

Faculti Summary

<https://faculti.net/communication-effort-and-the-cost-of-language/>

This video video discusses a research paper that investigates how communication friction affects the quality of information transmission, focusing on two primary channels: incentives and exogenous constraints.

The paper highlights that communication friction can arise when information holders lack incentives to share information optimally or face external constraints—like language barriers—that hinder effective communication. The study specifically examines these issues in the context of knowledge platforms, particularly Stack Overflow, which has introduced versions in various languages to accommodate non-English speakers.

Key findings include:

1. Allowing users to communicate in their native language significantly improves the quality of their contributions, increasing coding snippets in responses by 21%.
2. When quality incentives are simultaneously present, the communication quality can further increase to 118%.
3. New users who participate only when their native language is available tend to produce lower quality answers compared to users who were already active in English, suggesting that these less-expert participants may dilute overall content quality.

The implications suggest that platforms should allow users to communicate in their native languages to enhance information quality. However, a balance must be struck, as this openness may invite less knowledgeable users, requiring effective moderation to maintain content quality. The findings underscore the importance for organizations to consider communication frictions when forming multinational teams, highlighting the need for strategies that accommodate diverse language capabilities.