

博士論文の要約

**Skilled migrants and workplace integration: The case of multinational
corporations in Japan**

広島大学大学院人間社会科学研究科

人文社会科学専攻

謝 金菊

While skilled migrants (SMs) are an increasingly valuable supply of human resources for domestic and multinational corporations (MNCs), they often face challenges in workplace integration. SMs are people who possess a minimum of a bachelor's degree or an equivalent qualification, and who have voluntarily relocated to another country to work and live, utilizing their own agency, with the intention of establishing long-term/permanent residency. Workplace integration occurs when people with different backgrounds perceive themselves as “insiders” and have equal career advancement opportunities in organizations. In terms of workplace integration, international business and management research provides a competency-oriented “mechanistic perspective” of motivation and competence-related issues on language and cultural competency. Making SMs largely responsible for their own workplace integration, research has given little attention to the socio-cultural and psychological effects of linguistic and cultural differences on SMs’ workplace integration in MNCs, especially in linguistically and culturally homogenous settings. Thus, this dissertation draws on the socio-cultural and psychological perspectives and interviews to examine

how and why language and cultural differences influence SMEs' workplace integration in local MNCs in Japan. By drawing on these perspectives, this dissertation advances the understanding of why and how SMEs encounter difficulties in workplace integrations in local MNCs.

This dissertation identifies three gaps in research on SMEs' workplace integration in MNCs. First, prior research has overlooked context-specific language differences – habitualized and cultural differences that reside within language use – that might influence SMEs' workplace integration. To date, research has focused primarily on general language proficiency. However, the general language proficiency often acquired through formal education and training might not guarantee SMEs' workplace integration because context-specific language differences are difficult for non-natives to diminish and are salient markers for social categorization and evaluation by local employees. Second, prior research has overlooked SMEs' perceptions of cultural identity threat – experiences appraised to pose a risk to the enactment, meanings, or value of peoples' original cultural identity – and the accompanied identity work in MNCs. Research on identity threats as well as the associated identity work might help to understand the psychological and social aspects of SMEs' workplace integration in MNCs. Third, prior research on SMEs' workplace integration is conducted mainly in culturally diverse Western countries where socio-cultural and socio-psychological effects of linguistic and cultural differences on SMEs' workplace integration are less salient. Research in a cultural and linguistic homogenous context helps to go beyond the competency-based discussion to understand the effects of linguistic and cultural differences on SMEs' workplace integration in local MNCs.

To partially fill these research gaps, this dissertation examines in three qualitative studies how and why socio-cultural and socio-psychological effects of linguistic and cultural differences influence SMs' workplace integration in local Japan-based MNCs. Study 1 adopts Bourdieu's theory of practice (1977) and conducts interviews with 142 SMs to explore how and why context-specific language differences such as accents, impact SMs to access and accumulate social capital (e.g., connections with coworkers) and economic capital (e.g., career advancement) within MNCs. This study demonstrates that context-specific language is legitimized as linguistic capital with symbolic power in the local context. In comparison to local employees who possess the linguistic habitus that aligns with the local context, SMs face challenges in attaining practical mastery of the local linguistic game's logic in part because they were born and raised in different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. The findings also demonstrate that the local's legitimation of the local's context-specific language capability as a tradable resource in the local cultural setting can lead to and sustain non-native speakers (SMs) unsuccessful workplace integration in MNCs.

Study 2 draws on the language attitude-based perspectives (e.g., Ryan & Giles, 1982) with interviews of 168 SMs to investigate how and why culture-related language differences influence SM's workplace integration in local Japan-based MNCs. The findings suggest that culture-related language differences (e.g., honorifics) increase the social categorization of SMs as outgroup members and negative evaluations by local employees in terms of their professional and managerial abilities. Despite being proficient in general language proficiency, the findings suggest that SMs' disadvantaged positions in local MNCs were sustained in part due to local employees' strict standards on the evaluation of SMs' culture-related

languages. In line with Study 1, this study highlights the influence of local employees' language attitudes on SMs' workplace integration.

Study 3 draws on the identity work perspectives (e.g., Petriglieri, 2011) and interviews with 163 SMs to examine their perceptions of cultural identity threats and how and why they use identity work to cope with cultural identity threats in local Japan-based MNCs. The study shows that SMs encounter cultural identity threats (e.g., value conflict) and respond to these threats by protective identity work (i.e., differentiating, detaching, distancing, and disengaging) or adaptive identity work (i.e., shifting, revising, extending, and suppressing). The findings suggest that SMs who adopt protective identity work tend to experience unsuccessful workplace integration, such as being detached from originations and local membership. Moreover, SMs who used adaptive identity work also faced unsuccessful workplace integration partly because of the low tolerance and acceptance of differences in local MNCs. This study highlights the difficulties for SMs to be integrated into local workplaces from the identity perspective and emphasizes the importance of taking the cultural practices of the receiving contexts into account to better understand SMs' workplace integration in MNCs.

This dissertation aims to make three contributions to the literature. First, it extends our understanding of how and why language affects SMs' workplace integration in MNCs. By doing so, the findings challenge the competency-based "mechanistic" perspectives demonstrating that context-dependent aspects of language influence SMs' workplace integration. Second, going beyond the competence-based discussion, the findings suggest that SMs' perceptions of the threats to their original cultural identity and identity work responses should also be considered because they influence SMs' workplace integration in MNCs. Third, the findings suggest that the

receiving context needs to be considered to understand SMs' micro-level workplace integration experience. While previous research on SMs' workplace integration is conducted predominately in Western countries with relatively high cultural diversity and focuses on SMs' motivation and competency, the findings demonstrate that in a cultural and linguistic homogenous context, the socio-cultural and socio-psychological aspects of linguistic and cultural differences influence SMs' workplace integration in local MNCs. The locals have strict evaluation standards towards SMs' linguistic and cultural differences, hindering SMs' workplace integration. By doing so, this dissertation answers scholars' calls for alternative and complementary insights into the Western-centric perspectives of language and culture.