

Language Barriers and Communication Effectiveness in Entrepreneurial Organizations: Implications for Sustainable Business Performance in India.



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Abstract

Communication is one important attribute that facilitates teamwork, creativity, and long-term organisational success in entrepreneurial settings. Entrepreneurial companies, the small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) often work in multilingual workplaces in the emerging economies like India, where workers belong to very different linguistic and cultural groups. English is usually a common business language, but non-native English speakers can feel the language barrier problem that can affect their ability to convey the ideas, engagement in the professional communications, and play an active role in organisational performance. Such communication issues can impact the confidence of employees, sharing of knowledge and collaborations that are critical in the sustainable development of an enterprise. The current research will look into the effectiveness of communication of non-native speakers of English in English-dominated working environments and explore how the level of language proficiency, comfort in communication and use of hybrid language affect the perception of professional success by employees in organisational and entrepreneurial settings. The primary data was gathered by the means of a structured survey that was conducted to 50 employees who work in organisations and business enterprises situated in the Delhi-NCR area of India. The relationship between the variables of workplace communication and perceptions of professional success were compared using multiple regression analysis. The results show that trust in English communication has a great impact on how employees view professional development and trust. Alternatively, the fact that the forms based on hybridization of the English language with the native languages may improve the level of communication comfort and collaboration. The paper gives relevance to inclusive communication and language development programmes in enhancing successful collaborative efforts, knowledge exchange, and long-term organisational development in multilingual entrepreneurial settings.

Keywords: Sustainable Entrepreneurship, Workplace Communication, Language Barriers, Multilingual Workplaces, Emerging Economy Enterprises, Organizational Sustainability

1. Introduction

In the current globalised business world, communication is an essential element of organisational success, productivity, and sustainability. Due to the cross-border exercises and the interaction of organisations with the varied markets, language and cultural diversity are making places of work more diverse. English has become the lingua franca of business communication in the world and these help in communication among the employees of various language groups. Nevertheless, effective communication within an English-dominated place of work may be a big problem to people who do not use English as their first language. The language barriers can also disrupt the capacity of employees to demonstrate ideas, engage in discussions, and execute positively in organisational operations thus affect personal performance as well as efficiency in the workplace in general (Tenzer et al., 2017).

Most of the time in emerging economies like India, the entrepreneurial firms and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) operate in multilingual

environment where workers with different linguistic and cultural orientations work together to facilitate innovation and business development. Knowledge sharing, coordinating and development of the enterprise are important in such entrepreneurial environments, which cannot be achieved without proper communication.

The language difference may produce communication gaps that affect the collaboration, trust, and sharing of knowledge among staff in most multinational organisations and multinational teams. To overcome them and guarantee the ease of interaction in heterogeneous work environments, organisations tend to implement language strategies (Aichhorn and Puck, 2017). Although such attempts are made, workers that do not understand the leading language in the organisation can face challenges in deciphering orders, taking part in dialogues, and expressing their thoughts in an appropriate manner. These communication difficulties might lower the confidence of the employees and might adversely impact our productivity in the workplace.

Organisational language policies, power relations, and informal language practises between employees tend to shape communication dynamics in multilingual work places. Research has demonstrated that language brokering and informal communication styles are common in any work environment where different employees have different degrees of language proficiency (Goncalves and Schluter, 2017). Moreover, the studies have revealed that multilingual spaces demand workers to flex their styles of communication so as to work well with other employees who may also belong to different languages and cultures (van der Worp et al., 2017).

The language barriers may also affect the job performance and productivity of the employees especially in cases where the individuals experience problems in communicating in their dominant language of the organisation. Unless the employees are confident about the ability to communicate in the workplace language, they might experience difficulties with the articulation of their ideas, which may lead to conflicts with their colleagues, decreased level of cooperation, and low productivity rates (Salleh et al., 2021). Simultaneously, multicultural and multilingual workers are likely to acquire bridging behaviours, which can be used to overcome barriers to communication and start cooperating in diverse organisational environments (Augustin et al., 2025).

Although the practise of having multilingual employees at the workplace is becoming common in up-and-coming economies, there is inadequate research on the effects of language barriers in determining communication effectiveness and perceptions of professional success among employees. The ways to decipher how knowledge in language proficiency, the ease of communication and alternative statement strategies affect interactions in workplaces are crucial to organisations that aim to establish inclusive, collaborative and productive workplaces. Thus, the current paper examines the efficiency of the non-native English speakers to speak in English-based workplaces and how the language barrier affects their working experience and their perception of success in their professional environments.

3. Literature Review

Communication is a key factor in organisational performance and a crucial element in helping to coordinate, collaborate, and exchange knowledge among the employees. Communication practises in modern organisations are shaped by linguistic diversity, and cultural differences, especially in those organisations that conduct their operations internationally. With globalisation of organisations, workers with different linguistic backgrounds have to interact and work together speaking a common organisational language. These dynamics render

communication as a variable that is significant in making sure that the teamwork and performance of the organisation are effective.

In multinational companies, language barriers tend to exist and affect the process of working and information exchange among the employees. The language barriers can intervene with understanding of employees to the complicated information, involvement in discussions and decision making. According to the research, the language difference may affect the knowledge processing of multinational teams, which may impact collaboration and team performance (Pudelko, 2021). The language variety also may affect the workplace dynamics with non-native accent and the style of communication being among the factors. Those who speak non-native accents can experience difficulties associated with perception, understanding, and communication during the teamwork, which can impact the collaboration and efficacy of communication (Kim et al., 2019).

Cross-cultural communication is critical in multinational corporations because it allows employees to work together regardless of geographical and cultural borders. Workers in international teams have to overcome the language barriers, communication patterns, and cultural anticipations. The organizations should thus learn to use appropriate communication techniques that will assist them in teamwork and reduce misunderstandings among multicultural workplaces (Hwang, 2025).

The modern workplaces are also being affected by technological advancements and organisational systems in the communication practise. With the introduction of digital tools and Industry 4.0 technologies, organisational communication processes are changing, and it is the elements that influence the manner in which employees share information and how employees coordinate their activities in the modern workplace (Singh et al., 2025).

Language is a resource that is being considered a strategic resource in multinational organisations. Language barriers between subsidiaries and headquarters can generate a communication barrier that can influence knowledge transfer, coordination and efficiency within the organisation. The organisations thus devise ways of dealing with linguistic diversity and enhancing communication within the different units of the organisations (Harzing et al., 2011).

Language is used in international business environments in various ways within organisations among them communication, organisational identity and knowledge exchange processes. These roles demonstrate how difficult it is to manage language in multinational settings and the necessity to work out effective language strategies (Brannen et al., 2017). To enhance communication among international

operations, many multinational companies have implemented a common corporate language, which is English, and the strategy is likely to bring problems to employees who cannot speak English (Neeley, 2017).

Despite the fact that language barriers and multilingual communication in multinational organisations have been studied before, the majority of the existing research deals with large multinationals which belong to developed economies. The issues of communication among the employees in the linguistically diverse workplaces are not well addressed in the emerging economies. In emerging economies such as India, workers often operate in multilingual settings where English serves as the common workplace language, but employees differ considerably in their levels of language proficiency.

The communication challenges can affect the effectiveness of employees in engaging in a discussion and being able to share ideas and to undergo some professional work with confidence. Although previous studies have indicated that language barrier does exist in international organisations, limited empirical studies have been showed to understand the effects of language barrier on effectiveness of communication in the workplace and perceptions of employees regarding professional success in the environment of emerging economies.

Moreover, very little empirical research has been carried out on the effect of language barrier on performance of communication in entrepreneurial organisation and SMEs in emerging economies. These dynamics are relevant to understand support of sustainable entrepreneurship and enhancement of organisational cooperation in linguistically diverse business contexts.

4. Methodology

4.1 Research Design

The current study is a quantitative research design because it aims at investigating how language proficiency is related to workplace communication comfort, and expectations of professional success among employees who work in multilingual organisations. The survey-based method was used to obtain primary data by asking the respondents to understand the communication issues experienced by non-native English speakers in a professional setting. The study focuses on employees working in multilingual organisations in India, where English is commonly used for professional communication despite employees belonging to diverse linguistic backgrounds.

4.2 Data Collection

The primary data were gathered with the help of a designed questionnaire that was distributed with the help of an online survey platform. The questionnaire

was intended to assemble data concerning the demographic features of the respondents, their knowledge of English language and the perception concerning workplace communication. The questions posed in the survey were connected with gender, age category, and educational qualification. Moreover, the respondents were required to rate various statements on workplace communication, comfort with language, and career achievements.

Measurement of the attitudinal items was through a five-point Likert scale where 1 was taken as highly disagree and 5 as highly agree. The items in the questionnaire included the comfort of the respondents in expressing ideas in English, anxiety when communicating in English, comfort using their native language at work, and the use of hybrid language forms that merge English with native languages when communicating at work.

4.3 Sampling Method and Sample Size

The responses of employees in organisations, entrepreneurial firms, and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) of the Delhi-NCR region were collected through convenience sampling. This approach was deemed suitable since the respondents were chosen as per their availability and their own desire to respond. Fifty responses were obtained and analysed. The sample was balanced in terms of gender, age, and educational background which gave a general understanding of communication experiences in multilingual work place.

4.4 Measurement of Variables

The study analyses the relationship between workplace communication variables and employees' perceptions of professional success. The dependent variable is the respondent's perception that knowledge of English is important for achieving professional success. To capture different dimensions of workplace communication, several independent variables were included.

These variables are the capability of the respondents to express themselves freely in English, nervousness in expressing themselves in English, comfort in using the native language at the workplace, comfort in using the combination of English and the native language, and expectations on whether English should be used as a primary language in the workplace or not. These variables, combined together, constitute some of the most important aspects of communication effectiveness in multilingual workplaces.

4.5 Reliability Analysis

A reliability test was performed to verify internal consistency of the measurement items to be used in the survey by use of Cronbach's Alpha. Cronbach Alpha is one of the most used statistical measures that are used to gauge the reliability of a set of items

that measure the related constructs. A reliability test was conducted to assess the internal consistency of the survey items using Cronbach's alpha. A Cronbach's alpha value of 0.70 or above is generally considered acceptable for social science research. The Likert-scale items concerning communication and language comfort at the workplace were subjected to the test to make sure that such items were always alive to the targeted constructs.

4.6 Data Analysis Techniques

Descriptive statistics and several regression analysis were used to analyse the data that was obtained. The demographic characteristics of the respondents were summarised with the help of the descriptive statistics that gives an overview of the distribution of the sample, in terms of gender, age group and level of education.

The association of communication variables and the perceptions of the success in the profession were tested using multiple regression analysis. The regression analysis also provides the researcher

with the ability to evaluate the impacts of two or more independent variables on one dependent variable at the same time. The paper has utilised regression model to establish the level at which other variables such as comfort in communication, and language anxiety and language preferences can explain the employees perception that English is the key to professional success in workplace.

5. Results

5.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the demographic of the respondents. The sample had 50 respondents with different organisational backgrounds. The gender distribution of the respondents, presented in Table 1, shows that 48% were male, 50% were female, and 2% preferred not to disclose their gender. The gender balance is also depicted in Figure 1 that demonstrates that there is a fairly equal number of male and female participants of the study.

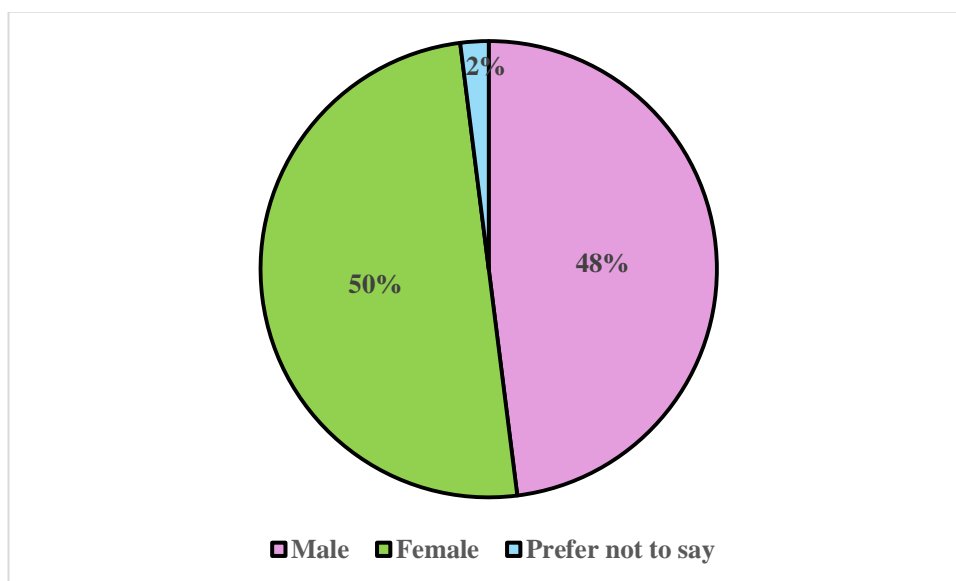


Figure 1. Gender Distribution of Respondents

In terms of age, the majority of the respondents were between 30 and 45 years of age (36%), next came 18 to 29 years (32%), then 45 to 60 years (30%), and lastly above 60 years (2%). These results imply that majority of the respondents belong to the working age group. Table 1 summarises the results of the age distribution of the respondents and visualises it in Figure 2.

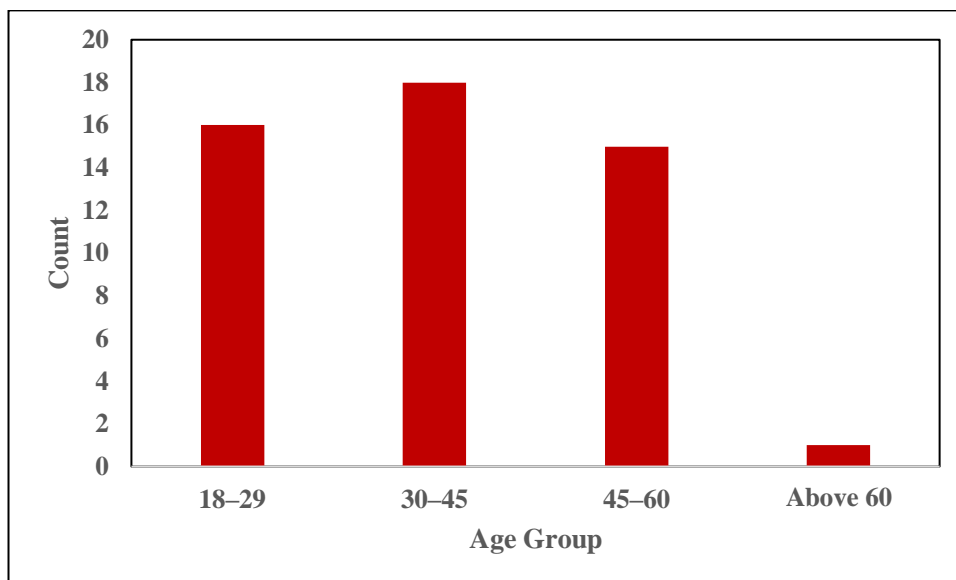


Figure 2. Age Distribution of Respondents

With respect to educational qualifications, 46% of the respondents held a Bachelor’s degree, 46% held a Master’s degree, and 8% had other qualifications such as PhD, M.Phil, B.Ed, or technical diplomas. It means that a majority of the respondents are well

educated and this might have affected the workplace communication experiences.

Table 1 has given response demographics of the respondents in regard to gender, age group and their education level.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	24	48%
	Female	25	50%
	Prefer not to say	1	2%
Age Group	18-29	16	32%
	30-45	18	36%
	45-60	15	30%
	Above 60	1	2%
Education	Bachelor’s Degree	23	46%
	Master’s Degree	23	46%
	Other (PhD, MPhil, Diploma, B.Ed.)	4	8%

5.2 Regression Analysis

A multiple regression analysis was performed in an attempt to determine the relationship that existed between workplace variables of communication and perceptions of professional success. The dependent variable was respondents’ agreement with the statement that knowing English is important for professional success.

The results of the regression are summarised in Table 2 giving the model summary statistics. The correlation coefficient ($R = 0.789$) represents the strong association of the independent variables and the dependent variable. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.623$) implies that about 62.3% of the change in perceptions of professional success can be modelled by the communication-related variables in the model. Adjusted R^2 of 0.514 gives a more conservative estimate of the explanatory power of the model having adjusted the number of predictors.

Table 2. Model Summary of Regression Analysis

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error
1	0.789	0.623	0.514	0.548

5.3 Model Significance

An ANOVA test was used to test the statistical significance of the regression model and the findings are in Table 3. The ANOVA findings indicate that there is statistical significance in the regression model ($F = 5.709, p < 0.05$). This implies that overall the independent variables significantly affect the dependent variable. This implies that the communication-related variables included in the study play an important role in explaining respondents’ perceptions of the importance of English for professional success.

Table 3. ANOVA Results for Regression Model

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	18.890	11	1.717	5.709	0.000
Residual	11.430	38	0.301		
Total	30.320	49			

5.4 Influence of Communication Variables

Figure 3 depicts the impact of the chosen communication variables on impressions of professional and career success in a relative manner. Among the predictors, the variable with the strongest positive effect on the dependent variable

was respondents’ agreement with the statement that knowing English makes them feel more confident. This finding suggests that employees who associate English proficiency with increased professional confidence are more likely to believe that English is vital for professional success.

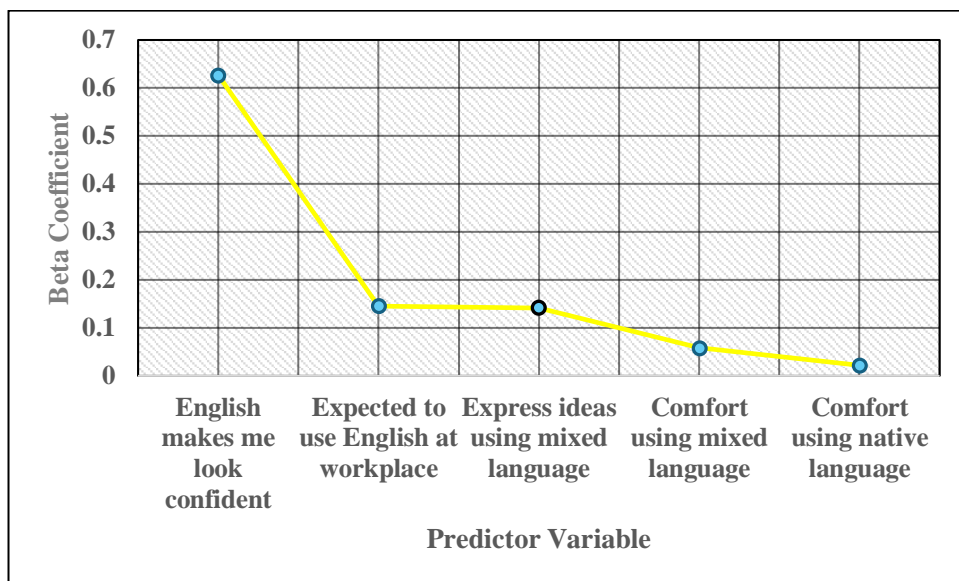


Figure 3. Key Predictors Influencing Professional Success

There are other variables where there is positive correlation with perceptions of professional success which include expectations to use English in the workplace and ability to communicate using a combination of both English and native language. These results suggest that the language requirements and the communication patterns in the workplace affect the perceptions of the employees about the role of English in their career progression. On the other hand, there were some communication variables that were found to have weak or negative correlation with the dependent variable regarding language anxiety and communication discomfort. The findings demonstrate that communication confidence and language comfort are important in influencing the perception of employees towards professional success in multilingual workplaces.

6. Discussion

This study examined the communication strategies of non-native English speakers in multilingual workplaces and analysed how language-related factors shape employees’ perceptions of professional success. The findings can be useful in understanding the manner in which language proficiency, comfort in communication and language expectations in workplace can influence the way professionals relate

to each other in linguistically diverse working environment.

Among the most important results of the research, the prominent role of communication confidence in forming the perception of professional success should be listed. The findings suggest that the respondent who thinks that being an English speaker boosts his/her professional confidence will be more likely to view that English is a parameter of an improved career. The concept of language competence may also be viewed as a valuable tool in global business settings since it allows people to engage in cross cross-cultural and global communication and working relationships (Barner-Rasmussen et al., 2014). Language skills enable the employees to communicate with various stakeholders and play an effective role in the organisational processes especially in multinational organisation set ups.

Effective cross-linguistic communication is particularly crucial in entrepreneurial organisations where teamwork, innovation, and sharing of knowledge are highly needed to drive business expansion. The language competence has the potential to facilitate problem-solving and exchange of ideas that are major sources of innovation and

sustainable growth of an enterprise in the context of emerging economies.

The research also reveals the strategic importance of language in international business and organisational communication. A language is not only a means of communication, but it is an organisational resource that is significant in coordination, sharing of knowledge and decisions within organisations (Brannen et al., 2017). Organisations that have to work in international markets often use a common corporate language, which helps to provide collaboration among employees with various languages. Nonetheless, the shift towards a common language can also pose a problem to employees who are not proficient in the language, which will have an impact on their engagement in the workplace process.

Another important finding of the study relates to workplace language expectations. The results suggest that employees who expect English to be used as the primary language of workplace communication are more likely to view English proficiency as an important professional skill. Organisational culture and diversity management practises usually influence the manner in which communication takes place at the workplace. According to research, management practises in contemporary organisations and how employees relate with each other are greatly affected by organisational culture and workforce diversity (El-Khatib et al., 2025). Inclusive communication practise is critical in various working environments where employees with varying linguistic backgrounds ought to be able to contribute towards the workplace activities.

It is also shown that the employees are sometimes using mixed language forms or hybrid language as a means of overcoming communication barriers in multilingual workplaces. These practises can assist employees in making their ideas more articulate and take part in professional relations more confidently. Inclusive communication practises have also been central to organisational communication studies, which point to the fact that inclusive communication is relevant in promoting collaboration and employee engagement in organisations (Larson et al., 2022).

Moreover, the concept of multilingual communication is becoming one of the primary aspects of the global business development. The language diversity is a characteristic feature of organisational communication as multilingual environments are common where employees come from diverse national and linguistic backgrounds (Piekkari et al., 2014). Effective management of this linguistic diversity is then necessary in enhancing the communication processes and organisational effectiveness.

Another insight that is brought out in the study is the overall effect of communication practises on employees' experiences in multicultural workplaces.

Communication barriers and cultural differences may have an impact on the well-being and job satisfaction of the employees, which subsequently impacts the workplace performance and the outcome of the organisation (Hordov et al., 2025). Proper communication strategies can thus help to enhance the employee experiences and create good working conditions at the workplace.

Additionally, the results of this work are also consistent with the literature, which holds that the language diversity can have an impact on innovation and sharing of knowledge on organisational level. Any employee who can communicate successfully across linguistic borders has higher chances to share ideas and engage in problem-solving activities (Worakittikul et al., 2025). Effective communication in multinational organisations can thus be very instrumental towards sustaining employee-based innovation and organisational learning.

The use of technological and cultural adaptation measures is also coming out as more relevant in dealing with the communication barrier in international firms. In an effort to bring employees of different languages and cultures together to work, organisations are adopting digital communication tools and cultural awareness methods (Al Hakim and Sigita, 2025). These measures assist organisations in breaking the communication barriers and ensuring greater organisational cohesion.

On the same note, studies on virtual teams around the world present the significance of effective communication practises in dealing with cultural and linguistic diversities in virtual workspace. Due to virtual collaboration, employees have to operate in various communication styles and cultural demands, which means that the ability to communicate is a critical skill in the contemporary work environment (Liu, 2025).

Lastly, other past research has underscored the significance of language-sensitive management practise in an international organisation. Multinational setting may greatly impact language as it may affect communication and sharing of knowledge and teamwork (Karhunen et al., 2018). In multicultural teams, effective knowledge exchange processes are likely to ensure team effectiveness and organisational performance (Hajro et al., 2017). Thus, the organisations ought to implement communication strategies that facilitate language growth, foster embracing communication patterns, and stimulate successful communication of knowledge across language boundaries.

Altogether, the results of this research support the significance of the need to build confidence in communication and language comfort when developing the perception of professional success of employees in multilingual workplaces. The organisations that work in the linguistic diverse contexts are thus advised to invest in the communication training programmes, language

development programmes and inclusive practises in the workplace that can accommodate the employees with different languages. Such programmes can contribute to enhancing the efficiency of communication, teamwork as well as assist to boost organisational performance within multicultural and global work environments.

7. Conclusion

The study reveals the significance of the language proficiency and confidence in communication in influencing professional experiences in the organizational setting where English is the most common language of doing business. The outcome of the regression analysis reports that those variables associated with communication play a significant role in the formation of the perception about the relevance of a professional success and it can be assumed that the communication practices and the language expectations of those working places have a real effect on how the employees themselves determine their own professional performance. More specifically, the research determined that trust in English use is closely linked with the belief that mastery of the English language is one of the factors that lead to professional growth. Employees who feel that proficiency in English can help them in building their confidence in the workplace have a higher possibility of assuming that proficiency in language is a pre-requisite to success at the workplace. The results are also indicative of the fact that in most cases, employees tend to resort to flexible communication techniques, i.e. speaking a combination of English and their native language in order to break the communication barrier and convey their ideas more efficiently in multilingual conditions. These adaptive communication practices have the potential of supporting teamwork and enhancing employee interaction at the workplace despite the difference in their language background. Simultaneously, the research also suggests that communication anxiety and difficulty using English can affect participation in professional interactions among the employees in a negative way and their workplace perceptions of being effective. In general, the research highlights the need to create positive contexts of communication to promote the development of language and inclusive communication strategies. Organizations can improve participation of employees, build on collaboration, and overall seek to ratify the effectiveness of communications in workplaces that are linguistically diverse by fostering the confidence in communication and offering employees room to develop language skills. It is also possible to note that these findings demonstrated the importance of communication capability as the source of strategic value of entrepreneurial organisations in multilingual and culturally diverse business setting for sustainable growth.

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