

# Improving Workplace Safety Through Localized eLearning & Training



10 minute read time

*“When training materials are only delivered in one language, organizations risk creating gaps in understanding that can affect both employees and operations. Therefore, localizing e-learning ensures every global and national worker has access to the knowledge they need to perform their role safely and confidently.”*

**— David Gomez, Omni Intercommunications**




# Introduction

Modern workplaces in the U.S. bring together employees with a wide range of first languages and varying levels of proficiency in the primary language used for workplace communication. Of course, this diversity strengthens organizations in many ways; however, it also poses challenges when critical information must be clearly understood by all employees. According to recent data from the [Census Bureau's American Community Survey](#), more than 1 in 5 people (22%) aged five and older speak a language other than English at home during the survey period 2017–2021, representing tens of millions of residents across the United States. ([US Census Bureau](#)).

There are over 350 different languages spoken in the United States, meaning businesses must be aware of the dynamics and opportunities that arise ([US Census Bureau](#)). Good communication is the foundation of every safe and high-functioning organization, particularly in key areas such as workplace safety and compliance.

Recent research states that 50% of non-native English speakers don't understand their safety training ([CMR](#)). This raises concern since many policies, codes of conduct and materials are written primarily in a single language, so employees who are not fully fluent in that language can have trouble following complex procedural instructions or the necessary regulatory requirements.





Localizing eLearning and training materials offers a practical and effective solution to these challenges. Through adapting training and e-learning content into the necessary languages, you can massively improve comprehension amongst your global and national workforce.

**This ebook will:**

- Examine the risks that language barriers create in modern workplace training environments
- Explore how localized eLearning can improve safety outcomes and multilingual training
- Provide practical guidance on implementing effective multilingual training strategies for diverse and global workforces



# Language Diversity in the Modern Workplace

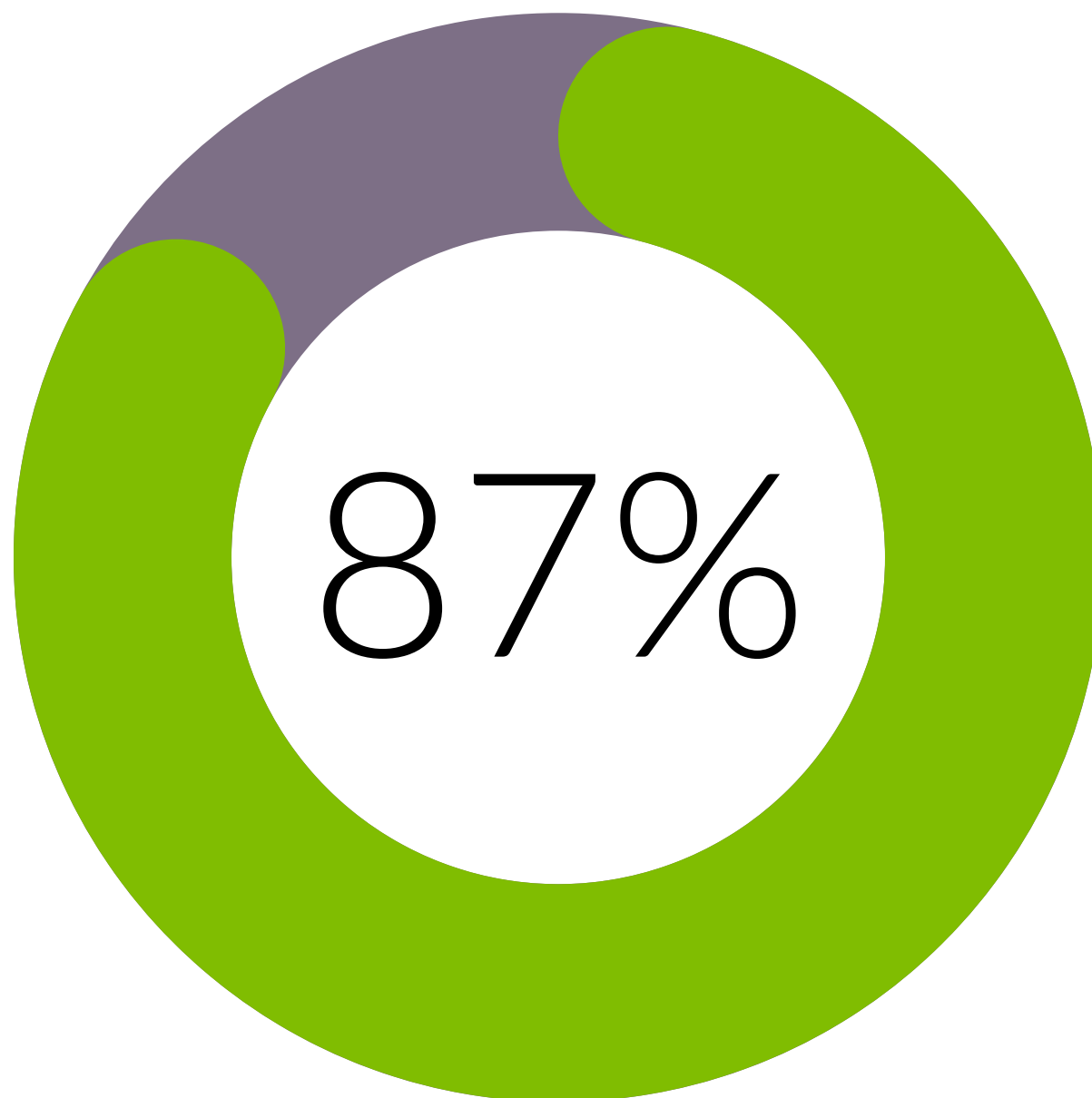
Modern American organizations are increasingly composed of multilingual and culturally diverse teams, both within their domestic and international workforces.

According to [UNESCO's World Atlas of Languages](#), there are 7,000 languages, spoken or signed, in use in the world today, although only a relatively small number are used across international business environments.

The Society for Human Resource Management ([SHRM](#)) reports that 90% of organizations now operate in more than one country, making communication across languages an essential aspect of workplace communication and training.




Research also suggests that diverse teams can bring measurable benefits. According to McKinsey, diverse teams outperform less diverse ones by 35% and are said to make better decisions 87% of the time\_([McKinsey, 2020](#)).



Diverse teams are said to make better business decisions 87% of the time.





A survey of more than 1,200 U.S. employers conducted by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages ([ACTFL](#)), found that nine out of ten employers report relying on employees with language skills other than English, highlighting the growing importance of multilingual communication in the modern workplace. Alongside this, the rise of remote work since the COVID-19 pandemic has made collaboration across geographic boundaries far more common. Combined with advances in global collaboration tools and international supply chains, organizations now interact with employees, partners and clients around the world daily.

Due to this, the need for accessible communication, multilingual e-learning and training increases massively. This trend is currently reflective of many workplace teams. Another study found that 63% of employees in the United Kingdom, for example, work with colleagues whose native language is not English. Here in the United States, 66% of employees report working with an employee whose native language is not English ([Software Advice](#)).

Together, these findings demonstrate how language diversity has become a routine feature of modern work environments and how teams composed of individuals with different backgrounds often demonstrate stronger problem-solving capabilities and collaboration.




# Language Barriers in Workplace Policies and Training

Half of non-native English speakers say that their company doesn't offer training in their native language ([Vector Solutions, 2024](#)).

Despite the growing diversity of the workforce, there are still plenty of organizations that continue to develop workplace documents in only one language, assuming that employees can understand all documentation.





E-learning platforms are now frequently used to deliver corporate training programs, covering areas such as onboarding, workplace conduct, compliance requirements and health and safety procedures. However, when training materials are designed for a single-language audience, employees who cannot speak that language may need to invest additional effort simply to grasp the language of the training itself, rather than focusing fully on the concepts being taught.

The effectiveness of training, therefore, depends not only on the quality of the content but also on its linguistic accessibility. When employees can engage with training materials in their language, it's proven that they are far more likely to absorb information and apply policies consistently in their daily work.


Language barriers can also affect how employees interpret formal workplace documentation. Legal and compliance materials often contain complicated phrasing and technical terminology that may be difficult for some to interpret accurately. As a result, communication gaps can arise that make it harder to resolve issues efficiently.



These challenges are particularly significant in high-risk industries where strong communication is needed for maintaining safe operations, such as:

- **Construction:** remaining clear on safety procedures, equipment instructions and hazard warnings.
- **Oil and Gas:** employees frequently work in hazardous environments involving heavy equipment, chemicals and strict safety procedures.
- **Manufacturing:** employees regularly operate complex machinery and follow detailed operational procedures.
- **Logistics:** when coordinating transportation, warehouse operations and the handling of goods.
- **Healthcare:** when following medical protocols, documenting patient information and responding to emergencies that could affect patient safety.





Emergency instructions and safety procedures must be easily understood to prevent accidents and ensure that workers can respond appropriately to hazards. Language barriers are cited as a contributing factor in 25% of workplace safety incidents ([OSHA](#)).

Workers may misinterpret instructions or overlook critical safety steps, increasing the likelihood of accidents.

In addition, employees may feel uncertain about how to raise concerns or escalate issues through official channels. Organizations that actively support language diversity and multilingual communication often experience measurable organizational benefits.

For example, companies with strong language diversity programs have been associated with 29% higher employee satisfaction and 19% lower turnover, while multilingual teams can generate up to 19% more revenue from innovation compared with less linguistically diverse organizations. ([Preply, 2026](#)).



# The Impact on Safety, Compliance and Incident Reporting

Language barriers in the workplace can affect organizational safety and reporting systems in several important ways, such as:

- Underreporting of workplace hazards and incidents
- Incorrect or incomplete safety reports
- Increased risks of workplace accidents
- Increased regulatory and compliance risk



**One of the most significant effects is the underreporting of workplace hazards and incidents.**

Employees who are not fully confident in their understanding of workplace policies or reporting procedures may hesitate to report issues. Research indicates that non-native speakers are significantly less comfortable raising safety concerns in the workplace, and a survey of more than 600 industrial workers conducted by [Vector Solutions](#) found that non-native English speakers were 127% more likely to report feeling uncomfortable reporting workplace hazards than native English speakers, both highlighting how language barriers can discourage this.

This can prevent organizations from identifying patterns of hazards, addressing unsafe conditions, or implementing corrective actions as soon as possible. Underreporting also reduces the effectiveness of internal safety management systems. Accuracy here is important for identifying causes, improving and preventing future incidents, meaning without clear communication across languages, organizations may lack the information needed to fully take in the scope of workplace risks.



**Language barriers can also affect the accuracy of incident reporting when employees attempt to raise issues but misunderstand forms.**

Here, workplace processes often require employees to describe events clearly, identify any hazards and document very specific procedural steps. However, we recognize that when employees are required to complete these processes in a second language, important details are likely to be missed or incorrect, delaying investigations and reducing the reliability of safety data collections.

**Language barriers can increase the risk of job-related incidents by limiting employees' knowledge of safety procedures.**

Research from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration ([OSHA](#)) estimates that language barriers are a contributing factor in approximately 25% of job-related accidents in the United States.

Misunderstandings can include confusion about equipment procedures or hazard warnings. For example, workers who miss safety instructions related to machinery and equipment may unintentionally place themselves or their colleagues at risk.



**Outside of immediate safety concerns, communication barriers can also create regulatory risks for the organizations themselves.**

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) states that employers must provide safety training “in a language and vocabulary that workers can understand,” ensuring that employees can fully comprehend workplace hazards and safety procedures ([OSHA](#)).

If training materials are delivered in a language that employees cannot reasonably comprehend, organizations may struggle to demonstrate compliance during regulatory inspections—leading to potential penalties if failing to do so.

In addition, ineffective communication may undermine the organization’s ability to demonstrate that employees have been adequately trained. Regulations governing workplace safety, ethics, data protection and harassment situations often require organizations to demonstrate that employees have been adequately informed and if training materials are not accessible to all employees, organizations may struggle to demonstrate that these requirements have been effectively met.



The consequences of workplace safety failures extend beyond individual incidents and can create significant financial impacts for organizations.

According to the National Safety Council, workplace injuries cost U.S. businesses an estimated \$176.5 billion annually, including lost productivity, medical expenses and administrative costs associated with injury management and prevention efforts. ([National Safety Council, 2026](#)).

As the next section will explore, addressing these challenges requires more than translating documents.

Effective solutions often involve the localization of training content, ensuring that policies, procedures and eLearning materials are adapted to the linguistic and cultural contexts of the workforce.




# Localization & Implementation in Multilingual Training

To address the communication challenges outlined in the previous sections, many organizations are turning to eLearning and multilingual training localization strategies.

Recent research indicates that nearly three-quarters (73%) of global enterprises are already translating training content to improve learning outcomes and employee performance ([RWS, 2024](#)).

Translation plays such an important role in making workplace training accessible across languages, focusing on converting text from one language into another. However, eLearning and workplace training materials often include specific terminology and contextual examples that may not directly translate across languages.





Localization goes further than direct, standard translation by adapting training content so that it is culturally appropriate for its intended audience.

In the context of workplace eLearning and training programs, localization helps employees engage with materials in a way that reflects their language, workplace contexts and learning preferences.

Studies also show that nearly 65% of employees demonstrate higher knowledge retention when training content is localized for their language and cultural context ([Global Growth Insights, 2026](#)).

The eLearning localization process may involve adapting terminology, adjusting examples to reflect regional work practices and modifying any visual or multimedia elements to improve overall clarity. This distinction is particularly important in modern training environments, since many corporate training programs are delivered through digital learning platforms and include interactive modules, video content, quizzes and scenario-based exercises.

Almost a third of employees are non-native speakers of their company's primary language, so for companies expanding across global markets, localizing eLearning content provides an effective way to make workplace training accessible for a diverse workforce.



According to The Association for Talent Development, 86% of organizations agree that localization improves their training effectiveness and 68% of organizations recognize the importance of localization and have adapted some or all of their e-learning content. ([Association for Talent Development, 2024](#)).

**Effective multilingual training requires a structured localization strategy. Organizations can begin by assessing the linguistic composition of their workforce through internal assessments or employee surveys.**

Recognizing the primary languages spoken across teams and locations helps determine which languages should be prioritized when localizing materials and policy documentation. They should also identify high-impact training content that would benefit most from localization.

Prioritizing these areas ensures that localization efforts address the most critical workplace communications first. Working with localization specialists can further support this process. Professional localization providers bring linguistic expertise as well as knowledge of industry terminology and regulatory requirements.



# Typical eLearning Localization Workflow

**Effective localization involves a structured workflow, meaning training content remains accurate and culturally relevant for all.**

Therefore, a well-defined process helps organizations maintain consistency, delivering a seamless learning experience for employees.

While workflows may vary depending on the scope of the project and the number of languages involved, most successful e-learning localization initiatives follow a series of core stages.





## 1. Content Analysis and Preparation

Our project managers evaluate factors such as the course structure, instructional design, and multimedia components to determine the work ahead.

**This stage may include identifying:**

- Source text for translation
- Video or audio narration requiring subtitles or voiceover
- On-screen text and graphical elements
- And interactive course components, such as quizzes

Just to note that preparing the content in advance helps streamline the process.

## 2. Linguistic Translation and Adaptation

Linguists translate the training materials into the target languages, making sure that terminology and instructional language remain clear for the intended audience.

Localizing e-learning content can be a complex process, as courses often contain many elements, including graphics, navigation menus, downloadable materials, narration, subtitles, assessments, and interactive features. Ensuring all of these components are accurately translated and adapted requires experienced linguists.

eLearning translation is supported by terminology glossaries and translation memory tools to maintain consistency.



### 3. Multimedia Localization

Many modern training programs contain audiovisual components such as narrated videos. These elements must also be adapted for international audiences.

#### **Multimedia localization covers:**

- Voiceover recording in the target language
- Subtitle creation and timing
- Audio synchronization with visual content
- Accessibility solutions, such as audio description and SDH

Ensuring that these elements also align with translated scripts is essential for creating a natural and engaging learning experience.

### 4. Design and Course Integration

This stage often involves multilingual desktop publishing (DTP) adjustments to ensure that translated text fits correctly within course layouts.

Since languages vary in length and structure, visual formatting may need to be adapted to maintain clarity and usability.

### 5. Quality Assurance and Testing

Linguistic reviewers verify translation accuracy and consistency, while technical teams test functionality within the learning management system (LMS).



# Omni Case Study: Allegion

**Allegion is a global security products and solutions provider operating in more than 120 countries.**

As part of its commitment to corporate ethics and integrity, the company needed to deploy a corporate ethics training program that could be understood clearly by employees across international locations.

Delivering this type of training globally presented several challenges. Allegion required a partner capable of delivering a seamless, production-ready eLearning experience. They needed a provider that could manage translation, multimedia and quality control within a single workflow.

Omni Intercommunications delivered a fully localized e-learning solution designed to support Allegion's global workforce.

## **Two key challenges shaped the project:**

First off, compliance training requires exact terminology and clarity. And, the training needed to feel natural in each region rather than appearing as a direct translation of U.S.-centric content.



Omni managed the entire eLearning localization process in-house, combining professional linguistic expertise with multimedia production and rigorous quality assurance.

### Key elements of the solution included:

- Translation of ethics training content by subject-matter linguists experienced in corporate governance and compliance
- Localization into six languages, ensuring cultural and regional relevance
- In-house production of localized audio, graphics, and course assets
- Centralized quality control to ensure consistency across all language versions

By handling translation and production under one roof, Omni eliminated handoffs, reduced risk and ensured a smooth learner experience.

Siz hangisine katılıyorsunuz?

Gerçekten Önemli Mi?

Ela, yasalara, kurallara ve yönetmeliklere uymaya devam edebilmek için Davranış Kurallarındaki belirli ayrıntıları bilmemiz gerektiğini vurguladı.

Konur hiçbir belgenin bilincimizin veya kişisel dürüstüğümüzün yerini alamayacağını savundu.

Ela ve Konur, Davranış Kurallarının işlerindeki rolü konusunda farklı görüşlere sahip. Kimin görüşüne katılıyorsunuz?

Tek bir doğru yanıt seçin ve Bitti'ye tıklayın.

Ela

Konur

Her ikisi de

Hiçbiri

Bitir Sıfırla

MEND çıkış KAYNAKLAR TRANSKRİPT DURAKLA TEKRAR OYNAT GERİ SONRAKI



# Conclusion

**Localization should be treated as an ongoing process and organizations can evaluate training effectiveness by gathering employee feedback, monitoring completion rates and reviewing safety and compliance metrics.**

Throughout this eBook, it has been shown that language barriers can significantly affect how employees follow workplace policies, engage with training programs and participate in processes like incident reporting and compliance procedures.

Localized e-learning and training programs provide a practical and scalable solution to these challenges. Organizations can improve comprehension and strengthen engagement with learning content while ensuring that safety procedures and compliance requirements are clearly grasped across the workforce.

Now, it's clear that the importance of accessible training will only grow, meaning organizations that integrate localization into their eLearning strategies today will be better positioned to create safer, more inclusive and more effective working environments in the future.

**Ultimately, making sure that every employee, regardless of their background, can fully understand the information that shapes their work environment also results in long-term success.**

