

### A qualitative exploration of the challenges of professionals in International Business from non-English speaking countries

Swati S<sup>1</sup> & Vandana K<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>CMR University, Bangalore

<sup>2</sup>College of Fisheries, Mangalore

#### ABSTRACT:

Language holds a central role in sustainable international business expansion and cross-border collaboration. Yet, professionals from non-English-speaking countries often face profound linguistic and emotional challenges when working in global organizations dominated by English as the lingua franca. This qualitative study explores how language barriers, accent perceptions, and cultural humour differences affect the communication, adjustment, and emotional well-being of international business professionals. Drawing from twenty in-depth interviews and guided by a phenomenological approach, the study reveals four emergent themes: (1) attitude toward foreign language, (2) difficulties in expressing emotional reflections, (3) challenges in addressing official concerns, and (4) lack of informal social support systems. Anchored in theories of emotional conflict in multicultural teams (Von Glinow et al., 2004) and host-country language adjustment (Selmer & Luring, 2015), the study enriches our understanding of how linguistic asymmetries shape workplace relationships and identity negotiation. The findings offer theoretical and managerial implications for promoting inclusive communication and psychological safety in multicultural organizations.

**Keywords:** Language, Emotional Conflict, International Business, Accent, Humour, Non-English Professionals, Phenomenology.

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**Correspondence:** Mrs. Swati S, Assistant Professor, CMR University, Bangalore  
(email – swati\_s@cmr.edu.in)

## 1. Introduction

In an era where globalization defines organizational success, cross-cultural communication has emerged as both an opportunity and a challenge for multinational corporations (MNCs). English, positioned as the *lingua franca* of international business, is widely assumed to serve as a neutral medium facilitating efficiency, clarity, and coordination (Piekkari, Vaara, Tienari, & Sääntti, 2005). However, this linguistic dominance often conceals significant emotional, cognitive, and relational complexities for professionals from non-English-speaking backgrounds (Harzing & Feely, 2008; Tietze & Dick, 2020). For these individuals, the workplace becomes a site where linguistic proficiency intersects with identity, cultural expression, and professional credibility.

Recent studies suggest that the global diffusion of English does not erase but rather amplifies inequalities in communicative competence and emotional experience (Tenzer, Terjesen, & Harzing, 2017; Zhang & Liu, 2023). Employees from non-English-speaking contexts often report feelings of exclusion, inferiority, or anxiety when communicating in a non-native language, leading to emotional fatigue and relational distance (Neeley, 2012; Selmer & Luring, 2015). Such challenges are magnified in international business settings where humour, sarcasm, idioms, and subtle cues shape rapport and trust (Luring & Klitmøller, 2022).

Von Glinow, Shapiro, and Brett (2004) argue that linguistic differences are not merely mechanical obstacles but sources of *emotional conflict*—a form of relational tension arising from frustration, misunderstanding, or perceived disrespect. In multilingual teams, emotions become “entangled in words,” making dialogue difficult or even undesirable across cultural boundaries. Their theoretical propositions highlight that in multicultural environments, “talking it out” is not always the best conflict resolution strategy, as linguistic and contextual diversity complicate emotional expression and interpretation.

Building upon this theoretical foundation, the present study examines how professionals from non-English-speaking countries navigate communication, adjustment, and emotional conflict while operating in global business contexts

dominated by English. Specifically, it investigates the lived experiences of individuals who must continuously negotiate meaning, identity, and belonging across linguistic boundaries. Through phenomenological inquiry, the study seeks to reveal the underlying meanings and emotional nuances associated with such experiences—beyond the mere technical aspects of language proficiency. This inquiry is significant for two primary reasons. First, the success of global organizations increasingly depends on their ability to integrate culturally and linguistically diverse talent pools (Sparrow, Brewster, & Chung, 2016; Lee & Maznevski, 2022). Second, despite the growing literature on language and international business, much of the extant research has focused on expatriates from English-speaking nations or the structural aspects of corporate language policy, leaving the emotional dimensions of linguistic adaptation underexplored. Addressing this gap, this study illuminates how linguistic asymmetry contributes to the emotional and relational dynamics within international workplaces.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Language as a Medium of Power and Identity in International Business

Language serves as a powerful conduit for both communication and control within multinational organizations. Proficiency in the corporate language—most often English—frequently dictates employees’ access to critical information, decision-making forums, and informal social networks (Marschan-Piekkari, Welch, & Welch, 1999). Those with limited fluency often find themselves marginalized in meetings or sidelined from knowledge-sharing processes that occur organically among native speakers (Tenzer, Pudenko, & Harzing, 2014). This dynamic creates a subtle yet pervasive linguistic hierarchy that mirrors organizational power structures, reinforcing perceived inequalities between native and non-native speakers (Harzing & Feely, 2008). Beyond its communicative function, language also shapes professional identity and self-concept. For non-native speakers, linguistic competence becomes a marker of credibility, influencing how they are perceived and how they perceive themselves within the organizational setting (Tietze & Dick, 2020). Difficulties arising from accent, pronunciation, or vocabulary limitations can trigger a sense of “linguistic insecurity,”

compelling individuals to withdraw from discussions or self-censor their contributions (Vaara, Tienari, Piekkari, & Sääntti, 2005). Such restraint can inhibit creativity, participation, and interpersonal trust, ultimately undermining both collaboration and innovation in global teams.

The emotional implications of linguistic disparity extend beyond the technical aspects of communication. Employees struggling with language adaptation may experience frustration, anxiety, or diminished self-worth, which in turn affects job satisfaction and relational harmony. In culturally diverse teams, where dialogue and mutual understanding are crucial, these emotional undercurrents can fracture cohesion and limit the potential for truly inclusive collaboration. Hence, recognizing language as both an emotional and structural element of organizational life is vital for cultivating equitable and psychologically safe workplaces.

## 2.2 Emotional Conflict in Multicultural and Multilingual Teams

Von Glinow et al. (2004) introduced the concept of *emotional conflict* in multicultural teams, describing it as relational tension triggered by miscommunication, cultural misunderstandings, and linguistic incongruence. Emotional conflict differs from task conflict: it is affective, personalized, and often non-verbal. The authors emphasize that in linguistically diverse contexts, “finding words” for emotional expression is inherently difficult because emotions and linguistic structures are culturally embedded. Consequently, communication intended to repair relationships may inadvertently intensify misunderstandings.

Recent empirical studies support this proposition. Tenzer and Pudelko (2016) found that emotional conflict arising from language barriers reduces team trust and knowledge sharing, while Zhang, Harzing, and Li (2022) demonstrate that language-related anxiety mediates the link between linguistic diversity and emotional exhaustion. Additionally, humour—a critical social lubricant—often fails to translate across linguistic and cultural lines, resulting in embarrassment or alienation rather than cohesion (Plester & Orams, 2021).

These findings suggest that emotional conflict in international teams is not simply a matter of

interpersonal incompatibility, but a systemic issue rooted in linguistic asymmetry. The capacity to “talk through” problems, a norm in Western management, may not align with the communicative preferences or emotional scripts of non-Western professionals (Brett, 2001; Duffey, 2000). Thus, emotional regulation strategies in multilingual workplaces must account for both linguistic competence and cultural norms.

## 2.3 Host-Country Language Ability and Adjustment

The ability to understand and use the host country’s language is central to expatriate and cross-cultural adjustment. Selmer and Luring (2015) demonstrated that host-country language proficiency enhances expatriates’ socio-cultural adjustment, particularly in environments where the host language is complex and difficult to learn. They argue that linguistic competence facilitates not only practical communication but also deeper social integration, thereby reducing feelings of isolation.

However, language difficulty moderates this relationship: professionals working in contexts with linguistically distant languages experience slower adjustment and higher stress levels. This insight is relevant for non-English-speaking professionals working in English-dominated environments—the “host language” in this case is English, which, while globally pervasive, carries cultural nuances and idiomatic forms that challenge non-native speakers (Selmer & Luring, 2015; SanAntonio, 1987).

Moreover, recent research underscores the *emotional* component of language adjustment. Chen, Wang, and Zhu (2021) found that linguistic exclusion leads to lower psychological safety, while Rahman and Ye (2023) highlighted that accent discrimination negatively impacts cross-cultural collaboration. Hence, language difficulty not only constrains adjustment but also shapes affective experiences in international workplaces.

## 2.4 Humour, Accent, and Emotional Reflection in Cross-Cultural Communication

Humour and accent are two subtle yet powerful elements influencing emotional communication. Humour functions as a cultural bridge, facilitating

relational warmth; yet it also becomes a source of exclusion when based on culturally specific idioms or sarcasm (Plester & Orams, 2021). Similarly, accents, often perceived as markers of competence or intelligence, can shape power relations in multinational teams (Lippi-Green, 2012). Studies have shown that accent bias leads to attributional errors—listeners may judge non-native speakers as less authoritative or confident, regardless of content quality (Lev-Ari & Keysar, 2010).

For professionals from non-English-speaking backgrounds, these factors often compound the emotional strain of communication. Struggling to express humour appropriately or being misunderstood due to accent can evoke feelings of alienation, shame, or frustration (Neeley, 2013; Zhang & Liu, 2023). Emotional expression itself—particularly frustration or disagreement—may be inhibited by cultural norms that value harmony or indirectness (Ting-Toomey, 2015). These dynamics collectively create a “silent tension” within multicultural workplaces, where individuals internalize conflict rather than verbalizing it (Von Glinow et al., 2004).

### 3. Research Gap

Despite an expanding literature on language and international business, most studies have focused on expatriates from English-speaking countries adapting to foreign contexts (Harzing & Feely, 2008; Selmer, 2006). Far less attention has been given to the *reverse phenomenon*: professionals from non-English-speaking countries navigating English-dominated organizations. This population faces a unique blend of linguistic, emotional, and cultural challenges that differ from traditional expatriate adjustment models.

Existing quantitative studies (e.g., Selmer & Laurant, 2015) have effectively demonstrated the association between language ability and adjustment but have not sufficiently captured the *lived emotional experiences* behind these phenomena. Moreover, while theoretical works (Von Glinow et al., 2004) have conceptualized emotional conflict, empirical exploration of how such conflict manifests in real international business contexts remains limited.

In particular, the nuanced role of accent and humour in generating or mitigating emotional conflict has been largely overlooked. Similarly, the

emotional toll of linguistic insecurity—how individuals manage frustration, embarrassment, and self-censorship when miscommunication occurs - has not been systematically studied. Thus, a qualitative, phenomenological inquiry is warranted to uncover the underlying meanings and emotions embedded in these linguistic encounters.

### 4. Research Objectives

Based on the above gaps, this study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

1. To explore the linguistic and emotional challenges faced by professionals from non-English-speaking countries working in international business contexts.
2. To examine how language barriers, accent perceptions, and humour differences contribute to emotional conflict and communication breakdown.
3. To understand how these professionals construct meaning and negotiate identity in linguistically asymmetric environments.
4. To derive theoretical and practical implications for fostering inclusive and emotionally intelligent communication in multicultural organizations.

### 5. Research Methodology

#### 5.1 Research Design

The study adopts a qualitative phenomenological design, appropriate for exploring lived experiences and capturing the essence of subjective realities (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Phenomenology allows the researcher to focus on how individuals perceive, interpret, and emotionally respond to linguistic and cultural encounters in international business settings. Given the study's focus on emotional and cognitive dimensions of language, this design facilitates depth over breadth, prioritizing interpretive richness.

#### 5.2 Sampling and Participants

A purposive sampling strategy was employed to select 20 professionals from non-English-speaking countries (including India, China, Brazil, Egypt, and Poland) who currently work or have worked in English-speaking multinational corporations. Participants represented diverse industries such as



consulting, technology, and higher education. The sample was balanced by gender and career stage to capture varied perspectives.

Eligibility criteria included (a) minimum two years of experience in an international business environment, (b) use of English as the primary language of communication at work, and (c) willingness to discuss emotional experiences related to language use. Demographic anonymity was maintained through pseudonyms.

5.3 Data Collection

Data were collected through semi-structured, in-depth interviews conducted over video conferencing platforms. Each interview lasted approximately 60–90 minutes. The interview protocol explored topics such as:

- experiences of language-related misunderstandings.
- emotional reactions to accent bias or humour discrepancies.
- coping strategies in linguistically challenging situations; and
- perceived support from organizations in managing linguistic stress.

Interviews were recorded, transcribed verbatim, and cross-verified by participants for accuracy. Field notes capturing emotional tone and contextual nuances were also included in the dataset.

5.4 Data Analysis

Data analysis followed the inductive thematic approach outlined by Braun and Clarke (2019). The process involved six stages: familiarization with data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the final narrative. NVivo 12 software was used to assist in coding and theme organization. Through iterative analysis, four dominant themes emerged attitude toward foreign language, difficulty in emotional expression, challenges in addressing official concerns, and lack of social networking mechanisms.

5.5 Trustworthiness and Rigor

To ensure research rigor, multiple validation strategies were employed. Credibility was established through member checking and prolonged engagement with the data. Transferability was enhanced by providing rich, contextual descriptions of participants’ experiences. Dependability and confirmability were ensured through an audit trail documenting coding decisions and researcher reflections. Reflexivity was maintained to minimize interpretive bias, acknowledging the researcher’s own linguistic background and positionality within academia.

5.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethical clearance was obtained from the host institution’s review board. Participants provided informed consent prior to data collection and were assured of confidentiality and voluntary participation. Pseudonyms were assigned, and identifying information was removed from transcripts. Emotional sensitivity was prioritized during interviews, with participants offered debriefing opportunities after discussions of stressful experiences.

6. Data Analysis

6.1. Open Coding

Initial line-by-line and concept-level coding from the transcript (with assumed repetition from 20 interviews):

Interview Excerpts (condensed)	Open Codes
“It’s tough for a guy from a non-English background to deal with fluent speakers.”	Communication difficulty; Language insecurity
“Pronunciation and accent become barriers.”	Accent barrier; Pronunciation issue
“Misjudgments happened when reporting to the boss.”	Miscommunication with superiors; Reporting errors
“Native speakers have more opportunities.”	Perceived inequality; Career disadvantage
“They don’t mock, but they talk behind.”	Subtle discrimination; Social exclusion

Interview Excerpts (condensed)	Open Codes	Axial Category	Sub-Codes / Related Concepts	Description
"Feedback from them helps me improve."	Constructive feedback; Learning through correction	Official Concerns	Reporting errors, Professional disadvantage	barriers hinder clarity and job performance.
"Watching English movies helps me learn."	Self-learning strategy; Informal skill development	D. Lack of Informal Social Support Systems	Social exclusion, Limited off-work bonding, Hidden bias	Absence of informal connections increases isolation and cultural distance.
"Workshops are helpful but short."	Limited formal support; Short-term training			Highlights mixed institutional support and employees' suggestions for improvement.
"HR guided us on how to talk to patients."	Workplace language coaching; Structured guidance			
"If I had better accent, I might be promoted sooner."	Accent linked to career growth	E. Organizational Efforts for Inclusion	Short workshops, HR guidance, Feedback mechanisms, Need for mentorship	
"You should not be shy; keep speaking."	Self-efficacy; Confidence building			
"Companies should hold regular communication programs."	Suggested language development policy			
"Native mentors should guide non-native employees."	Mentorship; Cross-cultural support			
"No one discourages us openly."	Surface-level inclusion; Hidden tension			
"Informal conversations missing outside work."	Lack of social bonding; Isolation			

## 6.2. Axial Coding

Grouping open codes into conceptual categories showing relationships.

Axial Category	Sub-Codes / Related Concepts	Description
A. Attitudes toward Foreign Language	Language insecurity, Self-learning, Confidence, Perceived inferiority	Reflects internalized struggles and perceptions about language competence.
B. Difficulties in Expressing Emotional Reflections	Accent barrier, Limited vocabulary, Misinterpretation, Fear of judgment	Emotional nuance and tone get lost due to linguistic limitations.
C. Challenges in Addressing	Miscommunication with superiors,	Professional communication

## 6.3. Selective Coding

Integration into overarching themes explaining the phenomenon.

Core Themes (Selective Codes)	Definition	Interrelationship to Phenomenon
1. Attitude toward Foreign Language	How employees from non-English backgrounds perceive and adapt to language demands.	Drives motivation, learning strategies, and self-efficacy in international contexts.
2. Difficulties in Expressing Emotional Reflections	Inability to convey tone, empathy, or emotion effectively in English.	Affects interpersonal connection and perceived professionalism.
3. Challenges in Addressing Official Concerns	Misunderstandings in official communication due to linguistic gaps.	Impacts job clarity, performance evaluation, and professional image.
4. Lack of Informal Social Support Systems	Limited informal networking due to cultural and language differences.	Reinforces isolation and limits integration into multinational teams.

#### 6.4. Narrative Integration (Theoretical Memo)

Drawing from twenty in-depth interviews and guided by a phenomenological approach, the study reveals how non-native English-speaking professionals navigate international business environments where English dominates as the working language. Participants reported linguistic self-doubt, emotional expression barriers, and miscommunication in official contexts, compounded by limited informal social support. Despite organizational efforts through workshops and mentoring, respondents stressed the need for sustained, inclusive, and culturally sensitive language development programs to bridge linguistic and emotional gaps in multicultural workplaces.

### 7. Discussion

The present study set out to explore how professionals from non-English-speaking countries experience and manage linguistic and emotional challenges in international business environments. Through twenty in-depth interviews and inductive thematic analysis, four interconnected themes emerged: attitude toward foreign language, difficulties in expressing emotional reflections, challenges in addressing official concerns, and lack of informal social support systems. Together, these themes provide rich insights into the emotional and communicative complexities of working in English-dominated global organizations.

#### 7.1 Attitude Toward Foreign Language

Participants' attitudes toward the English language ranged from adaptive enthusiasm to reluctant compliance. Those who perceived English proficiency as an enabler of global mobility demonstrated greater motivation to engage in learning and self-improvement. Conversely, individuals who viewed English dominance as an imposition experienced resistance, anxiety, or self-doubt. This aligns with Selmer and Lauring's (2015) observation that linguistic confidence shapes expatriate adjustment and cross-cultural competence.

The data also reveal that *linguistic self-efficacy* - the belief in one's capacity to communicate effectively—mediates emotional responses to language barriers. Participants who had undergone

prior exposure to multicultural environments reported lower linguistic anxiety, consistent with recent findings by Rahman and Ye (2023) that prior cross-cultural exposure buffers emotional strain. However, participants also noted that linguistic competence alone does not eliminate emotional dissonance; rather, the *perceived legitimacy* of one's language use (accent, vocabulary, tone) plays a crucial role in shaping professional identity.

In line with Von Glinow et al. (2004), language is not merely a technical medium but a symbolic system that confers or denies social status. Several respondents described their "non-native accent" as a perpetual marker of difference—eliciting subtle forms of bias or condescension from colleagues. This indicates that linguistic diversity, if not managed sensitively, may reproduce power asymmetries in global workplaces.

#### 7.2 Difficulties in Expressing Emotional Reflections

A recurrent theme was the *emotional constraint* experienced when communicating in English. Participants reported difficulty in expressing empathy, humour, or disagreement naturally in a non-native language. This hindered relationship-building and occasionally led to misinterpretation of tone or intent. For instance, one respondent described how her attempt at sarcasm was taken literally, causing awkwardness during a team meeting.

Such instances exemplify Von Glinow et al.'s (2004) concept of emotional conflict—the dissonance between intended and perceived emotion due to linguistic incongruence. Emotional expression is deeply intertwined with cultural communication styles; professionals from collectivist backgrounds often rely on contextual cues and indirect phrasing, which may not translate effectively into English (Ting-Toomey, 2015).

Recent research reinforces these findings. Zhang and Liu (2023) report that emotional expressivity diminishes among bilingual employees working exclusively in English, leading to affective exhaustion. In this study, participants frequently noted the psychological burden of "thinking twice before speaking"—an indication of emotional self-monitoring. This constant vigilance curtails

spontaneity and may impede creativity and authentic engagement in cross-cultural teams.

### 7.3 Challenges in Addressing Official Concerns

Communication breakdowns in official correspondence emerged as another major challenge. Participants recounted episodes where emails, reports, or performance feedback were misunderstood due to subtle linguistic nuances. For instance, indirect phrasing—perceived as polite in many Asian or Middle Eastern cultures—was sometimes misread as evasiveness or lack of confidence by native English-speaking supervisors. These findings echo Selmer and Luring's (2015) assertion that linguistic distance affects job clarity and organizational socialization. Misinterpretations in professional exchanges can distort meaning, undermine trust, and delay decision-making. Moreover, several participants mentioned hesitation to raise grievances or negotiate workload issues due to fear of being misjudged linguistically.

From an emotional standpoint, such experiences reinforce self-doubt and perceived marginality. As one respondent articulated, "When I cannot say it right, I prefer to say nothing." This silence, though protective, can be detrimental to both personal growth and team transparency. It underscores the relational cost of linguistic asymmetry and the importance of communicative empathy in leadership.

### 7.4 Lack of Informal Social Support Systems

Beyond formal communication, participants emphasized the absence of informal social support in multicultural workplaces. Language barriers restricted small talk, humour, and casual bonding—critical channels for inclusion and psychological safety (Luring & Klitmøller, 2022). Without shared linguistic comfort, many felt excluded from after-work interactions or digital chats that foster belonging.

This isolation mirrors the "social disconnection loop" described by Chen, Wang, and Zhu (2021), where linguistic exclusion diminishes emotional support and team cohesion. While formal mentoring programs existed in some organizations, participants perceived them as short-term or procedural. They called for continuous, culturally sensitive interventions that promote everyday

inclusion, such as peer support circles and multilingual dialogue spaces.

Interestingly, several respondents highlighted the paradox of digital globalization: while online platforms enable collaboration across time zones, they also amplify linguistic insecurity through written communication subject to constant scrutiny. The fear of grammatical judgment or delayed response was noted as a subtle yet persistent source of stress.

### 7.5 Integrative Interpretation

The four themes collectively illustrate a continuum of linguistic-emotional adaptation, where professionals oscillate between competence, anxiety, and resilience. Language proficiency functions as both a bridge and a barrier: it grants access to global opportunities while simultaneously invoking emotional vulnerability.

Theoretically, this study extends Von Glinow et al.'s (2004) framework of emotional conflict by introducing the concept of *linguistic-emotional interplay*—a dynamic process where language shapes emotional expression, social positioning, and identity negotiation. It also empirically complements Selmer and Luring's (2015) model by emphasizing the affective dimensions of host-language competence. In essence, linguistic fluency alone does not ensure integration; emotional fluency—comfort in expressing one's authentic self—is equally critical for sustainable cross-cultural adjustment.

## 8. Implications

### 8.1 Theoretical Implications

This study contributes to the growing intersection of international business, cross-cultural management, and emotion studies. First, it deepens the understanding of language as an emotional resource rather than a mere communicative tool. By highlighting how accent, humour, and linguistic identity influence emotional well-being, the study enriches theories of cultural adjustment and diversity management.

Second, it underscores the bidirectional nature of linguistic power-non-native speakers face adjustment pressure, but native speakers also shape emotional climates through inclusion or exclusion. Future models of multicultural collaboration



should therefore integrate *linguistic sensitivity* as a variable influencing team effectiveness and psychological safety. Third, the findings invite re-examination of emotional conflict theory in multilingual contexts. Whereas Von Glinow et al. (2004) argued that “talking it out” may exacerbate conflict, this study suggests that when linguistic and emotional awareness are cultivated, dialogue becomes a transformative tool for empathy and learning.

## 8.2 Practical Implications

From a managerial standpoint, the results underscore the need for sustained and inclusive language development programs. One-time workshops on “business English” are insufficient; organizations should embed ongoing linguistic mentoring within diversity and inclusion frameworks. Culturally adaptive training—focusing on idiomatic use, humour sensitivity, and emotional expression—can mitigate misunderstanding and enhance relational cohesion. Leaders play a pivotal role in fostering psychological safety by acknowledging linguistic diversity as an asset. Encouraging multilingual practices, such as allowing bilingual explanations or culturally nuanced storytelling, can validate diverse voices. Additionally, cross-cultural coaching and team reflections can help normalize linguistic imperfections while promoting mutual empathy. Human resource systems must also incorporate linguistic fairness in performance appraisals and recruitment. Evaluating ideas rather than accents ensures meritocratic assessment. Moreover, promoting informal networking platforms—social clubs, language cafés, or intercultural events—can strengthen belonging among non-native speakers.

## 8.3 Policy Implications

At a policy level, organizations operating transnationally should frame language inclusivity as part of their corporate social responsibility (CSR). Integrating language diversity metrics into ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) reporting could signal commitment to equitable communication. National-level professional associations may also collaborate with linguistic institutions to provide standardized certifications that validate global communicative competence beyond native fluency benchmarks.

## 9. Conclusion

This study explored the lived experiences of professionals from non-English-speaking countries who operate in English-dominated international business environments. Through phenomenological inquiry, it uncovered a complex interplay between linguistic proficiency, emotional expression, and workplace integration. The findings affirm that while English serves as a unifying corporate medium, it simultaneously perpetuates subtle hierarchies of voice and belonging. The challenges identified—ranging from emotional inhibition to communicative misjudgment—underscore that language is not just a tool of transmission but a site of identity and emotion. By acknowledging linguistic diversity as a strength rather than a deficit, organizations can cultivate emotionally intelligent teams capable of navigating the nuances of global dialogue. Future research should expand this exploration across industries and language contexts, employing longitudinal designs to examine how linguistic-emotional adaptation evolves over time. Integrating neurocognitive and psycholinguistic approaches could further illuminate how bilingual professionals internalize and regulate emotions in cross-cultural communication.

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