culture play in communicating business and be aware of the nature, all the distinctive features of their partners’ native culture.

To go farther, Fiedler (2011) identifies two different languages which would separate BELF use and identity. Through the notion of phraseology, highlights and explains the terms of “language of communication” and “language of identification” invented in a first place in 1992 by a german applied linguist; Werner Hüllen.

Phraseology means a mode of expression, especially one characteristic of a particular speaker or writer. It is also a way to relax atmosphere, because of their interpretation, some humor could result from phraseology. According the author, the language of communication is a common language used for practical purposes, BELF is part of it.

The language of identification referred to our native language, which should reflect our identity (Fiedler, 2011). When these both languages meet in a professional context it shows all the complexity of communication in this environment of international exchanges. Fiedler (2011) bring out here a big difference in the use of English as a language of communication. Indeed, there is a big gap between the way pupils are taught English at school and the way non-native English business professional speakers use it in a specific context.

At school, pupils and students are “preprogrammed”, they know how to speak, using the appropriate expressions and words according to American or British models. Such English in a professional context can be used but it is not compulsory, the speakers’ culture is the first aspect which influence the way they choose words. The spoken communication in English is distorted by what we are, that is to say our unconscious Culture. As the Fiedler called this “the speakers’ own sociocultural background.

The author’s research highlights 3 aspects which build the identity of non-native speakers, she explains that identity is based on:

- English native culture;
- The speakers own social cultural background;
- Incipient awareness of membership in a specific speech community.

(Fiedler, 2011)
The non-native English speaker is split in two inside, when he faced the situation of using the English as a language of communication. He transfers his own experience and way of speaking on a different culture. At this point he has who distinct identities: one which is trying to adapt and translate what he knows in his native language, and the other which want to speak the right way not making grammatical mistakes.

To be more specific, in her book Seidlhofer raises an important and disturbing point; “what is […] intriguing is that particularly idiomatic speech by one participant can be problematic when the expressions used are not known to the interlocutor(s).” Indeed, that kind of grammatical mistakes can totally change the aspect of a conversation and create misunderstanding and misinterpretation. In a business context it could have negative consequences like missing an opportunity, failed on a project and so on. However, she qualifies her words by evoking the work of Professor Jennifer Jenkins, Chair of Global Englishes and Director of the Centre for Global Englishes at the University of Southampton, United Kingdom. According to “Jenkin's phonological work, these "non-native" features generally do not interfere with intercultural intelligibility” (Seidlhofer, 2005). Participant are smart enough to overcome those tiny communication problems, especially as they are professional and use to meet those mistakes. It is also a part of experience which evolves constantly. Wolfartsberger (2009) agree on this point with Jenkins, indeed interpretations on expression or meaning could happen, but they are immediately identified and lead to something positive “Collaborative strategies involving overlap, […] are likely to be interpreted differently by speakers from different cultures. […] however, these incidents were interpreted as supportive offers of help […] [participants] seemed to be aware of their mutual status as lingua franca communicators.” (Wolfartsberger, 2009).

The use of expressions typically English is a guarantee of proficiency in both written and oral way. This article shows that certain uses of phraseology that the author called “ELF-specific” could be the solution for non-native speakers, according their needs they choose to use or not this practice of phraseology which make their speech more consistent and more legitimate.

Another author proposes an alternative to the BELF, by focusing on the development of BELF in Europe, Frath (2006) presents his arguments on a new BELF’s status.

English is a language that has become known as universal on almost every continent. This language takes an important place because other languages (i.e. Italian, Spanish, German, and French) do not have a defined role within Europe.

At first, Frath (2006) tries to prove that the use of a single language would be counterproductive to the development of Europe. In a second step, he develops arguments for what he calls a "language policy” highlighting all the main languages of the continent (Frath, 2006).

The author is not against the idea of a lingua franca, but he advocates the learning of all the European cultures in the language of origin. In a certain way he is in favor of the development of multilingualism. This necessitates some change in Europe, on these principles, and how it works. Language learning would not only be in school setting, but throughout life. English as a lingua franca would not lose its place but its status and its use will be different.
2.5 Key elements to succeed in a multicultural exchange

Performance and trust are linked, that’s what some authors try to show. Through their analysis based on survey and interview, Henderson and Louhiala-Salminen (2011) wanted to highlight how language affect trust in global professional contexts. The creation of trust is closely related to what the authors called “the language factors in socialization processes”.

The capacity to trust differs according to the individuals. It is based on two main criteria:
- The personality;
- The national culture.

Nevertheless, those facts are not always reflecting the reality. Indeed the individual can change according to professional environment in which he develops himself.

The following points have to be taken into account in a multicultural business context:
– Share a common language (ELF) permit to share understandings;
– Understanding is not shared if there is mutual exchange in a safety atmosphere;
– Complicity is built around both language and communication.

(Henderson and Louhiala-Salminen, 2011)

The notion of trust between employees at work has repercussions on all the steps and tasks to perform. It is therefore important to train individuals to open their minds to the importance of business language practices.

For non-native speakers English language is only a tool, the communication and the increase of proficiencies will not work if business professionals’ culture is not taken into account. Identity is the element that makes the link between language, communication and culture.

Furthermore, there is a link between contexts and the use of BELF. Adaptation is the most important thing, each situation is unique at work, national and corporate culture both play a key role in the use of English at work.

Based on these different research, I wanted to lead a quantitative survey to check if these arguments are potentially real and match in a real business context.
3. Material and methods

In regard to my various readings on BELF, I chose to conduct a study using a quantitative approach in order to understand individuals and groups of individuals (Fick, 2002), in another words here; to identify and analyze the daily attitudes of non-native English towards English-speakers, in a professional context. A quantitative method seemed more appropriate since I wanted to highlight the attitudes of interviewee in a specific situation (cf. appendix A and B).

Concerning the participants, my sample was composed of employees mainly from 5 different companies, from Paris, Clermont-Ferrand, Toulouse and Montpellier. They were recruited thanks to my network of contacts. I contacted them by phone and by e-mail, explaining the context of my study and why it was relevant to interview them.

The aim was to find out if they work in a multicultural context, especially with English speakers, counterpart, customer etc. 12 participants were selected 6 women and 6 men. Aged between 19 and 65 years. By the way, the average age is 38 years. In order to have a representative sample and limit the risk of biased results, I chose a male / female parity.

Below, the sample of 12 professionals:

Interviewee 1: Working in an active RFID Company, working with international customers and suppliers;
Interviewee 2: Working in an active RFID Company, working with international customers and suppliers;
Interviewee 3: Working in an active RFID Company, working with international customers and suppliers;
Interviewee 4: Working in a bank, directly in contact with a multicultural clientele;
Interviewee 5: Working in a bank, directly in contact with a multicultural clientele;
Interviewee 7: CGI, working on projects for national and international organizations;
Interviewee 8: SNCF agent;
Interviewee 9: Medical student, made several internship in different medical services;
Interviewee 10: Working in the cosmetic industry;
Interviewee 11: Working in the cosmetic industry;
Interviewee 12: Working in the cosmetic industry.
To carry out this project I chose the following materials:

- A questionnaire;
- An analysis grid, using graphics to highlight the main results.

My questionnaire included several main questions as well as supplementary probing questions intended to encourage interviewees to clarify and expand on their points. To build this questionnaire I selected different themes: the context, misunderstandings (language level/mastering), feelings (stress, culture influences), and solving problems.

To finish, the procedure for data collection was simple, I made an analysis grid to pinpoint the key element which could be the most interesting and which represents the most the attitudes of stakeholders in a professional context.
4. Results and discussion

I will now discuss the results I found after making the questionnaire analyses. I chose to create graphics to make the results more “visual”. First we will draw a parallel between the professional status and English level of the sample. Then we will deal with relationship and technical level. To finish I will talk about problem encountered and the place of the culture.

![Figure 1. English level of the different interviewees](image1)

![Figure 2. Professional status of the interviewees](image2)

Table 1. English level according to the status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status Level</th>
<th>Intern</th>
<th>Employee</th>
<th>Senior</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beginner</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As illustrated by Table 1, mastering the English language is not the only condition of success, professional must also have good interpersonal skills and empathy to be in the best conditions of exchange. In fact only 3 out of 12 in this sample are currently taking English classes. Nevertheless 11 out of 12 participants consider their English level as “intermediate” and “advanced”. As a consequence we can notice the will is also a criteria of success. Besides, this statement have to be qualified: this analysis may be biased, there is maybe a gap between how they perceive their level and which their real one is.
As we can see in Figure 3, Customer/Supplier is the most representative relationship in the sample. Then comes Client/Seller. Linking to those relationship, there are various purpose of exchanges: exchanges of basic information, such as information request, then training, to technical details, negotiations and commercial procedures (study and project quotation). It requires lots of skills such as dexterity, relational ease, tact, patience and precision.

Figure 7 shows that they meet and work with several people, the main nationalities are: first of all American, British, German, Italian, Spanish and Chinese. Then, sometimes Belgian, Polish, Portuguese, Ukrainian, Dutch, Romanian Mexican and Brazilian. Most of the quoted countries are close to France, except the United States and China.
Figure 5. How interviewees estimate the technical level of their exchanges.

Technical level of exchanges goes to 3 to 9. According to the interviewees the 9 persons who consider their technical level in the highest scale (7, 8 and 9) are seniors except 1 who is intern. Others are in the lower levels (3, 4 and 5). Which shows that the higher you position is, the more challenging English level you must have.

However, it could be a source of anxiety since, as illustrated by Figure 6, we can see that 2 interviewees feel nervous before the exchange. Those 2 persons correspond to senior, they both have a purpose of exchange in common: negotiation.

Fortunately, they both eventually change their behavior always in a positive way, they felt more comfortable with their interlocutor and found solutions to make themselves understood. Moreover, to go on in the overall context, according to the interviewees the three elements below:

- The clarity of answers;
- The attitude of your interlocutor;
- The result of exchange.

Are all identified “very satisfactory” and “satisfactory”. Which prove that individuals see each other as equals in a professional context.
Problem encountered mostly deals with vocabulary. Only three answers “no” occur for misunderstanding which matches with the three interviewees who consider their English level as advanced. Among the “yes”, the main cause of misunderstanding is the use of an imprecise vocabulary and then comes the lack of vocabulary. I would like to add that there is a tiny difference between these two reasons but it does exist, indeed the fact is you can know the word, its pronunciation and its spelling but you don’t master its exactly meaning. So you might think the word or expression is not appropriate for the situation, and your mind avoid it in purpose.

On the other hand, the lack of vocabulary comes in the knowledge category, you know the word in your maternal language but you’ve never learn its translation.

As underlined Wolfartsberger (2009) mutual assistance appears between all the members to move project forward, training is essential to be in the best condition, the individuals have also prepared some vocabulary in case of lack. Preparation and positive behavior help to overcome the misunderstandings.

To overcome this problem, they all use synonyms. Unlike Arifon (2003) says (stereotypes and interpretations can alter our judgment) (p.5), professionals can overcome the problem of interpretation, and put aside the stereotypes they might have in mind.

When Melo-Pfeifer (2008) evokes a multilingual science, we can here identify the exchanges as a bilingualism / multilingualism based on mutual understanding and a bilingualism / multilingualism based on mutual understanding, but where some participants interact in English. We are close but not totally in the fourth step which is the adoption of a lingua franca.

100% of the interviewees had the same experience concerning their interlocutors, indeed it appears that they all react the same way: by an understanding behavior. It seems that in a professional context the excessive politeness and a “preference for safe topic”, contrary to Björkman (2013) evokes in her book. Professionals go straight to the point because they are at work, the formality of the meeting doesn’t give way to such attitudes.
Generally, the words emphasized to qualify their behavior correspond to the three positive attitudes, which are:

- Open-minded
- Attentive
- Clement and professional (equal)

The adaptation to the situation is essential here, indeed to adopt this kind of behavior requires a great adaptability, as Kankaanranta and Louhila-Salminen mentioned; adaptation to each context would play a key role in the use of English at work (p. 6).

Concerning the culture, the study of Nickerson (2009), on the interaction of language in multilingual business context has its limits. Indeed, he argues that the cultural aspect is relegated to the background, the English is just a material to provide information (p. 9). After analyzing, it appears that only 5 interviewees felt culture influence during their exchanges. Of course it is a few part of my sample but it matches with the executive seniors having advanced professional relationships, such as negotiations, study and project quotation, exchanges on technical details and so on. As a consequence we can deduce that the cultural influence is felt at a high level of interaction. How does influence appears so? The main answers shows that the cultural differences lie in: punctuality, rigor, efficiency, technique, decisions taken and the length of meetings. The way the interlocutor translate his ideas, specifically the “literal translation” is also felt during the exchange. They try to translate by thinking in their own mother tongue.

In the interest of the project seniors, employees and intern have to be convincing and make their interlocutors at ease, it is the same scheme for the person in front of them. As a result, it is not surprising to see that 100% of the interviewees completion of the project, the exchange. They all find an agreement, in a positive way.

To my mind, this research seems to reveal what happen in real life, even if professionals have knowledge theoretically they have to adapt, to cope with the professional they face and be as specific as possible to make themselves understood.

The important points to retain are:

- The preparation;
- The adaptability;
- The will.
5. Conclusions

It is important for me to stress that what I propose below are only remarks and observations that seem important to me to be underline further to the analysis of questionnaires I made.

Those conclusions only reflects my opinion.

Through those questionnaires, I wanted to study four main points:

- Behavior;
- Problems encountered and how to solve them;
- Quality of feedback
- Culture influence.

What I found after analyzing the answers is pretty interesting and seems to reflect the workplace reality.

Concerning behavior, it is always positive, because what matters here is the adaptability, the way people react even they face a problem. All the exchanges were satisfactory, on all the points, moreover the interlocutors were always understanding, attentive and open-minded.

Problems encountered were mostly because of the imprecision in vocabulary, preparation is the solution, and if you possess synonyms you have the solution.

Feedback really positive, since after the exchanges 100% of the interviewees achieved the project, whatever its size.

The culture influence appears to a certain degree of relationship, particularly when there are negotiations, discussions on technical details and project development.

Moreover, what matters too lies in the wealth of linguistic skills that people own, and acquired with their experience and their will to learn.

English speakers and non-native speakers are tolerant towards one another, using BELF seems to be a good compromise to communicate, on condition to have adaptability skills, be open-minded and be well prepared.

Individuals have the same goal in a professional context: to be understood and understand the interlocutor in order to realize a project, whatever its scale.

It would be interesting to make the same study but in a different context, especially in the private sphere. Because stakes are completely different from those discussed above.
6. Thanks

I would like to thank particularly the Pedagogical team, teachers and tutors who helped and guided me all along this report.

A big thank-you to all the professors, they give me all the keys and knowledge to produce this document through these two years of training.

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Many thanks to the different interviewees for their time and consideration, their participation has been of great help and I wouldn't have been able to lead this study without their help.
7. References

Articles


Books


Resource page

Appendices

A. Questionnaire English version

In the scope of your job you are asked to speak in a language different from your mother tongue. We will focus on the use of a particular language; English to communicate orally.

I would like to know your feelings following these multicultural exchanges.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

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Exchanges with English speakers

1) What is the nature of your relations with English speakers?
   - [ ] Client / seller
   - [ ] Customer / Supplier
   - [ ] Counterpart
   - Other, specify: .................................................................

2) In general, what is the purpose of your exchanges?
   ..............................................................................................................................

3) On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 signifying “very low” and 10 signifying “very high”, what is the technical level of your exchanges?
   Circle your answer.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

4) Can you specify the / nationality (s) of your interlocutors?
   ..............................................................................................................................
   ..............................................................................................................................
Now choose the exchange that marked you the most.

**Your behavior and feelings**

1) Before the interview, you were:
   - Quite serene
   - Quite nervous
   - Other, specify: ………………………………………………………………………………………………………

2) Did your behavior changed during the interview?
   - Yes
   - No
   If so, did it evolve in a:
     - Positive way?
     - Negative way?
     - Explain: ……………………………………………………………………………………………………………

3) What was your feelings on:

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<th></th>
<th>Very satisfactory</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>Unsatisfactory</th>
<th>Very unsatisfactory</th>
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<tr>
<td>The clarity of answers</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The attitude of your</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>interlocutor</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The result of the interview</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tick the appropriate answer.

4) Were there misunderstandings during the exchange?
   - Yes
   - No

5) If so, what was the cause?
   - The use of an imprecise vocabulary
   - Lack of vocabulary
   - Misinterpretation/problem on the mastery of the subject
   - Other, specify: ………………………………………………………………………………………………………

6) What were your reactions to break the deadlock?
   - Use synonyms
   - Make signals with hands
   - Show items
   - Other, specify: ……………………………………………………………………………………………………..
7) What were your interlocutor’s reactions?
   □ Understanding
   □ Little understanding
   □ Not understanding
   Other, specify: ………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

8) Specifically, select 3 words from the list below to consider the behavior of your interlocutor:
   □ Open-minded
   □ Attentive
   □ Clement
   □ Professional
   □ Motivated
   □ Rigorous
   □ Confident
   □ Strict
   □ Meticulous
   □ Unreceptive
   □ Narrow-minded

9) From a sociocultural perspective, did you feel the cultural influence of your interlocutor?
   □ Yes
   □ No
   If so, how did it happen? Explain.
   ………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
   ………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
   ………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
   ………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

10) As a follow-up to this exchange, did you eventually realize this project?
    □ Yes
    □ No
More about you

1) Do you take English classes?
   □ Yes
   □ No

   If so, it is:
   □ A personal learning
   □ A training as part of your work
   □ Other, specify: .................................................................

2) In your opinion, how would you estimate your English level?
   □ Beginner
   □ Intermediate
   □ Advanced

3) How old are you? Select your age range.
   □ 18-25 ans
   □ 25-35 ans
   □ 35-45 ans
   □ 45-55 ans
   □ 55-65 ans

4) What is your professional status?
   □ Employee
   □ Technician
   □ Interim
   □ Senior
   □ Leader
   □ Other, specify: .................................................................

Any comments?
........................................................................................................
........................................................................................................

Thank you for participating!
B. Questionnaire French version

Dans le cadre de votre travail vous êtes amenés à échanger dans une autre langue que votre langue maternelle. Nous allons nous concentrer sur l’utilisation d’une langue en particulier ; l’anglais pour communiquer oralement.

Je souhaiterai connaître votre ressenti suite à ces échanges multiculturels.

Merci de prendre quelques minutes pour compléter ce questionnaire.

Échanges avec des anglophones

1) Quelle est la nature de vos relations avec ces personnes ?

☐ Client/vendeur
☐ Client/fournisseur
☐ Homologue
Autre, précisez : ..................................................................................................................

2) De manière générale quel est l’objet de vos échanges ?
...........................................................................................................................................

3) Sur une échelle allant de 1 à 10 ou 1 signifie « très faible » et 10 signifie « très élevé », quel est le niveau technique de vos échanges ?
Entourez votre choix.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

4) Pouvez-vous préciser la/les nationalité(s) de vos interlocuteurs ?
..........................................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................................

26
Maintenant, choisissez l’échange qui vous a le plus marqué.

**Votre comportement et ressenti**

1) Avant l’entretien vous étiez :
- Plutôt serein
- Plutôt stressé
- Autre, précisez :………………………………………………………………………………………………………

2) Votre comportement a-t-il changé au cours de l’entretien ?
- Oui
- Non

Si oui, il a évolué de manière :
- positive
- négative

Expliquez :……………………………………………………………………………………………………….

3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quel est votre ressenti sur :</th>
<th>Très satisfaisant</th>
<th>Satisfaisant</th>
<th>Peu satisfaisant</th>
<th>Pas du tout satisfaisant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>La clarté des réponses fournies</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L’attitude de vos interlocuteurs</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>L’issu de l’entretien</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Cochez la réponse qui vous correspond.

4) Y-a-t-il eu des incompréhensions au cours de l’échange ?
- Oui
- Non

5) Si oui, quelle en était la cause ?
- Imprécision au niveau du vocabulaire utilisé
- Manque de vocabulaire
- Contresens/problème sur la maîtrise du sujet
- Autres, précisez :………………………………………………………………………………………………………

6) Si incompréhension il y a eu, quelle(s) a/ont été vos réactions pour débloquer la situation ?
- Synonyme
□ Signes avec mains
□ Désigner des objets
Autres, précisez: ...........................................................................................................................................

7) Quelle(s) fut la/les réactions de votre interlocuteur ?
□ Plutôt compréhensif
□ Peu compréhensif
□ Pas du tout compréhensif
Autres précisez: ...........................................................................................................................................

8) Plus précisément, sélectionnez 3 mots parmi la liste ci-dessous pour qualifier le comportement de votre interlocuteur :
□ Ouvert
□ À l’écoute
□ Indulgent
□ Professionnel
□ Motivé
□ Rigoureux
□ Confiant
□ Sèvere
□ Pointilleux
□ Peu réceptif
□ Fermé

9) D’un point de vue socioculturel, avez-vous ressenti l’influence de la culture de votre interlocuteur ?
□ Oui
□ Non
Si oui, comment cela s’est-il manifesté ? Expliquez.
...........................................................................................................................................................................
...........................................................................................................................................................................
...........................................................................................................................................................................
...........................................................................................................................................................................

10) Suite à cet échange, y-a-t-il eu un aboutissement au projet/ ?
□ Oui
□ Non
En savoir plus sur vous

1) Suivez-vous des cours d’anglais ?
   □ Oui
   □ Non
   Si oui, s’agit-il :
   □ d’un apprentissage à titre personnel
   □ D’une formation dans le cadre de votre travail
     Autre, précisez : …………………………………………………………………………………….

2) Selon vous quel est votre niveau d’anglais ?
   □ Débutant
   □ Intermédiaire
   □ Avancé

3) Dans quelle tranche d’âge vous situez vous ?
   □ 18-25 ans
   □ 25-35 ans
   □ 35-45 ans
   □ 45-55 ans
   □ 55-65 ans

4) Quel est votre positionnement professionnel ?
   □ Salarié
   □ Technicien
   □ Intérimaire
   □ Cadre
   □ Dirigeant
   □ Autres, précisez : …………………………………………………………………………………….

Avez-vous des remarques ?
…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

Merci pour votre participation !