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E-Learning of Foreign Language for the Employees and Majority of Countries Requirements

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ABSTRACT

It is doubtless that migrant workers' diverse cultural and professional backgrounds and their presence in different sectors make such a group of people a cornerstone of building any country and maintaining its heritage and land intact. Therefore, the necessitous that one has to do in this kind of situation is to create an avenue, most especially e-learning, to teach them the language and culture of the host country. Almost all Eastern and Western countries usually require a good command of their own language and culture before granting a work permit or starting work, while the Arab nations seem less concern about its own tongue; foreign employees are recruited without obliging to learn Arabic. Thus, this study aims to shed light on the international requirements for learning the host-country's language and the need for e-learning to achieve it. The research comprises of introduction about importance of learning the business language, international requirements for learning the host country's language and the impact of achieving it on individual and society. The research concludes by proposing a viable solution to promoting learning business language among expatriates; such as providing the newcomers with e-courses that can help them learn the business language and expose them to Arab culture and heritage. This step will certainly add excellent value to culture, identity, and ideals at the

domestic level and builds bridges for communication abroad. It could also open-up career prospects for professionals in the Arabic language and literature.

1. Introduction

Language is an important part of any society, and the development of any community economically, commercially, and culturally lies on its tongue. If the language remains alive, the nation survives. On the other hand, if the language dies out, the community's heritage and reputation would automatically fade-away.

Karl Von Habsburg, who was the president of Blue Shield International since 2008 confirmed during an interview in 2018 that the world loses one language averagely every six weeks. Therefore, in order to avoid extinction of any community's culture, its mother tongue must be preserved.

This could be the reason why majority of Western and Eastern countries in Asia, Europe, US, UK, and Australia came up with number of policies that can enable the expatriates to learn their languages before they can be assigned for any job or given work permit.

However, these policies were not set-up to discriminate against other citizens or to frustrate their effort, rather, it is to make life easier for them in the place of work and integration to the society.

Statement of the problem could be formulated into one main question, which is "To what extent are migrant workers required to learn the language of the host country, and what is the impact of this requirement"?

The significance of the research lies in demonstration of how some countries feel proud of their native language and cultures by requiring migrant workers to learn their language and assimilate their culture.

2. E-learning of the Language of the Host Country for Migrant Workers and International Requirements

International requirements for expatriate's learning the host country's language

The study shall present major countries' experiences in Europe, Asia, Australia, and the US, to know their perspectives on the language and how it helps individuals engage in work.

2.1 EU Language requirements

Organization of European countries known as "Council of Europe (CoE)", previously the Committee of Independent Experts on the European Social Charter, in its resolution no. 68/18 requests its members to make more significant efforts to enable all migrant workers to learn the language of the host country (Europe, 1954). The European Social Charter also called its members to promote teaching of the host state's national language and facilitate it or, if there are many languages, one of them should be taught to migrant workers and members of their families (Rights, 2006).

The charter also stresses in paragraph (2.1) regarding teaching the language of the host country that teaching of the host country's language is a means of integrating migrant workers and their families into employment and society as

a whole. It considers that Contracting Parties should facilitate the learning of the national language by (a) children of school age and (b) migrant workers themselves and members of their families who are no longer of school age. (Rights, 2006).

International labor conference held in Geneva in 1999 also emphasized the necessity of learning the host state's language by migrant workers to ensure their movement and movement of their family members to the country of work and not to be marginalize in the workplace nor society. (Work, 1999)

Therefore, EU members must take appropriate measures to ensure that children who are dependent of any migrant worker have access to free tuition, particularly, the host country's language. (Directive, 1977).

In France, immigrants must sign the Republican Integration Contract and participate in French and civic training courses. (Murphy, 2006).

In Italy, secondary schools and higher institutions must offer courses and events in Italian language to benefit non-Italian speakers. (OSCE.org, n.d.).

In Germany, people moving to Germany to seek a job can apply for Germany Jobseeker Visa. They can stay there for a specific time, provided that they have enough funds to support themselves for the duration of their stay and German knowledge of at least B1 level. They can come to Germany with a visa for Training and Skill Development, under the condition that they have the necessary German language skills, A2 level. (Schengenvisa.info).

In UK, all EU and non-EU applicants must demonstrate good command of English to get offer for job. (UK).

In Netherlands, permanent settlement in the country must requires active participation in the society, mastering the Dutch language, and aware of Dutch value. Learning basic Dutch language is also requirement for admission in Dutch schools. Upon arriving Netherlands, the migrant must also deepen his or her knowledge of Dutch language and culture. (House, 2002).

In Denmark, newly arrived immigrants and refugees must enrol in an integration course for three months in their respective municipalities. The course includes Danish education and work ethics training. Integration Act requires immigrants and refugees to stay in their municipality during the training unless they obtain a job offer in another place. (socialjura, n.d.).

2.2 Language requirements in Asia

The Republic of Korea required migrant workers to complete 20 hours of Employment Training Module upon entering the country, which about 16 hours of its content is allocated for Korean Language, culture, relevant working permit law, and industrial safety & public health. (Organisation, 2015).

In Indonesia, article (26) of the Indonesian regulation on Foreign Workers Utilization makes learning the Indonesian language obligatory, stating: "It is the responsibility (and obligation) of the employer to offer language training to the foreign worker. During the foreign worker's stay in Indonesia, he/she needs to learn Indonesian." (Regulation, 2018).

According to items (2 and 3) of the above article, each employer of a foreign worker is obligated to appoint an Indonesian worker as an Associate for Foreign Worker; implement education and training for Indonesian workers in

accordance with job qualifications occupied by a foreign worker; and facilitate Indonesian language education and training for foreign workers. These provisions do not apply to the foreign worker who occupies the board of directors' positions and/or board of commissioners. (Group, 2018).

In Turkey, the law (805) on the “compulsory use of Turkish language in Economic Enterprises” states that foreign companies must use the Turkish language for all correspondence and communications in transactions. (Compulsory Use of Turkish in Economic Enterprises).

Turkey passed a law that foreign doctors will be obliged to receive a minimum score of "B" from Turkish language tests administered by universities' Turkish Teaching Application and Research Centers (TÖMER) as per the criteria set forth by the European Language Portfolio. (Agency, 2012).

In Malaysia, foreign workers are required to attend an induction course, conducting through the Ministry of Human Resources (MoHR) on communication skills, Malaysian culture, and working permit laws and regulations. (Organisation, Strengthening Post-Arrival Orientation Programs for Migrant Workers in ASEAN., 2015).

Memorandum of understanding between the Government of Malaysia and the government of migrant's workers' countries stipulates in articles (5, 6 and 8) that all migrant workers working in Malaysia must possess sufficient knowledge of Malaysian culture and social practices and must be able to communicate either in English or Malay language and comply with all Malaysian laws, regulations and immigration procedures.

The aims are to enable foreign workers in Malaysia to have basic English or Malay communication skills, provide awareness of and respect for cultures and customs practiced in Malaysian, and develop understanding and compliance with Malaysian laws and regulations. (Malaysia, n.d.).

In China, a new policy on work permits for foreigners includes a system by which expatriates will be ranked according to their salary, educational background, the amount of time they have worked, Chinese language proficiency level, age, and location, according to a 2016 report by Xinhua News. (Newspaper, 2017).

In Japan, the Upper House committee on education and science unanimously approved a bill aimed at supporting learning Japanese for foreign nationals in Japan. The bill states that substantial efforts will be made to cultivate Japanese language education through local government. Local governments are to implement language-learning measures for foreign-born workers specifically, as well as students. (Doerr, 2020).

2.3 Language requirements in the US and Canada

Some American states made it compulsory for immigrants in the US, including workers, to attend night schools to learn English. They penalized the employers and minors for violating this bill. (Claxton, 1918)

In Canada, a basic level of English is a must for day to day living in Canada. A complete lack of English could also be a deterrent for health and safety. (Canlii.Org, 2003).

In part (11) article (200) item (3a) of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations, an officer shall not issue a work permit to a foreign national if there are reasonable grounds to believe that the foreign national is unable to perform the work sought. (Justice, 2020) Temporary foreign worker applicants will be denied a work permit if a Canadian immigration officer deems that they will not be able to perform their job properly due to weak language skills in one of Canada's official languages. (Department, 2017)

2.4 Language requirement in Australia

Australia believes that immigrants must have English proficiency to work in the country. A foreign worker who wants to obtain a temporary work visa must have a sufficient English level, which can be proved by scoring a band (5) in IELTS. (New Foreign Visa Worker).

The applicant had to obtain the score in one session or demonstrate his/her proficiency in two sessions with an interval of (6) months. Still, he must score (7) points or submit a secondary school certificate in English. ((AASW), 2019).

3. Significance of learning the host country's language and its effects on the individual and society

3.1 Importance of acquiring the language of the host country

The world has become a small village where people can move quickly from one place to another for different purposes. Travel may be for personal reasons. Some people move to other countries for social causes such as the quest for a comfortable life or uniting with families and friends. Economic reasons could encourage people to immigrate somewhere to find a job or start a new career. Also, individuals may leave their homelands to escape political oppression and war or protect themselves from natural disasters like floods, hurricanes, and earthquakes.

Statistical studies in 2015 show that the number of people leaving their homelands grows massively, and approximately 250 million people immigrate every year. About 34% of this number move to industrial counties in search of jobs or work opportunities. (Ratha, 2016)

Chron newspapers published that cultural differences present problems for migrant workers, and local residents may discriminate against or resent migrant workers for taking the available jobs in the area. Migrant workers are often isolated from their neighbors and shop mostly at ethnic stores. (Sullivan, Challenges Faced by Migrant Workers).

Language skills play a crucial role in the life of migrant workers in general. Therefore, acquiring the receiving country's language is essential to achieve any country's economic and social integration. It helps workers better integrate into the labor market and achieve social and political integration. This will positively reflect on the migrant's personality and the entire community of the host country.

3.2 Individual and social effects of acquiring the host country's language

Knowing a new language enables the person to develop their linguistic skills and gain more learning and educational skills. Through this language, the learner can read and write better, gain more confidence, improve one's communication skills, and secure a decent job. For these benefits, many

countries added a second language subject to school and university curricula so that graduates can speak another language besides the official one. Here are some individual and social impacts that acquiring the host country's language can have on the worker.

First: Individual Impacts

1- Strong employer-employee relationship: language skills are a productive asset, and employers are ready to reward the workers who master the language of the host country. (Isphording, 2015) It might be difficult for migrant workers to build a strong relation with the host country's citizens or employers without having proficiency in the host country's language.

2- Increase in employment potential: learning the reception country's language increases expatriate's job opportunities. Travel and telecommunications companies and education corporations focus on recruiting efficient professionals who can communicate in the country's language where they are established. By doing so, they will compete well with other businesses in a global economy (Sun). A report on employer's demand for bilingual workers conducted in 2017 and published in New American Economy shows that more than a third of the positions advertised by Bank of America in 2015 was for bilingual workers. (Economy, Demand for Bilingual Workers More than Doubled in 5years)

3- Worker's economic growth: workers who grasp the host country's language earn more than those who lack this skill. According to a study conducted in the University of Guelph, people who speak both French and English are likely to earn more than their unilingual counterparts. Those who are able to speak both official languages earn about 7-8 percent higher than those who speak French only. (Leung, 2010).

4- Integration in the society: learning the receiving country's language is critical because language is an essential tool for dialogue between cultures and an effective way to achieving successful integration in the society at the economic, political, cultural, and linguistic levels. European Commission's migrant integration statistics show that successful migrant integration occurs through labor, education, and active participation in society. (Union, 2017). Thus, acquiring the host country's language has become part of the curricula in many developed countries. (Extramiana, 2012)

5- Avoiding marginalization: new migrants often suffer discrimination, exploitation, hostility, and marginalization in the public rights and services sectors, such as banks, health clinics, and others. Learning the host country's language helps the migrants overcome these problems. (ardner-Chloros, 2016) Case studies carried out by Ontario Health Services aimed at engaging marginalized populations assure that lack of language proficiency is a marginalization barrier in the Ontario community. (Montesanti, 2017)

Second: Social impacts

1- Understanding the culture: Language is considered the direct carrier of culture and the primary tool by which citizens develop their understanding of it. It is also a crucial instrument by which expatriates develop their understanding of the new society's culture. (Selmer, 2015) Understanding the

host country's culture represents a significant milestone in the managerial ability in any workplace and trade. It helps identify cultural similarities and diversities, differences in general behaviors, and expectations of that given society and country. (Onyebuchi, 2019)

2- An instrument of promoting the nation's culture: language is an integral part of any culture and expresses its values. It plays an essential role in interpreting identity and a powerful engine of cultural transmission. The more a nation's language is used, the greater its culture, and if a language disappears, the culture of speakers of this language disappears as well. (Gelman, 2017). The relationship between language and culture is homogenous. Therefore, requiring expatriates to learn the host country's language could be a means to propagating the country's culture because language and culture are inseparable.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

Proposed solutions to obligate migrant workers to master the host country's language

Language is the facet of peoples with their different concepts and ideologies. Their adherence to it means they adhere to everything that protects their culture and loyalty to their lands. Therefore, every nation has to protect its own tongue from any distortion and alteration, not by only make policies, but by lay down some effective plan to achieve it. Part of those strategies are as follow:

First: To establish e-training courses to teach migrant workers basic words covering the essential topics in their daily situations.

Second: To introduce night, weekly, and summer e-language courses for migrant workers and require them to obtain certain scores in specified times to renew the contract.

Thirdly: To build some applications that can be useful for migrant workers to learn the host country's language.

Lastly: Employers should issue decisions forcing migrant workers to dedicate part of their free time to learning the host country's language.

These suggestions will definitely help to teach migrant workers a new language to improve their capabilities and build their confidence and communication skills. They also acquaint the workers with the host country's culture to facilitate their integration in the new society on the one hand and guard this language and its people's culture against neglect and extinction on the other.

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