BUSINESS LIMITATION AS A CONSEQUENCE OF UNBROKEN LANGUAGE BARRIER

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Abstract

This paper investigates business limitation as a consequence of unbroken language barrier with a view to exploring strategies for overcoming such barriers. Although considerable scholarly attention has been given to business limitations arising from inadequate capital, poor advertising, lack of technology, and ineffective management strategies within the fields of Management, Economics, and Business Studies, limited attention has been paid to the role of language in business. A mixed methods approach was adopted for the study, involving 50 purposively selected business men and women across five designated markets in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), namely Wuse Market, Area 1 Shopping Complex, Area 3 Shopping Complex, Area 10 Shopping Complex, and Gwagwalada Market. Quantitative data were collected using a 10-item instrument titled Business Limitation as a Consequence of Unbroken Language Barrier Questionnaire (BLCULBQ), while qualitative data were obtained through Focus Group Discussions and a 10-item in-depth interview schedule. The face and content validity of the BLCULBQ were established by experts in Linguistics and Measurement and Evaluation from the University of Abuja. The reliability of the instrument was determined through a pilot test involving 20 business entrepreneurs who were not part of the study, yielding a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.81, which indicates good internal consistency. Quantitative data were analysed using frequency counts and percentages, while qualitative data were transcribed, coded, and subjected to thematic analysis. Findings revealed that language barriers significantly inhibit rates of turnover, profit margins, business growth, and expansion, thereby underscoring the critical role of language in business management. The study concludes that unbroken language barriers constitute a major limiting factor in business performance. It further contributes to existing knowledge by establishing the indispensability of language in achieving business goals and recommends the promotion of language learning, development of communication skills, and adoption of multilingual practices as effective strategies for overcoming language barriers in business.

Keywords: Consequence, indispensability, business limitation, profit-margins, management strategies and language barrier.

Introduction

Business entails efforts and activities by individuals to produce and sell or buy and sell products for profit. This implies that profit which translates into growth and expansion is key in business. Irrespective of the fact that the goal of every business apart from the non-profit category is profit making, limitations are inevitable in business. Some of the business limitations are orchestrated by limited capital, poor management strategies, technological limitations and language or communication barrier.

This study examines language barrier-induced business limitations, given the central role of language in business operations. Language is fundamental to business because it serves as the medium through which transactions are conducted, negotiations are managed, documents are prepared, and relationships with customers and other stakeholders are maintained. More broadly, communication has been shown to occupy a central position in business interaction and organizational outcomes rather than functioning as a peripheral activity (Szkudlarek et al., 2020). In addition, recent empirical evidence indicates that language capability contributes significantly to export performance and international networking capacity among small and medium-sized enterprises, thereby demonstrating that language competence is a strategic resource for growth and competitiveness (Tibrewal et al., 2024). Similarly, language choices within firms have been found to shape how businesses engage external stakeholders and operate in multilingual environments, which suggests that language barriers can restrict transactions, reduce profit opportunities, and hinder expansion (Talukder & Barner-Rasmussen, 2024).

Although considerable research has examined business limitations arising from financial, managerial, and technological challenges, relatively limited empirical attention has been given to business constraints induced specifically by language barriers, especially in localized trading contexts. Recent studies suggest that language-related business research has focused more strongly on multinational corporations and internationally oriented firms, thereby leaving an important gap in relation to how unresolved language barriers affect day-to-day business performance in smaller or local market settings (Tibrewal et al., 2024; Ivanova-Gongne et al., 2023). Against this background, the present study contributes to the literature by examining business limitations as a consequence of unbroken language barriers and by identifying practical pathways for addressing such limitations in ways that may improve customer relations, competitiveness, growth, and market participation.

Statement of the Problem

Language plays a central role in business transactions, customer relations, negotiation, and market expansion. However, where traders and customers do not share a common language, communication difficulties may hinder transactions, weaken customer trust, and negatively affect business performance. Although existing studies have examined business limitations arising from financial, managerial, and technological factors, limited attention has been given to the specific effects of language barriers on business performance. This study, therefore, addresses this gap by examining how unbroken language barriers constrain business activities and outcomes. The study addresses three research questions:

1. What is the importance of language in business?
2. What are the consequences of language barrier in business?
3. What are the strategies of overcoming language barrier in business?

Literature Review

Business denotes an enterprise involving commercial, industrial or professional engagements to facilitate or promote the production of goods and services mostly for the purpose of making profit. In other words, business involves activities undertaken by people to produce and market commodities and services to make gain. Business begins with an idea and a name which is followed by a plan where the goals and objectives are clearly stated (Britannica, n.d.; U.S. Small Business Administration [SBA], 2025a).

In addition to the business plan, business requires an initial capital for a smooth take off, as well as strategies for the actualization of the goals stated in the business plan. Again, a business must be registered in line with the registration requirements and necessary permit and licenses secured since business can be sued in court for one reason or the other (SBA, 2025a).

Although the reason behind most businesses is profit making, some businesses are classified as non-profit. The non-profit entities operate as charities, advocacy groups and social service providers. Business activities take place anywhere; physical shops, roadsides and online and are defined by the industries in which they operate like shoe business, food business, real estate, etc. Businesses come in different sizes; small business, mid-sized and large scale (Internal Revenue Service [IRS], 2025; Britannica, n.d.).

There are also different types of business:

(i) Sole Proprietorship – owned and managed by a single individual
(ii) Partnership – operated by two or more people
(iii) Corporation – managed by a group of people as an entity
(iv) Limited liability Company (SBA, 2025b).

Although some businesses are non-profit oriented, profit is a major goal of business. What this means is that for a profit-oriented business, the absence of profit, which inhibits growth and expansion is described as business limitation. Put differently, limitation in business refers to restrictions that affect business operations and activities, with negative consequences for business growth, expansion, and profit margins (Britannica, n.d.).

Apart from internally orchestrated limitations stemming from the business' own structure, managerial inefficiencies, inadequate resources, and unfavorable market conditions, one of the contributory factors to business limitation is poor communication occasioned by a language barrier. Communication in business is an inevitable, veritable instrument for the conveyance of clear and unambiguous business messages, customer service, advertising, and branding. Business language encapsulates both specialized technologies and terminologies used in commerce, and a wide range of language skills is needed for effective business transactions. It also involves understanding core business concepts, using professional language and recognizing cultural nuances in business (Szkudlarek et al., 2020).

Effective language use is unavoidable in making business decisions and solving problems in business. A multilingual business person is at an advantage in accessing wider range of information sources and collaborations with other business persons from different cultural settings. His linguistic background will not only enable him to make informed business decisions but will also enhance his ability to resolve business challenges with relative ease (Szkudlarek et al., 2020; Tenzer et al., 2021).

In addition, effective communication or barrierless communication in business helps in maintaining valid and valued customer service relationship as well as improved business reputation and enhances customer trust and confidence that also leads to continuity in business. On the contrary, when business goals and transactions are poorly articulated due to language barrier and insurmountable cultural nuances, customers' trust and confidence will hardly be earned and maintained (Ivanova-Gongne et al., 2023; Sheth et al., 2023).

Empirical studies have shown that language plays an important role in business interaction, customer relations, and organizational performance. Earlier studies provide useful background for understanding this relationship. For example, Ahmad Abdullahi (2012) found that both verbal and non-verbal communication were instrumental to business success in Funtua Main Market. Similarly, Nwankwere (2012) observed that language remained central to business transactions among Igbo traders despite the pressures of globalization. In the same vein, Farrias and Dewi (2023) reported that language variation in traditional markets was strategically used to support negotiation and attract buyers. Collectively, these studies show that language is closely tied to market interaction and business continuity.

More recent studies extend this argument by demonstrating that language capability has broader implications for business performance. For instance, Tibrewal et al. (2024) found that language operative capacity contributes significantly to export performance and international networking capability among small and medium-sized enterprises. Likewise, Talukder and

Barner-Rasmussen (2024) showed that language choice, whether English-only or multilingual, affects how firms manage internal communication and respond to external stakeholder needs. These studies suggest that language competence is not merely a social asset, but also a strategic resource that can shape competitiveness, growth, and market expansion.

Furthermore, empirical evidence indicates that language influences customer experience and relationship quality. Sheth et al. (2023) found that customer-centric support services improve customer experience when communication is effectively integrated across the customer journey. Similarly, Ivanova-Gongne et al. (2023) demonstrated that language in intercultural business interactions affects power relations, dependence, and frustration among business actors. This implies that language barriers may weaken trust, reduce service quality, and undermine long-term business relationships.

Moreso, language barriers have been shown to affect internal coordination and knowledge processing. Tenzer et al. (2021) found that both visible and hidden language barriers impair participation in communication and weaken knowledge processing in multilingual teams. In a broader sense, Szkudlarek et al. (2020) argued that communication lies at the core of international business activities and directly shapes business outcomes. Thus, persistent language barriers can hinder not only everyday interaction but also strategic decision-making and organizational effectiveness.

Finally, recent research suggests that digital communication can help businesses respond to some of these challenges. Monroy-Osorio (2024) found that digital service innovation improves business performance when communication systems are effectively integrated into service delivery and decision-making processes. Therefore, in addition to multilingual competence, digital adaptability has become increasingly important for firms seeking to remain relevant in contemporary markets.

Theoretical Framework

The research is hinged on the Economic Theory of Human Capital Development. The theory was developed by two Economists; Gary Becker and Theodre Schultz in the 1960s. According to the theory, knowledge, skills, experience and abilities of individuals contribute positively to economic growth and national development. Human capital refers to the educational attainment, knowledge, experience and skills that individuals acquire through training programmes and skill development initiatives that shape or determine their economic values. Human capital includes qualities like education, communication skills, human management, problem solving skills, and physical, mental and emotional wellbeing

For the purpose of this study, of all the components of human capital, communication skills is emphasized as the most critical. This is based on the fact that acquiring language skills in business finds expression in this crucial component of human capital.

Today, there is no doubt that proficiency in multiple languages by embracing language learning programmes is key to business success and expansion. In addition, acquiring language skills help traders in navigating the intricacies of cross border negotiations and collaborations and enhance their global competitiveness.

This theory therefore informs the study's analysis of business relations, outcomes and other narratives and by situating the study's empirical findings within the theory, it provides the conceptual tool for understanding how language skill development or acquisition in business positively influences business outcomes. Specifically, this theoretical model provides a deeper understanding on how unbroken language barrier limits business outcomes.

Methodology

The study adopted a mixed methods research design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches to examine business limitation as a consequence of unbroken language barriers. The quantitative component employed a descriptive field survey design, while the qualitative aspect was addressed through thematic analysis. The research was conducted across selected markets in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), including Wuse Main Market, Area 1 Shopping Complex, Area 10 Shopping Complex, Gwagwalada, and Kuje Main Markets. These markets represent major commercial hubs with diverse business activities involving both national and international transactions.

The population of the study comprised all business owners and entrepreneurs operating within the selected markets in the Federal Capital Territory. A sampling procedure was adopted to draw participants from this population. Specifically, purposive sampling technique was employed to select respondents based on their level of business experience and active engagement in market operations over time, ensuring that only information-rich participants were included in the study.

The final sample size consisted of 50 respondents. This sample size is considered appropriate for studies of this nature, particularly where the emphasis is on depth of understanding rather than statistical generalization. In line with Yin (2018), small but carefully selected samples are suitable in field-based and qualitative-oriented studies where the focus is on analytical depth and contextual insight rather than large-scale representation. Consequently, the sample size of 50 respondents is deemed adequate to generate meaningful evidence on the effect of language barriers on business performance within the study area.

Three main instruments were used for data collection in this study. The first was a structured questionnaire (BLCULBQ), which consisted of 10 items designed to obtain quantitative data on the perceived consequences of language barriers on business performance, particularly in relation to turnover, profitability, growth, expansion, and other operational outcomes. The second instrument was a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) guide, which comprised 5 guiding questions aimed at eliciting in-depth views on the causes and consequences of language barriers in business transactions, communication processes, and customer relations among participants. The third instrument was a Key Informant Interview (KII) schedule, which contained 10 semi-structured questions designed to obtain detailed experiential accounts from selected business owners regarding how language barriers influence decision-making, negotiation, customer interaction, and overall business performance.

The face and content validity of the research instruments (BLCULBQ, FGD guide, and interview schedule) were established by three experts in the Department of Linguistics and Measurement and Evaluation at the University of Abuja, who reviewed the instruments to ensure clarity, relevance, and alignment with the study objectives. Based on their recommendations, minor adjustments were made to improve clarity and contextual appropriateness. The reliability of the questionnaire instrument was determined through a pilot test involving 20 business entrepreneurs who were not part of the actual study sample. The data obtained from the pilot study were analyzed using Cronbach's Alpha, yielding a reliability coefficient of 0.81, indicating a high level of internal consistency and suitability of the instrument for the study.

Data analysis was carried out in two stages consistent with the mixed methods design. Quantitative data obtained from the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics, specifically frequency counts and percentages, to profile respondents' demographic characteristics, linguistic status, and business typologies, as well as to answer the research questions.

Qualitative data generated from the focus group discussions and key informant interviews were transcribed verbatim, coded, and subjected to thematic analysis in order to identify recurring patterns, meanings, and interpretations regarding language barriers and business performance. Finally, triangulation of findings was employed by comparing and integrating results from both quantitative and qualitative data sources to ensure convergence, enhance validity, and strengthen the credibility of the study findings.

Ethical Consideration

The study was carried out in compliance with ethical considerations for safety, dignity and privacy of respondents and in line with established humanitarian and academic research protocols. The researcher also ensured the confidentiality of the respondents as well as the protection of their data. No identifying personal data were recorded and participation was entirely voluntary and participants retained the right to withdraw at will without penalty.

Data Analysis and Results

The data collected from questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussions were analysed and the result shows that most business limitations are orchestrated by language barrier. The findings are presented in two sections: Quantitative results from the survey of 50 participants and qualitative insights obtained from in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. A combination of these results yielded both numerical patterns and rich narrative accounts, providing a clear picture of business limitation as a consequence of unbroken language barrier in the sampled markets.

Quantitative Results

Table 1: Distribution of Participants According to Sex

S/N	Sex of Participant	Frequency	Percentage (%)
i.	Females	25	50
ii.	Males	25	50
	Total	50	100%

Field survey, 2026

From Table 1, the participants comprised of 25 females (50%) and 25 males (50%), making a total of 50 participants (100%). This accounts for a balanced representation of participants in respect of sex.

Table 2: Distribution of Participants According to their Business Locations

S/N	Business Location	Frequency	Percentage %
i.	Wuse Market	10	20%
ii.	Area 1 Shopping Complex	10	20%
iii	Area 3 Shopping Complex	10	20%
iv.	Garki Market	10	20%
v.	Araa 10 Shopping Complex	10	20%
	Total	50	100%

(Field survey, 2026)

From Table 2, 10 participants corresponding to 20% of the total participants were selected from each of the selected markets. This accounts for another even selection of the participants vis-à-vis the markets under investigation.

Table 3: Distribution of Participants According to Business Typologies

S/N	Type of Business	Frequency	Percentage (%)
i.	Textile	5	10%
ii.	Ceramics	5	10%
Iii	Grains	5	10%
iv.	Electronics	5	10%
v.	Perishables	5	10%
vi	Provisions	5	10%
vii	Jewlries	5	10%
viii	Shoes	5	10%
ix	Plastic Products	5	10%
x.	Soft drinks	5	10%
	Total	50	100%

(Field survey, 2026)

From Table 3, 10 products were selected from the numerous products in the sampled markets. The Table shows that 5 merchants were selected for each typology of business, amounting to a uniform of 10% participant representation for each selected business typology

Table 4: Distribution of Participants According to their Educational Qualifications

S/N	Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
i.	1st School Leaving Certificate	5	10%
ii.	WAEC/SSCE/GCE	35	70%
Iii	NCE/National Diploma	7	14%
iv.	Degree/HND	3	6%
v.	Master's Degree and above	Nil	%
	Total	**50**	**100%**

Field survey, 2026

Table 4 reveals that 5 or 10% of the participants have 1st School Leaving Certificate while 35 or 70% have either, WAEC, or SSCE Certificate. Another 7 or 14% have either NCE or National Diploma Certificates while 3 or 6% of the participants have Degree or HND Certificates. None of the sampled business men and women has Master's Degree or more.

Table 5: Perceived Effects on Business Performance

Item	Statement	Agree(A)	%	Disagree(D)	%
1	Reduces turnover	42	84%	8	16%
2	Affects profit margin	40	80%	10	20%
3	Slows business growth	39	78%	11	22%
4	Limits business expansion	38	76%	12	24%
5	Loss of customers	41	82%	9	18%
6	Affects service delivery	40	80%	10	20%
7	Affects negotiation	36	72%	14	28%
8	Affects customer retention	38	76%	12	24%
9	Causes financial loss	37	74%	13	26%
10	Reduces competitiveness	39	78%	11	22%

Note. A = Agree; D = Disagree; N = 50.

As presented in Table 5, the findings indicate that language barriers significantly constrain business performance. Notably, the highest agreement was recorded for turnover (84%), suggesting a direct negative effect on sales volume. Similarly, 80% of respondents reported adverse effects on profit margins, reflecting the economic cost of communication inefficiencies. In addition, 78% and 76% agreed that language barriers slow business growth and limit expansion, respectively, indicating constraints on long-term development. With regard to customer outcomes, 82% reported customer loss, while 80% indicated reduced service quality, underscoring the importance of effective communication in customer relations. Furthermore, 78% and 76% of respondents linked language barriers to reduced competitiveness and customer retention, respectively. Moreover, 74% associated them with financial losses, while 72% reported challenges in business negotiations. Overall, the pattern of responses consistently demonstrates that language barriers exert a multidimensional negative influence on turnover, profitability, growth, expansion, and customer-related outcomes. Therefore, they constitute a critical impediment to business performance.

Qualitative Results

Thematic analysis of interviews and focus group discussions corroborated and enriched the survey findings, bringing to light the following recurrent themes:

Theme 1: Customer Service Impediment

All the participants asserted that: "*Language is vital in maintaining customer relationship in business". Again, one of the participants interviewed in Gwagwalada main market observed: "It is absolutely difficult to retain a customer whose language you neither speak nor understand"*.

In every business, every trader needs to communicate fluently in the language that the customer understands and speaks. If there is no cordial customer relationship, it may be difficult for the customer to come back another time. Language barrier negatively affects customer service and the totality of business transactions between traders and customers. The same language barrier creates gaps in answering customers' questions and providing adequate solutions to their needs, thereby reducing both their confidence as well as the business reputation.

Theme 2: Weakening of Business Relationships

From the focus group discussions held in Area 10 shopping complex, the participants asserted that: "*If a business man or woman is faced with language barrier, he or she hardly keeps a strong business relationship with his/her customers"*.

This implies that effective communication creates a positive atmosphere for strong business relationships to flourish. In other words, when communication is negative or ineffective, it discourages and weakens business relationships. Where there is no business relationship due to language barrier, trust and customer loyalty will be conspicuously absent and this can limit business to a very large extent.

Theme 3: Competitive Advantage Incapacitation.

All the participants agreed that: *"Language barrier inhibits competitiveness in business"*.

Many business men and women end up incapacitated because they lack the linguistic ability to compete effectively in business locally and internationally. They therefore face limitations in business even when they have the required resources to do business in such places. Their inability to speak multiple languages therefore significantly impede their competitive advantage in business and hinders them access to broader range of market opportunities especially within the international scene.

Theme 4: Hindrance to Global Business Growth and Expansion

All the participants said: "*Language barrier hinders business growth and expansion.*"

This consensus opinion by the participants is not unconnected to the fact that in business, linguistic diversity, apart from achieving effective communication also enables cross cultural understanding with so much value addition to business success. In other words, lack of understanding of cultural differences hinders effective communication and appropriate marketing strategies that suits diverse markets within diverse cultures.

Theme 5: Access Limitation to Global Market Opportunities.

Majority of the Participants said: *"Traders with language barriers find it difficult to access global or international market opportunities."*

According to the participants, market and marketing today go beyond local and national borders to include foreign and international scenes. The implication of this is that success in markets to some extents is dependent on the linguistic efficiency of the traders involved. This is because of the essentiality of barrierless communication between customers and their traders for fruitful outcomes. Put differently, ineffective communication, especially through new technologies like social media, email, Facebook, You-tube, WhatsApp, internet, etc, will be unsuccessful in reaching international audiences in global markets

Discussions

The findings of this study show that language barriers are not merely incidental communication problems; rather, they constitute a serious constraint on business performance. In practical terms, the results suggest that when communication between traders and customers is disrupted by linguistic differences, several aspects of business activity are affected at once, including customer service, relationship management, competitiveness, growth, and market expansion. This interpretation is consistent with the position of Szkudlarek et al. (2020), who argue that communication occupies a central place in international business and should be treated as a dynamic process that shapes interactions and outcomes across business contexts.

To begin with, the findings point to a clear need for improved customer service. Where language barriers remain unresolved, businesses may find it difficult to understand customer needs, explain products accurately, respond to complaints promptly, or deliver services in ways that inspire confidence. As a result, communication breakdowns can weaken customer satisfaction and reduce trust. This position is supported by Sheth et al. (2023), who show that customer-centric support services are most effective when they are integrated across the entire customer journey rather than restricted to the post-purchase stage.

Furthermore, the findings suggest that language competence is crucial for building and sustaining strong business relationships. Effective business relationships are typically founded on clarity, reciprocity, and mutual understanding. However, when one party struggles to communicate effectively, the relationship may become marked by frustration, imbalance, or dependence. In this regard, Ivanova-Gongne et al. (2023) found that language in intercultural business interactions influences self-perceived power and may generate dependence or frustration because of linguistic limitations. This is especially important because long-term business relationships often depend not only on transactional success but also on whether the parties feel respected, understood, and able to negotiate meaning on equal terms. Thus, the current findings suggest that traders who make deliberate efforts to communicate in linguistically inclusive ways are more likely to build trust, familiarity, and relational continuity with customers (Ivanova-Gongne et al., 2023).

In a related sense, the study indicates that language barriers weaken business competitiveness and constrain growth. In contemporary commercial environments, firms compete not only through price and product quality, but also through their ability to communicate value effectively to diverse stakeholders. Tibrewal et al. (2024) demonstrate that language operative capacity in small and medium-sized enterprises has explanatory power for export performance and international networking capability, which shows that language resources contribute directly to international business outcomes. Similarly, Talukder and Barner-Rasmussen (2024) argue that language choices have major implications for the success and survival of international small firms because decision-makers must balance internal resource sharing with the linguistic expectations of external stakeholders.

More importantly, the findings reveal that language barriers can slow business expansion by obstructing communication, negotiation, and knowledge sharing. Expansion into new markets often depends on the ability of firms to process information accurately, coordinate with others, and interpret market signals effectively. Yet Tenzer et al. (2021) found that both evident and hidden language barriers reduce participation in team communication and impair sensemaking, thereby obstructing basic and sophisticated knowledge processing activities. By implication, where communication remains linguistically fragmented, businesses may struggle to interpret customer preferences, negotiate effectively, or make informed strategic decisions. Consequently, the present study’s finding that language barriers limit growth and expansion is strongly supported by broader evidence that language-induced communication difficulties can undermine both operational and strategic performance (Tenzer et al., 2021).

Another important implication of the findings is the need for greater access to global market opportunities through multilingual and digitally enabled communication. In the twenty-first century, business activity increasingly extends beyond local and national boundaries, making linguistic flexibility a necessity rather than a luxury. On the one hand, Talukder and Barner-Rasmussen (2024) show that multilingualism can be critical for firms seeking to respond to diverse external stakeholder preferences. On the other hand, Monroy-Osorio (2024) demonstrates that digital service innovation, especially when combined with intelligent use of customer feedback and contextual data, can strengthen business strategy, growth, efficiency, and decision-making. Accordingly, the implication of the present findings is that businesses should not only adopt digital tools such as email, social media, and online messaging platforms, but should also use them in linguistically accessible ways. This is because technology alone does not eliminate communication barriers; rather, its value lies in how effectively it is integrated into customer-oriented and multilingual business practice (Monroy-Osorio, 2024; Talukder & Barner-Rasmussen, 2024).

Overall, the discussion makes it clear that language barriers exert a multidimensional and systematic influence on business performance. More specifically, they affect customer service, relationship building, competitiveness, growth, expansion, and access to wider markets. For that reason, the findings should not be interpreted as isolated communication challenges, but as evidence that language efficiency is central to business sustainability and long-term success. This broader interpretation also resonates with the earlier studies already contained in the manuscript, including Farrias and Dewi (2023), Ahmad Abdullahi (2012), and Nwankwere (2012), all of which underline, in different ways, the importance of language in shaping business interaction and outcomes. Therefore, businesses that invest in multilingual capability, customer-sensitive communication, and digital communication competence are likely to be better positioned for durable performance and market relevance.

Future Research Directions

As a buildup on this study, future researches can focus on:

1. Ways of avoiding language induced business limitation
2. Ways of breaking language barrier in business
3. Ways of encouraging cross cultural understanding in business
4. Ways of promoting multilingualism as part of human capital development

Conclusion

The study has shown that, beyond inadequate capital and poor management strategies, language barrier constitutes a significant constraint on business performance. The findings demonstrate that language-related communication gaps negatively affect customer relations, service delivery, negotiation, competitiveness, growth, and access to wider market opportunities. In particular, ineffective communication weakens customer confidence, limits mutual understanding in cross-cultural transactions, and reduces the ability of businesses to respond effectively to the demands of both local and international markets.

The study further establishes that business success in contemporary markets depends not only on multilingual competence but also on the ability to adapt communication to diverse cultural and digital environments. In this regard, the application of Becker's and Schultz's Human Capital Theory underscores the importance of communication skills, language learning, and knowledge development as valuable resources for business growth and expansion. Overall, the study concludes that effective and barrier-free language use is not optional in business; rather, it is essential for sustainable performance, competitiveness, and the actualization of business goals. Despite these sobering realities, the study proposes the following recommendations as ways of breaking language barrier in business to avoid limitations:

(i) **Traders should Embrace Language Learning:**

Intricacies of cross boarder negotiations in business can only be easily surmounted if one is linguistically well equipped. To be linguistically well equipped is a product of embracing wide range language training programmes. The aim of these programmes is to enhance marketers' linguistic abilities and cultural integration for effective global business transactions.

(ii) **Traders should Leverage on Language Skills.**

The impact of effective language skills in global business expansion can never be over emphasized. A trader's ability to communicate in the language of his customers enhances his business transactions as well as exposes him to the cultural expectations and preferences of his customers. Again, a business individual that easily navigates through both linguistic and cultural differences usually experiences hitch free relationships with his customers and easily accesses new business opportunities.

(iii) **Business Men and Women should Embrace Multilingualism.**

To have a good command of different languages of the world guarantees a trader a competitive advantage in the global business world. This feature bridges communication gaps in business, streamlines engagements with international customers and enhances robust business relationships that enable sustainable business growth in diverse markets across the globe.

(iv) **Traders should Listen to and Watch Business Oriented Programmes:** Listening to and watching business-oriented programmes are ways of improving language skills. This is because these programmes are anchored by experts in the business fields who use key words or right vocabularies related to business regularly. So, by listening to or watching such programmes, business men and women become familiar with such key words or terminologies needed to flow in their daily business transactions

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