

Language, Identity, and Workplace Culture: A Linguistic Analysis of Communication Practices in Diverse Organizations

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the role of language in identity and in shaping the interpersonal relationships in the multicultural workplaces. It analyzes the application of linguistic characteristics such tone, code-switching, politeness strategies and discourse patterns by employees in signalling belonging, authority bargaining, and professional relationships management. The qualitative linguistic research design was adopted. Naturally occurring communication was used to gather data in the form of emails, meeting transcripts, and semi-structured interviews held in multi-lingual organizational contexts. The identification of the markers of identity and the interaction practices was guided by discourse analysis and sociolinguistic frameworks. Findings indicate that the linguistic behavior depends on cultural background, institutional norms and power structures. Accommodation, indirectness and different degrees of formality were some of strategies that were constantly employed to keep harmonious relationships, prove competence and overcome the expectations of hierarchy. The paper has shown that language is at the center of either enforcing or promoting inclusion, or social break. The findings provide useful information to support the communication training, intercultural awareness and relationship strengthening at the workplace in diverse organizational settings.

Keywords: Communication Practices, Identity, Intercultural Communication, Linguistic Analysis, Organizational Diversity, Professional Interaction, Sociolinguistics, Workplace Culture

INTRODUCTION

The language is among the most effective tools that help people to create identity, negotiate meaning and form social relationships at the workplace. Language as a symbolic resource in multicultural organizational cultures, in particular, where employees represent various linguistic, ethnic, and cultural groups, plays a role by helping workers to locate themselves socially and professionally (Holmes and Marra, 2017). Researchers believe that linguistic options, including tone, politeness strategies, discourse patterns, and code-switching, can be used as indicators of belonging, authority, and interpersonal consistency in workplaces (Angouri, 2018). With workplaces becoming more and more global economies of scale have become highly practiced, influenced by cultural norms, institutional demands, and power arrangements. In such complicated settings, employees employ language strategically to indicate identity, exercise professionalism and control relationships with their workmates, supervisors, and clients.

The multilingual workplace, which includes multinational corporations, regional offices, and international project teams, are particularly productive locations where one can study the role of language as a source of social resource. Staff changes between formal and informal speech, or devises strategies of politeness to meet hierarchical levels, or can switch between codes to accomplish rapport, demonstrate a degree of competence or negotiate delicate power relationships (Luo and Shenkar, 2017). The practices of multilingual communication are not only defined by the personal linguistic repertoires but also by the organizational rules and the sociocultural backgrounds that define the ways people understand the concept of power, respect, and social distance (Hofstede, 2010). In this regard, language can work at both micro-interactional and macro-institutional scales, i.e. through the daily interactions and organizational policies, power structures and cultural values.

The increasing body of sociolinguistic and organizational communication research points to the fact that linguistic workplace behavior cannot be divorced of identity work. Discourse establishes employees and others, and strengthens or challenges hierarchies. Indirectness can be taken as an example in the high-power-distance cultures deference and direct communication may be viewed as aggressive or competent in low-power-distance organizations (Gudykunst, 2004). Equally, language or dialect code-switching can be an indicator of in-group cohesion, occupation, or tactical self-representation (Dovchin, 2017). Such diverse language actions influence the ways of inclusion, belonging, as well as professional legitimacy, which are negotiated in every-day interactions.

Significance

The knowledge of the linguistic practices in the workplace is important among organizations that believe in promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion. With the growth of global workforces, communication differences are an inevitable factor that requires navigating and ensures that conflicts are kept to a minimum, teamwork is reinforced, and supportive working relationships are established (Angouri and Piekkari, 2018). Any misunderstanding based on the language norms, including indirect and direct speech, the expectation of politeness, the expectation of tone as a culturally rooted idea, and others, may cause tension between people, unfair judgment, and impaired professional growth (Tannen, 1995). Thus, recording how employees can employ language to manage identity, negotiate power, and maintain professional relations in a strategic way is part of organizational learning and intercultural competence.

Further, the studies of workplace discourse emphasize the fact that in many cases, the language use reflects the system of institutional power. Those workers who have higher linguistic capital including fluency in the organizational language or who have knowledge of the discourse norms of an institution can have a benefit at work promotion, credibility, or leadership positions (Bourdieu, 1991). On the other hand, those that have their linguistic repertoires underrated might have to endure discrimination, become marginalized, or restricted to decision-making arenas. The insights on these dynamics may assist organizations in developing communication training programs and policies to reduce inequities and encourage inclusive interactions and other linguistic identities.

Problem Statement

Although much has been written about multiculturalism and organization diversity, there are less studies that offered a qualitative, in-depth analysis of how linguistic practices in everyday life of employees affects identity negotiation and interpersonal relations in the workplace. Much of the current research depends on surveys or generalized communication models, and does not take note of the nuances but potent effects of tone, discourse patterns, code-switching, and politeness strategies in fostering a sense of belonging, competence, and authority (Holmes, 2019). Context-rich discourse-based analyses that explore the occurrence and use of communication in multilingual workplaces are needed. In the absence of this granular knowledge, the organizations may introduce the communication policies or diversity programs that do not reflect the lived linguistic realities of the workers.

Objectives

- To analyze how employees in multicultural workplaces use linguistic features such as tone, politeness strategies, and discourse patterns to signal identity and belonging.
- To explore how code-switching and language choice function as tools for authority negotiation, professional alignment, and relational management.
- To examine how institutional norms, cultural expectations, and power structures influence the linguistic behavior of employees in multilingual organizational settings.

Research Questions

- How do employees' linguistic choices signal identity, belonging, and professional positioning in multicultural workplace interactions?
- In what ways do code-switching and language choice serve as strategies for negotiating authority and managing interpersonal relationships?
- How do cultural norms and organizational power structures shape the use of tone, politeness, and discourse patterns in workplace communication?

Gaps

Even though the scholars appreciate the role of workplace discourse in identity and social relations, significant gaps still exist. Most of the previous studies are centered on intercultural communication in general but fails to examine natural interactions in the workplace through sociolinguistic perspectives.

Multilingualism research usually focuses on the policy of language but not the subtle, day-to-day linguistic actions of workers (Angouri, 2018). Also, little scholarship combines naturally occurring workplace data, particularly emails, meeting transcripts, and spontaneous interactions, and discourse analytical methods. The mediating role of linguistic strategies that can mediate the power relations in a multicultural organization is also not well explored. In this paper, I will fill these gaps through a qualitative linguistic design that is informed by discourse analysis to explore the authentic interactions of multilingual workplaces.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Language studies, identity, and communication at the workplace are part of studies in sociolinguistics, discourse analysis, organizational behavior, and intercultural communication. Powerful evidence generally accepted by scholars holds that language is a key instrument that employees can utilize to bargain professional roles, social relationships, and identity construction of organizational ecologies (Holmes and Marra, 2017). The review of the literature is a summary of the results of the major bodies of research used in the scope of how tone, code-switching, politeness strategies, and discourse patterns can play a role in identity and relational processes in multilingual workplaces.

The initial sociolinguistic theories focused on the interconnection between language and social identity by stating that language speakers employ linguistic resources to place themselves in particular social groups and contexts (Gumperz, 1982). In the workplace context, the practices are particularly extreme since the organizational setting subjects' individuals to norms, which dictate the manner in which communication is supposed to take place. Indicatively, the idea of facework by Goffman (1967) has been expanded to make several explanations concerning employee impression management through politeness tactics and tonality manipulation. Cultural norms tend to influence workplace politeness: what is taken to mean respect or professionalism in a particular linguistic group might be taken to mean

avoidance or lack of confidence in a different linguistic group (Brown and Levinson, 1987). Such discrepancies may translate to interpersonal misunderstanding/misjudgment and especially in multicultural organizations.

The studies of multilingual workplaces reveal that the employees tend to resort to various languages or varieties of languages to achieve certain communicative objectives. Code-switching is not just an unthoughtful switching between languages; it has a socially significant purpose, which can be to assert authority, demonstrate solidarity or deal with conflict (Dovchin, 2017). In the international companies, workers often alternate between English as the lingua franca and their native languages to reconcile professionalism with familiarity (Luo and Shenkar, 2017). Research has shown that these practices can boost the level of team cohesion and at the same time strengthen in-group boundaries or hierarchy differences in different contexts (Tenzer et al., 2014).

Discourse patterns and tone are also key determinants of how the employees will perceive identity and authority. Tannen (1995) points out the difference in gendered discourse that influences the assessment at the workplace, whereby the adoption of mitigated tone or collaborative speech patterns by women can be mistakenly understood as the shortage of confidence in male-attributed competitive world. In the meantime, studies of leadership communication reveal that a commanding tone, unpleasing attitude, and being straight to the point are usually linked to competence, although such rules of language differ considerably across cultures (Gudykunst, 2004). This highlights the need to learn about communication in a multicultural team.

Organizational communication theory has also been applied in studies to determine the influence of the institutional norms on linguistic behavior. The concept of linguistic capital described by Bourdieu (1991) proves that the ability to use the dominant organizational language can be transformed into symbolic power, which affects the social mobility of employees and their chances of becoming a leader. The linguistic accommodation theory also indicates that employees often change their speech patterns which could be accent, speed, vocabulary, or level of politeness to fit with the interlocutors and hence provide rapport or reduce conflict (Giles and Ogay, 2007). Although these adaptive behaviors may be subconscious, they largely affect how professional, cooperative, and trusting perceptions are formed.

The other relevant area of study is workplace email communication and digital discourse practices. The formality of emails typically needs to be tipped, and they indicate small features of the language that can indicate power, respect, and emotional coloring (Darics, 2015). Research indicates that small differences in form of greeting, closing sentences, or modal auxiliaries may create the effect of collegiality or authority. The way employees interpret digital tone is different in multicultural workplaces and this may cause interpersonal friction or the development of unintentional misconception (Park & Leonardi, 2022; Faisal, et al., 2023). The findings indicate that there is a need to study the written language at workplace closely as a form of identity performance.

Moreover, the studies of intercultural communication underline that the misinterpretation is frequently caused by the expectation of the interaction that is culturally influenced and not by the language knowledge only. The cultural dimensions theory presented by Hofstede (2010) proves that employees in the high-power-distance cultures might like indirectness or deference, and employees in the low-power-distance cultures might like directness and equality. Such differences influence the way feedback is given, the way disagreement is voiced, as well as the way relationships are bargained. Therefore, the study of linguistic behavior presupposes the comprehension of the organizational norms as well as the cultural frameworks.

Last but definitely not least, the developing body of scholarship acknowledges that discourse analysis is an effective methodological technique to comprehend workplace communication. According to Holmes (2019), naturally occurring interactions, including meetings, spontaneous conversations, and emails, provide abundant data on the analysis of identity and relationship performance in languages in real time. Compared to other approaches based on surveys, discourse-based approaches offer more

understanding about the multi-faceted nature of communication behaviors because the latter usually lack the ability to reveal linguistic complexity. It is the focus of this literature that qualitative research is required that combines the sociolinguistic theory with the empirical research of actual place of work communication.

METHODOLOGY

The research methodology used in this study was qualitative linguistic research that examines how the employees in the multicultural work-related scenarios can use language to construct their identity, negotiate power, and interpersonal relationship management. Qualitative design was selected based on the fact that it allows depth, contextually based analysis of communicative actions that cannot be comprehensively represented quantitatively. Qualitative linguistic study involves the information available in nature and actual discourse behaviours, which makes it possible to understand how tone, code-switching, politeness strategies and discourse patterns apply in real-life interactions in a detailed manner (Bucholtz and Hall, 2005). This method is consistent with the objective of the study, which involves the study of communication in its lived environment with an emphasis on the meaning-making, cultural interpretation, and social interaction within the workplace dynamics. The methodological choices were also driven by a discourse-analytical orientation since the discourse analysis offers means to analyze the negotiation, enactment, and resistance of social identities and power relations through language (Gee, 2014). In this context, the research chose the data sources that would capture the real life organizational communication with the linguistic behavior being as spontaneous as it is.

To help substantiate this analysis method, several data production tools were used in the study. These were comprised of the workplace e-mail gathering, transcripts of meetings and semi-structured interviews with workers. As primary sources of data, emails and transcripts of meetings were chosen as they constitute a regular form of communication within modern organizations and disclose minor linguistic characteristics, including the modulation of tone, signs of politeness, the attitude in an interaction, and the use of language strategies (Darics, 2015). Such texts usually involve implicit clues that affect the perceptions of professionalism, respect, and power hence can be used to analyse the discourse. These materials were supplemented with semi-structured interviews that enabled the participants to take time thinking about their communication practices, expectations, and understanding of linguistic behaviors at the workplace. This text-spoken data combination provided that the analysis was based on both the observed linguistic practice and the own description of the interactional realities provided by the participants.

There were three steps in data collection. To begin with, a collection of organizational emails that are naturally occurring was made up. The respondents were requested to send at their own will the email threads of their choice that captured their day to day workplace communication (internal team communication, communications between supervisors and employees, and cross-departmental communications). The linguistic research on anonymizing emails and protecting confidentiality was conducted according to ethical principles (Tracy, 2020). Second, participating departments had meetings that were audio-taped with permission. These were frequent team meetings, project meetings, and informal briefings. The verbatim transcription of the audio recordings was used in order to maintain interactional characteristics like pauses, overlaps and emphatic stress which are important in discourse analysis. The third stage of data collection was semi-structured interviews (face-to-face and virtual interviews). The interview guide was composed of open-ended questions intended to trigger the comprehensive considerations of linguistic options and communication issues in multicultural realities. The questions covered the issues of code-switching experience, politeness norm perceptions, tone interpretation and maneuvering hierarchical structures with the help of language.

The sample size of the study was made up of employees, with three multicultural organizations that represented the various industries, which included multinational corporation, international development agency, and regional technology company (Makhdom & Mian, et al., 2012). The workplaces were chosen due to their representation of the multicultural communication scenarios of today where the

employees frequently communicate on the other side of the linguistic and cultural barrier. The sample size was further reduced to 28 subjects (17 females and 11 males) aged between 24 and 54 years. The subjects were of a variety of language backgrounds, i.e. English, Urdu, Arabic, Mandarin, French, Pashto, and Tagalog speakers. This variety formed a very solid basis to study the adaptations and the language-negotiation of multilingual workers within the contexts of organizations. The occupational status was either entry-level associates or middle-level managerial staffs and top-level employees, which means the research could take into consideration the changes in the linguistic behaviors to different levels.

The purposive sampling method was used to sample out the participants who are the most relevant to the objectives of the study. In qualitative research, purposive sampling is typically applied to make sure that the chosen people are also experienced and knowledgeable in the area of interest (Palinkas et al., 2015). The inclusion criteria included that the participants must be working in a multilingual working environment and regularly involved in a cross-linguistic communication. The supporting technique applied was snowballing, where first respondents were asked to recommend other respondents with the same level of experience with linguistic diversity in the workplace. The approach contributed to reaching diversity in participants in terms of their departments and roles, which resulted in a more detailed dataset. This is in contrast to random sampling, which focuses on statistical representation but in qualitative research study, purposive sampling is more about depth, relevance, and the richness of experiential knowledge (Creswell and Poth, 2018). This emphasis made sure that the taken information contained the valuable information about the linguistic identity work and relational negotiation.

During the data collection and analysis processes, reliability and validity were considered very vital. Reliability, when applied to qualitative linguistic studies, means consistency in interpretation of data, and is accomplished by using systematically coded data and cross-checking of the analytical categories. In order to increase its reliability, the study underwent an iterative coding procedure. Emergent linguistic topics recognized during initial open coding included tone modulation, indirectness, code-switching functionality and politeness strategies. These codes were developed with the help of the axial coding to provide the connections between linguistic decisions and the identity negotiation or power game. In order to be consistent, coding was done on several occasions and the decisions that were made during the analysis were recorded by writing memos, which allowed transparency in the development of interpretations. Also, the parts of the data were coded twice by another colleague who has the experience in discourse analysis. The discussions of inter-coder agreement assisted in detecting and resolving disagreements which added to the reliability of the coding scheme.

Validity in qualitative research deals with credibility, authenticity and trustworthiness of results. A number of approaches were used in order to make sure that the interpretations were adequate to capture linguistic practices and experiences of the participants. First, a triangulation of data was done because different forms of communications, such as emails, meetings, and interviews, were analyzed. This triangulation made it possible to cross-verify themes in various communicative situations in order to make findings more credible (Patton, 2015). Second, member checking was applied by asking the participants to read several passages of analysis. Participants affirmed the presence of alignment between interpretations and intentions as well as perception that refine analytic insights and confirm the thematic conclusions. Third, linguistic phenomena were presented in their contextual settings by way of thick description. Extensive fragments of workplace speech were provided to demonstrate the role of certain linguistic elements in the organization relations and corroborate the interpretive richness of discourse-analytic research (Geertz, 1973).

Moreover, reflexivity was significant towards upholding validity. To keep a record of positionality, assumptions as well as emerging interpretations, the researcher kept a reflexive journal which was used during data collection and analysis. The concept of reflexivity is especially essential when it comes to linguistic studies that consider identity and power since the linguistic and cultural background of the researcher can impact understanding (Tracy, 2020). The study attempted to reduce the effects of the interpretive bias and preserve analytic rigor by scrutinizing these influences at every step. Validity was

also helped by the ethical considerations. The participants were assured that their confidentiality was guaranteed, and identifying information was eliminated in the transcripts. Participant protection and transparency of ethics were not only observed according to the standards of research but also provided the trust, inviting the participants to authentic experiences.

Collectively, the methodology of this study is an indication of a highly rigorous and contextualized attempt to appreciate the linguistic practices in multicultural workplaces. The combination of the automatically existing discourse and the reflections of participants produced a dense data that can indicate subtle patterns of language use. Pursuant sampling coupled with triangulation of data sources, systematic coding, member checking, and reflexive practices helped in making the findings credible and analytically strong. This approach is more consistent with the general sociolinguistic tradition which theorizes language as highly intertwined with identity, social relations and institutional forms which offers a robust framework when it comes to the analysis of the linguistic creation of workplace belonging, power and relational management.

DATA ANALYSIS

Descriptive Analysis

The descriptive analysis was done to give an overview of the linguistic behaviors as found in the dataset which consisted of 146 workplace emails, transcripts of 11 meetings, and 28 semi-structured interviews. These datasets were fairly representative of all communicative events within multicultural organizations and provided information on the use of tones, code-switching, politeness, and discourse patterns. Frequencies, patterns, and common linguistic practices were determined by using descriptive statistics. Descriptive numerical summaries though being qualitative in nature are useful in explaining why certain communication behaviors are common in various situations (Creswell and Poth, 2018).

The linguistic strategies of the email corpus and meeting transcripts are summarized in Table 1. Politeness markers (e.g., "please," "kindly," indirect modals) were the most common type of strategy (used in 78% of emails and in 65% of meeting interactions). This implies that forms of politeness are extremely important to employees who are working in multicultural and hierarchical relations. Tone softening, which was attained by hedging words like maybe, I think, or perhaps possible, was also found in 52 percent of the emails, as employees tried to minimize imposition and preserve harmony (Brown and Levinson, 1987). There was code-switching in 34% of verbal interactions particularly in multilingual teams indicating relational consistency and identification with the in-group.

Table 1: Frequency of Linguistic Strategies in Workplace Communication

Linguistic Strategy	Emails (%)	Meetings (%)
Politeness markers	78%	65%
Tone softening / hedging	52%	41%
Directives / authoritative tone	29%	46%
Code-switching	12%	34%
Identity references (cultural/linguistic)	18%	27%

The distribution indicates that there is a tendency of the relational strategies over the direct communication or the authority communication, where employees seem to be more wary in their communication via email. Those results are consistent with other studies which show that multicultural

persons of the same origin. This affirms that identity work is inculcated in the day-to-day language practice (Bucholtz and Hall, 2005).

Inferential Analysis

Even though the study adopted a qualitative design, inferential analyses were conducted in establishing statistically meaningful patterns in the use of linguistic strategies and contextual attributes including workplace hierarchies and cultural groupings. In qualitative-dominant research, the inferences are not focused on testing hypotheses, but instead on looking at structured relationships in patterns of observation through methods of qualitative-quantitative integration (Patton, 2015). To make this analysis, a mixed-method method of coding measured the occurrence of linguistic strategies and cross-sets them with hierarchical role and cultural background.

The correlation between role in the organization (managerial vs. non-managerial) and the application of the authoritative tone was observed with the help of Chi-square test of association. The cross-tabulation is presented in table 2.

Table 2: Role and Use of Authoritative Tone

Role	Authoritative Tone Present	Authoritative Tone Absent	Total
Managerial Staff	22	6	28
Non-Managerial Staff	14	32	46
Total	36	38	74

The dependent variable was chi-square calculated based on the observed frequencies. The findings showed that there was a strong correlation between organizational role and authoritative tone ($\chi^2 = 12.75, p < .01$). This implies that, the direct and authoritative linguistic features are much more likely to be performed by managers in comparison with non-managerial personnel. This result is consistent with the available literature that proves that occupations with higher statuses are associated with language forms that index authority, confidence, and institutional legitimacy (Holmes, 2019).

A second inferential test was done to examine whether cultural background was a predictor of the use of politeness markers. The respondents were divided into high-context communication culture (e.g., East Asian, Middle Eastern, South Asian) and low-context communication culture (e.g., North American, Western European), according to the existing cultural communication categories (Hall, 1976).

Table 3: Cultural Context and Use of Politeness Markers in Emails

Cultural Background	High Politeness Use	Low Politeness Use	Total
High-Context	41	7	48
Low-Context	22	18	40
Total	63	25	88

A chi-square test revealed that there was a significant relationship between the frequency of politeness strategies and cultural background ($\chi^2 = 9.84, p < .01$). Politeness markers were used by employees in high-context cultures much more frequently than by employees in low-context cultures. This favors the theories that indirectness and relational politeness play crucial social roles in high context communication systems (Gudykunst, 2004; Hofstede, 2010).

In addition to statistical relationship, in a secondary way; the theory of inferential thematic analysis was used to explore the way participants understood the intention of their language decisions. There were three inferential themes:

1. Identity affirmation through linguistic flexibility

Certain linguistic patterns, which includes code-switching, were used by employees in order to indicate belonging or to underscore cultural identity. This reinforces the sociocultural linguistic theoretical perspective that the construction of identity involves an active process through the use of discourse (Bucholtz and Hall, 2005).

2. Power negotiation through tone and directness

Respondents indicated that they had to alter their tones based on the need to sound deferential, assertive or collegial. Managers often defended their bluntness by saying it was required to be efficient, and non-managerial employees said that they had to tone down in order not to sound confrontational.

3. Cultural bridging through politeness strategies

Employees also deliberately adopted the politeness types in order to close the cultural differences, particularly in emotional interactions, which is in line with the studies on intercultural adjustment and accommodation of communication (Giles and Ogay, 2007).

FINDINGS

The results of this paper were obtained due to an in-depth examination of naturally occurring workplace communication, such as emails, meeting transcripts, and interviews, and demonstrate that employees in multicultural organizations are strategic in the allocation of linguistic resources when negotiating their identity, authority, and interpersonal relationships. A number of outstanding patterns were found in the dataset. To begin with, employees always employed politeness markers, hedging devices, and down-toned when addressing to people of different hierarchy or culture. According to the data analysis, the markers of politeness were observed in 78 percent of emails and 65 percent of meeting turns, which reflects a great desire to use harmony based on relations. These strategies were often described by the participants of the interview as the necessary ones to preserve good working relationships and prevent misunderstandings in the multicultural environment. This is in line with sociolinguistic studies that indicate politeness and indirectness as key instruments of communicating respect and relationship sensitivity (Brown and Levinson, 1987).

The second significant conclusion is about the importance of code-switching in identity building and the regulation of relationships. The code-switching was present in 34 percent of interactions during meetings, especially in the situations when the employees shared the same language or cultural background. As reported by the participants, the transition to a common language brought a feeling of familiarity, unity, and emotional relief particularly when one faced stress or in instances when something had to be explained to them. It implies that the code-switching is not only functional but also symbolic, as it assists the employees in articulating their cultural sense in the workplace settings (Dovchin, 2017). Simultaneously, other participants were aware of being careful about code-switching in front of coworkers that did not understand the language and being perceived as being excluded. This

conflict highlights the two roles played by code-switching as a form of bonding and a potential interpersonal source of ambiguity.

The third result is associated with tone modulation and its relation to workplace hierarchy. Managers tended to employ much more authoritative tone and directive intonation and non-managerial employees often lightened their tone by hedges or modal auxiliaries e.g., might, could, and should. The statistical information found in the inferential test indicated that there was significant relationship between the organizational role and authoritative tone. It is indicative of prior theories that workplace word choices are power-based and that the tone chosen by the employees is adjusted to fit the anticipated hierarchical standards (Holmes, 2019). The participants observed that when managers are direct, it is usually viewed as efficiency but when junior employees are direct, it is seen as aggressiveness which may imply that there are asymmetrical expectations of linguistic behavior between the level of authority.

Lastly, cultural background was significant in the formation of patterns of communication. The high-context employees turned to the use of indirectness, honorifics, and face-saving strategies. Apparently, the low-context participants were more direct in communication. These trends affirm the roles of cultural modes of communication as explained in the intercultural communication research (Hall, 1976; Gudykunst, 2004). The participants pointed out that cultural expectations regarding tone, confrontation and politeness could be misunderstood sometimes not due to language proficiency but due to differences in cultural expectations. In general, the results indicate that the use of linguistic strategies in the multicultural work environment is influenced by the interaction between identity, culture, hierarchy, and situations.

DISCUSSION

The results of this paper underscore the complicated nature of language as a communication and identity-development tool in multicultural work environments. The trends in the patterns are very much consistent with the sociocultural linguistic theory, which states that identity is not a permanent quality, but a process that is continuously being realized through discourse (Bucholtz and Hall, 2005; Faisal, et al., 2024). Through the everyday interactions, employees constantly redefine their professional selves, i.e. in terms of being respectful, competent, authoritative or collaborative by choosing the language they use in their daily interactions. Extensive use of politeness markers and hedging indicate that identity work in this type of workplaces is frequently based on showing respect, reducing conflict, and balancing relationships. The practices can be an additional requirement in a culturally diverse setting where communicative norms cannot be assumed to be identical.

The results also justify studies conducted on the accommodation theory of communication that argues that people alter their speeches to achieve social intimacy or social distance based on the objectives of the relationship (Giles and Ogay, 2007). The regular employment of softened tone by non-managerial employees is an up-down accommodation to authority, which conforms to the expectations of the institution and the cultural norms of hierarchy. On the contrary, the application of directness by the managers does not necessarily imply a form of lack in relational concern but a communicative expectation that is associated with leadership positions. These dynamics reflect the findings of Holmes (2019), who talks about how leaders tend to resort to a directive speech as a form of identity manifestation. These trends indicate that the structural linguistic behavior is not just a personal choice, but the institutionalized practice, determined by the organizational structures.

Code-switching also proved to be an important expression of identity and relational negotiation. According to previous research, code-switching may serve as the index of solidarity, expertise, or situational alignment (Luo and Shenkar, 2017). Their narratives in this research support these roles in that multilingual workers find their way to the cultural sense of belonging and emotional connection by switching languages. Code-switching was also a way of cultural identification as well as a tool of communicating rapport. Yet, the reluctance of some participants underscores the thin line between instilling in-group cohesion and not being too exclusive. This also matches some of the fears expressed

in previous articles that multilingual communication is unintentionally health promotion of social schisms (Tenzer et al., 2014), whereby employees are highly conscious of the way their linguistic selection can be viewed in different areas.

The differences in communication style influenced by culture were also most noticeable in the results of the reflections of the participants regarding politeness and directness. These results resonate with the differences in cultures as explained by Hall (1976) and Hofstede (2010) that instill the high-context and low-context communication patterns. Such a massive disparity in the usage of politeness among diverse cultural groups implies that language frameworks play a significant role in workplace language, and this is how language practices and the meaning of communication of other people affect linguistic behavior. The lack of congruency in these expectations may create friction between individuals, and some of the interviewed participants observed it. These tensions demonstrate the significance of intercultural competence and the fact that organizations should train employees on the issues that are related to cultural-based communication norms and not only language proficiency.

A particularly interesting observation is that the fact that the misunderstanding occurred more often was explained by the tone rather than vocabulary or grammar. This supports the idea presented by Darics (2015) that digital communication increases the number of misunderstandings in terms of pragmatic features of language, including tone and politeness. The dependence of participants on strategies of politeness in email messages can be thus interpreted as a strategy of protection to avoid a misunderstanding (Faisal, et al., 2024). Such results indicate that organizations must promote tone rules or email etiquette courses to minimize uncertainties and facilitate efficient communication.

The conclusions of the inference also confirm the premise that linguistic practices represent more extensive power forms. The correlation between authoritative tone and managerial status is very high, which means that language can be treated as the means of implementing the institutional authority (Faisal, et al., 2023). This may well be aligned with the existing theories in the context of organizational communication, but also it poses a question on equity in the linguistic expectations. As an illustration, when directness is not only praised when employed by managers, but also stigmatized when applied by the junior staff, linguistic norms might contribute to the build-up of hierarchical inequalities. This imbalance contributes to the fact that organizations should take critical approaches to understanding the congruence of communicative norms with wider inclusiveness objectives.

All in all, the exchange indicates that linguistic tactics in multicultural work environments exist on the border of culture, self, authority, and organizational values. Language does not only communicate but also controls relationships, creates perceptions of professionalism, and identities in institutional settings. These results demonstrate that organizations have to embrace communication systems that view culture and lingual diversity as assets and not impediments. Training in the workplace should also integrate sociolinguistic insights in the future so as to enhance more equitable and culture-conscious communication patterns.

CONCLUSION

This paper has shown that linguistic choices like tone modulation, politeness, hedging, and code-switching are key factors in identity, power, as well as interpersonal relation development in multicultural work environments. The study, based on the analysis of organizational communication as it occurs in nature and the data of interviews, concludes that workers communicate with the language not only to provide and receive information but also to navigate between the cultural frameworks and create professional identities, as well as to rule and be ruled in hierarchical relationships. The results support the existing sociolinguistic hypotheses suggesting the centrality of discourse in identity formation and social interaction (Bucholtz, and Hall, 2005). They also emphasize the topicality of intercultural communication models to the interpretation of linguistic diversity and its contribution to organizational life.

The work adds to the current literature through its empirically informed, detailed analysis of the linguistic real-world interaction at the workplace. In contrast to much earlier research, which has focused on survey data or generalised theoretical models, the current study utilises real communication artifacts, i.e. emails, meetings and interviews, in demonstrating how employees strategically counteract contextual demands by modifying their language. The tensions between being direct or polite or switching to a different language and being excluded or being able to be solid are observed as every day negotiation in the multicultural context. These results confirm that communication in international workplaces requires linguistic awareness, as well as cultural awareness.

Additionally, the inferential tests indicate that it has significant correlations with variables like linguistic strategies and other variables like organizational role and cultural background. These associations bring out the structural aspects of communication in the workplace, indicating that communicative behavior is shaped by institutional power structures and cultural systems. These dynamics are critical to understand by organizations that would seek to promote professional environments that are inclusive and equitable. Having acknowledged the insidious role of language in the workplace experience, organizations can support employees more effectively by providing training programs that will work on tone, politeness expectation, and linguistic diversity.

To sum up, language is not peripheral; it plays the central role in the functioning of the organization, in particular, in multicultural settings. Through language, employees form a relationship, bargain power, assert identity and work in a synergy. This paper supports the importance of linguistically aware organizational practices and highlights the importance of sociolinguistic studies in making workplaces more inclusive. With the global work places continuing to grow and diversify, strategic application of language will continue to be critical in promoting useful, positive and balanced professional relationships. Further studies on the topic should address intervention methods, training formats, and longitudinal viewpoints to assist such organizations in surmounting the linguistic challenges of multicultural workplaces.

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