

Abstract

While workplace interactions are likely to be conducted in English, the *lingua franca* of international business (Janssens, Lambert, & Steyaert, 2004), employees may occasionally switch to their native language in their interactions with coworkers who share knowledge of this language. *Linguistic ostracism* (LO) refers to situations in which two or more people use a language that others in their presence cannot understand (Dotan-Eliaz, Sommer, & Rubin, 2009). This dissertation explored the contextual antecedents of LO in a business setting, probed managerial techniques currently used to mitigate the effects of LO, and examined the relationship between LO and organizational citizenship behaviors. For Study 1, I conducted semi-structured interviews (N = 24) with professionals across three hierarchical levels in multinational corporations. Interviewees reported LO occurring more frequently in organizations lacking in language training, managerial training, or language-based policies. Managerial actions included acting on experience and creating an environment of open communication. Study 2 was an online survey disseminated to professionals (N = 171) across various industries and linguistically diverse organizations. This study tested the Language-Based Exclusion (LBE) model proposed by Kulkarni and Sommer (2014) and summoned additional support for the contextual antecedents uncovered in Study 1. Consistent with the LBE model, positive state affect mediated the relationship between LO and self-reported prosocial behavior. No evidence was found for social identity or procedural justice as mediators as predicted by the LBE model. The mediating effects of positive state affect were significant among people high but not low in the desire for control. LO was associated with lower levels of perceived competence on the part of sources of ostracism, although not when ostracized participants reported benign motives (e.g., the sources did not speak English). Ostracized participants also reported lower levels of prosocial

behavior and higher levels of negative impact if working in weak compared to strong organizational diversity climates. Collectively, the findings of this dissertation suggest that LO may be mitigated in organizations by way of making contextual changes and/or changes in managerial actions. Several new research avenues for Industrial-Organizational and International Business scholars alike are also discussed.

Keywords: linguistic ostracism, prosocial behavior, linguistic diversity