

**ARE ENGLISH-ONLY WORKPLACE RULES HERE TO STAY? AN EXAMINATION OF THE
SOCIOLINGUISTIC EVIDENCE AND THE ACCOMPANYING LEGAL ENVIRONMENT**

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ABSTRACT

As workers are increasingly crossing international boundaries employers must make crucial decisions regarding how they accommodate the language preferences of an ethnically assorted workforce. Based on recent Census data, it is clear that the U.S. workforce is increasingly becoming culturally and linguistically diverse. As our workforce grows more culturally varied, so do the legal complexities involved in managing this workforce. This paper juxtaposes the speaking of languages other than English in the workplace with the growing contemporary trend of employer enforced English-only policies. In this paper, the authors examine this phenomenon from a sociolinguistic perspective (social relationships, code-switching, and subject matter proficiency) while appraising trends in English-only employment litigation and regulation. The authors follow this review with suggestions for employers to effectively manage a multilingual workplace.

Keywords: *English-only, workplace, discrimination, linguistic*