How Does Using a Non-Native Language Influence Consumer Response to Service Failure?

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The rise in global mobility leads to an increasing number of consumers experiencing services in a language other than their native one, but when these services fail, the impact of language on consumer responses remains underexplored. We conducted three pre-registered experiments (N=1,079) across a wide range of language combinations to test the effect of using a non-native versus native language on responses to service failures. Building on research demonstrating that using a non-native language impacts cognitive processing, our findings reveal that consumers using a non-native language are more optimistic about future service improvements following a failure. This increased optimism positively influences behavioral intentions, including willingness to revisit and recommend the service. By examining how language impacts response to service failure, this research offers insights into the cognitive processes underlying decisions in different languages, with practical implications for consumers, marketers, and policymakers.