

LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY AND ITS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES IN MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS (OURHOUD FIELD STUDY, HASSI MESSOUD – OUARGLA)

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Abstract:

This research paper sought to reveal the reality of linguistic diversity and its management strategy in multinational corporations. The Ourhoud organization, headquartered in Hassi Messaoud – Ouargla, was selected as the field of study. The paper began by presenting the research problem along with its questions and hypotheses, followed by defining the main concepts used in the study, as well as the field procedures of the study (spatial, human, and temporal framework). This was followed by the presentation, analysis, and discussion of the results in light of the study questions. The study concluded that linguistic diversity in the Ourhoud organization constitutes a structural feature resulting from its multinational nature, with the French language dominating as the official and functional language. The results also showed that this diversity does not constitute an obstacle to communication; rather, it has become a positive organizational resource thanks to the formation of a shared professional language and a flexible administrative strategy for its management.

Keywords: Language; linguistic diversity; multinational corporations.

1. Introduction

René Sainsaulieu, the author of *The Sociology of Organizations*, states: “An organization is not merely a set of legal texts and rules, nor is it only formal models and structures; rather, it is formed by complex and original social relations. An organization has its own history, shaped by social actors as a response to the internal and external issues imposed upon it.” From this perspective, the importance of studying the social culture of workers becomes evident, since organizational culture is formed on the basis of the workers’ social environment. As language is an inseparable part of culture, it is likewise transferred from the social environment to the organizational (institutional) environment. On the other hand, Algeria is considered a destination for many multinational companies seeking to invest in the petroleum sector, which results in cultural diversity and, consequently, linguistic diversity. Accordingly, the following question is raised: What is the reality of linguistic diversity and what are the strategies for managing it in multinational companies?

The subsidiary questions are as follows:

- What is the reality of linguistic diversity in the Ourhoud organization?
- What are the implications of linguistic diversity in multinational companies?
- What strategies are adopted to manage linguistic diversity in multinational companies?

This study seeks to shed light on the status of the Arabic language in global economic institutions, also known as transnational or multinational corporations, within the context of Algerian companies operating with Spanish, American, and Italian companies, and on the importance accorded to it by managers as the first national language. The study also aims to reveal the element of linguistic acculturation among workers in these organizations, how Arabic-speaking workers benefit from other languages present in companies, and how foreign workers learn to speak Arabic, all within the framework of the concept of acculturation and intercultural exchange.

Field and Methodological Procedures of the Study:

-Study Areas:

- **Spatial Scope:** The field study was conducted in the Ourhoud organization, which is the result of cooperation between CEPSA and Sonatrach. Ourhoud is the largest oil field in Algeria, located in the Berkine Basin about 300 km from the city of Hassi Messaoud in southern Algeria. The national company Sonatrach and the Spanish company CEPSA established the organization alongside other partners to ensure the optimal exploitation of this massive reserve.
- **Human Scope:** The total number of workers in the Ourhoud organization is 618 employees, distributed between the administration headquartered in Hassi Messaoud and the Ourhoud field located in the Berkine Basin, approximately 320 km from the city of Hassi Messaoud.
- **Temporal Scope:** The study extended from March 12, 2015, until November 2016.

• **Research Method:**

Since the issue addressed by the study is: “Cultural diversity in multinational companies and its role in the dynamics of work groups,” this required the use of the descriptive method, which is often associated with topics related to social and human sciences. This method diagnoses, analyzes, and interprets data. It was used in the present study through the collection of field data using the questionnaire as the main tool to identify the ways and methods adopted by management to develop teamwork. A structured interview was also used as a tool to identify the characteristics of the sample individuals and to conduct interviews with some managers in order to obtain data relevant to the study. The elements of description and analysis appear in this study through commentary on the tables obtained after processing the questionnaire questions, while the attempt to search for the reasons behind the results obtained constitutes an interpretation of those results. The researcher does not suffice with mere description but must seek to extract the various indications and meanings embedded in the data.

Two approaches were adopted:

- **Quantitative Analysis:** Through collecting data by means of a questionnaire, tabulating it into composite tables, assigning numerical significance to the data, and analyzing it statistically.
- **Qualitative Analysis:** Through interpreting the numerical data derived from processing the questionnaire, as well as analyzing the interviews and observations conducted.
- **Research Population and Study Sample:** Since the size of the study population has a stratified nature (a group of workers who perform their duties in departments), and since departments differ from one another in terms of nationality, number, nature of work, and nature of language, etc., it is necessary to select a stratified random sample with proportional allocation. Accordingly, the original population (all workers of the organization) is divided into strata (departments), and then a random sample is selected in proportion to the total population of each stratum.

2. Intercultural Communication:

“Sitram” defines intercultural communication as the interaction that takes place between members of different cultures, regardless of how minor or major these differences may be. It

usually involves a person from one culture and a receiver (communicant) from another culture; therefore, the communication process is a two-way process (Abu Asba‘, 1998, p. 39).

The communication process is fundamentally based on language, and knowledge of the language of the country entered by multinational companies ensures smooth communication and success. A single language may spread across more than one country; Arabic unites Arab countries, while English, French, and Spanish are widely used globally as key languages in business administration (Atiyah, 2001, p. 123).

In addition to spoken language, there is also body language or sign language. Body movements, hand gestures, and facial expressions carry different meanings from one country to another. There are hand signals that have globally unified meanings, such as forming the fingers in the shape of the letter V as a sign of victory, signaling to stop a car to request a free ride, and others. Likewise, the meanings of colors and symbols vary from one society to another: white is the color of mourning in one society, while black represents mourning in another. Kissing is common among men in Arab societies, nose-kissing is practiced in certain countries, and shoulder-kissing in others (Atiyah, 2001, p. 124).

Johns (1996) reported the results of an experiment on nonverbal intercultural communication, in which a group of English managers were trained in certain nonverbal behaviors appropriate to the Arab world, such as standing or sitting close to the interlocutor, physical proximity, patting the body, frequent smiling, and a warm handshake by holding the hand and shaking it firmly. Through interaction with Arab managers, the Arab managers showed greater comfort toward those managers who had received such training compared to managers who were provided only with general theoretical information about the Arab world (Hammouda, 2005, p. 181).

Table No. (1): Shows the diversity of cultures in greeting and welcoming practices.

Culture or country	Culture or country
Bowing or inclining the upper half of the body toward the host and downward	Japan
Placing the right hand over the left on the chest in a prayer-like position, with a slight inclination toward the guest	India
Very similar to India	Thailand
Among elders, the greeting “Peace be upon you” prevails, with raising the right hand and touching the heart, then shaking hands upon departure	The Middle East
Greeting by rubbing noses between the two parties	Some tribes of New Zealand
Each party spits on the other’s extremities	Some African tribes
Sticking out one’s tongue at explained to the other party	Tibetan tribes
Shaking hands accompanied by a gentle pat on the back	Bolivia
Beginning with a handshake and then a bear hug of the other person	Russia
Embracing with arms wrapped around each other	Some Latin American countries

3. Linguistic Diversity:

Language is a means of communication within a given society that encompasses specific socio-cultural characteristics, and it reflects the nature of the environment and system of any society. It should be noted that two or more languages may exist within the same society. For example, in some Arab countries there are two languages, such as Iraq, where Arabic and Kurdish coexist. This is also the case in other countries of the world, where the same population may speak English, French, German, and Italian.

Language is a means of communication and consists of transforming ideas into a set of images with shared meanings between the sender and the receiver. The transformation of ideas may take several forms, including the following symbols: words, movements, sounds, numbers, images, silence, facial and bodily expressions, touch and handshakes, shouting and whispers. These symbols may carry different meanings depending on the individuals working in these companies, and they may also include implicit, hidden, synonymous, or even contradictory meanings (Shawqi, Hijazi, 2011, p. 63).

There are approximately 3,000 spoken languages in the world, and researchers differ in defining the nature of the impact of language on information and behavior. There is debate over the extent to which language influences perception and behavior. On the one hand, proponents of the relativist approach argue that each language independently develops distinct perceptions. On the other hand, universalists argue that all languages share common elements and therefore develop general ideas and perceptions. Research findings have supported the universalist view, as researchers have confirmed the existence of a noticeable agreement across cultures in the use of words, despite the presence of elements that share common meanings. Nevertheless, managers in the field of international business have indicated that there is absolutely no substitute for knowledge of the local language of the country in which business organizations operate. Clear intercultural understanding, for example between the United States and Japan, is considered among the critical and important factors for improving relations and work at the level of both countries. For instance, in order for Japanese businesspeople to succeed in working in the United States, they learned English and resided there for years to learn business customs, regulations, and the American way of life. This contrasts with Americans, who generally speak only English, which makes their work in Japan more difficult (Hassan, 2003, p. 434).

In general, it can be said that communication among people occurs more effectively when communicators use the same language or share the same cultural values. Generalizing this statement is acceptable here, despite the possibility of the emergence of some minor differences in terminology within the same language or around the same designation. However, these variations may reach a level that prevents, for example, an American manager from working in a British organization, despite the existence of American English and British English, so to speak (Hammouda, 2005, p. 178).

Nevertheless, Johns and Saxs argue that even when communicators share the same language, this does not necessarily prevent communication problems arising from cultural differences themselves, which may hinder the formation of shared understanding as the ultimate goal of the communication process. For example, Hellriegel pointed out that a Japanese manager rarely explicitly expresses rejection or says the word "no" in Japanese or in other languages. Instead, they usually say "yes," then follow this decisive answer with a stream of details and questions that ultimately lead the listener to realize complete rejection. Ramsey and Birk mention that the Japanese have approximately 27 ways to express polite refusal. In general, it can be said that speaking the same language does not guarantee full communication effectiveness, even if it increases its level of achievement (Hammouda, 2005, p. 178).

According to the differentiation criterion used in this field (the method of interpreting meanings), individuals belonging to cultures that focus on open, non-specific meanings in their interactions tend to rely heavily on context to interpret meaning. They depend on nonverbal cues to interpret meaning when interacting with and perceiving others through nonverbal indicators (context-dependent), such as formal position and social status, which clarify the content of the message more strongly than the use of verbal words. Japan is considered an example of this type of culture (Hassan, 2003, p. 433).

As for cultures that focus on explicit and clearly defined meanings in their interactions, meanings are primarily derived from written or spoken words. This does not mean that individuals do not understand body movements, gestures, or signals, but they prefer greater certainty in correctly understanding the message. In negotiation situations, the Japanese may consider a handshake sufficient to conclude a final agreement, whereas Americans do not consider it sufficient and regard it as only a preliminary approval **until the contract is written (Hassan, 2003, p. 434).**

4. Multinational Partnerships:

At the outset, it should be noted that “the company is a legal concept rather than an economic one,” and there is no precise concept in the economic literature that adequately expresses this type of institution (Yasser, 2006, p. 317). Various terms are used, such as multinational or transnational corporations (Multinational Corporation), transnational corporations (Transnational Corporation), global or universal corporations (Global Corporation), international corporations (International Corporation), or super-national corporations (Super-national Corporation). The multiplicity of these concepts reflects the complexity of this phenomenon and, at the same time, expresses specific ideological and intellectual positions. These concepts obscure the real role played by these organizations in the international economy, as they represent a new stage of global concentration of capital and production. Historically, perceptions of multinational corporations have been closely linked to the ideological foundations of the state and influenced by concepts from the colonial era, during which these companies themselves paved the way for transforming economic investment projects into colonial political projects for certain countries. The concept of multinational corporations has also been associated with foreign investment in general and foreign direct investment in particular (Al-Jamil, 2002, p. 109).

Researchers have not agreed on a single definition of these companies—as previously noted—despite the numerous attempts made by both legal scholars and economists, due to differing perspectives on this type of company. Consequently, definitions, criteria, and standards varied according to each scholar’s approach. One study issued by the United Nations Economic and Social Council on “Multinational Corporations and Their Impact on the Development Process” even cited (21) definitions of these companies (Ajil, 2007–2008, p. 22).

Livingston defines them as: “those companies that enjoy independent legal personality and carry out their activities in one or more foreign countries” (Al-Khatib, 2009, p. 134).

Livingston gave his definition a legal-economic character, emphasizing financial independence—legal personality—and specifying that the scope of activity must extend beyond the home country to one or more foreign countries.

Vernon defines multinational corporations as: “a company whose annual turnover or sales exceed 100 million dollars and which owns facilities or branches in six or more foreign countries” (Abu Qahf, 1999, p. 18).

This definition is characterized by its economic nature, as it specifies sales volume as a classification criterion, which must exceed 100 million dollars for a company to be classified as multinational, in addition to having branches in more than six countries worldwide.

Through analyzing the definitions of Livingston and Vernon, it is clear that both pointed to an important element, namely the scope of activity, which must extend beyond the home country to one or more foreign countries according to Livingston, and to more than six countries according to Vernon. Other definitions are linked to the nature of ownership, requiring owners from more than one nationality, while others relate to the nature of human resources employed by these companies, which consist of a mix of different nationalities.

Operational Definition of Multinational Corporations:

By reviewing the previous definitions, an operational definition of multinational corporations can be formulated as follows: “They are a form of socio-economic organizations characterized by financial independence and legal personality, with a social dimension, employing human resources of diverse nationalities in order to achieve a set of objectives.”

5. Study Results:

Table No. (2): Shows the extent to which difficulties exist in conveying ideas to colleagues due to linguistic differences.

Overall total		In the field					In management					
Percentage	Repetition	Total			In the field	In management	Total			Repetition	Repetition	
		NAK	NI A	Maj	Repetition	Repetition	NMK	NI M	Maj	Repetition	Repetition	
7.2	10	2,2	13,0	3	0	3	5,0	6,0	7	7	0	Always
51.8	72	7,2	43,5	10	2	8	44,6	53,4	62	46	16	Sometimes
41.8	57	7,2	43,5	10	7	3	33,8	40,5	47	21	26	Never
100	139	16,5	100,	23	9	14	83,5	100,	116	74	42	Total

It is evident from the above table that more than half of the surveyed sample sometimes face difficulties in communicating with their colleagues at work due to linguistic limitations, with their overall percentage estimated at 51.8%. The proportion of local workers was estimated at 53.4%, representing 44.6% of the total sample, while the proportion of foreign workers was estimated at 43.5%, accounting for 7.2% of the total study sample. This result can be viewed from a positive perspective.

In second place comes the category of workers who categorically deny facing difficulties due to linguistic limitations, with a percentage of 41.8%. The proportion of local workers reached 40.5%, equivalent to 33.8% of the total surveyed group, while the proportion of foreign workers was estimated at 43.5%, representing 7.2% of the total study sample.

These two positive results can be explained by several reasons, including:

- The strategy adopted by the organization, which consists of unifying the language, especially in official dealings. One of the clauses of the partnership agreement concluded between Sonatrach and the Spanish company CEPSA stipulates the use of the French language as the primary language in official transactions.
- The nature of the external environment, particularly the educational and pedagogical environment in Algeria, which relies on French as a second language after Arabic and as the primary language for teaching technical and scientific disciplines. It is also evident that most local workers holding university degrees received their higher education in French, which facilitated their integration within the linguistic diversity present in the organization.
- The corporate culture that places great importance on language during recruitment, as local workers with scientific qualifications and linguistic competence (good command of foreign languages, especially French and English) are hired.

-Through the interview conducted with the head of the Human Resources Department, it was inferred that the organization seeks to overcome linguistic obstacles faced by both local and foreign workers by establishing special departments for language teaching, particularly French and English, and by organizing training courses inside and outside the organization at its own expense.

On the other hand, there are negative outcomes of linguistic diversity in the Ourhoud organization. Some workers consistently experience difficulties in communicating with their colleagues at work due to linguistic limitations, with their proportion estimated at 7.2% of the total study sample. This is attributed to the university education they received in their mother tongue in the case of some local, Spanish, and Italian workers. It can also be explained by the presence of a significant linguistic mix within the organization, consisting of French, English, Arabic, Spanish, and Italian. In addition, some languages, such as French, differ in pronunciation and terminology from one country to another; the French used in Algeria differs in certain terms from that used in France, Canada, and Spain, which creates difficulties in understanding. Moreover, the use by some workers of words from their original languages that are less commonly used within the organization, such as Italian and Spanish, hinders effective communication.

Table No. (3): Shows the extent to which workers are compelled to explain and simplify language in order to make it understandable to their colleagues at work.

Overall total		In the field					In management					
Percentage	Repetition	Total			In the field	In management	Total			Repetition	Repetition	
		NAK	NI A	Maj	Repetition	Repetition	NM K	NI M	Maj	Repetition	Repetition	
17.9	25	1,4	8,7	2	0	2	16,4	19,7	23	20	3	Always
57.9	81	10,7	65,2	15	4	11	47,1	56,4	66	43	23	Sometimes
24.3	34	4,3	26,1	6	5	1	20,0	23,9	28	12	16	Never
100	140	16,4	100,	23	9	14	83,6	100,	117	75	42	Total

It is clear from the above table that the largest proportion of the surveyed group believes that they sometimes have to explain and simplify their language in order to be understood by colleagues who differ from them culturally. This proportion was estimated at 57.9% of the total surveyed sample. The proportion of local workers amounted to 56.4%, representing 47.1% of the total surveyed sample, while the proportion of foreign workers was estimated at 65.2%, corresponding to 10.7% of the total study sample.

Experience, daily interaction, and routine among workers have created what can be described as a shared language during communication among workers of diverse cultures. It is a mixture of languages that makes communication smoother and easier than if each worker adhered strictly to their mother tongue. French constitutes the backbone of this linguistic mix. Workers

may sometimes fail to understand certain unfamiliar words; therefore, they ask their colleagues to simplify their language to make it clear. Foreign workers, especially Spaniards, Italians, and Americans who have not previously worked extensively in Francophone organizations, often encounter this obstacle. This is mainly due to the nature of their educational background at all stages, which is conducted in their mother tongue, with English as a second language. When working in organizations where French is considered the official language, they face numerous difficulties in acquiring a third language, namely French.

In second place comes the proportion of workers who categorically deny having to explain and simplify their language every time, with an estimated percentage of 24.3% of the total study sample. The proportion of local workers was 23.9%, equivalent to 20.0% of the total sample, while the proportion of foreign workers was estimated at 26.1%, representing 4.3% of the total study sample.

The philosophy adopted by the organization’s management regarding human resources policies particularly in recruitment and the transfer of competent workers with good command of the French language has played a positive role in limiting the negative effects resulting from the presence of a large linguistic mix within the organization. In addition to recruitment, the company organizes training courses in French and English for its workers. Routine also plays a major role in reducing the linguistic gap among workers. From the interview conducted with the Head of Human Resources, it was indicated that some foreign workers initially lacked fluency in French; however, working conditions and daily interaction with Algerian workers enabled them to acquire this skill. Moreover, a linguistic mix developed within the organization that allowed local workers who speak Arabic to understand Spanish, Italian, and American colleagues, and vice versa.

Finally, the smallest proportion consists of workers who always have to explain and simplify their language to make it understandable to colleagues who differ from them culturally, with an estimated percentage of 17.9%. Local workers represented 16.4%, while foreign workers accounted for 1.4% of the total study sample. This is due to the fact that these workers are newly recruited, which creates difficulties in integrating into the existing linguistic mix within the internal work environment. The nature of their education conducted solely in their mother tongue also contributes to their limited ability to understand others. Consequently, the organization resorts to organizing internal and external training courses to improve the linguistic level of its workers.

Table No. (4): Shows the results of linguistic diversity among members of the work group.

Overall total							In management					
Percentage	Repetition	Total			In the field	In management	Total			Repetition	Repetition	
		NAK	NI A	Maj	Repetition	Repetition	NM K	NI M	Maj	Repetition	Repetition	
93.5	129	13,0	78,3	18	8	10	80,4	96,5	111	70	41	Develops linguistic wealth

6.5	9	3,6	21,7	5	1	4	2,9	3,5	4	3	1	Hinders communication
100	138	16,7	100,	23	9	14	83,3	100,	115	73	42	Total

From the above table, it is noted that the majority of the study sample views the linguistic diversity present in the organization from a positive perspective, considering that it contributes to the development of workers' linguistic capital, at a rate of 93.5% of the total study sample. The proportion of local workers reached 96.5%, equivalent to 80.4% of the total sample, while the proportion of foreign workers amounted to 78.3%, representing 13.0% of the total sample. Through the statistical reading of the percentages presented in the above table, it is observed that linguistic diversity has a positive aspect for both local and foreign workers. Through daily interaction and intercultural exchange that occur within the organization's internal environment, each worker benefits from the other in developing their language proficiency (French). A considerable number of local workers have also acquired the ability to speak Spanish through interaction with their Spanish colleagues, while some Spanish workers have come to speak Arabic, albeit with some difficulty, according to statements made by the person in charge of relations with foreigners.

It is also important to point out a key aspect: through the positive intercultural exchange that takes place among workers within the organization, a specific workers' language has emerged. This language differs from administration to the field and from one level to another, and it is mainly based on the French language with a mix of other languages such as English and Arabic, in addition to the language of activity, which is limited to use within certain departments. On the other hand, the proportion of workers who consider the linguistic diversity within the organization to have a negative effect, meaning that it hinders communication with their colleagues at work, was estimated at 6.5%, which is a very low percentage compared to the first. The proportion of local workers was 3.6%, representing 2.9% of the total study sample, while the proportion of foreign workers was 21.7%, corresponding to approximately 3.6% of the total study sample.

This is attributed to the nature of the education received by some local workers at all stages (primary, middle, secondary, and university), which was conducted in the Arabic language. Their integration into an organization that primarily operates in French creates difficulties in work and communication with foreign colleagues. The same applies to foreign workers; for example, some American workers do not have good command of the French language, which creates communication difficulties due to their education being conducted solely in their mother tongue.

Table No. (5): Shows the extent to which workers tend to communicate with group members who speak the same original language.

Overall total		In the field			In management		
Perc enta ge	Repet ition	Total	In the field	In man age ment	Total	Rep etiti on	Rep etiti on

		N A K	N I A	M aj	Rep etiti on	Rep etiti on	N M K	N I M	Maj	Rep etiti on	Rep etiti on	Altern atives
31.4	44	4,3	26, 1	6	2	4	27,1	32,5	38	32	6	Alwa ys
50.0	70	9,3	56, 5	13	5	8	40,7	48,7	57	30	27	Somet imes
18.6	26	2,9	17, 4	4	2	2	15,7	18,8	22	13	9	Never
100	140	16,4	10 0,	23	9	14	83,6	100,	117	75	42	Total

It is evident from the above table that half of the study sample sometimes tends to communicate with individuals who speak the same original language. The proportion of local workers was estimated at 48.7%, equivalent to 40.7% of the total study sample, while the proportion of foreign workers reached 56.6%, corresponding to 9.3% of the total sample. These workers believe that the purpose of their presence within the organization is work; therefore, selecting colleagues based on the language they speak is not important. Moreover, their placement within the work group is planned by management according to several considerations, most notably role complementarity. The experience these workers possess in this organization or in other organizations where they previously worked has enabled them to deal with workers of different linguistic backgrounds. These workers usually master two or more languages in addition to their mother tongue. Routine also plays a major role in enabling workers of different nationalities to acquire the language of activity or profession, which is characterized by simplicity and fluency.

In second place comes the proportion of workers who always tend to communicate with individuals who speak the same language, estimated at 31.4%. The proportion of local workers was 32.5%, equivalent to 27.1% of the total study sample, while the proportion of foreign workers reached 26.1%, representing 4.3% of the total sample. This is attributed to the fact that language is an element of attraction, as most people prefer to communicate with those who master the same language. Communicating with people who do not speak or understand the same language is considered a waste of time and requires additional effort to convey the message.

Finally, the smallest proportion consists of the study sample that categorically denies any tendency to communicate with individuals who speak the same language, estimated at 18.6% of the total study sample. The proportion of local workers was 18.8%, equivalent to approximately 15.7% of the total sample, while the proportion of foreign workers was 17.4%, corresponding to approximately 2.9% of the total study sample. This is due to the fact that the group is formal in nature, and the work of the group is planned in advance by management. The group has a set of predefined objectives that must be achieved; therefore, these workers do not have the right to choose the group they belong to based on language.

Table No. (6): Shows the extent to which group members need a translator.

Overall total		Foreign workers in					Local workers in					
Percentage	Repetition	Total			In the field	In management	Total			In the field	In management	
		NI A	Maj	Repetition	Repetition	N M K	NI M	Maj	Repetition	Repetition		
8.6	12	1,4	8,7	2	0	2	7,1	8,5	10	9	1	Always
54.3	76	9,3	56,5	13	6	7	45,0	53,8	63	41	22	Sometimes
37.1	52	5,7	34,8	8	3	5	31,4	37,6	44	25	19	Never
100	140	16,4	100,	23	9	14	83,6	100,	117	75	42	Total

It is clear from the above table that the highest proportion of workers believe that they most often do not need a translator when communicating with their culturally diverse colleagues, with an estimated percentage of 54.3%. The proportion of local workers was 53.8%, representing 45.0% of the total surveyed sample, while the proportion of foreign workers was 56.6%, equivalent to 9.3% of the total study sample.

In second place comes the study sample that categorically denies any need for a translator, with an overall percentage estimated at 37.1%. This was represented by 37.6% of local workers, corresponding to approximately 31.4% of the total study sample, while the proportion of foreign workers was 34.8%, equivalent to approximately 5.7% of the total study sample.

Through the field study conducted at the Ourhoud organization, it appears that communication between local and foreign workers in the French language does not pose a problem, as the message is very clear and the language of communication is characterized by a certain degree of fluency. This is due to the fact that most workers operating within the organization's internal environment are local workers for whom French is considered a second language. In addition, most of the terms used within the organization reflect a professional culture or occupational language characterized by simplicity.

It is also inferred from the table that a very small proportion of workers confirm their need for a translator when communicating with workers who do not speak the same language. Their percentage was estimated at 8.6%, represented by 8.6% of local workers, equivalent to 7.1% of the total study sample, while the proportion of foreign workers was estimated at 8.7%, corresponding to approximately 1.4% of the total study sample. This is mainly due to the fact that these workers are monolingual and do not master any language other than their mother tongue; therefore, the need to resort to a translator becomes necessary.

Table No. (7): Shows the extent to which management takes linguistic differences among workers into account when issuing instructions and orders related to the workflow for group members.

Overall total		Foreign workers in					Local workers in					
Percentage	Repetition	Total			In the field	In management	Total			In the field	In management	
		NAK	NI A	Maj	Repetition	Repetition	NM K	NI M	Maj	Repetition	Repetition	
36.2	50	3,6	22,7	5	2	3	32,6	38,8	45	34	11	Always
26.8	37	5,8	36,4	8	3	5	21,0	25,0	29	13	16	Sometimes
37.0	51	6,5	40,9	9	3	6	30,4	36,2	42	27	15	Never
100	138	15,9	100,	22	8	14	84,1	100,	116	74	42	Total

It can be inferred from the above table that the largest proportion of the study sample categorically denies that management takes linguistic differences into account when issuing instructions and orders related to the workflow for group members, with a percentage estimated at 37.0% of the total research sample. This is attributed to the fact that the official language of administration is French; therefore, every worker within the organization is required to adhere to this rule. Messages and reports must be drafted in French, while oral communication during work within culturally diverse groups allows workers the freedom to choose the language they deem appropriate.

This is followed by the proportion of workers who believe that management always takes linguistic particularities into account when communicating with workers, estimated at 36.2% of the total study sample. This was observed through the review of some instructions and directives issued by the Ourhoud administration, where notices and instructions are written in French as the primary language of the organization, followed by English, and Arabic, which is considered the language of the host country and the mother tongue of the majority of workers. It is also noted that the majority of foreign workers categorically deny this consideration, with a percentage of 40.9%, equivalent to 6.5% of the total study sample. This is due to the fact that most foreign workers are Spanish, and the administration excludes the Spanish language. In contrast, the majority of local workers affirm that management takes linguistic particularities into account when communicating with workers, with their percentage estimated at 38.8% of the total local workforce, equivalent to 32.6% of the total study sample. This is attributed to the fact that French is the second language in Algeria and the language of training for most local staff, which means that this group does not encounter difficulty in communicating in French.

Finally, the smallest category consists of workers who believe that management sometimes takes linguistic differences among members of the work group into account, with an overall percentage estimated at 26.8%. The proportion of local workers was 25.0%, equivalent to 21.0% of the total study sample.

Table No. (8): Shows the methods adopted by management to take linguistic differences into account.

Overall total		Foreign workers in					Local workers in					
Perc enta ge		Total			Field	Ad mini strat ion	Total			Field	Admin istratio n	
		N A K	N I A	Ma j	Rep etiti on	Rep etiti on	N M K	N I M	M aj	Rep etiti on	Repetit ion	
88	44	6	60	3	1	2	82	91. 1	4 1	30	11	Communicating with workers in the language they understand
12	6	4	40	2	1	1	8	8.8 8	4	4	00	Providing a translator
100	50	8,9	100,	5	2	3	90	10 0,	4 5	34	11	Total

It is evident from the above table and graphs that the largest proportion of the study sample believes that management always takes workers’ linguistic particularities into account by communicating with them in a language they understand, at a rate of 88%. The proportion of local workers was estimated at 91.1%, equivalent to 82% of the partial sample (respondents who answered “always”), while the proportion of foreign workers was estimated at 60%, equivalent to 6% of the partial sample.

Through the field study and our review of some of the notice boards within the organization, we observed the use of the three previously mentioned languages French, Arabic, and English displayed on special boards in public areas of the organization (such as the cafeteria, club, main entrance, and security office). These are directed at all workers. However, when administrative correspondence is addressed to a specific department within the organization, it is conducted in French without taking linguistic diversity into account, as accommodating workers’ linguistic particularities in such cases would constitute a heavy burden on the organization.

Meanwhile, the proportion of the study sample that believes management takes linguistic particularities into account by providing a translator reached 12%. The proportion of local workers was 8.88%, equivalent to 8% of the total sample, while the proportion of foreign workers was 40%, equivalent to 4% of the total study sample. Through the interview conducted with the Head of the Human Resources Management Department, it was revealed that the organization employs two translators who are occasionally called upon to translate certain administrative correspondences written in Spanish and English.

Table No. (09): Shows the most frequently used language in the organization.

Overall total		Foreign workers					Local workers					
Perc enta ge	Rep etiti on	Total			In the field	In manag ement	Total			In the field	In mana geme nt	
		N A K	N I A	M aj	Rep etiti on	Repeti tion	N A K	N I M	Maj	Repeti tion	Repeti tion	
2.3	3	1,6	8,7	2	1	1	0,8	0,9	1	1	0	Arabic
82.2	106	14,7	82,6	19	7	12	67,4	82,1	87	53	34	French
13.2	17	1,6	8,7	2	1	1	11,6	14,2	15	7	8	English
2.3	3	0,0	0,0	0	0	0	2,3	2,8	3	3	0	Spanish
100	129	17,8	100,	23	9	14	82,2	100,	106	64	42	Total

It is clearly evident from the above tables that the largest proportion of the surveyed sample considers French to be the most frequently used language in the organization, with an estimated percentage of 82.2%. The proportion of local workers reached 82.1%, equivalent to 67.4% of the total surveyed group, while the proportion of foreign workers was estimated at 82.6%, representing 14.7% of the total study sample.

This is attributed to the policy adopted by the organization as a result of the partnership agreement concluded between the two main contributing companies in the consortium (Sonatrach and CEPSA), which considers French as the primary language of the consortium. This is followed by the proportion of the study sample that considers English to be the most frequently used language in communication among culturally diverse group members, estimated at 13.2% of the total surveyed group. The proportion of local workers was 14.2%, equivalent to 11.6% of the total sample. This is due to the fact that English is the native language of Anadarko and Burlington Resources (American companies) and Talisman (a Canadian company). In addition, a considerable proportion of local workers received their training in English, whether at university or in private institutes; hence, it ranked second.

In third place, the proportions of the study sample that consider Arabic and Spanish to be the most frequently used languages during communication among culturally diverse workers were equal, at approximately 2.3% of the total study sample.

Table No. (10): Shows workers' opinions on language unification and the preferred language.

Overall total		Foreign workers			Local workers			
Perc enta ge	Rep etiti on	Total		In the field	Total		In the field	In mana geme nt

		NAK	NI A	Maj	Repetition	Repetition	NMK	NIM	Maj	Repetition	Repetition		
55.3	77	8.63	54.4	12	5	7	46.7	55.5	65	44	21	yes	
6.83	8	0.71	4.54	1	0	1	5.0	10.7	7	5	2	Arabic	Options
33.3	39	7.19	45.4	10	5	5	20.8	24.7	29	19	10	French	
22.2	26	0.71	4.54	1	0	1	17.9	21.3	25	18	7	English	
0.71	1	0	0	0	0	0	0.71	0.8	1	1	0	Spanish	
2.15	3	0	0	0	0	0	2.15	2.5	3	1	2	Without answer	
44.6	62	7.19	45.4	10	3	7	37.4	44.4	52	31	21	No	
100	139	15,8	100	22	8	14	84,2	100	117	75	42	Total	

It is observed from the above table that more than half of the study sample agrees with unifying the workers' language, at a rate of 55.4%. The proportion of local workers who support this option was estimated at 55.55%, equivalent to 46.76% of the total study sample. The proportion of foreign workers who agree with unifying the language among workers reached 54.4%, corresponding to approximately 8.6% of the total research sample. This is attributed to the fact that linguistic plurality results in a set of negative effects related to misunderstanding language (these effects will be addressed in Table No. 6-15). French ranked first among the preferred languages, with an estimated percentage of 33.3%, followed by English as a second choice at 22.2%. The third choice was Arabic, with 6.83%, while Spanish ranked last at 0.71%. The preference of both local and foreign workers especially Spaniards for French is mainly due to the fact that it is the second language in Algeria and the closest to Spanish. English was chosen as the second preference because it has become the primary language in international business management.

On the other hand, the proportion of those who reject language unification reached 44.6%. Local workers accounted for 44.4%, equivalent to 37.41% of the total study sample, which is close to the proportion of foreign workers, estimated at 45.4%, corresponding to 7.19% of the total sample.

This is mainly due to these workers' desire to retain the freedom to speak the language that facilitates their work, as language is considered a means of communication. Unifying the language may create communication problems and thus hinder work. Through the interview conducted with the Head of the Planning Office, it was indicated that management does not intervene or impose a specific language for communication among workers, but rather allows them the freedom to choose the language that facilitates their work. However, when communication involves management especially administrative correspondence and reports they must be drafted in French.

Table No. (11): Shows the extent to which workers learn to speak some phrases in a language other than their mother tongue.

Overall total		Foreign workers					Local workers					
Perc enta ge	Rep etiti on	Total			In the field	In man agem ent	Total			In the field	In mana geme nt	
		N A K	N I A	M aj	Rep etiti on	Repe tition	N M K	N I M	Ma j	Rep etiti on	Repet ition	
87.9	123	12,1	73,9	17	7	10	75,7	90,6	106	70	36	Yes
12.1	17	4,3	26,1	6	2	4	7,9	9,4	11	5	6	No
100	140	16,4	100,	23	9	14	83,6	100,	117	75	42	Tota l

It is clear from the above table that the majority of workers have learned to speak some expressions and sentences in a language other than their mother tongue, at a rate of 87.9%. Local workers accounted for approximately 90.6%, equivalent to 75.7% of the total study sample. It is also evident that a large proportion of foreign workers learned to speak a language other than their mother tongue, at 73.9%, representing approximately 12.1% of the total study sample.

From the reading of these figures, it becomes evident that there is positive intercultural exchange between local and foreign workers, manifested in each worker benefiting from the other and learning some phrases in a language other than their mother tongue. Some local workers have even learned Spanish and English through daily interaction with their foreign colleagues, without having previously practiced or studied these languages in an academic manner (in schools or universities). The same applies to foreign workers, as some of them have come to speak Arabic, albeit with some difficulty and a rather limited level of fluency.

It is also worth noting that culturally diverse workers, when communicating with one another, form a shared language (the language of the profession or activity), which serves as a language of communication and mutual understanding. This language constitutes a mixture of French, English, Arabic, Spanish, and others, along with agreed-upon and commonly adopted symbols, expressions, behaviors, and rules that indicate that members of the organization speak a common language.

On the other hand, there is a small proportion of the study sample that denies having learned some words and sentences in a language other than their mother tongue, estimated at 12.1% of the total research sample. Local workers accounted for 7.9%, while foreign workers represented 4.3% of the total study sample.

Table No. (12): Shows the effects resulting from multilingualism among workers.

Overall total		Foreign workers										
Percentage	Repetition	Total			In the field	In management	Total			In the field	In management	
		N A K	N I A	M a j	Repetition	Repetition	N M K	N I M	M a j	Repetition	Repetition	
31.1	42	3,0	18,2	4	1	3	28,1	33,6	38	29	9	1
17.0	23	5,2	31,8	7	2	5	11,9	14,2	16	10	6	2
11.1	15	0,7	4,5	1	0	1	10,4	12,4	14	12	2	3
36.3	49	5,2	31,8	7	4	3	31,1	37,2	42	19	23	4
4.4	6	2,2	13,6	3	1	2	2,2	2,7	3	1	2	5
100	135	16,3	100,	22	8	14	83,7	100,	113	71	42	Total

1. Information reaches in an unclear manner.
2. Misunderstanding in receiving instructions.
3. I cannot interact flexibly with my colleagues.
4. No impact.
5. Other.

From the above table, it is noted that the largest proportion of the study sample believes that multilingualism among members of the work group does not affect their communication with culturally diverse colleagues; this percentage was estimated at 36.3%. This is attributed to the nature of the cultural and educational environment, where French is considered the second language in Algeria after Arabic. Most workers who constitute the majority of the study sample are Algerians who received their training in French (especially in technical specializations) at the university level. It should also be noted that workers, whether local or foreign, through their interaction with one another, form a specific linguistic system (a mix of Arabic, French, English, and Spanish), in addition to the technical language or specialized terminology used in the field or administration. Therefore, they do not face communication-related obstacles.

In second place comes the study sample that believes that multilingualism among workers causes information to be conveyed in an unclear manner, at a rate of 31.1%. In third place is the sample that considers linguistic diversity among work group members to cause misunderstanding in receiving instructions, at 17.0%. In the penultimate place is the sample that believes linguistic diversity does not allow them to interact flexibly with their colleagues, at 11.1%. Analysis of the data shows that the first-ranked result is positive, indicating that the presence of a linguistic mix within a culturally diverse group does not negatively affect communication within the group. In contrast, the options ranked second, third, and fourth view linguistic diversity from a negative perspective. This is mainly due to the following reasons:

- The presence of some local workers who speak only Arabic, with the ability to understand French but without the ability to speak it.
- The French spoken within the organization by Spaniards, who represent the majority of foreign workers, is characterized by a degree of inadequacy, as the Spanish accent dominates their French.
- The presence of some foreign workers who are unable to speak any language other than their mother tongue, or English in the case of some Americans, alongside Algerian workers who speak Arabic and French but are not proficient in English, which is considered the primary language in business management. This creates communication difficulties.

Study Results in Light of the First Question: What is the reality of linguistic diversity in the Ourhoud organization?

The results of the field study reveal that the Ourhoud organization is characterized by a complex and multidimensional linguistic reality, resulting from its nature as a multinational company that includes partners from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. This diversity is manifested in the daily coexistence of several languages within the organizational space, most notably Arabic in both its standard and colloquial forms, French, as well as other languages linked to the national origins of partner companies, such as Spanish, English, and Italian.

The results show that French occupies a central position within the organization, as it is the official language adopted in documents, organizational structures, and administrative correspondence, and it is also the most widely used language among culturally diverse workers. English follows, then Arabic, and finally Spanish. This linguistic hierarchy reflects a historical and organizational logic linked, on the one hand, to the colonial legacy, and on the other hand, to the functional dominance of foreign companies.

This linguistic reality has also led to the formation of a shared functional language within work groups, primarily based on French, with the integration of elements from other languages, in addition to technical terms related to the nature of the activity. This confirms that the linguistic reality within the organization is not merely a juxtaposition of languages, but rather a dynamic social construct shaped by daily interaction and work requirements.

Study Results in Light of the Second Question: What are the implications of linguistic diversity in multinational companies?

The results of the study indicate that linguistic diversity within the Ourhoud organization generally has positive implications for the internal work environment, for both local and foreign workers. Daily interaction and continuous engagement among culturally diverse workers have contributed to the development of individuals' linguistic competencies, with many acquiring the ability to communicate in languages other than their mother tongue.

The results also show that linguistic diversity did not constitute an obstacle to communication or mutual understanding, as workers developed a simplified shared language that enabled them to overcome linguistic barriers. This finding supports intercultural communication studies, which suggest that professional groups tend to produce their own communicative patterns to ensure work continuity and effectiveness.

Conversely, shared linguistic affiliation was not viewed as a factor of attraction in building professional relationships, as workers focus on job performance and role complementarity rather than linguistic or cultural proximity. This reveals a shift of the professional group from a logic of cultural identity to a logic of organizational identity.

Study Results in Light of the Third Question: What strategies are adopted to manage linguistic diversity in multinational companies?

The study results showed that the management of the Ourhoud organization adopts an indirect strategy in managing linguistic diversity, based primarily on unifying the official language used

in administrative dealings, while allowing work groups a margin of freedom to choose the most appropriate language for daily communication. French has been adopted as the unified official language, followed by English, while Arabic and Spanish are used to a lesser extent depending on the context.

The management has also resorted to using multiple languages for guidance and instructions in public spaces (French, English, and Arabic), in an attempt to ensure a minimum level of shared understanding and to avoid miscommunication. The majority of the study sample expressed satisfaction with this strategy, considering that unifying the official language limits the potential negative effects of linguistic diversity.

Conclusion:

This study concluded that linguistic diversity within multinational corporations, as exemplified by the Ourhoud organization, cannot be reduced to a merely technical communicative factor; rather, it represents a complex sociological phenomenon that reflects the interplay of organizational, cultural, and power dimensions within the professional space. The findings showed that the reality of linguistic diversity is primarily the result of multinationality and the diversity of institutional origins of the contributing companies, which has led to the simultaneous presence of several languages within the organization, foremost among them French as the official and functionally dominant language.

The study demonstrated that the implications of this linguistic diversity were largely positive, as it contributed to the development of workers' linguistic competencies and enhanced their ability to adapt and communicate within multicultural work groups. Linguistic diversity did not constitute a fundamental obstacle to mutual understanding, thanks to the emergence of a shared professional language based on simplification and pragmatism, serving the requirements of daily work and limiting the potential for miscommunication. This reflects a shift in professional relations from a logic of linguistic and cultural affiliation to a logic of organizational identity and job performance.

At the level of managing linguistic diversity, the results revealed that the organization adopts a flexible organizational approach based on unifying the official language in administrative dealings, while allowing a margin of linguistic freedom within work groups. This strategy has contributed to achieving a degree of balance between the requirements of organizational regulation and the reality of cultural plurality, although it simultaneously raises questions regarding the position of local languages and the limits of their recognition within the institutional space.

In light of the above, it can be stated that the success of multinational corporations in managing linguistic diversity is not linked to eliminating linguistic plurality, but rather to their ability to transform it into an effective organizational resource that contributes to improving performance and enhancing professional integration. This study opens future research perspectives for examining the relationship between language, power, and identity within organizations, and for assessing the impact of language policies on organizational justice and the quality of communication in multicultural professional environments.

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