

Conversations about BELF

Article discussion: “Conceptualising BELF”



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CONVERSATIONS
ABOUT
BELF
English as a
Business
Lingua Franca

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English as a business lingua franca (BELF)

BELF is the use of English as the medium of communication among **speakers of different first languages** in an emergent, variable and hybrid manner that is **appropriate to the demands** and (multilingual) **resources** of the **specific business context**.

“getting the job done” – clarity as priority

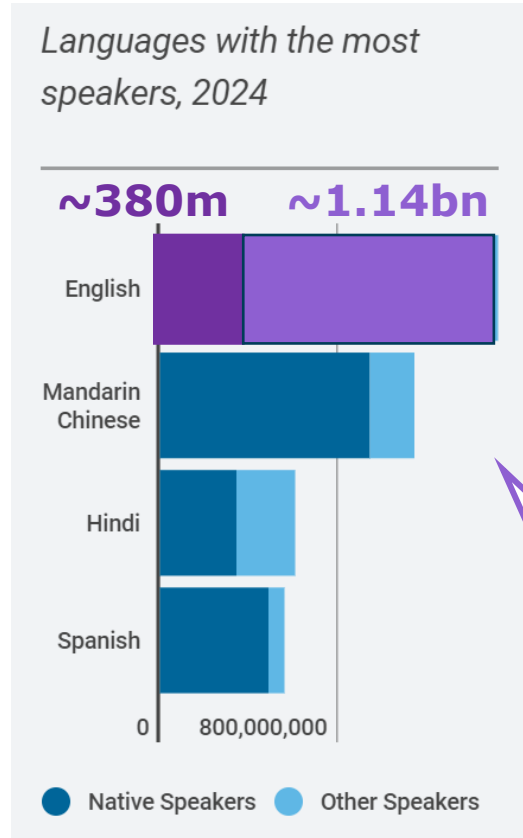
shared repertoire of business knowledge & language

relationship-building & maintaining rapport

Komori-Glatz 2018: 52
see also Ehrenreich 2016, Kankaanranta et al. 2015;
Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen 2017; Kankaanranta
& Planken 2010, Kankaanranta et al. 2018

English as a lingua franca – what is appropriate English in a global world?

Native speakers
account for only
1/3 of the world's
English speakers



You are **much more likely** to be working with **non-native** than native speakers of English!

Non-native speakers can have **very high** or **very low** proficiency → **Flexible** language use is key!

Source: [Ethnologue](#) (2024)

English as a business lingua franca (BELF)



front stage

Kankaanranta et al.
2015 & 2018

back stage



Figure 1 Linguistic manifestations of English in international business(es)

<p><i>Common corporate language (English)/“official English”</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• top-down management policy• oriented to Standard English norms• used for official external & internal communication <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• shared & hybrid; inherently potentially multilingual, including professional & functional languages• performative/constituent of interactional processes and relationships• emergent & ad hoc language practice <p><i>English as a business lingua franca (BELF)/“working language”</i></p>	
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Komori-Glatz 2018: 52

Photo credits:
[Volksoper Instagram](#),
Carmen with Katia Ledoux

Discussion in breakout rooms

- What resonated the most with you?
- What aspects do you disagree with?
- How could you make use of this research in your context?
- How could you / have you adapted your current teaching materials to reflect these concepts?
- Share tasks with the group that you could think of or have already used to implement these ideas.

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