ALTRALANG Journal
e-ISSN: 2710-8619 p-ISSN: 2710-7922
Volume 8 Issue 2 / October 2026 pp. 179-194

Translating Entrepreneurship: Reflections on Arabic–English Mediation in Digital Business and Intercultural Communication

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Received: 22/06/2026, **Accepted:** 11/10/2026, **Published:** 31/10/2026

ABSTRACT: *Entrepreneurial ideas rarely move across markets in their original form. Before attracting investment, partnerships, or public engagement, they must become intelligible to audiences operating within different linguistic and cultural environments. This article adopts a conceptual-analytical approach, drawing on interdisciplinary scholarship in English for Specific Purposes (ESP), translation studies, entrepreneurship, and intercultural communication, and is complemented by limited practitioner reflection from Arabic–English professional translation and interpreting. It argues that translation functions as entrepreneurial mediation, making opportunities, credibility, and business relationships accessible across linguistic boundaries. The discussion develops this concept through five interconnected dimensions: opportunity, trust, intercultural business communication, digital entrepreneurship, and language policy. The practitioner reflections serve illustratively rather than as empirical evidence, helping illuminate the situated judgements involved in entrepreneurial communication. The article concludes that entrepreneurial success depends not only on innovation and market access but also on communicative processes that enable ideas to be recognised, evaluated, and supported across diverse audiences. Translation therefore constitutes part of the infrastructure through which entrepreneurial opportunities acquire mobility and legitimacy.*

KEYWORDS: Entrepreneurship; English for Specific Purposes (ESP); Translation; Entrepreneurial Mediation; Intercultural Communication; Digital Entrepreneurship.

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Introduction

Entrepreneurial ideas rarely enter the world as self-explanatory objects. Before they become opportunities that attract investment, partnerships, or public attention, people narrate, translate, pitch, defend, and make them credible. In contemporary startup culture, where proposals circulate among local founders, international investors, digital platforms, and multilingual markets, entrepreneurship depends on more than innovation and finance. It also depends on the linguistic and cultural work that makes business ideas intelligible to others. The language of entrepreneurship is therefore not an accessory to economic activity but a condition through which entrepreneurial possibilities acquire social recognition.

This article begins with the proposition that entrepreneurial ideas gain mobility through language before they access markets. A product may be technically viable, and a founder may possess a compelling vision. Nevertheless, participation in cross-border environments requires forms of communication that diverse audiences can understand, evaluate, and trust. In Arabic–English business contexts, this process extends beyond lexical transfer. Entrepreneurial discourse carries assumptions about credibility, risk, authority, innovation, ethical responsibility, and future promises. Translation and interpreting matter because economic value must be articulated across linguistic and cultural boundaries.

Existing discussions of ESP have highlighted the role of specialised language in professional communication and disciplinary access (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998; Hyland, 2006). Entrepreneurship scholarship has generated substantial work on ecosystems, innovation, opportunity recognition, and digital ventures (Isenberg, 2011; Nambisan, 2017; Stam, 2015). Intercultural communication research likewise demonstrates that effective cross-cultural engagement requires interpretation, relational sensitivity, and adaptive judgement (Bennett, 2013; Deardorff, 2006). Despite their shared concern with communication across boundaries, these conversations have seldom entered sustained dialogue around a common question: how entrepreneurial ideas gain intelligibility across linguistic and cultural environments.

Translation studies offer a productive lens for addressing this gap. Rather than treating translation as the transfer of fixed meanings, scholars increasingly understand it as mediation, negotiation, and situated decision-making (Cronin, 2003; Inghilleri, 2005; Wolf & Fukari, 2007). Bourdieu's observation that "relations of communication *par excellence*—linguistic exchanges—are also relations of symbolic power" (1991, p. 37) speaks directly to entrepreneurial settings shaped by unequal distributions of linguistic prestige, institutional access, and market visibility. English often functions as a language of global investment and commercial legitimacy, while Arabic may carry local authority, cultural familiarity, and social trust. Translators and interpreters therefore mediate forms of communicative authority as much as they mediate language.

Against this background, the article examines Arabic–English mediation in digital business and intercultural communication. It argues that translation should not be viewed as a secondary service that follows entrepreneurial activity. Rather, it forms part of the communicative processes through which opportunities become recognisable, credibility is established, and ventures gain access to wider audiences. Drawing on translation studies, ESP, intercultural communication, and entrepreneurship research, the discussion also incorporates limited practitioner reflection to illuminate dimensions of entrepreneurial communication that formal models do not always capture.

Methodologically, the article adopts a conceptual-analytical approach. It brings selected scholarship from translation studies, ESP, entrepreneurship, and intercultural communication into dialogue in order to identify recurring problems of opportunity recognition, credibility, audience adaptation, digital visibility, and linguistic access. The analysis is interpretive rather than empirical: it does not draw on interviews, questionnaires, or a formal corpus. The article uses limited practitioner reflections from the author's professional experience in Arabic–English translation and interpreting only to illustrate how the conceptual issues discussed in the literature arise in situated communicative practice. These reflections therefore complement the theoretical analysis and do not function as an independent body of empirical evidence.

The article first develops a framework linking translation, ESP, and entrepreneurship through entrepreneurial mediation. It then examines opportunity, trust, intercultural business communication, digital entrepreneurship, and language policy before concluding with reflective practitioner insights. The argument throughout is that entrepreneurial opportunity may appear inherently transferable. In practice, its broader circulation depends upon acts of linguistic and cultural mediation. Entrepreneurship is therefore not simply a matter of innovation entering markets. It is also a process through which ideas are interpreted, negotiated, and rendered meaningful across different communicative worlds.

Theoretical Framing: Translation, ESP, and Entrepreneurial Mediation

This article's argument rests on a convergence of ESP, translation studies, and entrepreneurship studies. Each field approaches situated communication from a different perspective. ESP examines language practices within professional domains; translation studies investigate how meaning is negotiated across linguistic and cultural boundaries; entrepreneurship studies explore how opportunities are recognised, developed, and transformed into value. Together, these fields suggest that entrepreneurial communication is not a secondary activity accompanying innovation but part of the process by which opportunities become recognisable, credible, and actionable.

ESP provides the first layer of this framework because entrepreneurship increasingly depends on specialised forms of communication, including investor pitches, business proposals, grant applications, partnership correspondence, digital branding, and platform-based self-presentation. These genres do not merely package information for delivery. They shape expectations about value, professionalism, growth, and credibility. Dudley-Evans and St John's observation that ESP is designed to meet the "specific needs of the learner" (1998, p. 4) remains relevant. However, entrepreneurial contexts complicate the notion of need, as ventures engage different audiences and communicative expectations shift, requiring the same underlying opportunity to be articulated in different ways.

Translation studies deepen this insight by challenging the assumption that communication involves the transparent transfer of meaning. Entrepreneurial opportunities do not remain unchanged as they are communicated across linguistic and cultural environments. They are adapted, reordered, and reframed to meet the expectations of particular audiences. Expressions that signal ambition, expertise, or responsibility in one setting may carry different implications in another. Translation thus involves as much judgement as linguistic competence.

The sociological turn in translation studies has reinforced this perspective by positioning translators as social actors operating within institutions, norms, and relations of power rather than as neutral processors of texts (Inghilleri, 2003, 2005; Wolf & Fukari, 2007). Cronin (2003) similarly situates translation within the infrastructure of global circulation, emphasising how far wider participation depends on mediation. Entrepreneurial communication can therefore be understood as a site where economic participation is negotiated through linguistic and cultural interpretation.

Bourdieu's concept of linguistic capital further sharpens the analysis. Languages function not only as communicative systems but also as resources whose value varies across social and institutional settings. His analysis of linguistic exchange as a site of symbolic power illuminates entrepreneurship, where access to investors, institutions, and markets is frequently mediated through language. Communicative competence thus serves as both a form of social positioning and a practical skill.

Entrepreneurship studies provide the final component of the framework. Ecosystem approaches show that entrepreneurial activity depends on networks of institutions, finance, education, policy, and culture (Isenberg, 2011; Stam, 2015). Research on digital entrepreneurship has further shown how ventures increasingly emerge through platform-based infrastructures and digitally mediated forms of innovation (Nambisan, 2017). These discussions have paid far less attention to questions of language.

The concept proposed here is entrepreneurial mediation: the linguistic, cultural, and interpretive work through which entrepreneurial opportunities gain intelligibility across audiences. It includes translation and

interpreting but extends beyond them to encompass genre adaptation, audience awareness, cultural explanation, terminological calibration, and managing communicative expectations. Its distinct contribution shifts attention from translation as general intercultural mediation to mediation within the specific processes through which entrepreneurial value is recognised, evaluated, trusted, and circulated. The term *entrepreneurial* is therefore not merely descriptive of a business setting; it identifies a particular communicative problem: transforming ideas into opportunities that different audiences can understand, assess, and act upon. Translators and interpreters are among its most visible practitioners, although entrepreneurs themselves also engage in similar forms of mediation as they move between communicative environments.

This concept also clarifies the relationship between ESP and translation. ESP equips individuals to participate in specialised domains, while translation enables specialised meanings to be interpreted across linguistic and cultural boundaries. In entrepreneurial settings, these functions frequently overlap. Learning the language of pitching, investment, or digital branding entails entering communicative genres governed by particular expectations regarding evidence, credibility, and value. Entrepreneurial communication takes on a translational character when opportunities must be articulated to audiences that do not share the same linguistic, cultural, or institutional assumptions.

The discussion begins with opportunity itself. Before a venture can attract support, investment, or collaboration, its central proposition must first be recognised as an opportunity worth pursuing. That recognition is not automatic. It is achieved through communication. While the discussion draws substantially on translation studies, its broader concern remains the role of specialised entrepreneurial communication within ESP contexts where opportunities, credibility, and business relationships must be negotiated across languages and cultures.

Translating Opportunity

Opportunity is often discussed as though it exists before language, waiting for a sufficiently alert entrepreneur to discover it. Entrepreneurial culture frequently celebrates vision, originality, and speed of recognition. A founder identifies a gap, perceives an emerging need, or anticipates a market before competitors do. Shane and Venkataraman (2000) famously frame entrepreneurship around the question "of how, by whom, and with what effects opportunities to create future goods and services are discovered, evaluated, and exploited" (p. 218). Their formulation links discovery, evaluation, and exploitation, but leaves the communicative processes through which opportunities gain recognition among others relatively unexplored. More recent scholarship has increasingly challenged the assumption that opportunities await discovery, arguing instead that people interpret, narrate, and socially construct them through sensemaking and legitimation (Alvarez & Barney, 2007; Cornelissen & Clarke, 2010; Garud et al., 2014).

An idea does not become an entrepreneurial opportunity simply because it exists in its originator's mind. Investors, partners, customers, regulators, and donors do not encounter opportunities in their raw form. They encounter descriptions, projections, narratives, and claims about future value. Opportunity must therefore be communicated before it can be evaluated. As Lounsbury and Glynn (2001) argue, entrepreneurial success draws on both economic resources and persuasive accounts that attract legitimacy and support. In multilingual entrepreneurial environments, this communicative work matters because opportunities must be presented in ways different audiences can understand, evaluate, and endorse.

This is where translation becomes consequential. The movement from Arabic to English, or vice versa, involves more than linguistic transfer; it requires adapting entrepreneurial meaning to different expectations of persuasion and evaluation. Translation studies have long emphasised that cross-language communication involves selection, negotiation, and contextual repositioning rather than simple equivalence (Cronin, 2003; Pym, 2010). A business proposal that foregrounds communal benefit, institutional legitimacy, or social responsibility may need reframing for audiences seeking evidence of market demand,

operational feasibility, scalability, or measurable outcomes. Such adjustments influence how a venture is perceived and how its prospects are assessed.

Few entrepreneurial activities demonstrate the role of translation more clearly than pitching. A pitch organises a narrative in which a problem, a solution, a market, and a future opportunity are presented in a persuasive relationship. Research on entrepreneurial communication suggests that founders rely on narratives, analogies, and rhetorical framing to make uncertain futures appear plausible and actionable (Cornelissen & Clarke, 2010; Garud et al., 2014). Translators and interpreters working in these contexts therefore face decisions that extend beyond terminology. A broad statement of aspiration may require greater specificity, a culturally resonant appeal may require explanation, and a general claim of benefit may need to be linked to identifiable outcomes.

Consider the Arabic expression " قد يكون مشروعًا نافعًا للمجتمع ". A literal rendering such as "it may be a beneficial project for the community" conveys the basic meaning. In some entrepreneurial contexts, however, the statement may appear insufficiently specific. A translated version that identifies the community need being addressed, the beneficiaries involved, and the mechanism through which benefit is delivered provides a clearer basis for evaluation. The opportunity has not changed, but the form through which it becomes visible has. As genre scholars observe, communicative effectiveness emerges from the relationship between content, audience expectations, and institutional purpose (Bhatia, 2004; Hyland, 2006).

Entrepreneurial opportunities gain recognition through communicative forms shaped by genre and audience. A startup pitch, executive summary, grant application, crowdfunding campaign, and company profile each construct opportunity differently. Each invites audiences to answer a related set of questions: What problem exists? Why does it matter? Why is this solution credible? Why should attention or resources be invested here rather than elsewhere? These questions help establish legitimacy and reduce uncertainty (Lounsbury & Glynn, 2001; Suchman, 1995).

The most difficult translation challenges often arise not from terminology but from assumptions about value. A source text may treat a project's significance as self-evident because it draws on shared social, ethical, or institutional understandings. A target audience may require those assumptions to be articulated more explicitly. In such situations, translation helps disclose opportunity by making the reasoning through which value is established visible.

The reverse process is equally revealing. Entrepreneurial discourse originating in English frequently relies on compressed expressions such as "disruption," "scaling," and "market capture." When translated into Arabic, these terms may require explanation or reformulation to remain meaningful across different cultural and institutional settings. The challenge is not merely semantic. Entrepreneurial language often carries assumptions about growth, competition, innovation, and value creation that do not travel unchanged across contexts. Translation consequently functions as a site where competing understandings of entrepreneurial activity are negotiated rather than merely transmitted (Baker, 2018; Cronin, 2003).

Opportunity, then, is not a stable object passing through a linguistic channel. It is a claim about the future that must be recognisable in the present. Its recognition depends upon narrative framing, genre conventions, audience expectations, and communicative resources. Translation helps transform possibility into a form that others can evaluate, support, and act upon. Entrepreneurial opportunity is therefore discovered, created, and communicated into existence through acts of mediation that connect ideas to audiences capable of recognising their potential.

The discussion now turns to a related question. Once an opportunity is recognised, how does it acquire the credibility needed to generate commitment? That question leads to the problem of trust.

Translating Trust

If opportunity is the first object of entrepreneurial mediation, trust is the condition that allows opportunity to move beyond recognition into commitment. A founder may present a promising venture, a product may appear useful, and a proposal may seem technically sound. Entrepreneurial exchange depends on more than

information alone. Investors, partners, clients, and institutions must decide whether the people behind a venture are credible, whether their claims are reliable, and whether they will honour future commitments. Trust therefore functions as one of the least visible but indispensable infrastructures of entrepreneurial activity.

Trust has long occupied a central place in social theory. In Fukuyama's (1995) account, trust refers to "the expectation that arises within a community of regular, honest, and cooperative behaviour, based on commonly shared norms" (p. 26). Luhmann (1979) similarly treats trust as a mechanism for reducing social complexity, while Giddens (1990) emphasises its role in sustaining relationships under conditions of uncertainty. These perspectives bear directly on entrepreneurship, where investment, partnership, and collaboration depend upon confidence in futures that remain uncertain.

The relationship between trust and communication is therefore crucial. Trust does not arise from language alone, but language often expresses, interprets, and negotiates it. Entrepreneurial actors assess credibility through tone, evidence, responsiveness, and communicative conduct as much as through a proposal's substantive content. Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman's (1995) influential model identifies ability, benevolence, and integrity as key foundations of trustworthiness. In entrepreneurial communication, these qualities must often be demonstrated discursively before experience can confirm them.

Translation matters here because trust is highly sensitive to audience expectations. What a speaker intends and what an audience perceives do not always coincide. A statement that conveys sincerity and commitment in one linguistic setting may be interpreted differently in another. Translation therefore involves more than transferring information; it requires attention to the discursive forms through which credibility is made recognisable.

Arabic–English entrepreneurial communication clearly illustrates this challenge. In many Arabic institutional and business contexts, trust may be reinforced through respectful address, moral seriousness, relational language, and appeals to shared values. English entrepreneurial discourse in many investor-facing environments often emphasises clarity, evidence, measurable outcomes, and demonstrable traction. Although these tendencies should not be treated as fixed cultural oppositions, they help explain why literal translation may preserve lexical content while weakening the signals that establish trust. The central issue is whether the cues that convey trust remain intelligible to the receiving audience.

Consider the language of assurance. Arabic business communication may include expressions that emphasise sincerity, ethical responsibility, or reliance upon divine assistance. Within the source context, such expressions can reinforce trust by locating the speaker within a broader moral framework. When transferred mechanically into English, however, they may not perform the same function. The translator's task is neither to remove such expressions indiscriminately nor to reproduce them uncritically, but to preserve their communicative purpose in a form meaningful to the target audience.

A similar issue arises in translating certainty. Entrepreneurial discourse often rewards confidence, but confidence must remain proportionate to evidence. English startup communication frequently encourages strong future-oriented claims about growth and market potential. Other contexts may favour greater moderation through expressions of humility or caution. Excessive literalism may make a text appear hesitant, while excessive adaptation may misrepresent the speaker's intended stance. Trust emerges from a credible alignment between confidence and evidence, not from certainty itself.

Interpreting introduces an additional dimension. In face-to-face business encounters, trust emerges as much through the interaction itself as through the content exchanged. Timing, turn-taking, clarification, and relational management all influence perceptions of credibility. Research on interpreter mediation shows that communicative success often depends on more than lexical equivalence (Inghilleri, 2003, 2005). A clarification offered at the right moment or an ambiguity resolved before it becomes problematic can help sustain productive interaction. Although such interventions are often invisible in the outcome, they contribute to the relational conditions under which trust develops.

Trust is also connected to linguistic capital. Bourdieu's (1991) observation that relations of power shape communicative exchanges remains highly relevant in entrepreneurial settings. A proposal presented in fluent, professionally recognisable English may acquire legitimacy more readily than an equivalent proposal expressed in hesitant language. This does not necessarily reflect the intrinsic quality of the underlying idea. Rather, linguistic competence often functions as a proxy for competence more generally. Translation can partially mitigate this imbalance by allowing entrepreneurial ideas to be assessed more on their substantive merits than on their performance within a dominant linguistic code.

Entrepreneurial mediation frequently encounters the challenge of preserving credibility without producing a voice that feels artificial or culturally displaced. A document that remains too closely tied to local rhetorical conventions may fail to persuade unfamiliar audiences. Conversely, a text that conforms completely to global business discourse may lose the ethical, social, or relational foundations that give the project legitimacy. Similar tensions arise in presenting evidence. Some audiences expect rapid movement from claim to measurable proof, while others allow claims to sit within broader social or institutional reasoning. Translators may therefore reorganise information, foreground evidence, or clarify outcomes in ways that influence how trustworthiness is established.

Trust also places limits on adaptation. If translation removes every culturally distinctive feature in pursuit of efficiency, credibility may be gained at the cost of authenticity. This carries greater consequence in social entrepreneurship, Islamic finance, educational initiatives, and community-based projects, where trust may depend as much on moral commitments as on commercial performance. Translational success therefore requires balancing audience accessibility with fidelity to the values that give a venture its legitimacy.

Trust, then, is not simply an emotional response or a by-product of successful communication. It is a communicative achievement produced through the interaction of language, evidence, cultural expectations, and social norms. Translation contributes to this process by helping to make credibility recognisable across linguistic and cultural boundaries. Opportunity concerns recognising future value; trust concerns others' willingness to act on that recognition. Without trust, opportunity remains a possibility. With trust, it gains the capacity to attract the relationships and commitments entrepreneurship depends on.

Intercultural Business Communication

Trust tends to be fragile across cultural boundaries because communication carries more than information. It also carries assumptions about how information should be presented, how authority should be signalled, and how professional relationships should be managed. An entrepreneur may communicate clearly within one setting and still be misunderstood in another, not because the message is obscure, but because the interpretive frameworks through which it is received differ. Questions such as what counts as persuasive evidence, how confidence should be expressed, or when directness becomes inappropriate are central to intercultural business communication.

Deardorff's (2006) formulation of intercultural competence emphasises "the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (p. 247). The pairing of effectiveness and appropriateness lies at the heart of entrepreneurial communication. A message may communicate information efficiently while failing to align with audience expectations. Conversely, cultural appropriateness alone may not satisfy the informational demands of business evaluation. Entrepreneurial communication frequently operates within this tension when ideas move across linguistic and cultural boundaries.

Intercultural business communication cannot be reduced to transferring content from one language to another. It involves interpreting audience expectations and interaction patterns. Hall's (1976) distinction between high-context and low-context communication, while necessarily broad, remains useful in explaining why business messages may be understood differently across settings. Some interactional environments rely more heavily on contextual cues, relationships, and shared understandings, whereas

others favour explicit articulation and direct informational exchange. Translation and interpreting often occur at the intersection of these preferences.

This challenge becomes visible in entrepreneurial presentations. Investor-oriented communication frequently rewards clarity, compression, and rapid movement from problem identification to proposed solution, market opportunity, and expected outcomes. Other business environments may value relationship-building, contextual framing, and gradually establishing credibility before introducing substantive proposals. These differences reflect deeper assumptions about how professional seriousness and commitment are demonstrated.

Translation must therefore attend to both linguistic meaning and rhetorical structure. A highly relational introduction may appear excessive if transferred unchanged into a context that values brevity. Conversely, a highly compressed entrepreneurial pitch may appear abrupt when translated for audiences that expect greater interpersonal framing. Intercultural mediation often involves deciding how much of the original rhetorical structure to preserve, adapt, or reorder so that the message remains intelligible while aligning with audience expectations.

Questions of authority illustrate this challenge. Entrepreneurial messages present ideas while simultaneously positioning speakers in relation to their audiences. Research in intercultural communication suggests that audiences recognise authority through culturally variable signals, including expertise, institutional affiliation, personal achievement, seniority, or relational standing (Bennett, 2013; Deardorff, 2006). As a result, a rhetorical strategy that establishes credibility in one environment may be less effective in another. Translation frequently requires sensitivity to these differences because authority itself is interpreted through culturally situated expectations.

Persuasion presents a similar challenge. Entrepreneurial discourse seeks to reduce uncertainty by providing reasons for action, investment, or collaboration. The effectiveness of those reasons depends as much on framing, evidence, and speaker positioning as on information itself. Translators and interpreters therefore mediate meanings alongside rhetorical expectations. A message that appears persuasive in one context may require reorganisation or elaboration in another if its underlying logic is to remain accessible.

Risk communication offers a further example. Entrepreneurs are expected to address uncertainty, identify challenges, and demonstrate mitigation strategies. However, how risk is discussed varies across settings. In some environments, explicit discussion of risk signals professionalism and preparedness; in others, excessive emphasis on uncertainty may undermine confidence. Effective mediation requires recognising how audiences interpret risk-related language and adjusting presentation without distorting substantive meaning.

Time and future orientation are equally significant. Entrepreneurial communication depends on narratives about what does not yet exist: future markets, projected growth, anticipated impact, and long-term sustainability. Such visions are expressed through culturally shaped assumptions about progress, continuity, responsibility, and change. Translation therefore mediates present meanings alongside competing interpretations of desirable futures. The same entrepreneurial project may be framed primarily in terms of innovation, community benefit, institutional development, or social responsibility depending on the communicative environment in which it is presented.

Misunderstandings frequently arise despite goodwill and apparent clarity. Business partners may leave the same meeting with different understandings of commitment, responsibility, or urgency because they have interpreted cues differently. Translation and interpreting matter not because they eliminate these differences, but because they make them visible before they obstruct cooperation.

For this reason, intercultural communication cannot be reduced to etiquette or surface-level cultural knowledge. In entrepreneurial settings, it involves interpreting value, authority, commitment, and professional identity. Bennett's (2013) developmental approach to intercultural sensitivity speaks directly to this issue by challenging the assumption that one's own communicative norms are universal. Without

such awareness, messages may be translated accurately while the assumptions that give them meaning remain untranslated.

The implications for ESP are significant. Entrepreneurial communication requires more than terminology, presentation skills, or business correspondence. It demands awareness of how audiences interpret evidence, credibility, hierarchy, and persuasion. Entrepreneurs operating across languages therefore need not only linguistic competence but also the capacity to anticipate alternative communicative expectations and adapt accordingly.

Intercultural business communication thus occupies a distinct place within the article's argument. Opportunity may be recognised and trust established, yet both remain vulnerable when entrepreneurial ideas enter unfamiliar interpretive environments. Translation and interpreting help manage this vulnerability by mediating between different expectations of communication, authority, and persuasion. From this perspective, entrepreneurship unfolds through ongoing acts of intercultural interpretation inseparable from its economic dimensions.

Digital Entrepreneurship and Public-Facing Translation

Digital entrepreneurship has transformed the scale, speed, and public reach of entrepreneurial communication. Ventures no longer depend exclusively on formal meetings, printed proposals, or institutional introductions before entering public view. They often first appear on websites, crowdfunding campaigns, social media profiles, online marketplaces, video content, or platform-based business pages. This shift creates new opportunities for market access and audience engagement, but it also exposes entrepreneurial communication to immediate public scrutiny. A venture may be evaluated before its founders have the opportunity to explain it, and by audiences whose linguistic and cultural expectations are largely unknown. In this respect, digital technologies have altered not only the reach of entrepreneurial activity but also the communicative conditions under which entrepreneurial projects first encounter their audiences (Castells, 2010; Nambisan, 2017).

For Nambisan (2017), digital entrepreneurship is "the pursuit of opportunities based on the use of digital media and other information and communication technologies" (p. 1030). The emphasis extends beyond opportunity itself to the infrastructures through which entrepreneurial activity is pursued. Digital platforms do not merely transmit entrepreneurial ideas; they influence how ideas are presented, circulated, compared, and assessed. As Castells (2010) argues, networked communication environments reshape the production and circulation of meaning itself. Platform scholars have similarly emphasised that digital connectivity is not a neutral channel but a socio-technical environment structured by platform logics that shape visibility, interaction, and participation (van Dijck, 2013). In multilingual settings, translation is part of this infrastructure. A poorly translated website or profile can weaken credibility before any direct interaction occurs, while a carefully localised digital presence can expand access to new audiences and markets.

Translation in digital environments differs from many forms of business translation because its audience is both diverse and unpredictable. A proposal prepared for a known institution can be tailored to that institution's expectations. A website, social media page, or crowdfunding campaign, by contrast, addresses multiple audiences simultaneously: customers, investors, partners, regulators, competitors, diaspora communities, and casual visitors. Communication across languages in such settings involves more than linguistic accuracy. It requires balancing global intelligibility with cultural specificity, public accessibility with brand identity, and clarity with rhetorical effectiveness. This challenge reflects a broader feature of digital communication, in which users encounter messages in fragmented, highly competitive informational environments (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). In such settings, content circulates through sharing, recommendation, and audience participation that often exceed its producers' intentions, making communicative adaptability increasingly important (Jenkins et al., 2013).

The relationship between translation and entrepreneurial identity becomes especially visible in branding. Brand names, slogans, mission statements, and promotional messages often condense a venture's identity into a few carefully chosen words. Digital branding research has shown that online identities are constructed through recurring textual and visual signals that distinguish one venture from countless competitors (Kietzmann et al., 2011). Expressions that resonate strongly in one language may lose their force when translated literally into another. Effective translation frequently requires adaptation, reformulation, or localisation so that intended associations remain accessible to new audiences. In this sense, translation contributes directly to constructing entrepreneurial identity rather than merely describing it.

Digital environments also intensify the pressure of brevity. A homepage headline, social media biography, crowdfunding summary, or search-engine snippet often has only a few seconds to capture attention. These genres reward concise communication, clear value propositions, and rapid orientation. Genre awareness therefore becomes inseparable from translation in digital settings. Entrepreneurs and translators must understand not only what information to communicate but also how platform-specific conventions shape audience expectations. Communication that succeeds in a lengthy proposal may fail when condensed into a website banner or social media profile.

Cross-linguistic entrepreneurial communication highlights the importance of genre. Local audiences may share background knowledge about a founder, community need, institution, or social problem that they can assume rather than explain. Once communication enters a broader digital environment, much of that shared context disappears. Translation often involves making implicit assumptions explicit. Questions such as who benefits, what problem is being addressed, and why a proposed solution deserves attention are central to publicly accessible communication. Translation thus contributes not only to linguistic transfer but also to articulating entrepreneurial value publicly.

If locally grounded ventures must be explained to broader international audiences, then globally circulating entrepreneurial vocabularies require similar adaptation when entering Arabic contexts. Digital entrepreneurial discourse in English frequently relies on concepts such as scaling, disruption, traction, ecosystem development, and innovation. These terms carry assumptions about growth, competitiveness, and entrepreneurial success. When translated into Arabic, they may require explanation, adaptation, or contextualisation to remain meaningful for different audiences. Entrepreneurial knowledge therefore circulates across languages through translation and reinterpretation, not straightforward transfer alone.

Translation in digital environments also influences discoverability. Digital prominence increasingly depends on search behaviour, metadata, platform categorisation, hashtags, and algorithmic recommendation systems. Research on digital platforms shows that audience reach depends not only on content quality but also on the linguistic forms through which content is indexed, categorised, and retrieved (Castells, 2010; Kietzmann et al., 2011). Platform processes of classification, moderation, and recommendation further shape the visibility of digital content by determining what becomes discoverable and what remains obscure (Gillespie, 2018). These dynamics also reflect broader asymmetries in digital environments, where data-driven systems increasingly shape patterns of attention, visibility, and user engagement (Zuboff, 2019). A translation may be linguistically accurate yet digitally ineffective if it fails to align with the search terms potential users employ when seeking information. Translation therefore intersects with localisation, search optimisation, and platform strategy in ways that extend beyond traditional notions of equivalence.

The same digital infrastructures that facilitate global circulation also exert pressure toward linguistic convergence. Entrepreneurial communication often gravitates toward familiar expressions such as innovation, impact, empowerment, transformation, scalability, and sustainability. While such language facilitates international circulation, it can also flatten local distinctiveness. Translation matters here because it can either reinforce generic entrepreneurial discourse or preserve aspects of the cultural and social environments from which ventures emerge. This tension is especially visible in social entrepreneurship,

where projects rooted in community welfare, education, charitable activity, or faith-based ethics must remain intelligible to international audiences without losing the values that underpin their legitimacy.

Digital entrepreneurship therefore shifts many of the communicative challenges discussed in earlier sections into highly exposed, publicly accessible spaces. Opportunity, credibility, and intercultural interpretation are no longer negotiated only through meetings, proposals, or personal relationships. They become embedded in websites, profiles, platform interfaces, promotional materials, and searchable texts. Translation consequently forms part of the public architecture through which ventures are rendered understandable, discoverable, and credible.

The implications for ESP are substantial. Entrepreneurial communication in digital environments requires familiarity with platform genres, digital branding, multilingual audience design, and the rhetorical demands of online presence. Translators and entrepreneurs alike must understand how language functions within platform-based ecosystems and how communication directed toward broad audiences shapes perceptions of legitimacy and value.

Digital entrepreneurship promises unprecedented reach, but reach is not the same as understanding. A venture may be visible across borders without becoming meaningful to those who encounter it. Public-facing translation occupies the space between visibility and intelligibility. It helps determine whether entrepreneurial communication merely circulates through digital networks or establishes genuine connection with its intended audiences.

Language Policy and Entrepreneurial Inclusion

The preceding sections have examined translation at the level of entrepreneurial communication: the articulation of opportunity, the construction of trust, intercultural interpretation, and digital reach. A broader question now emerges. If engagement in contemporary entrepreneurial ecosystems depends in part on access to specialised forms of communication, then language constitutes more than an individual skill. It becomes a matter of policy. Questions of who can access entrepreneurial opportunities, enter innovation networks, apply for funding, or engage international markets are inseparable from questions of linguistic access.

Entrepreneurial ecosystems are often described in terms of finance, technology, mentorship, regulation, and institutional support (Isenberg, 2011; Stam, 2015). Nevertheless, they also depend on communicative infrastructures, including education systems, professional training, translation services, multilingual documentation, and access to specialised business knowledge. This broader perspective resonates with Welter's (2011) argument that entrepreneurial activity is inseparable from the social and institutional contexts in which it unfolds. Language shapes that context by shaping access to information, networks, legitimacy, and opportunity. When communicative infrastructures are unevenly distributed, access to entrepreneurial environments becomes uneven, too. A founder may possess a viable idea and deep local knowledge yet lack the communicative resources needed to present it effectively to investors, institutions, or international partners.

Language policy matters because it extends beyond formal legislation. Spolsky's (2004) account distinguishes three components of language policy within a speech community: "language practices," "language beliefs or ideology," and "specific efforts to modify or influence that practice" through language intervention, planning, or management (p. 5). This broader understanding is useful because entrepreneurial language policies are often implicit rather than explicit. They appear in funding applications, accelerator programmes, startup competitions, digital platforms, university entrepreneurship curricula, mentorship schemes, and business-support initiatives. Institutions may describe themselves as inclusive while operating almost entirely through a single language. Access is therefore shaped not only by entrepreneurial merit but also by communicative requirements.

If Spolsky broadens language policy beyond formal legislation, Shohamy (2006) demonstrates how such policies acquire practical force through institutional mechanisms. Tests, application procedures,

administrative documents, and access requirements all function as instruments for implementing linguistic priorities. Entrepreneurial ecosystems operate in similar ways. The language required to complete applications, prepare pitches, participate in training programmes, or communicate with investors often determines who gains entry and under what conditions.

These issues are readily apparent in Arabic–English entrepreneurial environments. English often serves as a language of international investment, technology transfer, global networking, and cross-border commerce. Arabic, meanwhile, remains essential for local legitimacy, regional markets, community engagement, and culturally grounded forms of trust. Rather than treating these languages as competitors, entrepreneurial ecosystems benefit from creating pathways between them. The challenge is not choosing one language over another but enabling mobility across linguistic domains.

Bourdieu's (1991) concept of linguistic capital helps explain why language proficiency often serves as a proxy for entrepreneurial legitimacy. Certain linguistic performances carry greater institutional value than others. Entrepreneurs who communicate fluently in dominant business languages may appear more competent, innovative, or investment-ready than equally capable founders operating through less privileged linguistic resources. The resulting inequalities do not arise solely from differences in entrepreneurial ability; they reflect broader distributions of symbolic and communicative power that shape whose ideas are heard, funded, and scaled.

This insight has important implications for ESP. Entrepreneurship-oriented ESP programmes often focus on presentation skills, business vocabulary, and professional communication. While these remain important, a more inclusive approach would also consider how language education can widen access to entrepreneurial ecosystems. Specialised English should function as a bridge rather than a gatekeeping mechanism. Entrepreneurs require access to global business genres while retaining the ability to communicate local knowledge, cultural specificity, ethical commitments, and community-based value without abandoning the contexts from which their ventures emerge (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998; Hyland, 2006).

A similar argument applies to translation and interpreting. These are frequently treated as supplementary services rather than components of entrepreneurial infrastructure. In multilingual settings, however, they perform a developmental function. Founders may require support in preparing business plans, grant applications, websites, legal documents, investor communications, and marketing materials. Interpreting may be necessary during negotiations, training programmes, mentorship activities, and international partnerships. Without such support, communicative barriers often remain invisible until they begin to restrict access and opportunity.

African and Arab contexts characterised by linguistic diversity make these dynamics more visible. Entrepreneurs may conduct their daily business activities in Arabic, Hausa, Dagbani, Twi, French, or other languages, whereas engagement with entrepreneurial institutions often occurs primarily in English. The transition between local communicative practices and formal entrepreneurial discourse can be substantial. Policies that overlook this transition risk privileging entrepreneurs who already possess access to dominant linguistic networks while disadvantaging those whose expertise is grounded in local experience, community knowledge, and culturally embedded forms of value.

Digital entrepreneurship can intensify these inequalities. Many entrepreneurial platforms, online courses, funding portals, and startup resources remain heavily English-dominant. Even where translation is available, it may be partial, automated, or insufficiently adapted to local contexts. Access to information therefore does not necessarily translate into meaningful engagement. Entrepreneurs may access digital platforms without acquiring the communication resources needed to compete effectively.

A policy-oriented response requires moving beyond symbolic commitments to multilingualism. Practical measures include bilingual entrepreneurship programmes, multilingual business-support services, translation assistance for startups, intercultural communication training, and entrepreneurship curricula that

integrate language development with venture creation. Universities, incubators, business schools, and translation programmes are particularly well positioned to support such initiatives.

There is also a parallel need to reconsider training for translators and interpreters. Effective entrepreneurial mediation requires more than linguistic competence. Translators working in entrepreneurial environments benefit from familiarity with business models, startup discourse, branding practices, investment communication, and digital platforms. Entrepreneurs, for their part, benefit from understanding the communicative and translational processes that shape cross-border engagement. Bringing these forms of expertise into closer conversation would strengthen both entrepreneurial practice and language-support systems.

The central issue, therefore, is not whether English should play a role in entrepreneurship. Its importance in international business environments is undeniable. The more consequential question concerns how access to specialised communicative resources can be distributed in ways that expand inclusion rather than reinforce existing inequalities. From this perspective, language constitutes an integral part of entrepreneurial infrastructure alongside finance, technology, legal support, and mentorship.

Language policy and entrepreneurial inclusion thus extend the article's argument from mediation to participation. Opportunity, trust, intercultural understanding, and public legibility all depend upon communicative resources. When access to those resources is uneven, entrepreneurial ecosystems become uneven as well. Translation, interpreting, and ESP are therefore not peripheral educational concerns. They shape the conditions under which innovation becomes broadly accessible and socially inclusive.

Reflective Practitioner Insights

The preceding sections have examined entrepreneurial mediation through the lenses of opportunity, trust, intercultural communication, digital reach, and language policy. The reflections that follow arise from the author's professional experience in Arabic–English translation and interpreting and are offered as illustrative practitioner observations rather than as systematically collected empirical data. They show how the conceptual issues discussed above become visible in situated professional judgement. Practice also shows that entrepreneurial communication is shaped not only by linguistic knowledge but also by judgement. Translation and interpreting often require decisions that terminology alone cannot resolve. They involve balancing audience expectations, institutional norms, cultural meanings, and communicative purpose in situations where no entirely satisfactory solution exists.

Schön's (1983) concept of reflection-in-action is particularly relevant here. He challenges the assumption that professional expertise consists merely of applying established knowledge to predefined problems. Instead, practitioners frequently respond to unique situations through ongoing reflection as they act. Translation and interpreting in entrepreneurial contexts illustrate this process clearly. Business communication often presents interpretive rather than technical problems. The question is rarely whether a word can be translated; it is whether a particular formulation will achieve the intended effect for a particular audience.

One recurring observation from Arabic–English mediation is that rhetorical alignment is often more challenging than lexical equivalence. Terms such as sustainability, impact, partnership, or investment can usually be rendered accurately at the lexical level. Difficulty increases when these terms carry different assumptions about value, responsibility, or success across communicative contexts. What appears to be a straightforward terminological choice may therefore involve broader decisions about how entrepreneurial activity itself is understood. This observation resonates with translation scholarship that views translators as social and institutional actors rather than neutral linguistic transmitters (Inghilleri, 2005; Wolf & Fukari, 2007).

A related observation concerns the visibility of translational labour. Successful mediation often disappears from view. A translated proposal may read as though it had originally been written for its target audience; a bilingual website may appear naturally coherent across languages; an interpreted meeting may

proceed without obvious interruption. Their apparent effortlessness typically depends upon numerous decisions regarding structure, emphasis, sequencing, and tone. Venture communication often requires repositioning information so value can be recognised in a different communicative environment.

Experience in translational work also highlights the ethical limits of adaptation. Translators are often expected to make business communication more persuasive when ventures seek funding, partnerships, or public exposure. Clarification and audience-sensitive reformulation remain legitimate dimensions of mediation. The translator's responsibility, however, is to make ideas intelligible across contexts, not to compensate for weaknesses in evidence, inflate achievements, or construct identities unsupported by the venture itself. This concern aligns with broader discussions of translator agency and professional responsibility within translation studies (Baker, 2018; Pym, 2010).

Another practical lesson concerns omission and relocation. Entrepreneurial texts frequently contain elements whose significance varies across audiences. Expressions of gratitude, references to institutional lineage, religious formulations, or culturally specific forms of courtesy may play important roles in one communicative setting while distracting from a document's primary purpose in another. Effective mediation does not necessarily require removing such elements. More often, it involves deciding where to position them most productively. Translation, therefore, operates not only through substitution but also through the strategic redistribution of meaning.

Interpreting makes these challenges even more immediate. Unlike written translation, interpreting unfolds under conditions of real-time decision-making. Meaning is communicated through tone, hesitation, emphasis, pacing, and relational cues as much as through lexical content. In entrepreneurial meetings, interpreters often encounter situations in which a literal rendering of an utterance may not adequately convey its pragmatic force. Managing such moments requires sensitivity to both linguistic meaning and interpersonal dynamics. The interpreter does not become a negotiator, yet the role cannot be reduced to mechanical transfer.

These observations suggest that entrepreneurial mediation operates through a series of context-dependent judgements. Decisions concerning tone, emphasis, sequencing, explanation, and adaptation may appear minor in isolation. Collectively, they shape how entrepreneurial ideas are received. Theory helps identify the forces at work, but practice reveals how unstable their application can be. No fixed rule can determine when to retain, explain, adapt, or omit a culturally specific expression. Such decisions depend on audience, genre, institutional setting, and communicative purpose.

These insights also have implications for ESP. Entrepreneurial communication cannot be reduced to vocabulary acquisition or the mastery of standardised business genres. Learners must develop rhetorical awareness and the ability to anticipate how meanings shift across audiences and contexts. Translation practice demonstrates that communication difficulties often arise despite grammatical accuracy because speakers and listeners interpret the same message through different expectations.

The reflective dimension offered here remains modest. Individual experience cannot substitute for systematic empirical investigation. Nevertheless, sustained engagement in Arabic–English entrepreneurial mediation can illuminate patterns worthy of scholarly attention. Repeated encounters with multilingual business communication suggest that the most consequential aspects of translation often remain invisible: framing opportunity, calibrating credibility, managing intercultural expectations, and adapting communication for public and digital audiences.

The central lesson is therefore straightforward. Entrepreneurial communication benefits when translation and interpreting are considered early in the communicative process, not after strategic decisions have already been made. Ventures operating across linguistic and cultural boundaries must think about audience, genre, credibility, and intelligibility from the outset. Translation is not merely an administrative stage that follows entrepreneurial planning. It is how entrepreneurial ideas reach new markets, institutions, and communicative worlds.

Conclusion

Entrepreneurial ideas do not move across markets through innovation alone. Before they attract investment, partnerships, institutional support, or wider public attention, they must become intelligible to audiences operating through different linguistic and cultural frameworks. This article has argued that Arabic–English translation and interpreting participate directly in that process by mediating not only information but also opportunity, credibility, authority, and value.

The concept of entrepreneurial mediation captures this broader function. It identifies the linguistic, cultural, and interpretive work through which entrepreneurial ideas are reframed for different audiences and communicative environments. Across opportunity recognition, trust, intercultural business communication, digital entrepreneurship, and language policy, the analysis has shown that communicative success depends on more than lexical accuracy. It requires attention to genre, audience expectation, rhetorical positioning, digital visibility, and the social distribution of linguistic resources.

The practitioner reflections reinforce this conceptual argument by showing how such mediation depends on situated judgement. Decisions about tone, emphasis, sequencing, explanation, and adaptation often seem minor in isolation, but together they shape whether entrepreneurial ideas become credible and actionable across linguistic boundaries. These reflections remain illustrative rather than empirical, and the study therefore makes no claim to represent Arabic–English entrepreneurial communication exhaustively.

The study's conceptual scope also points to a clear direction for future research. Empirical work could examine entrepreneurial mediation through interviews with translators, interpreters, founders, investors, and business-support institutions; comparative analysis of multilingual pitches and digital materials; or studies of how different audiences assess translated entrepreneurial discourse. Such research would help test and refine the framework proposed here.

The central claim remains that entrepreneurial ideas gain mobility through language before they gain mobility through markets. Translation is therefore not merely an auxiliary service attached to entrepreneurial activity. It forms part of the communicative infrastructure through which opportunities become recognisable, credible, and capable of circulation across linguistic and cultural worlds.

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