

Effect of Language Barriers on Task Completion by Local Employees in Multinational Construction Materials Companies: A Case Study of Company X in Cross River State, Nigeria

Nneoyi Nnana Aripko; and Bernard, Samuel Eventus

Department of Business Management, University of Calabar, Nigeria.

Corresponding author: nneoyi1@gmail.com

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.62154/ajmbr.2025.020.01036>

Abstract

This study examined how language barriers affect task completion among local employees of Company X, a multinational construction materials firm in Cross River State, Nigeria. Specifically, it explored their impact on task execution, assessed organisational responses, identified employee coping strategies, and proposed culturally informed communication solutions. Organisational Information Theory (OIT) provided the analytical lens, explaining how organisations manage information under uncertainty and enabling examination of communication breakdowns in multicultural workplaces. Using an interpretivist philosophy and an inductive approach, the research adopted a single-case study design. Fourteen operational employees, including engineers, safety officers, logistics staff, machine operators, and maintenance personnel, were purposively and snowball-sampled for semi-structured interviews. Data were transcribed verbatim and analysed thematically using Braun and Clarke's reflexive method. Findings showed that language barriers hinder task completion through misinterpretations, workflow delays, and safety breaches. Existing organisational responses, such as ad hoc peer translation, were inconsistent, leaving employees to rely on coping strategies like observation and guesswork. The study recommends structured peer language support, visual communication tools, a communication support officer, and a mobile translation and learning app. These measures offer practical strategies for multilingual construction sites and deepen theoretical understanding of how language barriers shape operational performance in multinational settings.

Keywords: Organisational Communication, Language Barriers, Employee Performance, Task Completion, Multinational Organisations, Construction Industry, Cross River State.

Introduction

Language constitutes a fundamental element of organisational communication because it provides the primary medium through which information is exchanged, shared understandings are established, and workplace culture is strengthened (Yue et al., 2021). Within organisational settings, a shared linguistic code enables employees to comprehend instructions clearly, interpret managerial expectations consistently, and coordinate tasks effectively. This shared understanding improves both the speed and quality of task execution while reducing operational errors and misinterpretations that can undermine organisational efficiency (Haroon and Malik, 2018). Task completion, the timely and

accurate fulfilment of assigned responsibilities according to set standards, relies on clear instructions, coordinated interaction, and the ability to respond to changing work demands (Aggarwal et al., 2023). In the construction sector, where projects are complex and time-sensitive, effective communication is particularly crucial because misunderstandings can cause costly delays and compromise safety and productivity (Egemen, 2024).

Language barriers are therefore a critical challenge to workplace communication, particularly in multicultural organisations. These barriers arise from differences in language, accents, and professional terminology, disrupting mutual understanding between local and expatriate employees and hindering task execution (Salaets et al., 2024). They have been shown to lower task completion capacity, job satisfaction, and morale by creating uncertainty and recurrent errors (Al-Tarawneh and Al-Badawi, 2025), while also fostering exclusion from workplace discussions and decision-making, which weakens employees' sense of belonging (Salih, 2024). Empirical studies further demonstrate that language barriers in multinational teams limit participation in meetings and slow knowledge processing, leading to missed instructions and prolonged decision-making cycles (Tenzer et al., 2021). They are also associated with reduced performance and increased disengagement when employees experience confusion or exclusion (Fiset et al., 2023). In West African multinational organisations, the coexistence of multiple workplace languages has been found to create operational strain, complicate instruction standardisation, and increase mistakes and delays (Suua et al., 2024). Despite these insights, limited research focuses specifically on how language barriers affect local employees' task completion in multinational construction companies in Nigeria. This gap is critical, given the sector's reliance on linguistically diverse local workforces and the operational risks of miscommunication. This study addresses this gap by examining the role of language barriers in task execution among local employees in a multinational construction materials company in Cross River State. It contributes to knowledge by offering context-specific evidence on workplace communication dynamics in Nigerian multilingual construction sites and to practice by proposing culturally informed strategies to strengthen communication and improve task efficiency.

Research Rationale

In response to growing communication challenges, many multinational companies now put in place deliberate language measures such as choosing a common working language, running workplace language classes, and providing translation or interpretation support to make information clearer, improve employee relations, and support operations across different countries (Pop and Sim, 2022). This trend is also visible in parts of Africa, including Nigeria, which continues to draw the attention of multinational construction firms because of its fast-growing economy, large population, and increasing demand for infrastructure (Aladelusi and Olayiwola, 2021). A significant number of these companies come from non-English-speaking nations like China, Germany, France, and Italy, bringing with them varied workplace cultures, management approaches, and construction methods into Nigeria's

industry (Isyaku et al., 2024). However, many senior staff in such firms have limited ability to communicate in English, and their strong native accents often make it harder for local workers to follow instructions or hold effective discussions (Abugre, 2018). This creates a serious communication gap, which affects job performance because clear instructions are essential for understanding tasks, following safety rules, and meeting project targets (Kalogiannidis, 2020).

Despite the implementation of language support programmes and policies, there is insufficient empirical evidence to demonstrate their effectiveness in enhancing task completion by local employees in multinational construction firms in Nigeria (Kori-Siakpere et al., 2024; Pepper et al., 2024; Nwangene, 2024). This is because available studies have not sufficiently examined how language barriers affect task completion by local employees in multinational construction materials companies in Nigeria, focusing instead on broader organisational issues or Western contexts like Europe, and Asia (Xia et al., 2024; Chen, 2019; Pop and Sim, 2022) and on general communication challenges without sector-specific analysis (Piller et al., 2020; Tenzer et al., 2021; Adanlawo et al., 2021). This gap limits the development of tailored strategies for Nigeria's multilingual construction sites, leaving workers to face unclear instructions, misinterpretations, and reduced autonomy, while management contends with inefficiencies, delays, and safety risks (Tijani et al., 2021; Bonde and Karlsson, 2025). Addressing this through qualitative research is essential to capture local employees' lived experiences and design practical, culturally responsive solutions that improve communication and task performance. It is on this basis that the present study set out to critically examine how language barriers affect the ability of local employees to complete their work in a multinational construction materials company in Cross River State, Nigeria. To this end, the following specific objectives were investigated:

- i. To explore how language barriers affect task completion by local employees at Company X through a critical analysis of data obtained from semi-structured interviews about their experiences.
- ii. To thematically explore local employees' perspectives on the organisational mechanisms currently in place at Company X for addressing language barriers.
- iii. To critically evaluate the perceived effectiveness of these organisational mechanisms in enabling task completion, using thematic analysis of local employees' views.
- iv. To identify and thematically analyse the informal coping strategies adopted by local employees to manage language barriers and facilitate task completion.
- v. To synthesise the key findings and propose a set of practical, culturally informed communication strategies that multinational construction materials companies can adopt to mitigate language barriers and enhance task efficiency.

Literature Review

Language Barriers in a Multinational Workplace

Language barriers in a multinational workplace involve communication difficulties, misunderstandings, reduced collaboration, and possible conflicts arising from differences in language proficiency, interpretation, and cultural expression among employees from varied linguistic backgrounds (Xia et al., 2024). According to Pop and Sim (2022), in a multinational context, such barriers go beyond linguistic differences to include cultural interpretations, communication styles, and power dynamics that disrupt information exchange and organisational coherence. Similarly, Subre (2024) observed that language barriers may relate to accent, tone, body language, and culturally embedded meanings, all of which hinder mutual understanding and task completion. Xia et al. (2024) emphasise the functional implications of language barriers, focusing on their effect on communication efficiency, collaboration, and conflict resolution. Their view centres on language proficiency and its direct effect on workplace dynamics, suggesting that linguistic differences create practical obstacles to team interaction. In contrast, Pop and Sim (2022) adopt a broader view, placing language barriers within the organisation's socio-cultural fabric. They argue that challenges extend beyond proficiency to include cultural interpretation, varied communication styles, and power dynamics, shifting attention from surface issues to structural and relational aspects.

Subre (2024) offers a more diverse stance by stressing the interplay between verbal and non-verbal communication, noting how misunderstandings can occur even with a shared language. This perspective reveals the layered complexity of intercultural communication. While Xia et al. (2024) highlight operational hindrances linked to proficiency, Pop and Sim (2022) add cultural and power-related dimensions, and Subre (2024) integrates verbal and non-verbal elements to show how communication challenges can be multi-layered. Despite globalisation and improvements in translation tools, studies indicate that language barriers remain a persistent problem in multinational enterprises, especially in operational settings like construction where collaboration across cultures is frequent and time-sensitive (Bonde & Karlsson, 2025; Isah et al., 2022; Xia et al., 2024). These challenges are more pronounced where local employees interact daily with expatriate staff speaking different native languages, as in Chinese-owned construction firms in sub-Saharan Africa. Barriers often include unclear instructions, misinterpretation of technical terms, limited use of shared languages such as English or Pidgin, and difficulties in giving feedback (Isah et al., 2022; Bonde & Karlsson, 2025). Such mismatches delay task execution, increase safety risks, cause frustration, and reinforce hierarchical divides between local and foreign staff. The concept of task completion in an organisational setting is discussed in the next unit.

Task Completion in an Organisational Setting

Task completion in an organisational setting refers to the successful execution of assigned responsibilities within a set timeframe and to expected standards, thereby contributing to organisational goals and efficiency (Susanto et al., 2024). It requires clear understanding of

instructions, effective communication, relevant skills and resources, and timely coordination of activities to achieve desired outcomes (Abdelwahed & Doghan, 2023). Aggarwal et al. (2023) described it as the systematic execution of activities through coordinated effort, clear communication, and adherence to procedures, leading to specific objectives being met on time. These views indicate that task completion is not only about finishing work, but about doing it correctly, on schedule, and in support of organisational aims. Susanto et al. (2024) emphasise results, noting that completion means meeting standards within the given time, while Abdelwahed and Doghan (2023) stress enabling factors such as understanding instructions, communication, and proper tools. Aggarwal et al. (2023) also stress communication but highlight following procedures and working in an organised manner. Thus, Susanto et al. (2024) is more outcome-focused, while Abdelwahed and Doghan (2023) and Aggarwal et al. (2023) focus more on processes. Taken together, these perspectives show that task completion relies not only on delivering results but also on having adequate support systems, teamwork, and organisational structures. These views suggest that task completion in multicultural workplaces is shaped by personal, social, and structural factors. Oladimeji et al. (2023) emphasise organisational issues such as poor communication, unclear roles, and systemic inefficiencies. Iskamto (2023) stresses language diversity, morale, and managerial backing, while Rojak et al. (2024) focus on cultural influences, including communication styles, authority structures, and risk perceptions. While all agree that multicultural contexts pose challenges, their emphases differ. Together, these perspectives highlight the need for strategies that improve communication, build cultural awareness, raise morale, and ensure supportive leadership and clear structures. The next unit discusses the organisational information theory as the theoretical framework for this study.

Theoretical Framework

The Organisational Information Theory (OIT), introduced by Weick (1969), explains how organisations process and interpret information to reduce uncertainty and achieve collective goals. Mkhize and Mutambara (2024) emphasise that it shows how workplaces minimise ambiguity through structured communication. OIT conceptualises organisations as information-processing systems that interpret complex or incomplete messages to support decision-making (Weick, 1969). When instructions are unclear, as in the presence of language barriers, employees' ability to respond effectively is weakened (Akintelu et al., 2023). To address ambiguity, organisations rely on rules and clarification cycles to interpret information and restore clarity (Ndu, 2024). In multilingual settings, ambiguity often stems from competing interpretations rather than information scarcity, requiring structured sensemaking (Mkhize and Mutambara, 2024). Language barriers such as vague instructions, inconsistent terminology, and poor translation are linked to errors, delays, and frustration (Akintelu et al., 2023), while informal coping methods like peer clarification and bilingual assistance are often used to bridge gaps (Ndu, 2024).

In this study, OIT provides a lens for understanding how language barriers generate equivocality; situations where employees face multiple or unclear interpretations of instructions. Findings showed frequent misinterpretations, workflow delays, and safety breaches, reflecting high equivocality in operational communication. Local employees engaged in sensemaking through observational learning, peer consultations, and guesswork to interpret unclear messages, consistent with OIT's view of sensemaking as a collaborative process for creating shared meaning under ambiguity (Whittle et al., 2023). The study also found that organisational responses depended on ad hoc bilingual translation rather than formal communication structures. This aligns with OIT's concept of rules and cycles, which describe how organisations reduce ambiguity through established rules or iterative clarification processes. Here, the absence of structured rules meant reliance on informal cycles, leading to inconsistent outcomes and persistent inefficiencies. Although OIT effectively illuminates how communication breakdowns occur and are managed, it has been criticised for overlooking power dynamics, cultural hierarchies, and non-verbal communication in multilingual contexts (Ann Glynn and Watkiss, 2020). In such settings, local employees often have limited influence over formal communication, meaning procedural solutions alone may be insufficient (Noor et al., 2023). Therefore, while OIT is valuable for explaining these processes, complementary perspectives are needed to capture broader socio-cultural factors (Whittle et al., 2023).

Language Barriers and Task Completion in the Construction Sector

In addition to harming organisational performance, language barriers can lower employee productivity by hindering effective task execution, as staff may struggle to understand instructions, express their thoughts, or work smoothly in teams (Xia, Wei, & Tang, 2024). This often causes frustration and disengagement, further reducing the ability to produce quality outcomes (Stahl and Maznevski, 2021). Chen (2019) found that linguistic challenges limit efficient task completion due to frequent misunderstandings, misinterpretations of directives, and difficulties in relaying vital information. Such barriers lead to mistakes, delays, and repeated clarifications, which slow execution and reduce efficiency. Tenzer et al. (2021) noted that language limitations may also discourage employees from seeking help or contributing to discussions, weakening collaboration. Similarly, Pop and Sim (2022) observed that communication barriers create confusion and uncertainty, complicating task completion.

Piller et al. (2020) reported that in construction companies, language barriers delay instruction delivery, increase on-site errors, and reduce teamwork efficiency, negatively affecting timelines and quality. Tijani et al. (2021) added that in multinational construction firms, such barriers can lead to mistrust, exclusion from decision-making, and reduced worker autonomy, further hindering completion and weakening team cohesion. Loderer et al. (2024) found that persistent barriers disrupt daily execution, lower morale, and diminish job satisfaction, contributing to project delays. This is critical, as effective task completion in construction depends on clear, timely communication, and persistent barriers can

compromise safety, reduce productivity, and harm project success (Iwashita, 2022). Bonde and Karlsson (2025) found that these barriers often cause repeated instructions, reliance on intermediaries, and misalignment between expected and actual outcomes, raising costs and delays. Similarly, Adanlawo et al. (2021) found that miscommunication results in duplicated tasks, execution errors, and strained supervisor–worker relations, disrupting workflow.

These studies show that language barriers significantly affect productivity and task execution, especially in multinational and multicultural workplaces. Xia et al. (2024) highlight how breakdowns obstruct performance, leading to disengagement, while Stahl and Maznevski (2021) emphasise emotional consequences such as frustration and withdrawal. Chen (2019) and Tenzer et al. (2021) stress the cognitive and behavioural effects, noting that misinterpretations and reluctance to speak slow execution and limit collaboration. Pop and Sim (2022) support this by showing how confusion reduces efficiency. In construction contexts, Piller et al. (2020) link language challenges to delays, mistakes, and poor teamwork, with Tijani et al. (2021) adding relational effects such as mistrust and exclusion. Iwashita (2022) and Bonde and Karlsson (2025) associate persistent issues with operational inefficiencies, while Adanlawo et al. (2021) point to duplicated efforts and strained relationships. Together, these works suggest that language barriers influence not only understanding but also emotional well-being, workplace relations, decision-making, and overall efficiency.

Coping Strategies of Employees and Multinational Companies in Addressing Language Barriers in an Organisational Setting

To address the language barrier challenges in the workplace, employees and multinational companies often rely on coping strategies such as simplifying language, using gestures, seeking help from bilingual colleagues, and employing visual aids to bridge communication gaps. Salleh et al. (2021) observe that employees often resort to basic or simplified English and non-verbal cues to ensure that essential information is conveyed, especially when verbal fluency is limited. This practical, on-the-ground approach is further supported by Alhamami (2022), who identifies additional strategies like code-switching, mobile translation apps, and learning essential phrases in the dominant organisational language as effective tools for navigating linguistic challenges. These strategies show a high level of adaptability and individual initiative, where employees actively adjust their communication methods to suit the demands of their work environment. Tenzer et al. (2021) contribute by highlighting how local employees often create informal support systems such as peer interpretation groups or “language buddies” to help their colleagues interpret instructions and complete tasks effectively. Chen (2019) reinforces this point by noting that these grassroots methods, like collaborative problem-solving and cultural adaptation, are particularly vital in multicultural contexts where formal language support may be lacking.

In parallel, multinational companies themselves have recognised the limitations of informal coping mechanisms and have introduced a range of institutional strategies to complement employee efforts and foster clearer communication. Subre (2024) outlines how companies have implemented multilingual safety training, hired bilingual supervisors, translated essential documents, and organised intercultural communication workshops to mitigate language-based misunderstandings. These more formal approaches are designed to create a structured and consistent communication environment, thereby reducing the reliance on individual coping. Weinzierl (2024) adds a technological dimension, showing how real-time translation devices, multilingual mobile apps, and virtual learning platforms can modernise communication and provide employees with accessible language tools in real time. Furthermore, Pop and Sim (2022) draw attention to the use of non-verbal organisational solutions, such as pictogram-based instruction manuals, colour-coded signage, and visual workflows, which reduce dependency on spoken or written language altogether. Compared to the informal and often reactive strategies employed by individual workers, organisational strategies tend to be more systematic, preventive, and scalable. However, both sets of strategies serve complementary roles; while employees' adaptive behaviours fill immediate gaps in communication, formal organisational interventions offer long-term solutions that promote inclusivity and efficiency. Essentially, these scholarly insights suggest that the most effective way to address language barriers in multinational workplaces lies in combining employee-driven flexibility with structured organisational support to ensure both day-to-day clarity and sustainable communication practices.

Gap in Literature

A review of relevant studies shows limited research on how language barriers affect task completion by local employees in multinational construction materials companies in Nigeria. While Xia et al. (2024), Chen (2019), and Pop and Sim (2022) provide insights into the effects of language barriers on communication and productivity, their work is largely set in broader or non-African contexts, overlooking the specific realities of Nigerian workers in this sector. Likewise, Piller et al. (2020), Tenzer et al. (2021), and Adanlawo et al. (2021) discuss the operational and interpersonal consequences of linguistic challenges but do not focus on how Nigerian employees in multinational firms experience and manage these issues. This gap limits the creation of communication strategies suited to linguistically diverse construction sites in Nigeria. As a result, employees may face unclear instructions, misinterpretations, and reduced autonomy, while management deals with inefficiencies, delays, and safety concerns. Tijani et al. (2021) and Bonde and Karlsson (2025) further note that language barriers can strain relationships, cause task duplication, and create operational disconnects. Addressing this gap through qualitative research is vital, as it can uncover the lived experiences of local workers and the informal strategies they use to overcome communication challenges; insights crucial for developing practical, culturally responsive solutions for Nigeria's multinational construction sector.

Methodology

Research Philosophy

This study was guided by interpretivism because the aim was not to test measurable facts or identify statistical relationships between variables, but to understand how local workers at COMPANY X personally experienced language barriers and their impact on task completion (Mbanaso et al., 2023). This approach was appropriate because it enabled exploration of nuanced personal perspectives within their real organisational context. Unlike positivism, which focuses on numerical generalisations (Nyabuto & Wabwoba, 2024), interpretivism examines meanings that are specific to particular groups and contexts (Means & Mowatt, 2024).

Research Design

A single-case study design was adopted, focusing on COMPANY X, a multinational construction materials company in Cross River State. This approach allowed for an in-depth examination of how language barriers influence task completion within one organisational context, enabling a rich, contextualised understanding of real-life communication dynamics (Van Manen, 2023). COMPANY X was selected because it represents a typical multinational construction environment in Nigeria, with a linguistically diverse workforce and operational complexities that make it an ideal site for studying workplace language barriers. A single case was also justified because the research sought to generate analytical generalisations rather than statistical ones, linking empirical findings to theoretical insights from OIT (Ellis & Hart, 2023). To protect organisational confidentiality and encourage candid participation, the company's real name was replaced with the pseudonym "Company X," in line with good qualitative research practice.

Data Collection Method

Primary data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 14 local operational employees, including site engineers, logistics personnel, factory workers, health and safety staff, machine operators, and maintenance crew. Primary data were preferred because they provided rich, up-to-date information directly related to the study objectives (Hazari, 2024; Verma et al., 2024). Semi-structured interviews enabled participants to share experiences in depth while allowing flexibility to explore emerging themes (Phillips et al., 2024). Interviews were conducted online, audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and analysed thematically.

Sampling Technique

14 local employees participated, which is appropriate for qualitative research because the aim was to obtain depth of insight, not statistical representativeness (Pyo et al., 2023). This sample size was sufficient to reach data saturation, meaning that after several interviews, no new information emerged, enhancing the credibility of the findings (Tisdell et al., 2025).

Participants were selected using purposive and snowball sampling. Purposive sampling identified employees with at least one year of experience at Company X (Ahmad & Wilkins, 2024), while snowball sampling allowed initial participants to refer others with relevant knowledge (Ahmed, 2024). These techniques were well suited to accessing employees with direct experience of language-related communication challenges (Pyo et al., 2023).

Data Analysis Techniques

Data were analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) reflexive thematic analysis. This systematic approach involved familiarisation, coding, theme development, refinement, and reporting (Rowland & Conolly, 2024; Sommeechai, 2024). Themes were compared with existing literature and interpreted through the lens of Organisational Information Theory (Weick, 1969), which guided the study's analytical framework.

Ethical Considerations

The researchers obtained ethical approval from the Post-Graduate Research Committee of the Faculty of Administration and Management Sciences, University of Calabar, Nigeria, prior to data collection. Participants were provided with clear information sheets outlining the study's purpose, confidentiality measures, and their rights. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before interviews, and participation was entirely voluntary. Data were anonymised, and organisational identifiers were removed to protect confidentiality.

Analysis and Discussion

In this unit, the qualitative data obtained from participants through interviews, are thematically analysed through Braun and Clarke reflexive thematic framework and critically discussed in line with relevant literature. The analysis and discussion centre on the four (4) key themes identified in the data. The insights from each key theme are critically discussed in relation to the organisational information theory (OIT) (Weick, 1969). This ensured that the qualitative analysis was not only grounded in participants' lived experiences but also critically framed within a relevant theoretical lens. This enabled a deeper understanding of how local employees at Company X make sense of, adapt to, and navigate language-related uncertainties in their task environments through communication processes. The identified key themes are stated thus:

Theme 1: Language barriers and task completion by local employees

Theme 2: Local employees' perspectives of current organisational response mechanisms

Theme 3: Perceived effectiveness of current organisational response mechanisms

Theme 4: Informal coping strategies of local employees

Data Coding

In order to make the thematic analysis clearer and more reliable, a coding sheet was prepared to outline the main themes, sample codes, selected participants, and their related

departments. This code sheet (TABLE 1) was developed as part of Braun and Clarke's reflexive thematic analysis (RTA) to systematically map how meaning was constructed across the dataset through an interpretive lens. It summarises the generated themes, illustrative codes, relevant participants, and their departmental roles, thereby offering a transparent and structured overview of the analytical process. It also shows how the responses were similar across different people, which adds to the strength and trustworthiness of the findings.

TABLE 1
Code Sheet

Theme	Indicative Codes	Participants	Department/Role
Language barriers and task completion by local employees	- Difficulty understanding instructions - Delays and repeated tasks - Safety risks due to miscommunication - Low confidence and frustration	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P13, P14	Factory Workers, Maintenance Crew, Health & Safety Officers, Logistics, Site Engineers, Site Supervisor, Truck Driver, Equipment Technician
Local employees' perspectives of current organisational response mechanisms	- No formal system - Infrequent or absent training - Ad-hoc supervisor explanations - Reliance on bilingual staff or experience	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P12	Same as above
Perceived effectiveness of current organisational response mechanisms	- Mechanisms seen as ineffective - Training/workshops not inclusive - Poor access to support - No real-time or practical assistance	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P13, P14	Same as above
Informal coping strategies of local employees	- Asking colleagues - Using hand signs and body language - Observing actions - Speaking slowly or in Pidgin - Using translation apps or notes	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P13, P14	Same as above

Source: Participants' Interview data (2025)

Critical Qualitative Analysis of the Effect of Language Barriers on Task Completion by Local Employees

This section gives a critical analysis of how language barriers affect local employees when carrying out their tasks in a multinational construction materials company in Cross River State. The discussion is arranged in themes that reflect the main focus of the study,

following the steps of Braun and Clarke's Reflexive Thematic Analysis. Each theme helps to show how language barriers create challenges, how the company is responding, and how local workers are managing the situation on their own. The aim is to clearly present what the participants shared, while comparing their views to show both similar and different experiences. This approach helped me to better understand how poor communication can slow down work, reduce confidence, and affect teamwork in the workplace.

Theme 1: Language Barriers and Task Completion by Local Employees

Across the interviews conducted, local employees consistently expressed that language barriers significantly disrupted their ability to carry out tasks effectively. This theme captures the major ways language challenges delay, distort, or complicate the completion of daily responsibilities. Drawing from participants' voices, the subthemes presented below reveal how miscommunication affects clarity, confidence, teamwork, safety, and overall productivity.

Subtheme 1: Misunderstanding of instructions and delayed execution

A prominent concern raised by nearly all participants was the struggle to clearly understand task instructions given by expatriate supervisors. Participant 1 shared, *"Language barriers make it hard to understand instructions clearly, so I may end up doing the wrong thing... it can slow down the work and cause small mistakes."* Likewise, Participant 2 added, *"It can also cause safety problems if I don't fully understand the warnings or safety guidelines."* These difficulties often force employees to ask for clarifications or rely on colleagues, leading to interruptions and delays.

Participant 4, who works in logistics, stated: *"Sometimes [the expatriates] use unfamiliar terms or speak too fast... this can lead to confusion when planning deliveries or managing pickups."* Such misinterpretations, as reported, can result in serious workflow errors like dispatching wrong materials or going to incorrect locations. These findings align with Weick's (1969) OIT, which emphasises that organisations must reduce equivocality (uncertainty of meaning) through effective communication processes. In this context, the lack of structured communication mechanisms heightens equivocality, making task execution harder and slower.

Subtheme 2: Reduced confidence and increased stress

Several participants described emotional stress arising from communication difficulties. Participant 3 explained, *"Sometimes I feel shy to speak up or ask questions because I'm not sure they'll understand me. This affects my confidence and makes the work harder."* Similarly, Participant 6 noted, *"It affects my confidence. I feel like I don't know enough."* Such feelings lead workers to withdraw during important discussions or remain passive, even when clarity is needed for safety or accuracy. This demonstrates that language barriers do not only affect cognitive understanding, but also the self-assurance required for efficient participation in task execution.

Participant 5, a site engineer, reflected on this by stating: *"During meetings with foreign supervisors, I struggle to follow their accents or technical terms... I miss important details."* This contributes to errors and loss of autonomy in completing assigned tasks. OIT helps us understand how uncertainty in information flow, especially when employees are unsure how to interpret what is being said, can emotionally destabilise staff, which in turn affects their performance.

Subtheme 3: Safety concerns and risk amplification

Some of the most serious consequences of language barriers are those that affect site safety. Participants in safety-related roles repeatedly expressed concern about how poor communication jeopardised safe operations. For instance, Participant 8 reported: *"Language barriers... make it hard to give or receive clear instructions. It slows down teamwork and increases safety risks."* Participant 10 echoed this concern, saying: *"Without clear communication, mistakes are more likely to happen... sometimes even safety instructions are not clear, and that's actually very risky."* Here, the lack of consistent translation support or clear visual communication tools undermines a key aspect of the organisational information environment: safety messaging. According to OIT, when organisations fail to provide timely and unambiguous information, it reduces their capacity to manage uncertainty and increases operational risk (Weick, 1969).

The insights from this theme align with the OIT by Weick (1969) in that they show how unclear communication increases uncertainty in the workplace. In Company X, language barriers make it difficult for employees to process information quickly, leading to confusion, hesitation, and repeated mistakes. Instead of reducing uncertainty, the organisation's weak communication system allows ambiguity to grow, especially when instructions are rushed or not simplified. This weakens the overall flow of information, making it harder for workers to complete tasks effectively and confidently. The insights are also consistent with findings from extant relevant studies. For instance, Xia et al. (2024) found that language barriers disturb communication flow and slow down task execution, just like the delays and repeated clarifications reported by workers in this study. Chen (2019) also observed that when workers struggle to understand directives, they often rely on trial and error, which leads to errors and low productivity. Likewise, Stahl and Maznevski (2021) noted that emotional reactions like stress and withdrawal are common outcomes of communication problems, which mirrors the feelings of shyness and self-doubt shared by many participants. In a similar way, Piller et al. (2020) and Tijani et al. (2021) explained that language barriers increase the chances of safety issues on construction sites; a concern raised repeatedly by safety staff in Company X. These studies all confirm that language challenges not only affect understanding but also increase emotional pressure and workplace risk, reducing both individual and team efficiency.

Theme 2: Local Employees' Perspectives of Current Organisational Response Mechanisms

This theme presents local employees' views on how Company X is currently addressing the problem of language barriers in the workplace. Participants gave mixed responses, showing that while some steps have been taken to improve communication, many workers still feel that the support is not enough. The responses reveal concerns about the limited nature of these efforts and how they affect employees' sense of inclusion, understanding, and task coordination.

Subtheme 1: Limited language support structures

From the interviews conducted, several participants noted that there were no clear or formal communication structures set up to help them bridge language gaps. Participant 7 explained: *"There is no interpreter or anything like that... we just try to understand them [the expatriates] by ourselves... if you can't understand, you just try to manage or ask another worker."* This response reflects a strong sense of self-dependence among employees who feel that they are left to handle communication challenges without adequate organisational help.

Participant 13, a technician, also said: *"We have to figure it out ourselves. Sometimes, I use Google Translate on my phone, or just nod and pretend I understand, so the work can move on."* This quote highlights how the absence of structured assistance makes employees rely on external apps or gestures, which may not always be accurate or safe. Many participants felt that the company's management has not introduced tools, translators, or regular briefings to help overcome language barriers.

Subtheme 2: Occasional toolbox meetings and instructional demonstrations

Some employees acknowledged that the company organises brief morning meetings where instructions are given before tasks begin. However, they noted that these sessions are not consistent or detailed enough to fully solve the communication challenges. Participant 8 shared: *"Sometimes they try to explain during toolbox meetings... but not always. And even then, the way they talk is still not clear for everybody."* Participant 4, from the logistics team, also remarked: *"They sometimes use signs or body language to show what they want, but if you're not used to them, you can still get it wrong."* This shows that although there are efforts like gestures or demonstrations, they are not structured or clear enough for all workers to benefit from. Some employees find them helpful, but most believe more should be done.

The findings under this theme show that while Company X is making minimal attempts to support communication, the current response mechanisms are inconsistent, and largely ineffective. From the perspective of Organisational Information Theory (Weick, 1969), these weak systems fail to reduce equivocality in the workplace. Instead of improving clarity and reducing uncertainty, the company's lack of structured support forces employees to make sense of tasks on their own or depend on colleagues, which leads to mixed

understanding and uneven task performance. These results align with earlier studies like Tijani et al. (2021), who found that lack of organisational support in multilingual construction firms leads to exclusion and reduced worker autonomy. Similarly, Piller et al. (2020) observed that delays in instruction and low efficiency in multinational construction sites are worsened by the absence of translation or communication support. Participant views in this study also mirror the findings of Pop and Sim (2022), who noted that when organisations rely only on informal communication, it creates confusion and inconsistency. Tenzer et al. (2021) further explained that without formal strategies to manage language diversity, workplace collaboration becomes weak, which matches the reliance on peer help described by Company X employees. In essence, I am convinced that Theme 2 shows that current response mechanisms are not enough to deal with the communication problems caused by language differences. This is because most employees feel unsupported and are left to manage on their own. This makes task completion harder and increases misunderstandings. To reduce uncertainty and improve productivity, the company needs to introduce more formal and structured communication systems that support both expatriates and local staff.

Theme 3: Perceived Effectiveness of Current Organisational Response Mechanisms

In discussing how effective the current organisational response mechanisms are, most participants expressed that the efforts made by Company X to address language barriers are limited and not achieving the intended results. While a few acknowledged the existence of toolbox meetings or occasional explanations during task assignments, the general feeling across interviews was that these measures were inconsistent, unclear, and often too rushed to make a real difference. Local employees repeatedly pointed out that they still experience confusion, misunderstandings, and delays in task completion; all of which suggest that the existing communication strategies are not truly effective.

For instance, Participant 8, a safety officer, stated plainly: *"What they are doing is not enough... They think because they talk to us in the morning, everything is clear. But after that, we still face problems when the foreigners are giving instructions."* Similarly, Participant 3 noted: *"Even after the meetings, there is still confusion... the way they explain things is not easy to understand, especially when the accent is strong or they use big grammar."* This shows that although communication efforts are present in some form, they fail to bridge the language gap for most employees. In fact, many felt that the company's measures are more symbolic than practical; done out of routine but not actually addressing the real issue of comprehension and clarity.

Participant 7 explained further that: *"Sometimes the foreigners try to use signs or explain with hand gestures, but they don't wait to be sure we understand. So, the work still suffers."* Another participant, Participant 10, added: *"They don't use translators or anything. If you don't understand, you're on your own... it's like they just expect you to cope somehow."* This highlights a serious gap between the intended purpose of the company's current

mechanisms and the actual experience of local workers. Instead of making communication clearer, many of these efforts leave workers feeling unsupported and exposed to errors.

Reinforcing the views of previous participants, Participant 14 remarked that: *"They have not done anything serious to solve the problem. We are just managing. You can't say the current system is working well because people are still guessing instructions."* Others pointed out that even though some expatriate staff try to speak slower or use simplified terms, there is no structured training or consistent approach from management to ensure that communication works for everyone on the team. This lack of coordination reduces the effect of the efforts being made and leaves the responsibility of managing communication largely on the local employees themselves.

Ultimately, the findings under this theme reflect a strong gap between intention and outcome. Although the company appears to have some basic response mechanisms in place, these measures are not functioning well enough to solve the communication challenges faced by local workers. In line with Organisational Information Theory (Weick, 1969), the failure of these mechanisms means the organisation is not properly reducing equivocality (uncertainty of meaning) in its information environment. When organisational messages (such as task instructions, safety guidelines, or work updates) remain unclear, employees are left to interpret them differently or depend on informal coping methods. This leads to inconsistent outcomes, mistakes, and frustration. Furthermore, these observations match the empirical findings of Chen (2019) and Pop and Sim (2022), who both found that ineffective organisational responses to language barriers result in frequent miscommunication and lower productivity.

Likewise, Tijani et al. (2021) pointed out that in multinational construction firms, weak communication structures cause exclusion from decision-making and reduce workers' confidence. In the case of Company X, local employees' continued struggle with understanding even after organisational communication efforts (like toolbox meetings) shows that those mechanisms lack structure, clarity, and follow-up. Tenzer et al. (2021) also noted that without consistent and formal systems to handle multilingual workforces, companies face higher risks of task duplication, confusion, and delay; all of which were evident in participants' experiences. Essentially, the effectiveness of the current organisational response mechanisms is perceived to be poor by most local employees. Rather than reducing uncertainty and enabling clearer task execution, the measures in place are seen as vague, inconsistent, and poorly structured. This leads to continued confusion, low morale, and dependence on informal strategies.

Theme 4: Informal Coping Strategies of Local Employees

This theme focuses on the creative ways local employees at Company X manage language barriers on their own in the absence of formal organisational support. Most participants revealed that they have developed informal strategies over time to help them understand tasks, communicate with expatriates, and complete their work more effectively. These

strategies include using gestures, seeking help from coworkers, relying on repeated demonstrations, and even pretending to understand to avoid embarrassment or delay.

Subtheme 1: Dependence on peer translation and support

Many participants shared that they depend heavily on fellow colleagues who understand the expatriates better. These peers often help by explaining instructions in simpler English or local languages. Participant 11 shared: *"I usually wait for someone else to explain what the foreign supervisor meant... especially someone who has worked with them longer and understands their way of speaking."* Similarly, Participant 6 said: *"Some of us understand them better... so others come to us for explanation. It's like we interpret for each other so the work can move on."* This shows how informal teamwork and peer-based interpretation have become essential coping methods for task completion. These observations align with Tenzer et al. (2021), who found that local employees often create informal support systems such as peer interpretation groups or *"language buddies"* to help interpret instructions and complete tasks more effectively.

Subtheme 2: Use of gestures and body language

Another commonly used coping strategy is relying on non-verbal communication. Several participants said that they use hand signals, body movements, or visual cues to figure out what is expected. Participant 1 stated: *"Sometimes I just look at what they are pointing to or how they move... from there, I try to guess what to do."* Participant 14 also mentioned: *"If I don't hear them well, I look at their hands, their face... I try to copy or understand from their movement."* The risk with this copy strategy is that although it helps in many cases, it can lead to wrong assumptions and task errors if the cues are misunderstood. Salleh et al. (2021) confirm that workers often resort to gestures and simplified English to convey essential information in settings where verbal fluency is limited, especially in the absence of formal training.

Subtheme 3: Trial-and-error and pretending to understand

Some employees admitted to taking action based on assumptions or simply pretending to understand to avoid embarrassment or delay. Participant 13 said: *"I don't like asking too many times, so I just try to do it the way I think they meant... sometimes I get it right, sometimes I don't."* Participant 9 explained: *"If I keep asking, they may think I'm slow... so sometimes I nod and go and try to figure it out on my own."* These examples show how fear of judgement or job insecurity can push workers to adopt risky coping behaviours that may lead to errors or safety problems. Alhamami (2022) identified similar patterns in multinational settings, where employees use trial-and-error, code-switching, and mobile translation apps as individual strategies to overcome language difficulties.

Ultimately, the findings under Theme 4 show that local employees are actively trying to reduce communication challenges on their own by developing informal coping methods.

From the view of Organisational Information Theory (Weick, 1969), these strategies represent personal efforts to reduce uncertainty in situations where formal organisational systems are missing or weak. While these informal practices help workers to "*make sense*" of unclear instructions, they do not guarantee accuracy or safety and can lead to mistakes if assumptions are wrong. This is supported by Chen (2019), who noted that grassroots methods such as collaborative problem-solving and cultural adaptation are crucial in multicultural environments where formal language support is lacking. Additionally, Pop and Sim (2022) argue that in the absence of structured communication, workers often rely on pictorial or gesture-based interpretations that, while innovative, may increase the risk of inconsistent workflows. In essence, Theme 4 shows that local employees are filling the gap created by the company's weak communication system through peer support, gestures, and self-guessing. While these strategies show adaptability, they also reflect a bigger problem: the organisation is not taking full responsibility for ensuring effective communication. Without formal support, these coping methods will continue to produce mixed results, increasing the risk of mistakes, stress, and delays.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study examined how language barriers affect task completion among local employees in a multinational construction materials company in Cross River State, Nigeria. Drawing on Organisational Information Theory (OIT) and an interpretivist lens, qualitative insights from 14 operational workers revealed three key findings. First, language barriers disrupted workflow, delayed task execution, and created safety risks. Second, organisational communication mechanisms were inconsistent and insufficiently structured to address ambiguity, compelling employees to depend on informal strategies such as peer support, observation, and guesswork. Third, while these coping strategies offered short-term solutions, they did not resolve underlying structural communication gaps. The study contributes to theory by extending OIT's application to a multilingual, Nigerian construction context, highlighting how equivocality and sensemaking unfold in settings shaped by linguistic diversity and power asymmetries. This localised application advances understanding of how information processing theories operate in Global South workplaces. Practically, the findings call for multinational firms to design culturally responsive communication protocols, strengthen formal clarification channels, and reduce reliance on informal workarounds to enhance efficiency and safety. Against this backdrop, the following recommendations are presented:

1. The company should establish a structured peer language support system by identifying and formally assigning bilingual or high-comprehension local employees as "language facilitators" or "peer interpreters" within work teams. These individuals can support real-time clarification of instructions and safety information during daily briefings or task execution. This step is imperative because the findings showed that many employees already rely informally on peers for interpretation. Formalising this system will reduce confusion, ensure consistency,

and relieve the burden on individual workers who currently “manage on their own”. By reducing reliance on ad-hoc communication, this strategy will create a more stable flow of information, minimise errors caused by misinterpretation, and foster teamwork and inclusion across cultural lines.

2. The company should comprehensively integrate visual communication tools and demonstrative training by using pictorial signs, workflow diagrams, colour-coded task charts, and regular demonstration-based briefings to supplement spoken communication. These should be standardised and integrated into daily toolbox meetings and safety briefings. This is essential because participants frequently relied on gestures or observational mimicry to understand tasks, but this often led to mistakes. Visual tools remove language dependency and enhance clarity, especially in high-risk environments like construction sites. This will enhance task completion for local employees by simplifying complex instructions into universally understandable formats, bridging communication gaps for employees with lower language proficiency, and improving task comprehension, accuracy, and safety.
3. It is important for the company to appoint a communication support officer to help bridge language gaps. This officer, ideally someone who understands both local and foreign cultures, will help monitor how well information is shared at work, explain messages when needed, and suggest ways to improve communication. This is critical because the study found that what the company says and what workers understand are often not the same. Having someone in this role will help fix that gap. It will also help the company respond quickly when there are communication problems, reduce confusion, and stop workers from relying only on guesswork. This will make daily tasks clearer, faster, and safer for everyone.
4. It is imperative for the company to introduce a simple mobile language application software for translation and self-learning. The company can develop or adopt a basic mobile app that local staff can use on-site to translate common phrases, safety terms, and job instructions. The app should also offer short, interactive lessons focused on the company’s work environment and vocabulary used by expatriates. This is important because many workers said they often guess instructions or pretend to understand, which leads to mistakes and delays. A mobile app will give them a private and convenient way to learn at their own pace and check unfamiliar words on the spot. This kind of tool will reduce misunderstandings, make workers feel more confident, and improve how quickly and correctly they complete tasks; even when no one is around to help.

Contribution to Knowledge

This study contributes to knowledge by offering new insights into how language barriers affect task completion among local employees in a multinational construction materials company operating in Cross River State, Nigeria. While previous studies have explored

communication issues in global workplaces, this research adds a localised and practical understanding of how limited organisational support, informal coping methods, and unclear communication structures shape employee performance in the construction sector. It also applies Weick's Organisational Information Theory (OIT) to show how uncertainty in workplace communication leads to errors, stress, and reduced efficiency. The study further contributes by proposing culturally informed strategies that companies can adopt to build clearer, more inclusive communication systems tailored to their multicultural workforce.

Limitations of the Study

This study, while insightful, was not without limitations. Firstly, the research was based on a single multinational construction materials company in Cross River State, which limits the extent to which the findings can be generalised across other companies or sectors. The study's focus on just one organisation may not fully capture the broader diversity of experiences that exist in other multinational or local construction firms operating in different regions or under different organisational cultures. Secondly, the sample size was relatively small, consisting mainly of local employees with limited representation from expatriate staff. This means that the perspectives of foreign staff (who are key actors in the communication process) were not directly examined, and this may have limited the full exploration of communication dynamics from both sides. Thirdly, due to time constraints and limited access, observations of real-time communication interactions were not conducted. This would have provided a richer understanding of how language barriers play out during daily operations. These limitations may affect the transferability of the findings to other settings, especially those with different cultural, structural, or operational characteristics. However, the study's use of detailed description, thematic analysis, and application of theory still support the credibility and relevance of its conclusions.

References

- Abdelwahed, N. A. A., & Doghan, M. A. A. (2023). Developing employee productivity and performance through work engagement and organizational factors in an educational society. *Societies*, 13(3), 65–78. <https://doi.org/10.3390/soc13030065>
- Adanlawo, E. F., Reddy, M. M., & Rugbeer, H. (2021). Intercultural business communication: The implications of language barriers. *Psychology and Education Journal*, 58(5), 6281–6290.
- Aggarwal, P. J., Khurana, N., & Shefali. (2023). Effect of HRM practices on employee productivity in times of COVID-19 pandemic. *International Journal of Productivity and Quality Management*, 38(1), 73–97. <https://doi.org/10.1504/IJPM.2023.128596>
- Ahmad, M., & Wilkins, S. (2024). Purposive sampling in qualitative research: A framework for the entire journey. *Quality & Quantity*, 4, 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-024-02022-5>
- Ahmed, S. K. (2024). How to choose a sampling technique and determine sample size for research: A simplified guide for researchers. *Oral Oncology Reports*, 12, 100662. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.oor.2024.100662>
- Akintelu, S. O., Oyebola, A. I., Tiarniyu, S., & Olateju, O. (2023). The effect of project communication management on successful project delivery in the construction industry: A case study. *International Journal of Development and Sustainability*, 12(8), 376–386.

- Alhamami, M. (2022). Language barriers in multilingual Saudi hospitals: Causes, consequences, and solutions. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 19(4), 553–565. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2020.1777134>
- Al-Tarawneh, A., & Al-Badawi, M. (2025). Addressing language barriers in employee training and development programmes. In *From machine learning to artificial intelligence: The modern machine intelligence approach for financial and economic inclusion* (pp. 997–1008). Springer Nature Switzerland. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-76011-2_73
- Ann Glynn, M., & Watkiss, L. (2020). Of organizing and sensemaking: From action to meaning and back again in a half-century of Weick's theorizing. *Journal of Management Studies*, 57(7), 1331–1354. <https://doi.org/10.1111/joms.12613>
- Bhangu, S., Provost, F., & Caduff, C. (2023). Introduction to qualitative research methods – Part I. *Perspectives in Clinical Research*, 14(1), 39–42. <https://doi.org/10.4103/picr.picr.253.22>
- Bonde, A., & Karlsson, J. (2025). *Addressing cross-cultural communication barriers in an outsourcing context: A case study in an international consultancy company* [Master's thesis, Uppsala Universitet].
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101.
- Chen, M. (2019). The effect of expatriates' cross-cultural adjustment on work stress and job involvement in the high-tech industry. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10, 2228–2248. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.02228>
- Eckstein, G., Shrestha, A., & Russo, F. (2024). Thirty-five years of sensemaking in the business & management research: A bibliometric analysis, review and discussion. *Management Review Quarterly*, 1–27. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11301-024-00458-5>
- Egemen, M. (2024). Assessing the individual effects of different job satisfaction facets on the job performance of qualified employees in the unique conditions of the construction industry. *Ain Shams Engineering Journal*, 15(7), 102789. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.asej.2024.102789>
- Ellis, J. L., & Hart, D. L. (2023). Strengthening the choice for a generic qualitative research design. *Qualitative Report*, 28(6), 67–81.
- Fiset, J., Bhawe, D. P., & Jha, N. (2023). The effects of language-related misunderstanding at work. *Journal of Management*, 6(1), 67–83. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01492063231181651>
- Great — here's the continuation of your reference list in APA 7th edition from Mayukh & Al-Giffari (2023) downwards:
- Haroon, H., & Malik, H. D. (2018). The effect of organizational communication on organizational performance. *Journal of Research in Social Sciences*, 6(2), 140–151.
- Hazari, A. (2024). Introduction to research methodology. In *Research methodology for allied health professionals: A comprehensive guide to thesis & dissertation* (pp. 1–6). Springer Nature Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-99-8925-6_1
- Isah, H., Ulang, N. M., & Azzmi, N. M. (2022). The influence of language proficiency on occupational safety of foreign workers in the sustainable construction industry. In *Sustainability management strategies and effect in developing countries* (Vol. 26, pp. 243–252). Emerald Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1108/S2040-726220220000026019>
- Iskamto, D. (2023). Organizational culture and its effect on employee performance. *International Journal of Management and Digital Business*, 2(1), 47–55. <https://doi.org/10.54099/ijmdb.v2i1.584>
- Iwashita, H. (2022). Language and identity in the shadow: A multi-case study of a Japanese multinational corporation. *International Business Review*, 31(2), 101913. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ibusrev.2021.101913>

- Kori-Siakpere, U., Gokeme, O., Omale, R. O., Aniah, A. R., Ojukwu, P. M., & Okache, M. O. (2024). The effect of linguistic diversity on intercultural communication in Nigerian organizations: A review. *Journal of Innovative Research*, 2(2), 25–33. <https://doi.org/10.54536/jir.v2i2.3174>
- Lin, P. Y. (2023). Qualitative longitudinal research. In *Varieties of qualitative research methods: Selected contextual perspectives* (pp. 401–406). Springer International Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3593013.3594066>
- Loderer, A., Muehlfeld, K., Wilken, R., Moritz, A., & Slomski, V. (2024). The language barrier as a springboard towards (team) creativity: An exploratory study of foreign language use in teams. *International Business Review*, 33(2), 102247. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ibusrev.2023.102247>
- Mayukh, N., & Al-Giffari, H. A. (2023). Survey and experimentation: Critical review of research design in social sciences. *Jurnal Syntax Transformation*, 4(10), 180–191. <https://doi.org/10.46799/jst.v4i10.842>
- Mbanaso, U. M., Abrahams, L., & Okafor, K. C. (2023). Research philosophy, design and methodology. In *Research techniques for computer science, information systems and cybersecurity* (pp. 81–113). Springer Nature Switzerland. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-30031-8_6
- Means, W. T., & Mowatt, R. A. (2024). Philosophy of science and leisure research: An exploratory analysis of research paradigms. *Leisure/Loisir*, 48(1), 123–147. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14927713.2023.2187865>
- Mkhize, S., & Mutambara, E. (2024). Upward communication as a vehicle for enhancing effective communication at South African petroleum retail service stations. *International Journal of Research in Business and Social Science*, 13(8), 130–138. <https://doi.org/10.20525/ijrbs.v13i8.3706>
- Ndu, A. C. (2024). Information management and human resource management practices among principals in secondary schools in Imo State. *African Journal of Social and Behavioural Sciences*, 14(7), 165–181.
- Noor, N. M., Mahbob, M. H., Salleh, M. A. M., Mahmud, W. A. W., & Harakan, M. A. (2023). Information management: Weick's organizational information theory approach. *Journal of Public Administration and Government*, 5(1), 72–75. <https://doi.org/10.22487/jpag.v5i1.735>
- Nwangene, N. L. (2024). Communication barriers encountered by anesthesiologists in a multilingual environment: The Nigerian case study. *Journal of Advances in Medicine and Medical Research*, 36(6), 297–305. <https://doi.org/10.9734/jammr/2024/v36i65472>
- Nyabuto, G. M., & Wabwoba, F. (2024). Philosophical paradigms in information technology research. *World Journal of Advanced Engineering Technology and Sciences*, 11(2), 567–577. <https://doi.org/10.30574/wjaets.2024.11.2.0141>
- Oladimeji, K. A., Abdulkareem, A. K., & Ishola, A. A. (2023). Talent management, organizational culture and employee productivity: The moderating effect of employee involvement. *Journal of HRM*, 26(1), 155–172.
- Pepper, E. P., Olori, H. O., Kori-Siakpere, U., Oviawe, R. E., Idiong, O. U., Edohoe, S., & Onozare, Y. R. (2024). Cultural diversity, communication, inclusivity and collaboration in Nigerian workplaces: A review. *South Asian Journal of Social Studies and Economics*, 21(11), 100–110. <https://doi.org/10.9734/sajsse/2024/v21i11905>
- Phillips, K. M., Tichavakunda, A. A., & Sedaghat, A. R. (2024). Qualitative research methodology and applications: A primer for the otolaryngologist. *The Laryngoscope*, 134(1), 27–31. <https://doi.org/10.1002/lary.30817>
- Piller, I., Zhang, J., & Li, J. (2020). Linguistic diversity in a time of crisis: Language challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. *Multilingua*, 39(5), 503–515. <https://doi.org/10.1515/multi-2020-0136>
- Pop, A. M., & Sim, M. A. (2022). Cross-cultural communication in multinational companies. *The Annals of the University of Oradea Economic Sciences*, 31(31), 1–28.

- Pyo, J., Lee, W., Choi, E. Y., Jang, S. G., & Ock, M. (2023). Qualitative research in healthcare: Necessity and characteristics. *Journal of Preventive Medicine and Public Health*, 56(1), 12–27. <https://doi.org/10.3961/jpmph.22.451>
- Rojak, J. A., Sanaji, S., Witjaksono, A. D., & Kistyanto, A. (2024). The influence of transformational leadership and organizational culture on employee performance. *EDUKASIA: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Pembelajaran*, 5(1), 977–990. <https://doi.org/10.62775/edukasia.v5i1.926>
- Rowland, E., & Conolly, A. (2024). A worked example of contextualising and using reflexive thematic analysis in nursing research. *Nurse Researcher*, 32(4), 51–67. <https://doi.org/10.7748/nr.2024.e1924>
- Salaets, H., Bernaerts, J., & Heijkants, S. (2024). Overcoming language barriers in Belgium: Enhancing communication in prisons to facilitate successful reintegration? In *Toward inclusion and social justice in institutional translation and interpreting* (pp. 209–229). Routledge.
- Salih, A. M. (2024). Language barriers and their effect on effective communication in different fields. *Journal of Advancement of Social Science and Humanity*, 4(1), 22–32.
- Salleh, M. M., Mohi, Z., Nordin, N., Mohamad, N. A., & Razali, N. A. S. (2021). The effect of language barriers and discrimination issues on work productivity of foreign workers. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 11(16), 42–52.
- Sommechai, K. (2024). Reflexive thematic analysis in military research: Insights from a Thai Military Academy. *NKRAFA Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 12, 130–138.
- Stahl, G. K., & Maznevski, M. L. (2021). Unraveling the effects of cultural diversity in teams: A retrospective of research on multicultural work groups and an agenda for future research. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 52(1), 4–17. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41267-020-00389-9>
- Suaa, C., Owusu, J., Aboagye, K. O., Donkor, M., Boateng, P. A., & Owusu-Yeboah, E. (2024). The effect of language differences on effective communication in multinational corporations in Ghana. *IOSR Journal of Business and Management*, 26(12), 45–54.
- Subre, N. S. (2024). *The effects of language barriers towards job performance and job satisfaction among employees at multilingual organisations* (Doctoral dissertation, Universiti Teknologi MARA).
- Susanto, P. C., Supardi, S., Suhendra, A., Soeprapto, A., & Saepudin, T. H. (2024). Productivity employee: Analysis of employee behavior, competence, task performance, and work motivation. *Dinasti International Journal of Digital Business Management*, 5(5), 67–81. <https://doi.org/10.38035/dijdbm.v5i5.3027>
- Tenzer, H., Pudelko, M., & Zellmer-Bruhn, M. (2021). The effect of language barriers on knowledge processing in multinational teams. *Journal of World Business*, 56(2), 101184. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jwb.2020.101184>
- Tijani, B., Jin, X., & Osei-Kyei, R. (2021). A systematic review of mental stressors in the construction industry. *International Journal of Building Pathology and Adaptation*, 39(2), 433–460. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJBPA-02-2020-0011>
- Tisdell, E. J., Merriam, S. B., & Stuckey-Peyrot, H. L. (2025). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Van Manen, M. (2023). *Phenomenology of practice: Meaning-giving methods in phenomenological research and writing*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003228073>
- Verma, R., Verma, S., & Abhishek, K. (2024). *Research methodology*. Booksclinic Publishing.
- Weick, K. E. (1969). *The social psychology of organizing*. Addison-Wesley.
- Weinzierl, M. L. (2024). Bridging the boundaries of corporate language competence in multinational teams. *International Journal of Business Communication*, 61(2), 123–145. <https://doi.org/10.1177/23294906231221135>

- Whittle, A., Vaara, E., & Maitlis, S. (2023). The role of language in organizational sensemaking: An integrative theoretical framework and an agenda for future research. *Journal of Management*, 49(6), 1807–1840. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01492063221147295>
- Xia, Y., Wei, X., & Tang, J. (2024). Understanding language barrier: How employee language anxiety affects employee innovative performance. *Current Psychology*, 43(13), 11804–11815. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-023-05292-8>
- Yue, C. A., Men, L. R., & Ferguson, M. A. (2021). Examining the effects of internal communication and emotional culture on employees' organizational identification. *International Journal of Business Communication*, 58(2), 169–195. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2329488420914066>