



**IBSU**

**INTERNATIONAL BLACK SEA UNIVERSITY  
FACULTY of EDUCATION and HUMANITIES  
AMERICAN STUDIES DOCTORAL PROGRAM**

**American, Turkish, Chinese and Georgian Cultural Differences and  
Peculiarities Depicted in Business English Correspondence**

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**Extended Abstract of Doctoral Dissertation in American Studies**

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I confirm that the work corresponds to the field, is characterized by novelty, scientific and practical value and is presented by the format defined by International Black Sea University.

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## INTRODUCTION

Globalization, the universal movement to develop and promote economic, financial, trade, educational, cooperational and communicational integration, stimulates the urgency of communication through the world. Global demand of communication challenges business people especially, as they are normally oriented on expanding their business and setting new contacts in their own country and abroad. The necessity of global communication requires existence of common language and emphasizes its importance to everyone participating in global issues. Current business and communicational development shows that English is the language which has undertaken the responsibility to blur the border between the business partners enabling them to establish fruitful communication.

It appeared that General English cannot provide equivalents for some specific meanings characteristic for business communication, so at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the narrow branch of linguistics appeared. Use of more sophisticated forms of language mostly applicable for business communication was termed as Business English. Since then a lot of works have been dedicated to business English explaining, recommending and providing the special patterns, the certain linguistic rules and the some linguistic peculiarities in order to formulate and perfect use of Business English language. However, the development of the business environment and cooperative relationship with foreign partners caused the adjustment of linguistic formulas of business English language to a specific environment or to a specific worldview typical to a certain culture.

The adjustment of linguistic formulas of business English to specific environment or to certain cultural meanings developed modification of the language patterns recommended to be used for business purposes mostly. Change of linguistic formulas drew the scientists' attention and a lot of examination, investigation and study of delicate linguistic units appeared. Firstly, they tried to study and collect those variations; secondly, they checked the accessibility of those alterations to different business environment and finally they tried to interpret the causality of language variations in English for special purposes. Main reason for changes in language and in connotation of words is culture. Culture defines perception of the world and attitudes toward business partnership as well.

Business language is not just the words uttered orally but body language, behavior and business culture convey meanings which needs thorough research and understanding of cultural peculiarities which may become the reason of business communication failure or success. Technological advancement does not necessitate business people to travel and have face-to-face meeting, due to that, writing is getting more and more popular for number of reasons. Business

people can save time, money and energy with the help of technology. Sending written documents happens instantly and difference in time is no concern any more. However, business writing is not easy to perform. It requires great attention and provision of cultural characteristics of the readers. Structure of the information, format and quick responses usually speak more than the words.

Business writing needs much practice as it requires careful selection of words, structuring of information and following globally accepted writing format. Writing models are not universal and the content may vary in accordance with the aim, approach towards the deal, level of relationship and awareness of rules of business correspondence. Moreover, publications which aim to teach business writing rules usually advance framework or structure which is very close to English speaking countries and their cultures. Business writers usually adjust writing norms to their culture, as some points are less acceptable or comprehensible for them. The diversity of the world and variability of cultures arise the question about the perseverance of the rules established in business English writing and extent of the cultural impact on it.

### **Problem Statement**

The problem of my dissertation is delicate and challenging. It deals with relation of culture and business communication in written form. Culture is a spirit, principles, ideas and beliefs which are usually deeply rooted in a certain society in a certain way. Business is a field which attracts almost everyone and demands communication with every possible partner or a customer. Modern development of technologies changes communicational habits, evolves new forms of it and set new rules. Some rules are very general and globally acceptable but there are some points which appear in different cultures.

Business writing with the advancement of technology is one of the most popular forms of business communication. Global business writing is mainly performed in English and American style seems to be the basement of every variation of English business written communication. Dominance of English and American style of business writing is depended on leading economic position of the USA. However, not every point is comprehensible or acceptable for global business society. Due to that, global business writing in English varies from its original form because of the influence culture and proficiency of English language.

### **Goal Statement**

The study will be an attempt to enlarge the notion about the target cultures and their impact on the language especially on the business language particularly in the written form. The purpose of

this research is to identify what is American Business English language, where the border between Business and General English is, why American Business English is becoming highly demanded and why and how it is becoming influential in the different business circles, how it is preserved or altered in different cultures. The research also gives the definition of culture and depicts the peculiarities of linguistic variation caused by target cultures. The research exhibits the clear picture of the cultural peculiarities of American Business English correspondence in comparison with Georgian, Turkish and Chinese business correspondence. The aim of the work is to give advice and recommend some ready-made linguistic formulas for the business peoples to avoid misunderstanding in business communication.

### **Research Questions**

Present thesis aims to answer the following questions:

- Q1. What is language, culture, business language and how is it connected to culture?
- Q2. What are the major effects of culture on business communication especially at international level of communication in modern technological era?
- Q3. How important is business writing and what linguistic characteristics are the signals of culture?
- Q4. How does business writing vary across cultures and what cultural traits are usually observable in process of business written communication?

### **Novelty and Actuality**

**Novelty** of the thesis is that it analyses and compares business letter written by the representatives of four target cultures: American, Turkish, Chinese and Georgian and identifies existed differences among them, in terms of fluency of language, vocabulary, grammar, style, formatting and information organization which can be attributed to the historically developed cultural peculiarities of the target nations.

Georgia is at the initial stage of involvement in global economy, and I think it is important to attract our attention to development of business correspondence to set meaningful and effective business communication with partners. As I have done pre-research, I could not find any researches conducted in Georgia which explores linguistic patterns of business correspondence in relation to culture.

The **actuality** of the thesis is that it defines to what degree the target cultures have an impact on business correspondence; assesses extent of attribution of business correspondence of target nations to globally adopted norms, and discusses cultural peculiarities and characteristics which may

become the reason of miscomprehension of business writing at international level of communication.

### **Theoretical and Practical Value**

**Theoretical** value of the thesis is that it provides broad analyses of target business cultures (American, Turkish, Georgian and Chinese) and written patterns of business communication. It will pay its contribution to the existed theories dealing with this problem: written business communication being influenced by the culture of the target nations.

Based on primary data analysis (obtained via questionnaire and authentic business letters) the thesis expands the excited theories about written business communication focusing attention of learners to take into account, respect and understand of linguistic deviations caused by different cultural perception especially in business correspondence.

As for the **practical** significance of the study, it will be extremely helpful primarily for Georgian businesspeople, as well as for teachers, scholars and learners interested in teaching and mastering business written communication. It will help them to understand and analyze the nature of different cultures, study and examine business language peculiarities and get thorough information about the influence of culture on language and particularly on business language.

I think my research will be helpful for the Georgians primarily to draw attention to business writing, think carefully about the reader and take into consideration cultural peculiarities which may be keys for understanding miscommunication causes.

### **Hypothesis**

1) American Business English is a basement of the world's business communication especially in digital written form, providing writing rules for business correspondence to make business writing globally comprehensible in format, style and structure.

2) Set of rules of American Business English correspondence is affected by peculiarities of different cultures, which cause alteration in linguistics patterns, and develops different approaches towards business writing.

### **Research Methods**

The conducted research on the topic will use both **qualitative** and **quantitative** methodologies in order to accomplish the final aim which is to depict cultural peculiarities in business English correspondence. Qualitative approach is used to study the problem deeper, quantitative data is essential to shape and study statistics of the research.

Qualitative data for the research is given by reviewing and description of the major points of the problem. Thorough literature review is provided that examines importance of the language, role of English in the world communication, especially in business communication. Definition of culture and peculiarities of culture of the target nations are exposed and in addition to this, it gives description of cultural values which are usually depicted in business English correspondence. Moreover, cultural competence for international communication is described with the help of qualitative research.

The thesis provides statistical data retrieved from the studies related to culture and business communication. The studies analyze involvement and influence of culture in business communication. In addition to this, statistical data which describe multilingualism of the target nations and extent of leading position of English as lingua franca compared with other languages are also given.

Quantitative research of the thesis is usually provided by the distribution of online or paper based questionnaire which aimed to reveal cultural peculiarities in business English correspondence. Furthermore, it intended to measure importance of English language proficiency among the target cultures in relation to advancement of business communication skills.

Observation and comparison of business letters written by the representatives of target cultures is the final stage of the research. It provides linguistic issues some of which are characteristics for certain cultures and others are globally accepted in practice.

### **Framework of the Research - Limitations**

The research examines degree of cultural impact on business communication in written form. The thesis does not cover influence of culture for all forms of business communication but in process of research mentions some of them for comparative reasons. As culture is a broad concept, the thesis analyzes major points and characteristics of American, Turkish, Chinese and Georgian cultures and allocates features observable in English business correspondence, particularly in business letters.

### **Structure of the Dissertation**

The dissertation includes the following parts: Introduction, 3 chapters, conclusion and recommendations and 2 appendixes. It involves 33 figures and 10 tables.

## **CHAPTER 1. – Literature Review, Theoretical Approach to Language, Culture and Business Communication**

Chapter 1 is literature review and represents concept and different approach towards language. Describes and gives general idea about the relation of language and culture, provides analysis different attitudes towards the relation. The chapter also gives historical review of English for specific purposes and provides development of business writing. It also discusses how communication works especially in business context.

Research of literature lead me to conclude that language the main tool of human communication is a living body, changing, developing and adjusting to modern needs. Many new items appear in a language due to technical development. Approaches to the concept of language have been changing since the ancient time but one thing remained universal: language is the mean of communication vital for the development of human world. Demand of advanced communication changed not only the way of expressiveness but the world perception followed by industrial change. Industrial change made it possible to transfer information from one generation to the other. Gathered experience enabled human to go deeper in language acquisition and its functioning. Influence of non-language features on language usage promoted different attitudes towards language functioning and narrowed it down to the specific needs.

Language of special purposes (LSP) is relatively new aspect of linguistics, which equips human with special knowledge useful in specific situations. That valuable knowledge is the precondition of fruitful communication especially for business needs. Proper usage of language in business is a half way to success, prosperity and wealth. Although LSP provides certain regulations and generally adopted ideas about the usage of language for special needs, multifacetedness of language, the influence of culture and current demands of communication always doubts the universality of the rules in the certain contextual environment.

Written language is one of the forms of language usage, which seems to one of the oldest practice for creating, gathering and delivering information. Along with the transformation of communicational demand, considering current development of the world had an impact on writing regulations. Adjustment of writing to modern needs requires not only the good command of language but global understanding of the world as well. Business writing involves precise knowledge of special language, writing regulations, expressing attitude, understanding of culture and proper public communication. Moreover, business correspondence in English can speak about the aspiration towards global market.



## **CHAPTER 2. – Cross-Cultural Communication**

Chapter 2 represents different business communication styles, explains the reason of English being lingua franca in particular for business purposes. The chapter underlines importance of multilingualism and multiculturalism when business communication occurs. Major key issues of international communication are depicted along with the barriers for cross cultural business communication. Different studies, which examine cultural values in business communication, are analyzed and importance of business writing in digital age is discussed.

Investigation of key issues in chapter 2 leads me to conclude that modern business requires cross-cultural communication in accordance to development of modern world. Considerable and significant recent change of the world is technological advancement. Appearance of digital technology influences style of communication all over the world and it is becoming more and more affordable, accessible and common in everyday life and in business. The most notable thing is speed of message delivery, better understanding of difference and sufficient coordination at international level of communication. Knowledge of communication styles and understanding of cultural, social or organizational preferences in business communication can lead people to fruitful cooperation at international level. However, just awareness of acceptable communicative forms can never be guarantee to successful international business socialization.

Communication at international level can never work properly without knowledge and respect of differences between cultures. Nowadays world tends to become more and more Multicultural. It has its reasons. Firstly, internet influences people to see and feel differences. Another thing is curiosity and eagerness to experience something new that drives people to look for new opportunities, study, share and develop. Aspiration towards new reality leads people to see vivid difference between them and other world. No one can say which social order or cultural traits are better as they are all unique, tied closely to the people and to the area as well. Multiculturalism colors the world and makes people be more tolerant, liberal, open-minded and progressive.

Multilingualism is becoming a norm for modern global society as well. Being able to speak more than one language is very beneficial not only for private success but for business activity as well. It enables people to cooperate in a host society without mediator and understand all the peculiarities related with linguistic perception of reality. Different languages reflect the world differently and knowledge of more than one language opens new reality to a person.

Communication at international level can never work properly without knowledge of common language. Common language unites people and helps them to establish productive

cooperation especially in business. Therefore, every language is unique in perception of the world. However, need of international communication promotes English as lingua franca for business world and not only for business. It has a number of reasons. English speaking countries have developed faster and achieved economic dominance. Moreover, education and discoveries made by scientists appeared to be more available in English. However, modern world seems to be open to same degree to the use of other languages as lingua franca as well. Nevertheless, the use of any language as business lingua franca requires adjustment to business needs.

International business communication along with the sophisticated knowledge of common language requires deep understanding of culture and cultural traits. If a business wants to prosper, respect towards cultural diversity and comprehensibility of preferences is crucial. Culture sometimes shapes and evolves business product or business appearance at the market and redirects goals of business. Some cultures value relationship more and are more team oriented, some cultures are more goal-oriented and some are more time oriented. Good knowledge of common language and following linguistic rules will never compensate intercultural miscommunication. The existence of the idea that business language is free from cultural background is groundless, cultural peculiarities are hidden in connotations of the words, in syntax of a language and in formulation of the ideas. Moreover, underestimation of influence of culture on language in business writing usually leads writers to miscommunication and unfavorable outcomes.

Writing in business communication is getting more and more popular. Technological advancement is beneficial precondition for promotion of business writing. Time and money are saved just by using technology and composing written business document that can be instantly sent to a reader. Furthermore, writing enables people to file the documents and remember the proceedings. However, creation of business document is not easy, especially at international level. That is extremely difficult when non-native language is used. Writer should know all peculiarities of a language which convey certain context. The context may or may not be writers' intended idea. Linguistic units may also imply meaning that is less favorable for business communication. The language used speaks a lot firstly about the language proficiency level of the writer, international communication competence of a writer and the degree of mastering writing skills. Everything mentioned above effects business writing and consequent outcomes are followed. Modern business writing is successful when proper words are selected and used in proper grammatical or stylistic context, appropriate attitude is displayed, sufficient techniques are used and sense of international communication competence is visible.

## **CHAPTER 3 – Different Cultural Peculiarities in Business English Correspondence – Comparative Analysis**

Chapter III will explore, describe, compare and analyze the existence of different cultural peculiarities depicted in business English correspondence. The research is based on the questionnaire and on the letters provided by the respondents. Examination and research of questionnaire and letters is an attempt to reveal possible cultural characteristics in business correspondence performed in English by a writer with different cultural backgrounds, in particular by American, Turkish, Chinese and Georgian business writers. Based on the result we will be able to see major characteristics of American business English correspondence and how the way of business communication varies across cultures and also, effects of linguistic proficiency and cultural awareness on business English correspondence. The research will distinguish issues which are globally acceptable in business communication and the degree of their provision across cultures.

### **Process of finding respondents**

Research findings were gathered through the questionnaire and the letters provided by participants. Anyone who had the experience of interaction in written form for business purposes in English was invited to participate. People who had any practice of written business communication with people of different cultural background were especially welcomed.

Finding of respondents for assessment of Business English writing appeared to be very difficult. Most of people (approximately 60%) asked to fill in the questionnaire claimed that they could not do it because of lack of competency in the field. Some of them (approximately 35%) were able to answer questions partially as they did not have sufficient experience to characterize business correspondence of all target cultures. Some respondents (approximately 5%) have just given information about themselves and refrained themselves from giving assessment of business writing of any cultural background and gave a short comment about their preferences in writing.

Process of finding respondents was very long and required considerable stamina. The easiest group to attract for participation in research appeared to be Georgians. That is not surprising, as I am Georgian and it was easy to explain to them what I needed. Some of them refused to take part in research with the explanation that they do not use business English or they do not have international business addressees. Some of them promised but their answers have never arrived. It may happen for number of reasons: respondents may have forgotten the request, they may not have time or found it too difficult to fill in the questionnaire, or just did not what to say “no” directly. People in Georgia

prefer to avoid giving negative answers as they are more oriented on seeming pleasant and helpful. This is also cultural trait which really appeared in process of finding respondents.

Finding of American respondents was not easy but they appeared to be very sociable and easily accessible mostly via the social network. After the explanation of the request, Americans tended to give the most direct answers. If it was relevant to their experience, they did it, but if it was not they usually gave detailed explanation. I was really grateful for explanations and their directness. It is assumed that Americans are direct in business relationship and this particular cultural trait was well-outlined.

The hardest process appeared to be finding Turkish and Chinese respondents. Without great help of International Black Sea University (IBSU) it would take more than year to find sufficient number of respondents for the research. I managed to find just two Turkish and four Chinese respondents on my own willing to participate into research. My requests were just left without answer. Only 2% Turkish addressees wrote me back with explanation that the questionnaire was beyond their experience but no Chinese respondents did the same. It is believed that Turkish and Chinese business communities have very closed relationship and any request from outside needs either a reliable mediator to seem persuasive or many efforts to build credibility in order to raise interest towards the request which requires time and good will to be replied sufficiently.

### **Method**

Questionnaire was offered online, on word – MS office program and paper-based as well. I used forms of Google for creating online questionnaire and managed to find 79 respondents online. The link of the questionnaire is as follows: <https://goo.gl/forms/2yfQ6wPCpzRmatzi1>. I have invited over 500 hundred people to fill in the questionnaire electronically but I got no answers. I have got just a request to remove some e-mail addresses from the list or the remarks that questionnaire will definitely be left unattended because business people usually prefer to spend their time on something more useful. After that I started using social media and my connections widely. I used to send approximately 50 requests a day nearly for 5 months and gradually I managed to find competent respondents and gather the answers for research. However, my attempt did not seem enough and without the help of the colleagues of IBSU, the goal seemed unreachable. I also distributed about 30 paper-based questionnaire and about 20 MS office doc. files. In total I got 105 responses, answers of 24 Americans, 38 Georgian, 18 Turkish and 25 Chinese respondents.

The **goal** of the questionnaire was to observe different attitudes towards business writing and explore cultural peculiarities in business writing. Furthermore, with the help of shared letters to reveal linguistic peculiarities which are acceptable globally or preferred by certain cultural group.

The research revealed that all target nationalities followed patterns of American business writing style more or less. Qualitative research showed that the national culture has an impact on effectiveness of business communication and on choice of linguistic patterns. Culture along with the proficiency of the language determines the quality of writing and extent of use of American business writing style.

Business written communication is becoming more and more popular. One of my questions asked the respondents about the forms of business communication used the most frequently. Respondents could mark more than one answer. According to the gathered answers, it appeared that written form of communication in business is the leading type of communication. That proves that advancement of communication had an impact on business communication. Moreover, globalization prevents people to be always available for face-to-face or oral communication, so written communication is becoming more and more popular.

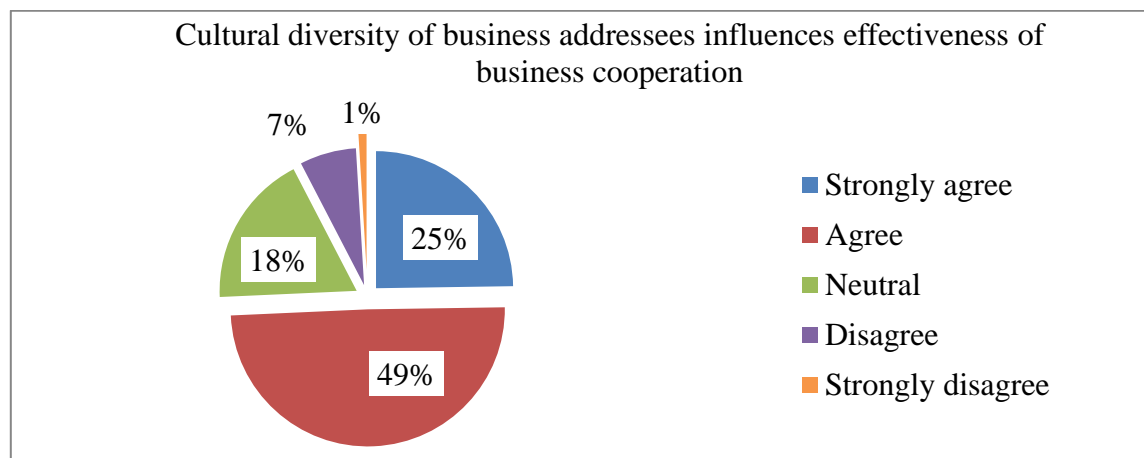
Forms of written communication were included in all the given answers. Oral form of communication appeared to be mostly used for business negotiations. That is not surprising as business people are much oriented on doing business and business can never develop without cooperation. Written communication is not enough for attracting clients or establishing new contacts; oral communication has its advantages and is the primary ability of a person. However, business is the field, which adjusts communication means to its necessities, so written communication, which needs special training and is a creation of humankind in order to reach the interlocutors in a long distance, is more appropriate, common and useful for business people. In addition to this, English as a language of modern global business is more applicable in written form, as business, which requires use of English for NNSs, is usually transnational or oriented to be available for international business partnership. Global business gives little chance of oral communication as need of travelling in order to expand business and establish new partnership is reduced by the use of technology which gives opportunity to have fast and suited reaction on the progression of business deeds. Table 1 depicts options of question 6 which referred to duties fulfilled by the use of business English. Numbers of responses with percentages are also given.

<b>Answer options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response count</b>
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Writing business correspondence, print or electronic (letters, press releases, etc.)	27.8%	55
Oral translation	11.1%	22
Oral interpretation	10.1%	20
Business negotiations	12.1%	24
Working with administrative documents	26.3%	33
All above	12.6%	25

**Table 1:** Duties fulfilled with the use of business English

I am trying to find out that cultural diversity has an impact on business communication and culture should be taken into consideration while communication at international level orally and in written form occurs. Respondents were asked to what extent they agree to the statement that cultural diversity of business addressees influences effectiveness of business cooperation. As it is exposed in the figure 1, half of the respondents agree that cultural diversity has an impact of business communication and cooperation. 25% of them strongly agree that culture really matter in business communication, 18% of them stated their neutrality towards the issue. Very few percentages of respondents disagree with the issue.



**Figure 1:** Consideration of importance of cultural diversity in business cooperation

The most important qualities for business correspondence are accuracy, clarity and competitiveness, being concise, appropriate in style and giving feeling of sufficient respect. Figure 1 gives assessment of nations according to these qualities being visible in business correspondence.

It is evident that, the most and equally accurate are Georgians and Americans. Comparatively less accurate appeared to be the Turkish and the Chinese. Primary reason for lack of accuracy may be level of English language and as mentioned above the Turkish and the Chinese are comparatively less proficient in business English.

As for the clarity of the message, here appeared that Americans and Georgians have the same level of clarity a bit better than the Turks do but the Turks are better in giving clear messages than the Chinese. Main reason for that may lie in culture. Americans and Georgians are more inclined to be part of low-context culture where openness is valued and place for implications are limited. The Chinese are part of high-context culture like indirectness and due to that their business correspondence is a bit vague for other target nationalities.

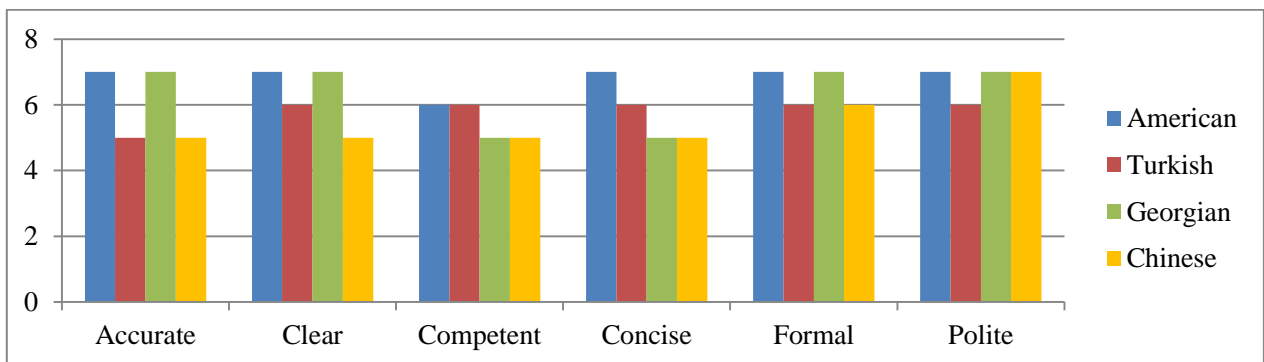
Competitiveness as inevitable part of business correspondence is more habitual for Americans and the Turkish. The reason may be that these two nationalities have bigger experience of communication at global business. Due to that, their competitiveness regarding to some issues is bigger than of Georgians as it is a newly independent country with comparatively little experience at global business. Although the China has reached highest level of competitiveness, it is the one which is trying to adjust the least to international demands of business correspondence and promotes their own way of communication.

As seen in the figure 2 Americans are the most concise. Conciseness is an ability of a speaker to cover and express much information in a few words. That is not surprising for number of reasons. First of all, English is Americans' native language and it is easier for them to express information in a few words. Another reason is pace of their business world. Americans value time very much and each minute is very precious for them. That cultural component prevents the writer to spend too much time of creating letters and correspondence and the reader to read long information.

The next target nation which also seems to be concise more than others is the Turkish. Here level of language is not as high as Americans but way of doing business is similar to the western one where brief wording is valued. As for the Chinese and Georgians, there are a lot of cultural differences between these two nationalities, whereas both nationalities try to build up friendly relationship before closing a deal and are not very good at meeting deadlines.

As for degree of formality Georgians and Americans sound very formal. That can be understood by the fact that they are usually more focused on business deals while doing business and want to sound professional rather than be relation oriented which is more characteristic for the Turkish and the Chinese cultures. It is very hard to break through the business circle of the Turkish and the Chinese and building up reputation and reliability in their business society requires time and dedication. After being accepted and considered as part of them, degree of formality seems not to be so important.

As for degree of politeness, I expected that all target nations would have the same indicator but it appeared that the Turkish are assumed to be a bit less polite than the others. I tried to find the explanation for that phenomenon but no cultural trait can explain that assumption. The Turkish, especially business people are very polite. That point makes me think that the use of language as expressing politeness requires use of complex forms of language, and the Turks seem to have a little weaker command of English when Georgian people. However, their level of English does not differ much from the Chinese. The Chinese are even less proficient in business English. However, their etiquette of doing business involves much patience, meaningful body gestures, avoidance of negative responses in any case that makes them be felt to be extremely polite.



**Figure 2:** Assessment of qualities of Business English correspondences according to Nations

**The analysis of the questionnaire** shows that business communication in written form usually reflect some cultural traits despite the fact that writing is not a spontaneous mean of communication. It requires much effort and business documentations are usually created with great carefulness. Every business writer takes into consideration the reader and wants to create a letter or any document which will meet global business writing standard and be easily understood at the global market.

Business writing requires good command of the English language as some units which are not clear in international writing are assumed to be part of culture. International business communication demands sufficient competence from the writer. Understanding of culture is vital in business writing, as it may be used favorably in accomplishing business deeds. Major findings are as follows:

- Degree of sociability and directness is higher in Georgian and American business societies rather than in Turkish and Chinese ones.
- Georgians are better at mastering English language for business purposes than Turkish and Chinese business society and it can be the influence of westernization.



- The most integrated and active in business communications are Americans, followed by Turkish and Georgian business people and less integrated seem to be Chinese.
- Business writing is getting more and more digitalized and the advancement of new technologies promotes new form of digital business communication. Correspondingly, business communication is getting less formal than before. Written digital communication has leading position in business.
- Knowledge of good command of English language for business communication is essential for all target cultures and consideration of culture is vital in business communication for all target nations. However, Georgians seem to be slightly less concerned about provision of culture in business communication.
- Representatives of high-context cultures: Turks and Chinese tend to write longer letters more than representatives of low-context cultures: Americans and Georgians.
- All target nations are understood quite well in English correspondence but misunderstanding still emerges. Chinese business communication seems to be comparatively harder to understand. Georgians seem to have the least cases of misunderstanding.
- Americans seem to request or are requested for additional explanations most often and they are followed by Chinese and Turkish counterparts.
- Comparison of qualitative analyses of business correspondence showed that Americans and Georgians approach to business correspondence are very close; they are more “accurate”, “clear”, “formal”, “detailed-oriented”, “productive” and “active”. While Turkish and Chinese business correspondence seem to be similarly “fast”, “excitable”, “active”, “successful”, “detailed-oriented”, “goal-oriented”, “considerate” and “helpful”.
- Digital and paper-based business correspondence in style needs more careful planning, practice and sufficient knowledge of common language and cultural traits.

Qualitative **comparison of letters** with business culture of target nations revealed that business writing reflects cultural traits of a writer. All target nations are aware of major rules and norms of business writing, appropriate wording and structure of letters but use of words, contractions, degree of formality consideration, giving details and explanations are influenced by cultural traits. Length of letters and their focus speak much about different approaches towards business. The analyses depicted the following cultural traits of target nationalities in business writing:

- Americans value time very much and usually write a letter not longer than a page. Structure of information and sentences are designed so that the reader finds it easy to follow and spend less time on understanding the main purpose of writing. Details are given reasonably and the format and the tone vary according to relationship. Americans are flexible in writing and helpful and moderate in assessments.
- Turkish business writing is mainly short and is focused on one or two issues. Turkish letters usually contain thorough explanation and detailed instructions of the issues. Turkish business people are extremely concerned about ambiguity and major purpose of their letters is uncertainty avoidance. Turkish people's writing also depicts great respect towards the reader.
- Chinese Business people are really concerned about building long lasting relation in business. It is characteristic for Chinese business to have connections and doing business involves partnership within those connections. Any new partnership is treated with great carefulness. Business letters of the Chinese underline eagerness for lasting fruitful cooperation and due to that their writing style is friendly and considerate.
- Georgia as an independent country is rather young and it is in the process of developing its business attitudes and forms. Georgia aspiration towards Europe and strategic partnership with the USA has an impact on doing business and on business writing as well. Georgians try to follow globally accepted English business writing patterns and depict their national identity as well. Georgians are very emotional, like long speeches and not very good at managing time so their business letters are sometimes emotional, long, not very simple, as Georgians like to show their knowledge. Format of business writing is sometimes mixed, tone is imperative, direct and relation caring which reflects that Georgians are in the process of development and finding and marking their place in global business.

## **CONCLUSION and RECOMMENDATIONS**

The humankind cannot develop without communication, which can be established in many ways. However, communication can never be perfect without a language. There are different kinds of languages. Language of humans is a set of organized symbols, which enables people to express themselves, communicate and formulate their ideas in verbal or written form in accordance to their perception of the universe, which is reflected in the language as well.

Different perceptions of the world facilitated formation of ways of life and developed the essence of different cultures. Main means of communication is language and its formation is based

on cultural perception of the world. Culture has very broad essence. The major constituents of concept of culture are as follows: culture is continuum of beliefs, customs, art, ways of life and thinking, behavior and interaction, it has ability to develop, create and adapt to new ideas. Culture and language have very close relationship as culture forms the language and language is its expression and realization in words.

Modern technological development of the world promoted importance of communication among people of different nationalities, different attitudes, speaking different languages and belonging to different cultures. That new reality increased the importance of existence of common language, which would enable people to share their ideas, information or attitudes. Understanding each other is especially important when relationship refers to business. Doing business requires specification of all delicate details and without existence of common language that seems impossible. English has undertaken the role of global language or role of *lingua franca*.

77% of our research respondents stated that knowledge of English is “very important” for business communication. Nowadays, English unites and connects people all over the world and enables them to cooperate.

One of the aims of the research was to find out how frequently English was used for international business communication by the representatives of target cultures: American, Turkish, Chinese and Georgian. It appeared that Chinese business people use English less than any other target nations. It does not mean that global business communication is less important for Chinese people. They have the second strongest economy in the world and it continues development. Primary reason is their political view. They refuse to use products strongly related to western countries: like Google or Facebook and they create their own Chinese products instead. In addition to this, Chinese people are more oriented on promotion Chinese as global language and challenge dominance of English as *lingua franca*.

It should be noted that proficiency of business English plays great role in business writing and it also talks much about the culture. Georgians’ aspiration towards the western countries is exposed by good command of English, 74% of Georgian respondents claim that they know English very well at C1 level. Knowledge of English for Turkish business community indicates about their experience and longtime integration in global business. However, their level of business English is not as high as Georgians’. Chinese business communication did not show high proficiency of English language. As it was mentioned above, the main reason can be their aspiration to promote Chinese.

Another aim of the research was to find out if there is any connection between culture and business English.

Language is used for general and special purposes. Use of language for specific purposes differs from general one and implies the use of certain rules and norms, which are acceptable for language for specific purposes, in our case for English. Business English is one of the variations of English for specific purposes. Business English unites business related vocabulary, structural norms, grammatical patterns, certain sets of phrases or word combinations which have purely business meaning and can be comprehensible for business community. Global business dictates necessity of common rules for common language, so business English requires special training as deviation from globally adopted norm may cause misunderstanding and business may suffer.

Business English is argued to have any connection with culture. Some scholars think that business English is culturally neutral because business especially international business needs cultural neutrality as much as possible and business people are more oriented on doing business and think less about the culture. However, business English cannot be culturally neutral as language itself implies culture, and meanings of the words are culturally dependent. According to the research results, we conclude that business English carries cultural meanings, they may not be as vivid as in general English because of wide use of special terminology related to business, but business English used by NSs in our case by Americans varies much from the use of NNSs. As language expresses the identity of the person, business English does the same, although NNSs try to adjust the use of business English to their identity as much as English gives them opportunity to do so.

It also appeared that international business communication is not easy. Just good command of common language is not enough. Business communication requires respect of cultural differences and acceptance of distinctions. 25% of respondents “strongly agree” and 45% of them “agree” that cultural diversity of business addressees influences effectiveness of business cooperation. In accordance to the results, we can conclude that cultural awareness is required in order to avoid misunderstanding and unpleasant consequences. Knowledge of general cultural traits is not enough; knowledge of business culture, business behavior, skills and attitudes towards the issues should also be taken into account. Consideration of different focus, thinking and working style should also be taken into account; otherwise, business communication may fail or be less fruitful than expected.

Technological advancement changed the form of business communication. Nowadays, business communication tends to be more digitalized than ever before. Less face-to-face communication occurs as technologies enable people to set ties immediately and more conveniently

with less expenditure. The research aimed to reveal the most popular form of business communication and it appeared that writing is the most popular form of business communication, particularly at international level. 32% of respondents claimed that they use digital written communication and 20% of them claimed that they use paper based written communication. In total 52% of answers come on written communication and remaining 48% unites all the other forms of communication (face-to-face, on the phone, social networking and so on). Writing gives writer opportunity to choose appropriate wording, format or style for communication. Also the process of providing details and consideration of readers' business culture are easier, as writing is not simultaneous form of communication and gives the writer opportunity to think more about the information intended to be sent.

Global business writing in English is greatly influenced by the American way of writing. The Americans try to promote their style of writing globally and create many handbooks, which teaches NNSs tips for business writing in detail. The USA has great influence on global economy and their attitude towards business is exemplary. Americans find it easy to start business, be involved in it and become successful as the USA gives much opportunity to its citizens and not only to them. Global business is greatly influenced by Americans' involvement in business and due to that, international business communication is varied in accordance with American pattern of business communication. Writing in American way is one of the most popular forms of communication.

The Americans recommendations about business writing are as follows: it should be clear, accurate, concise, competent, warm, polite, accordingly formal, fast, individual-oriented, detailed oriented, goal-oriented and flexible. Furthermore, Americans outline that, simplicity, order of information, length of letters, tone, directness, "you attitude" are important - when a writer is more concentrated on readers benefits and shows their endurance towards the business deals. Organization of writing is very important as meaning is conveyed only by the organisation of words. Writing prevents the reader to see facial reaction or hear the tone of an interlocutor, so organization and style of writing becomes considerably significant. However, some wording, style or tone of a message is greatly influenced by the native culture of a writer. There are some general ideas which are copied or adopted as they are offered by the Americans, but there are some delicate things which are affected by the national culture of a writer.

According to results of the thesis American, Georgian, Turkish and Chinese nationalities have different business cultures. Doing business with the people of target cultural background requires deep knowledge of business culture and communication. Research of business writing of

target cultures showed that business writing is not free from cultural impact. All target cultures try to be globally comprehensible in terms of written communication and follow American pattern of writing. However, culture can be read within the lines. All of them enrich writing with their cultural traits and adjust writing to their business culture. Widely assumed characteristic of business culture of target nations are easily observable whereas that does not prevent their writing to be less globally comprehensible, on the contrary, that makes it sound interesting.

American culture and especially business culture turned out to be open, collaborative, direct and flexible in style, productive, detailed-oriented and goal-oriented, and we can conclude that American spirit is evidently reflected in business writing.

As for Turkish culture, they are assumed to be representatives of high context culture which implies characteristics such as indirectness, reservedness, implication of a lot of information, team oriented work or team oriented decision making process, and behavioral communication. Almost all these features are characteristic for Turkish general and business culture. The study of Turkish culture revealed that Turkish people are greatly concerned with details in order to avoid ambiguity. Research of Turkish business writing in English revealed that Turkish writing reflects major characteristics of Turkish business and national culture: uncertainty avoidance, orientation to collectivism and obedience to rules and aspires to follow globally acceptable norms of business writing as well.

Chinese culture does not lose its uniqueness in business context as well. Chinese culture is relation oriented and hierarchal. That major features were reflected in business writing as well. Moreover, once a business communication is established and business deal signed, the Chinese try their best not to harm that relationship, be as credible, considerate, excitable and helpful as possible. As for their adherence towards international business communication, simplicity, which is one of the most valuable things for business written communication, was the most evidently observable in business writing created by the Chinese.

As for Georgians, business writing revealed Georgians' aspiration towards Europe and the USA. Georgia's political past is very hard and the country strives to develop strong partnership with western countries. General cultural characteristics of Georgians are a bit different from their business culture. Business tries to adopt globally established norms of doing business and communication follows the western pattern of communication as much as possible. It reflects Georgians' aspiration and some national cultural units. Georgians are very sociable, relaxed and active in their general culture and research revealed existence of these components in business

writing as well. The research depicted the resemblance of their business culture to the American one and the Georgians business writing is almost as clear, accurate, productive, flexible and detailed-oriented as the Americans' ones are.

Qualitative analyses of business letters revealed that linguistic patterns for business English are treated unusually by different cultures and sometimes mixed degree of formality appears along with the other features. Business English is specific and rich in forms and vocabulary having special meanings compared with general English uniting all meaningful linguistic patterns. Meanings in business writing need to be composed with great care as the selected wording, structure of sentences or terminology should be comprehensible and adequate for international business. The reader's cultural preferences should always be taken into consideration and understood. That will ease perception of business written communication correctly.

The results of the analysis of my data – both questionnaire and business letters are in positive correlation with the modern theories (Edward T. Hall, Geert Hofstede, Fons Trompenaars, GLOBE) which outline and characterize national, organizational or leadership cultural differences and degree of their reflection in communication.

Businesspeople who are directly responsible for business letter writing should become familiar with the result of present research to consider cultural impact on writing and business deals as well. The ignorance of these factors may lead to misunderstanding and damage of effective communication. Wide dissemination of thesis findings will raise the culture and technique of business letter writing among Georgian business people. Moreover, findings will help them to increase their degree of international business communication competence, as it will broaden their knowledge and awareness of intercultural business written communication in terms of understanding the implication of business letters written by a person having one of the target cultural backgrounds.

The thesis will provide the lectures of academic courses with valuable teaching material and with valuable information about culture and business writing tips. It outlines that business writing requires great mastery and knowledge of both language and business issues along with awareness of cultural traits. The thesis gives certain tips for building up a letter understandable and acceptable for people of different cultural backgrounds.

In conclusion, English is global business language especially American version of it as it offers internationally comprehensible set of rules for business writing. The influence of the USA economic condition plays great role on acceptance and readiness of international business writers to use American version of business writing. Proficiency of business English plays great role on

comprehensibility and effectiveness of business writing. Attractiveness of American business English is promotion of simplicity, clarity, conciseness, directness, individualism, flexibility and consideration. These features are acceptable for global business writers but degree to what extent they follow the offered rules is depended on writers' needs, preference or attitudes and also on their cultural background. Culture, which identifies identity of a person, has an effect on structure, formality, flexibility, consideration or clarity of business writing. Tone, collectivism approach and directness of a message varies in accordance to culture of a writer. Deviation from general rules of American business writing does not cause misunderstanding but reflects culture and gives information about cultural preferences.

### **The List of Publications on the Present Research**

1. Kutateladze, M. (2017). Usefulness of Multilingualism in Business. *Journal in Humanities*, 6(2), 41-43.
2. Kutateladze, M. (2016). Contemporary Approaches to Multiculturalism in Relation with Multilingualism. *Journal in Humanities*, 5(1), 43-45.
3. Kutateladze, M. (2015). Importance of Gender-Sensitive Language and Some Guidelines for Business Writing. *Journal in Humanities*, 4(1), 21-24.
4. Kutateladze, M. (2015). Cultural Values and Georgian Society in Business Communication. *Journal in Humanities*, 4(2), 35-37.
5. Kutateladze, M. (2014). Major Differences Between American and British English in Business Communication. *Journal in Humanities*, 3(2), 23-26.
6. Kutateladze, M. (2014). Historical Review of Business English as a Part of English for Specific Purposes. *Journal in Humanities*, 3(1), 27-29.