The Use of English in User Experience Writing

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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
Article History: Submitted: 17 April 2025 Accepted: 13 Juni 2025 Published: 30 Juni 20205	This study explores the role of English in User Experience (UX) writing, particularly in the context of digital products aimed at international audiences. As global digital platforms increasingly adopt English to ensure accessibility and clarity, the integration of well-structured English UX writing has become essential in enhancing user interaction, engagement, and overall satisfaction. This study is based on the author's internship experience at HiColleagues, an EdTech and IT service startup, where English was employed as the primary language for developing bilingual website content targeting B2B segmentation. Through qualitative analysis and practical implementation, the study investigates how English UX writing supports intuitive user navigation, improves comprehension, and contributes to the company's strategic goals such as increasing website traffic and attracting international leads. The study also outlines the stages involved in the UX writing process, including synergy meetings, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. The findings highlight that the use of clear, concise, and context-aware English in UX writing not only enhances usability but also strengthens brand credibility in global markets. This thesis contributes to the growing body of knowledge in UX and content strategy, emphasizing the strategic importance of language in digital communication.

Keywords: User Experience, English UX Writing, Bilingual Website, Business Communication

INTRODUCTION

In the digital economy, English has emerged as the dominant lingua franca for global communication, shaping how digital products connect with diverse international audiences (Baumgartner, 2024; Kemp, 2022). As cross-border business and online transactions become increasingly common, digital interfaces are expected to communicate information clearly, concisely, and inclusively. This expectation extends to User Experience (UX) writing, which goes beyond providing instructions, it builds engagement, enhance usability and drives business growth (Lentez & Mager, 2023).

The importance of English in digital communication is reinforced by the increasing role of technology in daily life. English has become the standard for programming, technical documentation, and digital products distributed globally. In this context, UX writing ensures that products remain user-friendly and accessible regardless of geographical boundaries. For

example, international platforms such as Google, Microsoft, and Meta heavily on English to maintain consistency across regions even when localized versions exist. This demonstrates the strategic role of English in enabling both usability and brand credibility.

In Southeast Asia, particularly in Indonesia the rapid growth of start-ups targeting international markets has created a pressing need for bilingual communication strategies. According to DataReportal (Kemp, 2022), internet penetration and e-commerce adoption in Indonesia have accelerate significantly in the last decade, positioning local companies as key players in the global digital economy. However, language remains both an opportunity and a challenge. While English provides global accessibility, Indonesian ensures inclusivity for domestic users. This, bilingual UX writing emerges as a solution that balances global reach with local user satisfaction.

The urgency of this study lies in the fact that for companies like HiColleagues, clear and well-crafted English UX writing not only enhances user navigation but also plays a decisive role in securing international partnerships, attracting certification bodies, and meeting the expectations of global clients. Startups in Indonesia often struggle with limited resources, and prioritizing English UX writing can become a strategic differentiator that sets them apart in competitive markets.

Therefore, this study aims to:

1. Analyze how English is applied in UX writing on HiColleagues' bilingual website;
2. Identify the strategies used to align UX content with the company's brand positioning and target audience; and
3. Compare the findings with existing literature on English in UX writing for global markets.

By addressing these aims, this study contributes not only to the growing literature on UX writing but also to the practical challenges faced by startups in emerging economies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Digital Marketing

Digital marketing plays a crucial role in transforming businesses in the digital economy, relying heavily on information and communication technology to strengthen customer relationships

and satisfaction (Veleva & Tsveranova, 2020). It encompasses various tactics aligned with a company's brand positioning, such as content marketing, search engine optimization (SEO), and social media marketing (SMM) (Umesi, 2023). Content marketing emphasizes persuasive, value-driven communication, while SEO ensures visibility on search engines, and SMM capitalizes on global user bases to foster interactions and community engagement (Kemp, 2022).

Within this broader scope, UX writing represents the micro-level execution of digital marketing principles. While SEO ensures that a website is discoverable, UX writing ensures that once users arrive, they can navigate intuitively. Thus, UX writing can be seen as the bridge between marketing strategies that attract users and the interface that retains them.

Content Writing and UX Writing

Content writing involves the process of researching, drafting, and refining text to meet specific purposes and audience need (Prana, 2022). This includes blog posts, social media content product descriptions, and white papers. In contrast, UX writing focuses specifically on crafting interface text, such as buttons, labels, error messages, and onboarding instructions that guide users through a product seamlessly (Lentez & Mager, 2023).

Unlike general content writing, UX writing must prioritize clarity and brevity while maintaining consistency in tone and style. Research indicates that even minor changes in microcopy can significantly influence user behaviour. For example, changing a button from "Submit" to "Get Started" may result in higher conversion rates due to perceived friendliness and clarity. This demonstrates that UX writing is not simply about wording, but about strategically shaping user perception and action.

Copywriting and Persuasive Language

Copywriting is the strategic use of persuasive language to influence consumer behaviour and prompt action (Albrighton, 2010; Ghose, 2019). Creative copywriting builds emotional resonance, SEO copywriting enhances discoverability, and digital copywriting supports online campaigns. UX copywriting, however, bridges the gap between persuasion and usability by ensuring that the interface not only informs but also convinces.

In a B2B (Business-to-Business) context such as HiColleagues, this persuasive element must be carefully balanced with professionalism. While overly casual language may risk reducing credibility, excessively formal text can appear rigid and unapproachable. Thus, the role of English UX writing in this context is to maintain a tone that is both professional and engaging, persuading stakeholders of the brand's value while guiding them through digital interactions.

Writing Process in UX Contexts

The writing process typically encompassing prewriting, drafting, revising, eduting, and publishing (Onozawa, 2010). In UX contexts, this process is iterative and highly collaborative. Writers must refine content in response to user feedback, design constrains, and marketing objectives. Each stage is crucial: prewriting involves aligning with brand voice; drafting ensures functional clarity; revising addresses consistency and tone; editing ensures grammatical accuracy; and publishing finalizes the integration into digital products.

This structures process is particularly important in multilingual or bilingual contexts. As seen in HiColleagues, UX writing must maintain coherence across English and Indonesian while still aligning with global usability standards. By following this structured process, companies ensure that every word contributes simultaneously to clarity, persuasion and brand identity.

METHOD

This study adopted a qualitative case study approach using three data collection methods: observation, interview, and documentation analysis. A qualitative design was selected because UX writing involves interpretive elements such as tone, clarity, and cultural appropriateness that are best captured through descriptive analysis rather than numerical data.

- Observation was conducted using a structured checklist adapted from UX writing best practices (Lentez & Mager, 2023). The checklist included indicators such as clarity, tone consistency, conciseness, and navigational guidance. The author examined HiColleagues' website content user interface elements, and competitor websites to identify strength and gaps. For example, attention was given to call-to-action (CTA) buttons, error messages, and onboarding sequences to evaluate whether they aligned with the principles of effective UX writing.

- Interviews were conducted with two key stakeholders:

  1. Head of Product Design, to understand brand positioning, tone of voice, and design objectives.

  2. Head of Digital Marketing, to explore user expectations, target segmentation and conversion goals.

  Semi-structured interview guides endured that questions covered both strategic and operational aspects of UX writing.

- Documentation analysis involved reviewing existing web content, style guides, and competitor materials. A content audit framework was applied, focusing on alignment with brand identity, SEO optimization, and multilingual accessibility. For example, internal drafts were compared with published website versions to trace how revisions addressed clarity and tone.

- All qualitative data were analysed using thematic coding. Interview transcripts and observation notes were coded into themes such as tone appropriateness, language clarity, and strategic alignment. These themes were then compared against literature on English UX writing to identify consistencies and deviations. Triangulation across observation, interview, documentation ensured validity by confirming findings multiple sources.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

FINDINGS

The findings reveal three key insights:

1. Professional yet Approachable Tone

   The English UX writing on HiColleagues' website requires a formal-professional tone to match its B2B (Business-to-Business) positioning while remaining accessible to a diverse audience. This aligns with Lentez & Mager (2023), who emphasize tone adaptation to audience maturity.

2. Balanced Persuasion and Information

   Copy must be persuasive enough to convey value propositions while retaining factual clarity, avoiding excessive informality. Documentation analysis revealed inconsistencies in tone across pages. Reinforcing the need for unified style guidelines.

3. Bilingual Strategy for Global Reach

The bilingual (Indonesian-English) approach supports accessibility for both domestic and international users, echoing Baumgartner's (2024) findings on English as a trust-building tool in global markets.

DISCUSSION

Alignment with Existing Literature

The results align with Lentez and Mager (2023), who argue that UX writing must not focus on clarity but also adapt to the maturity of the target audience. In the case of HiColleagues, the professional tone adopted reflects its B2B orientation while still maintaining accessibility for users unfamiliar with technical jargon. This balance demonstrates how tone adaptation, a recurring theme in global UX research, is equally relevant in Southeast Asian contexts.

Moreover, the study's emphasis on bilingual strategy resonates with Baumgartner (2024), who emphasized English as a trust-building tool in global markets. By offering content in both Indonesian and English, HiColleagues reduces the risk of alienating domestic users while simultaneously projecting credibility to international audiences. This dual strategy contributes to bridging local inclusivity with global reach, a finding that extends the discussions in Kemp (2022) on the role of English in international digital marketing.

Compares to Olson et al. (2021), who focused on the integration of digital marketing strategies in enhancing business performance, this case highlights how English UX writing becomes a practical manifestation of broader strategies. Instead of remaining abstract, UX writing serves as the operational link between high-level brand positioning and user interaction at the micro-level, particularly through website navigation and interface design.

Practical Implications for Startups

For staraups operating in emerging markets such as Indonesia, the findings underscore the importance of investing in UX writing as part of overall business communication. Clear, concise, and contextually appropriate English enhances not only usability but also signals professionalism to global stakeholders. In practice, this could mean higher chances of securing international certifications, forming cross-border collaborations, and attracting foreign investment.

Furthermore, UX writing plays a critical role in user retention. In a competitive digital landscape where alternatives are abundant, poor interface language may lead to user frustration and abandonment. By contrast, carefully designed English UX content ensures smooth navigation and reinforces the company's reliability. In B2B context, where decision-making often involves multiple stakeholders, persuasive yet professional English UX writing can provide reassurance and reduce uncertainty in forming partnerships.

Another implication is the need for synergy between design, marketing, and content teams. The study demonstrates that the iterative writing process, from drafting to publishing, must be aligned with both brand identity and technical interface design. This collaboration is crucial as inconsistencies in tone across different pages, as observed in HiColleagues, may reduce credibility. Establishing style guidelines, informed by both marketing strategy and linguistic precision, can serve as a practical solution.

Challenges and Limitations

Despite its benefits, the implementation of English UX writing in Indonesian stratups also faces several challenges. First, there are cultural nuances in how users interpret English expressions. Words or phrases that appear neutral in Western contexts may be perceived as overly formal, distant, or even confusing for Indonesian users. This necessitates careful localization without sacrificing clarity for international audiences.

Second, resource constraints can hinder consistency. Stratups often operate with limited human and financial capital, making it difficult to employ specialized UX writers. As a result, marketing staff or designers may assume this responsibility without sufficient linguistic expertise, leading to fragmented quality across digital platforms.

Third, there is the challenge of establishing universally applicable style guides. While large global corporations may rely on detailed UX writing manuals, smaller startups must strike a balance between standardization and flexibility. In the case of HiColleagues, inconsistencies across website sections highlight the ongoing struggle to achieve this balance.

Theoretical Contributions

Beyond practical insights, this study contributes to the theoretical discourse on digital communication and UX writing in several ways. First, it highlights the dual role of English UX writing: as a navigational aid that improves usability, and as a business communication tool

that enhances brand credibility. This duality extends current frameworks that often separate usability research from business communication studies.

Second, the case of HiColleagues adds an emerging market perspective to predominantly Western-centric UX writing literature. By situating UX writing in Indonesia, this study demonstrated how global language practices interact with local market dynamics. This addresses calls from scholars such as Kemp (2022) to broaden the geographical scope of digital communication research.

Third, the study underscores the importance of considering bilingual approaches in UX research. While previous studies (e.g., Lentez & Mager, 2023) focused primarily on English-only contexts, this case illustrates how bilingual strategies function as an adaptive mechanism for companies straddling domestic and international markets.

Future Research Directions

While the present study provides valuable insights, further is needed to deepen understanding of English UX writing in global contexts. Future studies could incorporate quantitative methods such as A/B testing, eye-tracking experiments, or user satisfaction surveys to measure the direct impact of UX writing choices on user engagement, navigation efficiency, and conversion rates. Comparative studies across industries could also enrich the discussion. For example, examining English UX writing in fintech, e-commerce, or government digital services may reveal distinct linguistic strategies tailored to each sector. Additionally, cross-country comparisons would help identify whether strategies observed in Indonesian startups are applicable in other emerging market such as Vietnam, Thailand, or India.

Finally, future research could explore the integration of emerging technologies, such as AI-assisted UX writing. Tools like ChatGPT are increasingly used in drafting interface content but their effectiveness in capturing tone, cultural nuances, and brand identity requires systematic investigation.

Overall, this discussion reinforces the strategic importance of English UX writing in digital communication. The case of HiColleagues illustrates how language choices affect usability, brand credibility, and global competitiveness. Bu situating these findings within broader

literature and practical contexts, this study demonstrates that UX writing is not merely a linguistic task but a strategic asset in today's digital economy.

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