



The Role Of Language In The Construction Of Professional Identity Among Non-Native English Speakers In Global Workplaces

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Citation: Ahmed Alshehri, (2024) The Role Of Language In The Construction Of Professional Identity Among Non-Native English Speakers In Global Workplaces, *Educational Administration: Theory and Practice*, 30(10), 176-183
Doi: 10.53555/kuey.v30i10.8017

ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

Purpose: The study mainly focuses on finding out the importance of language knowledge and fluency in English speaking for establishing the organisational position of an individual bearing non-native background regarding English speaking.

Methods: This study conducts the primary quantitative data analysis with 101 participants of non-native English background of the conduction of this survey.

Results: The study has shown that almost 30.67% of participants belonging to the age group of 21 to 30 have shown their interest mostly in responding to the questions. Among these people, the highest participation is seen from the participants bearing a work experience of 5 to 10 years, and their percentage is 29.71%. Moreover, it is seen that almost similarly both male and female participants participated. The main dependency of the variable Career growth and professional construction is found against the variable Language Knowledge and the correlation index value is found to be 0.643 which denotes a comparatively high dependency. Moreover, the highly changing values of Standard deviation show the opinion-based differences present among the organisational employees that have acted as the respondents. On the other hand, the correlation coefficient value is found to be 0.755 which is typically high and shows that the average correlative index value is higher, denoting the interdependency of variables.

Findings: Findings show that despite English language knowledge having a high importance in the speaking style of non-native English speakers that is not the ultimate. The influence of mother tongue dialect impact insignificantly upon the speaking style and continual practice drives them towards a better speaking ability. The most important factor regarding speaking ability is their interest in communication which helps in enhancing their professional construction.

Keywords: Global English, Multilingualism, Verbal English, Grammatical language, workplace culture

1. Introduction

The global workplace creates landscapes for the amalgamation of different types of languages. The Global English (GE) “paradigm” is a well-accomplished and “inclusive term” as this provides the “fluid and hybrid” nature of English. This paradigm initiates the platform for depicting the relationship between the “world English” and English as the “international language.” The workplace cultures and diversities depend upon the languages used by the employees to promote “multilingualism” and diversity of languages within the workplace. The “fixed linguistic identity” is dependent upon the race, culture, and geographical location of people that help to lessen the ties of “colonialism.” The native speakers experience the acceptance of them within the workplace and due to the diversities of languages of each employee, the global workplaces experience the multilingualism through the presented style of their languages. The English language, recognised as the language of economic powers, used by the UK and USA, has become a most prominent language in creating identity within the global workplace.

The native speakers are chosen to properly use language within the workplace. Still, non-native speakers have to face challenges in creating their communication to form their identity within the workplace. With the globalisation of workplaces, the diversity within the places has increased and the cultural backgrounds of different employees help to achieve their goals in the workplace. Language becomes a significant barrier to creating communication among employees and the creation of professional identity within their workplace. Non-native workers face unique issues in the Global workplaces as English is the “Lingua Franca” of those workplaces (Widodo, Fang & Elyas, 2020). The international collaboration of different countries influences the participation of the workers within the organisational workforce. The supportive working environment among employees occurs through the open communication of employees within workplaces (Saba & Frangieh, 2021). The professional identities of employees within workplaces are described through their “speakerhood status” that has been negotiated throughout their “professional and personal” trajectories.

The abundance of employee opportunities is dignified with the increasing number of employees in global workplaces. As per the report of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), about 230 million people work outside their countries of origin, which signifies the increasing importance of “International collaboration.” The number of “International Migrant workers increased to 169 million in 2017, and the share of the youth among these migrant workers increased to 3.2 million in 2017 and 16.8 million in 2019 (ILO, 2024). Different cultural barriers with diversity in languages create issues among the employees in the global workplace. The last two decades of globalisation have impacted the professional identities of global workplaces. The construction and the development of the workplace impact the communication system of employees (Samaşonok et al. 2023). English is the most acceptable language in global workplaces due to the diversities of languages among employees, the workplace culture and the multilingualities within the workforce of organisations.

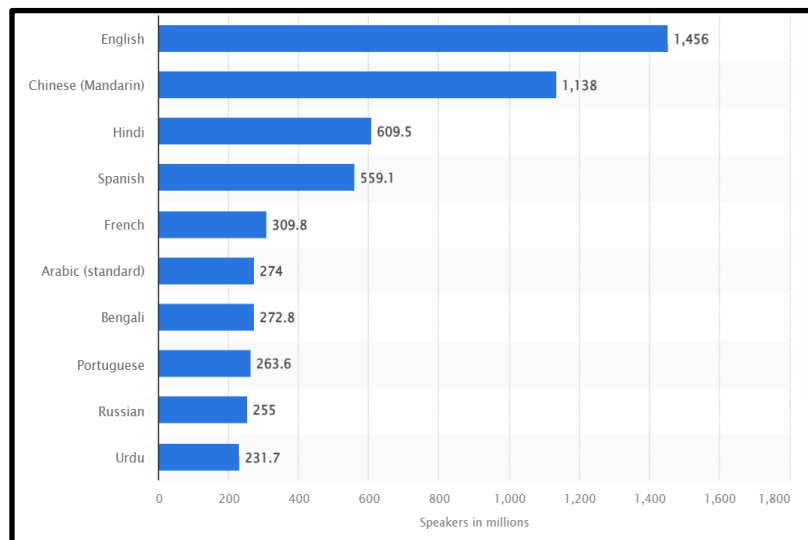


Figure 1: Mostly spoken language worldwide
(Source: Dyvik, 2024)

Various languages exist within this world and among them the most accepted language is English, followed by Chinese and Hindi. Studies show that around 1,456 million people speak the English language and around 1,138 million people speak in Chinese, more than 1.5 billion people speak English and 1.1 billion people speak in Chinese within the world (Dyvik, 2024). Workplace culture and organisational function are the aftermaths of the diversity of languages among employees. “Language-related misunderstanding” among employees is the most common issue that has to be experienced among employees. Due to those misunderstandings within the workplace, the productivity of the employees is hampered and their self-confidence gets destroyed within their work. The “mutual understanding” among employees and the “interpersonal competencies” among employees are another important challenge, experienced by the employees in the global workplace.

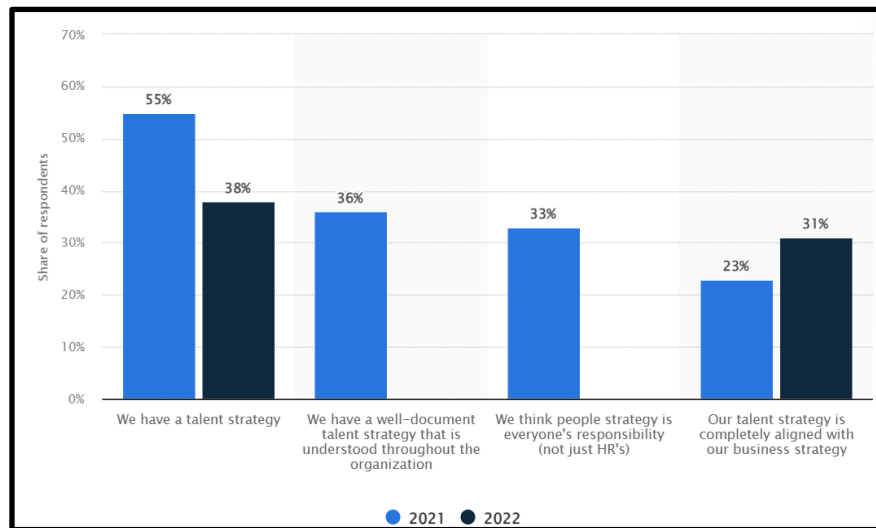


Figure 2: Organisational strategies for coping with language barrier
(Source: Statista, 2024)

Organisational factors impact the language barriers among employees and various strategies are there to implement the diversities within the organisational workplace. Studies show that 55% of the organisations effectively worked on the talent strategy in 2021 and 38% in 2022 enforced the same idea, the rate decreased up to 31% within recent years (Statista, 2024). Most employees have to face limitations in their career progression as the language barriers within the global workplace. The insufficiencies within the training system and the inadequacy in the language support impact workplace productivity and the software tools do not provide support to the employees in the global workplace (Sinitsyna et al. 2021). Due to the insufficiencies among employees related to language affects the identity creation of employees.

Aim: The study aims to understand the influence of language in enhancing the professional identity of non-native English-speaking employees in global-level workplaces.

Research Objectives:

- To discuss the impacting factors that influence the speeches of non-native English-speaking employees at the global level
- To evaluate the challenges faced by non-native English speakers while communicating in a global workplace atmosphere
- To develop an idea about the role of mother tongue in the professional identity construction of non-native English-speaking employees in a global workplace
- To investigate the impact of English lingual knowledge on the communication skills of non-native Employees who speak English

Hypothesis (H1): Language is a highly impacting factor in navigating the professional identity of non-native English-speaking employees within global workplaces.

2. Methodology

The study has focused on conducting a quantitative Data Analysis based on primary sets of Data that are collected by the researcher. The main aim for conducting an extensive evaluation of different aspects related to the study has motivated the researcher to progress with the positivism philosophy that has helped generate hypotheses regarding the influence of language knowledge in the professional image construction of an individual who is not born in English-speaking countries. Using a Descriptive Design, the researcher has focused on creating a significant and detailed analysis of the opinions of the first-hand information providers and focusing on answering the research questions based on the insourced sets of information (Bauer et al. 2021). Moreover, the researcher has utilised the method of Deductive research approach procurement that has helped in creating a top-down approach for the researcher to analyse the aspects regarding the language strength of Non-native English speakers attached to global workplaces (Hollin et al. 2020). The deductive approach-based study is focused on analysing the global context of Non-native English-speaking employees and their career growth and narrowed down the global context to a country-based level gradually.

Now, for conducting the primary quantitative analysis of the selected sets of information, the researcher has used a method of purposive sampling and has chosen only those employees as the respondents that satisfy the following sets of criteria, including non-native English Background, attachment with UK based Multinational companies, and holding a position of Human Resource Manager. Depending on these three criteria, 101 respondents are chosen from 15 Multinational companies that have originated from the nation of United

Kingdom, otherwise have their branches in different regions present in the United Kingdom. A Questionnaire-based survey is conducted with the help of the answers given by these employees, including a total of 15 questions (Aithal & Aithal, 2020). Among these 15 questions, 3 were demographic ones asking for information regarding the age, gender, and work experience of the employees, and the other 12 questions were close-ended and were selected based on a five-point Likert scale. The Likert scale was designated from 0 to 4, depending on the level of agreement where strong disagreement is denoted as 0 and strong agreement is denoted as 4 (Campus et al. 2020). The survey questionnaire is sent to the participants using the Google Form link, and their answers are imported to IBM SPSS for conducting different statistical analysis processes to find out the features related to their given answer-based survey data.

3. Results

Based on the frequency testing method, the researcher has focused on understanding the demographic features that are related to the identity of the professional employees who have participated in the study. Among these participants, it is seen that most of the employees belong to the age group of 21 to 30 and their percentage is found to be 31.68%. On the other hand, the people from the age group of 31 to 40 years are the ones that have participated in the study consisting of almost 30.69%. On the other hand, people belonging to the age group of 41 to 50 years have a percentage of 22.77% and the number shows a sudden decrease to 14.85% in the case of the respondents belonging to the age group of 51 to 60 years. The results interpret that the highest number of employees belonging to non-native backgrounds that face problems in speaking English mostly belong to the newly joined employee groups. Gradually, with their increasing age, their familiarity with the spoken form of English gets higher, and they get more accustomed to their English-speaking skills.

Another demographic criterion that was considered by the researcher while conducting the study was gender and the frequencies that are seen to be found as 54.46% and 44.55% of the employees from male and female genders respectively. These show that the unfamiliarity with the English-speaking skills of the employees is present in both the cases of the Non-native male employees and the female ones. However, a very low percentage of people that belong to the third gender, consisting of a value of 0.99% have opined that they face issues regarding speaking in English. This does not mean that the people coming from the third gender do not face any lingual problems, rather the value means that the people coming from the third gender do not get the opportunity in most cases regarding getting attached to a corporate organisation.

The researcher has analysed another important demographic criterion based on which the opinions of the respondents vary from one another and that is the level of work experience. Among these people, the most number of respondents belong to the experience group of 5 to 10 years which includes 29.70% of people, and in the age-related graph, the highest number of people were found to belong to the 21 to 30 years age group. Considering these two answers given by the employees, it can be found that most of the respondents belong to the age group that is between 21 and 30 and have had the chance to serve at least one company for more than 5 years. The simultaneous satisfaction of these two criteria indicates that most people belong to the age group of 25 to 30 years. On the other hand, the experience group of 10 to 15 years have shown the second highest level of participation in this study which indicates that the people belonging to the age group of 31 to 40 years fall under this experience group. Hence, it is found that the second highest level of participation is mostly shown by the employees that have at least 10 to 15 years of experience. This interpretation means that the employees that have participated in the survey generally face problems regarding speaking in English, as an impact of being a non-native English speaker.

Question	Mean	Standard Deviation
Importance of English-speaking fluency in active workplace communication	1.77	1.462
Disadvantage of English grammatical knowledge for non-native English speakers' communication	1.56	1.473
Ease regarding writing English over speaking in English	1.44	1.452
Benefits of watching English movies and videos in enhancing the English-speaking skills of non-native employees	1.50	1.514

Repetitive participation-based improvement of English-speaking ability	1.52	1.460
The spontaneity of English speaking and their relation to Grammatical correctness	1.47	1.500
Verbal English communication and dependency upon grammatical rule	1.38	1.448
Time consumption for communication by a non-native English speaker	1.62	1.535
Sounding differences of mother-tongue dialect	1.23	1.413
Ridiculousness of mother tongue dialect of non-native English speaker	1.54	1.540
Overcoming Mother Tongue dialect	1.59	1.491
Influence of English communication fluency in establishing a professional identity	1.32	1.462

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics
(Source: IBM SPSS)

The study has focused on conducting the descriptive statistics-based analysis of the different variable-based questions and their respective answers answered by the respondents. Here, the highest mean value is found against question number 4, which denoted “Fluency in English language is typically important while active professional communication to be conducted in English” included the value of 1.77, which means the mean value slightly varies just below half of the Likert scale. On the other hand, the lowest value is found against the 12th question, which denotes “Mother tongue dialect-based sounding differences create significant issues for the employees in global workplace while English communication conduction” which has shown the value of 1.23, that shows their low level of agreement with the statement. However, irrespective of each close-ended question, the standard variation value is found to be comparatively higher and in all cases the value is found to be more than 1. These high values of more than 1 show clearly that the answers of the respondents drastically vary from one another.

Correlation analysis denotes the relationship between different variables present within a specific set of study and among these different variables present within this study, a varying relationship is found between different variables. The independent variables present in the study are considered as “English lingual fluency”, “Spontaneity in speaking English”, and “Dialect of mother tongue”, and the dependent variable is created as “Construction of professional identity in the global workplace”. Against each dependent variable, four different questions are constructed and the highest dependency of the dependent variable is found against the second question of the second independent variable. The question denoted “Spontaneity in English speaking is not related to the correctness of each phrase used by a speaker while communicating” and the correlation index against the question related to the dependent variable with this variable is found to be 0.643, which is the highest dependency among all the close-ended questions.

R-value	R Square	Standard error of the estimate	F change	Sig. F change
0.755	0.570	1.017	10.724	<0.001

Table 2: Model Summary
(Source: IBM SPSS)

The R-value and the R-square value show the relationship between the dependent and independent variables. As per the above table, the R-value is 0.755 and the R-square value is 0.570, indicating that the independent variables are interlinked with the dependent variable.

Model	Sig.
Regression	0.000 ^b
Residual	
Total	

Table 3: ANOVA
(Source: IBM SPSS)

The above ANOVA table indicated the statistical significance of the relationship with the dependent and independent variables. This relationship is portrayed through the Sig value and from the above table, the Sig value is 0.000^b, depicting a positive relationship between the dependent and the independent variables.

4. Discussion

Primary quantitative analysis has been done by the researcher with the help of survey methods in the research paper. A total 101 numbers of participants are engaged in the survey to collect valuable insights about the present topic. Different age groups of individuals are engaged with the survey and from the survey responses, it can be seen that most individuals are from the younger age group in the survey. Most engaged participants have experienced more than 5 years to 15 years and these individuals provide their real-life and valuable insights about their profession in the global workplace.

Fluency in the English language is necessary for non-native English speakers in the global workplace. From the survey method, it can be seen that most individuals agreed with the fluency of the English language to manage professional communication. The English language plays a significant role in managing communication and collaboration in the global market (Islam, Ahmad & Islam, 2022). Grammatical knowledge is not required for maintaining professional communication among employees. Therefore, survey respondents strongly disagreed with the grammatical knowledge in professional communication style globally. The English grammatical knowledge is valuable for the learners to know about the right way of speaking. This knowledge is an advantage for non-native speakers in the global workplace.

Written way of English communication is tough for non-native speakers and the spoken way is effectively easy for these individuals in the global workplace to improve their professional identity. Hence, from the survey participants, most individuals strongly disagreed with the above statement. The spoken way of English language is effectively easy and smooth for non-native speakers in the workplace to maintain their identity. Watching English movies and shows cannot improve the speaking style of non-native speakers in the workplace. Regular practice of the English language among non-native speakers is valuable to improving professional identity globally (Widodo, Fang & Elyas, 2020). Most individuals strongly disagreed with the statement that watching movies is not a solution to improving English speaking power.

English group-based communication is not required for non-native speakers to improve their identity. Active participation in different seminars is needed among these non-native speakers in the global workplace (Ka & Horne, 2020). From the survey responses, it can be stated that most individuals strongly disagreed with the above statement in the research paper. Non-native speakers should use correct phrases during communication time as it helps to understand their thoughts. From the survey responses, it can be identified that most individuals strongly disagreed with the statement. The usage of wrong phrases creates a negative impact on the communication style of non-native speakers (Obremski et al. 2021). Non-native speakers should use correct words and phrases to convey their ideas and thoughts to others.

Grammatical rules are not required for speaking English among non-native speakers in the global workplace. Non-native speakers should focus on their pronunciation and usage of words to maintain communication successfully. From the survey respondents, most individuals strongly disagreed with the above statement as English speaking is the only way to communicate in the global workplace. Non-native English speakers take more time to speak in English than others worldwide (Fauzi & Hashim, 2020). Most individuals strongly disagreed with the above statement as these individuals can communicate with others effectively with the help of the English language globally. It can be stated that non-native English speakers should focus on their communication strategies and processes in the workplace.

Mother tongue is valuable for the speakers to speak in the English language fluently. Several non-native speakers do not have the English language as their mother language and these individuals cannot maintain their professional identity due to a lack of using proper words and phrases during communication. From the survey responses, it can be seen that most individuals strongly disagreed with the usage of mother tongue. Non-native English speakers' pronunciation sounds are different from others and it creates a negative impact on mental depression (Candan & Inal, 2020). From the survey respondents, it can be stated that most participants strongly disagreed with the pronunciation of English language among individuals. Speaking style of the English language is different for non-native speakers to improve their professional identity in the market.

Current "app" based English speaking classes are necessary for the speakers to learn the speaking process and it helps to improve professional identity in the global workplace. These non-native speakers should focus on their speaking style and strategy in the workplace. Speaking style of non-native speakers is different from others to develop their identity (Lawrence, 2020). English communication is valuable for non-native speakers to

manage their professional identity and communication skills in the global market. From the survey responses, it can be said that professional identity and communication skills are associated with each other and improve professional skills effectively.

5. Conclusion

The role of language is valuable for non-native speakers in the global workplace to improve professional identity. Communication with others is valuable for the speakers in their workplace to enhance their skills and knowledge effectively. Correct words and phrases should be used by the speakers in the workplace to improve their professional identity. English communication is valuable for maintaining a professional identity in the global workplace. Regular participation and repetitive practice among non-native speakers are essential to develop a professional identity. English communication is valuable for non-native speakers to develop a professional identity in the global workplace. Language efficiency and usage of proper phrases are improved with the help of the English language. Non-native speakers should focus on their grammatical knowledge and skills in the English language. The mother tongue of speakers is valuable to improve their professional identity and improvement in the global workplace. Active participation in different seminars among individuals is improved with the help of language efficiency.

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