Non-native/Native English Language Barriers’ Effects on Intercultural Business Interactions when Using Idioms: A comparative study

Track: Culture, Social and Ethical Issues
Non-native/Native English Language Barriers’ Effects on Intercultural Business Interactions when Using Idioms: A comparative study

Abstract
The study deals with the familiarity of idiomatic expressions by non-native speakers of English (NNS) and how this affects cross-cultural communication in business transactions. It combines qualitative and quantitative analyses of data collected from a questionnaire and will be conducted with NNS of English from multinational companies (MNCs) in San Juan, Puerto Rico, Puebla, México and Florida, USA. A questionnaire of business idiomatic expressions will be administered to NNS who will rate their familiarity of these expressions by responding on a Likert scale. This study seeks to raise cultural awareness and encourage cultural sensitivity among employers in MNCs, using the case of the mentioned cities.

Keywords: managerial communication, intercultural communication, negotiation and clarification in multinational companies
Introduction

In this research, we first intend to present case studies and research in the fields of Intercultural Business Communication and in Business English as a Lingua Franca at the international level. These studies will provide the basis and justification for the study we propose in this study, which is focus on the case of Puerto Rico, Mexico and United States. Thus, secondly, we will focus and examine the experience of business communication in English in the particular context of the multinational companies (MNCs) in these three countries, through the familiarity of idiomatic expressions of non-native speakers of English.

Motivation and justification

Increased globalization has brought people from different cultures together to collaborate and compete internationally (Vijaya and Tiwari, 2010; Virkkula-Raisanen, 2010). As part of the global village we live in, the ability to communicate effectively with other cultures is a key to success and also a fundamental skill that companies seek in business graduates. Communication skills in business are crucial to establish and strengthen good business relationships and interpersonal skills. But, for global business to succeed internationally, their members must develop effective intercultural skills. Companies that spread to other countries must have a clear understanding of the cultural differences between locals and foreigners that work in the companies.

The research sites selected are San Juan, Puerto Rico; Puebla, Mexico; and South Florida, United States. Each one of these cities has MNCs that employ local business people, and in the case of Florida many non-native speakers of English are working in these MNCs. Puerto Rico is a leader in the corporate world with many MNCs operating locally (PRIDCO, 2011). This means that many Puerto Ricans work with supervisors, executives and colleagues who only speak English. Many of the supervisors that work in these companies are native speakers of English, often with basic, or no knowledge of Spanish. Puebla in Mexico has become a center of economic activity. With a population of 1.6 million inhabitants, Puebla is the 5th largest city in Mexico and one of the destinations for the foreign direct investment (FDI). It is becoming a business process outsourcing (BPO) center. Puebla has been attracting automotive industry and in fact, it has one of the largest automobile factories – Volkswagen. South Florida also has an extensive population of non-native speakers of English and it addition it serves as the headquarters for more than 1000 MNCs.
Literature Review

*Intercultural Business Communication*

The approach taken in this study is primarily influenced by the Intercultural Business Communication and Business English as a Lingua Franca (BELF) fields. As cited in Kankaanrant and Planken (2010), English plays an essential role in spoken communication in the business context, such as negotiations, meetings, email and advertising. English is an intrinsic part of communication in multinational settings and a fact of life for many business people (Akar, 2002; Bilbow 2002). As stated in Du-Babcock (2013), more and more, non-native speakers of English are using this language as means of communication, and thus its role has been increasing in use and in importance.

Intercultural communication focuses on how people from different cultures communicate and understand each other. Specifically, it is the communication among individuals or groups from different cultural backgrounds in business environments (Vijaya and Tiwari, 2010; Varner, 2000). An important aspect of this field is to understand the meaning of culture. Culture is indeed a very broad term. As defined in de Mooij (2014), “Culture is what defines a human community, its individuals and social organizations...People are dependent in the control of mechanisms of culture for ordering their behavior” (de Mooij, 2014, p. 56-57). According to Jameson (2007), professionals that constantly interact in intercultural settings need to understand the meaning of culture and more so understand “the hidden force of culture” (Jameson, 2007, pp. 200). It is crucial that the field of Intercultural Business Communication emphasizes on the importance of understanding each person’s and one’s own individual cultural identity (Jameson, 2007). Jameson adds that this field has focused its studies in the use of multiple languages and shared languages in multinational corporations.

The single biggest barrier to the success of a company in the business world today is the lack of cross-cultural understanding (Vijaya and Tiwari, 2010). Understanding and appreciating intercultural differences will promote effective communication and will avoid breakdowns in communication. As stated in Ainsworth (2013):

> Researchers studying internationalization of higher education agree that all undergraduates require contact with and understanding of other nations, languages and cultures in order to develop the appropriate level of competence to handle the increasingly complex and ill-structured nature of professional work and to function effectively in the rapidly emerging global environment (Ainsworth, 2013, pp. 29).

Internationalisation component emphasizes the link between local and global, includes diversity and intercultural communication as well (Ainsworth, 2013).
Studies of workplace and employers’ needs show that much importance is placed on developing good communication skills. Oral communication skills were identified as valuable for both obtaining employment and successful job performance in a national survey of 1000 human resource managers. Another survey with Fortune 500 executives, stressed that college students need better communication skills, as well as the ability to work in teams and with people from diverse backgrounds. There is also an increasing need to develop and strengthen effective oral and written communication skills, more tolerance and accommodation to different accents and jargons (Ainsworth, 2013).

According to Ainsworth (2013), many academics underline the importance of including an internationalization component to the undergraduate and graduate programs in order to produce students and futures professionals with strong communication and intercultural skills. Through the internationalization of the curriculum, students could receive intercultural communication training. It is not as simple as learning a foreign language; intercultural communication “constitutes a distinct yet complementary set of skills in relation to foreign language proficiency” (Ainsworth, 2013, pp. 32). In spite of the intercultural and language challenges that employers face in the MNCs, many business schools are failing to link the importance of language policies with international business practices (Ainsworth, 2013).

Ainsworth (2013) carried out a study to reveal the value students place on intercultural communication education and foreign languages for business studies and future careers. The authors administered two surveys, one target to Business French students and graduates, and other target to Business Administration students. The authors also sought to demonstrate whether students perceived language skills as a core management skill for International Business studies. The results of the survey showed that both groups of students valued cultural awareness as an important skill to develop early in their studies and career. According to the responses, most students agreed that this skill would help employers feel more comfortable with other cultures in addition to avoiding possible misunderstandings.

It is crucial to carry out more ethnographic studies to gain more information on different strategies adopted to conduct business according to intercultural encounters (Virkkula-Raisanen, 2010). Several studies in intercultural communication have identified multiple abilities that are considered crucial to attain effective intercultural communication. Some of them are the ability to communicate interpersonally; the ability to adjust to different cultures; the ability to adjust to different social systems; the ability to establish interpersonal relationships and the ability to understand one’s own individual cultural identity (Hammer et al., 1978; Abe and Wiseman, 1983; Jameson, 2007). As discussed in Jameson (2007), cross-cultural business communication research is considered an applied form of ethnography where there are communicators closely observing and analyzing components of other cultures. She cites Victor (1992) who identified seven variables affecting
business communication when shifting across cultures: language, environment/technology, social organization, contexting, authority, non-verbal behavior and conceptions of time.

Success in business interactions demands that participants have good communicative competence in the language and the situation. According to Virkkula-Raisanen (2010), global professionals require more than good linguistic performance. In order to have a successful business interaction in an international context, professionals need to also command the field’s terminology, strategies of negotiation in the particular country, intercultural business awareness, interactional competence and good interpersonal relations management, among others.

Ainsworth (2013) identifies several intercultural and international business communication skills that are crucial for business graduates to operate successfully in MNCs. Some of these are participating in meetings, teams, and informal work-related discussions, delivering formal presentations, listening and following instructions. In addition, networking is essential among employers in order to build and strengthen interpersonal relationships.

Multicultural team members need to have intercultural and communicative competence. This will enable them to obtain important information about other team members, and to reduce uncertainty and anxiety. In addition, it will help them develop empathy which is an essential communication skill in business relations. Cultural, historical and language backgrounds of each business person that interacts with another come into play in business interactions. In addition, if business professionals are empathic, they are able to step outside their own cultural and business environment and they create a new context. Business transactions will be more successful if each person or company has an understanding of each other’s cultural and business background. In addition, corporations as well as individual business people have to take into account the national culture, the general business culture, and the specific corporate culture. Individual communication styles must also be considered in business transactions (Varner, 2000: p. 45).

Virkkula-Raisanen (2010) studied the participants’ role alignment and interpersonal relationships in a business interaction setting between Finnish and Chinese employees of a small company in Finland, in which English was used as the lingua franca. The Finnish manager served as a mediator in a multilingual meeting. The study revealed that professionals working in international or multilingual business settings face several challenges in business interactions at the communication level. She states that in multilingual contexts in which English is used as the language of interaction, professionals’ language skills are very unequal. Even individuals at the top management levels, such as top executives, may not have good command of English. It is crucial that individuals not only know English but that they also recognize how to use the language appropriately for the setting and situation, in this case, a business context.
Kobayashi and Viswat (2011) carried out a study to examine intercultural awareness and accommodation phenomenon while business interactions are taking place. According to these authors, having intercultural awareness applied to communication is not enough. An individual may have intercultural communication knowledge, but it will be meaningless unless it can be applied to real situations. Thus, intercultural communication applied to business should be focused on helping people find solutions (Kobayashi and Viswat, 2011). When people from different countries are involved in business transactions, each must be willing to share the responsibility of cultural awareness. According to this study, the Japanese seem to accommodate unilaterally to American culture. In Kankaanranta and Planken (2010), the tendency of non-natives speakers of English was to also accommodate. Their interviewees adopted accommodation practices with different types of English as non-native speakers.

Culture defines our working behavior and customs. Vijaya and Tiwari (2010) carried out a study in which they observed Japanese and Indian business people’s interactions in business meetings. They also observed that the Japanese prefer more passive forms of criticism than Indians, but are stricter than Indians when it comes to turning in a report on time. Indians seemed to have some delays in their projects since they have flexible business practices. On the other hand, when Indians are carrying out business transactions in Puerto Rico, they seem uneasy with our lack of punctuality, which is a cultural norm.

Each language has its own idiosyncrasies and peculiarities that may produce different terminology, even in business. Some languages may share grammatical and semantic patterns, others, such as Japanese and English, don’t. These are details that the professionals must take into consideration when preparing for international and intercultural business interactions (Aktan and Nohl, 2010). Idiomatic expressions may cause confusion among the second language speakers. These cannot be translated literally since the audience won’t understand their meaning. “A literal translation for specific words would leave the foreign audience perplexed” (Aktan and Nohl, 2010: p. 4). As very well stated by Jameson (2007) “Language creates both division and unity in ways that affect business policy, decision making, and costs” (p. 215).

Still, there are other theories and academics that point out that equating culture with a country can be a misconception that can limit the real understanding of business issues and strategies (Jameson, 2007). According to Jameson, a person with the knowledge about a particular culture will not guarantee successfully communication with the person of that other culture. The view as cited in Jameson is that professionals should not view people from other cultures as representatives of a homogenous group. They need to understand that they will always be individual variations.

There are many benefits employers gain when they have been intercultural trained, and that is that they develop increased awareness of the roles among a diverse workforce, greater understanding of diverse cultures and one’s own culture,
developing empathy when understanding the differences in perceptions based on culture, and more effective business practices in a global economy (Ainsworth, 2013).

**Business English as a Lingua Franca (BELF)**

Language enables human beings to communicate. Thus, language enables individuals and companies to communicate (Charles, 2007). The language of communication in this era is English. The total numbers of people who speak English as a foreign language outnumber those who speak it as their mother tongue. About a quarter of the world’s population speaks English; and by 2060, the non-native speakers of English will outnumber native speakers of English by 50% (Kashru, 1992).

Business English has become the lingua franca of the international business world. It is undisputed that Business English as Lingua Franca (BELF) has dominated as the language of international business in the last few decades. “BELF….is employed as substitute for Business English because of the wider application of Business English in international business communication among nonnative speakers” (Yu, 2013, p. 130). It has also become an intrinsic part of communication in multilingual settings for many business professionals (Kankaanranta and Lu, 2013; Kankaanranta and Planken, 2010; Nickerson, 2005). More international business is done in English between non-native speakers than between native speakers (Charles, 2007). Yu (2013) states that research and teaching in this field is influenced by globalization as well as by the growth of the domestic economy.

The research in this field has shifted its focus to identifying language strategies used by non-native speakers to achieve, for example, effective communication in business interactions (Nickerson, 2005). Scholars in this field have focused their work on identifying core linguistics elements that conform to native speakers’ expectations so that they don’t cause intelligibility problems, and distinguish them from noncore elements recognized by native speakers as anomalies but that do not cause problems (Charles, 2007: p. 262). Misunderstandings are somehow managed. They are solved, and will only rarely lead to complete breakdowns of communication (Hinnenkamp, 1999). According to Wu (2013):

> …the literature research in this field has shown that many colleges, universities, scholars and teachers have taken initiative to explore BE in terms of teaching methods and modes, teaching materials and they have endeavored to relate theories to practice which it totally different from intuition-oriented” (Wu, 2013, p. 131).

Some studies have shown that problems in business interactions arise when there is linguistic imbalance between native speakers of English and non-native speakers of English (Pullin, 2010). Still, other studies have pointed that BELF speakers
avoid and overcome misunderstandings in spite of the usage of non-standard forms of English. For most business professionals, having competence in BELF is an essential skill to be used along with their business knowledge (Kankaanranta and Lu, 2013; Kankaanranta and Planken, 2010). BELF should follow the principles of clarity, simplicity, and relational orientation.

The phenomenon of BELF has produced many varieties of English in countries where English is spoken as a second, third, or even fourth language. As BELF is adopted in other countries, it receives linguistic and cultural influence from the non-native speakers (Kankaanranta and Planken, 2010; Nickerson, 2005; Charles, 2007). BELF will carry the non-native speaker’s culture, as well as his/her mother tongue discourse (Kankaanranta and Planken, 2010). In the companies included in Kankaanranta and Planken (2010) study, the researchers found that there was a hybrid version of English that contain features from the speakers’ mother tongue. The authors described it as: “…a simplified, shared code whose basis is English with highly specialized vocabulary and a variety of discourse practices” (Kankaanranta and Planken, 2010: p. 402). These processes are similar to one of the theories of the pidgin and Creole language development in which speakers of different language background simplified their language to facilitate communication in a highly multilingual setting (Alleyne, 1988; Mufwene, 2001; Devonish, 1986).

Kankaanranta and Planken (2010) carried out a study with five globally-operating Finland-based companies, where they administered an online questionnaire. The authors wanted to learn about the business professionals’ perception of their BELF communication skills and that of their partners. The interviewees admitted facing several challenges in business interactions using BELF with native speakers of English. They showed lack of competence in English, limited repertoire of idioms, and incomprehensibility of some regional U.S. and U.K. accents (Kankaanranta and Planken, 2010). When these interviewees interacted with natives speakers of English, they tried to adopt their pronunciation or just made efforts to keep up with the conversation. In this study, the researchers found that the shared business domain of BELF, shared special field of expertise and length of relationship affected the participants’ BELF discourse. The interviewees stated business English was more useful for their work than “general” English, since BE was more persuasive, task-oriented, and goal-based. Terminology and concepts of certain fields is usually more widely understood in English across cultures. Therefore, the expertise in the field meant an increase in business-related terms that helped in the communication process in cross-cultural settings. According to the findings in their study, Kankaanranta and Planken (2010) described some of the characteristics of BELF discourse as a simple and clear version of English, with no usage of idiomatic expressions or complex sentence structures. This could aid in the communication process among various non-native speakers. The participants admitted accommodating to simple and clear English.
In their interviews, the participants observed that in general, even if they spoke English as a second or third language, their core message would most of the time get through. In their oral communication process, the grammatical inaccuracies did not break down communication. Still, there were some instances in which misunderstanding did occur and interrupted communication. Some of these interviewees admitted feeling frustrated with the usages of English as the corporate language, since their non-native proficiency sometimes affected their work. In Charles (2007), interviews carried out in a company showed that in general, participants felt disempowered due to their relative lack of language skills. They showed a sense of frustration and a struggle to maintain dignity. If the employees feel that the frame of reference in communication is the native speaker, the challenge of communicating appropriately becomes quite acute. Their language affected their perception of themselves or others. In Puerto Rico, most Puerto Rican non-native speakers of English, feel ashamed and intimidated when speaking English in public. In many cases, lingua franca speakers complain that native speakers of English don’t adjust or simplify their language. But, sometimes the frustration emerges due the non-native speakers’ lack of proficiency in English. Sweeney and Hua (2010) explain that often, the miscommunication problems in intercultural business interactions are due to native speakers of English. They argue that native speakers of English continue to speak idiomatically.

The BELF nature of providing flexibility, tolerance and ability to negotiate meaning can help provide insight to raise awareness among native and non-native speakers concerning effective business communication and international communicative competence (Pullin, 2010).

The review of literature in these fields shows some gaps in research concerning intercultural communication interactions using BELF, thus a study focused in this topic is much needed. “The field of intercultural communication needs more investigations into connections between culture language and power” (Jameson, 2007, p. 222). “Each achievement in BELF teaching and research will have a positive impact on economic development and global communications. There is no other subject that can surpass the great effect BELF has produced on international communications” (Yu, 2013, pp. 134).

Charles (2007), states that research is needed to make us understand better the process of how people relate to each other across language barriers. It is crucial to carry out more ethnographic studies to gain more information on different strategies adopted to conduct business according to intercultural encounters (Virkkula-Raisanen, 2010). This study may provide a basis for improving cross-cultural communications and business relationships.
Hypothesis and Research Questions

The hypothesis is stated as: 1) The more non-native speakers are familiar with idioms, the more likely they are to have successful communications with native speakers.

The research questions are as follows:

1. Which are the idioms most likely to be recognized and understood?
2. Which are the idioms least likely to be recognized and understood?
3. Is there any relationship between age and familiarity with idioms?
4. Is there any relationship between gender and familiarity with idioms?
5. Is there any relationship between years on the job and familiarity with idioms?
6. Is there any relationship between job position and familiarity with idioms?
7. Is there any relationship between experience abroad and familiarity with idioms?

Objective

The research will deal with non-native/native language barriers’ effect on intercultural business interactions. Specifically, the focus is on the familiarity of idiomatic expressions by non-native speakers of English and how their rate of familiarity affects cross-cultural communication in business transactions.

Methodology

The study will employ mixed methodology where subjects will respond to self-perception questions and then to a questionnaire on a Likert Scale. Data triangulation will be used to increase the validity of the data retrieved in the study. Specifically, we will identify certain variables obtained from the self-perception questions and correlate them with variables obtained from data collected from the questionnaire. The subjects will be non-native speakers of English (NNS) who are employees of MNCs in each of the three countries.

As a first step, NNS of English will respond to a battery of self-perception questions to assess their experience communicating in English in their companies and also to measure “success-breakdown” in their communication interactions (see appendix #1). The questions will focus on communication experiences in business interactions between the two language groups.

The subjects will then fill in a questionnaire (see Appendix #2) which contains several idiomatic expressions. To answer the exercise, the interviewees will rate their familiarity of each expression by responding on a Likert scale, ranging from I have heard this expression, and I know what it means (4); I have heard this expression, and I have an idea of what it means (3); I
may have heard this expression, but I don’t really know what it means (2); I may have heard this expression, but I do not know what it means (1); and I have never heard this expression before (0). The statements were based on a previous survey designed by Griffin (2004). Initially, this task would be administered only to NNS of English to see how their degree of familiarity with idioms might affect communication interactions. Additional assessments of a similar nature can be used with control groups, and in similar designs pairing manager-subordinate dyads to test for more specific effects and to further refine the recommendations for improving the intercultural communication process in multinational firms.

Results

The specific result of this proposal is the research: Non-native/Native Language Barriers’ Effects on Intercultural Business Interactions when Using Idioms: A comparative study.

Conclusions

Based on the literature review discussed in this paper, multinational corporations throughout the world are affected by BELF and by the Intercultural Business Communication (IBC). With this study we will be contributing to the field of International Business, Management, BELF and IBC. In addition, the study seeks to raise cultural awareness and encourage cultural sensitivity among foreign managers in multinational corporations, using the case of Puerto Rico, Mexico and United States to illustrate this.

There are challenges that non-native speakers of English face when interacting with native and non-native English speaking managers and/or colleagues in multinational companies, both at the linguistic level as well as at the psychological level. Studies showed that there is some degree of local adaptation to the corporate culture and to the native English speaker’s language. Although some miscommunication instances where found in some studies cited in this paper, these were not a cause for breakdowns in communication. In Puerto Rico, Puebla and Florida there are many multinational companies operating, thus the communication processes in these corporations are most likely affected by BELF and by IBC as well. Still, studies in these areas, using the case of Puerto Rico, Puebla and Florida are lacking. Thus, the proposed study in this paper is to uncover whether there is breakdown in communication interactions, and whether these are affected by the degree of local adaptation to corporate culture and language, and how the regulative forces affect these interactions.

Implications and Directions for Future Research
This research seeks to raise cultural awareness and encourage cultural sensitivity among employees/managers in multinational corporations, using the case of Puerto Rico, Mexico and United States to illustrate this. Globalization will continue to increase and people with very different linguistic backgrounds will continue to use English non-natively to communicate between each other. It is, thus, the responsibility of managers or employers who are foreign to the country where they are based, to learn about the national culture, general business culture, specific corporate culture and individual communication styles. They have to develop this awareness and sensitivity in order to improve business communication and thus have effective job performance and profits in their organization or company.

In addition, the research pursues to reduce ethnocentric views and negative attitudes of foreign manage. The study may help to point out the importance to simplify language discourse, such as limiting use of idiomatic expressions. This may help communication flow without misunderstanding and therefore achieve good production and results.

Future research can focus on expanding the topic of degree of local adaptation of both language groups to the local culture and corporate culture, and how the regulative pillar might lead the local culture to adapt to the corporate culture. In addition, a more detailed study can be carried out in terms of other factors that can lead to communication errors. The following outline for such a study would be an initial effort towards advancing the knowledge of the impact of the use of idioms in managerial communication on subordinate performance and effectiveness.
References


Appendix #1

**Part I: Introduction**
The following questions deal with your communication experience in English at the workplace context.

1. **What is your nationality/nationalities?**

2. **How would you describe your position/title in the Company?**
   - Top/Senior management
   - Middle management
   - Middle
   - Others

3. **How frequently do you use English at the workplace?**
   - Every day
   - Few times a week
   - Once a week
   - Others

4. **Information about the Company**
   - Size
   - Years of operation
   - Internationalization level
   - Market position of the Company
   - Any other relevant details

5. **Is it important for your Company to speak English to be able to reach top/senior management positions?**
   - Yes
   - No
   - Why?

6. **The person/persons with whom I interact in my job whose first language is English is/are:**
   - Manager of the office
   - My supervisor
   - My colleague/coworker
   - Others
   - Does not apply

7. **How do you feel when you’re communicating in English with your supervisor/manager/colleague/coworker/others?**
   - Briefly comment

8. **What has been your experience in this Company?**
   - Briefly comment

9. **Have you spent time abroad? If yes, specify where and for how long.**
On scale from 0 to 4, where 0 represents no familiarity of the idiomatic expression, respond according to your level of familiarity with the idioms below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Idioms</th>
<th>I have heard this expression, and I know what it means</th>
<th>I have heard this expression, and I have an idea of what it means</th>
<th>I have heard this expression, but I am not sure what it means</th>
<th>I may have heard this expression, but I do not know what it means</th>
<th>I have never heard this expression before</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. This one’s on the house.</td>
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<td>2. Bail a company out.</td>
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<td>3. Give me a ball park figure.</td>
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<td>4. Break even</td>
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<td>5. Keep track of…</td>
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<td>6. Close the books</td>
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<td>7. Bottom line</td>
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<td>8. Calculated risk</td>
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<td>9. Deliver the goods</td>
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<td>10. Double check</td>
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<td>11. Fair play</td>
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<td>12. In the long run</td>
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<td>13. Take over</td>
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<td>14. Just for the record</td>
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<td>15. Speak the same language</td>
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<td>16. Buy out</td>
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<td>17. Buy off</td>
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<td>18. Carry the day</td>
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<td>19. Carry through</td>
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<td>20. Face value</td>
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<td>21. Figure out</td>
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<td>22. Fill the bill</td>
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<td>23. In stock</td>
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<td>24. In short supply</td>
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Part III: Demographic Data

1. Gender
   Male
   Feminine

2. Age
   18-21
   22-30
   31-39
   40-49
   50-59
   60-69

3. What is your level of proficiency in English?
   Poor
   Somewhat good
   Good
   Very good
   Excelent

4. How would you describe the quality of teaching that you received to learn English?
   Poor
   Regular
   Good
   Very good
   Excelent

5. How important is English for your professional career?
   No importance
   Very little importance
   Important
   Very important
   Essential