

**THE POWER OF BABLE: LANGUAGE DIVERSITY, CLUSTERS,
AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF
ON-THE-JOB TRAINING PROGRAMS**

by

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B.Com (Hons.), University of Delhi, 2010

Masters in Management, IE Business School, 2012

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Peter B. Gustavson School of Business

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We acknowledge with respect the Lekwungen peoples on whose traditional territory the
university stands and the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ peoples whose historical
relationships with the land continue to this day.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examined the relationship between language diversity and the implementation of on-the-job training programs. Using India as the empirical context, I conducted a multi-case study research, which involved semi-structured interviews and direct observations in the headquarters of two Indian multinational enterprises. Drawing from social identity theory, I first examined the factors that influence the emergence and transformation of two types of language -based clusters, coping clusters and clusters of convenience. The two types of clusters display distinct mechanisms related to arousal, ingroup favoritism and outgroup bias, which questions one of the key assumptions of social identity theory related to the role of affect. Additionally, I found that language diversity can create cognitive discomfort for training recipients, and emotional anxiety for both training facilitators and recipients. However, training recipients, training facilitators, and the executive management, (i.e., the firm) can utilize certain language accommodation approaches that can reduce the emotional and cognitive discomfort experienced by employees. Using communication accommodation theory, I discuss that the influence of each language accommodation approach depends on its source and time of implementation. As well, language -based clusters can facilitate the exchange of interpersonal information during on-the-job training programs. The emergent findings also suggest that linguistic identity seldom operates in isolation. It often intersects with other dimensions of social identity, specifically, the status differentials attached to gender, education and regional dialects. The findings have implications for research on language diversity and language management in international business, social identity theory and communication accommodation theory.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Tarjeet Kaur and Harjit Singh,
for their unconditional love and support.

Language shapes the way we think, and determines what we can think about.

Benjamin Lee Whorf

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Questions

The main research question that this dissertation intended to answer is: *How does language diversity within MNE headquarters affect the implementation of on-the-job training programs within the organization?*

At a deeper level, I seeked to examine (1) *When and how do language clusters emerge within an MNE headquarter?* and (2) *How do language clusters within the headquarter of an MNE affect the implementation of on-the-job training programs?*

In exploring these questions, this dissertation builds theory within cross cultural management and international business (IB) by exploring the impact of within-headquarter (HQ) language diversity.

Internationalization of business implies that business communications are rarely monolingual (Bargiela-Chiappini & Nickerson, 2003). Language diversity is a given condition in Multinational Enterprises (MNEs) and in organizations located in countries with multiple official languages (Karhunen, Kankaanranta, Louhiala-Salminen & Piekkari, 2018), and understanding and coping with challenges arising from language diversity in organizations is of critical importance. In order to comprehend the role of language in a more in-depth and rigorous manner, I focused on one key activity of MNEs – on-the-job training programs (OJTs), whose effectiveness depends critically on communication and language. There is a gap in our research, wherein, we do not know about the mechanisms by which language diversity affects organizational processes, especially, when MNEs have HQs located in linguistically diverse countries and regions. This dissertation draws from social identity theory (SIT) to explore when and how language clusters form within an organization, and how the creation of these clusters affects the implementation of

OJT programs within an Indian MNE. One of the main contributions of this dissertation is to bring to attention the construct of within-HQ diversity that answers the call by scholars for more research concerning how within-country differences affect international business decisions (Tung, 2008).

1.2 Research Motivation

In the last couple of decades, an abundance of studies has analyzed the impact of culture on various aspects of International Business (IB) and management. Most of the empirical work has treated culture as a national level construct (e.g., Hofstede, 1984; House, Javidan, Hanges & Dorfman, 2002). However, cultural scholars have increasingly argued that the tendency of IB scholars to focus on national level differences fails to account for cultural heterogeneity within nations (Tung, 2008; Tung & Verbeke, 2010), meaning that potentially important differences between various societal subgroups or geographic regions are not explored in detail, or are ignored altogether. A “fallacious assumption” (Tung, 2008, p.42) of homogeneity within nations, and the tendency for many IB scholars to equate cross-cultural with cross-national, has led to a lacuna in our understanding of important within country differences, which could have significant implications for IB and management. As a result of our leaning towards analyzing only cross-national differences, language, which is one of the most visible aspects of culture has also largely been studied as a national level construct (Dow, Cuypers & Ertug, 2016). Considering the substantial diversity and variations in workforces within many nations, within country heterogeneity can be as important as between country differences. Within country heterogeneity may be especially pertinent in emerging markets, which are experiencing dynamic economic, social and political transitions. In fact, large emerging countries in particular are often linguistically diverse, and we do not have enough knowledge about how such diversity affects MNEs. The diversity of these large emerging countries is reflected in the workforces of MNEs

(Thomas, 1992). In fact, it has been argued that within country diversity can add to the complexities created by the national level differences (Dow, et al., 2016). With this in mind, a number of scholars have called for studying within country differences in more depth arguing that such differences can be equally or more consequential than between country differences in terms of their implications for IB theory and the MNE (Caprar, Devinney, Kirkman & Caliguiri, 2015; Dow, et al., 2016; Peterson, & Søndergaard, 2014; Shenkar, 2001; Tung, 2008; Tung & Verbeke, 2010). In this dissertation, I study language diversity within MNEs because organizations echo the diversity of the external environment in which they are embedded (Thomas, 1992). An MNE headquarter that is located in a multilingual country, and has hired workforce from the host country would reflect the within country differences and diversity of its national environment, and therefore, provide a pragmatic context to study the implications of within country diversity.

Human resource management (HRM) is a critical function in every organization (Minbaeva, et al., 2003; Sparkes & Miyake, 2000). Countries such as Belgium, Switzerland and India are quite diverse linguistically, and have multiple official languages, and it is highly probable that MNEs based out of these countries face additional HRM challenges because of the increased linguistic complexity of the environment in which they are embedded. The in-built tensions and dynamics created by multiple cultures, nationalities and languages make these countries intriguing contexts for study. It becomes more fascinating because the organizations echo the diversity of not only their host country context but their home country context as well. In this dissertation, I focused on a key HRM activity within organizations: on-the-job training programs.

1.3 Theoretical Foundations

Definitions. Within this dissertation, MNEs refer to organizations that own outputs of goods or services originating in more than one country (Buckley & Casson, 1985). Most studies have

analyzed linguistic differences between MNE headquarters and subsidiary (e.g., Welch & Welch, 2008), but language diversity can also be conceptualized at the country, organizational, work-group and individual level of analysis. Language diversity has previously been conceptualized at the work- group level, as “presence of a multitude of speakers of different national languages in the same work group” (Lauring & Selmer, 2012, p.93) and this implies that language diversity at the country level refers to the multitude of languages spoken within a country, and at the organizational level, it implies the multitude of languages spoken within an organization. At the individual level, language diversity refers to the number of languages spoken by individuals (e.g., monolinguals, bilinguals or multilinguals). In this study, language diversity refers to the diversity of languages within a country, which is reflected in the individuals working in MNEs. Different languages may be more/less prominent in an organization depending on the region of the country in which the organization is situated; this implies that even within the same country, members of an organization can speak different languages, depending on the location of the organization. I analyzed language diversity within the HQ at the individual level of analysis. Language clusters refer to "shadow," informal structures that are based on individuals' language proficiencies, which often replace the formal organizational structure (Marschan-Piekkari, Welch & Welch, 1999b). Language clusters often provide “informal connecting points” between individuals who speak the same native language or are fluent in a common language (Mäkelä, Kalla & Piekkari, p.2). Linguistic identity refers to “a self-definition based on perceived membership of a linguistic group” (Bordia & Bordia, 2015, p.420). This dissertation refers to linguistic identity as a form of social identity that is derived from an individual's membership of a relevant social group (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Ashforth, Harrison & Corley, 2008), in this case a linguistic group, especially the individual's native language. Individuals with a strong linguistic identity are “deeply rooted in the

linguistic environment of their language and hold the language in higher esteem than any other language family” (Bordia & Bordia, 2015, p.420). I am studying the implementation of on-the-job training (OJT) programs as the empirical context in this dissertation. Training is defined as, “the acquisition of skills, concepts, or attitudes that results in improved performance in an on-the-job environment” (Goldstein, 1980, p.229). This study examined both technical trainings that focus on imparting technical/task related skills, and non-technical trainings that focus on imparting soft skills and orientating the employees to the organizational culture. This is discussed in depth in Chapter 2.

I position this dissertation within the domains of cross-cultural management, sociolinguistics and IB literatures. According to Gomez-Mejia and Palich (1997), language is one of the most visible components of culture, and therefore, it is important to draw upon the cross-cultural management literature to understand the complexities created by language diversity. Selmier and Oh (2013) observe that cultural values are often reflected in the languages spoken and that these are quintessential for the maintenance of relationships in transactions that require long-term communication and understanding between different parties. In fact, culture and language skills can help in the creation of a common cognitive ground and contribute to a better understanding of various meaning systems and knowledge bases (Brannen, 2004; Marschan-Piekkari, et. al., 1999a, b). Researchers within such as Shenkar (2001) have criticized the assumption of homogeneity by arguing that ignoring the diversity a nation is a questionable practice. This dissertation aligns well with this viewpoint.

Within the domain of sociolinguistics and IB, language is described not just as a medium to describe and report the content in a particular area, but also as a medium through which we “know reality and orient our actions” (Boje, Oswick & Ford, 2004, p.571). A number of

researchers have long recognized the importance of culture and language in firm internationalization decisions (Hofstede, 1984; Johanson & Vahlne, 1977), and the difficulties that various barriers can pose in the accurate communication and exchange of information. Kingsley (2010) focused on the implementation of MNE wide language policies in multicultural and multilingual settings so that important information can be transferred efficiently. According to Giles and Johnson (1981, 1987), language is one of the most significant attributes of social identity and it sets distinct boundaries to social interactions. Language is a significant part of an individual's social identity and is therefore difficult to change (Bordia & Bordia, 2015). Kulkarni (2015) studied the role of native language as an identity maker in different organizational groups and explained that language diversity often leads to knowledge exchange difficulties and fault lines within organizations. Language can be a compelling source of conflicts when communicating in organizations (Luo & Shenkar, 2006). Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) considered language as an important tool in the creation and evaluation of trust in social networks. Marschan, Welch and Welch (1996) studied the impact of language in the knowledge and information exchanges within organizations. Despite the role played by language in a number of key international management decisions such as negotiation processes, knowledge sharing and headquarter-subsiary relationships, management researchers often look at language as a "simplistic" issue, that is, it is often just regarded as a "mechanical translation problem" (Welch, Welch & Piekkari, 2005, p.11). However, the resultant effects of ignoring the role of language as a unique resource of the organization can be quite complicated, especially, if there are multiple languages being used within the organization (Tenzer, Terjesen & Harzing, 2017).

Social Identity theory

SIT argues that individuals classify themselves into various social categories based on organizational or religious affiliations, gender, age or other salient social categories (Ashforth, et al., 20008; Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Tajfel, 1974). These classifications tend to result from individuals' need to answer the questions of "who am I" or "who are we" (Vignoles, 2017, p.2). SIT provides a useful theoretical mechanism to understand the socio-cognitive processes that describe the connection of behaviour and actions to the social context (Hogg, Terry & White, 1995). Of course, different individuals use different schemas to distinguish between categories and it might be possible for an individual to have more than one identity (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Ramarajan, 2014). Identification, here, is the notion of belongingness to a particular group or category. Individuals' social identity forms a basis for the distinction between ingroup and outgroup members, while favoring the ingroup in order to maintain their need for self-esteem (Turner, 1975).

It is also possible for individuals to identify themselves based on their native language. Language use can influence the cognitive schema of groups, leading to inter and intra group divisions. Difference in languages and meanings attached to different words often leads to misunderstandings, which further activates and polarizes group identities (Harzing & Feely, 2008). In fact, an individual's linguistic identity in the workplace becomes more noticeable in the presence of other employees who associate with a different linguistic identity (Bordia & Bordia, 2015). Research on language has suggested that sharing common languages can lead to the creation of trust (Marschan-Piekkari, et al., 1999b), and that could affect the knowledge sharing between different levels within the organization (Aichhorn & Puck, 2017a; Mäkelä, et al., 2007). It is also likely that individuals retain more than one social identity based on their linguistic capabilities;

this would probably mean that some individuals identify with more than one linguistic group because they are fluent in multiple languages.

Language based groups within the organizations play an important role by creating connections between employees and providing them access to the vast knowledge base (Marschan-Piekkari, et al., 1999b). Linguistic ties can further increase the level of trust between employees from similar or different units, and shared language can facilitate the flow of information between units. Such connections can also increase an individual's ability to convey information to a more diverse audience. However, the interpretation of the information will depend on the group or the category to which the individual belongs. Past research suggests that when there are linguistic differences between two groups, the communication process and the resultant interpretation is negatively affected (Harzing & Feely, 2008). These results have been drawn from studies that have focused on the differences among language groups across countries. However, recent research on diversity in IB has noted several advantages associated with diversity (e.g., Stahl, Maznevski, Voigt & Jonsen, 2010), and a few studies have explored the advantages of language diversity (e.g., Mäkelä, et al., 2007). This dissertation aims to build on this work to understand the role of such linguistic groups among individuals of the same country, especially when many of these individuals are multilingual.

1.4 Research Context and Methodological Overview

To understand the complexities at play in the implementation of OJTs and the role played by language diversity and language clusters, I utilized a multi-case study approach (Stake, 2013). The study was conducted in two HQs of two Indian MNEs that have presence in multiple cities in India, all of which have different regional languages. India, with 22 official languages and 30 languages that are spoken by more than a million people (Registrar General & Census

Commissioner, India, 2011), provides a fascinating context to study the construct of within-HQ language diversity in an emerging country. The case study approach is particularly useful for responding to how and why questions about a contemporary set of events (Leonard-Barton, 1990). In this multi-level study, the data were collected using a combination of in-depth interviews with senior management, middle managers and entry level employees, and observations of OJT programs from the two HQs located in Chennai. Additional methodological details are discussed in Chapter 3.

1.5 Intended Contributions

Through this study, I am able to make a number of contributions within the areas of IB and cross-cultural management. Theoretically, I have developed conceptual models focused on the processes related to the emergence and evolution of language based clusters, and the impact of language diversity on the implementation of OJT programs, which are aimed at increasing the skillset and adjustment of the workforce. By analyzing observations and responses to interview questions, I explored the relationships of people who speak the same native language and explore how and when those relationships lead to the development of clusters. As well, this dissertation has tried to answer the call for research that provides a more nuanced understanding of how differences within nations impact international business and management decisions (Caprar, et al., 2015; Tung, 2008; Tung & Verbeke, 2010). The within country diversity and differences are reflected in the workforce employed by organizations, and such differences can often lead to complex communication problems within organizations. This dissertation also explored the role of individual and firm level initiatives that can aid in reducing the negative effects of language diversity. To my knowledge, this study is one of the first of its kind to empirically explore within-HQ diversity, specifically language diversity in an emerging economy, and study the boundary

conditions that lead to the formation and transformation of language clusters within organizations.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

I view three areas of research as particularly relevant to understanding the relationship between within-HQ language diversity and implementation of OJT programs. The first two are related to the literatures on language diversity in IB and sociolinguistics. Sociolinguists focus on the social view of language and study language use in social interactions (Lønsmann, 2011). I focus on both the corporate view of language as well as the research on linguistic faultlines and subgroups that have been highlighted in the studies on language diversity in multinational/multilingual teams. Within the corporate view, MNE management employs an official language that is used for communication within and between headquarters and subsidiaries. Much research in this domain has focused on advancing the understanding of how language impacts communication and management processes, as well as the relationship between headquarters and subsidiaries (Karhunen, et al., 2018). I then build on the current research on OJTs to explain the rationale for selecting *implementation of OJT programs* as the empirical context of this dissertation. I also incorporate literature on SIT to understand the theoretical mechanisms through which the relationship between within language diversity and implementation of OJT programs can be explained. I present a review of these streams of literature followed by a discussion of the gaps in our existing knowledge, and the need to use an interdisciplinary approach to holistically understand the phenomenon under investigation.

In discussing the abovementioned literature streams, I have endeavored to identify key constructs from the existing literature that are pertinent to this line of research, and to provide a solid theoretical foundation from which I build theory. The main aim of this dissertation is theory elaboration, that is, the subsequent ideas from the existing literature provided the foundation for this study (Bluhm, Harman, Lee & Mitchell, 2011; Maitlis, 2005).

2.1 Introduction to the literature on Language Diversity

According to Welch et al. (2005), “Language is almost the essence of international business” (p. 11) and when it comes to cross cultural communication, language is more than just “noise” (Welch & Welch, 2008, p.345) as it affects “the total system within which knowledge transfer takes place” (Welch & Welch, 2008, p.354). In fact, language can be described as a medium through which we can become aware of the reality and accordingly tailor our actions. Schweiger, Atamer and Calori (2003) argue that language is an important factor for the MNE when integrating people from diverse cultures and geographic locations, especially those who must rely on virtual communication to accomplish their tasks. Although language is no longer a forgotten factor in MNE studies, and has gained the attention of international management scholars, the consequences of linguistic differences and diversity on multinational management processes have not been explored in depth (Tenzer, et al., 2017). A major reason for this is that language is often studied as a part of the broader construct of culture (López-Duarte & Vidal-Suárez, 2010). Although language has been acknowledged as an important and a visible aspect of the culture box (Welch & Welch, 2008), it is becoming essential to study the role of language as a focal construct in order to fully comprehend and understand its impact on the dynamics within MNEs (Harzing & Feely, 2008; Karhunen, et al., 2018; Welch & Welch, 2008). The bundling of language into the culture box masks its role in the various aspects of IB and management operations (Welch, Welch & Marschan – Piekkar, 2001). In fact, it is becoming indispensable to acknowledge and understand the role of language diversity in MNEs, largely because of the increasing number of employees in foreign subsidiaries who speak and utilize a large number of local languages throughout the MNEs (Harzing & Feely, 2008). The following sections provide details on the prominent work that has been done in the field of language diversity.

Language Diversity in MNEs

"Language carries with it patterns of seeing, knowing, talking, and acting" (Agar, 1994, p.71) and these patterns facilitate the development of individual's identities (Fasold, 1984). Giles and Johnson (1981) describe language as one of the most significant attributes of social identity as it sets distinct boundaries to our social interactions. Language has the tendency to impose its own pattern on our routine interactions and therefore, it is imperative for MNEs to acknowledge its impact on the interactions of the individuals within the organization (Marschan-Piekkari, et al., 1999a, b). Although organizational scholars tend to follow the work by linguists Giles and Johnson who identified language as a salient identity marker (1981, 1987), it was SanAntonio's (1987) study on the use of English language in an American company in Japan that seems to be the pioneer in investigating the role of language in MNEs. She analyzed the role of language as a source of power and a group identity marker. Since then, a stream of research has been developing that is trying to extend our understanding of the role that language plays in various aspects of management processes and decisions, thereby affecting the overall strategy of organizations (e.g., Barner-Rasmussen & Björkman, 2007; Luo & Shenkar, 2006; Peltokorpi & Vaara, 2014). It has been well established that language can play a very important role in everyday interactions and information exchanges within an organization (Marschan, et al., 1996; Marschan-Piekkari, et al., 1999a, b), and it "tends to impose its own structure on communication patterns, flows and informal networks" (Marschan-Piekkari, et al., 1999b, p.431). Scholars such as Barner-Rasmussen and Björkman (2005) and Mäkelä, et al. (2007) have studied language as an independent variable and shown the relationship between inter-unit communication and knowledge sharing. Others have analyzed the relationship between language proficiency and dependent variables such as subsidiary

control (Björkman & Piekkari, 2009), expatriate management (Fish, 2005; Graf, 2004), or knowledge management (Welch & Welch, 2008; Vance & Paik, 2005) in their research.

Several studies note that the lack of a shared language might lead to negative communication related outcomes such as misunderstanding and conflicts, and studied the implications for headquarter-subsidiary relationships (e.g., Harzing & Feely, 2008), joint ventures (e.g., López-Duarte & Vidal-Suárez, 2010), and decisions related to the choice of entry modes (e.g., Dow, et al., 2016; López-Duarte & Vidal-Suárez, 2010). Overall, these articles emphasize the need for a “shared language” (Charles & Marschan-Piekkari, 2002, p. 9–10) in the organization. Other authors have studied the impact of language diversity in multinational/multilingual teams by analyzing the relationship between language and knowledge sharing (e.g., Klitmøller & Luring, 2013), emotions and leadership (e.g., Tenzer & Pudelko, 2015), team conflicts (e.g., Kassis-Henderson, 2005; Voss et al., 2014), and work processes (e.g., Piekkari, Oxelheim & Randøy, 2015).

Another key theme that has been of interest to scholars is related to the role of language as a source of power, i.e., employees who are proficient in the usage of official corporate language (usually English) attain a position of dominance (e.g., Marschan, et al., 1996; Marschan-Piekkari, et al., 1999b; Tenzer & Pudelko, 2017). The issues of power are deeply connected with the issues of language competence (Gaibros & Nentwich, 2020). For instance, Louhiala-Salminen, Charles and Kankaanranta (2005) found that employees who lacked required English skills were not invited to attend key meetings and were often excluded from decision-making processes. Many studies have analyzed the influence of language at an individual level, i.e., how a company’s language policies impact the functioning of employees. Many studies within this domain share an understanding that communication problems that develop due to language differences can be

solved by improving the linguistic competence of MNE employees through in-house language trainings (Charles & Marschan-Piekkari, 2002; Swift & Wallace, 2011). Although there is some evidence that an effective language strategy can positively contribute to the establishment of trust and cohesion across an MNE's global operations (Schweiger et al., 2003; Kassis-Henderson, 2005; Welch et al., 2005; Brannen, 2004), several scholars have argued that a common language does not always improve employees' language competence, and that information exchanges between native and non-native speakers of English are usually highly complex (Fredriksson, Barner-Rasmussen & Piekkari, 2006; Nickerson, 2005). In non-native English-speaking countries such as India, an English language policy can restrict employees' ability to communicate in their mother tongue and create power imbalance between those who are fluent in English and those who are not. Boussebaa, Sinha and Gabriel (2014) used postcolonial theory to study the usage of English language in call centres in India and found that corporate "Englishization" re-produces colonial-style power relations that are deeply rooted in the history of "European imperialism" (p. 1153). Additionally, researchers have also argued for a need to study the impact of language on communication practices of middle managers and lower level employees (e.g., Sanden & Lønsmann, 2018) as most research on language focuses on the top management. Sanden and Lønsmann (2018) note the importance of studying the microlevel effects of everyday interactions in the usage of language and in this dissertation, I try to bring attention to this aspect by conducting interviews and observing interactions between employees at all levels of the case organizations.

2.2 Social Identity Theory

SIT is a theory of social psychology that argues that individuals derive their identities from group memberships, and explains group processes and intergroup behaviors (Tajfel 1974, 1981). It originated in Britain with the works of Henri Tajfel on social and cognitive aspects related to

the perceptions of prejudice and discrimination (Tajfel, 1959; 1963; 1974). Tajfel (1974) defined social identity as "that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the emotional significance attached to that membership" (p.69). The theoretical emphasis is on the "multifaceted and dynamic self" that relates social structure and individual behavior (Hogg, et al., 1995, p.255). People can classify themselves into different social categories such as organizational affiliations, gender, age and ethnicities (Tajfel & Turner, 1985) and they can use different cognitive schemas to define such classifications. A central motive of such identity construction is the feeling of *belongingness* to certain groups, that is, the *need to feel connected to and accepted by certain others* within an organization or a social context (Ashforth & Schinoff, 2016; Vignoles, Chrysochoou, & Breakwell, 2000; Vignoles, Schwartz, & Luyckx, 2011). One advantage of such social classification is that it allows individuals to define themselves within their social environment or context (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Ashforth & Schinoff, 2016). In fact, it can also be called a "psychological group" that includes individuals who share social identities and categorize themselves in terms of the membership of the group (Turner, 1984, p.530; Vignoles, 2017). Individuals' social identity also forms a basis for the distinction between ingroup and outgroup members, while favoring the ingroup in order to maintain the underlying need for self-esteem (Turner, 1975; Vignoles et al., 2000; Vignoles, et al., 2011). One of the major tenants of SIT is the motive to establish and sustain a sense of differentiation from other groups (Brewer, 1991; Vignoles et al., 2000). This has major behavioral and cognitive implications, that is, people tend to behave in ways that show their association with certain groups, and distinctiveness from others (e.g., Hogg & Abrams, 1998; Schwartz, Luyckx, & Vignoles, 2011; Vignoles, et al., 2011).

Within an organizational context, employees can derive their social identity not only from the organization, but also from their department, team, age cohort and union (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). SIT has been frequently used to explore and analyze employee-organizational relationships (Ashforth, et al., 2008; He & Brown, 2013). Studies have focused not only on organizational identification but also on various antecedents and outcomes of such identification, for example, leadership and job performance (Avolio, Walumbwa & Weber, 2009; Walumbwa, Avolio, & Zhu, 2008). Leaders can often influence how employees view their social identifications and relationships with their work groups and their organizations. It is also common for individuals to retain multiple social identities at a given point of time (Allen, Wilder, & Atkinson, 1983; Ramarajan, 2014). Group membership may lead individuals to behave in accordance with the group's norms, beliefs and values, and act in *group-typical* ways (Hogg & Abrams, 1988; van Knippenberg, 2000; Turner & Tajfel, 1986), however, according to some social psychologists, the influence of group identification depends on the "salience" of social identity, or whether it has been "cognitively activated" (van Knippenberg, 2000, p.359). Individuals can have a single or multiple identity that are salient, and their behavior shifts as the situational salience of these identities shifts (Ramarajan, 2014). Research also shows that there can be contextual shifts in individuals' identities, based on the characteristics of the context in which the individuals and groups are embedded (Lee, Park & Koo, 2015; Schwartz et al., 2011). This is especially common if we analyze social identity that is derived from the languages spoken by employees (Lauring, 2008). If individuals speak and relate with more than one language, especially if they speak multiple languages, then they could potentially switch languages when context changes. This is similar to the experience of *frame switching* among bicultural individuals, wherein they shift their

interpretative frames as a response to the changes in their social environment (Hong, Morris, Chiu & Benet-Martinez, 2000).

Language as a Source of Identity

As discussed in some of the previous sections, language can be an important marker of an individual's identity and can be used to distinguish between individuals and groups within an organizational context. A number of scholars have studied SIT in organizational contexts and IB (e.g., Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Salk & Shenkar, 2001; Vora & Kostova, 2007), yet there is not enough research on how SIT can be used as a theoretical mechanism to understand the consequences of interaction between individuals and groups across linguistic boundaries. One way individuals define themselves and others is through their native/ethnic language (Giles, 1977). Giles and Johnson (1981) proposed that an individual's language usage is often a source of ethnic expressions and that language is a marker of an individual's identity, which can be used to symbolically distinguish him/her from others who speak a different ethnic language (Giles & Johnson, 1987). Language is one of the most significant attributes of social identity and it sets distinct boundaries to social interactions (e.g., Giles & Johnson, 1981, 1987; Kulick, 1992; Miller, 2000; Morgan, 2004; Ochs, 1988; West & Graham, 2004). When SanAntonio (1987) analyzed the use of English language in an American company in Japan, she found that speaking in English was a source of power when it came to advancements and promotions within the organization. She also found that language was a strong source of group identity, and that individuals identified more with those colleagues with whom they shared a common language. When Neal (1988) interviewed foreign managers working in the UK, he found that language barrier created by lack of fluency in English compounded their sense of being foreigners and "outsiders" (p.38). Kingston (1996) describes the communication difficulties faced by French and English managers during the

analysis of GEC Alshtom. A major source of frustration for the English employees was that the foreign colleagues communicated with each other in French, even in the presence of their English counterparts. Language also has a strong influence when it comes to defining group boundaries and group compositions (Harzing & Feely, 2008; Harzing, Köster & Magner, 2011). The decision of many MNEs to implement an official corporate language can divide the organization into subgroups consisting of individuals who are proficient in the corporate language and those who are not (Piekkari et al., 2005). In an extreme case, such divisions can lead to the emergence of language-based clusters or “shadow structures”, which can worsen the power imbalance between those who are proficient in the corporate language and others (Marschan-Piekkari et al., 1999a).

Using social identity and self-categorization theories (Tajfel & Turner 1979), various scholars have explained that the sense of familiarity associated with a language is often the main reason behind the division of employees into groups based on shared language, which often leads to the manifestation of language based boundaries in MNEs (Born & Peltokorpi, 2010; Chong et al, 2010). Such boundaries are often the reason behind the emergence of language-based clusters within MNEs. The notion of language-based clusters draws from the principles of homophily, a tendency of people to connect with those who are similar to themselves in socially significant ways (Mäkelä et al., 2007). These clusters unite people who share a common language (e.g., mother tongues) as they are able to establish and maintain interpersonal associations (Fredriksson et al., 2006). Language is deeply connected to cognitive perceptions of self and others as communicators, and one’s social identity can influence the perceptions of ingroup members towards the members from outgroups. In fact, language can be a defining element of individuals’ social identity and changes to linguistic identity may not be easy (Bordia & Bordia, 2015). Infact, the employees’

level of confidence in using the corporate language can increase their commitment to their firms' globalization initiatives (Yamao & Sekiguchi, 2015).

At an intrinsic level, language promotes intra- and inter-organizational communication and as aforementioned, the neglect of language management leads to the distortion and blockage of information and communications, and negatively impacts teamwork and performance (Brannen, 2004; Kassis-Henderson, 2005; Welch et al., 2005). Organizational members might not share all the information with their colleagues during interactions if they speak different languages and not trust each other (e.g., Kassis-Henderson, 2005; Tenzer & Pudelko, 2017). Through language clusters, an individual might be able to access critical information and develop important contacts, thereby strengthening his/her position within the group and the organization (e.g., Mintzberg, 1983; Pfeffer, 1981; Welch & Welch, 2008). The subset of individuals who have access to the language clusters can then control the flow of information across groups and units by acting as “nodes and mediators” (Welch & Welch, 2008, p.437). Employees who identify with the same language cluster often engage in code switching to exchange information with each other and such code switching can have a detrimental impact on the overall level of knowledge sharing within an organization by creating mistrust and exclusion. Using faultline theory, Ahmad and Barner-Rasmussen (2019) found that organizations can limit the potential negative effects of code switching on subgroup formation by aiding knowledge sharing and boosting inclusion in knowledge-sharing interactions.

Several studies have shown that language diversity and differences can create faultlines in organizations by influencing the perceived status of employees (e.g., Neeley, 2013), especially when fluency in the corporate language of organizations becomes an important benchmark for individuals' performance evaluation (Hinds et al., 2014). This often leads to divisions into in-

groups and outgroups (Hinds et al., 2014; Kulkarni, 2015). It is also possible that employees are not fully aware of the linguistic divisions and attribute the friction and faultlines to other factors such as individuals' personalities (Tenzer et al., 2014).

Consistent with the tenants of SIT, language use can influence the cognitive schema of groups and therefore, lead to divisions between and within groups. Threats associated with linguistic identity may lead to poor communication and lower levels of trust and satisfaction for employees (Kostova, 1999; Kostova & Roth, 2002). "Parallel information networks" emerge when language competencies regulate communication channels within organizations (Harzing & Feely, 2008, p.54). Differences in languages and meanings attached to different words can lead to misunderstandings and therefore, activate and polarize group identities (Harzing & Feely, 2008). This can also affect the relationships between people within the same organizations when employees tend to think of their colleagues as belonging to another distinct group or cluster because of their language. Kulkarni (2015), in her study of language diversity in organizations in India, found that language is often used as a tool to define social boundaries, and to differentiate between insiders and outsiders based on the meanings that are derived from language use. In fact, inter group distinctions can also be made based on accents and vocabulary.

In their study on entry mode choices when investing abroad, López-Duarte and Vidal-Suárez, (2010) found that firms change their entry mode preferences in situations of high language diversity because language-based clusters often emerge when there is diversity. As aforementioned, in this dissertation, I propose that such language clusters could emerge among individuals of the same nationality as well and firms do not have to cross national borders to manage such diversity. Drawing on the work of López-Duarte and Vidal-Suárez (2010), I argue that clusters form due to a need for inclusion and trust as well as the ease of communication, and

that there is a possibility of increased friction between these clusters, and information is more easily transferred within each cluster than between clusters. In fact, such clusters are often responsible for creating a strong feeling of “inclusion or exclusion” that hinders collaboration between the groups (p.579). Strong social identities and in-group favoritism impedes the knowledge sharing process across different groups (e.g., Argote, et al., 2000; Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Language in such instances becomes a component of corporate identity and how individuals and groups view themselves within the larger frame of the organization (Welch, et al., 2005; Welch & Welch, 2008). In fact, many scholars have viewed language as that component of corporate identity that enables MNEs to transfer and share information and knowledge (e.g., Neeley, Hinds & Cramton, 2012; Welch & Welch, 2008).

Vaara, Tienari, Piekkari and Sääntti (2005) explained how language is a significant aspect of national identification, and can be connected to an individual’s culture, knowledge and power. Linguistic identities help shape and transmit cultural identities. In fact, their study of the merger of a Finnish and Swedish bank showed that linguistic skills and knowledge can lead to the creation and expansion of social networks. It has been argued that language use and social identity should be viewed as an interactive process as languages supply the linguistic means with which identities are constructed and negotiated (Lauring, 2008). In a study of Danish expatriates in a subsidiary in England, Lauring (2008) found that the conflicts between the different linguistic groups increased when expatriates or local employees interacted amongst themselves in a different language. Although the author prefers the anthropological view of language over the socio-psychological SIT, he accepts the role of language as an identity marker, that can lead to divergence or convergence of groups. When individuals and groups link language to identity, it can be used as a tool to divide or unite the existing groups within an organization, depending on the context. It is

also possible that native speakers of the official/dominant language within an organization can gain symbolic domination (Bourdieu, 1991; Luring, 2008). In their conceptual paper, Harzing and Feely (2008) state that language barriers play an important role in multilingual groups and relationships, and call for the need to use more of SIT in understanding the dynamics related to polarization created by language diversity and differences in organizations. Kulkarni (2015) did not directly use SIT but explained how everyday linguistic encounters within the organizational context lead to “social identity-related conflicts” in an Indian workplace (p.140). She also emphasized that multilingualism creates difficulties for sharing of information, and that language can be a tool to differentiate between insiders and outsiders based on the meanings that are derived from language use.

As evident from the preceding paragraphs, much of the existing work in IB has utilized SIT to analyze language diversity at the corporate level with a focus on mergers and acquisitions, or to understand the headquarter-subsidary relationships when organizations enforce a common corporate language. A contribution of this dissertation is to use SIT in a new context (within-HQ language diversity) within the IB arena. A review of past research shows that SIT can provide a deeper understanding of issues related to language salience and development of linguistic identities, and this could further impact implementation of OJTs. Although some of the aforementioned research has analyzed the negative impacts of language diversity, we do not know what happens when individuals relate to more than one linguistic identity within an organization. An individual with a multilingual identity could be seen as a linguistic equivalent to an individual who is high on the bicultural identity integration (Benet- Martínez, Lee, & Leu, 2006; Bordia & Bordia, 2015). It is also plausible that individuals with multilingual identity are more likely to show willingness to embrace and adopt any new languages that they are exposed to (Janssens &

Steyaert, 2014). It is also possible that linguistic identity intersects with other elements of individual identities, but it hasn't been empirically examined yet.

Table 2.1 provides a summary of some of the prominent articles on language diversity in IB that I used to build theory in this dissertation. As seen in table 2.1, the number of empirical studies related to language diversity have increased within the last decade, however, very few studies have moved beyond the role of language in inter-organizational interactions and communications. To my knowledge, only two studies (Dow, et al., 2016; Kulkarni, 2015) have focused on the empirical examination of within country language diversity. Dow, et al. (2016) explored the role of within country language diversity in the decisions about entry mode choices, and Kulkarni (2015) studied the faultlines created by this diversity in domestic and multinational organizations in India. IB researchers have argued that such diversity can add to the complications created by the national level differences, but we lack empirical work in this field (Dow, et al., 2016). The next section delves into the research on the OJTs and explains why the implementation of OJTs have been selected as the empirical context for this dissertation.

2.3 On-the-job training programs

There is little doubt amongst management scholars that an organization's workforce is one of the most significant sources of knowledge, especially contextually embedded tacit knowledge within an organization (Grant, 1996; Pudelko & Harzing, 2007). In fact, the workforce can be termed as one of the most critical assets available to an organization (Barney, 1991, 2001). One of the more common means of managing the workforce within an organization is to provide them with training to impart the necessary skills needed to accomplish tasks as well as to adjust within

Table 2.1 Prominent IB studies used as a foundation for building theory

Author(s)	Outlet	Year	Type	Findings/Conclusion
SanAntonio	<i>Journal of Language and Social Psychology</i>	1987	Qualitative- Ethnography	Language can be a source of power within the organization. Language policies can restrict and control the flow of information.
Marschan-Piekkari, Welch & Welch	<i>International Business Review</i>	1999b	Qualitative – Case study	Language imposes its own structure on communication flows and personal networks. Language is often used as an informal source of expert power in multinationals.
Welch, Welch & Piekkari	<i>Prometheus</i>	2001	Conceptual	Attempts to impose a common corporate language may hinder or alter information flows, knowledge transfer, and communication.
Kassis Henderson	<i>International Studies of Management & Organization</i>	2005	Qualitative – Interviews	Uses sociolinguistic perspective to explain the relationship between language, trust, team building and socialization processes in multinational teams.
Piekkari, Vaara, Tienari & Säntti	<i>The International Journal of Human Resource Management</i>	2005	Qualitative – Case study	Study the disintegrating effects of implementing a corporate language policy in a cross-border merger. Introduction of a new corporate language in a cross-border merger may restrict equal opportunities between employees of merging organizations. Human resource implications include negative effects on performance appraisal, language training and management development, and promotion.
Welch, Welch & Piekkari	<i>International Studies of Management & Organization</i>	2005	Conceptual	Iterates the need to explore both positive and negative effects of having a common company language. Language can be a factor in the effective functioning of various IM processes, such as staff movements, corporate identity knowledge transfers and organizational structure. Language competence can deliver considerable power to individuals and units.
Luo & Shenkar	<i>Journal of International Business Studies</i>	2006	Conceptual	Headquarter’s functional language is determined by the MNC’s international strategy, organizational structure, and transnationality, and the subunit’s functional language is based on the organizational form, strategic role, and expatriate deployment. Aligning these systems can improve knowledge sharing.

Table 2.1 Prominent IB studies used as a foundation for building theory (continued)

Author(s)	Outlet	Year	Type	Findings/Conclusion
Fredriksson, Barner-Rasmussen & Piekkari	<i>Corporate Communications: An International Journal</i>	2006	Qualitative – Interviews	Implications of corporate language policy. Despite the corporate attempts to render the organization monolingual or bilingual, the case company still operated as a multilingual community. Language use was largely context-specific.
Mäkelä, Kalla & Piekkari	<i>International Business Review</i>	2007	Qualitative – Multiple case study	Discuss the notion of informal linguistic clusters based on principles of homophily. Interpersonal exchange among cluster members can facilitate knowledge sharing within clusters.
Welch & Welch	<i>Management International Review</i>	2008	Conceptual	Develop the concept of language as a reconfiguration agent. Language diversity and differences can impact the cost, transfer medium, teams, networks, trust, staff movements and motivation of international knowledge transfer.
Harzing & Feely	<i>Cross Cultural Management: An International Journal</i>	2008	Conceptual	Language barriers can lead to polarization of the cognitive schema of the employees in headquarter and subsidiary. Impact headquarter-subsidiary relationship through aspects such as strategic decision-making, organization and personnel selection, global integration strategies and autonomy and control procedures.
Björkman & Piekkari	<i>Journal of International Management</i>	2009	Qualitative – structured interviews	Subsidiaries with low language competence (in the shared corporate language) were controlled to a greater extent by centralization and formalization. Output control and socialization mechanisms unaffected by language competence of subsidiary staff.
López-Duarte and Vidal-Suárez	<i>International Business Review</i>	2010	Quantitative – Secondary database	Analyze the effects of political risk and cultural distance on entry mode decisions. Find a preference for JVs when language diversity doesn't exist.
Harzing, Köster, & Magner	<i>Journal of World Business</i>	2011	Qualitative – Interviews	Language barrier reduces the speed and increases the cost of decision-making processes. Discuss 12 informal and structural solutions.

Table 2.1 Prominent IB studies used as a foundation for building theory (continued)

Author(s)	Outlet	Year	Type	Findings/Conclusion
Lauring, Selmer	<i>International Business Review</i>	2012	Quantitative-Survey	Contradicts results of prior qualitative research and finds that management of a common corporate language (English in this case) in multicultural organizations is positively associated with diversity climate.
Neeley	<i>Organization Science</i>	2013	Qualitative – Interviews	Study status loss experienced by non-native speakers of English. Find that variability in employees’ self-assessed fluency (an achieved status marker) was associated with differences in language performance anxiety and job insecurity in a nonlinear fashion.
Boussebaa, Sinha & Gabriel	<i>Journal of International Business Studies</i>	2014	Qualitative – Document analysis, Interviews & Observations	Multilevel study. Use postcolonial theory to study the usage of English language in call centres in India and find that corporate <i>Englishization</i> re-produces colonial-style power relations that are deeply rooted in the history of ‘European imperialism’.
Hinds, Neeley & Cramton	<i>Journal of International Business Studies</i>	2014	Qualitative – Ethnography	Multilevel study. Asymmetries in language fluency contribute to an us vs them dynamic common in global teams. Language differences are a potential faultline dimension in global teams (activated by power differences).
Bordia & Bordia	<i>Journal of International Business Studies</i>	2015	Conceptual	Use a subsidiary employee perspective in developing a model of host country employees’ willingness to adopt a foreign language. Emphasize the role of linguistic identity. Need for social, economic and career enhancements, along with language proficiency can increase employees’ willingness.
Kulkarni	<i>Journal of Organizational Behavior</i>	2015	Qualitative – Interviews	Within the Indian context, organizationally mandated languages are occasionally disregarded by employees both in national organizations and MNCs. Language switching (between corporate and personal) can lead to the creation of language-based groups; and stimulate social identity based fault lines. Multilingualism can lead to difficulties in knowledge transfers.

Table 2.1 Prominent IB studies used as a foundation for building theory (continued)

Author(s)	Outlet	Year	Type	Findings/Conclusion
Welch & Welch	<i>Journal of Management</i>	2016	Conceptual	Adoption of a common corporate language is an insufficient response to dealing with language diversity. Conceptualize a multilevel Language Operative Capacity Model (LOC): language-in-place, language-in-time, and language-in – Context, to deal with knowledge transfers.
Dow, Cuypers & Ertug	<i>Journal of International Business Studies</i>	2016	Quantitative – Secondary database	During cross-border acquisitions, within country linguistic and religious diversity of the target country is a source of behavioral uncertainty and information asymmetry. Diversity within the home country increases the cognitive complexities of decision makers.
Neeley & Dumas	<i>Academy of Management Journal</i>	2016	Qualitative – Interviews	Multilevel study. Study both positive and negative effects of status gain. Address issue of unearned status gain of native English speakers and discomfort of native Japanese speakers after implementation of corporate language mandate.
Aichhorn & Puck	<i>Journal of World Business</i>	2017a	Qualitative – Case study	Focus on both positives and negative effects of linguistic diversity. Identify two main language strategies through which employees cope with the emotional and cognitive challenges stemming from linguistic diversity and the use of a common corporate language.
Peltokorpi & Yamao	<i>Journal of World Business</i>	2017	Quantitative – Survey; longitudinal	Shared vision mediates the positive effect between host country national employees' corporate language proficiency and reverse knowledge transfer. A combination of functional and psychological relational characteristics (of language) is needed to understand these upward knowledge flows.
Tenzer & Pudelko	<i>Journal of World Business</i>	2017	Qualitative – Interviews	Study hierarchical position and professional expertise as sources of power in MNE teams. Different language policies, degrees of formality in language structures and disparities in language proficiencies can moderate team members' ability to exploit two sources of power.

Table 2.1 Prominent IB studies used as a foundation for building theory (continued)

Author(s)	Outlet	Year	Type	Findings/Conclusion
Sanden & Lønsmann	<i>European Journal of International Management</i>	2018	Qualitative – Document analysis & Interviews	<p>Study the communication practices used by front-line employees to cross language boundaries in the context of English language policies implemented by the Management.</p> <p>Introduce the concept of ‘discretionary power’ to explain the why front-line employees diverge from the corporate language policies.</p> <p>Emphasize the importance of studying the microlevel effects of everyday interactions in the usage of language.</p>
Ahmad & Barner-Rasmussen	<i>Journal of International Management</i>	2019	Qualitative – Case study	<p>Study the influence of code switching on knowledge sharing.</p> <p>Use faultline theory to show that in situations where organizational norms and routines help limit the potential impacts of code switching on subgroup formation and inter-subgroup animosity, it can also aid knowledge sharing.</p>

the organization (Pentland & Rueter, 1994). Managing the knowledge residing in the employees is one of the most powerful ways of enhancing an organization’s capabilities (Grant, 1996). Training, or more specifically, OJT refers to the endeavors by organizations to develop and expand the physical, cognitive and behavioral skills of the workforce so that they can accomplish tasks to enhance an organization’s capabilities and create competitive advantages (Nikandrou, Brinia & Bereri, 2009). It can be argued that training creates a resource that might be more profitable and critical than any other resource available to organizations - employees who are committed (Jex & Britt, 2008). Committed employees tend to perform better and as a result, improve the overall organizational performance (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009). Past research has established connections between OJT and employees’ organizational commitment by analyzing variables such as

employees' emotional and affective responses towards their organization (Bulut & Culha, 2010). Aragón-Sánchez, Barba-Aragón and Sanz-Valle (2003) surveyed 457 SMEs in the UK, Netherlands, Finland, Spain and Portugal, and found that OJTs utilizing in-house trainers positively impacted organizational performance related to the dimensions of effectiveness and profitability.

In fact, employee training lies at the “heart of modern management practice” (Bulut & Culha, 2010, p.311), and is a core focus of HRM (Hamori, 2018). The U.S. companies alone spent \$365 billion globally on employee training in 2015, however, it is argued that they are not reaping a sufficient return on their investment (Beer, Finnström & Schrader, 2016). There are several factors that can be attributed to the ineffective implementation of the OJT programs. Past research has studied factors such as national culture, organizational culture and climate (e.g., De Long & Fahey, 2000; Fiedler, Mitchell & Triandis, 1971; Mendenhall & Stahl, 2000), training design (Arthur Jr, et al., 2003), choice of the evaluation criteria as well as the characteristics of the skill that is the focus of the training (e.g., Arthur Jr, et al., 2003; Day, Arthur & Gettman, 2001). Within the realm of IB, much research has focused on training of expatriates (e.g., Kealey & Protheroe, 1996; Mendenhall & Stahl, 2000). Interestingly, most of the current research on trainings has relied on theoretical frameworks and methods that focus on the micro level of analysis (individual or dyad) (Kozlowski, Brown, Weissbein, Cannon-Bowers & Salas, 2000; Tharenou, Saks & Moore, 2007). In this dissertation, I focused on the micro and macro level of analysis (interviews with individuals, and observations of organizational level OJT programs) to study the effectiveness of OJT programs. One of the highlights of this study is the focus on the understudied construct of language, which has only been passingly mentioned in the OJT training as a part of culture, but not investigated until now. It is important to understand the role of language in the implementation

of training programs, because employees can attach different meanings to the OJTs and this could create barriers to understanding as well as communicating the goals of the organization, such as the performance standards that are expected from each employee.

2.4 Summary

The literature on language diversity in the international management context draws from and contributes to international business and cross-cultural management literature. The increase in the number of multilinguals in MNEs has sparked the curiosity amongst scholars to study the multifaceted construct of language and understand the dynamic role it plays in the organizational relationships. As the field is still nascent, there is a lack of empirical studies in areas other than headquarter-subsidary relationships, and recently multinational teams. This dissertation extends the existing research by conducting a study that not only focuses on the organization, but also brings into focus the role of informal groups or language clusters that form within the organizations. I employed SIT as a theoretical lens to understand the notion of linguistic identities, which has been used to understand how and why language clusters emerge and change within organizations. SIT provided the theoretical grounds to understand issues such as ingroup and outgroup polarization that happen because of language diversity. Table 2.2 summarizes the relevant theoretical constructs from existing literature as well as the theoretical relationships that I intended to develop in this dissertation. The next step was to understand how and to what extent these language clusters facilitated/constrained the implementation of OJT programs. How exactly this process unfolded was a puzzle that I aimed to explore via this dissertation, using SIT as the focal theoretical tool, while incorporating additional literatures depending on how the data unfolded.

Table 2.2 Comparison of existing constructs with theory building aims of this dissertation

Summary of relevant theoretical constructs from existing literature	Theory building in this dissertation
Language diversity between organizations located in different countries (assumes one official language in each country).	Within - HQ Language diversity (reflecting the diversity present in multilingual countries).
Distinct Linguistic Identities of individuals in HQ and in subsidiaries.	Distinct linguistic identities within the same organization. Multilingual individuals → multiple linguistic identities.
Language clusters emerge in situations of Diversity.	When and how do Language clusters emerge? Map the process of cluster formation.
Mistrust between Clusters.	Resultant dynamics due to the presence of multiple linguistic identities and language clusters.
Effects (generally negative) of Language diversity on communication and information exchange.	Impact of language diversity and clusters on implementation of OJT programs if individuals hold multiple linguistic identities.

CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGICAL OVERVIEW

3.1 Introduction

To address my research questions (when and how language clusters emerge in an MNE headquarter, and how these clusters impact the implementation of on-the-job training programs), I conducted my study in two organizations in India. Specifically, I conducted a comparative study of two case organizations as this helped in understanding how the impact of language diversity varied according to the organizational contexts. Given the limited theory and empirical evidence on the within HQ language diversity and implementation of OJTs, I relied on multi-case theory building (Stake, 2013). In my study, I focused on the uniqueness of the two organizational contexts and the lived experiences of their members to answer my research questions as this allowed me to understand how they interpreted and attributed meaning to their work and social relationships within the organizations. This further helped me in understand their behavior within their organizations. The case study research allowed me the opportunity to get a “holistic view of the process”, that is, a researcher can study different aspects, examine their relationship with each other and “view the process within its total environment” (Meyer, 2001, p.330). I utilized the theory elaboration approach, that is, ideas from existing literature provided the foundation for this study (Bluhm, et al., 2011; Maitlis, 2005). As mentioned in the following chapters, additional theoretical perspectives were incorporated as the data analysis and theory building process unfolded, consistent with the qualitative process approach adopted in this study (Bettenhausen & Murnighan, 1986). Through interactions with individuals working in two organizations in Chennai who speak different languages, I was able to capture the essence of the impact of language diversity on the implementation of OJTs. In the following sections, I explain the reason for selecting India

for my study, provide an overview of my ontological and epistemological assumptions that guided this study, explain the rationale behind the selection of the multiple case study methodology, and the strategies that were employed to study and analyze the phenomenon under investigation.

3.2 Research Context

3.2.1 The Indian Context

Linguistic identities have always been an important element in the nation's social and political issues since its independence in 1947 (Kulkarni, 2015). The language diversity in India is ranked fourth in the world (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). The Census of 2001 identified more than 6,600 mother tongues, as listed by the citizens (Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India, 2001). There are 22 official languages, and 30 languages that are spoken by more than a million people (Registrar General and Census Commissioner, India, 2011). According to the data on bilingualism and trilingualism in India, 255 million people speak at least two languages and 90 million people speak three or more languages. In simple words, about one-quarter of the population speaks more than one language on a daily basis (Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India, 2001). Following the enactment of The States Reorganization Act of 1956, the Indian states were largely divided based on the cultural and linguistic affiliations of the people living in the regions (Kulkarni, 2015). Since the amendment to the Official Languages Act of 1963 in 1967, both Hindi and English are used for official purposes in the Union and the Parliament, such as rules, general notifications, permits, contracts and administrative reports. Over time, various efforts have been made to maintain and appreciate the linguistic identities of various cultural groups that reside in the country (Kulkarni, 2015). In general, a large number of languages are used in various aspects of public life, for example, over 104 languages are used in radio broadcasting programs, 87 languages are used in print media, 67 languages are used in primary school education, and over

104 languages are used in adult literacy programs in different regions and subregions of the country (Mohanty, 2010).

It has been argued that multilingualism in India is a “natural phenomenon” (Bhatia & Ritchie, 2004, p.795). Social and language diversity is fundamental to the social fiber of the nation and numerous linguistic communities can be found across India, with minority language clusters exceeding 20% of the population in more than half of the districts (Khubchandani 1986; Mohanty, 2010). Indian languages have traditionally been categorized into domains such as home language, official/corporate language and language of the marketplace and intergroup socialization. Furthermore, India adopted the three-language formula, officiated in 1968 by the Ministry of Education and Government of India under the 1968 National Policy Resolution, which instructs the teaching of three languages in the school curriculum. The teaching of Hindi and English is mandatory, but the choice of the third language (usually the regional language) is left to the discretion of the state governments. Under conditions of such “multilingual functioning”, it is difficult to stick to just one language for a particular domain, therefore, it would suffice to say that no single language is enough for communicative requirements in different situations, and individuals need multiple languages to interact effectively (Mohanty, 2010, p.134). This also requires a high degree of flexibility when interacting across languages. Khubchandani (1986) analyzed mother tongue declarations made by individuals in the national surveys and showed that language speakers move between different languages, such as Hindi and Urdu, on a daily basis, with the patterns of identities associated with different languages changing under different social and psychological conditions. Multiplicity of languages and linguistic identities are “defining (features) of Indian bilingualism” that shows the “constant negotiation of identities” during the

language usage by individuals (Bhatia & Ritchie 2004, p.795). Therefore, India provides an ideal context for studying within-HQ language diversity in an emerging country.

3.2.2 Implementation of Training programs

Existing literature on the implementation of training programs has studied aspects such as the relationship between training of employees and the commitment to organization, as well as enhanced performance (e.g., Bulut & Culha, 2010). As discussed in the previous chapter, scholars have analyzed the role of cultural barriers to the successful implementation of OJT programs, however, to my knowledge, the effects of language diversity have not been studied. It is important to understand the role of language because employees can attach different meanings to OJTs and this could create barriers to understanding as well as communicating the goals of the organization, such as the performance standards that are expected from each employee. In terms of operationalization of the successful implementation of the OJT, I studied the employee perception of the usability of the training for local context, as well as the managerial perceptions of the success of the training (i.e., whether the managers think the employees are able to implement the learnings from the trainings in their job and tasks effectively). Also, I analyzed the effects of language diversity on the implementation of multiple OJT programs, which would enhance the validity of the results obtained.

3.3 Research Strategy

3.3.1 Selection of methodology

As there is limited theoretical and empirical knowledge about the key research phenomenon, I employed an exploratory qualitative approach (Birkinshaw, Brannen & Tung, 2011). The multidimensional context of OJTs was explored in a way that spoke to the complexity

and dynamism of the phenomena and how the clusters interacted with each other. Also, the relationship between within-HQ language diversity and implementation of OJTs is highly context based. Given these considerations, a qualitative approach was well suited for exploring the highly contextualized and complex phenomena (Birkinshaw, et al., 2011). Qualitative data enable researchers to generate new insights and offer potential to reveal complex processes (Birkinshaw, et al., 2011), which made it ideally suited to my research problem and phenomenon of interest. In carrying out this dissertation, I followed an interpretive approach to theory building (Burrell & Morgan, 1979), that is, I analyzed the phenomena under investigation by capturing the contextual and subjective experiences, and interpretations of the social actors (informants) who were embedded within the social context (that is, the organization). By adopting the interpretive paradigm in my research, I made a key assumption that organizational phenomena and realities are socially constructed (Burrell & Morgan, 1979).

Specifically, I employed a multi-case study design (Stake, 2013), wherein I conducted a comparative analysis of two organizations. The case study approach was particularly useful for responding to how and why questions about a contemporary set of events (Leonard-Barton, 1990). Another advantage of case study research was the opportunity to get a “holistic view of the process”, that is, I could study different aspects, examine their relationship with each other and “view the process within its total environment” (Meyer, 2001, p.330). An important reason for doing the multi-case study was to understand how the core phenomenon of interest performs in different environments. The two cases were selected carefully so that the design of a study could incorporate a diversity of contexts (Stake, 2013). Multiple cases are more useful than single cases for theory development because replication across cases often enables the development of a more accurate, parsimonious, and generalizable theory (Garg & Eisenhardt, 2017). The case study

approach allowed me to get much closer to theoretical constructs, enabling new theory building and framing a more persuasive argument about the causal relationships and improving existing theory by pointing out the gaps clearly (Siggelkow, 2007; Stake, 1995, 2013).

3.3.2 Pilot Study

A pilot study can be defined as a small-scale study that is undertaken prior to the main study (Jairath, Hogerney & Parsons, 2000). One of the main reasons for conducting a pilot study is to test whether enough scientific evidence exists to justify a more elaborate study (Jairath, et al., 2000; Kim, 2011). I undertook a pilot study to identify some of the issues that could be further studied in the main dissertation case study; a key objective of the study was to collect, and reflect upon, some initial empirical data and to gain field experience that might allow for further elaboration of the initial conceptualizations and theorizing, as well as for assessing feasibility issues with respect to research design, data access, and the like (Kim, 2011). The data from the pilot study were used to generate the initial theoretical ideas and interview questions that would be used to ground the research design of the case study.

The method of data collection used in the pilot was in-depth interviews. The interview approach is particularly useful for understanding how the individuals understand and deal with the issue of language diversity and the presence of multiple linguistic identities in the organizational and team context. Semi structured interviews were conducted with eight MNE employees working in MNEs consisting of individuals with different linguistic backgrounds. The interviews were conducted over Skype, with the duration of each interview ranging from 45-60 minutes. The respondents were selected mainly based on convenience, that is, my contacts in organizations, mainly because it allowed me to interview persons at different levels (entry level, middle level and senior executives) and I was able to explore whether the respondents understood the interview

questions and if the questions needed to be altered for the final dissertation study. All the individuals work in consulting MNEs, however they vary in terms of their experience, managerial responsibilities as well as the duration in their current organization. This variation helped in making the sampling more purposeful (Lee, Mitchell & Sablynski, 1999) and gain insights in relation to the experiences of respondents with OJT programs in linguistically diverse organizations.

Following the theory elaboration approach, the interview structure consisted of questions based on themes discussed in prior research, and the following categories of questions were asked: the degree of language diversity within the organization (e.g., “what percentage of people in your organization speak multiple languages?”), the notion of linguistic identity and the creation of language clusters or groups (e.g., “Do you think you identify with a certain language more than others?”; “Describe a situation from your work when people in the workplace around you were speaking multiple languages?”) positive and negative outcomes of such diversity (“Please describe an instance where the language based diversity impacted the team functioning?”) and other thoughts on language diversity within their organizations. Most of these questions were purposefully created to be open-ended in nature and designed to provide insight into the participants’ opinion on the current workings of their respective work groups as well as their involvement in the other activities within their organizations (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). Particularly, the questions were created with the goals of attaining insight into the participants’ thoughts and experiences with the different language clusters that form within the organizations. Additionally, during the pilot study interviews, I was able to learn that some questions had an ambiguous framing and needed to be reframed or removed from the list of questions for the final study. For instance, the question “what percentage of people in your organization speak multiple

languages” was only asked in interviews with the senior management and senior HR executives in the final study as I learned that very few employees could provide an accurate answer to such a question. Nevertheless, the results from the interview data affirmed that language diversity has an impact at multiple levels within an organization, and that language clusters can affect working relationships and information exchange. The results were used to draw the initial questions that were then used to anchor the data collection procedure in the main dissertation case study.

3.3.3 Case Selection Criteria

For selecting the organizations for conducting this study, I employed the logic of intentional, theoretical sampling (Garg & Eisenhardt, 2017), which means that I purposefully selected data sources (e.g., organizations and individuals) based on their relevance to the research question at hand. The cases were selected based on the ability to contribute to the existing literature by filling important conceptual categories, for example, mapping out the formation of language clusters. Table 3.1 identifies the key criteria used for selection of cases and how the two cases met those criteria. The selected case organizations offered interesting research sites to investigate the previously discussed assumptions and issues in the existing literature related to language diversity. Specifically, they helped me in identifying and analyzing the issues related to linguistic identities and how language clusters are formed and sustained within two different types of organizations, and how that impacts the implementation of OJTs in two different contexts.

Table 3.1 Case selection criteria

Case selection Criteria	Company MT	Company FS
An organization that is headquartered in India.	✓	✓
An organization that has operations in multiple regions in India.	✓	✓
Multilingual workforce.	✓	✓
Employees are required to speak more than one language as a part of their job.	× Employees should be able to interact with clients in English and accomplish written tasks in English.	✓ Employees should be fluent in English as well as at least one regional language. Most employees are fluent in two regional languages.
A large organization, i.e., having more than 500 employees.	× Employs around 250 people in the HQ. However, considering the level of language diversity of the organization and the location of clients, the company was deemed suitable for data collection.	× Employs around 300 people in the HQ. This company was considered suitable for this study because of the high level of language diversity in the headquarters. Additionally, the updated language policies of the management made this organization an interesting research context.

Table 3.2 Description of Cases

Criteria	Company FS	Company MT
Industry	Financial services (share trading)	Medical transcription
Number of employees working at HQ	~300	~250
Number of pilot interviews	-	4
Number of semi-structured interviews	23	29
Number of male and female interview respondents	13 men 10 women	15 men 14 women
Total hours of direct observations of OJT programs	12 (22 pages of text)	13 (15.5 pages of text)
Total hours of participant observations	9.5 hours (45 pages of text)	9 hours (46 pages of text)

Criteria	Company FS	Company MT
Key senior management personnel	Chairman, CEO, 3 Vice-Presidents	Chairman, Managing Director, Senior Vice-President, 3 Senior Managers
Importance of social relationships in building business with clients	High	Low
Level of language diversity	High	High
Pace of the shift from mono/bilingual to a multilingual organization	Abrupt	Gradual

The chosen case organizations have operations in multiple cities in India, and also have presence in Africa and North America but for the purposes of this dissertation, the focus was on the locations in India; however some interviews were conducted with the management in USA. Although the de-facto (unofficial) corporate language of both the organizations is English, the HQ in Chennai consists of employees and clients who speak different native languages, therefore, both the companies and its employees are exposed to the diversity of language and face the challenges and advantages created by such diversity on a regular basis. The unit of analysis was the implementation of on-the-job training programs. I interacted with the employees in two organizations in Chennai – one in the field of medical transcription (a highly technical environment wherein social relationships are not considered important), henceforth mentioned as company MT and another in the financial services domain where the primary goal is to provide brokerage services for stocks, currencies and commodities, besides distributing a range of financial products to clients (a business where in social relationships with clients are very important), henceforth mentioned as company FS. In company MT, employees work in teams and digitally transcribe the prescriptions given by doctors in USA. Company FS manages share transfer/depository work for a number of government entities as well as public and private companies. In fact, this organization

is trying to increase the language diversity in order to enhance its capability to reach out to a wider client base. Also, as both of these organizations are expanding, the management has been constantly imparting training to its employees to enhance their skills and promote their adjustment within their workplace, which gave me the opportunity to understand the employee perception of the usability of the trainings in real-time. I also interacted with some employees (approximately 12% of all participants) who worked in other cities such as Coimbatore and Delhi via skype and telephone as they report to the managers based out of the HQ in Chennai. These employees work from home and travel to the Chennai office a few times in a year. Table 3.3 displays the similarities and differences between the case companies.

For this study, I collected data over a period of seven months, using interviews and observations. Both interviews and observations were used to understand how linguistic differences among individuals have led to the creation of language clusters as well as the managers and employees' perceptions of the usability of the training that has been imparted (level of analysis = individual). During this entire process, I investigated how language diversity within the chosen organizations affected the emergence of language clusters and the implementation of OJT programs. I also investigated any additional issues that emerged during the process of data collection and analysis. Infact, the information gathered from the initial interviews was used to guide interview and observation strategies in the later months. For instance, when multiple interview respondents mentioned the importance of language accommodation approaches employed by training facilitators and HR managers, I incorporated these into my interview structure and questioned the other respondents about these strategic initiatives. This strategy of making sense of the data from early stages helped me manage the extensive data that included

interpretations and interactions gained through interviews, and events noticed through direct observations of OJT programs (Langley, 1999).

3.3.4 Data Sources

As aforementioned, I utilized interviews and direct observations of OJT programs to achieve a comprehensive, multi-faceted and reliable understanding of the focal phenomenon from different perspectives (Stake, 2013). The details are provided in Table 3.2. Consistent with case study research, my principal means of data collection were in-depth one-on-one interviews (that is, semi-structured interviews) with key informants (Yin, 1981, 2013).

Interviews. Interviews were my primary source of data collection. I conducted interviews with 52 individuals, 23 in company FS and 29 in company MT. The share trading business recently made the decision to have a multilingual workforce, and the management laid off employees who couldn't speak Hindi, although that was not a formal requirement when those individuals joined the organization. The employees in the medical transcription business must constantly interact with doctors in USA and North India, which means they have a linguistically diverse client base. Therefore, these served as optimal research sites for me to explore my research questions.

I achieved theoretical saturation, that is, I did not observe any new information or themes after 44 interviews (21 in company FS and 23 in company MT), however, I still conducted all 52 interviews to ensure the diversity of backgrounds of my respondents. The key informants included senior executives, managers and mid to low level employees. The senior executives and managers were able to explain how the language diversity affects the implementation of OJTs as well as the long-term effects of these trainings. The other employees expanded on the formation of clusters as well as the factors that inhibit the effective implementation of OJTs. I was able to gain insights into their perceptions of the usability of the OJTs through the interview sessions. Past research

suggests that sampling should begin with senior executives as they play an important role in the strategic aspects of exploring and exploiting new knowledge (Voss, 2010). Therefore, before interviewing the mid-level employees, I interviewed informants with years of deep and strategic involvements with the company who were able to inform me on my main research question. Such informants included the Chairman, and the Managing Directors of the two organizations. Then I used a snowballing technique (Smith, Wright & Pickton, 2010; Patton, 2002), and asked informants for their recommendations about who else could offer insights into the processes of interest, for example, which employees to select as a starting point for my interviews.

Table 3.3 Description of Data

Primary Data Types and Dates	Amount	Use in Analysis
<i>Interviews</i>		
8 Pilot Interviews, 45-60 minutes (November - December 2017)	40 pages of text (typed up from detailed handwritten notes taken at the time of the interview)	Validate the importance of language diversity and the merits of this study.
52 semi-structured interviews, averaging 47 minutes (September 2018 - March 2019)	400 pages of text (verbatim transcriptions from audiotape)	Insights into the factors that lead to the creation of clusters and how language diversity affects the implementation of OJTs.
<i>Observation of interviewees for additional data</i>		
2 initial meetings with Chairman (January 2019)	2 pages of text (typed up from detailed handwritten notes taken at the time of the meeting)	Information about the organizational structure as well as the history of language diversity within the two case organizations.
20 field notes taken at the time of semi-structured interviews	82 pages of text (typed up from detailed handwritten notes taken at the time of the meeting)	Participant observation to provide a more holistic understanding of each interviewee interaction.
1 initial meeting with the Senior VP (Company FS)	2 pages of text (typed up from detailed handwritten notes taken at the time of the meeting)	Information about the organizational structure, hierarchy and how language diversity impacts day to day interactions.
1 initial meeting with the CEO (Company MT)	3 pages of text (typed up from detailed handwritten notes taken at the time of the meeting)	Information about the organizational structure, hierarchy and the history of multilingualism in the organization.
<i>Direct Observations</i>		
Organizational culture orientation (Company FS)	10 pages of text (typed up from detailed handwritten notes taken at the time of the meeting)	Information regarding the role of language diversity and language clusters in the implementation of OJTs

Team manager & team meeting - purpose: technical training related to a project (Company FS)	6 pages of text (typed up from detailed handwritten notes taken at the time of the meeting)	Information regarding the role of language diversity and language clusters in the implementation of OJTs
Team manager & team meeting - purpose: technical training related to a project (Company MT)	7.5 pages of text (typed up from detailed handwritten notes taken at the time of the meeting)	Information regarding the role of language diversity and language clusters in the implementation of OJTs
Technical training regarding new clients (Company FS)	6 pages of text (typed up from detailed handwritten notes taken at the time of the meeting)	Information regarding the role of language diversity and language clusters in the implementation of OJTs
HR meeting with Managers and Team Leads (Company MT)	4 pages of text (typed up from detailed handwritten notes taken at the time of the meeting)	Follow up on the interview responses
HR led training (Company MT)	4 pages of text (typed up from detailed handwritten notes taken at the time of the meeting)	Information regarding the role of language diversity and language clusters in the implementation of OJTs. And Follow up on the interview responses

The initial interviewees were identified after conducting preliminary conversations with a key participant (the Chairman of the company). Throughout the interviewing process, I sought out informants whose responses would help in explaining aspects of the emergent conceptual model, based on the initial interview transcripts. My analysis of initial interview response guided the selection of additional informants (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). For instance, I interviewed specific HR executives and certain other multilingual managers in company FS because the statements made by the senior executives reflected the importance of those persons in ensuring successful orientation trainings. In company MT, I selected certain female managers for interviews because the responses provided by initial interview respondents implied a potential relationship between language clusters and gender stereotypes. Interviews were guided by a data collection protocol (Yin, 2013) that included a list of pre-written interview questions. The initial interview structure consisted of the following categories of questions: the notion of linguistic identity and the creation of language clusters or groups (e.g., “Describe the relationship/association of people who speak language X with others who speak the same language”; “Describe an instance where you

encountered a situation within the organization when people spoke multiple languages”; “What role, if any, do you think language based diversity plays in understanding the training conducted by your managers”) positive and negative outcomes of such diversity (“Describe an instance where the language based diversity impacted the usability of the skillset imparted through the OJT”; “Can you walk me through the incident, i.e., how it unfolded”) and other thoughts on language diversity within their organizations. Adjustments were made to the interview protocol based on the informant responses (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). Some questions changed after the analysis of the initial interviews. For instance, a number of respondents noted the relationship between gender, emotions and language during the implementation of OJTs, therefore, I added additional questions related to the role of emotions in the creation of language clusters and the role of bi/multilingual female managers in the implementation of OJT programs (Table 3.4 provides an example of the changes that were made after initial interviews). A majority of interview questions were purposefully created to be open-ended in nature and designed to provide insight into the participants’ opinion on the current workings of their respective organization as well as their involvement in the other activities within their organizations (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). Particularly, the questions were created with the goals of attaining insight into the participants’ thoughts and experiences. Each participant was asked to provide a verbal informed consent before the interview, and the interviews lasted 47 minutes on average. The sample semi-structured interview schedule can be found in the Appendix.

All but five interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed. I could not record five interviews because these respondents were not comfortable with the recording of confidential information discussed during the interview, however, I was able to take detailed notes during our conversations. The recordings, notes and transcriptions provided me with an objective account of

the interviews conducted in terms of capturing exactly what each informant communicated verbally. I also took field notes during all interviews including my own participant observations of the organizational environment and non-verbal cues from each interviewee, specifically related to what I found familiar (based on the existing literature or the pilot study interviews), surprising and what I wanted to learn more about. In this way, each structured interaction with key participants involved the interviews and observations being carried out simultaneously. I conducted two interviews with three senior managers, two HR executives and four training facilitators, before and after observing the OJT sessions, as that allowed me to clarify doubts and any paradoxes that I observed. For instance, An HR executive mentioned the importance of relying on speaking English during the OJT programs because of the corporate policy. However, when I observed the OJT, I noted the usage of multiple regional languages or constant translation, therefore I interviewed the HR executive again after the completion of OJT program as the second interview allowed me to comprehend the situation more clearly.

Observation of interviewees for additional data. To provide a more holistic account of my interaction with each interviewee, I generated field notes of initial interviews that I conducted in person. I tried to schedule interviews in each participant's 'home' organization in order to better understand the contextual environment and the meaning systems in which each person was working. I was able to employ this strategy in 30 interviews as I conducted the others via telephone/skype call. My field notes included my personal observations regarding the organizational environment, non-verbal cues from interviewees and any other subjective thoughts that the interview may have generated for me, especially things that were surprising and what I wanted to learn more about at the time. Below are two examples from my field notes:

The interviewee seemed a bit hesitant to talk in English. He told the VP that he was comfortable talking to me in English but as soon as his senior left, he asked me whether we could interact in Hindi as he missed speaking his mother tongue. He was also constantly looking outside to see if anyone could hear him speaking Hindi. It appeared that his colleagues were not very welcoming towards Hindi speakers.

When I asked him to explain why he felt that female bilingual managers were not able to manage the trainings as efficiently as the male managers, he took a long pause before saying anything further. Then he said the organization and everyone working there does not think about gender or language and implied that only work ethic mattered. This is contradictory to what the female managers said yesterday. I need to watch out for this more.

In this way, the interactions with my key respondents from both organizations involved the interviews and participant observations being carried out together. My field notes from these interactions resulted in 89 pages of text. I also took notes of my informal interactions and ongoing one-on-one meetings with key players, particularly the Chairman, Vice-President and HR manager of company MT, and the CEO of company FS as I asked follow up questions and clarified my understandings over time. The following is an example of a conversation with one HR manager two weeks after I had interviewed him:

The HR asked me over lunch as to what surprised me this week in the data collection and I said that the confusion amongst the junior team members regarding whether they can only communicate in English, whereas the senior executives mentioned that there is no corporate language policy. He said he was surprised because the HR team often answers questions in the local language and he asked me why I think the confusion existed. I mentioned that it could be due

to the lack of a written policy or because the team leaders or mid-level managers were uncomfortable conversing with their juniors in the native language because it would be considered informal and too friendly. He seemed to agree with me and then offered his own opinions....

Table 3.4 Adjustments to the methodology and interview questions based on emergent findings and intended contributions

Key Research Questions	Methods employed to answer the Questions	Intended Contributions	Refinements to methods to address/explore emergent findings
<i>When and how do language clusters emerge within an MNE headquarter?</i>	Semi-structured Interviews.	Boundary conditions that lead to the development of language clusters. Positive and/or negative effects of language diversity.	Adjusting interview questions. E.g., The initial responses indicated that male and female employees had different responses to language diversity in the share trading business. In order to know more about this, I requested to interview more female participants as the initial sample was more dominated by men.
<i>How do language clusters within the headquarter of an MNE affect the transfer of knowledge during the implementation of on-the-job training programs?</i>	Observations & Semi-structured Interviews. Observations helped me make notes of the people who ask clarification questions during the training sessions. I also noted who they talked to and in which language. Interviews provided me with the opportunity to ask follow up questions. In many cases, I conducted interviews before observing. In this way, I was able to verify interview responses through observations.	Mapping out the relationships between people who speak similar/different languages. Impact of within-HQ language diversity on implementation of OJTs in the HQ. Evolution of individual linguistic identities, and intersection of language with other elements of individual identity such as gender, education and dialects.	I added questions that helped me understand how linguistic identities adapt/change over time. For this, I asked people to share instances from past and now (more recent versions). I asked them about what has helped them achieve this transition. I also asked interviewees about the role of education, ethnic dialects and gender. I also conducted follow up interviews with some respondents after I analyzed the initial interviews and observations. I asked for their permission to email them when I first interviewed them.

Direct Observations. I observed OJT sessions in order to gain the experience and understanding of organizational and social interactions (e.g., workshops, and presentations by

company managers). Through the initial interviews and interactions, I got a sense of the people involved in running the different types of trainings (e.g., HR executives, team leaders, senior executives), their perspectives, and a general sense of the working environments of both case organizations. Therefore, when I started sitting in the OJT sessions, I was well positioned to examine the interactions among the employees and the management. I attended 6 OJT sessions (3 in company FS and 3 in company MT). Overall, I conducted 25 hours of observation (13 within company FS and 12 in company MT). Within both companies, I attended one session on organizational culture orientation that was conducted by the HR managers, one technical training conducted by the senior manager and team leader and it was related to new client projects, and I also observed another technical training that was conducted by team leader. While I only observed the interactions among participants during the meetings and training sessions, I had the opportunity to interact informally with participants, which allowed me to continually clarify my ongoing understandings of the implementation of OJT programs and to gain deeper insight into various individuals' viewpoints. I took detailed notes pertaining to all the observed activities shortly after the period of observation (Jorgensen, 1989). While in the field, I noted down the observations in the form of bullet points or key points, and then elaborated on those in writing within 24 hours of each observation. Collecting data in this manner allowed me to directly observe the interactions among the various individuals involved in the OJT programs and how the pattern of interaction varied between different linguistic groups or clusters. It also allowed me to further disentangle and compare what participants mentioned to me during one-on-one interviews with their actual interactions with others in the training sessions. Consider the following excerpt from the field notes generated during an OJT session:

The HR manager stopped multiple times to let people settle down. She had to ask various individuals to stop talking amongst themselves. It was obvious that some trainees could not understand complex terminologies in English and referred to their peers for explanations in their local language. Also, Hindi speaking people were constantly running back and forth from the desks of other Hindi speaking trainees. The same was visible with the Tamil speaking employees. Interestingly, trainee X [a team lead] seemed reluctant to explain content in the local language even though it was clear that he understands Tamil. I need to follow up on this during our interview next week.

Data Analysis Strategy. I analyzed the data on an ongoing basis throughout the dissertation, i.e., data collection and analysis for theorizing went hand in hand (Owen, 1984). My analytic process was both iterative and abductive. Abduction is a theoretical reasoning that begins with empirical data while accepting the existence of some theoretical preconceptions and frameworks (Locke, Golden-Biddle & Feldman, 2008; Peirce, 1931-1958). I followed a systemic and repetitive process of collecting and analyzing data until I developed a theoretical model to explain the interrelationships and the causality (Creswell, 2007). The basic idea was to approach phenomenon of interest with an open mind to gain an understanding of the experience from those social actors who are involved in it.

Following the multiple case study approach described by Creswell (2007), I conducted a within case analysis (for each organization) and a cross case analysis between the two case organizations. I used a combination of thematic analysis (Owen, 1984) and open coding for each individual case organization, and then conducted a cross case analysis (comparing similarities and differences in the themes that emerged from both cases). During the first stage of data analysis, I used Owen's (1984) technique of thematic analysis to identify initial themes or first order codes

based on their recurrence, repetition, and forcefulness in the transcribed data (Owen, 1984). Recurrence refers to the implicit repetition of key words or phrases, for example, the informant could use different words or sentence structures to repeatedly come back to one main issue. Repetition is an extension of recurrence, in that, the keys words or phrases are repeated explicitly. Forcefulness refers to the “vocal inflection, volume or dramatic pauses” with the aim to emphasize certain words or phrases more than others. In the written reports, it would refer to the underlined words, or the words in italics or capital letters (Owen, 1984, p. 275).

I let the themes emerge from data, rather than impose my previous assumptions on it, and noted themes based on the theoretical categories indicated by prior research, as well as emergent categories. I then compared the generated data with emerging categories until no new information emerged (Creswell, 2007). The themes were continuously refined throughout the analysis, so that the resultant data structure of the major themes could clarify the relationship between the various constructs that are being studied. This helped me visually map out the theoretical relationships and the pattern of interactions between the individuals and understand how the organizational context, consisting of language diversity affected the training processes. As I worked with my data to note the emergent relationships and themes, I revisited the academic literature to sharpen my analysis and concepts whenever the boundaries between concepts were unclear or when unexpected themes emerged (e.g., the relationship between gender and language clusters).

I regularly reviewed the data collected, including interview transcripts and field notes to draw comparisons within and between data sources as I began to make sense of some of the embryonic themes. For example, I realized early on that education played a key role in deciding whether an individual associates with clusters or not, therefore, I looked within and between the key informants' responses to begin to form emerging patterns (e.g., similarities in the responses of

employees). At this early stage, I kept all of my thoughts and ideas about the initial codes and their potential relationships in the field notebook that I kept on my person, so that I could continually write down ideas as they struck me. In order to sift through the large volume of data available, I primarily used the interview transcripts as anchors in developing initial themes. I then triangulated these emerging themes with data from my observation and field notes. Once I started noticing patterns in the gathered data, I started combining them into higher order categories and themes. The second -order themes and key theoretical dimensions generated during analysis of interview transcriptions were included in the study only if I was able to triangulate them with the themes generated from analyses of observations and field notes. For instance, one of the themes that emerged from analysis of initial interview responses was related to the relationships that employees developed during their training programs. I then corroborated this finding with the themes generated during the initial analysis of observations and field notes, after which it was included in the list of emergent themes. After I was able to clearly articulate the initial themes, I set up meetings with some of my interview respondents to review the budding ideas and themes and clarify any issues/questions. These meetings did not take the form of interviews as the purpose was to discuss the emerging themes to ensure that my description of the interview responses and observation data was accurate.

I then created a detailed excel sheet to note the detailed patterns and themes as they relate to the creation of language clusters as well as the OJT implementation processes. At this stage, I followed the same process that I used when I developed initial themes or first-order codes and started with my main data source, i.e., interviews. After I had a better understanding of the salience of these themes within my interview transcripts, I triangulated by coding the data from observation of OJTs, participant observations and field notes. This allowed me to understand and note how

participants interacted with each other and their organizational context. During this round of coding, I also generated memos to theorize and write-up the relationships between different codes. “Memoing serves to assist the researcher in making conceptual leaps from raw data to those abstractions that explain research phenomena in the context in which it is examined” (Birks, Chapman & Francis, 2008, p.68). In fact, Glaser (1978) urges researchers to write memos during field work to ensure that ideas do not get lost during the data collection and analysis process. One example of memo can be seen below:

It is interesting that in today’s interviews, many women mentioned that they feel they are confident in their multilingual abilities and that they can lead trainings efficiently. It is a contrast to the responses of the middle level manager and the team leaders I interviewed yesterday who said they felt that the trainings led by male managers are more useful. I would need to interview the senior manager again to gain their perspective on this issue.

Once I had achieved some clarity during the formal coding process, I constructed an initial model focused on the factors that impact the creation of language clusters as well as another model on the process of how language diversity impacts the implementation of OJT programs. I also detailed the key characteristics that individuals exhibited in order to bridge across different language clusters within both the organizations. I continued to construct and refine my empirical findings as I consulted the literature and continued to collect additional data. Specifically, in regards to additional data, in order to sharpen my understandings of the role of language diversity at both individual and group levels, I obtained feedback from participants before developing my key findings.

3.3.5 Strategies to Ensure the Quality and Rigor of the Research Design

In qualitative research, trustworthiness is considered a critical component to ensuring the quality and rigor of the findings as well as increasing the confidence of the reader that the findings are worthy of attention (e.g., Birkinshaw, et al., 2011). Trustworthiness refers to “producing results that can be trusted and establishing findings that are meaningful and of interest to the reader” (Trauth, 1997, p.242). Throughout the data collection and analysis processes, I employed strategies suggested by Stake (2013) to establish trustworthiness and overall methodological rigor of my study. To ensure construct validity (that is, the extent to which the findings may lead to an accurate observation of reality), I triangulated the results throughout the study (Stake, 2013; Yin, 1999). In order to increase the confidence in my interpretation of results, I relied on methodological triangulation. The intention behind utilizing two data collection methods was to “illuminate or nullify any extraneous influences” (Stake, 1995, p.114). Following up on the interviews with observations and vice-versa helped me capture different dimensions of the same phenomenon and confirm that I did not miss out on any critical information. I compared the themes generated from observations and interviews to ensure that there were no inconsistencies. If I found any inconsistencies between my notes from interviews and observations, I reached out to the participants and asked them for clarification on those specific issues.

In order to ensure internal validity, I ground the data collection procedures in existing literature and used concepts such as language clusters, trust, ingroup-outgroup friction and bias, etc. that are derived from my review of the literature to guide me towards the questions or topics that were covered during the interviews (Yin, 1999; 2013). I used Microsoft Excel and Word to organize all my data including the interview transcripts, informant records, documents and field

notes from observations. I also shared the main findings with the key informants for their feedback and reflections; this helped strengthen the accuracy of my findings.

3.4 Overview of the Results

My overarching empirical focus throughout this dissertation has been to investigate how and why language clusters emerge and how that impacts the implementation of on-the-job training programs. At a deeper theoretical level, I examined how individuals interact with each other during training sessions and the role of management in ensuring the successful implementation of OJT training programs. While this motivation guided my inquiry and data collection process in the field, the qualitative multiple case study approach allowed me the flexibility to explore new avenues depending on what emerged during my fieldwork.

Before delving into the findings, I would reiterate the difference between language diversity and language clusters. Language diversity within an organization refers to the number/diversity of languages spoken by the employees within the organization, whereas language clusters can be defined as the shadow informal structures that are based on individuals' language proficiencies, which often replace the formal organizational/communication structure (Marschan-Piekkari, et al. 1999b). Language clusters are groups that consist of individuals who speak the same native language and consider language to be a significant element of their social identity (Mäkelä, et al., 2007). The success of OJT programs is measured using the perceptions of training recipients and managers regarding the utility of information transmitted during the programs. Some of the findings that emerged in this dissertation study align with my prior expectations. Specifically, I discovered that language clusters can work as informal communication channels and that language diversity can negatively affect the implementation of OJT programs. At the same time, my iterative and reflexive approach to theory building allowed me to make four unexpected

discoveries, which were not predicted by current research. Namely, (1) regional dialects¹, education and gender² stereotypes are surprisingly influential in the formation and evolution of language clusters, (2) cluster composition and size are more dynamic than current research suggests, (3) language clusters were discernable within the firms I studied and employees who associated with the same language cluster helped each other during the OJTs by engaging in activities such as translation, (4) training recipients, trainers and firm can employ certain language accommodation approaches to facilitate the successful implementation of OJT programs and (5) gender of the OJT facilitators plays an important role in the successful implementation of OJTs. Therefore, while explaining my key findings, I incorporate new and relevant literature as appropriate, particularly where it concerns gender and dialects as these constructs emerged as unexpected focal points in my dissertation study and were not explicated in my literature review chapter.

In what follows, I explain my central findings. First, in chapter 4, I detail how language clusters emerge and change over time. In chapter 5, I explain the relationship between language diversity and implementation of OJT programs. As well, I examine the language accommodation approaches that can reduce the negative effects of language diversity. While doing so, I explore the intersections between dialects and language, and gender and language, and theoretically develop these relationships as they emerged empirically in this study. My intent is to guide future integrative work to better understand the connection between language and other elements of

¹ A particular form of a language that is specific to a region or social group. Regional dialects are often associated with geographic and/or political boundaries within a country.

² I acknowledge that gender is a non-binary construct, however, all the respondents in this study identified themselves as either male or female. Therefore, I only use these two identifications in this dissertation.

individuals' identities by developing theoretical frameworks and laying down the theoretical implications for future work in this discipline in chapter 6.

CHAPTER 4. WHEN & HOW LANGUAGE CLUSTERS EMERGE

4.1 Summary

In this chapter, I discuss the findings of my first research question, i.e., when and how language clusters emerged in both case organizations. I first provide an overview of my initial observations and notes from my early days in the field. I then discuss the key findings and emergent themes from data analysis. With regards to when and how clusters emerged, there are two key findings. First, two types of clusters emerge in both case organizations – clusters of convenience emerge when individuals who share a common language spend extended periods of time working together, and coping clusters emerge as a result of dissatisfaction with the changes in language requirements of the case organizations. Second, I find that linguistic identity does not function in isolation. It often intersects with education, gender, and regional dialects. These three elements of individuals' identities often have an impact on their association with language-based clusters.

4.2 Introduction

“I obviously choose to interact more with some colleagues compared to others. For me, personally, language similarity makes it easy. But even then, my relationships have changed over the years and it is largely because Tamil alone is not enough. Over time, people change and I can tell you this – a common tongue cannot stop from you having problems with them [other Tamil speakers].” - Interview respondent.

As described in chapter 1, language clusters refer to ‘shadow’, informal structures that are based on individuals' language proficiencies, which often replace the formal organizational structure (Mäkelä, et al., 2007; Marschan-Piekkari, et al., 1999b). These clusters often consist of persons who share a common mother tongue or who have the ability to operate in a given language.

According to Mäkelä, et al., (2007), language clusters can have a significant impact on the interpersonal transfer of knowledge, which is critical for the timely completion of projects and assigned tasks. In fact, the authors argued that knowledge flows more evenly among members of the same language cluster than between different clusters. Prior research has established that language is an important source of identity and it can create divisions among groups and clusters. However, we don't know exactly when and how language clusters emerge within organizations, nor how they change over time. The aim of this chapter is to answer this question based on the findings from two case organizations in Chennai. In what follows, I briefly introduce my results, present key findings and themes, and situate them within existing literature to highlight my contributions.

Early on, many participants emphasized to me that language diversity is not as important as the corporate identity and culture. It was mentioned by the senior management that most employees are comfortable with English and it is a norm for managers/seniors to explain tasks to junior level employees in the local language (Tamil) if something is unclear or if they feel ambiguities arising during the training sessions. They explained to me that all employees are familiar with the corporate culture and core organizational values. They further elaborated that various projects would be delayed if employees did not have a flexible learning attitude during the OJT sessions. One senior manager from Company MT put it this way:

“... everyone here is aware of the way we run things, the projects and meetings. Nothing else matters. Because if people start thinking about cooperating with only those who share languages with them, it would create a mess.”

As I began my fieldwork, the initial interviewees indicated that language clusters did not exist in Company MT and that language diversity and linguistic identities were not an important feature of their organization. However, as the data collection progressed and I re-interviewed some senior executives and probed deeper, I learned that language-based groups existed in both case organizations. The interview respondents noted that such groups or clusters consist of persons who speak the same native or regional languages. Membership of language clusters is driven by their members' strong identification with native language and homophily, i.e., the tendency to interact with similar others (McPherson, et al., 2001). I also discovered that employees form language clusters because they feel more comfortable in sharing their emotions and thoughts with those who share their native language. The cluster membership is limited to individuals who are available to support their colleagues emotionally and professionally. Persons who associate with the same language-based cluster would often help each other during their day to day organizational tasks. For instance, employees often refer to specific individuals when they require clarifications on their assigned tasks, or certain people who speak the same language usually take breaks together. Additionally, association with language clusters can impact the assignment of employees to client projects, i.e., some managers and team leaders prefer to work with the same group of people on numerous projects because they are able to interact with them in their native or shared regional language. In many instances, this was communicated directly to me during the one on one interviews, but I also observed this during the OJT sessions. In Company FS, interview respondents were relatively more vocal about their association with language-based clusters and they noted that employees formed clusters at different points of time, depending on the practices and policies implemented by the management. I explicitly asked interview respondents about the number of persons in their language cluster; the maximum number that was mentioned was 25 and

the minimum number was 10, however, many respondents noted that they would not consider a cluster significant enough if it had less than 7-8 people because such a small number could not provide the appropriate social and emotional support needed by multiple individuals. Additionally, the dynamic between persons who are a part of the same language cluster can change with time (discussed in the findings section). This is a new understanding of the notion of boundaries between language clusters: much of the extant literature assumes the boundaries to be stable and clearly defined whereas in this dissertation, I find that they are much more fluid than we have assumed in the past.

Additionally, respondents in both Company MT and Company FS suggested that language proficiency is necessary for the creation of language clusters but it is not a sufficient condition for their continuation. As discussed later, other factors such as perceived status of higher education institutes and language proficiency, regional dialects and gender stereotypes related to emotions also play a critical role in emergence and sustenance of these clusters. The following quotes are reflective of how interview participants articulated the notion of language clusters:

“I would think that it is a multifaceted issue. Language is a strong part of our identity, but I think someone’s dialect should also be clear enough for me to want to work with them. I tend to feel a stronger bond with those who are Hindi speakers but if I can’t understand the words they are saying, I’m not going to be comfortable with them.” Interview respondent, Company FS.

“Language is the main source of division on many occasions, but I would think that those who went to good schools don’t care about such divisions.” Interview respondent, Company MT.

In the next section, I review the emergent themes from data analysis and situate my key findings within the relevant literatures.

4.3 An overview of language-based differences and divisions

“One of the challenges is that everyone does not have the same understanding of tasks. You also notice some people interacting and explaining to only a fixed small number of others.... My core circle comprises of people who speak the same local language as me and it’s easy to communicate tasks to them and also share feedback or problems that I face in other projects.” - Interview respondent, Company FS.

“Language is a big part of who I am, and I just don’t think that it is the same in English. Even though I am fluent in English, speaking the same native language is the easiest way to connect with others and work is easier because I am able to be at ease with the Hindi [native language] speakers.” - Interview respondent, Company MT.

Regional language diversity in India is an important reason why English continues to be used as the lingua franca through which different language groups communicate and exchange information (Kachru, 1983). However, a person’s use of regional languages is still a strong signal of regional identity in contemporary India (Krishnamurti, 1990; Kulkarni, 2015). A majority of interview respondents mentioned that their native language is an important part of their social identity and that they feel strongly connected with those individuals with whom they shared a common native tongue. Many individuals acknowledged and explained how linguistic divisions are an obvious result of the need of individuals to interact with their peers and feel at home within their work environments. As one interview respondent from Company FS said:

“When I first moved here, I felt like an outsider because I don’t speak Tamil and everything was different and complicated because I couldn’t even understand the most basic

conversations....So when I met others who speak my language, it was a relief. I was able to connect with them and make friends. Otherwise it would have been a very lonely place for me.”

Another respondent from company MT noted:

“Working together is hard enough. Things get overly complicated when people around you speak multiple languages because not a single conversation happens in just English or the local language of this place. So it helps when I can go ask for help from people who can understand my language, it’s easier for me when I am explained tasks in my language.”

Despite the underlying impacts of language-based differences, these foundational issues are rarely discussed openly in either organization. Rather, the divisions have been ignored and assumed to be non-existent by the executive management. As one HR executive told me, such issues are generally considered trivial. What was interesting was the initial denial of the importance of language diversity and presence of clusters in company MT even though the role played by such clusters in the daily interactions among employees was easily visible during the one-on-one interviews and observation sessions (Table 4.1 summarizes my initial observations related to this during fieldwork).

The timing of creation of clusters depends on whether they were created out of convenience or as a coping mechanism to deal with the mismanagement of expansion strategy by senior leadership. The composition of various clusters as well as the relationships between and among clusters changes frequently, sometimes deliberately and at other times, accidentally or unintentionally. Deliberate changes include changes to the clusters due to issues of status differences associated with different regional dialects as well as the gender stereotypes associated with expression of emotions. It is worth mentioning that despite the changes in the composition of

clusters, the underlying factor uniting the members is their shared language. Examples of unintentional changes include the convergence of clusters of convenience with coping clusters (discussed in the next section). Interestingly, there is also a group of individuals who perceive their English proficiency and education status superior to their colleagues and choose to not identify with any language cluster and often undertake measures to keep themselves from getting involved with the clusters. The details are discussed in the next section.

Table 4.1 Comparison of initial observations from field work in Case companies FS and MT

Initial Responses	Company MT	Company FS
Initial responses regarding language diversity.	Outright denial of problems caused by language diversity by senior management (Chairman, Senior Vice-President).	Some acceptance of minor inconveniences caused by language diversity (CEO, 1 Vice-President).
Initial senior management responses regarding presence of language clusters.	Denial by senior management during early interviews. Some acceptance after deeper probing in the interviews conducted after late January.	Some acceptance during early interviews because the CEO acknowledged that they had made the decision to hire a multilingual workforce in a short span of time.

4.4 When and how did language clusters emerge in both organizations?

It became apparent to me from the beginning of my time in the field that the senior management of both organizations believe that all employees are cordial with each other, and the organizational culture encourages them to be helpful and accessible to others during project work. The management and team leaders often mentioned that employees are eager to help each other out, especially when the clients want to talk to someone in their native language. However, after I followed up with the respondents during the one-on-one interviews, I learned that there is quite

a lot of ‘frustration’ among the employees regarding the manner in which language diversity has been managed. The following quote provides evidence of this.

“It wasn’t always like this. Back when I joined this company, almost everyone spoke only Tamil and we could all manage some English and that was that. Then when the expansion started, and we started hiring people to cater to different clients in different regions...now we have people who speak many languages. But when the other employees started coming in, I think some of us started feeling threatened and uneasy...they would communicate within their groups or networks in Tamil only.” – Interview respondent, Company FS.

I also learned that not all clusters emerge because of frustration or anger, some clusters are formed because employees appreciate the emotional support provided by others who speak the same native language. It is convenient to interact with those who understand their native language rather than engaging in English or a third language while working on client projects. One respondent mentioned:

“I am happy that I started interacting some Hindi speakers during my first week. I was very nervous and they were a source of encouragement. Don’t get me wrong, I don’t have problems with any other language, but I do prefer to work with Hindi speakers because it is easy and convenient.” – Interview respondent, Company MT.

In relation to the first research question, i.e., when and how language clusters emerged in the two organizations, three main themes emerged – work on new clients, connections developed during orientation, and mismanagement of expansion strategy by senior leadership (please refer to table 4.2 and 4.3 for examples of data analysis structure).

Finding 1 and 2, i.e., work on new clients and connections developed during orientations are related to the clusters that emerge out of convenience of employees. These clusters emerge because certain employees find an opportunity to conveniently connect with others who share their native language or are fluent in a common language. Sharing a native language helps them build rapport and provide emotional support to each other. The third finding relates to the clusters that are intentionally created as a coping mechanism to deal with the frustration caused by the mismanagement of expansion strategy by senior leadership.

Table 4.2 Deduction of first-order categories from data

Example quote	Example First order categories
Obviously they did not think language was a serious issue, that is why they expected us to learn Hindi so quickly. They were giving more importance to non Tamil languages.	Priority to new employees' languages.
We all had problems with the enforced language policy. There was a lot of frustration going on. I heard that some people complained but it was ignored.	Frustration with management decision-making.
I was allocated to a few new clients after we rapidly started expanding. Plus we also have to bring in new business ourselves. So I started talking to some people I hadn't talked to before. And I didn't even know there were so many others who speak the same language as me. Similar backgrounds, you know.	New projects provide opportunities to connect with native language speakers.
The first few days of training are lonely. I did not know who to talk to. So when I heard him saying something in Hindi, I thought that was a good way to start making connections. He then introduced me to some others who speak Hindi.	Similar languages provide networking opportunities.
I started spending more time with Telugu speaking friends because it was easy to share my feelings with them, especially all the expansion fiasco that happened. But the thing is many of those people don't expect women to lead them so the other day, when I was explaining something during a meeting, a junior colleague came up to me afterwards and asked me if I am overreacting because I did the same when we were hanging out informally last week.	Undermining, and harsh opinions on women displaying authority.
So it was fine initially. But slowly I started noticing some impolite behavior from others because my Tamil is a bit different from theirs. I come from a small town and I did not go to a fancy school, so I don't use a lot of English words when I speak. They mix Tamil with English some times. I also think I can't talk to them about my experiences because they won't understand.	Difficulty processing rural dialects.

Table 4.3 Data Structure - Deduction of final conceptual dimensions from second order-themes

Example First order categories	Sorting first order categories into second order themes	Conceptualizing dimensions of second-order themes	
Priority to new employees' languages.	Ignorance of management	Mismanagement of expansion strategy	Coping clusters
Frustration with management decision-making.	Frustration		
New projects provide opportunities to connect with native language speakers.	Identifying similarities	Work on new clients	Convenience clusters
Sharing language with new team builds rapport	Rapport building		
Similar languages provide networking opportunities.	Networking tool	Connections during orientation	
First relationships with native language speakers.	Initial connections		
Undermining, and harsh opinions on women displaying authority.	Negative judgments of women	Gender stereotypes of emotion	
Masculine emotions equate strength.	Stereotypes		
Difficulty processing rural dialects.	Status differences	Role of regional dialects	
Preference for regional dialects creates fissures.	Dialect-faultlines		

Table 4.4 provides a comparison of the emergent themes in the two case organizations. The key themes and findings are discussed in the following paragraphs.

Table 4.4 Emergent themes in Case companies FS and MT

Themes	Company FS	Company MT
Relationships developed during orientation	<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p>Example quote: <i>“For me, I would say I met a couple of other Marathi speakers during my first training seminars here. When we were introducing ourselves, I noticed they spoke the same language, so I decided to go and talk to them...and then slowly they became a part of social network here at the company.”</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p>Example quote: <i>“Some of my colleagues met members of their social groups during their orientation but I think this can work only if you are working at similar levels in the company. I don't think that a senior manager can suddenly become friends with an entry level QC [quality controller]...that takes time.”</i></p>

Themes	Themes	Themes
Work on new clients	<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p>Example quote: <i>“When I started working on ABC [client name not mentioned], I had my first concrete conversation with a number of people. I knew their names because it is a small office but I had not interacted with them properly because we never got a chance to work with them before. Turns out Deena and I both are native Hindi speakers and it is so easy to talk to her. I wish I had known her before.”</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p>Example quote: <i>“I’m so glad I started working on that new client last year, I met Alex who introduced me to some of his network who all speak Telugu and now we have a large group of people or friends who hang out together and we always have each other’s back.”</i></p>
Mismanagement of expansion strategy	<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p>Example quote: <i>“I was never the person who would pick and choose between my work colleagues. It was a friendly environment. But I started feeling left out and then the only time, I felt comfortable was when I was explaining my work and my problems to my Tamil speaking peers. It was the same for them. Somehow, after the big language policy shift, we started hanging out more and confiding in each other more than others.”</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p>Example quote: <i>“I think we started forming groups after the expansion started. It was just the easy way to deal with changes and discuss our feelings without worrying about communication issues or translation of the exact thoughts. And then people like me got used to just being with our own people and we now help each other at work and while working on client work.”</i></p>
Regional dialects	<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p>Example quote: <i>When the expansion process started, I started hanging out more with those who speak my native language because the environment was getting a bit toxic and we needed some mutual support. But within a few months, I realized that despite sharing the same language it was difficult to be friends with all of the people who speak Tamil. I mean how am I supposed to talk to people whose Tamil has this strong rural dialect – they cannot understand my viewpoint. They can’t have lived similar experiences because obviously if had lived in cities for long, they wouldn’t have this strong dialect.”</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p>Example quote: <i>“Somehow I am more comfortable with those who have a bit of a urban manner of saying their words. I know it sounds like I am vain but the thing is I grew up in a big city so it’s just the way I am. It has not affected my job and it shouldn’t matter if it is important on a personal front.”</i></p>

Themes	Company FS	Company MT
Gender stereotypes of emotion	<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p>Example quote: <i>“I would say that there are both disadvantages and advantages of always hanging out and interacting with one particular group. But I have to say that the biggest advantage is that we can express our feelings in words that we are comfortable in. The biggest disadvantage is that we get comfortable with them but then when we start getting promotions or doing well, we also started getting judged and then we don't know what to do or how to react.”</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p>Example quote: <i>“As a woman, I feel judged for sharing my feelings with them [members of language cluster] now. I fear that I'll lose their respect and they won't listen to me or take me seriously if I come across as overly emotional or as a woman who can be easily agitated. At this stage of my career where I have worked so hard to reach where I am, I don't think hanging out with them [language-based cluster] is a good move.”</i></p>

1) **Clusters of convenience.** These clusters emerge because employees find themselves in friendly conditions or environments where they are able to connect with others who speak their native language or share a common regional language. The clusters of convenience form because persons with a shared/ common language spend prolonged periods of time working together and therefore, find themselves appreciating the advantages provided by a shared language. This finding builds on the work of scholars such as Mäkelä, and colleagues (2007) who found that language clusters based on homophily can emerge in MNCs, however, it is in strike contrast to other arguments made in existing research on language diversity that focus only on the negative reasons behind the emergence of language clusters (e.g., Fredriksson, et al., 2006; Marschan-Piekkari, et al., 1999b). Clusters of convenience do not emerge out of frustration or because individual employees dislike others who have different linguistic or social identities. Moreover, I show that these clusters emerge due to the presence of specific circumstances or occasions. Figure 4.1 illustrates the process of creation of clusters of convenience.

Figure 4.1 Creation of clusters of convenience



a) Connections made during orientation – A large number of interview respondents mentioned that they met other members of their language clusters when they joined their current organization. A number of new hires form language-based relationships with colleagues and peers after exchanging basic demographic information with them. These relationships are common between individuals working at the same position or hierarchical level within the organizations. An interview respondent noted:

“For me, I would say I met a couple of other Marathi speakers during my first training seminars here. When we were introducing ourselves, I noticed they spoke the same language, so I decided to go and talk to them...and then slowly they became a part of social network here at the company.” – Interview respondent, Company FS.

Another interview respondent mentioned:

“Some of my colleagues met members of their social groups during their orientation but I think this can work only if you are working at similar levels in the company. I don't think that a senior manager can suddenly become friends with an entry level QC [quality controller]...that takes time.” – Interview respondent, Company MT.

It was also noted that the dialects or manners of pronouncing words prompted respondents to identify the persons they wanted to reach out to. As mentioned in the following quote, interview respondents identified the hint of a specific dialect or pronunciation as a cue that those individuals are approachable.

“I first approached Alan after I heard the distinct Hindi touch in his Tamil pronunciations. And I speak Hindi and it is so rare to find someone who speaks my language here. So, I sat next to him after lunch and we started talking and our conversation switched to our local language instantly...it was a relief to be honest. Later it was through him that I met others who speak our language and we all became a close-knit circle.” – Interview respondent, Company FS.

The connections established during orientations are a source of comfort and familiarity for many individuals as these relationships help them adjust to the new organizational environment with more ease and comfort. These clusters allow many people to connect to a relatively wide network during their early days in their organization. In addition to the connections established during orientations, I found that employees can form convenience clusters when various persons who share a common language work together on projects for a prolonged period of time, when the organizations start new client projects. This is revealed below.

b) Work on new clients – Another recurrent theme that emerged during the interviews was related to the acquisition of new clients. Often times, new project teams are created to work on new clients' projects. As a result, many people who have not worked together in the past would start interacting. Some employees interact with each other for the first time while working on these projects and this gives them a chance to build new relationships. An interview respondent noted:

“When I started working on ABC [client name not mentioned], I had my first concrete conversation with a number of people. I knew their names because it is a small office but I had not interacted with them properly because we never got a chance to work with them before. Turns out Deena and I both are native Hindi speakers and it is so easy to talk to her. I wish I had known her before.” – Interview respondent, Company FS.

Once individuals formed relationships with certain others from their teams, they introduced them to their core language-based circles. As one interview respondent mentioned:

“Alan introduced me to his friends who all speak Tamil and I was so glad he did this. I finally felt comfortable with a group and I didn't need to translate or think before saying what I wanted. I eventually introduced colleagues from my network to them...it is just nice to have a group of people who understand each other's native references.” – Interview respondent, Company FS.

Another respondent noted:

“I'm so glad I started working on that new client last year, I met Alex who introduced me to some of his network who all speak Telugu and now we have a large group of people or friends

who hang out together and we always have each other's back.” – Interview respondent, Company MT.

Altogether people are able to meet other colleagues who share a language with them through their new team members. Clusters form as a result of formation of new project teams, allowing individuals the opportunity to build and develop a larger number of new relationships simultaneously.

2) ***Coping clusters.*** As the name suggests, these clusters emerge out of the human desire to make connections to cope with the frustrations caused by mismanagement of expansion strategy by senior leadership. The mismanagement started when both case organizations decided to diversify their clientele and as a result, hired persons with different linguistic backgrounds. Many existing employees were not pleased with the sudden importance granted to Hindi and other regional languages because before the expansion, most employees were able to converse in Tamil or English and sometimes, the meetings were also held in the local language, Tamil. A major difference between clusters of convenience and coping clusters is that there is a greater outgroup bias in coping clusters, mainly because coping clusters are a result of frustration with the increasing importance given to speakers of other languages. In addition, the ingroup favoritism is stronger in coping clusters compared to clusters of convenience. The following excerpts from my notes that I wrote after two observation sessions can help explain the difference between coping clusters and clusters of convenience. The first note relates to the responses regarding coping clusters and the second note relates to clusters of convenience.

“While observing the interactions in company FS, I noted that facial reflections of some Tamil and Telugu speakers reflected irritation when they heard the manager and some others

Speak in Hindi. Interestingly, during the interview later, Asha mentioned that when she asked another employee a clarification question, he told her he didn't speak Hindi. However, Asha said that she had asked for clarification in English.”

“Today, three different interview respondents mentioned that although they prefer to interact with those speak their native language, they are happy to help others. It is important to note that these three respondents started interacting with others who share their native language because it was convenient for them, none of them made any special efforts to become friends with members of their clusters.”

The emergent theme is discussed in the following sub-section.

a) Mismanagement of expansion strategy – It was frequently noted that formation of some language clusters is often a result of mismanagement within the organizations. Interview respondents emphasized that management did not implement the changes to language requirements appropriately. Although English was the unofficial corporate language in both case organizations, as a result of expansion initiatives, employees were expected to learn various regional languages. Many respondents repeatedly mentioned that the senior executives underestimate the challenges involved in learning and speaking new languages. For example, when company FS started hiring more Hindi speaking employees and asked several existing employees to learn Hindi, its management did not anticipate or prepare for the negative impact of this shift on the existing employees who did not speak Hindi. As a result, the non-Hindi speaking employees often felt threatened by new hires who were fluent in Hindi. Language clusters started emerging as a form of coping mechanism to help employees deal with change. Due to the formation of language clusters and the resultant outgroup bias, Hindi speaking employees started feeling

‘frustrated’ and ‘unwelcome’ and formed their own groups to deal with the ‘hostility’ shown by other employees. An interview respondent noted:

“It was awkward all around...suddenly I felt like I was not wanted around here because there was this sudden requirement of knowing more than just Tamil. My English ok and I can interact in it. But when I was hired, I did not know that I needed to be able to know and speak Hindi too. A number of my friends left after the change happened. To say the least, I was extremely frustrated.” – Interview respondent, Company FS.

Another respondent said:

“I was never the person who would pick and choose between my work colleagues. It was a friendly environment. But I started feeling left out and then the only time, I felt comfortable was when I was explaining my work and my problems to my Tamil speaking peers. It was the same for them. Somehow, after the big language policy shift, we started hanging out more and confiding in each other more than others.” – Interview respondent, Company FS.

I found similar feelings of frustration towards speakers of Malayalam. On further probing, the interview participants also mentioned that the clusters would not have surfaced as rapidly and strongly as they did if the management had been more aware of the challenges involved in learning new languages. Although there is no official written language policy in either case organization, employees in company FS were expected to adapt to the switch to a multilingual environment, wherein they were expected to know English, and two other regional languages such as Tamil, Hindi, Telugu or Malayalam without any consultation or training. As noted in an interview:

“I think it [the problems arising due to language diversity] could have been fixed. When they decided to expand operations, they should have anticipated the problems and the frustration that we would feel. Maybe they could have found a way to coordinate and manage this language issue and differences better. If I am being honest, I started hanging out with colleagues who speak my language only because I was frustrated, angry and wanted to share my frustration with them.”

– Interview respondent, Company FS.

Although there was no such deliberate attempt to expand the language capabilities by the management in company MT, employees faced similar challenges as the company started expanding and catering to a more diverse set of clients. This is clear from the following quote:

“I think we started forming groups after the expansion started. It was just the easy way to deal with changes and discuss our feelings without worrying about communication issues or translation of the exact thoughts. And then people like me got used to just being with our own people and we now help each other at work and while working on client work.” – Interview respondent, Company MT.

The above findings and themes are consistent with the existent literature and show that language is a strong part of an individual’s social identity. SIT is a powerful tool to explore the mechanisms behind social inclusion and exclusion. However, the mechanisms related to SIT do not become activated without the help of an external force. In this case, the external force or pressure came from the change in management policies as a result of business expansion. The resulting changes have made the employees’ social identity related to language more salient. The resultant faultlines can lead to the creation of language clusters in which many employees feel at ease. Social inclusion means that individuals are being granted membership in a community, i.e.,

language clusters, and being accepted as ‘one of us’. These homophilic connections often split between those who are ‘in’ and those who are not and SIT argues that that in-group members favor their own group over other groups (Tajfel, 1982). This implies that clusters of convenience have weaker ingroup ties and less outgroup bias because they are not created due to an unsatisfactory external force. The following quote from an interview respondent provides a justification for this argument:

“Sometimes you notice a group of people from specific regions that speak the same language sticking together a lot. But I understand why people do that – I myself hang out with my friends who speak Kannada. I often find myself going to them for clarifications on work related questions. But it doesn’t mean that we don’t help others; everyone is in the same boat. In fact, if we ignore each other or don’t help those who speak different languages, it has the potential to create trust issues and affect social relationships within the work environment. I think that we should have a friendly environment at work and having a close-knit group is good, but it should not harm others.”

On the other hand, coping clusters are driven by an external force and have stronger in-group connections. There is also stronger outgroup bias and frustrations among coping clusters, which leads to deeper faultlines. When I tried to investigate the origins of these divisions and faultlines, the responses included a lot of ‘blame shifting’ to others who ‘initiated conversations in native languages’. A quote from a Telugu speaking interview respondent in company FS points towards the presence of deeper faultlines between coping clusters:

“When the team lead asked about the status of a task from one of my colleagues, he responded in Tamil and their conversation just continued in Tamil and they did not even realize that others might not understand what they were saying. Or maybe they did not care. I felt like

they intentionally tried to hide that information from me so that my other colleague could do better and get the next promotion because they get along well.”

Another respondent from company MT noted:

“When I first started working here, I always tried to speak and communicate in English, at least during meetings and in common areas. But there were others who didn’t care at all and would talk to others in another language...I’d often feel left out. So, I decided to not care either, now oftentimes I also communicate to those who are from my region in our common language. If the other colleagues are present and they seem to not understand what we are saying, I’ll try to translate for them or switch to English...but honestly, I just try to work with those understand my language.”

Table 4.5 lists the key differences between the two types of clusters and table 4.6 lists the differences between cluster characteristics in company MT and FS. Some clusters of convenience consisting of Tamil speakers transformed into coping clusters as frustration with mismanagement of language during expansion developed. According to the interview responses, the convergence is not deliberate; the interview responses from approximately 50% of the Tamil speaking interview respondents who identified with convenience clusters suggested that their ingroup favoritism and outgroup bias grew stronger after management started enforcing new language requirements without consulting with the existing employees. Additionally, although management is not aware of the presence of either type of clusters, it would be beneficial for the management to pay more attention to the frustration among employees that leads to the development of coping clusters, mainly because coping clusters result from a stronger dissatisfaction with the corporate management’s decision-making and such dissatisfaction has the potential of reducing employees’

productivity and/or increase employee turnover rates. Figure 4.2 visually illustrates the process of formation of coping clusters.

Figure 4.2 The process of emergence of coping clusters

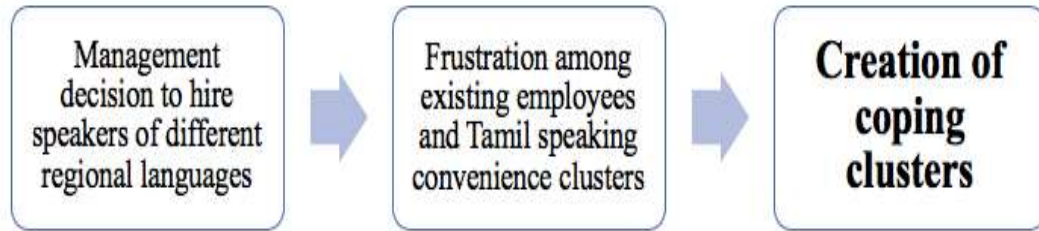


Table 4.5 Key differences between clusters of convenience and coping clusters

Criteria	Clusters of convenience	Coping clusters
Key emergent themes	Connections developed during orientation; work on new clients.	Mismanagement of expansion strategy.
Outgroup bias	Less because these clusters form as a desire of persons to connect with those who share a common language with them.	Strong because some coping clusters form because employees believe that the management is partial to speakers of other regional languages. These clusters emerge out of frustration with the managerial decision making and changes.
Timing of emergence	Created without any ‘trigger’ events.	Formed after changes to language requirements.
Members	Members consist of those who are at similar hierarchical levels within the organizations.	Cross hierarchical boundaries as employees tend to find others who share similar concerns against management decision making and language requirements.

Criteria	Clusters of convenience	Coping clusters
Strength of clusters	Weak because there is no external motivation behind the connections.	Stronger because there is an external motivating factor to stay united.
Level of arousal	Propensity to act on emotion is low.	Propensity to act on emotions (i.e., frustration and anger) is high.
Convergence	Some of these clusters converged with or changed into coping clusters after changes in language requirements.	Do not change into clusters of convenience at any time.
Connection to existing literature	Relatively similar to the concepts of language clusters in existing research on language in IB. However, there is a key difference, i.e., fluent English speakers do not get a preferential treatment.	Absent from existing research and there is no empirical evidence that any of these clusters is in a privileged position because of language capabilities.

Table 4.6 Differences between cluster characteristics in company FS and MT.

Criteria	Company FS	Company MT
Prominent cluster	Coping clusters because of the drastic shift in language requirements after expansion decisions.	Clusters of convenience.
Composition of clusters of convenience	Middle and entry level employees.	Middle and entry level employees.
Composition of coping clusters	Middle level employees, or those employees who have been with the organization for at least 2-3 years.	Middle level employees who have been with the company for at least 5 years.
Convergence	A large number of Tamil speaking convenience clusters converged with/ changed to coping clusters after changes in language requirements.	Approximately 50% of Tamil speaking clusters of convenience converged with/ changed to coping clusters after changes in language requirements.

Criteria	Company FS	Company MT
Percentage of interview respondents who indicated their association with language clusters	Approximately 80% (approximately 60% of these indicated an association with coping clusters)	Approximately 75% (approximately half of these indicated an association with coping clusters)
Predominant languages of the majority clusters.	Hindi, Tamil, Telugu and Malayalam.	Tamil, Telugu and Malayalam.

3) Perceived status of higher education institutes and language proficiency. Before moving to the discussion regarding the transformation of clusters, I would like to highlight a key exception that I found during the current study. During my observations in company FS, I noticed a group of employees who voluntarily and consciously chose to stay ‘outside’ the language clusters and not engage with these clusters. When I asked about this observation during the interviews, I found that some persons from better-ranked schools who have relatively higher levels of English proficiency do not reach out to any specific group of employees for clarifications. Instead, they usually address questions directly to the person(s) leading the trainings and they speak in English, which is the de-facto official language. This indirectly points towards an informal hierarchy based on the education status of different persons who work in company FS. I did not find this hierarchy in company MT, mainly because all interview respondents graduated from similar community colleges and have similar levels of English proficiency. The persons with relatively ‘elite’ education backgrounds in company FS try to not get involved with clusters because they were fluent in English, routine tasks are generally clear to them, and they do not rely on their peers for clarifications. The following quotes shed light into this:

“ I am going to be honest here, I obviously interact with my peers in my native language when we are having breaks or when we are doing some routine tasks. But I don’t have a preference for one language over another when we are at work. I understand English, can read and write

properly and obviously I have to seek clarifications and have questions when I am doing my assigned tasks but so I don't see why I need to worry about who I go to. As long as my manager or my team members can explain to me in English or Tamil, it doesn't matter who explains to me. Because everyone here is expected to know basic English, I think I always have someone to go to."

- Interview respondent, Company MT.

"This is a professional environment. I was hired to talk to Hindi speaking clients, in case they are uncomfortable with English. I am completely fine with talking with my colleagues in English if they don't understand Hindi. I see people who prefer to hang out only with those who also speak their native language but I had friends from all over India in my college and therefore, I am used to it." - Interview respondent, Company FS.

Additionally, due to their high proficiency in English, they are able to understand the information transmitted during OJT programs without requiring any further clarifications. What is interesting is that the notion of superiority based on the schools from which these persons have graduated is largely based on individual perceptions, i.e., although some of the employees attended some popular colleges such as Loyola College or Vivekananda College, none of their schools/universities are listed in the widely accepted ranking systems in India, e.g., QS university rankings or Times higher education rankings. Nonetheless, the interview responses suggested that not only do these individuals not want to be associated with language clusters but they also look down upon the phenomenon of clusters. When I observed the OJT sessions, I noticed that the facial expressions of some of these employees reflected confusion and irritation when others expected them to respond to their questions or conversations in their native languages. When I probed further during the one-on-one interviews, they acknowledged that this constant need of some of their

colleagues to only be friendly with a ‘certain group of peers and colleagues’ is ‘irrational’ and ‘immature’. In fact, some of these persons also noted that this notion of clusters based on languages exist because of a failure on the part of the management to fully orient employees to the organizational culture. This finding is quite beneficial because MNEs consist of persons with varying educational backgrounds and many successful firms often take pride in hiring their employees from some of the top universities worldwide. However, much of the existing literature on language diversity, faultlines and/or language clusters (e.g., Fredriksson, et al., 2006; Hinds, et al., 2014; Neeley, 2013) has been silent on the intersection between language and education hierarchy. There is an assumption within the current scholarly work that if the native/local language of employees is different than the corporate language, employees might feel more connected with those who share a common language with them (e.g., Klitmøller & Lauring 2016; Kulkarni, 2015). However, my findings suggest that individual perceptions related to one’s education status might motivate them to stay away from clusters as it would interfere with their current notion of ‘eliteness’. The following quote provides more clarity on this.

“You are going to think this is pride, but I think that university matters. I worked hard to get educated from my university and others did not. My background helps me. My English is good and because of this, I understand information easily and I don’t feel the need to ask questions all the time. So ya, I don’t feel like being a part of these language groups that you are asking about because I am better at my job than them.”

According to SIT, group differences can be sustained only if they are visible and meaningful (Ashforth & Mael, 1989), and it appears that for individuals who perceived their education and English proficiency superior, did not consider language as a meaningful indicator

of group identity. For these individuals, their education is a more prominent and visible identity marker. Infact, over time, other people might decide to disassociate themselves from language clusters and either form their own small clusters or completely move away from the idea of language clusters for other reasons. These are discussed in detail in the next section.

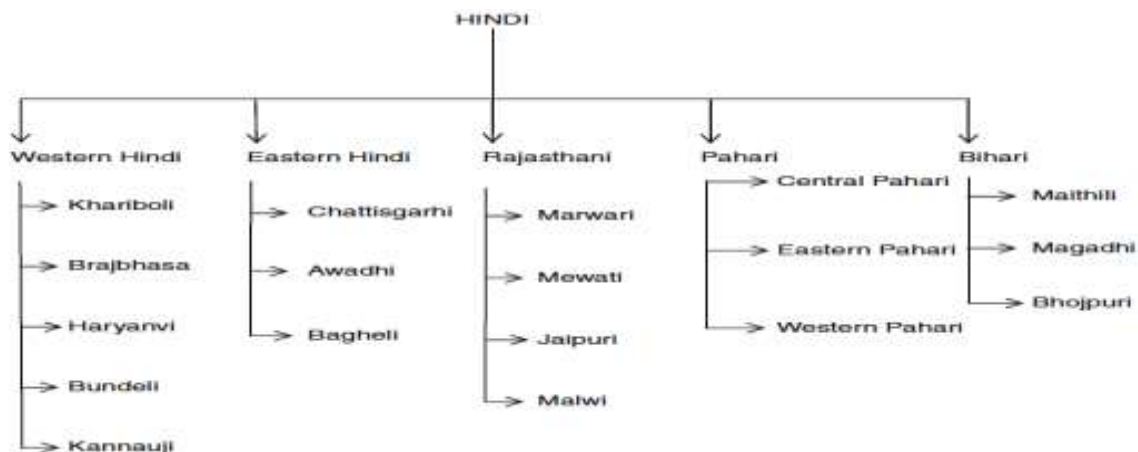
4.5 Transformation of language clusters.

While language clusters often emerge because language is closely tied to identity (Giles & Johnson, 1981), language-based identification is not always enough to sustain language clusters. I learned that increased salience of both regional dialects and gender stereotypes can weaken and/or transform language clusters by altering their composition, i.e., some clusters become smaller and more male dominated. I discuss both elements ahead.

I) **Regional dialects** – A dialect is a particular variety of language that is specific to a particular region or political boundary. A regional dialect refers to “a variety of language which differs grammatically, phonologically and lexically from other varieties [of the same language], and which is associated with a particular geographical area” (Trudgill, 2003, p. 35). Agha (2007, p. 135) develops this concept by stating that “the demographic dimensions marked by speech are matters of geographic provenance alone, such as speaker’s birth locale, extended residence and the like”. According to the data analysis, small groups and divisions can form among people speaking the same language as well. For instance, during the observations and interviews, I noted that not all the employees who speak Hindi connected with each other - it was clear that faultlines existed within the Hindi speaking cluster (figure 4.3 provides an example of the various common dialects of Hindi language in India). The following quote from a respondent explains one reason behind the formation of dialect-based sub-clusters:

“We have different regions where people speak the same language but our backgrounds are different. Just because two people know a language X, it does not mean they speak the same version of X. It is the same with Hindi – people from Delhi and Bihar can speak a very different version [dialect] of Hindi. Similarly, people from Bengal and Darjeeling can speak a different version of Bengali....and obviously, I prefer people from Delhi because their language is similar to mine.” Interview respondent, Company FS.

Figure 4.3 Various dialects of Hindi language (Kulshreshtha & Mathur, 2012; p.17)



During the interviews, I further probed to discern why people considered dialects to be an important factor along with language. A large number of respondents suggested that a common language is important for the emergence of clusters, but language alone is not sufficient. Regional dialects are important considerations for sharing ingroup benefits with others. As one interview respondent who is a manager in company FS said:

“When the expansion process started, I started hanging out more with those who speak my native language because the environment was getting a bit toxic and we needed some mutual support. But within a few months, I realized that despite sharing the same language it was difficult

to be friends with all of the people who speak Tamil. I mean how am I supposed to talk to people whose Tamil has this strong rural dialect – they cannot understand my viewpoint. They can't have lived similar experiences because obviously if had lived in cities for long, they wouldn't have this strong dialect.”

Another interview respondent who is a senior manager in company MT noted:

“Somehow I am more comfortable with those who have a bit of an urban manner of saying their words. I know it sounds like I am vain but the thing is I grew up in a big city so it's just the way I am. It has not affected my job and it shouldn't matter if it is important on a personal front.”

The abovementioned quotes highlight the status distinctions between speakers of different regional dialects. The interview data point towards a rural versus urban divide between dialects of the same regional language. Some urban/city dialects are considered superior to rural dialects of the same language. This can create discomfort for many employees if they feel that their colleagues are not willing to put effort into their conversations because they are not as ‘elite’ as the employees from major cities. Additionally, it also points to the problem of processing fluency that has been discussed by Dragojevic & Giles (2016). Often, human judgement and stereotypes reflect not just the “content” of the conversation but also the “metacognitive experience of processing those thoughts” (p. 397). If people find it difficult to understand ideas mentioned in certain dialects, they would not be comfortable in sharing their emotions with them, which is a significant reason behind the formation of language-based clusters. The combination of status divide and processing difficulty often creates faultlines within language-based clusters.

This finding builds on research conducted in the fields of sociology and marketing that has confirmed that many regional dialects carry a negative connotation and can signal an individual's inability to communicate efficiently (e.g., Khazzoom, 2013). Dialects that are associated with

certain regions can signal lower socio-economic status and therefore, lead to disinterest when it comes to communication and engagement with others. There might be a stigma attached with people who speak with a certain dialect, even when they are proficient in the corporate language of their organization (i.e., English). Furthermore, a dialect is one of the ways through which people recognize common ancestry and thus ethnic similarity. Sharing dialects enhances communication and interactions between individuals, which encourages them to form their own clusters. As mentioned in the following quote by a respondent, this factor can further motivate people to connect with certain persons more than others:

“I feel closer to someone when I hear them speaking in the UP [Indian state of Uttar Pradesh] style...it’s mostly due to the fact that I know they understand and are aware of my traditions and even the workplace rituals and they will not make fun of me doing tasks the way I do.”

For instance, one interview respondent from company FS noted:

“I realized that I was not respected by my colleagues because I speak a rural version of Tamil. Some of my friends would always ask me to explain the meanings of terms and words I was using and then some people would say that it was a backward manner of speaking. Finally, some of my friends and I decided to form our own group away from the ‘posh’ speakers of Tamil.”

Findings from the interviews and observations confirm the presence of faultlines based on regional dialects and it is clear that dialects often create new faultlines within language clusters. Thus, dialects tend to create fissures and divide language clusters. Individuals first tend to connect with one another solely on the basis of language. Once they have adjusted within the language clusters and established relationship with other members, there is a tendency to identify more with

those with whom they share a regional dialect. The major reason for this is the outgroup bias that formulates as a result of the status inequalities between urban and rural dialects. These inequalities prompt the formation of groups because of the prominence of regional dialects and associated identities. Similar to the arguments about multiple identities in SIT, I found that my interview respondents identify with both their linguistic identity and their regional identity. However, due to the need to maintain their self-esteem arising out of status differences between different dialects (Turner, 1975), regional dialects become salient and people start favoring those with whom they share this identity. It is plausible that this division influences the cognitive schema of individuals, thus intensifying inter and intra group divisions. The data collected from interviews suggest that such clusters do not cut across language clusters, i.e., people who speak a rural dialect of Tamil do not associate with others who speak a rural dialect of Hindi. The status hierarchies do not diminish the boundaries created by differences in native languages. Additionally, a comparison of the interview responses of persons who associated with coping clusters and clusters of convenience suggests that the impact of regional dialects is stronger in convenience clusters than coping clusters. Coping clusters exhibit a higher level of ingroup favoritism compared to clusters of convenience, mainly because there is a high level of frustration with speakers of other languages. Therefore, members of coping clusters ignore the status differences among regional dialects as they prefer to maintain a strong ingroup dynamic to maintain their language identities within their organization.

However, regional dialects are not the only factor that impact the long-term composition of language clusters. As discussed in the following section, gender is also a crucial factor.

2) **Gender-emotion stereotypes** – During interviews, male and female interview participants varied significantly in their opinions about long-term association with language clusters.

Specifically, male participants felt more deeply connected to their language groups than their female counterparts. Although both men and women relayed stories about how they used language clusters to share emotions, this emotion-sharing role changed for women as they climbed into more senior roles, while it stayed constant for men. For example, one male interview respondent who is a manager in company FS put it this way:

“I would say that having friends with whom I can share my thoughts in my native language is a great source of comfort. And yes, I have received two promotions since I joined my current company and I am confident that gender is not a big deal. I have always been firm when it comes to work. I am able to get my subordinates to do their work, regardless of our language similarities or differences.”

When I asked a similar question to a female manager in the same organization, she noted:

“I always felt more comfortable when I was able to share my emotions with others in my own [native] language. But I started feeling uncomfortable recently. When I was promoted, I felt that colleagues from my [language] group did not take me seriously. Ever since I have been getting this feeling that they are constantly judging me and questioning me. I did not get this feeling from others [members of other language clusters].”

Interestingly, when I tried to probe deeper regarding the disadvantages and the relevance of language clusters, I heard stories about why the relevance of clusters changed for women. Women often noted that they had to distance themselves from the clusters as they climbed up the hierarchical ladder in their respective organizations. A female senior manager in company FS noted the following during our conversation:

“When I first started working here, getting connected to a group of people I could talk to easily and share my thoughts easily was a relief but I started noticing a difference in their behavior when I started doing well and outperforming them. It was as if they were fine with me and want to be friends with me and share their feelings as long as I am not great at my job. I was worried that they would question my authority if I kept showing my vulnerable side to them. I don't see this attitude towards men though. So slowly I started distancing myself.”

Another female manager in company MT noted:

“As a woman, I feel judged for sharing my feelings with them [members of language cluster] now. I fear that I'll lose their respect and they won't listen to me or take me seriously if I come across as overly emotional or as a woman who can be easily agitated. At this stage of my career where I have worked so hard to reach where I am, I don't think hanging out with them [language-based cluster] is a good move.”

This resonates with the arguments made in prior research that women are judged more harshly than men for displaying negative emotions. The term “gendering of emotion” refers to the role that “gender plays in perceptions, expectations and attributions about emotion” as well as the “evaluation of emotion” in organizational relationships (Ragins & Winkel, 2011; p.378). One of the main reasons behind the creation of language clusters is for employees to share their feelings and frustrations with those persons who share their native language. Sharing emotions such as anger, frustration and even happiness in a native language is a source of comfort for many employees. However, when women express emotions regularly, they are often deemed as irrational, unstable and unsuitable for their jobs (Brescoll & Uhlmann, 2008; Fischer, 1993; Lewis, 2000). The interviews with women managers also brought attention to the fact that women who

display ‘male’ emotions such as frustration are generally not considered for promotions or salary increments (Lewis, 2000). Interestingly, the fact that women choose to disassociate from language clusters as a result of these gender-emotion stereotypes insinuates that gender stereotypes are a stronger influence than language. Furthermore, this finding reflects that gender and emotion can combine to impact the development of authority in working relationships (Regins & Winkel, 2011). In the current study’s context, female employees are concerned that expression of negative emotions could undermine their authority over their subordinates. Although one of the main reasons for the emergence of language clusters is to provide emotional support, along with ease of communication, gender-emotion stereotypes can make it tough for female employees to decide how much and what kind of emotion to display (Brescoll, 2016; Ibarra, Ely, & Kolb, 2013). For instance, the September 2013 cover of Harvard Business Review used three key words to illustrate “the biases that hold female leaders back”: “Emotional” “Bossy” and “Too Nice” (Ibarra, et al., 2013).

My analysis indicates that language clusters may transform with time and become more male dominated as women employees tend to disassociate as they are promoted. Based on the interview responses and direct observations, approximately half of the women choose to disassociate from clusters after receiving promotions. This happens because of three main reasons, (a) although an important reason behind the formation of language clusters is the desire to share emotions and communicate easily with those who share a common language, women feel that their authority is undermined if they show signs of emotional vulnerability, signaling a status difference between male and female employees, (b) the stereotypes associated with display of negative emotions such as anger and frustration are stronger for women than for men, and (c) the biases against women inhibit their growth within the organizations, i.e., they are deemed unsuitable for

their jobs. It could be a result of the location of the two organizations as they both are located in a patriarchal society. Prior research indicates that the influence of gender stereotypes is stronger in patriarchal societies (Sloan, 2012). Additionally, this finding is quite relevant in developed economies such as USA, where debates related to gender inequality are still persistent (Sloan, 2012). Table 4.7 depicts the impact of regional dialects and gender on the transformation of language clusters. The implications are discussed in detail in chapter 6.

Table 4.7 Impact of regional dialects and gender-emotion stereotypes on morphing of language clusters

Criteria	Clusters of convenience	Coping clusters
Regional dialects	Stronger impact. Approximately two-thirds of all clusters of convenience get divided into more regional dialect based clusters than coping clusters.	Less impact because employees feel a stronger desire to connect with those who speak the same native language in order to cope with the frustrations caused by increased language diversity and related hiring.
Gender-emotion stereotypes	Approximately 50% of women choose to disassociate from clusters of convenience and coping clusters. The data analysis did not suggest major differences between the two types of clusters as women felt issues in exercising authority in both kinds of clusters.	Approximately 50% of women choose to disassociate from clusters of convenience and coping clusters. The data analysis did not suggest major differences between the two types of clusters as women felt issues in exercising authority in both kinds of clusters.
Importance of language	Language remains the main source of identity that brings the persons together. Regional dialects do not cut across language clusters' boundaries. For instance, the speakers of rural dialects of Tamil still associate with only those who speak other rural dialects of Tamil.	Language remains the main source of identity. Coping clusters transform into smaller sized coping clusters with less women.

CHAPTER 5. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LANGUAGE DIVERSITY & IMPLEMENTATION OF OJT PROGRAMS, & THE ROLE OF LANGUAGE ACCOMMODATION

5.1 Summary

In this chapter, I highlight the impact of language diversity on the implementation of OJT programs. The successful implementation of OJT programs has been measured using the interview respondents' perceptions regarding the usability of the information transmitted in the OJT programs as well as the managers' perceptions of the impact of trainings in improving the time taken to complete tasks. The data analysis suggests that language diversity can lead to emotional anxiety and/or cognitive discomfort for individuals who are not fluent in the de-facto corporate language (English), which makes it difficult for them to process the information that is transmitted during the OJT programs. I then discuss the language accommodation approaches that are employed by colleagues/training recipients, trainers and the firm to facilitate the successful implementation of OJT programs. As well, the data analysis suggests that language-based clusters can help in reducing the emotional anxiety experienced by some individuals. Furthermore, the impact of a language accommodation approach varies according to its source and time of implementation, and I draw from communication accommodation theory (CAT) to explain how and why the intersection of source and time reduces emotional and/or cognitive discomfort. Additionally, some of the OJT programs are not successful despite the use of language accommodation approaches because of biases associated with the gender of the training facilitator, i.e., many training recipients perceive the training sessions led by female multilingual managers as less successful than the ones that are led by male bi/multilingual training facilitators.

5.2 Introduction: The negative impact of language diversity

“You know, I don’t say this very often or maybe I try to not think about this but sometimes, it is hard. This constant worry that I have to do extra work and be active to understand the difficult terminologies that we use in our line of work....another thing that I find challenging when we get a script in English but when I talk to customers to sell them a product, I am expected to explain English things in Hindi. It just takes a toll on my mind.” – Interview respondent [Training recipient], company FS.

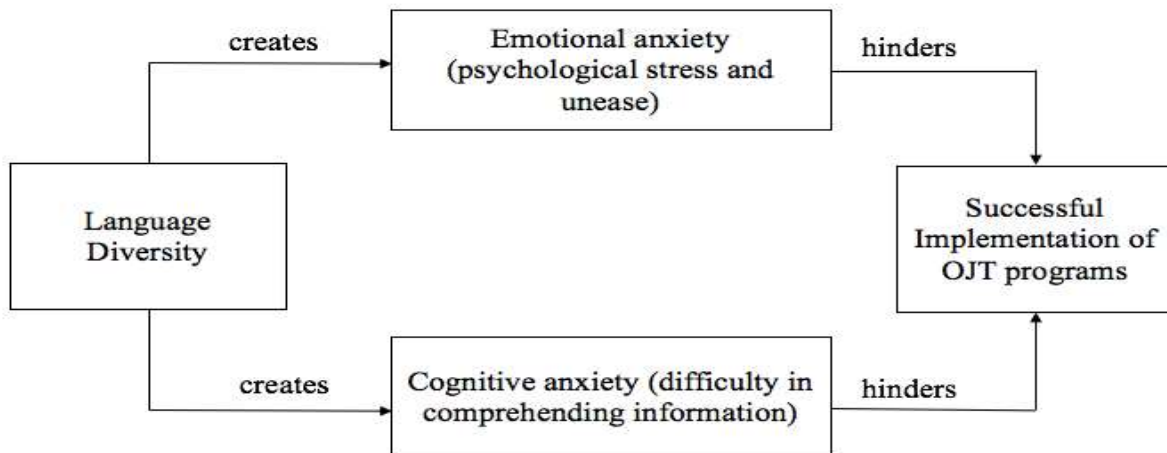
“It [language differences] causes delays so many times. I have to keep a track of who attended the sessions and who learnt what. Then I have to check on them because if I don't do this, then projects will get delayed and we won't finish on time. Who will explain that to the boss?” – Interview respondent [Manager], Company MT.

Based on the interview respondents’ perceptions of usability of information transmitted during the OJT programs, I found that language diversity within the case organizations negatively impacts the successful implementation of OJT programs. Language diversity can create cognitive challenges (i.e., difficulty to comprehend certain information) and emotional anxiety (i.e., psychological stress, unease or discomfort) for those training recipients who are not fluent in English. This can lead to delays in the completion of client projects (Figure 5.1 provides a visual illustration of this relationship). Additionally, such delays can be detrimental to the morale of employees who start considering themselves incompetent. The following quote from a training recipient provides an example of the impact of language diversity on emotional and cognitive discomfort.

“You feel like such a stupid person. Sometimes I think I am dumb or something like that because I don’t know how to express my thoughts during those meetings [OJTs]. And sometimes I

also don't understand basic words. I generally know English but when they are speaking non-stop, it doesn't give time to pause and process all that information."

Figure 5.1 The influence of language diversity on implementation of OJT programs



Another training recipient noted the role played by code-switching between English and another regional language (Telugu) in creating frustration (i.e. emotional anxiety) and comprehension issues (i.e. cognitive discomfort):

"I feel very frustrated and I also miss important information when they [training facilitators] start explaining in Telugu to one or two persons. We are in a Tamil speaking city so either speak English or use Tamil but don't go around saying words that the majority of people don't understand. How can I go back and do my work if that constantly happens?"

During the interviews, I discovered that the detrimental effects of language diversity are not limited to training recipients; team leaders and managers regularly experience emotional anxiety and distress because they are worried about the impact of project delays on the variable component of their remunerations (i.e., bonuses and commissions). This builds on the findings of prior research that discusses the detrimental effects of language diversity (e.g., Aichhorn & Puck, 2017b; Tenzer & Pudelko, 2015) by bringing to attention the adverse impact of language diversity

on the emotional health of team leaders and managers, who are not emphasized in the existing literature. Prior research has highlighted the role of leaders/managers in managing language induced emotions in team members (Tenzer & Pudelko, 2017b; Aichhorn & Puck, 2017b), however, I find that language diversity can have detrimental effects for managers as well.

In addition to this, I found that implementation of certain language accommodation approaches can reduce the adverse influence of language diversity. Although some studies have analyzed a few individual or team level strategies that can help overcome barriers caused by language diversity (e.g., Aichhorn & Puck, 2017a; Tenzer & Pudelko, 2015), we still do not have a clear understanding of how organizations manage the cognitive and emotional challenges posed by language diversity (Tenzer, et al., 2014). In what follows, I discuss the central tenants of CAT, followed by a discussion of the key findings related to language accommodation approaches (tables 5.1 and 5.2 provide examples of the coding process that led to the emergence of the key main themes).

Communication Accommodation Theory

CAT provides a general theoretical framework for understanding interpersonal and intergroup communications (Giles, 2016; Giles, Coupland & Coupland, 1991) and understanding interactants' motivations, objectives and communication approaches (Willemyns, Gallios & Callan, 2003). The theory, which has its roots in SIT (Giles, 2016b), is based on the notion that interpersonal and intergroup relationships can be managed through effective communication (Gallois & Giles, 1998) and aims to understand “why, when, and how people adjust their communicative behavior during social interactions (including mediated contact), and what social consequences might result from such adjustments” (Giles, 2016a, p.1). CAT was originally conceived as a sociopsychological model to understand accents and bilingual shifts in interactions

(Giles, 1973; Giles, Taylor, & Bourhis, 1973), however, over time, CAT has expanded into an “interdisciplinary model of relational and identity processes in communicative interaction” (Coupland & Jaworski, 1997, p. 241–242). According to Giles and Ogay (2007, p.294), there are four main principles or central tenants of CAT that suggest that the theory is applicable to a wide array of situations and organizational contexts: (1) interpersonal and intergroup communications are often influenced by their broader macro context, i.e., the socio-historic context in which the interactions are embedded (Dragojevic, et al., 2015), (2) communication not only includes exchange of ideas, facts and/or emotions, but it also involves negotiation of social category and group memberships through the process of communication accommodation (Giles, 1973), (3) interactants tend to have expectations around the expected levels of accommodation, which depend on situational norms, and (4) interactants tend to use specific communication strategies, generally convergence and/or divergence, to signal their attitudes towards each other and their social groups (Giles, 1973; Dragojevic, et al., 2015).

CAT scholars suggest that individuals use different types of communication to show their attitudes towards each other, and this continuous movement “toward and away from others by changing one’s communicative behavior is called accommodation” (Giles & Olay, 2007, p.295; Mulac, et al., 2013), i.e., interactants often realize the informational and relational purposes of communication by accommodating their communicative behavior through linguistic (e.g., speech rate, accents) and non-verbal (e.g., smiling) means to their interlocutor’s (Willemyns, et al., 2003). Furthermore, the theory distinguishes between accommodative and non-accommodative approaches employed during individual and group interactions (Dragojevic & Giles, 2014; Zhang & Giles, 2017); in this dissertation, the focus is on the accommodative approaches as they are reflected in the emergent themes. Additionally, communication adjustment can be “proactive” or

“reactive” depending on the intended audience (Gasiorek, 2016; p.15), and it can influence the cognitive and social meaning of the information that is conveyed to the audience (Bell, 1984). The distinction between reactive and proactive accommodation approaches is quite relevant within the context of this dissertation’s emergent themes as the different sources (firm, trainers and colleagues) of language accommodation approaches employ these approaches at different points of time. Proactive approaches that are employed before and during the OJT programs help reduce cognitive discomfort, whereas reactive approaches that are employed during the OJT sessions or on an ongoing basis aid in reducing emotional anxiety. The theory also proposes that communication adjustment could regulate social distance between sender and receiver of information, while enhancing their personal and social identities.

Two main strategies of convergence that are frequently used by interactants are called convergence and divergence. Convergence occurs when a person adapts their communication behavior to become more similar to the other person(s), and divergence refers to accentuating the differences between the persons (Dragojevic, et al., 2016). Out of these two, convergence has been more extensively studied in the literature and it is often deemed as the core of CAT. Additionally, convergence and divergence are not always mutual, i.e, sometimes, during an interpersonal communication, one person might converge and the other might diverge. An important theoretical dimension related to the application of convergence is related to whether it is ‘upward’ or ‘downward’ in terms of its societal valence (Giles & Powesland, 1975). Upward convergence occurs when individuals adjust their communication behavior or speech to showcase the norms of higher status individuals and downward convergence occurs when individuals adapt their speech patterns or behaviors to exhibit the norms of lower status individuals. An example of downward convergence is training facilitators or senior executives who use uncomplicated vocabulary or

terminologies to reflect the speech levels of entry level employees who are not fluent in English. An important motive for convergence is the desire to gain approval from one another (Byrne, 1971) and reduce the linguistic and psychological distance between individuals. Additionally, converging speakers are generally viewed more favorably and are perceived as more efficient in their communication than diverging speakers. As discussed in the findings section, each source of accommodation discussed in this chapter utilizes the adjustment mechanism of convergence, specifically partial convergence, i.e., trainers, colleagues and firm partially adjust their communicative behaviors and styles to reduce the communicative distance between themselves and the training recipients. (Bradac, et al.,1988).

In the next section, I provide details on the key findings and themes related to language accommodation approaches and connect them to research within the domains of communications and language diversity in IB, and sociolinguistics to highlight my key contributions.

Table 5.1 Deduction of first-order categories from data

Example quote	Example First order categories
I send emails before trainings with the important information or details they need to be aware of before coming to the meeting. It gives them to understand key information.	Spend time on pre-training electronic communication.
We often use PowerPoint or other tools to visually explain some key processes or emphasize key points. I often send these a day or a few hours before the meeting.	Visual aids and picturization of key information.
People can only retain so much information especially when they are not fluent in language of communication, so I try to repeat the key information multiple times, sometimes I'll talk more slow for the benefit of non-fluent speakers.	Paraphrasing and repeating in native language.
Making time to help colleagues is time consuming and if it is without any incentives, it looks like a burden. So one of the things we do is we have these social breaks and it is mandatory for everyone to attend these. During these, we often recognize the employees who have gone out of their way to help others.	Compulsory attendance at bi-weekly get-togethers
I don't think they [female HR] are able to explain things properly and many of my colleagues will agree with me if you ask them. Another thing is that they never want to translate or use simple language. So many of them can't speak in our local regional language and I wished they did. I have to rely on others for explanations when they run meetings.	Men are better trainers.

Table 5.2 Data Structure - Deduction of final conceptual dimensions from second order-themes

Example First order categories	Sorting first order categories into second order themes	Conceptualizing dimensions of second-order themes
Spend time on pre-training electronic communication.	Using Emails and PowerPoints	Use of written communication and visualization
Visual aids and picturization of key information.	Drawing key processes	
Paraphrasing and repeating in native language.	Literal interpretation	Functional translation & Repetition
Explaining information over and over.	Repeating key words	
Fun activities help establish connections.	Casual connections	Enforcing socialization
Compulsory attendance at bi-weekly get-togethers	Mandatory breaks	
Men are better trainers.	Gender difference	Perceptions of linguistic abilities associated with gender
Women lack multilingual skills.	Inferior multilinguals	

5.3 Language accommodation approaches

During the early stages of data collection, senior executives in both case organizations mentioned that they were not aware of any challenges created by language diversity or differences and that they did not know about any language clusters (details discussed in chapter 4). However, as I explain later, a few middle level managers and HR executives recognized the cognitive challenges created by language diversity and therefore, persuaded senior management to undertake some initiatives and activities that could lessen the adverse effects of language diversity.

During the interviews with HR personnel and training recipients, they mentioned that they used a few techniques and approaches to help their colleagues during OJT sessions. Their interview responses suggested that they are not aware of the emotional anxiety experienced by their colleagues, and that they have been undertaking a few initiatives because they want to complete

client projects without unnecessary delays. Regardless of the motivation, efforts by both trainers and colleagues unintentionally aid in reducing emotional anxiety along with the cognitive discomfort experienced by training recipients. This is illustrated through the following quote by an employee (training recipient) of company MT:

“I always try to help my fellow Tamil colleagues. It does not take much time for me to explain the content in Tamil when the HR manager is doing their presentation. They do it in English and sometimes they also explain some things in Tamil, but I think they sometimes don’t have time.”

The next quote illustrates the emotional anxiety and psychological strain experienced by a training recipient as well as the positive impact of an accommodation approach in enhancing the usability of information transmitted during OJT sessions:

“There is always some hesitation....I think that this continuous shift between English and Hindi is tiring. I get so tensed when I have to go for those long meetings with difficult terminologies and conversations...and I think for a while, it affected me emotionally as well. Even my family could feel it when I went home after meetings about new clients. But now it is somewhat better. Some of my colleagues often help me during those meetings or on-the-job trainings as you called them...they would repeat things to me in easier words and sometimes, I use the words they tell me during my interactions with the potential clients on phone”. - Interview respondent [Training recipient], Company FS.

The main emergent findings (language accommodation approaches) are grouped according to their source and time of implementation; the source includes the firm, trainers and colleagues,

and time refers to whether approaches were used before or during the OJT program or on regular ongoing basis. Table 5.3 distinguishes between proactive and reactive language accommodation approaches and tables 5.4 and 5.5 provide details related to influence of language accommodation approaches on the implementation of OJT programs.

Table 5.3 Differences between proactive and reactive language accommodation approaches.

Criteria	Proactive	Reactive
Time of usage	Before OJTs - to avoid emergence of cognitive issues.	During OJTs - after noticing the anxiety experienced by training recipients Ongoing basis – after receiving information from HR personnel and trainers about issues related to cognitive anxiety
Users	Trainers	Trainers, colleagues and firm
Method of accommodation approach	Written communication and visualization; Group assignments	Trainers and colleagues - Translation & Repetition; Firm - Socialization activities
Impact	Reduces cognitive anxiety	Reduces emotional anxiety
Ripple effect	Leads to the usage of reactive language accommodation approaches	X

Table 5.4 Language accommodation approaches employed by different sources.

Source \ Timing	Before OJT [Proactive]	During OJT [Reactive]	Ongoing basis during the year
Colleague	X	Translation & Repetition	X
Trainer	Written Communication; Group assignments	Translation & Repetition	X
Firm	X	X	Socialization initiatives

Table 5.5 The impact of different language accommodation approaches on cognitive or emotional anxiety depends on the timing of the approach.

Source \ Timing	Before OJT [Proactive]	During OJT [Reactive]	Ongoing basis during the year
Colleague	X	Emotional	X
Trainer	Cognitive	Cognitive/Emotional	X
Firm	X	X	Emotional

Table 5.6 provides a comparison of the emergent themes in the two case organizations.

Table 5.6 Emergent themes in Case companies FS and MT

Themes	Company FS	Company MT
Use of written communication and visualization	<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p>Example quote: <i>“I think it is great that I get details before the meeting because I take time to understand complicated words sometimes. I found out recently that the managers are no obligated by senior management to send meeting details in advance so I have appreciating it more recently. It also helps that I no longer look confused during the meetings.”</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p>Example quote: <i>“We often use PowerPoint or other tools to visually explain some key processes or emphasize key points. I often send these a day or a few hours before the meeting.”</i></p>
Functional translation and repetition	<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p>Example quote: <i>“It is understandable that sometimes, some people have trouble understanding the key issues or information that are mentioned to us when we are in large groups. Sometimes the manager himself translates information to Tamil but not everyone is Tamil. And I try to help out when I can because if one</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p>Example quote: <i>“See, I have learned this from experience – you cannot assume that everyone understands everything in one go. People can only retain so much information especially when they are not fluent in language of communication, so I try to repeat the key information multiple times, sometimes I’ll talk more slow for the</i></p>

	<i>person doesn't understand the task properly, it is going to delay the work for all of us."</i>	<i>benefit of non-fluent speakers. Another thing that helps is translation but I can't do that in a large group, therefore I spend a lot of time preparing the agenda and material for my sessions and I use easy simple words that everyone can understand."</i>
Functional translation and repetition	✓ Example quote: <i>"It is understandable that sometimes, some people have trouble understanding the key issues or information that are mentioned to us when we are in large groups. Sometimes the manager himself translates information to Tamil but not everyone is Tamil. And I try to help out when I can because if one person doesn't understand the task properly, it is going to delay the work for all of us."</i>	✓ Example quote: <i>"See, I have learned this from experience – you cannot assume that everyone understands everything in one go. People can only retain so much information especially when they are not fluent in language of communication, so I try to repeat the key information multiple times, sometimes I'll talk more slow for the benefit of non-fluent speakers. Another thing that helps is translation but I can't do that in a large group, therefore I spend a lot of time preparing the agenda and material for my sessions and I use easy simple words that everyone can understand."</i>
Enforcing socialization	✓ Example quote: <i>"Not everyone is conscious of the problems that these [language] differences cause and some of us are not as patient as others because let's face it – making time to help colleagues is time consuming and if it is without any incentives, it looks like a burden. So one of the things we do is we have these social breaks and it is mandatory for everyone to attend these. During these, we often recognize the employees who have gone out of their way to help others."</i>	✓ Example quote: <i>"It [role playing activities] can be quite fun and it also means that people are listening. If two people are going to be grouped together, then they will also help each other when we are imparting the information as they will not want to look bad in front of others, especially their seniors. Having said that, it also helps the persons running the meeting because it is a chance for them to know which of the aspects of their explanations are not working."</i>

	<i>It is generally a very small token or we would put up their names on the board but ever since we have started doing this, the communication during our team meetings and training sessions have become smoother.”</i>	
Group assignments for OJTs	<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p>Example quote: <i>“I ended up being paired with the same people two or three times and initially, I did not particularly enjoy helping them out. But I realized that some of them were better with technical stuff and have been in this company longer than me. I am good at communicating in English but they helped me in finding some interesting ways to work, such as some shortcuts when researching new clients. So now I no longer think of people who are not fluent in English as a problem, plus we have so much fun when we are making jokes in Tamil.”</i></p>	×
Perceptions of linguistic abilities associated with gender	<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p>Example quote: <i>“I don’t think they [female HR] are able to explain things properly and many of my colleagues will agree with me if you ask them. Another thing is that they never want to translate or use simple language. I think they can't switch between languages easily and I wish they could. I have to rely on others for explanations when they run meetings.”</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p>Example quote: <i>“It’s interesting that you said that many women here think they are great at running our sessions...I probably disagree with this. I just think that other managers [men] are better. They are more confident and they speak 2-3 languages.</i></p>

5.3.1 Timing and source of accommodation approach

1) Language accommodation approaches employed before the OJT program (source: trainers). It is widely acknowledged that second-language speakers often feel deprived of organizational opportunities due to their less fluent command over the corporate lingua franca (Kassis Henderson, 2005) and limited vocabulary (Schweiger et al., 2003). As mentioned earlier in this chapter, such feelings of deprivation and anxiety can hamper the usability of the information imparted during OJT sessions and lead to delays in project completion. Therefore, some training facilitators proactively undertake communication adjustment activities to enhance the cognitive impact on the receivers. Specifically, they would engage with communication media such as emails to facilitate an easier learning process for training recipients. This is explained below.

a) Use of written communication and visual aids. During data collection, a number of interview respondents repeatedly mentioned the importance of written communication in facilitating and establishing a positive relationship between language diversity and implementation process of OJTs. Detailed emails are often sent a couple of days before the scheduled training to ensure that people are aware of the key issues that are going to be discussed in the OJT sessions. The emails and reading material allow training recipients to use other resources such as internet to help enhance their understanding, which helps reduce the cognitive load associated with learning new information in a non-native language. It also allows them to read at their own pace to better prepare for the trainings. One interview respondent mentioned:

“I always send emails with the details and I also make PowerPoint with visual representation of facts or graphs. I think visualization makes it easy for them to grasp the complex details and it also eases the communication barrier. It is a lot more work for me but it helps in decreasing the confusion later.” - Interview respondent [training facilitator], Company MT.

An interview respondent [training recipient] from company FS noted:

“I think it is great that I get details before the meeting because I take time to understand complicated words sometimes. I found out recently that the managers are no obligated by senior management to send meeting details in advance so I have appreciating it more recently. It also helps that I no longer look confused during the meetings.”

This accommodation approach used by trainers helps in reducing the cognitive discomfort experienced by training recipients as the written communication improves the comprehensibility of the information. The key mode of communication is the verbal communication during OJT programs, however, by utilizing electronic media to share information with training recipients, the trainers are partially converging verbal and written modes of communication to enhance the comprehension levels of training recipients. The intention here is to improve the communicative efficiency of the information that would be transmitted during the OJT program (Thakerar et al., 1982). Additionally, relying on a mode of communication (such as emails) that the receivers find useful can help enhance the effectiveness of the accommodation initiative and process (Dragojevic, et al., 2016).

In addition to the written communication and use of electronic media, trainers in Company FS employ an additional approach, which involves pairing individuals together to do pre-assigned work for the training sessions. I did not find any evidence of this in company MT. This is discussed below.

b) Group assignments for OJTs. Another proactive method of adjustment that training facilitators of Company FS utilize to improve the effectiveness of the OJT programs is to pre-assign some tasks to employees in order to better prepare them for the sessions. This helps in

reducing the cognitive discomfort experienced by training recipients. During this assignment process, the trainers carefully pair individuals into dyads or groups so that employees with low levels of English proficiency are able to interact with someone who shares their native language. Often, the underlying expectation is that the interactions between these assigned dyads or groups would create an amicable environment and in the long term, these individuals can initiate accommodation activities to help their colleagues voluntarily. One interview respondent (a trainer) from company FS noted:

“We often divide them [potential training recipients] into groups or teams of 2-3 so they can discuss some of the training material in advance. This way, if one member is not understanding anything, he/she can ask the other person. And if both don’t understand, then we know that the material is difficult and we need to find another way to explain it to them. The most important reason for doing this is that we want to overcome this communication problem when the session is in progress as it will waste so many people’s time.”

A training recipient from company FS elaborated on this further:

“I ended up being paired with the same people two or three times and initially, I did not particularly enjoy helping them out. But I realized that some of them were better with technical stuff and have been in this company longer than me. I am good at communicating in English but they helped me in finding some interesting ways to work, such as some shortcuts when researching new clients. So now I no longer think of people who are not fluent in English as a problem, plus we have so much fun when we are making jokes in Tamil.”

Prior research has argued that second language interaction can lead to amplification of communication avoidance (Marschan- Piekkari et al., 1999a). Generally, this happens because

perception of one's inability to interact fluently in a language can cause anxiety and limit future interactions (Harzing & Feely, 2008). When employees feel restless and uneasy about their ability to express thoughts in English or the corporate lingua franca, they unintentionally switch to speaking their mother tongue in order to avoid feelings of anxiety and reinstate their self-confidence (Lauring & Klitmøller, 2015). This limited interaction can create conflicts due to misconceptions in the minds of individuals about their peers. Working together in pairs can reduce the misunderstandings and generate a sense of collective confidence and cohesion, decreases individuals' anxiety and enhances their self-confidence during interpersonal exchanges during the trainings. This form of proactive communication adjustment approach initiated by trainers wherein they are pairing employees in dyads or groups positively influences the comprehensibility of the information that is conveyed during the interpersonal interactions between training recipients (Gasiorek, 2016). Furthermore, according to CAT, such approaches can help change employees' motives for adjustment (Dragojevic, et al., 2016; Gallois et al., 2005). Individual motives behind initiation of language accommodation approaches can be divided into affective and cognitive (Giles, Scherer & Taylor, 1979). Cognitive motives focus on the comprehension and utility of the information whereas affective motives focus on reinforcing one's personal and social identity. In this dissertation, I found that cognitive motives initiated by trainers can facilitate effective communication between employees and motivate them to engage in affective communication activities such as undertaking translation initiatives for their peers who are not fluent in English.

2) Language accommodation approaches employed during the OJT program (source: trainers and colleagues).

a) Functional translation and repetition (source: trainers and colleagues). The research on interlingual communication and translation studies distinguishes between written and

verbal modes of translation, i.e., translation generally refers to written mode of communication and interpretation normally implies oral communication (Blenkinsopp & Pajouh, 2010; Tietze, 2008). However, in my interviews, the respondents continuously used the term translation to refer to oral transfer of meanings from one language to another. Therefore, in order to stay true to my data, I use the term translation to refer to verbal/oral interlingual communication.

During the observations, I noted that certain employees would repeat information for the benefit of some of their colleagues. Oftentimes, even the training facilitators would stop and repeat the information slowly to ensure that everyone understood the key information. Therefore, I followed up on this during the interviews. A quote from one respondent sheds more light on this:

“It is understandable that sometimes, some people have trouble understanding the key issues or information that are mentioned to us when we are in large groups. Sometimes the manager himself translates information to Tamil but not everyone is Tamil. And I try to help out when I can because if one person doesn’t understand the task properly, it is going to delay the work for all of us.” Interview respondent [colleague/fellow training recipient], Company FS.

A number of respondents mentioned that translation and/or repetition increases their chances of understanding the key information and ideas that are discussed in the OJT programs. The human resource managers and executives also emphasized its importance:

“See, I have learned this from experience – you cannot assume that everyone understands everything in one go. People can only retain so much information especially when they are not fluent in language of communication, so I try to repeat the key information multiple times, sometimes I’ll talk more slow for the benefit of non-fluent speakers. Another thing that helps is translation but I can’t do that in a large group, therefore I spend a lot of time preparing the agenda

and material for my sessions and I use easy simple words that everyone can understand.” – Interview respondent [trainer], Company MT.

This is similar to and builds on the theme of “negotiation of meaning” discussed by Aichhorn and Puck (2017a, p.391), however, there is a key difference: Aichhorn and Puck discussed the role of message repetition, summarization, code-switching and asking questions. In my study, despite the acts of repetition and functional translation, most training recipients do not feel comfortable in asking questions in front of the entire group. One reason could be the difference in cultures and the importance of hierarchy and face saving in India (Bhawuk, 2017). Asking too many clarification questions in front of a large group of people can signal linguistic incompetence (Harzing & Feely, 2008) and deepen the level of emotional anxiety experienced by persons. Many respondents, specifically those who are involved in managing and conducting trainings clarified that translation efforts are successful only when the group size was small. Employees speak multiple languages and trainers cannot be expected to know each person’s native language. Nonetheless, translation of key information is a common feature during the OJT sessions. This insight is interesting because the research on translation is gaining momentum in IB and there are calls to understand the role of translation in MNEs (Tietze, 2020; Tietze & Piekkari, 2020), however, the role of translation and whether it is employed as a social practice or a functional/mechanical tool could depend on not only the size of the organization (i.e., number of employees) but also the cultural practices (e.g., face saving) of the organization and the region where the organization is located.

Role of language-based clusters. Many training recipients do not rely on the trainers or multilingual managers, instead they often translate difficult words or terminologies for their colleagues. Translation initiatives undertaken by colleagues help reduce the emotional anxiety and

psychological stress felt by training recipients. Language clusters play an important role in facilitating these interactions. As discussed in chapter 4, language clusters can enhance the exchange of knowledge among cluster members. The interview responses suggested that persons who identify with the same clusters frequently help each other during the trainings. Information exchange with colleagues often reduces emotional discomfort and frustration experienced by training recipients as they gain clarity on the information transmitted during OJTs without asking too many questions. This often leads to a more effective training session as the translation activities undertaken by cluster members ensures that their friends do not interrupt the training facilitator, thereby reducing the overall disruption levels during the OJT programs. As noted by an interview respondent:

“Sometimes I know my friends are not getting the gist of the main points of training. I can see it on their faces when they have these confused looks. So, I go sit next to them and translate in Tamil. I also try to explain to them after the meeting finishes.” – Interview respondent [colleague/fellow cluster member], Company FS.

This is also emphasized in my notes taken during the observation of OJT in Company MT wherein I wrote:

“It was noteworthy that the manager let many employees explain the information to their colleagues if they did not seem to understand. He also asked employees to ask questions to not only him but also their peers. I thought it would lead to chaos and disrupt the flow of the session...but many people looked satisfied and less confused after talking to their peers. It seemed like the confusion had reduced.”

Interestingly, this finding builds on the research on interpersonal knowledge exchange among cluster members (Mäkelä, et al., 2007) and contradicts the results a number of previous studies that have focused only on the problems caused by such clusters or subgroups (e.g., Marschan et al., 1997; Hinds, et al., 2014). Additionally, I found that members of language clusters help each other because they are motivated by affective reasons as they want to maintain their social identities within their social groups or language-based clusters (Gasiorek, Van de Poel, & Blockmans, 2015; Giles, et al., 1979). Furthermore, members of language-based clusters are aware of their colleagues' communicative needs and characteristics, and therefore, they are able to translate or repeat the training information in a more clear and comprehensible manner (Thakerar et al., 1982). Communication accommodation in intragroup contexts such as language-based clusters can serve to strengthen the closeness between its members.

Some studies have emphasized the importance of paraphrasing and reliance on frequent repetition (e.g., Canney Davison & Ward, 1999) to reduce the role of conflicts in multicultural/multilingual teams consisting of a small number of individuals. I found that such individual efforts can also positively impact the implementation of training programs. This finding contributes to previous research that suggests that employees who are open to language differences and diversity can enhance team and organizational performance and creativity. In fact, this can greatly improve employees' initiatives related to better collaboration on projects (Lauring & Klitmøller, 2017). Additionally, recent research on translation in IB has mainly focused on the importance of studying it as a social practice and researchers have frequently criticized the functional or mechanical view of translation (Chidlow et al. 2014; Piekkari, et al., 2019; Tietze, 2008). In this dissertation, I find that employees often engage in functional/mechanical translation, i.e., they are replacing words of one language (usually English) with the words from their local

language (Venuti, 1995, 1998) in order to help their colleagues understand the gist of the OJT programs. This functional or source strategy of translation that is undertaken in the case organizations is used to ensure that the source information is appropriately explained in another language. Interestingly, the social cues and surrounding context are not considered essential because simple content translation often enables employees to work on projects individually or in teams. This does not imply that social cues or context are not important, rather it is intriguing that functional translation is effective in two different kinds of organizations. Company MT is part of a very technical industry and company FS is engaged in financial services, however social relationships are quite important in company FS. When training recipients, HR personnel, and managers are voluntarily undertaking the role of translators and/or interpreters, other employees appreciate their assistance and therefore, do not dwell on the lack of social or cultural context. Furthermore, language accommodation activities, especially functional translations and repetitions often cause delays in OJTs and sessions frequently run over time, therefore if individuals used multiple translation methods, it could lead to even more delays and cause frustration in the minds of fluent speakers of English, which might deter them from helping their colleagues in future. My argument is that scholars should not underestimate the importance of the functional translation because when individuals are relying on a combination of different modes of communication (verbal, written and/or visual), such translation can speed up the meaning transfer process.

3) Ongoing basis (source: firm).

a) Enforcement of socialization activities by firm. During my time in the field, I found that senior executives of neither organization are aware of the emotional challenges presented by language barriers. However, some middle managers and HR managers and executives acknowledged the cognitive hurdles created by language differences and noted that when

employees feel anxious about their learning capabilities, they withdraw from communications during the trainings and they often remain quiet during OJT sessions. In order to combat such anxiety, they asked senior management for help in diminishing the detrimental effects of language diversity on the implementation of OJT programs. Senior management of company FS noticed the lack of a formal mechanism that could help the individuals who are struggling in OJT sessions, and therefore, they decided to implement some socialization initiatives that could aid in reducing the difficulties faced by employees. These activities take place on an ongoing basis, at regular intervals (bi-weekly) throughout the year. The intent behind utilization of this approach is to develop some cohesion among employees so they can develop the ability to work together on client projects. One HR manager noted:

“Not everyone is conscious of the problems that these [language] differences cause and some of us are not as patient as others because let’s face it – making time to help colleagues is time consuming and if it is without any incentives, it looks like a burden. So one of the things we do is we have these social breaks and it is mandatory for everyone to attend these. During these, we often recognize the employees who have gone out of their way to help others. It is generally a very small token or we would put up their names on the board but ever since we have started doing this, the communication during our team meetings and training sessions have become smoother.”

Many interview respondents acknowledged that such activities reduce stress levels and improve interactions during OJT sessions. Management also mentioned that they are increasingly relying on small team activities; one that is frequently employed is role playing, where the employees enact scenarios related to conversation/interactions between a doctor and patient in company MT or between the client and customer service telecom operator in company FS. Role

playing techniques help bring employees from different linguistic backgrounds to work together. This quote from a senior executive from company MT summarizes it well:

“It [role playing activities] can be quite fun and it also means that people are listening. If two people are going to be grouped together, then they will also help each other when we are imparting the information as they will not want to look bad in front of others, especially their seniors. Having said that, it also helps the persons running the meeting because it is a chance for them to know which of the aspects of their explanations are not working.”

A key advantage of assigning tasks that required individuals to work together and socialize with each other is the increased pace at which work can be accomplished during the OJT sessions. Socializing implies “the need to...spend time together to learn each other’s way of speaking” (Lagerström & Andersson, 2003, p.91). Prior research on CAT suggests that such convergence initiatives can build rapport among colleagues (Acosta & Ward, 2011), and increase their relational solidarity (Dragojevic, et al., 2016; Imamura, Zhang, & Harwood, 2011), motivating them to proactively engage with other language accommodation initiatives. This finding also reflects the significance of leadership in the management of language diversity, i.e., leaders can facilitate cooperation and collaboration by encouraging people to work together, thus enabling individuals with low fluency to gain some voice (Tenzer & Pudelko, 2015; Robinson, Hogg & Higgins, 2014). Multilingual organizations constitute a leadership context of high importance and the leaders’ cross-lingual competencies and cross-lingual bridge making activities (Tenzer & Pudelko, 2015) are crucial to the success of OJT programs. House and colleagues (2002) defined leadership as “the ability of an individual to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute toward the effectiveness and success of the organizations of which they are members” (p.5). Effective leaders

not only manage a diverse workforce, they also encourage communication between different groups within the organization (Kalra, Szymanski & Olszewska, 2018; Levy, Beechler, Taylor & Boyacigiller, 2007; Mendenhall, Reiche, Bird & Osland, 2012). Prior research has argued that multilingual leaders can act as bridge-makers or boundary spanners in multilingual teams by reducing linguistic faultlines (e.g., Aichhorn & Puck, 2017a; Barner-Rasmussen, et al., 2014). My findings build on these studies and I argue that multilingual managers must enact bridge-making activities at the organizational level as well. OJT programs cannot be successful if multilingual training facilitators do not engage in activities that reduce the barriers for non-native speakers of the corporate lingua franca. More importantly, I echo the arguments made by Tenzer and Pudelko (2015) who highlighted the importance of emotion management by leaders. In this dissertation, I find that leaders are more aware of cognitive hurdles faced by training recipients but not the emotional anxiety/barriers. It could be one reason why some OJT programs have not been successfully implemented (discussed later in this chapter).

To date, there has been limited research on the role of management in handling the negative effects of language diversity. Some studies (e.g., Tenzer & Pudelko, 2015) noted that language barriers appear less daunting when senior leadership holds open discussions or communications regarding this during team interactions. Findings of the current section contribute to this line of research by finding that management can reduce the language barriers within an organization by undertaking simple initiatives that can bring individuals together. The findings also contribute to the work of Liu, Chua and Stahl (2010) on quality of communication experience. Liu and colleagues noted clarity, responsiveness and comfort are acutely important in social interactions in intercultural situations. The abovementioned findings suggest that management can play an important role in improving the clarity and comfort experienced by communicators in situations

of language diversity as well. Clarity refers to the “cognitive aspect of the communication experience” and it is defined as “the degree of comprehension of the meaning being communicated”, and comfort experienced by an individual reflects the “affective aspect of communication” and it has been defined as “a condition of positive affect of ease and pleasantness when interacting with each other” (p. 470).

Although the firm level initiatives are reactive in nature, these can help in creating a disposition towards proactive initiatives in the mindsets of many individuals. Different language accommodation approaches are employed at different points of time, however, some of these approaches can have a ripple effect, wherein the initiatives by the firm or senior leaders can motivate trainers and junior-level employees (training recipients) to engage in communication accommodation initiatives such as written communication and translation at the intergroup and interpersonal level. Spending time on interactions with fellow colleagues can be invaluable in deepening interpersonal relations and contribute to the growth of mutual trust (Robinson et al., 2014). Many employees in the case organizations started helping others by acting as functional translators during OJT programs, mainly because they interacted with multiple colleagues during group work or bi-weekly socialization events and appreciated receiving recognition of their efforts during social gatherings. In summary, the proactive accommodation approaches initiated by the trainers motivate training recipients to initiate translation and repetition during OJT programs, and the reactive approaches undertaken by senior executives in the firms encourage both trainers and training recipients to undertake language accommodation approaches. Figure 5.2 visually illustrates this relationship between all three sources of language accommodation and figure 5.3 explains the effects of reactive and proactive language accommodation approaches on the implementation of OJT programs.

Figure 5.2 Relationship between the three sources of language accommodation.

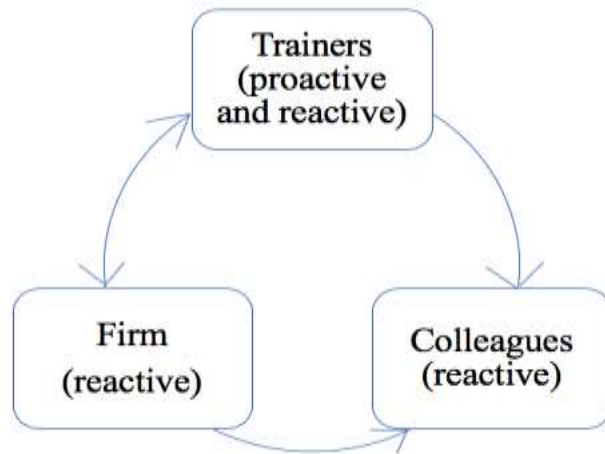
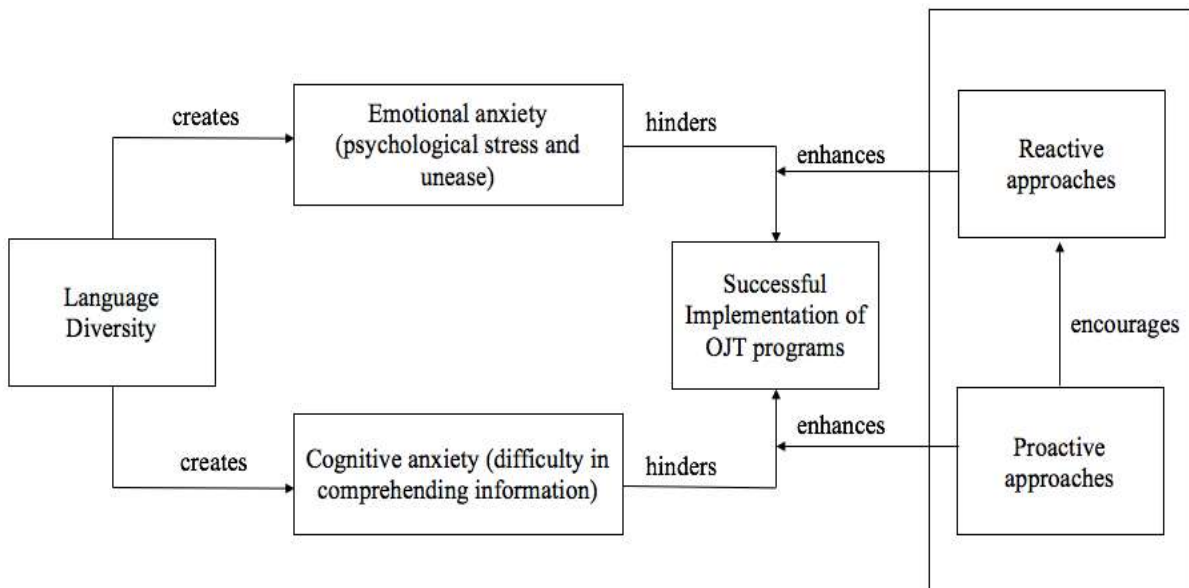


Figure 5.3. Effects of reactive and proactive language accommodation approaches on the implementation of OJT programs.



It should be noted that despite the use of language accommodation approaches, some OJT programs were not successful. Although a majority of the OJT programs are led by multilingual individuals, many of them fall short of the management’s expectations, i.e., either the employees are not able to retain information for longer periods or they do not find the information transmitted

during OJTs useful. Further analysis found that many trainings are led by women managers, especially women HR managers and the employees' reception of the trainings conducted by females is different than when they are led by male managers. This is discussed in depth in the next section.

5.4 Perceptions of linguistic abilities associated with gender

Despite some efforts to ensure the success of OJT programs, there were concerns regarding the results of some OJTs falling short of expectations. On examining further to find the reason, I discovered that gender stereotypes play an important role in the implementation of OJTs, i.e., training recipients perceive men to be better training facilitators compared to women. Perceptions of linguistic abilities associated with gender relate to the subconscious bias related to linguistic and managerial abilities of male and female training instructors. The findings show that although male and female employees holding similar positions in both organizations have comparable levels of education, recipients of OJT programs perceived the sessions led by male bi/multi-lingual managers to be more effective than the ones led by female bi/multi-lingual managers. When I talked to senior executives and female HR managers, they seemed to not know about the existence of such perceptions in employees' mindsets. In fact, both organizations are proactively trying to hire equal number of men and women as they want to be known as organizations that champion diversity and equal opportunities. A male training recipient in company FS noted:

“I don't think they [female HR] are able to explain things properly and many of my colleagues will agree with me if you ask them. Another thing is that they never want to translate

or use simple language. I think they can't switch between languages easily and I wish they could. I have to rely on others for explanations when they run meetings.”

Interestingly, the management and some of the HR personnel that I interviewed stated the complete opposite:

“I think everyone does an equally good job in managing meetings and orientations. We do not differentiate between anyone based on gender or region or anything. If you know your work and you are doing it well, it is good enough. No employee has ever complained about not understanding the job material. In fact, we encourage them to ask more questions because we only ask people with good communication skills to lead these sessions.” – Interview respondent [HR manager], Company FS.

When I probed deeper and had interactions with female employees regarding this finding, I found that most female HR managers and training instructors were not aware of this problem. One interview female manager noted:

“I would say I do my work very well. I am fluent in English and I am from this area so Tamil is my mother tongue. So, I can answer questions and clear doubts for many of them [training recipients]. And I always email them the main discussion points in advance so they can prepare or ask questions to me later. No one from high up [in the management hierarchy] has ever told me that I am not performing well.”

A male training recipient contradicted the above comment and said:

“It’s interesting that you said that many women here think they are great at running our sessions...I probably disagree with this. I just think that other managers [men] are better. They are more confident and they speak 2-3 languages.”

These quotes from interview respondents present a contradiction wherein senior management and female training leaders are unaware of the perceptions in the minds of junior employees and/or training recipients. Based on my conversations, I realized that female training instructors are confident that they are performing well and this confidence is validated by senior management. Senior management often tries to hire more female HR personnel to carry out recruitment and training tasks. The responses of women and senior management aligned with the results of prior scholarly work that has argued that female employees often choose to enhance skills or qualities such as communication skills to improve their status within their organizations (Bordia & Bordia, 2015; Ely, 1995). However, training recipients were quite vocal about the quality differences in the trainings led by male and females, and that male instructors are better at managing language diversity. This finding is important for two main reasons; the current research on gender in the field of management and IB assumes that women are aware of the biases that exist against their leadership and management styles and therefore, we can find a way to reduce those biases (e.g., Joshi, et al., 2015; Hearn, Metcalfe & Piekkari, 2006). However, in the case organizations, it is tricky because management or female trainers cannot fix this problem if they don't know about its existence. A plausible reason for the lack of awareness can be attributed to the lack of interactions between training recipients and senior executives. Both case organizations are hierarchical in structure, and as a result the bureaucracy deters junior level employees from expressing opinions and providing feedback. The cognitive and emotional challenges created by language diversity can also discourage employees from sharing their thoughts with executives.

Second, so far, there has been little discussion about the intersection of language and gender (for exceptions, see Ashcraft & Mumby, 2004; Johansson & Śliwa, 2016). In fact, there have been calls to study the relationship between language and gender (e.g., Piekkari, 2006; Karhunen, et al., 2018). Additionally, the findings of this dissertation study present a paradox. Various studies in sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology have found that women are better at managing language diversity of their communities (e.g., Constantinidou, 1994). The results of this study contradict that. This paradox is theoretically interesting as it suggests that there are contingencies (e.g., organizational context; an awareness of biases) that shape the ways in which gender and language interact to impact perceived OJT effectiveness. During data analysis, I found that women are confident in their ability to learn new languages and they rapidly adapted to the changes in language requirements of their organizations, however based on the responses of training recipients, it is clear that there is an inherent bias that insinuates that women cannot communicate in multiple languages. In fact, numerous interview respondents mentioned that male managers are not only more adept at managing language diversity, their accommodation and communication adjustment approaches are perceived more favorably than the ones initiated by females. This is interesting because there is a constant debate in sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology wherein scholars are divided into two groups. Research conducted by one group indicates that women can show better motivation and agency to learn and practice a second language, relative to men, when they want to improve their status and power within a community (Gal, 1978; Mills & Mullany, 2011; Pavlenko & Piller, 2008; Pavlenko, Blackledge, Piller & Teutsch-Dwyer, 2011). Historically, several researchers have challenged the portrayal of women as less bilingual than men and shown that females are not only better at adapting to bilingualism, they can also initiate language shifts (Constantinidou, 1994; Gal, 1978; Pavlenko & Piller, 2008; Trudgill, 1974). In

some other contexts, researchers have found that females are more motivated in learning foreign languages because they want to overcome the barriers that result from the assumption that maleness is more valuable than femaleness (e.g. Dörnyei, Csizer, & Nemeth, 2006; Mori & Gobel, 2006) and that female learners of new languages perform better than men (Ellis, 1994; Oxford, 1993). However, other scholars have questioned the methodologies employed in such studies and maintained that the findings are inconclusive (e.g., Matsuda & Gobel, 2004). Men and women communicate differently because of the difference in socialization processes that shape their interactional styles during their early years (Takahashi, 2012). Moreover, researchers in this group argue that there are no differences in the motivation levels of men and women, and they are both identical in their abilities to manage language diversity. Interestingly, the finding from my data analysis challenges the assumptions and research findings of both these groups. There was a widespread perception among training recipients that male training leaders are better at managing a multilingual environment. They also noted that men are better at learning and adapting to new languages. One reason for this perception could be related to the role of stereotypes surrounding gender in patriarchal societies. However, in order to comprehend the reason behind the emergence of this paradox between my findings and those discussed in existing research in sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology, I investigate the role of gender salience within the domain of CAT. According to prior research on CAT, communication is a product of gender salience because it has strong ties to the ways in which men and women communicate and often times people respond to information based on superficial cues, such as facial features or voice (e.g., Palomares, et al., 2016). Additionally, women are expected to be low on the assertiveness scale and high on affiliation, therefore, even though numerous studies in sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology argue that women are skillful in learning new languages and adapting to multilingual

environments, the information transmitted by women within an organizational context might not be perceived as informative or comprehensible if they are perceived to be too assertive. Additionally, the female trainers might be evaluated negatively if they adopt a masculine sounding voice (e.g., a low pitch) while delivering information during the OJT program (Hogg, 1985). In such situations, gender salience activates social norms and conventions that play a prescriptive role in communication behavior (Palomares, et al., 2016) and as a result, during OJT programs where the female trainers are more assertive or the pitch of their voice is different than the stereotypical social expectations, the training recipients might not evaluate them positively. Nevertheless, as the findings from data analysis suggest, language does not function in isolation. Most research in IB has studied the construct of language in isolation from other contextual factors, with the exception of culture, and therefore, we have not paid attention to the intersectional effects of language and gender in MNEs. Here, I find that although multilingualism of the training leader is essential for the successful implementation of OJT programs, it is not enough. Women and men are often valued differentially in terms of formal authority, position and informal status within organizations (Hearn & Piekkari 2005; Kanter, 1977/1993), and this can diminish the impact of accommodation techniques used by them in OJT programs.

CHAPTER 6. DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

In this dissertation, I wanted to answer two research questions, (1) When and how do language clusters emerge in the headquarter of MNEs?, and (2) How do these language clusters impact the implementation of OJT programs? I used SIT to understand the connection between linguistic identity and the emergence of language clusters. Using a multiple case study methodology, I found that language diversity negatively impacts the implementation of OJT programs and certain language accommodation approaches can reduce the negative effects of language diversity. Additionally, I learned that employees who belong to the same language cluster can help each during the OJT sessions by engaging in activities such as translation. In order to measure successful implementation of OJT programs, I relied on the perceptions of effectiveness of my interview respondents, e.g., whether they found the trainings useful or whether they were able to seamlessly incorporate the learnings from trainings into their work. One of the key findings of this dissertation is to bring to attention the relationship between language and other dimensions of identity, such as gender and education. So far, the IB literature has not explored the relationship between language diversity and these dimensions, which are extremely vital in the sustenance of language clusters as well as the successful implementation of OJT programs. This finding builds on the work by Johansson and Śliwa (2016) and Gaibrois and Nentwich (2020) who argued for the need to understand the intersections of language and other identity processes to comprehend how the social and organizational positions experienced by the participants are shaped by broader social processes and practices relating to differentiation.

6.2 Theoretical implications

This section highlights the key contributions and theoretical implications of the findings of this dissertation for research on language diversity, SIT and CAT.

1) **Implications for research on language diversity.** Over the past few years, there has been a rapid increase in the number of studies that focus on the role of language in IB, however, most of these studies have focused on a handful of western developed economies (Tenzer, et al., 2017; Karhunen, et al., 2018). In this dissertation, I expand the focus to an understudied context, India. Additionally, I answer the call to explore the impact of within country differences and diversity and find that diversity of regional languages can negatively impact the implementation of OJT programs by creating emotional and cognitive discomfort, therefore, the notion of homogeneity that is often associated with multilingual countries is erroneous. Furthermore, some researchers (e.g. Angouri & Piekkari, 2018) have criticized IB scholars for focusing solely on language diversity of managers and senior executives, therefore, in this dissertation, I conducted interviews with employees at all levels (entry level, middle level team leaders and managers, and senior executives) to obtain a more complete picture of the effects of language diversity in the two case organizations.

a) **The relationship between affect, status and language diversity.** Prior research has noted that language proficiency is often a source of privilege and that linguistic identity is closely intertwined with one's emotions (e.g., Gaibrois & Nentwich, 2020). The dissertation study's findings build on these arguments by bringing to attention the relationship between language diversity and affect and status. For instance, the findings related to the role of regional (rural vs. urban) dialects and education relate primarily to status-seeking behaviors that can have impact on group identity formation. The prestige or higher status associated with urban dialects

can create divisions or faultlines within language based clusters and individuals who graduated from relatively elite schools have better language proficiency and they consider themselves to belong to a higher status group than their colleagues, thereby choosing to not engage with language based clusters. Additionally, affect plays an important role in the emergence and transformation of language-based clusters. The two types of language clusters discussed in this dissertation, coping clusters and clusters of convenience differ primarily on the level of arousal, i.e., the propensity to act on emotions. Coping clusters reflect a higher level of arousal because they reflect the frustration with the mismanagement of expansion strategy by the case organizations. Additionally, the gender stereotypes of emotion can influence female employees' decisions to disassociate from language-based clusters. The relationship between affect, status and language diversity that emerged during this dissertation is significant because prior research on language diversity has mainly studied the role of emotions and status in isolation from each other as most studies have only studied the relationship between language proficiency and individual privilege, without paying much attention to the role of affect (Gaibrois & Nentwich, 2020). The current study highlights that the amalgamation of affect and status can have a multilayered influence on not only individual identity but also group identity formation and transformation. Additionally, the issues of status are not only associated with language but they can also be related with other dimensions of identity, such as gender, education and regional dialects.

b) The relationship between linguistic identity and other identity dimensions. The findings of this dissertation reinforce the arguments made by prior research that language is indeed a significant element of individual identity and diversity of language can lead to the creation of language clusters (e.g., Marschan et al., 1999b; Mäkelä, et al.,2007). Perhaps the most significant contribution of this dissertation is the introduction of other elements of a person's social identity

that frequently intermingle with language. Although some studies have explored the relationship between language and cultural identity (e.g., Barner-Rasmussen, et al., 2014; Bordia & Bordia, 2015), the relationship between language and other dimensions of identity have largely been ignored. Most studies examine language as the single source of identity at the expense of other factors that might be more salient in a particular context. The findings of this dissertation point towards the importance of gender, regional dialects and education. This is also a response to the call for research on characteristics such as gender and education that can impact cross-cultural communication (Piekkari, 2006; Karhunen, et al., 2018). Following Cheng, Henisz, Roth and Swaminathan (2009) who noted that IB research benefits from interdisciplinary knowledge, I relied on literatures from CAT, sociolinguistics and communication studies to understand the intersection of language with these other elements of identity. Giles and Billings (2004) mentioned that the perceptions of communication effectiveness are often connected with the perceptions associated with the speaker. My findings build on the work of Woo and Giles (2017) who noted that various personal characteristics can overweigh language differences (or similarities) and impact trust development. Here, I find that perceptions of linguistic capabilities are often tied to the perceptions of gender. Several training recipients found women to be less capable than men in facilitating OJT programs, even though they could not provide specific examples to support their assertions. This has multiple implications for research on language and multilingual leaders. For instance, prior research has argued that multilingual individuals and/or managers are effective boundary spanners or bridge-makers as they can connect groups that are separated by language or cultural differences (e.g., Aichhorn & Puck, 2017a; Barner-Rasmussen et al., 2014), however, my research shows that within particular contexts, a multilingual individual's gender can influence this effectiveness. Furthermore, my study was conducted in India, but research on the relationship

between gender and the stereotypes associated with expression of emotions has highlighted the negative perceptions surrounding female leaders even in western and developed economies (e.g., Sloan, 2012; Shields, 2000). This is notable because an emotional connection is quite important in fulfilling boundary spanning requirements and characteristics such as gender can often influence the quality of supervisor-subordinate relationships (Varma & Stroh, 2001). Additionally, gender bias in the case organizations also insinuates status differences between men and women. Prior research on language has shown that proficient speakers of the corporate lingua franca often hold privileged position with MNEs (Vaara, et al., 2005; Gaibrois & Nentwich, 2020). Multilingual individuals are a useful organizational resource, therefore, gender bias and status differences imply that multilingual women are not able to reach their full potential and organizations are losing a valuable resource available to them. Hearn and Piekkari (2005) noted that the assumption of gender-neutrality is a form of gender bias and therefore, it is important to understand how gender stereotypes interact with multilingual leaders' bridge making abilities. Future studies could test the theoretical frameworks developed in this dissertation in other organizational contexts. Although, research has shown that stereotypes related to expression of emotions exist in numerous countries, it would be interesting to test whether they intersect with language in similar ways in all countries, for example, how does the relationship between language and gender stereotypes play out in organizations that utilize language sensitive recruitment practices.

Another diversity dimension that is relevant is education. This study finds that individuals who perceive the status of their educational institutes to be more elite compared to their peers do not partake in language clusters and they also perceive language diversity and regional languages to be trivial compared to corporate lingua franca. This is novel and interesting (Weick, 1989) because MNEs are essentially multilingual corporations (Fredriksson, et al., 2006) that employ

individuals with a variety of educational and linguistic backgrounds. Prior research has not found any relationship between status of education and association with language clusters. In addition, individuals with a more elite education are expected to have a better command of English. It could imply that if MNEs recruit individuals from similar schools or universities, they might reduce the instances of cluster formation. It would be beneficial to study the connection between language and education when organizations engage in language sensitive recruitment.

c) **Research on language management.** The combination of interviews and observations allowed me to understand how accommodation approaches can be utilized to enhance employees' experiences related to language diversity. Depending on the source and time of implementation, each accommodation initiative can help reduce emotional and/or cognitive discomfort experienced by training recipients. Research on language management has mainly focused on two broad areas, the first area is related to language management at the macro level, which involves the implementation of language standardization and/or language sensitive recruitment policies (e.g., Luo & Shenkar, 2006). The second area focuses on the individual level, which involves studies on the importance of multilingual bridging individuals (e.g., Aichhorn & Puck 2017a). Janssens, Lambert and Steyaert (2004) suggested a strategy under which the MNE would adopt a common corporate language and counterbalance its effects by allowing the use of multiple languages in in-person situations. However, as mentioned during my interviews, such a strategy is only useful when team sizes are small. In my study, I move beyond the focus on language standardization or the implementation of company speak and use CAT to show that firm led initiatives related to socialization can not only enhance the effectiveness of OJT programs by reducing emotional anxiety, they can also motivate employees to help their colleagues voluntarily. Furthermore, I find that bridging activities are not limited to multilingual managers, any bi/multi-

lingual person can undertake the role of a bridge-maker, if desired. Although the formal leadership of the organizations does not mandate any individual level assistance initiatives, the willingness of some HR executives and managers to go the extra mile to help the training recipients via written communication or functional translation and/or verbal repetition of key information has motivated other people to help their colleagues. This finding contributes to the research on translation as well. Translation is a relatively novel area in language diversity and IB research (Tietze, 2008) and many studies have criticized the past focus on mechanical translation (e.g., Janssens, et al., 2004) as such translation often ignores the social and cultural contextual factors that have an impact on meaning making. However, I argue that the success of any kind of translation depends on the organizational context. As well, I note that functional translation is useful in the case organizations mainly because it is undertaken by bi/multi-lingual individuals in conjunction with other activities. Moreover, the choice of functional translation by employees reflects the nature of technical tasks that are accomplished by them as a part of their job requirements. My research is not undermining the importance of social or political translation strategies, instead I am arguing that different translation strategies are suitable for different tasks. Future research could examine whether and how these different types of translations co-exist within organizations. It would be interesting to study the interplay between these different strategies in a longitudinal study.

2) Implications for research on SIT. In this dissertation, social identity is defined as “that part of the individual’s self-concept which derives from their knowledge of their membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership” (Tajfel, 1982, p.2). During interviews and observations, I noted that language is a significant part of one’s social identity and language diversity in organizations can lead to formation of language clusters due to the need for employees to be part of a social group with

which they can identify, and that such clusters can help employees cope with challenges that result from language diversity in the workplace. The findings of this dissertation make two important contributions to research on SIT, which are discussed in the following paragraphs.

a) **Ingroup/outgroup dynamics.** The data suggest that the two types of language clusters display different levels of ingroup favoritism and outgroup bias; clusters of convenience show much less ingroup favoritism than coping clusters and I found weak evidence of outgroup bias among clusters of convenience. SIT assumes that ingroup/outgroup dynamics always exist, even in minimal groups (e.g., Haslam, et al., 2003; Tajfel, 1982; Turner, 1978). The minimal group paradigm proposes that even trivial arbitrary differences between groups can trigger their tendency to favor ingroup members at the expense of outgroup members (Tajfel, 1970). Various theoretical and empirical studies on SIT have noted that even when subjects are divided into random groups on an explicitly random basis, they tend to show a more positive evaluation of their ingroup members compared to the outgroup members (Billig & Tajfel, 1973; Brewer & Silver, 1978; Rubin, Badaea & Jetten, 2014). It has also been argued that ingroup members discriminate against the outgroup in the minimal group experiments because such discriminatory behaviors reinforce the differences between groups and enhance the positive value of the ingroup, helping ingroup members establish a more positive social identity (Wetherell, 1982). Therefore, the lack of outgroup bias among clusters of convenience is fascinating because although the individuals who associate with such clusters identify strongly with their native/regional language, they do not feel the desire to discriminate against others in order to enhance their social status. Hence, it is plausible that SIT needs to incorporate additional explanatory factors that can explain the rationale for identity group formation. For instance, organizational context can impact the motivation for group formation and groups that have a stronger motivation (e.g., dismay over organizational policies)

to identify together show higher levels of ingroup favoritism and outgroup bias, whereas groups or categorizations that lack a strong motivation to identify together do not show any ingroup favoritism. In this dissertation, group identities that are created to explicitly categorize its members as distinct from others because of negative motivation, i.e., frustration with their organization or speakers of other languages, show a stronger ingroup favoritism and outgroup bias.

b) The role of affect. A central mechanism in the research on SIT is related to the role of affect in describing perceptions of group status. In the original minimal group studies, Tajfel demonstrated that affect precedes social categorizations (Tajfel, 1982), however, over time, researchers started focusing on the role of affect as an outcome of social categorization as their focus shifted to cognitive experimental research on minimal groups (Park & Judd, 2005). Nevertheless, Tajfel insisted that such cognitive experiments could not explain the interactions between groups with value-laden judgements of each other (Tajfel, 1982). Cognitive processes are used to build impressions of others such as stereotypes, whereas people use affect to evaluate each other, which can predict interpersonal preferences and social groupings such as clusters (Amodio & Devine, 2006). My findings related to the emergence of coping clusters suggest that affect is a key antecedent leading to social categorizations and cluster formation, i.e., individuals first make value judgments of groups that speak different languages, then they categorize themselves within the group that they evaluate more positively (Haslam, et al., 2003; Fitzsimmons, 2013). As aforementioned, coping clusters formed because certain individuals were unhappy with their organization's management of expansion strategies and they also perceived and evaluated their native language more positively than other languages. Language is an important element of interpersonal interactions and communications, therefore, affect laden mechanisms lead to the

formation of language clusters. This distinction between the role of affect in interpersonal interactions and cognitive processes is a key contribution of the current study.

3) Implications for research on CAT. CAT with its roots in SIT, provides a theoretical framework to comprehend interpersonal and intergroup communication (Giles, 1973). In this dissertation, I employed CAT to understand the different types of proactive and reactive language accommodation strategies that are employed by trainers, colleagues, and firms to reduce the cognitive discomfort and emotional anxiety experienced by certain training recipients and managers. I also found that members of language-based clusters employ reactive accommodation approaches for affective reasons, i.e., to enhance their social identities and group memberships. Through this study, I make several contributions to the research on CAT. First and foremost, to my knowledge, this dissertation is one of the first studies on language diversity in IB to employ this theory. Although several studies have engaged with CAT in organizational contexts such as healthcare (e.g., Watson & Gallois, 1999), hospitality (e.g., Wang, Miao, & Mattila, 2015) and HRM (e.g., Willemys, et al., 2003), IB scholars have not applied CAT in studies on language diversity. Second, in this dissertation, I focus on partial convergence strategies, which are relatively underexplored in the current literature. Till date, researchers have focused on convergence strategies, wherein communicators completely adapt their communicative behavior to their interlocutors', whereas the findings related to proactive and reactive accommodation approaches employed in the case organizations suggest that both trainers and colleagues partially adapt their communicative behavior, for example, trainers do not completely change their training styles, rather they adopt additional measures such as functional translation and increased written communication to ensure that the information is transmitted effectively.

Additionally, I employ CAT at interpersonal, intergroup and organizational levels by studying interactions among cluster members, trainers and training recipients, as well as between the firm (i.e., senior management) and training recipients. The findings suggest that CAT can be employed to simultaneously study different modes of communication (oral and written) at different levels within the organization. Extant research within the domain of CAT has not studied the role of awareness in forging accommodative inclinations and only explored different accommodation strategies as categories that are distinct from each other (Giles & Ogay, 2007), however, this study highlights that if interactants are aware of the communicative issues, they can adopt proactive and reactive approaches in conjunction to reduce the negative effects of language diversity.

6.3 Limitations and future research directions

Although my research provides important insights into the role of language diversity in an understudied context, i.e., India, and the relationship between language and other individual characteristics such as gender and education, it has a few limitations that I would like acknowledge. First, although I am fluent in two Indian languages, due to the diversity of my interview respondents, many interviews were conducted in English. It is plausible that had I interviewed all interview respondents in their native languages, I could have obtained richer insights. As Von Glinow, et al. (2004) and Aichorn and Puck (2017b) suggest, it can be difficult for interview respondents to express their emotions in a foreign language, yet I decided to opt against using a translator because introduction of a third party can create disturbances and I did not want the interview respondents to feel that their privacy was being violated (Usunier, 1998). Although there is a possibility that a few interview respondents withheld some information because of limitations to their English capabilities, I am confident in my data and findings because many of the interview respondents repeatedly mentioned they felt comfortable in communicating their responses in

English. I often engaged in small talk at the beginning of the interviews to evaluate the interviewees' language competence before proceeding with the actual interview questions (Welch & Piekkari, 2006). Additionally, I used simple vocabulary and frequently repeated my questions to ensure that the interview respondents understood them. I also paraphrased the interviewees' responses and asked them to correct me if I made a mistake. Future studies could include a team of bi/multi-lingual researchers who are able to ask questions in respondents' native languages. Second, my study is based on observations and interviews conducted at one point in time because of constraints related to the access to respondents in case organizations. Although I relied on historical accounts during interviews, I believe that a longitudinal study could have enabled me to identify the specific points in the case organizations' histories when the composition of language clusters evolved. Future studies could use a longitudinal research design to study the specific time points in time where coping and clusters of convenience emerge and transform. Third, although prior research has found a strong relationship between regional dialects, ethnicities and castes in India (e.g., Chen, Chittoor & Vissa, 2015; Pradhan, & Visweswaran, 2011), during my interviews, the respondents declined to talk about issues of caste because the corporate policies refrained them from answering questions about controversial topics such as caste system and disclosing such information to others within the organizational premises. Fourth, although some prior studies have suggested connections between linguistic and cultural identities of individuals (e.g., Barner-Rasmussen et al., 2014; Bordia & Bordia, 2015), I did not find any evidence of the impact of cultural identity on the emergence of language clusters or implementation of OJTs. One reason could be that culture, ethnicity and caste of the respondents are closely intertwined (Gupta, 2004) and as a result, I was not able to get any information about cultural identities because of the reluctance of respondents related to matters to caste. It would be interesting for future research to

explore these connections. Lastly, case study results are difficult to generalize in different contexts because of the unique contexts in which the case organizations are embedded (Stake, 2013). However, this approach allowed me the opportunity to get a holistic understanding of the relationship between language diversity and implementation of OJTs as I was able to examine the relationship between different actors in their organizational environment. I also believe that many of my findings can be tested in other multilingual contexts. For instance, it would be interesting to test the relationship between language and gender stereotypes in countries such as Canada, which is a progressive nation but is home to a large diaspora of migrants from patriarchal societies such as India and China. Similarly, the relationship between regional dialects and language can be tested in other developing countries such as China. Additionally, the status difference associated with regional dialects and resultant ethnicities could be equated with the class and race distinctions in many western countries, therefore, it would be interesting to study how these relationships pan out in developed country contexts.

6.4 Personal reflections and key takeaways

As I reflect upon this research journey, I realize that not only have I made research discoveries but I have also learned a great deal personally. As I started gathering data, I was aware that my initial viewpoints about issues surrounding language diversity had been shaped by my personal and professional experiences from living in India, however, throughout the iterative process of data collection and analysis, I tried to be as reflexive as possible to ensure that my analysis and results reflect my participants' experiences. This included taking detailed notes on what was interesting and novel during observations and one on one interviews. Additionally, I learned to be open to learning about the perspective of each study participant by practicing active listening and being patient and respectful of their viewpoints. During interactions with the

management of both case organizations, I was often asked if their approaches to language diversity was successful or worthwhile. This dissertation study has certainly taught me that a providing a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answer would not justify the complexities associated with the issue of language diversity. In fact, my experiences during field work and data analysis have motivated me to conduct further research in this domain. Specifically, I am interested in conducting a quantitative study to test the effectiveness of language accommodation approaches that are discovered in this dissertation in a wider array of organizations, both MNEs and SMEs. It would be interesting to design a longitudinal process study that can track the precise timeline of emergence and transformation of language clusters, so we can understand more about the specific time periods at which cluster membership changes.

Finally, this dissertation study has allowed me to appreciate the significance of an engaged scholarship approach (Van de Ven, 2007). This research is a result of my engagement with both the study participants and the scholarly community. My conversations with practitioners and research scholars during this entire process have deepened my understanding of issues related to language diversity, challenged some of my pre-existing assumptions and viewpoints, and provided me with numerous opportunities to learn by challenging myself, and asking stimulating questions. Following an engaged scholarship path can be time consuming and slow paced, yet this approach has helped me grow as a researcher and I intend to continue working on this path as I progress in my academic journey.

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APPENDIX

Semi-Structured Interview Schedule

Introduction

Begin by providing participant with a brief overview of my motivation for this current research project and the key purpose of this study.

Interview Items

Below are the key items to address in the interview, but specific questions will be based on what has already been said by the participant in order to make the interview more of a conversation.

Interviewee's Experience in Current Organization

- Description of current work position
- Description of organization
- Nature of experience to date

Ice-breaker (It provides a context to the interviewee and their attitude/body language during the interview).

- Start the interview with a broad question that doesn't specifically relate to the RQ
 - For example: How was your day?; What does your typical day look like?

RQ related Interview questions

- Description of the on-the-job training programs and how language differences affect their ability to understand these
 - Elaborate on specific instances and examples
 - Description of the instances where the presence of different language clusters is an issue
 - Also ask about specific positive instances
- Motivation behind the creation of language clusters or groups
 - Ask about who the employees talk to when they have a problem understanding the tasks
 - Which language they communicate in
 - Discuss the process of problem solving
 - If the points of contact are multiple people (who speak different languages), then elaboration on the reasons behind selecting those individuals
- Descriptions of the instances where the presence of language diversity creates positive impacts
- Discussion of how they deal with such linguistic differences and diversity - Managers
 - Description of the kinds of skills that are taught; what are they doing to minimize the impact of language diversity and differences during the implementation of OJT trainings;

- Why are they taking the actions mentioned above?
- If no action is being taken, then why not.
- Elaborate on the process/steps taken to ensure the success of the training programs.
- Discussion of how they deal with such linguistic differences and diversity - Employees
 - Walk through the steps taken to ensure they understand and successfully use the skills imparted during OJT programs
 - Discussion on aspects of training that work better for them. Why?
 - Discussion on aspects of OJT that inhibit understanding and implementation. Why/Why not?
 - Follow up on specific instances observed during trainings. Elaborate on how they have translated the key components of the OJTs.

Discussion related to other unexpected but relevant issues mentioned by interviewees

- Ask for detailed examples related to the evolution of language clusters – why regional dialects are important.
- Walk through examples where the regional dialects led to disintegration of clusters
- Discussion on the role of gender in both language clusters and the implementation of OJTs
- Follow up on specific examples observed during trainings and team meetings.

Finishing the Interview

- Is there something that you would like to share that you think might be important, which we missed it in our conversation.