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ENGLISH BUSINESS COMMUNICATION IN THE SAUDI WORKPLACE: EMPLOYERS'
PERCEPTIONS AND INSIGHTS ABOUT THE CULTURAL ECOLOGY AND NEEDED
LITERACIES

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfillment of the

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Doctor of Philosophy

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Title: English Business Communication in the Saudi Workplace: Employers' Perceptions and Insights about the Cultural Ecology and Needed Literacies

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The purpose of this study was to utilize the framework of needs assessment to explore the perceptions of employers about the English business communication (EBC) literacy needs of several Saudi EFL workplaces. These perceptions, in turn, can contribute to designing or revising ESP courses for business students to meet the requirements of the job market. The study particularly investigated the extent of English language use in the jobs of business employees, and the required EBC literacies and skills for employees to perform different business communication activities.

The study used a mixed methods research design, and the participants were employers from 10 private companies in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia. A total of 77 employer surveys were used in this study, representing the 10 workplaces. Out of 77 participants, nine employers participated in semi-structured, in-depth interviews, and seven of them took part in follow-up interviews.

The findings indicated that English is the business lingua franca of Saudi workplace, and has undergone noticeable changes due to extensive contact with non-native speakers of English and extensive use of electronic media. Employers emphasized that successful businesses require English business communication skills for employees' productivity, career success, and clients' satisfaction. They perceived that the most important English skills for their workplaces are