

HIDDEN
STRUGGLES OF
THE NON-NATIVE
SPEAKER IN
ACADEMIA





ISSUES TO BE DISCUSSED
AFFECT NOT ONLY NON-NATIVE
ENGLISH SPEAKERS, BUT
ANYONE WHO MOVES FOR WORK
TO SOMEWHERE WHOSE
LANGUAGE IS NOT THEIR OWN.



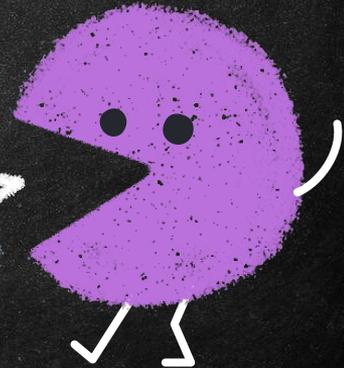
HOW MANY NON-NATIVE
ENGLISH SPEAKERS DO WE
HAVE WITHIN THE
ASTROPHYSICS GROUP?

VEVOX: 117-347-371

vevox.app

or

<https://www.vevox.com/>



TWO VEVOX SESSIONS

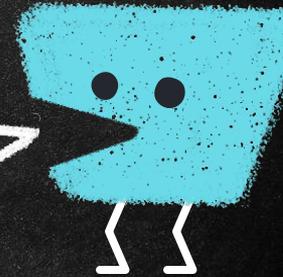
Native speakers:

117-347-371

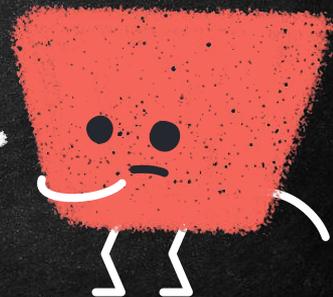


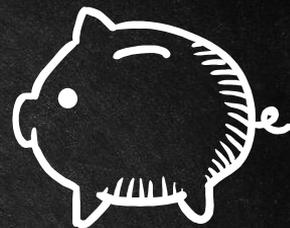
Non-native speakers:

158-263-735

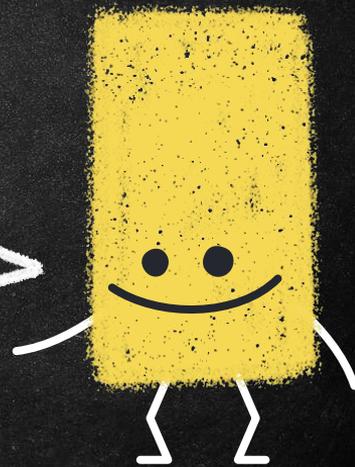
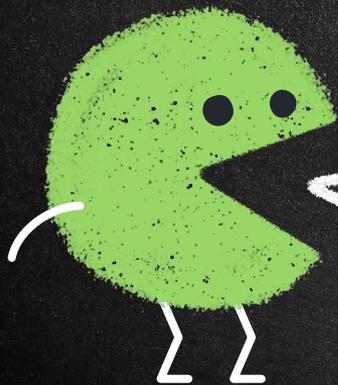


- FINANCIAL BURDEN
- TIME INVESTMENT
- WORSENING OF ALREADY EXISTING PROBLEMS
- PERCEPTION OF ACCENTS
- CULTURAL COMPLEXITY AND SUBTLETIES
- COUNTRIES WHOSE LANGUAGE IS NOT ENGLISH CAN BE LESS INCLUSIVE



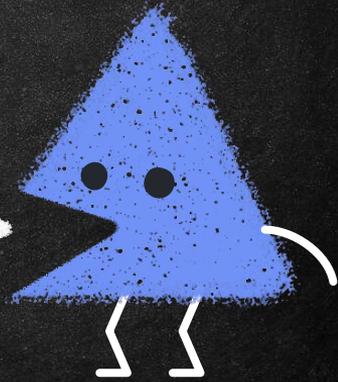


FINANCIAL BURDEN



FINANCIAL BURDEN

- Learning a language costs money... but that's just the start!



FINANCIAL BURDEN

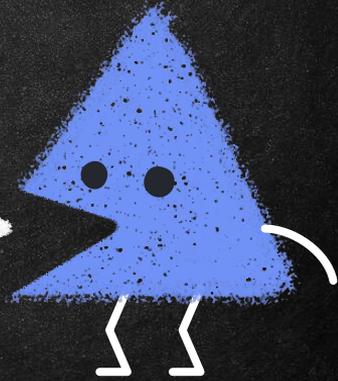
→ Some visa types require an English certification.

How much do you think that costs?

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Native speakers #117-347-37

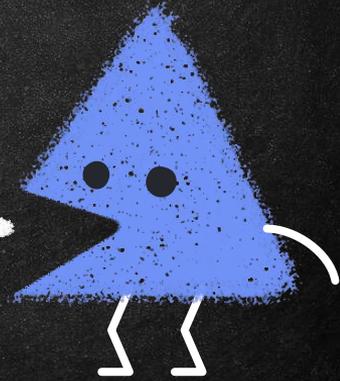
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FINANCIAL BURDEN

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BRL R\$ 995,00 (Monthly salaries: BSc: R\$ 400; MSc: R\$ 1400; PhD: R\$ 2200)



FINANCIAL BURDEN

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- People often have to travel to do that = more money.

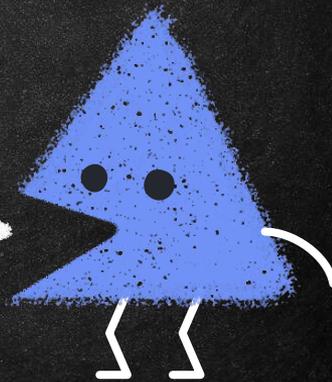
Register your IELTS Test for UKVI

*Start by selecting your Country/Territory:

Brazil

- Select Location -

✓ Sao Paulo

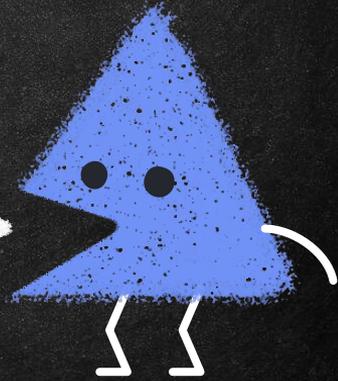


FINANCIAL BURDEN

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"Long waits for English-proficiency tests have also vexed Stefan Bon, a chemical engineer at the University of Warwick in Coventry, UK. Last year, **one of his postdocs had to travel from Germany to the Netherlands to take the test, and the whole process** — scheduling it, taking it and waiting for the results — **took almost six months.**"

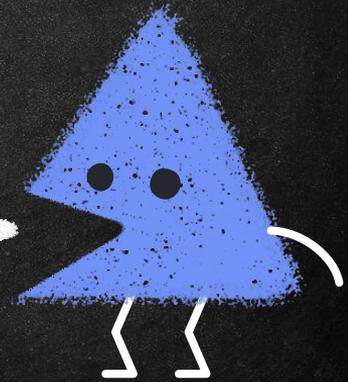
From: <https://www.nature.com/articles/nj7643-139a>



FINANCIAL BURDEN

- For students in particular, official translation of documents (certificates, transcripts) is also required.

Number of Pages	Translation Cost	Standard Certification Cost	Delivery Time
2	£175 + VAT	£10 + VAT	3-4 working days



FINANCIAL BURDEN

→ And that's all on top of visa fees...

Study - applications made outside the UK			
Fees category	Current Fee	New fee from 6 April 2022 (unless noted in fee category)	Fee Change
Student - main applicant and dependants	£348	£363	£15



FINANCIAL BURDEN

→ And that's all on top of visa fees...

...and (for the UK) health surcharge fees.

Cost for a year

You'll have to pay:

- £470 per year for a student or [Youth Mobility Scheme](#) visa, for example £940 for a 2-year visa
- £470 per year for visa and immigration applicants who are under the age of 18 at time of application
- £624 per year for all other visa and immigration applications, for example £3,120 for a 5-year visa



FINANCIAL BURDEN

- Situation is worsened for people moving with family! Total cost can easily reach a few thousand pounds... *all to be paid before moving.*

"When various charges, such as those for obtaining sponsorship documents, are tallied, **a five-year visa for highly skilled work costs about £16,000 (US\$21,000) for a researcher with a family of five**"

From: <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-018-05632-w>

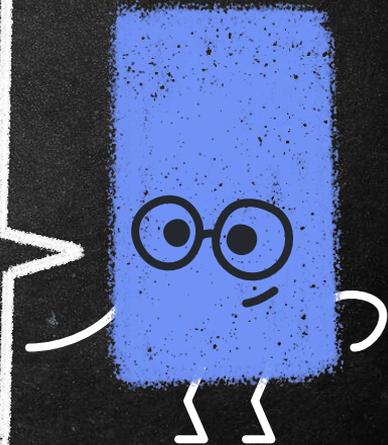


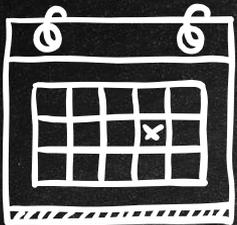
FINANCIAL BURDEN: HOW TO HELP

- Be aware of the situation, bring it up when hiring someone from overseas.
- Tell people about Warwick's relocation package:

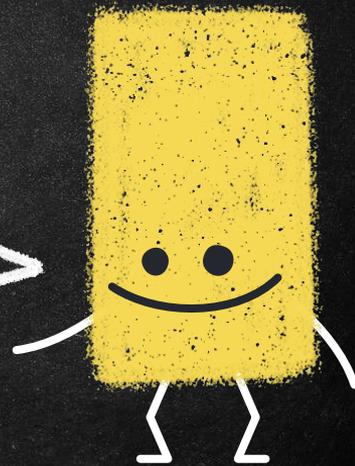
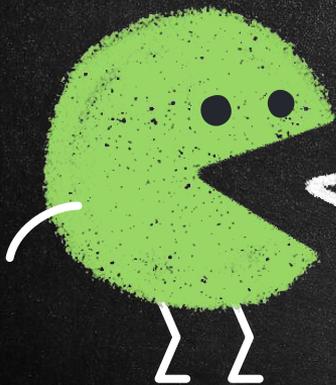
<https://warwick.ac.uk/services/humanresources/internal/payroll/expenses/relocation/>

- Put pressure on 'the powers that be' to change things...





TIME INVESTMENT

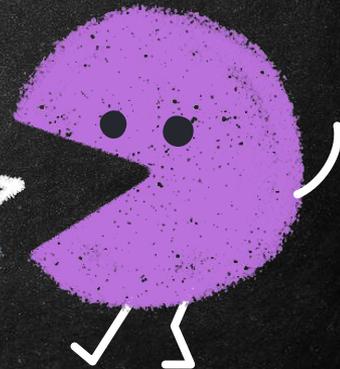
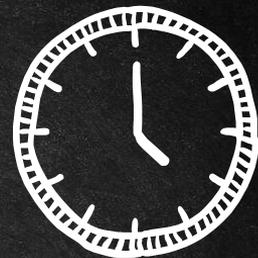


TIME INVESTMENT

Learning and adapting to a **new culture** is a long process

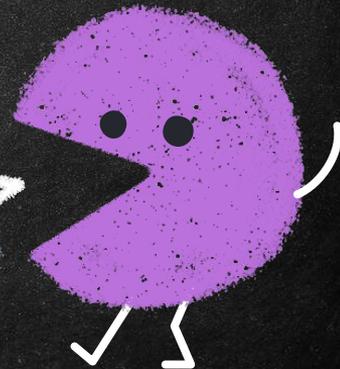
→ **Learning a new language** is hard

- Applies to **non-native English** speakers, but also anyone moving to a **new country** where they speak a different language than their mother tongue(s).
- Language courses, learning on your own.
- Need time to learn, to process information.
- Language certifications / exams.



TIME INVESTMENT

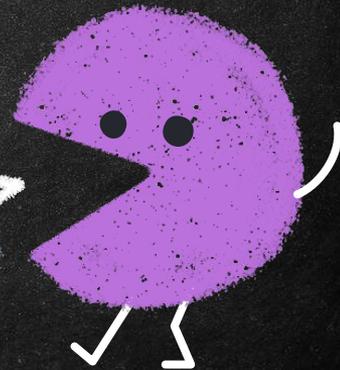
- Scientific / informal language: need both
 - Articles, formal communication with colleagues, job applications...
 - Social activities
- Bureaucracy (mostly related to financial burden)
 - Official document translation
 - Visas



TIME INVESTMENT

Work environment is in English → Anything work-related can take longer

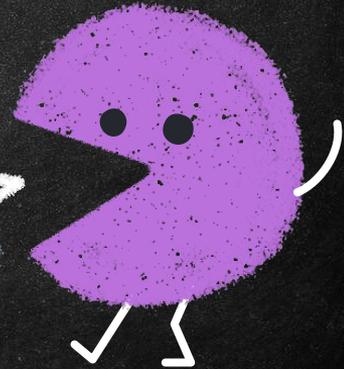
- Reading / writing articles, applications, proposals
- Sending emails, communication, overthinking
- Preparing talks
- Teaching: presentations, handouts, tests



TIME INVESTMENT

Also *outside of work*

- Visiting family/friends back home can take longer.
- All holiday time = family visiting. If not, can feel guilty, mental health?
- Travel constraints / requirements
 - Different in home / residence / destination country
 - Not being able to travel at all



WORSENING
OF ALREADY
EXISTING
PROBLEMS



IMPOSTER SYNDROME

- Not being able to explain what you mean and/or formulate an idea/question like you want to
- Struggling when trying to follow a talk
- Is using simple English going to make me sound stupid?



ANXIETY



- Social situations
 - Asking & answering questions
 - Networking
 - Giving talks
 - Having to repeat sentences
- Loud locations, multiple conversations
- Non-work life: calling doctor's etc.



PHYSICAL DISABILITIES



- Having to set up a whole new support network in your non-native language
- Figuring out a new health care system
 - Do I get the same care/medication/etc. that I'm used to/that I need?
 - Explain your medical history again, in your 2nd language

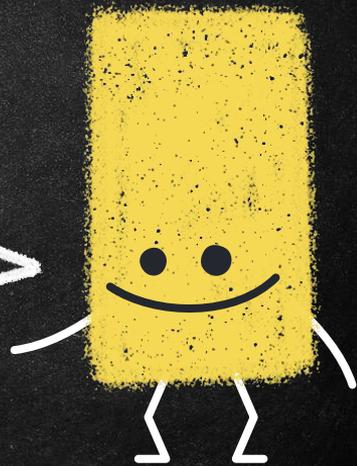


SO MANY MORE ...

- Dyslexia
- Neurodiversity
- Deafness, blindness
- Any chronic illness
- Mental health
- Homesickness
- ...



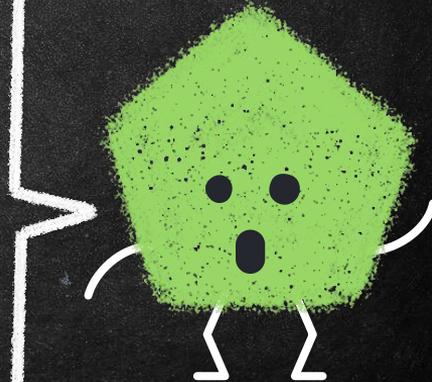
PERCEPTION OF ACCENTS



PERCEPTION OF ACCENTS

Accents: Distinctive variations in the pronunciation of a language.

- Provide information about a person's **background** (locality, socio-economic status, ethnicity).
- Shape our **perception** of people.
- Can lead to stereotype-based **judgement** & **discrimination**.



HOW MUCH INFLUENCE DO YOU THINK
YOUR ACCENT HAS IN THE WAY
PEOPLE PERCEIVE YOU?

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Native Speakers: 117-347-371

Non-Native Speakers: 158-263-735

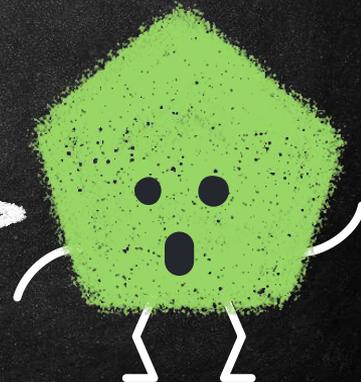


HOW MUCH INFLUENCE DO YOU THINK
OTHER PEOPLE'S ACCENT HAVE IN THE
WAY YOU PERCEIVE THEM?

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PERCEPTION OF ACCENTS



You don't **look** like a scientist.

You don't **sound** like a scientist.



PERCEPTION OF ACCENTS

This seems to be a subjective topic and research seems to lead to different conclusions, but based on our experiences and a quick read of some papers...

- An accent can have more influence on how we are perceived than the way we look.
- Strong-accented speakers can be perceived more negatively than speakers with native accents.
- **Perception depends on the listener's** own background and accent.
- Awareness and more exposure to different accents can reduce biases.



PERCEPTION OF ACCENTS

Other than how we are perceived, sometimes an accent can make simple **communication difficult**.

If a speaker has an accent we are not used to, or if we have an accent we think won't be understood easily, it is harder to:

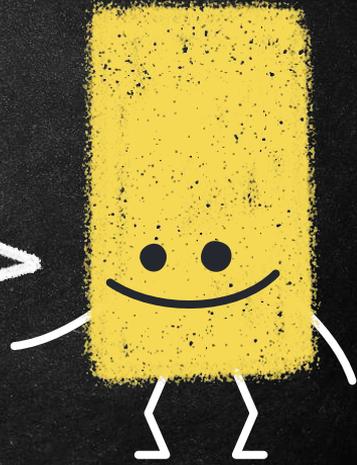
- Follow a seminar / conference talk / lecture
- Ask / answer questions
- Have informal conversations
- Do anything involving oral communication

This can have negative consequences:

- Less citable work
- Less networking
- Less collaborations
- Bad feedback from students / supervisors



CULTURAL
COMPLEXITY
AND
SUBTLETIES

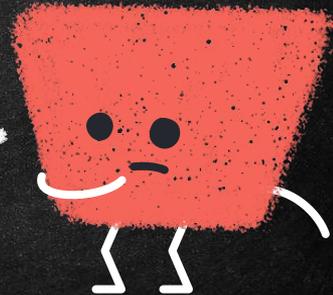


WHAT DO YOU THINK COULD BE AN
ISSUE WHEN IT COMES TO CULTURAL
DIFFERENCES?

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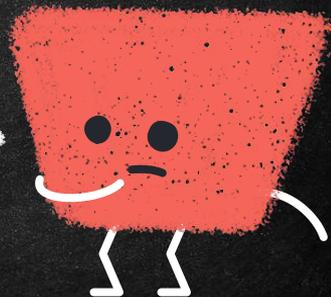
WHAT DO YOU THINK COULD BE AN ISSUE WHEN IT COMES TO CULTURAL DIFFERENCES?

LANGUAGE SUBTLETIES E.G.

"THIS IS SHIT" VS "THIS IS THE SHIT"

OR ACCENTUATION

"I DIDN'T STEAL YOUR BAG"



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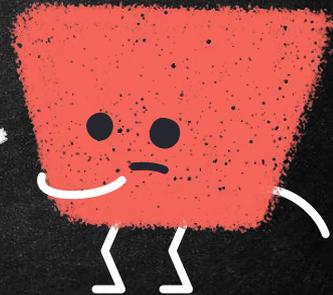
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CONVERSATIONS AT LUNCH/PUBS:

- CROSSWORDS
- TOO LOUD
- VERY DRAINING
- MORE THAN ONE CONVERSATION HAPPENING AT ONCE



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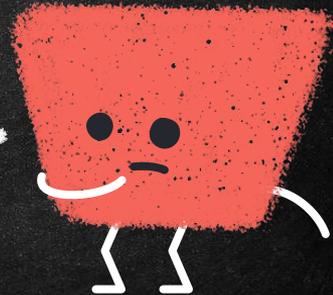
EMAIL CONVENTIONS:

FROM VERY FORMAL (GERMANY, SPAIN) TO VERY INFORMAL (BRAZIL)

FROM VERY DIRECT (GERMANY) TO VERY INDIRECT (UK)

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NON-WORK LIFE:

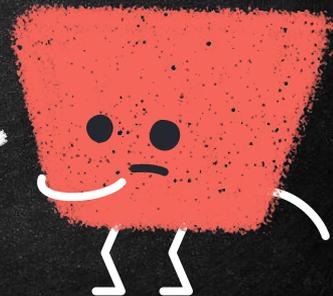
COMPLICATED IN ITS OWN WAY

E.G. COUNCIL TAX, FOOD, GPs,
GETTING A BANK ACCOUNT, ETC.

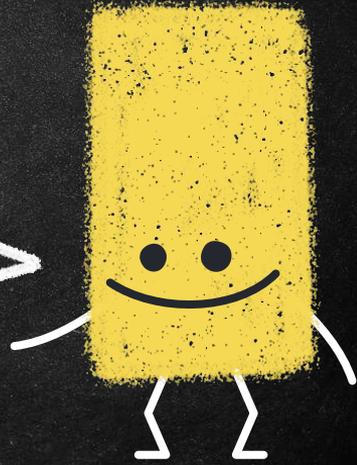


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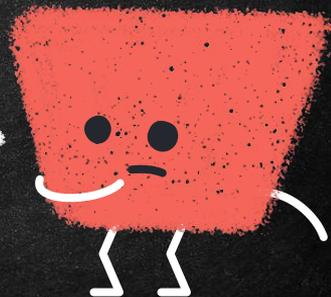
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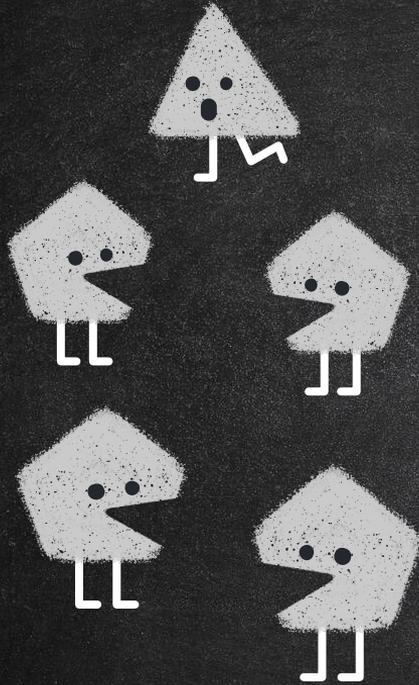
COUNTRIES
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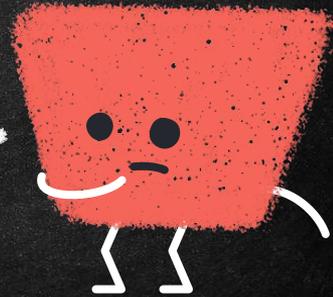
WHEN ENGLISH IS NOT THE LANGUAGE...



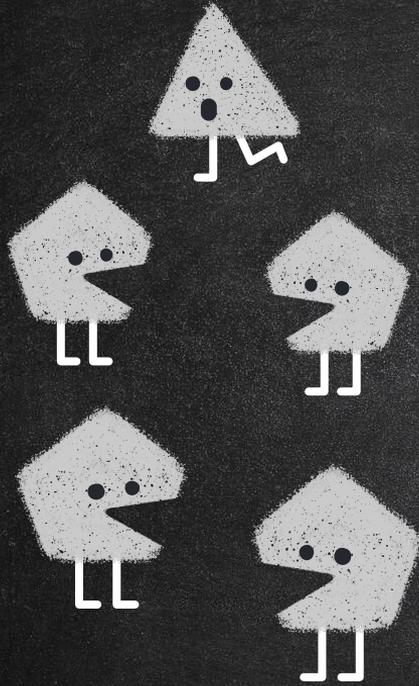
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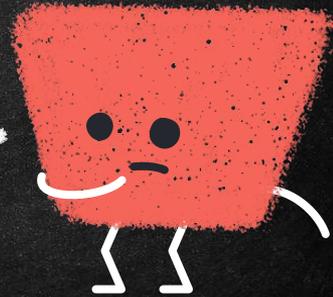
→ Even if the work is done in English, socialising is often done in the native language.



WHEN ENGLISH IS NOT THE LANGUAGE...



- Even if the work is done in English, socialising is often done in the native language.
- This can lead to a feeling of isolation.

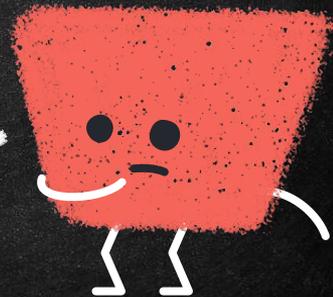


HAVE YOU EVER FELT ISOLATED DUE TO
A LANGUAGE BARRIER?

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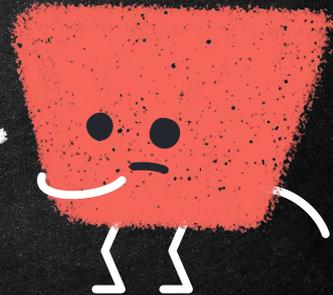


WHICH SITUATIONS DO YOU THINK
COULD LEAD TO A FEELING OF
ISOLATION FOR THOSE WHO ARE
NON-NATIVE SPEAKERS?

vevox

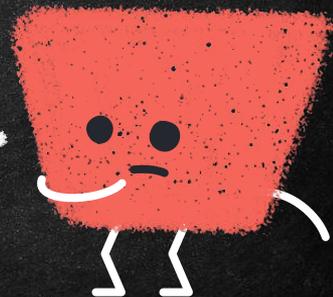
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WHEN ENGLISH IS NOT THE LANGUAGE...

- And often, all paperwork and bureaucracies are also only in the local language.



WHEN ENGLISH IS NOT THE LANGUAGE...

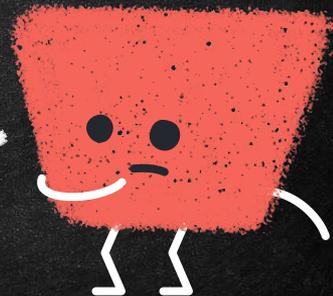
Liebe Kolleginnen und Kollegen,

am Mittwoch, 12.02.2020 findet um 13:00 Uhr in Haus 27,
Raum 2.27.1.001 (Kleiner Chemiehörsaal) eine

allgemeine Sicherheitsunterweisung

statt. Die Teilnahme ist für alle Kolleg*innen auf
Haushaltsstellen verpflichtend. Nichtdeutschsprachige
Postdocs u. ä. auf Drittmittelverträgen können durch
den jeweiligen dienstvorgesetzten Professor die Sicher-
heitsunterweisung erhalten.

→ Mandatory safety briefing... but
only if you can speak German.



HOW TO HELP

- Offer help with local bureaucracies.
- Tell people about resources available.
- Check if university offers language courses and inform newcomers.
- Try to include the person in conversations.
- Minimise the use of local slang, and explain it if necessary.
- Speak slowly if needed.

