

Linguistic and Cultural Variations in British and American Business Communication

¹Shalini Pathak, ²Dr. Kanu Priya Verma

¹Research Scholar, School of Science and Humanities, Maharishi University of Information Technology, Lucknow

²Associate Professor, School of Science and Humanities, Maharishi University of Information Technology, Lucknow

Abstract

Background: Global business conveys the importance of effective written communication but in even such nations where a native language is English, there are many cultural differences that may affect tone, structure, and rhetorical style. The whole country and the United States, even though sharing a common language, can demonstrate different business writing standards that depend on the historic, social or cultural values. The misunderstandings, decreased efficiency and negative working relationships may arise in multinational situations due to these variations.

Objectives: This study aims to: (1) compare the linguistic, rhetorical, stylistic characteristics of both British and American business writing, (2) to analyze the role of cultural values based on the Cultural Dimension Theory by Hofstede and High - and Low-Context Communication model by Hall, and (3) deliver practical recommendations concerning the effectiveness of cross-cultural business communication.

Methods: The analysis was carried out based on the authentic business documents- applications, reports, and emails- of British and American organizations, and also the pertinent scholarly literature through a qualitative comparative analysis of the secondary data. Examples of analytical frameworks were a discourse analysis, stylistic, and rhetorical analysis, and application of cultural theory. Thematic coding of data was done to find out commonalities in tones and structures and language usage.

Results: These results indicate that the British business writings are rather formal, polite, and indirect and that they may also be very complex, involving hedges and framing. American business writing is direct and to the point with a small amount of action oriented and also simple syntaxes, clear calls to actions supported and organized around the bottom line. Such differences come to agreement with the cultural dimensions including individualism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, context dependability differences.

Conclusion: Professional writing styles are greatly influenced by culture values, even in situations of shared languages. Knowledge of these differences may help to minimise misunderstanding, increase efficiency and promote professional relationship within the multinational settings. The paper is relevant to the academic theory as well as to the practice of academic writing through the culturally based comparison between the British and the American business writing.

Keywords: British business writing, American business writing, intercultural communication, Hofstede's cultural dimensions, Hall's context model.

1. Introduction

Communication is crucial in the international business world as it helps build cross-border relationships and manage professional relationships. Despite the existence of common language English in the United Kingdom and the United States, cultural, historical and social factors have an enormous impact on business styles of writing used by the two countries. The British business writing is usually characterized by the presence of formality, indirectness, and being framed in a contextual manner, whereas American business writing is characterized by a straightforward composition, clarity, and focus on the result (Kutateladze, 2014; Moreno &

Sznajder, 2013). Without taking these differences into consideration, outrage may ensue, and operations among multinational may get less efficient. Using the Cultural Dimensions Theory presented by Hofstede (Hofstede, 2011) and High- vs. Low-Context Communication as suggested by Hall (Hall, 1976), I am going to discuss the linguistic and rhetorical as well as cultural differences that influence the British and the American business writing. The study denotes both theory and practice; it would enable the researcher to bridge the gap in comparative studies of written business discourse between the two nations by providing a theoretical perspective and practical suggestions about facilitating intercultural communication.

1.1. British vs. American Business Writing Overview

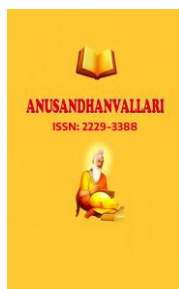
Communication is crucial in the international business world as it helps build cross-border relationships and manage professional relationships. Despite the existence of common language English in the United Kingdom and the United States, cultural, historical and social factors have an enormous impact on business styles of writing used by the two countries. The British business writing is usually characterized by the presence of formality, indirectness, and being framed in a contextual manner, whereas American business writing is characterized by a straightforward composition, clarity, and focus on the result (Kutateladze, 2014; Moreno & Sznajder, 2013). Without taking these differences into consideration, outrage may ensue, and operations among multinational may get less efficient. Using the Cultural Dimensions Theory presented by Hofstede (Hofstede, 2011) and High- vs. Low-Context Communication as suggested by Hall (Hall, 1976), I am going to discuss the linguistic and rhetorical as well as cultural differences that influence the British and the American business writing. The study denotes both theory and practice; it would enable the researcher to bridge the gap in comparative studies of written business discourse between the two nations by providing a theoretical perspective and practical suggestions about facilitating intercultural communication (Guffey & Loewy, 2019).

These are differences in stylistic pattern that transfer to rhetorical structure and tone: British writers tend to smooth out requests so as not to sound terribly imperative, whereas American writers much prefer to use imperative or directive style (Moreno & Sznajder, 2013). Petty things as well, like spelling (organize vs. organize, colour vs. color) may indicate culturally-based identity and can affect professional perception. These differences are the issue that should be comprehended not to misinterpret the information in a cross-cultural business environment, when the tone or the structure might accidentally influence the clarity of the message, its perceived professionalism, or persuasiveness.

1.2. Role of Cultural Theories (Hofstede, Hall)

Cultural communication theories offer a context of exalting the differences noted in business writing between British and American cultures. The theory of Cultural Dimensions by Hofstede (2011) emphasizes the role of such values as individualism, power distance, and uncertainty avoidance in impacting the trends in communication. Individualism is very high and the power distance is low in the United States, which has resulted in an egalitarian, self-reliant and direct form of communication that is keen on efficiency (Ferraro & Briody, 2023). Comparatively, the United Kingdom is also high in individualism but with moderate power distance and a little higher uncertainty avoidance leading to a formal, cautious and hierarchy-sensitive outlook (Hofstede Insights, 2023).

Edward T. Hall's High- vs. Low-Context Communication model (Hall, 1976) contributes lighter. Both the UK and the US are low-context cultures, which implies that they both tend to use direct straightforward messages as opposed to connotations. Nevertheless, when speaking about the two cultures (UK and the US) there is a slight difference in favoring the context scale when communicators communicate via writing utilizing more implicit cues and hints, hedging, and unstated meanings (Cardon, 2008). This is the reason why in British writing, more stress is usually given to building of context and connecting framing whereas in American writing more ones look forward to a bottom-line-first kind of writing (Adanlawo et al., 2021).



1.3. Problem Statement

Despite both of them (the United Kingdom and the United State) having English as a common language, their business writing styles are quite different which can be explained by cultural, historical, and social aspects. Business communication in Britain tends to follow the style of formality, diplomacy, and politically correct use of language, American business writing, on the contrary, is direct, succinct and focused on actions (Kutateladze, 2014). In intercultural scenarios, these stylistic conflicts may result in miscommunication, diminished productivity and conflicts at the workplace. Although there are numerous studies that relate to intercultural communication, a focused comparative study that deals with the cultural foundation of the written business discourse between the two countries is rather lacking as such and thus a gap that this study is trying to fill in.

1.4. Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the given study is to provide a comparative review of British and American business styles of writing, with references to identifying the cultural determinants influencing the specifics of communication. In particular, the aim of the study is to.

Specific Objectives:

- To seek to identify and study the linguistic, rhetoric, and stylistic British and American differences in written business communication, in terms of tone, formality and structure.
- To explore the role of cultural values, based on the cultural dimension's theory, originated by Hofstede and similar models, in the context of what is acceptable in business writing in either of the two contexts.
- To make viable, culturally grounded prescriptions on how to enhance transparency, suitability and efficacy of cross-cultural communication in business transactions.

1.5. Significance

The study is relevant to both academia and the practical sphere of knowledge in terms of intercultural business communication. It helps to better understand how stylistic differences between British and American business writings are culturally based by exposing the cultural foundations on which tone, formality, and rhetorical choices tend to be based on (Hofstede, 2011). These results should be of use to multinationals as well as communication trainers and business people in the formulation of culturally responsive writing practices and, hence, minimize misunderstandings on cross-border communications, improve cross-border teamwork and general communication excellence. In addition, the research can be of great contribution when it comes to curriculum development in an undergraduate course on business communications and training professionals to work efficiently and within a globalized business ecosystem.

2. Literature Review

This section summarizes the literature and examines research done on how cultural differences apply to the British and American approaches to business writing. It is based on the Cultural Dimensions Theory of Hofstede and the Theory of High- vs. Low-Context Communication that allow explaining the background of culture influencing the communication. The existing literature on intercultural business communication, comparison of the both contexts, linguistic and stylistic analysis is synthesized in order to emphasize the cultural values as an element that gives form to writing practices. The chapter will end with a clear specification of the research gap which the present study is going to fill.

2.1. Theoretical Foundations

To comprehend how business communication is shaped on a cultural level, it is necessary to understand theoretical models in the background of how values, norms, and the organization of society shapes the style of communication. Contributing to a better understanding of the stylistic and rhetorical similarities and differences between British and American business writing are the two most popular frameworks, i.e. the Cultural Dimensions Theory by Hofstede and the High Context vs. Low-Context Communication model.

2.1.1. Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory

The model by Hofstede points out some of the main cultural dimensions that are embraced in the definition of communication behaviors such as individualism vs. collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity vs. femininity, long versus short-run orientation, and indulgence vs. restraint (Hofstede, 2011). With a high score in individualism and a low power distance, the culture is characterized by a concept of personal autonomy, directness and egalitarianism, which are characteristics that tend to be translated in business writing through brevity and a call to action. Another question is how the UK is on individualism, as this country is also high on this dimension but with more formality and higher context sensitivity, corresponding to more diplomatic and roundabout written codes (Hofstede Insights, 2023). Using this model would allow the study to connect noticed writing trends to the existing cultural values as it would result in a comparative analytical form guide.

2.1.2. High-Context vs. Low-Context Communication

Hall's (1976) High-Context vs. Low-Context Communication framework categorizes cultures into the extent of meaning that the culture communicates based on context or explicit language. The United States is a low-context culture where ambiguity is minimized, and professional communication uses clear, direct and explicit verbal messages. High-context cultures rely more on background knowledge, unspoken signals, and formality which is more pronounced- albeit with normal intensity- in British business correspondences (Cardon, 2008). This paradigm can clarify why writing in business is generally more concerned with clarity and conciseness in the US, whereas British writing will above all be relationship- and tone-building.

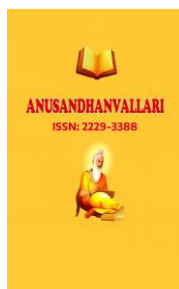
2.2. Studies on Intercultural Business Communication

Present studies point out the difficulty of communicating in cross-cultural business and the necessity of cultural sensitivity during international operations. According to Basabe & Ros (2005), cultural dimensions including power distance and individualism play a major role in how people inter-relate in any workplace setting and it determines everything including politeness strategies and decision-making styles. Equally, according to Schwab (2013), individualism, uncertainty avoidance and power distance have a direct impact on the approaches of communication in the multicultural settings, where more individualistic styles have a pronounced tendency to be more direct. In their comparison of the business emails sent across all the British, Spanish, and Polish companies, Moreno and Sznajder (2013) found that even though the process of globalization tends to establish uniform formatting, certain cultural peculiarities still appear in tone and format. Moreover, Kutateladze (2014) stressed that vocabulary, grammar, and spelling heterogeneity between British and American English puts forward misunderstanding within the business setting lightly, but definitely important.

2.3. Comparative Studies of British and American Communication

Comparative studies between the British and American communications reveal that although both cultures speak the same English language, their particular variation in business writing and interpersonal communication is quite different, given different cultures of orientation. According to Kutateladze, which is based on the findings obtained in the study, the British are more likely to sound formal, indirect, and context-dependent in their communication, whereas Americans are usually direct, to the point, and result-oriented (2014). Based on asking formal interview, Nickerson (2005) discovered that American business executives tend to advocate clarity and directness in written communication, so that ambiguity is avoided, whereas British business people might choose to emphasize diplomacy and establishing relations, more so at the expense of clarity of instructions given and/or the end product.

Jenkins and Leung (2014) have conducted a cross-cultural analysis of the use of discourse and identified that the usage of active voice, aggressive tone, and action-oriented language in the business correspondence between the American and British is high, whereas British writing is represented with passive voice, softening strategies, and the use of mitigations to present a request. On the same note, Moreno and Sznajder (2013) laid stress on the fact that, British writers tend to employ a more complex structure of sentence patterns and subtle vocabulary, while



American writers prefer plain language and straightforwardness. These results can prove that the choice of style is substantially formed on the basis of cultural values, including the dimensions of individualism, power distance, and uncertainty avoidance, by Hopstede and that they affect the success of communication in multinational business environments.

2.4. Linguistic and Stylistic Features in Business Writing

Linguistic and stylistic elements of business writing are very important regarding the transfer of professionalism, establishment of rapport and understanding the message conveyed. The British write about business in quite formal, moderate, indirect tone and apply a lot of modal verbs (e.g. may, might, could), hedging and polite mitigation tactics (De Bot & Clyne, 1994). It prefers unity and point of view harmony even requirement of brevity. By comparison, American business writing is short, snappy and direct and tends to use the active voice, imperative, and straightforward language (Bargiela-Chiappini & Nickerson, 2003).

There are also variations in such areas as spelling (e.g. colour vs. color, organise vs. organize), punctuation (e.g. the use of the Oxford comma), and formatting (e.g. block paragraphs vs. indented). Kutateladze (2014) adds that these linguistic differences are seemingly minute to cause any misunderstandings in cross-cultural business communication in the cases when they are not addressed. In addition, rhetorical styles vary: British authors may construct an argument by consistently reasoning and being able to contextualize, whereas the American writers would have a bottom-line-starting approach, which entails jumping the gun by stating the conclusions without preceding supporting information (Connor & Menzies, 1996). These features are imperative in the composition of efficient business communication strategies that are adaptive to people of different cultures.

2.5. Impact of Cultural Values on Writing Style

A strong factor that dictates writing style is cultural values, which has a high impact on tone, structure, and rhetorical strategies in a business letter. Hofstede (2011) concludes that the dimensions individualism vs. collectivism, power distance and uncertainty avoidance influence organization and delivery of information. High individualism and low power distance as applied in the American context entails directness, aggressiveness and explicitness in writing with a big concern on completion and efficacy of the task at hand. By contrast to the United Kingdom, its higher power distance and more formal cultural guidelines contribute to a greater relational harmony through the strategies of politeness and indirectness and an enhanced attention to preserving harmonious relationships in written communication (Hofstede Insights, 2023).

Hall (1976) High-Context vs. Low-Context Communication model reproduces these differences even better. U.S. as a low culture context favors direct clear and to the point communication and employ very little reliance on the context. On a scale of low to high-context, any British communication would seem rather low-context as compared to the majority of cultures, yet it would tend a little toward some contextualism, such as increased reliance on hedging, multi layered politeness and implications (Cardon, 2008). Such dispositions are reflected in structural habits, e.g., the order in which the main point is introduced (is it front-loaded, as in U.S. writing; or is it just rolled out, as in U.K. correspondence).

The cohesion of cultural norms and writing approach also has a pragmatic component: unless multinational teams be aware of these variances, they face the credible threat of misunderstanding, inefficiency and, relationship stress across professional communication (Beuter, 2023).

2.6. Research Gap Identification

Previous studies have studied in depth the rules of intercultural communications in general (Balakrishnan, 2022) as well as the linguistic differences between British and American English (Kutateladze, 2014), but little to no research compares, referring specifically to culture, written business communication between these two countries. Existing studies often:

- Over specify English communication, assuming it is ethnically hadal, or
- Choose verbal/oral communication to the spoken language, over

- Look at business writing into global multinational company contexts in not focusing on Pair U.S.–U.K.

Moreover, much of the literature covers the surface of language yet fails to cover the cultural forces beneath it which influence the practice of business writing, exemplified by the power distance, individualism, and contextuality concepts. This lack provides the practitioners with no specific methods to consider adapting the communication to these particular cultural settings. Thus, the study aims at bridging the gap by pursuing a comparative and culturally rich investigation of British and American business writing with the illustration of linguistic characteristics and rhetorical patterns on the context of their cultural roots, as well as practical guidelines in business communications in the international scenario.

3. Materials and Methods

The methodology describes the step-by-step process followed in the realization of goals of this comparative study on British and American business writing. It describes the research method, the data collection, analytical models, and data analyzing instruments to study the ways cultural values contribute to the written patterns of communication in the professional environment.

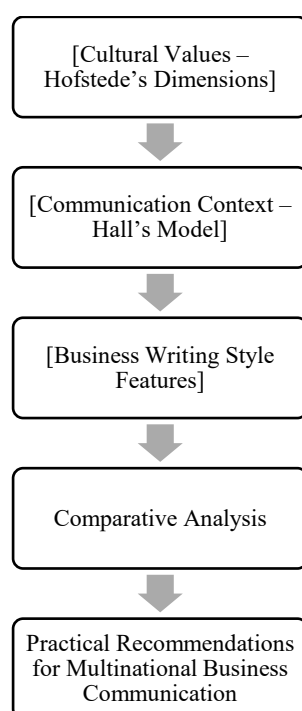
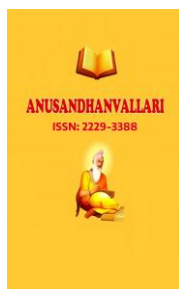


Figure 1: Framework of the study

The Cultural Dimensions Theory by Hofstede (2011) and the High- vs. Low-Context Communication Model by Hall (1976) form the direction of current investigation addressing how cultural values influence business writing style in the UK and the US. The structure of the study is depicted in figure 1.

3.1. Research Design

The research utilizes qualitative comparative research design to study and compare the cultural and style of writing business in England and America. It has an interpretive nature and involves determining the pattern of various factors such as the tone, formality, structure, and the set of rhetorical strategies by analyzing the text. Through comparison of veritable written business documents of both contexts, through the research, observed



communication practices can be connected to the underlying cultural values as deduced by Hofstede Cultural Dimension Theory and High- vs. Low-Context Communication models. Such a strategy can result in a thorough culturally based approach to differences and their significance to multinational business communication.

3.2. Data Sources

The paper uses only the secondary data, and the author is certain the analysis of the paper is performed with the use of available, original materials and peer-revised literature. The primary data sources include:

- Business Documents: Formal reports, corporate emails, proposals, and business letters of both British and American organizations, recovered after studying the company publication, government records and case studies.
- Scholarly Literature: Scholarly books, journal articles, and conference papers relating to intercultural communication, business writing, and applied linguistics, with an unbalanced focus on the studies that relate to the Anglo-American style of communication.

A combination of documentary and scholarly material provides not only empirical honesty but also theoretical sophistication in terms of analysis.

3.3. Sampling Criteria

There is specific attention given to the purposeful sampling of the materials, as the aim is to choose the ones; they represent typical communication practice in the business environment within the given cultural context. Inclusion criteria are:

- The document needs to be issued by a British or American verifiable corporate, governmental or institutional source.
- The writing should not be entertaining but has to have a professional business objective, sending information or persuading or reporting.
- The text also has to be in English and without heavy localization or translation that would hide local stylistic patterns.

The texts of non-professional situations or extremely informal communication or texts with external editing that changes their cultural originality can be excluded.

3.4. Analytical Frameworks

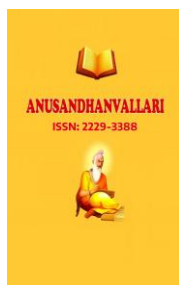
To facilitate the undertaking of a profound analysis of British and American styles of business writing, the study makes use of three complementary analyses. These models enable the systematic research of language building blocks, rhetorical construction and cultural influence on the written communication.

3.4.1. Discourse Analysis

A discourse analysis is going to be used to discuss the structural arrangement, tone, and interactional aspects of the chosen business documents. This involves evaluating sentence syntax, organization of the paragraphs, use of modality, hedging techniques and the structure of the flow of information. Through the analysis, each culture may be distinguished in its encoding of authority, politeness, and professionalism in written communication that better understands the pragmatic language functions in corporate settings (Fairclough, 2013).

3.4.2. Stylistic and Rhetorical Analysis

Stylistic and rhetorical analysis revolves around the lexical selection, syntactic structure, persuasive style inherent into the texts. This regards the test of directness versus indirectness, level formality, persuasive sequence, and cohesive device. Through its British and American preferences of rhetoric comparison, which includes inductive reasoning as exhibited in British writing as opposed to the deductive, bottom-line oriented



writing of the American writer, the study links the style of language to the purpose of the communication objective as well(Connor& Menzies, 1996).

3.4.3. Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory

Hofstede framework offers the cultural prism through which the results of the discourse and stylistic analyses are represented. Important dimensions like individualism vs. collectivism, power distance and uncertainty avoidance are plotted on the basis of the observed communication patterns. To elaborate, the inclination toward direct action-oriented language among American business writing is associated with the reading of low power difference and high individualism, and the formal, mitigated nature of the British writing translates into moderate power difference and relational orientation. (Hofstede, 2011).

3.5. Data Analysis Tools

Qualitative thematic coding methods are applied to analyze the data with the help of software like NVivo so that proper classification and locating of coded segments of texts collected can be ensured. This tool favors the possibility of spotting patterns of similarity and difference in tone, word choice, and structure that can then be compared side by side between British and American samples. Analytical categories shall be identified deductively (expenditure on the basis of the theoretical frameworks) and inductively (after seeing regularities in the data).

3.6. Ethical Considerations

This study utilizes secondary data; however, its ethical level is supported by the fact that all business documents of the study are provided to maintain ethical standards in the study as they are found through publicly available and verifiable databases. There is respect of intellectual property rights at the right citation of corporate and academic materials. The cultural contexts are not misrepresented and the findings are reported in a way that would encourage intercultural appreciation instead of stereotyping. There are no problems with informed consent since there are no human subjects directly involved in the research, though the research adheres to institutional rules regarding ethics of conducting research with publicly available data.

4. Results

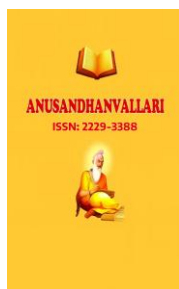
The findings of the comparative analysis of British and American business writing are represented in this chapter and refer to the identified linguistic, rhetoric and cultural peculiarities of the selected samples. The findings are categorized according to thematic areas that are based on the analytical plan such as comparative linguistic characteristics or rhetorical structure preferences as well as the correlation between cultural dimension and communication styles.

4.1. British and American Business Writing

Table 1 provides a comparative analysis that exposes opposing linguistic styles in British and American business writing that correlate with their respective cultural orientations.

Table 1: Comparative Linguistic Features in British and American Business Writing

Feature	British Writing Characteristics	American Writing Characteristics	Example
Tone	Formal, polite, indirect	Direct, assertive, action-oriented	"We may consider..." vs. "We will proceed..."
Sentence Structure	Complex, often passive	Simple, active	"The proposal has been reviewed..." vs. "We reviewed the proposal..."



Vocabulary	Nuanced, varied	Plain, functional	“Kindly revert at your earliest convenience” vs. “Please respond soon”
Hedging Devices	Frequent use of May, might, could	Limited hedging	“We might need to...” vs. “We need to...”
Spelling	British English	American English	Colour / Organise vs. Color / Organize

British style of business communication is formal, polite and indirect, with the use of hedging windows, depending on may, might, or could, which makes statements polite and avoids conflict of relationships. Sentence patterns are often complicated and passive creating a sense of deference and formality or can conceal agency. The use of vocabulary in British writing is subtle and heterogeneous with some like orderly to revert at your earliest convenience being used which convey the consideration of politeness rather than shortness. In the contrary, usually involved with American business writing is a direct, aggressive, and decisive tone of business writing, preferring the structure of simple, active forms that give a straightforward bearing of responsibility as in, the example, we read the proposal... The vocabulary is simple and focused on the effectiveness of the communication and is rather pragmatic as in the phrase of Please reply soon. In addition, spelling is national in character, such that in the UK, British English spellings are used (colour, organise), and in the US, American English spellings are used (color, organize). Such tendencies show that the British writing style is focused on being diplomatic and formal, whereas the American one is focused on being unmistakable, fast, and effective.

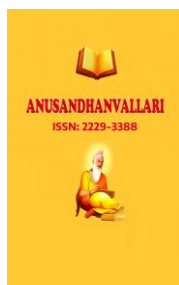
4.2. Preferences of Rhetorical Structure

As Tables 2 illustrate, British and American business writing differ significantly in their finance cluster use in terms of rhetorical organization and persuasive strategy.

Table 2: Rhetorical Structure Preferences

Rhetorical Element	British Business Writing	American Business Writing
Order of Information	Context and background first	Conclusion or key point first
Persuasive Strategy	Indirect persuasion, relationship focus	Direct persuasion, task focus
Use of Supporting Details	Detailed, layered evidence	Concise, bullet-pointed evidence
Level of Formality	High	Moderate
Reader Engagement	Subtle, implicit appeals	Explicit, call-to-action statements

The pattern used in the British business correspondence is to put in context and background before drawing to the conclusion, then the reader is able to follow the logical construct of the arguments. Usually, the persuasion follows development which leans more on relationship-building and trust prior to the delivery of the main proposal. Evidence is supported with the help of detailed and layered narrative, which is characteristic of being more thorough and subtle in its argument. The levels of formality are quite high and speech is moderated to be professional. The involvement of the reader is secured according to the respect of the implicit appeals that do not explicitly compel doing the desired action. The American business writing, in contrast, will tend to present the most significant point or conclusion first, which is a results-oriented way of communicating. The appeals to persuasion are direct and task-oriented and the supporting information is in brief or bullet-point form so that quick decisions can be made. Its formality has a certain standard, and the interaction with readers is based on the clear calls to action, so no one was left with the opinion that the response would be ambiguous. Such contrasts



signify that the British writing style emphasizes slow persuasion and formal relationship, but American writing style is economic, has clarity, and is firm.

4.3. Correlation of Cultural Dimensions and Communication Style

Table 3 shows how differences in Hofstede cultural dimension differences can be used to explain differences in the United Kingdom and the United States in business writing.

Table 3: Cultural Dimensions and Communication Style Correlation

Hofstede Dimension	UK Score/Implication	US Score/Implication	Observed Writing Impact
Individualism	High – relational diplomacy	Very High – focus on personal achievement	UK – builds rapport before request; US – focuses on result
Power Distance	Moderate – respect for hierarchy	Low – egalitarian approach	UK – formal titles; US – use of first names
Uncertainty Avoidance	Moderate – cautious tone	Low – risk-taking, decisive tone	UK – careful commitments; US – bold commitments
Communication Context	Moderately low-context	Low-context	UK – implied meaning possible; US – explicit meaning

Both nations rate well on individualism, but the UK model of applying it is to also pursue relational diplomacy, where an approach is sometimes made to establish a rapport and then understanding before issuing a request. To the contrary, the US, which has an even higher score of individualism, tends to focus on personal progress and performance and consequently, it has an outcome-oriented and actions-driven writing. Power distance also affects formality to some degree: the moderate score of the UK allows respecting the hierarchy and using formal titles and honorifics, the low score of the US on the other hand, inspires egalitarian approach and even professional correspondence may be written using first names. In terms of uncertainty avoidance, the middle ground that the UK occupies translates to a tentative and guarded tone where the wording of the commitments is keyed to give maximum leeway. The low score of the US is associated with a decisive and risk-taking tone, with offbeat promises being more on the scene. Finally, the difference in cultural contexts of communication: in the UK, with moderately low-context profile, it is possible to imply some meanings and use some subtle wording, whereas in the US with strictly low-contextual profile, nothing is left to implied meaning and subtle turn of phrase. These results affirm that cultural values influence what is to be communicated, but how it is to be structured and portrayed in the professional writing.

5. Discussion

In this chapter, the findings of the comparison of the business writing in Britain and America have been analyzed through the light of the theories of cultural communication. It puts together the results of the research with the previous scholarly literature as it points out that linguistic, rhetoric and structural differences evoke a reflection of cultural values classified in Cultural Dimensions Theory described by Hofstede and High- vs. Low-Context Communication model as defined by Hall. The section also looks into the practical consequences of the differences on multinational business communication in terms of their potential misinterpretation as well as the ways in which they can be enhanced. When contextualizing the findings of a study through a wider academic background, not only does it confirm the results of analysis, but also points to the way in which the said study contributes toward the understanding of intercultural communication and professional treatment (practice).

5.1. Comparison with Existing Literature

The results of the current research fit and enhance the entire literature of the intercultural business communication by showing a direct impact of cultural values on writing styles in the British and American business environment. The fact that the British business writing is more formal, indirect, and employs the usage of numerous hedging devices aligns with the findings of Kutateladze (2014) who emphasized the UK political correctness, subtle wordings, and context creation prior to stating the main idea. On the same note, American usage of directness, active voice as well as explicit calls to action reflect the findings of Nickerson (2005) and Connor & Menzies (1996) who both cited U.S as low-context, results-based communication culture that is efficiency-driven as opposed to a relational-diplomatic culture.

The rhetorical structures interpretation by this research which is, British texts tend to develop arguments inductively, American texts adopt the bottom-line-first method deductive work also supports an earlier study of contrastive rhetoric by Connor & Menzies (1996) which attributed the observed structural tendencies to culturally guided modes of reasoning. The same can be seen when looking at Jenkins and Leung, (2014) as they explain that American correspondence seems to focus on accomplishing tasks, but British writing has rapport and slow persuasion as priorities.

When analysed using the Cultural Dimensions Theory of Hofstede, the relationship between cultural scores and the writing practices proves to be reflective of previous research. According to Hofstede (2011) and Hofstede Insights (2023) both the U.S. has a very high individualism and low power distance which drives it to use egalitarian, explicit communication, whereas the UK is a little less power distance and formal norms of culture which lends itself towards being more cautious and status-sensitive in tone. The fact that uncertainty avoidance tends to affect tone and commitment language, as observed in the current study aligns with Cardon (2008), who observed that when cultures experience high degrees of uncertainty avoidance, the cultures are more likely to use hedging and very careful qualification to deal with perceived risks during business communication.

Moreover, the difference in the communication context correlates with the Hall (1976) model, because both the UK and the U.S. are low-context cultures, however, the UK has a comparatively stronger dependence on the non-verbal meaning and word usage than the U.S. This nuance is in favor of Moreno and Sznajder (2013) and their arguments that even in cultures that speak English, differentiations in context sensitivity can take place and influence understanding.

In sum, the present study can be deemed not only continuing to support current body of theory and prior empirical findings but also adding to it by offering a more culturally located contrast between the written form of written business communication in Britain and America an area that has largely been overlooked in comparison to oral or general intercultural communication studies (Balakrishnan, 2022)

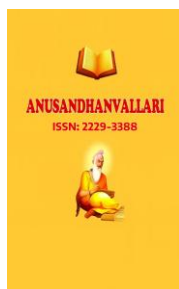
5.2. Gaps and Opportunities

Despite a considerable accumulation of research on intercultural communication, there are still wide gaps in the context of the specific comparable study of British and American written business communication. A great deal of the current literature mostly:

- Over generalizes English-language communication without making any difference in the Anglo-American cultural differences (Kutateladze, 2014; Nickerson, 2005),
- Uses a more spoken language than written language and (Balakrishnan, 2022), or
- Maps linguistic dissimilarities without relating them to the underlying cultural dimensions, i.e., power distance, individualism, and uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede, 2011).

These gaps create opportunities for further inquiry. Future research could expand on this study by:

1. To confirm the trend in the examination of stylistic tendencies, by referring to primary sources of information via surveys or interviews of British and American professionals.



2. Analyzing occasion-specific communication, since situation-specifics (e.g., financial, medical, technological) can affect tone, structure, and rhetorical measures.

3. Venture into digital communication systems, including instant messaging and virtual collaborative tools, in which the equilibrium of formalism and efficiency could be placed in brand new directions.

4. Continuing the cultural comparison to incorporate the English speaking countries with some other colonial and historical heritage (e.g., Australia, Canada, New Zealand) to check the generalizability of the findings.

Eliminating these gaps would lead to a more academic study of how cultural values influence written communication and would give more focused recommendations on possible training programs, mentioned earlier, corporate policies, including ethics.

5.3. Limitations

Although this study provides a useful avenue on how British and American write in businesses, there are some weaknesses that need to be realized.

1. **Reliance on Secondary Data** – The research will be carried out solely relying on business documents available in the public domain as well as academic sources. Inasmuch as this assures authenticity, it constrains the capacity to detect the communicative intentions in the real time or the effects of situational settings on choices made in writing.

2. **Sample Representativeness** – The choice of documents is rather heterogeneous and therefore may lack some global coverage of industries, organisations, cultures, and regions involved in the UK and the US. The existence of the sector-specific practices might result in having various stylistic norms that are not presented in the analysis at hand.

3. **Absence of Primary Participant Perspectives** – The research will be unable without access to business people in interviews or surveys, to provide any rationale behind specific stylistic or rhetorical choices.

4. **Cultural Overlap Due to Globalization** – Growing globalization and the effect of common international corporate styles could have obscured certain differences in writing between British and American writing styles in that it can be difficult to ascribe differences based on cultural differences alone.

5. **Focus on Written Communication Only** – The study does not cover spoken communication and multimodal communication (e.g., presentations, video calls) that can also help uncover significant cultural specifics.

The understanding of these limitations is the basis of improving the future research designs and makes an extension of the research scope by including primary data collection, sector-specific analysis, and other forms of business communication.

6. Conclusion

The following research paper attempted to analyze British and American business writing culture in order to gain knowledge about the ways in which despite commonality in language, common communication patterns may still emerge due to the influence of various cultural, historical and social backgrounds. Based on qualitative comparative study of both real-life business documents and relevant academic literature, the study has found out that both types of business writing vary not only on some shallow linguistic characteristics but also on the latent of rhetorical forms, tone and persuasive techniques.

The use of Hofstede Cultural Dimensions Theory allowed to realize the fact that such dimensions as individualism, power distance, and uncertainty avoidance are core in describing these stylistic differences. British business writing is highly individualistic but maintains a moderate level of power distance. As a result, it

tends to be formal, polite, and indirect, reflecting a diplomatic approach to relationships and respect for hierarchy. On the other hand, American business writing which due to extremely high individualism and a low power distance is direct, concise, and action-oriented prefer egalitarian relation and well-structured, results-based communication. Likewise, the High- vs. Low-Context Communication model by Hall served to prove the contextualization of the result that both cultures tend to be low-context but the UK slightly tends toward the usage of implied meanings and subtle expression, the US considers it rather explicit.

The tendencies highlighted in the rhetorical analysis are as follows: British authors tend to use contextual background preceding the general point, slow and gradual persuasion, and formal tone, whereas the American writers have a tendency to start with the conclusion, use direct and direct persuasive appeals, and adopt a not so formal tone. These results confirm the research performed by others (Kutateladze, 2014; Connor & Menzies, 1996; Moreno & Sznajder, 2013), and form a more specific comparison of written, rather than verbal, business communication between the two countries.

In practical terms, the research identifies the threat of incorrect interpretation that can happen in a multinational business environment when one does not pay attention to the cultural implications of writing style. A good example is that what may appear as diplomatic and professional to a British writer may send a vague or evasive message in US, and the American bluntness may come out as over assertive in Britain. Being aware of these differences may assist multinational professionals to change their type of communications, enhance international cooperation, and minimize possible tensions at cooperative projects.

The research contributes both: academically, it contributes to the lack of comparative studies on the discourse of written business communication between Anglo-American nations; practically, it can provide the field of business practitioners, trainers in business communication, and educators who develop global business communication curricula with guidelines to be put into action. Nevertheless, the study used only secondary data, which means that in the future, similar studies might be carried out that not only use secondary data, but also include data collection by methods (in the industry), data collection by methods (in the industry), analysis, and study of the uses of the digital communication tool (email, instant messaging, and collaboration tools). Extensions of this would further enhance our knowledge regarding cultural business writing practices in terms of how globalization, technology, and the changing norms of workplaces still contribute to it.

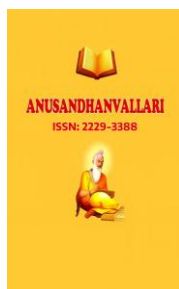
6.1. Implications

6.1.1. Theoretical Implications

The results of this research can be applied to developing the theoretic scope of intercultural business communication by providing its specification in the sphere of written discourse, which is less studied than intercultural communication in general. Using Hofstede Cultural Dimensions Theory (Hofstede, 2011) and Hall High- vs. Low-Context Model of Communication (Hall, 1976), the paper confirms the usefulness of these theories in interpreting the existence of stylistic disparities with even nations that speak the same language. The findings further support the assumption of contrastive rhetoric (Connor & Menzies, 1996), as it proved that cultural norms define the inner linguistic aspects as well as document structuring and argumentative styles. Also, the study continues the earlier observations (Moreno & Sznajder, 2013; Kutateladze, 2014) and places them in a comparative Anglo-American setting, filling thus a considerable gap in the intercultural communication literature regarding intra-English communication.

6.1.2. Practical Implications

Practically, the study can be of interest to individuals working in cross-cultural business settings because it has provided some direct recommendations. Being aware that British writing style tends to be diplomatic, formal, subtle, then direct, concise and task oriented, American writing style, allows practitioners to speak in a manner that the audience expects to hear. Nickerson (2005) remarks that modifying the form and the tone of the message according to the cultural background could elevate the level of clarity and minimize a possible misunderstanding within the international correspondence. The results may be used in the design of corporate communications policies, international staff training, and the business English curriculum with a focus on ideas of culture



adaptation applied to writing courses. Furthermore, it is possible to normalize cross-border communication, given that the differences between spelling rules, rhetoric ordering, and word tone are addressed, and there are no plans to deprive cultures of their authenticity.

6.1.3. Implications for Multinational Business Communication

In case of the multinational corporations, the present study emphasizes on the role of cultural literacy in written communication. As it was noted by Balakrishnan (2022), being unaware of little differences in the approach to business writing may cause misunderstanding and negatively affect project deadlines, contract negotiations, and client relations. When they match the communication of messages to the cultural expectations of the particular recipient, including the desire of the UK to communicate about relationships first or the tendency of the US to act directly and immediately, businesses will strengthen mutual trust, efficacy, and joint results. Moreover, the study contributes to the need to create cross-cultural style guides of multinational teams so that communication will be not only culturally adapted but also company-consistent (Cosman, 2021). Such implications, in the context of globalization and remote cooperation especially digital channels of communications, should be in a manner that preciseness and brevity are balanced up against filthiness of cultural sensitivity.

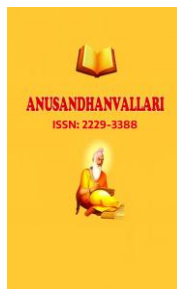
6.1.4. Future Research

To build on this study, future research could explore the following areas:

- **Development of Cross-Cultural Writing Training Modules** – Future research could plan, execute and evaluate specific training courses aimed at educating professionals on how to modify their writing patterns when communicating with a British or US counterpart to assess how these changes in effectiveness, efficiency, and relationships can be achieved.
- **Creation of Industry-Specific Communication Guidelines** – Research may be conducted into the creation of tailored style guides in industry, personalised to meet the demands of finance, law, healthcare, or technology, with written communication being fit to work both with cultural expectations and against industry regulations.
- **Integration of Cultural Sensitivity into Digital Communication Tools** – Future research may be conducted in the field of AI-based language adaptation features implemented in the email clients and collaborations platforms to automatically identify tone, vocabulary, and structure and change towards the cultural profile of the recipient.
- **Impact Assessment of Cultural Writing Adaptation on Business Outcomes** – Applied research would also be able to quantify the impact of culturally-tailored writing on such hard numbers in the business as client retention, successful conclusion of a negotiation, and project completion times.
- **Collaborative International Business Simulations** – Subsequent research might include simulated multinational work-projects to test the effect of applying culturally-informed writing tactics to cohesion within a group or team, (slow) decision-making, and conflict resolution.

References

- [1] Adanlawo, E. F., Reddy, M. M., & Rugbeer, H. (2021). Intercultural business communication: The implications of language barriers. *Psychology and Education Journal*, 58(5), 6281–6290. <https://doi.org/10.17762/pae.v58i5.3394>
- [2] Balakrishnan, K. (2022). Influence of cultural dimensions on intercultural communication styles: Ethnicity in a moderating role. *Journal of Communication, Language and Culture*, 2(1), 46–62. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcomlac.2022.01.005>



-
- [3] Bargiela-Chiappini, F., & Nickerson, C. (2003). Intercultural business communication: A rich field of studies. *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 24(1), 3–15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07256860305788>
- [4] Basabe, N., & Ros, M. (2005). Cultural dimensions and social behavior correlates: Individualism–Collectivism and Power Distance. *International Review of Social Psychology*, 18(1), 189–225.
- [5] Beuter, K. (2023). *English as a lingua franca among adolescents: Transcultural pragmatics in a German-Tanzanian school setting* (Vol. 18). Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co KG. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110782222>
- [6] Cardon, P. W. (2008). A critique of Hall's contextualizing model: A meta-analysis of literature on intercultural business and technical communication. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, 22(4), 399–428. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1050651908320361>
- [7] Connor, J. R., & Menzies, S. L. (1996). Relationship of iron to oligodendrocytes and myelination. *Glia*, 17(2), 83–93. [https://doi.org/10.1002/\(SICI\)1098-1136\(199606\)17:2<83::AID-GLIA1>3.0.CO;2-4](https://doi.org/10.1002/(SICI)1098-1136(199606)17:2<83::AID-GLIA1>3.0.CO;2-4)
- [8] Cosman, O. (2021). Cultural differences in business communication. *The USV Annals of Economics and Public Administration*, 21(1(33)), 78–87.
- [9] De Bot, K., & Clyne, M. (1994). A 16-year longitudinal study of language attrition in Dutch immigrants in Australia. *Journal of Multilingual & Multicultural Development*, 15(1), 17–28. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.1994.9994554>
- [10] Fairclough, N. (2013). *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language* (2nd ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315834368>
- [11] Ferraro, G. P., & Briody, E. K. (2023). *The cultural dimension of global business* (9th ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003343776>
- [12] Guffey, M. E., & Loewy, D. (2019). *Essentials of business communication* (11th ed.). Cengage Learning.
- [13] Hall, E. T. (1976). *Beyond culture*. Anchor Books/Doubleday.
- [14] Hofstede Insights. (2023). *Country comparison tool*. Retrieved June 19, 2023, from <https://www.hofstede-insights.com>
- [15] Hofstede, G. (2011). Dimensionalizing cultures: The Hofstede model in context. *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture*, 2(1), 8. <https://doi.org/10.9707/2307-0919.1014>
- [16] Jenkins, J., & Leung, C. (2014). English as a lingua franca. In A. Kunnan (Ed.), *The companion to language assessment* (Vol. 4, pp. 1607–1616). Wiley. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118411360.wbcla047>
- [17] Kutateladze, B. L., Andiloro, N. R., Johnson, B. D., & Spohn, C. C. (2014). Cumulative disadvantage: Examining racial and ethnic disparity in prosecution and sentencing. *Criminology*, 52(3), 514–551. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1745-9125.12047>
- [18] Moreno, R. G., & Sznajder, H. S. (2013). Business communication across three European cultures: A contrastive analysis of British, Spanish and Polish email writing. *Ibérica*, (26), 77–98.
- [19] Nickerson, C. (2005). English as a lingua franca in international business contexts. *English for Specific Purposes*, 24(4), 367–380. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.esp.2005.02.001>
- [20] Schwab, K. W. (2013). Individualism–Collectivism and Power Distance cultural dimensions: How each influences parental disciplinary methods. *Journal of International Education and Leadership*, 3(3), n3.