

Workplace discourse among diverse multinationals: the case of the medical setting in Bahrain

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This research pays closer attention to language and belonging in medical settings, specifically in terms of language use among diverse multilingual societies in Bahrain. Drawing from previous scholarly studies on language and belonging, Tabouret-Keller (1997: p. 321) states that language is the “foundation of the human condition that allows human beings to interact with each other, to socialize, to include and exclude.” Whereas Vallentin (2019: p. 41) views belonging as “people’s processes of making sense of themselves as part of a group in terms of social, spatial, and temporal dimensions, and as sharing specific practices with that group.” In other words, when people speak the same language or varieties of the same language for mutual engagement, they form a shared practice with the group. Against the backdrop, this research focuses on the diverse multilingual and multinational workers in Bahrain who use English and other languages available to them in their medical workplace discourse to signal inclusion or exclusion. Hence, the research questions are: 1) What languages are noticeably present among various multinationals within the medical workplace context? 2) How do interactants use these languages in their conversations to signal belonging? And 3) how do they manage their attitudes and experiences in terms of language and belonging within the medical workplace context? Using the triangulation method, the study through surveys, audio interviews, and naturally occurring conversations, aims to identify specific workplace languages in context, provide narratives on language and belonging in context, and highlight strategies for managing interactants’ attitudes and experiences towards language and belonging in the medical workplace setting. The transcribed data with instances of language and belonging were linguistically analysed into text-based forms using thematic-based analysis to gain a bottom-up perspective on actual, situated scenarios and agents in the medical workplace setting. The findings revealed the importance of embedding mitigating factors like celebrating linguistic diversity and promoting inclusion, especially when dealing with members from diverse multilingual societies. Thus, this research will benefit policymakers, hospital management, patients, and clinicians in the medical workplace setting.

Keywords: Workplace discourse, language and belonging, medical setting, multinationals, Bahrain

References:

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