Managing communications in multilingual workplaces

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Handbook of Management Communication

Handbooks of Applied Linguistics

Communication Competence
Language and Communication Problems
Practical Solutions

Editors
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Handbook of Management Communication

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Preface to the Handbooks of Applied Linguistics Series

The present handbook constitutes Volume 16 of the De Gruyter Mouton *Handbooks of Applied Linguistics*. This series is based on an understanding of Applied Linguistics as an inter- and transdisciplinary field of academic enquiry. The *Handbooks of Applied Linguistics* provide a state-of-the-art description of established and emerging areas of Applied Linguistics. Each volume gives an overview of the field, identifies most important traditions and their findings, identifies the gaps in current research, and gives perspectives for future directions.

In the late 1990s when the handbook series was planned by its Founding Editors Gerd Antos and Karlfried Knapp, intensive debates were going on as to whether Applied Linguistics should be restricted to applying methods and findings from linguistics only or whether it should be regarded as a field of interdisciplinary synthesis drawing on psychology, sociology, ethnology and similar disciplines that are also dealing with aspects of language and communication. Should it be limited to foreign language teaching or should it widen its scope to language-related issues in general? Thus, what *Applied Linguistics* means and what an Applied Linguist does was highly controversial at the time.

Against this backdrop, Gerd Antos and Karlfried Knapp felt that a series of handbooks of Applied Linguistics could not simply be an accidental selection of descriptions of research findings and practical activities that were or could be published in books and articles labeled as “applied linguistic”. Rather, for them such a series had to be based on an epistemological concept that frames the status and scope of the concept of Applied Linguistics. Departing from contemporary Philosophy of Science, which sees academic disciplines under the pressure to successfully solve practical everyday problems encountered by the societies which aliment them, the founding editors emphasized the view that was only emerging at that time – the programmatic view that Applied Linguistics means the solving of real world problems with language and communication. This concept has become mainstream since.

In line with the conviction that Applied Linguistics is for problem solving, we developed a series of handbooks to give representative descriptions of the ability of this field of academic inquiry and to provide accounts, analyses, explanations and, where possible, solutions of everyday problems with language and communication. Each volume of the *Handbooks of Applied Linguistics* series is unique in its explicit focus on topics in language and communication as areas of everyday problems and in pointing out the relevance of Applied Linguistics in dealing with them.

This series has been well received in the academic community and among practitioners. In fact, its success has even triggered competitive handbook series by other publishers. Moreover, we recognized further challenges with language and communication and distinguished colleagues keep on approaching us with proposals to edit

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further volumes in this handbook series. This motivates both De Gruyter Mouton and the series editors to further develop the *Handbooks of Applied Linguistics*.

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Daniel Perrin (Zürich), Editor
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François Cooren and Peter Stücheli-Herlach

Introducing

In recent scholarship, management has been understood not only as a field of formalized and instrumental action but also, in a broader sense, as a communicative practice of formal and informal conversation, text production, process stabilization, collective problem solving, identity formation, and value creation in modern organizations. The assertion that management and communication are deeply entangled results from of a shift from a scientific-technical approach to a practice perspective on management, a shift that took place during the last three decades (Holman and Thorpe 2003b; Rüegg-Stürm and Grand 2015: 48–54) and has led researchers to recognize the key role communication plays in the various spheres of action that characterize managing (Mintzberg [2009] 2011: 43–96).

1 The notion of *management communication*

To highlight this processual, discursive, and embodied aspect of management communication, each chapter of this handbook (including this one!) begins with a verb in the gerund form. We invited each contributor to focus on what people *do* when managing, an activity that, as we know since Mintzberg's (1973) landmark contribution, essentially consists of communicating. Why is communication and why are the linguistic features of this process so important in the activity of managing? To answer this question, we just have to reflect on the etymology and definition of the term itself. The verb "to manage" comes from the Latin noun *manus*, which means 'hand'. The word was originally used to speak about the handling or training of a horse, hence, the French term *manège*, which means both horsemanship and the place where these exercises occur.

We understand from this etymology why people tend not to like to be managed, as nobody likes to be treated like a horse in need of training! But what is important in this etymology is the role hands are supposed to play in this activity. Somebody who handles or, so to speak, manages a horse has to deal with a beautiful creature that could easily unseat its rider. This explains why control is always relative and finite; when thinking about control, the *autonomy* of what or who is being managed has to be taken into consideration. Handling a situation, for instance, means that we are dealing with it, that we are in charge of it, and that we might even be able to control it to some extent. However, this also implies that this situation needs to be constantly attended to and taken care of. The image of the rider who handles her horse implies that managing is a continuous *work of communication* (Kuhn, Ashcraft, and Cooren 2017).

In its multiple usages, the verb *to manage* always expresses the difficult character of this activity. For instance, *The Cambridge Dictionary* (Cambridge University Press) offers the following definitions:

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> To succeed in doing or dealing with something, especially something difficult (e. g., Did you manage to get any bread?)
> To succeed in living on a small amount of money (e. g., After she lost her job, they had to manage on his salary.)
> To be able to attend or do something at a particular time (e. g., Let's meet tomorrow – I can manage)
> To be responsible for controlling or organizing someone or something, especially a business or employees (e. g., Has he had any experience of managing large projects?)

As we see, managing is not an easy task and can even sometimes take the form of a miracle. Usually, it is treated as a "controversial black box" (Rüegg-Stürm and Grand 2015: 26–27). It is little wonder managers need to communicate, because communicating is the only way they can try to minimally frame and control a situation before it gets out of hand. This handbook is thus also meant to rehabilitate the activity of "managing", which is often negatively compared with other, more noble ones such as leading, for instance. Even so-called leaders have to manage situations, as Kevin Barge aptly reminds us in one of the chapters of this volume. *Man*-aging does imply some forms of *mani*-pulation (after all, both terms share the same Latin root *manus*). However, this is the price we have to pay when we work and live together. Furthermore, handling a situation does not necessarily imply that we manage it unethically. Managing is certainly not the solution to everything. At some point, it might indeed be healthier or wiser to let things get out of hand. But management has its own merits as a communicative and thus discursive practice (Cooren 2015), and that is what this handbook is trying to demonstrate.

2 The shift to the practice and linguistic perspective

As we will see, the practice perspective we would like to put forward in this handbook is neither the result of a single scholar's work nor a consistent theoretical or methodological approach (Bourdieu 1973; Schatzki 2001; Hillebrandt 2014; Nicolini 2012; Schäfer 2013). Rather, it is characterized by a set of epistemic assumptions that underlie several conceptualizations. For example, these assumptions include the context-dependent nature of human activities and their ability to transform situations in a sense that "knowing and doing and means and ends are not held to be separate and distinct entities" (Holman and Thorpe 2003b: 5; see also Joas 1996: 218–242 as well as Philippe Lorino's contribution in this handbook). Furthermore, these assumptions take for granted the embodied, mediated, discursive, and reflective constitution of practices as well as the fact that there is never "a practice" as a singular object of research, but rather and always an "array" of practices that form a "field of practices" (Schatzki 2001: 2; see also Hillebrandt 2014: 59). Thereby, language use and communication are more generally key phenomena because discourse in interaction is seen as "a type of activity" that plays a constitutive role for practices, which are "organized around shared practical understandings" (Schatzki 2001: 3).

The shift toward the practice perspective on management was made possible by specific theoretical and methodological strands in the fields of organizational studies, management studies, and organizational communication. These include social constructivism (Weick 2001; Berger and Luckmann 1966), the ethnography of managerial work or managing (Mintzberg 1971, 2011), the interpretive approach (Burrell and Morgan [1979] 2016; Putnam and Pacanowsky 1983), the processual turn (Langley 1999, 2009; Hernes and Maitlis 2010; Rüegg-Stürm and Grand 2015), as well as the communication as constitutive of organization (CCO) approach (Putnam and Nicotera 2009; Robichaud and Cooren 2013; Brummans et al. 2014; Schoeneborn et al. 2014).

Modern management has been historically characterized by an explicit focus on the cognitive processes of decision making (Simon 1957). As Philippe Lorino (2014), points out, it is time to advocate research that investigates not only practice but also *management as practice*. Thereby, management must be understood as more than the practice of individual actors such as leaders (Bennis 1989; Mintzberg 2011), and the notion of management must not be reduced to the implementation of specific strategic instruments (Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, and Lampel 1998). In contrast to the management at the top or in the center of an organization, the notion of *management communication* leads us to think of management as something that occurs not only *at the top* or *in the center*, but mainly *throughout* an organization (Mintzberg 2011: 125).

It is a permanent, networked, and linguistically performed practice, one that deals with the uncertain development of activities, stakes, and valuations with the aim of organized *value creation* (Rüegg-Stürm and Grand 2015: 30–37) where the idea of value should not be reduced to its monetary and financial dimensions (Grand 2016: 66–148). In this sense, it is a field of socially distributed sensemaking (Weick 2001; Holman and Thorpe 2003a) and collective action (Lorino 2014; and Philippe Lorino in this handbook) to which all members of an organization potentially contribute.

3 Discursive agency and applied linguistics

Over the past thirty years, this practice perspective has revealed social and communicative aspects of management that had previously been underestimated. This, in turn, has led to an increasing interest in the communicative, linguistic, and discursive features of management practices. One might call this a communicative, linguistic, or discursive turn in the study of organizations and their management (Becker-Mrotzek and Fiehler 2002; Cooren 2015; Grant et al. 2004; Holman and Thorpe 2003b; Müller 2008; Shotter and Cunliffe 2003; Tietze, Cohen, and Mussen 2003; Westwood and Linstead 2001). However, these turns should not be interpreted as an attempt to reduce organizational life to communicative, discursive, and linguistic matters only.

Theoretical specifications and empirical evidence have so far been summarized under several key terms such as the interactional, contextual, improvisational, episodic, and multifunctional aspects of managerial performances, which contribute to the "handling" of an organization (Trujillo 1983). Others speak of controlling the situation and networking (Spranz-Fogasy 2002), of practical authorship (Shotter and Cunliffe 2003), of metaconversation (Taylor and Robichaud 2007), or even of multicommunicating (Reinsch 2008). In general, management communication also tends to be associated with the implementation of communicative roles on diverse planes of an organization (Mintzberg 2011: 48), or the enactment of the organization within its environment on distinctive levels of corporate governance and executive management, for instance (Rüegg-Stürm and Grand 2015, based especially on Weick 2001).

In all these variations of the practical performance of management communication, the use of language plays a key role. Schatzki (2001: 3) describes it as the driver of social structures and institutions. Accordingly, we understand the use of language as the "discursive agency" of management communication (Cooren 2000; Cooren et al. 2014: 4; Cooren 2015; Stücheli-Herlach 2018: 118–126). Thereby, it is neither the social status nor the hierarchical level of a "sender" that determines the *a priori* performance of managerial practices by linguistic means, but rather the interactive viability of the connections between roles, voices, artifacts, cognitive schemes, etc. that are manufactured by discursive acts and their linguistic performance.

Thus, in this sense, language use can be modeled in diverse ways (for an overview see also Tietze, Cohen, and Mussen 2003). For instance, it can be described and understood as "the performance of speech acts" (Austin 1962; Searle 1979) or "situated symbolic actions" in general (Heracleous 2006). It can be described and understood as the use of specific linguistic "form-meaning-use dynamic patterns" in the complex systems of real-life situations on various levels and in different modes of social interaction (Larsen-Freeman and Cameron 2008: 82). It can be modeled as the emergence of mediated forms (or "genres") of communication in the frame of "communication households" (Luckmann 2009). It can be seen as the emergence of collective meaning and agency in the course of "imbricating conversation" and text production in organizations (Taylor and Van Every 2011: 28–32). It can even be understood as the reproduction and transformation of discursive formations such as cognitive schemes and narratives (Boje 2008).

In this broader framework, the authors of this handbook chose their own specific approaches. This theoretical and methodological diversity is a characteristic of applied linguistics, which does not see itself as an autonomous discipline, but as a diverse, multi-perspective practice of "'doing linguistics' related to the real-life world" (Knapp and Antos 2014: xiii). Just as the objects of applied linguistics are only found in fragmentary and defective shape, the research of applied linguistics is not characterized by a compelling coherence, but by its relation of different critical and reflective approaches and methods to each other (Knapp and Antos 2014: xiv).

Therefore we understand *management* as the totality of those communicational practices that author, enact, and control an organization and its processes of value creation in specific socio-material contexts by linguistic means, this in more or less pronounced shape. And we define *management communication* as the metaconversation of all the practices, forms, and contexts of organizational communication. These activities can, of course, be planned in advance, but they can also be organized on the spot. Hence, we identify the strategic but also improvisational nature of management.

Thus the contributors to this handbook address the following questions:
- What is the specific contribution of management communication to the constitution and value creation of organizations?
- How do actors practically manage groups, projects, and organizations by "making connections" (Shotter and Cunliffe 2003: 28) and relating to each other in a professional, meaningful, decisive, and intelligible way?
- What specific events and forms of management communication can be understood as solutions for specific problems in real-world organizations (Knapp and Antos 2014)?
- How can the dynamic interplay between these practices, on the one hand, and the dynamic context of social situations, networks, and communities in organizational daily life, on the other, be described?
- What are the conditions of success and the constraints of management communication?

Answering questions such as these proves to be especially important in organizational environments where tasks are often ill defined, solutions uncertain, and flows of interaction constant. This is especially the case in the modern complex organizations of economies, state spheres, and civil societies that are highly specialized, knowledge-driven, globalized, multicultural, and multirational (Joas 1996; Baecker 2003; Danesi and Rocci 2009; Sarangi and Candlin 2011; Schedler and Rüegg-Stürm 2015).

4 The three sections of the handbook

In order to address these questions, this handbook is divided into three sections. The first section, titled *Practices of management communication* addresses specific situated activities and their discursive patterns that constitute the daily activities of management. The second section, titled *Forms of management communication* is devoted to the activities considered integral to management communication. The third section, titled *Contexts of management communication*, includes chapters that address how managing also involves dealing with specific situations and constraints that characterize the environment of an organization.

4.1 Practices of management communication

The first section, *Practices of management communication*, begins with a chapter simply titled *Speaking*, authored by Nicolas Bencherki. Although this chapter is primarily focused on orality, Bencherki deconstructs the separation that is still often established between speaking and writing today. He reminds us that any communication always involves some form of mediation. This assertion, echoing Taylor and Van Every (2000), leads him to conceive of organizations as constituted through the interplay of talk and text. Talk is marked by a certain ephemerality, while text has the capacity to endure beyond the context of a conversation, providing a certain form of stability to any collective.

In this dynamic interplay, talk is the means by which members jointly perform action and construct situations. As Bencherki demonstrates, talk builds organizational episodes not in terms of adjacency pairs, as claimed by conversation analysts, but in terms of triads where the basic organizational phenomenon can be clearly identified: request (initiation) – response (performance) – acknowledgment (closure). Talking is therefore a form of doing, and, as a form of doing, it makes up the building blocks of organization. This performativity of talk, however, needs to acknowledge that some people are prevented from speaking. So voices are not equally distributed when it comes to constituting an organization.

The second chapter offers a nice complement to the first by exploring the activity of *Writing* in a managerial context. Geert Jacobs and Daniel Perrin point out that writing constitutes a key professional practice that managers perform daily to think and decide, inform and convince, as well as integrate and motivate. Therefore, this practice needs to be mastered, because writing involves various competencies depending on the type of readership targeted or the genre the texts are supposed to belong to. Over the years, Jacobs, Perrin, and others have developed an expertise in teaching people how to increase what they call *domain-specific competences* regarding writing practices. They outline, in this handbook, some important domain-specific competences of management communication by writing texts.

To illustrate how these skills can be developed, the authors present two cases taken from their own teaching practice: a Master's-level communication course in innovation and entrepreneurship and an American-Chinese-Swiss Executive MBA. They also present a specific method called the *WAYS* (Write-As-You-Speak) writing technique, a technique that helps managers and leaders improve how they prepare and conduct their regular meetings with their employees. This method mobilizes a management instrument called *WAYSbase*, which allows managers to systematically record all agreed tasks and make them available to their employees before, during, and after each meeting. Jacobs and Perrin show that using this writing technique allows members to agree on what has to be done in a focused, transparent, and binding way.

The third chapter, *Deciding*, authored by Theresa Castor and Mariaelena Bartesaghi, explores deciding as a form of situated action where questions of agency, action, and accountability are at stake. As they remind us, reflection on decision-making processes is as old as the study of management itself. The chapter includes some key contributions from scholars such as Chester Barnard (1938) or Herbert Simon (1960). Simon highlighted what he called the *bounded character of rationality* to explain why people may select a satisfactory option instead of an optimal one when the time comes to make a decision. Deciding is messy and it is often only retrospectively that we can label what happened as having been a decision.

To study this messiness, Castor and Bartesaghi examine the process of deciding from an interactional perspective. Thus, they analyze two case studies in crisis contexts: the 2005 Hurricane Katrina and the case of Governor Andrew Cuomo's interventions during the COVID-19 crisis in New York City in 2020. Both cases show that deciding is not necessarily defined by specific speech acts and that it is not necessarily identified as a decision when it is taking place. They demonstrate that by uttering the verb "decide" in interaction, people signal an asymmetry where others are assigned positions of agency and accountability. They analyze deciding as an interactional accomplishment and as what they call a *metapragmatic* resource that helps people defer, distribute, or disclaim their own agency.

In his chapter titled *Creating by communicating*, Philippe Lorino presents a communicational view of organizations based on the pragmatist theory of *trans-actional* inquiry, initially proposed by Dewey and Bentley ([1949] 2008). According to this approach, organizations should be conceived as ongoing processes, marked by pluralist and dialogic forms of inquiry that aim not only at making situations understandable and actionable, but also at inventing possible courses of action by redefining situations through creative communication. To do so, Lorino presents two organizational episodes that illustrate this creativity. The first example involves the report of a nuclear incident to a public commission, and the second concerns the strategic transformation of a clothing manufacturer.

Through these two case studies, Lorino shows how the control paradigm, characterized by a means-ends dichotomy and a heteronomous conception of human activity, appears particularly ill-fitted when members of organizations face complex, ambiguous, and fast-evolving situations. In contrast with this paradigm, the author puts forward the principle of *trans-actional* inquiry, where people are encouraged to develop an explorative and pluralist way of collectively dealing with a problematic situation. Through this type of collective and creative inquiry, new potentials for collective action can be identified as long as people collectively remain careful, imaginative, and humble – three traits that Lorino presents as the cardinal virtues of this type of inquiry.

In his chapter, *Networking*, Peter Winkler examines this important practice, which consists of initiating and cultivating reciprocal relationships with internal and external stakeholders. While the traditional literature on networking tends to focus on the context, features, and functions of networking, the author departs from this essentialist and structural focus by exploring the communicative and linguistic dimensions of this activity. Winkler examines in detail the work of Harrison C. White (2008), a sociologist who, in his most recent work, has redefined the notions of context, features, and functions in interactional and linguistic terms.

As Winkler states, this lens allows us to identify two principal relational positions and communication styles of management that correspond to different stages of network formation in organizations. During the stage of network initiation, which White (2008) called *footing*, managers tend to preserve uncertainty, ambiguity, and indecision. During this stage, small talk is favored, and people can observe what emerges from the discussions. During the second stage, which White (2008) called *face*, the objective is to maintain the network by making formal decisions regarding questions of purpose, order, and control. These practices are supposed to lead to organizational value creation.

In their chapter on *Controlling and resisting*, Zhuo Ban and Heather Zoller address questions of power and resistance in management communication. They remind us that control is usually presented as an essential element of any organization. They draw on references from Fredrick Taylor's (1911) scientific management, which mainly focused on modes of technical control, to Elton Mayo's (2004) human relations school of management or Douglas McGregor's (1960) theory of work motivation, which were centered on persuasive methods, such as the promotion of camaraderie and self-actualization. In contrast to these traditional approaches to control and resistance, which can portray the latter as irrational, Ban and Zoller advocate for a critical/interpretive perspective that questions this functionalist agenda.

According to this critical approach, controlling should primarily be conceived as a political act by which some interests are systematically privileged over others. As the authors point out, two types of scholarship represent this approach. The structuralists, usually influenced by Karl Marx (1972) and Max Weber (1964), investigate how domination and power are cultivated and reproduced through specific communicative practices. The poststructuralists tend to be inspired by Michel Foucault (1978) and Jürgen Habermas (1984), who insist more on the fragmented and contested nature of power and control, as they both express themselves in discourse and interaction. Overall, Ban and Zoller assert that effects of power are at stake even when no conflicts or tensions appear to be present at first sight and that power can be exercised not only by people in a position of authority but also by those subjected to forms of control.

In their chapter on *Tweeting*, Christine Domke and Matthias Klemm remind us that the study of communication always appears extremely relevant when examining how managers go about their daily activities. With the rise of modern technologies of communication, such as digital texting and microblogging, managers, however, have to face new questions, which these authors explore. Twitter challenges top managers in how they present themselves through this platform. By studying the case of Siemens' CEO, Joe Kaeser, Domke and Klemm show how this executive manager deals with the necessity to represent the interests of his company within the social environment of Twitter.

With the rise of social media, CEOs often have to take the role of activists. They are supposed to raise awareness about social problems while exerting their influence on economic and political questions. This important change in management communication means that decision making seems to be repersonalized. CEOs who are using Twitter have to constantly navigate between the necessity to speak as themselves while simultaneously representing their organizations and sometimes positioning themselves as speaking on behalf of the greater good. They need to be professional, entertaining, and personal, a multiplicity of requirements that often forces them to reinvent themselves.

The chapter titled *Documenting*, authored by Viviane Sergi, deals with the common organizational practice of producing documents, whether in analog or digital format. Sergi shows that the ubiquitous character of documents renders them almost invisible, because, in organizations, we tend to take them for granted. Echoing the chapter on *Writing* (Geert Jacobs and Daniel Perrin), Sergi highlights the diversity of these documents not only in content and form (reports, budgets, procedures, policies, etc.) but also in uses (archiving, promoting, etc.) and destinations (clients, internal, etc.). She also shows how the digitalization of documents has led to their multiplication, making them more important than ever in the media ecology of an organization.

Despite its variety, Sergi also shows that the practice of documenting is characterized by the production of traces that are *a priori* considered worthy of being not only made but also kept. In other words, documenting materializes something that supposedly matters to the organization. She also points out that documents have to be relatively autonomous, given that they should be legible and usable in a near or more distant future. Their value, therefore, lies in their capacity to minimally endure. They tell us the same thing over and over, giving organizations a certain stability in terms of procedures, protocols, routines, and programs. It is this performativity of documents that Sergi also investigates throughout this chapter by showing that documents should be considered key agents in the constitution of organizations.

In her chapter, titled *Posting*, Salla-Maaria Laaksonen examines how members are inclined to use the internal social media platforms that organizations are increasingly adopting, whether they are called *enterprise social media* (ESM), *enterprise social platforms* or *enterprise social networks* (ESN). She especially focuses on the practice of writing and publishing textual updates, also known as *posts*. Posting, as she points out, not only contributes to organizational knowledge and memory but can also transcend hierarchies and boundaries by allowing employees to connect easily with each other. Even if the activity of posting demonstrates, at first sight, a certain democratic potential, Laaksonen also highlights what could be called *the dark side of posting* by revealing how these textual updates can also support surveillance and groupthink while sometimes contributing to an unhealthy work-life balance.

As she shows, these social media platforms are characterized by their technological affordance, that is, what these technologies can provide employees in terms of potential uses (Gibson 1979). These affordances also mean that these platforms are, of course, far from neutral because they definitely constrain the way people communicate. Posting, in this respect, allows employees to publish short texts that are persistent, replicable, and searchable. This also means that they increase information visibility and can potentially have positive effects on the searchability of organizational knowledge, even if concerns can sometimes be raised about security and privacy.

4.2 Forms of management communication

This section is devoted to the most basic types of management communication activities bundled to accomplish complex tasks in organizations. It begins with Florence Allard-Poesi and Laure Cabantous's chapter on *Strategizing*. The two authors examine to what extent and how communication contributes to the making of strategy. To do so, they mobilize a perspective based on John L. Austin's (1962) speech act theory, a theory that focuses on the performative dimension of language use. For Austin (1962), speaking and writing involve doing things with words, a performativity that the language philosopher analyzed by distinguishing two types of acts he called *illocutionary* and *perlocutionary* acts. While illocutionary acts refer to what people conventionally do when they say or write something (e. g., asserting, promising, asking, apologizing, etc.), perlocutionary acts correspond to the intentional or unintentional effects people produce in their interlocutors or readers when they say or write something (e. g., angering, persuading, upsetting, seducing, humiliating, etc.).

As Allard-Poesi and Cabantous note, strategy discourses rarely bring about the changes they envision, which the authors interpret as a lack of illocutionary power. The two authors attribute this lack of clout to the often ambiguous nature of this type of discourse, which frequently creates resistant employees. To circumvent this problem, this discourse can be clarified and inscribed into socio-material devices or calculative technologies. However, even this approach breaks down since the lack of ambiguity can then lead to criticism if strategic objectives are not ultimately achieved. The lack of illocutionary power does not mean, though, that these discourses do not have any perlocutionary effects. On the contrary, strategy discourses participate in positioning the persons who hold them as strategists – a prestigious status that allows this type of discourse to colonize new territories by being more frequently adopted (universities, hospitals, governmental administrations, etc.).

In the second chapter, *Leading*, Kevin Barge focuses on the interactional dimension of leadership. This approach distinguishes itself from leadership psychology, which has a tendency to center on the psychological traits that supposedly define real leaders from non-leaders. Leading, as Barge points out, is essentially about management and the coordination of human and nonhuman actants. Here, communication is conceived as constitutive of leadership, especially when it comes to building consensus – one of the key aspects of this form of management communication.

According to discursive leadership, leading is especially about the capacity to co-construct a context so that people feel that they can move forward and accomplish things together. In that respect, Barge highlights the act of framing, which he presents as an interactional accomplishment that allows people to make sense of what happens by backgrounding and foregrounding specific aspects of a situation to make some objectives and aspirations more salient. The author also shows how a plurality of agencies can also be mobilized in the activity of leading – a plurality that helps in establishing leadership presence and in building authority. Ultimately, this chapter shows how leadership practitioners have to develop a sensitivity to interaction because it is only in interaction that leading can take place.

In their chapter titled *Planning and designing*, Howard Nothhaft, Alicia Fjällhed, and Rickard Andersson also explore the performative character of communication, this time by focusing on plans and designs. While planning involves devising a program of action, designing consists of describing a main idea or vision, which usually precedes and defines the plans themselves. The authors examine the agency of plans and designs, that is, their capacity to make a difference, especially when they are concretely invoked and mobilized by managers and leaders in various situations. While things do not always work according to what is envisioned, Nothhaft, Fjällhed, and Andersson assert that this uncertainty should not discourage people from designing a future and planning accordingly.

This reflection on what one could call "bad and good governance" shows that planning and designing especially help people make sense of a situation and allow them to move forward, even if plans or designs sometimes have to be redefined in the course of action. In other words, planning and designing help people make decisions and proceed to action confidently. In a world full of uncertainties, they reassure managers and employees that they are facing a future that they can minimally anticipate and master. Although plans and designs are often criticized for acting as a smokescreen, Nothhaft, Fjällhed, and Andersson remind us that a more or less foreseeable future remains a prerequisite of good organization and management.

In their chapter on *Routinizing*, Alex Wright and David Hollis highlight the key role communication plays in routines and routinization, which are presented as the primary means by which organizing and managing take place. Routinizing is a multifunctional form of management communication that is normally tightly interlinked with other forms such as strategizing, planning, designing, and documenting. Although routines are often understood as mindless accomplishments, the authors show that their mundane and ubiquitous characters exclude a need for mindful efforts, which contributes to the creation of value. Understanding routines from a communicative viewpoint, thus, requires that we focus on their relational and performative dimensions. Routines are relational because they mobilize various elements of a situation that conjointly contribute to their achievement. And routines are performative because of their citational dimension, that is, their capacity to reiterate norms of action that legitimize what is being accomplished.

To illustrate this relational and performative dimension of routines, Wright and Hollis draw from ethnographic data collected during a nine-month period of fieldwork conducted in the UK branch of an international cosmetics company. More precisely, they focus on a makeup routine called *The Ultimate*, which comprises ten steps that must be strictly followed by the makeup artists working for this company. Despite the routine's constraints, the two authors show that each time employees follow this script, they tend to apply it for "another next first time" (Garfinkel 1967), which highlights the eventful character of this iterative performance. Through this progressive reappropriation, these employees can also affirm their organizational identity and status; these are reinforced through the invocation of this routine in face-to-face conversation and social media posts.

In her chapter, *Branding*, Consuelo Vásquez addresses what could be called the "brandization" of our societies, a tendency that can be observed today through the numerous attempts aiming at constructing coherent images for organizations, products, places, and even people. Through branding, organizations try to communicate how they want to be recognized by internal and external stakeholders, a recognition that is directly connected to the reputation they want to build for themselves. By mobilizing a communicative constitutive approach, Vásquez examines the communicative nature of branding by focusing on the meaning indeterminacy that characterizes appropriate activities and constitutes their performative force for management communication.

As this author shows, branding can be conceptualized as a semantic space of valuation where brands become the main organizing principle by which companies and other collectives structure themselves. Therefore, branding, as a collective activity, can be seen as involving conversations through which the brand is co-created and negotiated between various stakeholders. This polyphony and struggle over meaning is, according to Vásquez, what characterizes corporate branding in neoliberal capitalism. To illustrate this communicative dimension, the author examines what has happened to universities since the 1990s, through what has been called the marketization of higher education.

In their chapter, *Managing communication*, Rickard Andersson and Lars Rademacher analyze communication management as the collective practice of authoring, enacting, and controlling an organization's communication to create value. While this form of management traditionally tends to be conceived as the responsibility of a few persons (essentially, communication managers), Andersson and Rademacher approach it as a collective responsibility that can involve all organizational members. Echoing Vásquez's chapter on *Branding*, they show that managing communication has become a central concern in contemporary thought even if this practice has been labeled a "bullshit job" by some authors (Graeber 2018).

While attempts to integrate, coordinate, and orchestrate communication appear to be some key objectives of contemporary forms of organization, Andersson and Rademacher remind us that this emphasis comes at a price to the extent that it can silence contradictory and inconsistent values and identities, which contribute to the complexity and the richness of an organization's personality. The two authors argue that this polyphonic character should be considered an asset, especially when we deal with internal stakeholders, i. e., employees, who may voice dissatisfaction when they believe that communication is overmanaged by top management. Similarly, recognizing and listening to the multiple voices of external stakeholders is increasingly a central concern not only for communication management researchers but also for practitioners.

In her chapter on *Mentoring*, Patrice Buzzanell focuses on how newcomers learn from more seasoned employees. This process allows organizations to retain and diffuse critical knowledge and practices among their members. The author distinguishes between different types of mentoring, which she calls prototypical, formal, informal, and episodic. The prototypical form of mentoring enacts a standard vision of mentorship marked by high expectations and a clear hierarchical status difference between the mentor and the protégé. By contrast, other forms of mentoring generally try to deconstruct this usually male-biased heroic view by establishing more realistic objectives. Formal mentorship normally contains contractual arrangements where rights, obligations, and responsibilities are clearly defined, whereas informal mentoring is characterized by close personal relationships. Episodic forms of mentoring tend to be more fluid and spontaneous, which does not prevent them from being effective.

All in all, Buzzanell reminds us that mentoring can be defined by three main attributes, which are reciprocity, developmental benefits, and regular interaction – even if episodic mentoring may depart from this characterization. Regarding the linguistic and interactional features of mentoring, the author highlights that this type of activity mainly comprises giving and receiving advice, whether in written or oral forms. However, mentoring can also be characterized, in some contexts, by explicit or implicit directives and requests. Mentoring in general is defined as a complex and situated communicative form where questions of inclusion, linguistic choices, and satisfaction have to be considered, especially when underrepresented organizational members are involved.

The chapter titled *Counseling*, authored by Peter Stücheli-Herlach and Ursina Ghilardi, explores this specific form of management communication that is meant to help managers reflect on problems and create possible solutions. Counseling is analyzed as an interaction between at least two people where one is seeking help (the client) while the other is providing assistance (the counselor or any other person who might be playing the role of the adviser). For these two authors, counseling thus implies a form of collective reflection where the adviser acts as a sort of facilitator in charge of helping someone find a solution in his or her own way.

When this type of intervention proves to be successful, counseling can help members become more aware of their organizational practices to rationalize them. These sessions can also lead to innovations, help clarify responsibilities, and transfer knowledge. Stücheli-Herlach and Ghilardi identify four practices of counseling communication, according to topic orientation and role structures. They call these practices documentation, deliberation, analysis, and design. To illustrate how this is performed concretely, the authors analyze the details of the interactions in two case studies. The key patterns of communicative moves in these excerpts are recapitulating, conceptualizing, staging, and selecting.

In their chapter, *Developing organizations*, Christian Schwägerl and Susanne Knorre address the field of organization development (OD), which they consider to be in crisis because of its relative lack of innovation and professionalization. As they point out, this state of crisis appears even more paradoxical given the current cultural change that many organizations are experiencing with the digitalization of their communications. To show how OD can still be relevant in this new era, the authors demonstrate how the foundations of this field of knowledge can help organizations deal with this digital evolution. This field has been characterized from the beginning by a belief in the effectiveness of more decentralized organizational structures where groups play a key role in the enactment of change, development, and collective learning.

From Lewin's (1947) three-step model of *Unfreezing, Moving, and Refreezing* to the paradigmatic shift that this field has more recently experienced by addressing more volatile and unpredictable forms of development, the authors show that many successful organizations are the ones that develop ambidexterity, fluidity, and agility by both mobilizing hierarchical and heterarchical ways of enacting and dealing with change. In this context, communication plays a constitutive role through the organization of meetings, workshops, and less standard forms of interpersonal communication, such as daily stand-ups or mere conversations where people can speak up and tell others what needs to be done across hierarchical barriers.

In his chapter on *Accounting*, Bertrand Fauré shows that even if the process of financial accounting is not usually considered part of what we call management communication, this activity takes on a central role when financial accounting as a form of communication is understood as a metaconversation (Robichaud, Giroux, and Taylor 2004). Here, the question of value creation is collectively addressed and discussed. However, the author also points out that accounting has to be reconceptualized to allow organizations to create the conditions of a sustainable future. In other words, accounting needs to address the question of what is counted and how, which means that new numbers and other forms of quantification have to be processed.

Thus, Fauré explores how accounting, often called the *language of business*, can be identified as a form of communication, but also how communication itself can be reversely characterized as a form of accounting. As a form of communication, accounting involves three positions that actors can fill when they process numbers: the accountor who renders accounts, the accountee who receives them, and the accountant who makes them. This triad is often associated with capitalism and the financialization of organizations. Fauré reminds us that more social and sustainable usages of numbers have been and can be invented to make organizations more socially and environmentally responsible. Regarding communication as a form of accounting, Fauré highlights how numbers and calculations can play the role of discursive resources for several forms of management communication, making things and people visible, commensurable, and governable.

4.3 Contexts of management communication

This last section begins with a chapter titled *Managing communication in multilingual workplaces*, authored by Susanne Tietze, Hilla Back, and Rebecca Piekkari. Here, the authors explore how employees coming from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds communicate in their daily interactions. While some use English as a global lingua franca, others choose to rely on nonverbal communication or translations to interact with each other. The authors point out that even if English is often used in multilingual workplaces today, miscommunication and misunderstanding often lurk just around the corner, besides issues of inequality related to this global usage. As they also insist, the question of what language to use also depends on the situations in which people find themselves.

To analyze this complexity, Tietze, Back, and Piekkari employ the iceberg model to identify the various layers of communication that can be found in multilingual workplaces. Below the surface where English appears as the common corporate language, we find other situations, which the authors call *linguascapes*, where language use is negotiated and contested through highly interactive behaviors. Deep below the surface, the authors also find nonverbal forms of communication, which include body language, intonation, gestures, and silences, as well as visual aids. These forms of communication are sometimes the only resources employees can rely on to understand each other. All these observations lead us to acknowledge the key role multilingual and multimodal forms of communication play in the constitution of organizations.

The chapter titled *Exploring and analyzing linguistic environments*, authored by Philipp Dreesen and Julia Krasselt, shows how discourses can be investigated and monitored as the communicative environments of organizations. If organizations can indeed be considered communicatively constituted, these authors go one step further by demonstrating how organizations can manage to communicate *through* their environment, an environment that comments on what the respective organization does and is. In other words, discourses that constitute the environment of an organization can ascribe various positions and images to the latter, an attribution that can have important effects on how the organization is perceived and evaluated by its stakeholders and the general public.

Given that an important role of an executive is to serve as a mediator between the inside of the organization and its environment, Dreesen and Krasselt present an approach that is meant to help these top managers analyze the patterns of language use that can be found in these discursive environments. This method, called *Applied*

Linguistic Discourse Analysis, implies an active collaboration between the researchers and these managers to address problems that are deemed relevant, scientifically or practically speaking. As the authors point out, this approach (Dreesen and Stücheli-Herlach 2019), structured in four modules: modeling, measuring, interpreting, and simulation, aims to understand the communicative conditions of a discursive environment to improve practitioners' public communicative actions in general.

In her chapter, *Managing high reliability organizations*, Jody L. S. Jahn analyzes the role that structures and hierarchy play in the way high reliability organizations (HROs) and their members deal with weak signals. By weak signals, she means operational issues that can be easily ignored, but could sometimes lead to daring consequences if they are not quickly identified. HROs are characterized by their capacity to avoid catastrophic failures – even in situations that could be considered hard to read because of their high volatility and instability (e. g., the management of aircraft carriers, the operation of nuclear power plants, the combat of wildfires). As Jahn points out, the particularity of HROs is that, because of their constant vigilance, they can manage to prevent disasters reliably by identifying and addressing these weak signals quickly.

Noticing weak signals is, of course, the key to preventing catastrophes. However, the success of this vigilance also lies in members' capacity to voice their concerns to others, especially to their superiors. Safety communication, thus, mainly relies on the extent to which structures and managers allow subordinates to speak up when the latter feel that something is wrong. Jahn proposes a different way to understand how weak signals are talked into being through the way they are positioned, ventriloquized, and presentified. Positioning deals with the questions of rights and responsibilities, especially regarding the face-threatening or empowering dimensions of speaking up. Ventriloquizing concerns members' capacity to invoke rules, procedures, and statuses to mark the importance of the weak signals they pinpoint. Finally, presentifying refers to the way generic texts (such as rules or maps) are mobilized to alter a specific course of action.

The next chapter, titled *Building communities*, authored by Shiv Ganesh, Mohan Dutta, and Ngā Hau, addresses the need to find the means to build or rebuild communities that are currently facing the devastating impact of capitalism and its colonialist effects (Deetz 1992). By community building, they mean a form of reflexive organizing that is especially attentive to questions of marginalization. Community building strives to create the conditions of democratic communication processes that support social and economic justice. This requires, as they remind us, that these communities explicitly deal with matters of power within their own ranks, given the intractable aspects of power relations, even in this context. According to Ganesh, Dutta, and Hau, communities have to lose their innocence, so to speak, and be attentive to the issues of injustice that pervade their own activities.

The authors point out that organizers have to deal with four central communicative tensions when they are building communities: local versus global, reform versus revolution, persuasion versus coercion, and immanent versus external. The first tension – local versus global – is concerned with the scale of contention, the locations of organizing activities, as well as questions of solidarity and intersectionality. The second tension – reformation versus revolution – involves the extent of the changes envisioned by the community members in their political fights. As for the third tension, i. e., persuasion versus coercion, it deals with questions of agency and the potential use of violence, while the fourth tension – immanent versus external – concerns the locus of control in community building as well as issues of empowerment. These four tensions are illustrated through two case studies, one in Singapore and the other in New Zealand.

In their chapter titled *Managing CSR communication*, Dennis Schoeneborn and Verena Girschik recognize that organizations appear increasingly preoccupied by the social and ecological impacts they have on their environments, which leads them to approach corporate social responsibility (CSR) either reactively or proactively. Schoeneborn and Girschik show that, even if potential accusations of greenwashing and window-dressing are always near at hand, the distinction between CSR talk and CSR walk can be problematized to the extent that talking can also be constitutively construed as performing something. Talking has consequences because it tends to commit organizations to change by becoming more responsible. Talk is thus an act of commitment for which they can later be held accountable by stakeholders.

However, beyond this top-down perspective on CSR communication, Schoeneborn and Girschik also highlight more bottom-up approaches where top managers do not appear as the only CSR actors of their organizations. This is, for instance, what happens when employees become themselves activists by trying to transform their organizations from within – an activity that is not without risk. Finally, the two authors show how external stakeholders can shape CSR policies and practices when organizations become minimally responsive to these voices, a responsivity that implies the emergence of a true dialogue between the organization and all its stakeholders.

In her chapter titled *Rating social and environmental performances*, Brigitte Bernard-Rau echoes Schoeneborn and Girschik's chapter on CSR communication by exploring how social rating agencies (SRAs) evaluate companies' environmental and social performances. As she points out, investors and stakeholders in general are more and more interested in accessing rankings and indices to evaluate these types of performance indicators besides the financial results of an organization. As third parties, SRAs are able to define what it means to be a responsible company by providing assessments and measurements in an objective manner.

To illustrate how these agencies establish ratings and rankings, Bernard-Rau takes the example of oekom research AG,[1] an SRA founded in 1993, that provides information about companies' performances in terms of ecology and sustainability. The

1 In 2018 oekom research joined ISS to become ISS-oekom.

author discusses the agency's environmental, social, and governance (ESG) metrics and rating processes, and she shows the key role that discussions of these metrics and ratings play in the constitution of organizational and social change. In particular, Bernard-Rau shows how this SRA can be seen not only as an economic actor but also as an advocate and even activist with a clear social and environmental agenda. In other words, oekom acts as a spokesperson for environmental and societal needs.

In their chapter titled *Managing in hospitals*, Anne Nicotera, Melinda Villagran, and Wonsun (Sunny) Kim propose a new theoretical framework for hospital management communication. Hospitals are unique in the organizational world, even among other HROs, which explains why a special chapter is devoted to them in this handbook. As the authors remind us, hospitals are becoming increasingly complex, with multiple missions that are often in conflict with each other. For example, they have to take care of patients, but they also have to provide community service, train future doctors and nurses, engage in health-related research, and, in some parts of the world, make profits and represent religious values. Furthermore, hospitals not only have conflicting missions, they also include several professions and have to deal with multiple stakeholders as well as ambiguous tasks that follow various standard procedures. The authors use structurational divergence theory to examine the key challenges hospitals face. They conclude that these challenges are largely related to the tensions created by contradictory structures that enjoin members to respond to what often appear to be incompatible demands.

In this complex world, communicating appears to be the way to manage various priorities successfully. In this context, communication must, according to the three authors, create and sustain structures of accountability by the formation and maintenance of quality-monitoring and environmental scanning systems. Managers also need to be aware of their hybrid identities as well as the numerous tensions they have to face because of this increasing complexity.

In their chapter on *Crowdsourcing*, Amanda J. Porter, Damla Diriker, and Ilse Hellemans explore how digital technologies have renewed the way by which several minds cooperate to produce new ideas. Although the phenomenon is not that new and can be traced back at least to the eighteenth century in England, the term *crowdsourcing* was coined in 2006 and its practice has since grown impressively, especially in the past ten years. As the authors remind us, this type of management communication may address not only organizational issues but also societal challenges, such as poverty or climate change. Crowdsourcing literature paradoxically tends to assume a linear and information-based view of management communication, while this type of collaboration would *a priori* favor a richer view of communication.

Crowdsourcing tends to concern two main types of activity: repetitive tasks and creative tasks. Both require the definition of well-structured problems that people are asked to solve, whether individually or collectively. In some cases, these activities require no specific skills, while in others, they directly rely on the expertise brought by the participants. Other ways to differentiate types of crowdsourcing concern the incentives, the rules, the various phases of the process, the selection procedure for the best ideas as well as the implementation itself. However, the authors show that in the case of societal issues, defining the problem itself is far from unproblematic. This conclusion also means that the sources of expertise required to solve it are *a priori* difficult to define. This specificity also affects the incentives, rules, phases, selection, and implementation. So, in this case, management communication is less about engineering the process than about orchestrating the plurality of perspectives that can be mobilized to both define and tackle the problems.

In their chapter titled, *Managing and being managed by emotions*, Sarah Riforgiate and Samentha Sepúlveda address the key role emotions play in management communication. Since Hochschild's (1983) landmark book on emotion work and the success that the idea of emotional intelligence has had in recent years (Goleman 2006), researchers have explored how emotions are interpreted, shared, and managed in organizational contexts. The authors point out the negative implications that emotion management can have, especially regarding questions of suppression or control. They also highlight its positive implications when it leads to constructive outcomes, especially in terms of compassion or pride.

After exploring how emotions are nonverbally and verbally communicated, Riforgiate and Sepúlveda show how emotions can spread from one person to another and be socially reinforced and managed in organizations. They also illustrate how the word *professionalism* can be used to suppress emotions. This suppression can be extremely problematic, especially when minority groups feel that they are being disenfranchised because they are not able to express their concerns. While professionalism tends to prevent the expression of emotions, the authors show that the opposite is true for care-work positions, which are traditionally occupied by women and considered emotion-related work. Finally, Riforgiate and Sepúlveda illustrate how emotions can be managed and spread through the socialization of members, emotional labor, emotional intelligence, emotional contagion, and organizational processes and structures. They also discuss how emotion management patterns can have important destructive effects.

Finally, in their chapter titled *Changing through communication*, Samir Vaz, Eduardo Figueiredo, and Gabriela Maia explore the role discourse and sensemaking play in the management of organizational change. As they remind us, discourse represents what is supposed to drive organizational change, while sensemaking is what allows actors to deal with the uncertainty and ambiguity that typically characterize these periods of organizational transformation. According to the authors, managing organizational change thus depends on top managers' discourses and middle managers' sensemaking. Top managers are supposed to guide, through their discourses, the way middle managers make sense of this kind of situation.

To illustrate this phenomenon, Vaz, Figueiredo, and Maia present the case study of a Brazilian company – for reasons of anonymity, here called *Icarus* – which undertook a massive change management program in 2017. As they show, the discourse of this company's CEO was mainly characterized by what they call *discourses for accountability*, whereby this executive presented the plan, justified the results, and valued achievements. In parallel to this first type of discourse, this CEO also produced *discourses for engagement* through which he tried to inspire individual value behaviors while encouraging participation. Further, the authors identified two ways by which middle managers made sense of the situation, what they call *subjective confidence* and *objective skepticism*. These frameworks explain why the change process was ultimately considered a failure.

We hope you will enjoy this handbook as much as we have enjoyed composing and editing it. This volume is, we believe, a testament to the high quality of the research that is currently being done on management from a communicative viewpoint by scholars from diverse continents, working in different languages. Management is certainly not a magic bullet for all our organizational or other problems, but it is necessary for us to work and live together in a valuable way. We hope that this handbook shows how this can be accomplished in the complex situations managers have to deal with in their daily work. We also believe that this handbook can support further work of researchers, teachers, and practitioners by better illuminating, elucidating, and enacting the "black box" of management communication.

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Susanne Tietze, Hilla Back, and Rebecca Piekkari

20 Managing communication in multilingual workplaces

Abstract: This chapter is concerned with the constitution of multilingual organizations through acts of agentic communication. Specifically, it focuses on the role of translation and non-verbal communication which are still mainly ignored in many streams of literature that focus on communication. Drawing on a layered iceberg model of communication, we propose that the use of multiple languages, translation, and non-verbal communication are fundamental to understanding the constitution of multilingual organization, yet they often remain hidden, silent, and unexplored. We argue that translation permeates all layers of communication and is a collective management practice. The chapter reviews selected examples from different streams of research to demonstrate how multilingual organizations are constituted. We advocate that future research should include phenomena and consequences of English, languages, translation, and non-verbal meanings as they unfold in multilingual workplaces and mingle with narratives, discourses, and authoring of organizations.

Keywords: multilingual organization; non-verbal communication; translation; English

This chapter is concerned with communication among diverse employees in multilingual workplaces. These employees belong to different cultural and language groups and collectively negotiate meaning and language use on a daily basis. They make decisions whether to use English as a bridge language, to engage in translation, or to rely on non-verbal communication. These acts of communication are expressive and constitutive of organizations as well as "processes of meaning production and negotiation" (Schoeneborn, Kuhn, and Kärreman 2019: 476). This chapter draws on the Communication Constitutes Organizations (CCO) tradition whose central tenet is that organizations come into being, persist, and are changed through communication practices (Cooren, Taylor, and Van Every 2006). According to this tradition, communication is not only about transmitting messages – it is also and especially about communication taking on a role of a performative, agentic force in organizations.

While the CCO tradition approaches communication as constitutive acts, this tradition is, in our view, monolingual in character. In other words, any considerations of organizations being constructed through translation or non-verbal communicative acts in "other languages" have been mainly ignored (Steyaert and Janssens 2013; Tietze 2018) with some exceptions within the CCO literature proving a case in point (e. g., Bencherki, Matte, and Pelletier 2016). Yet, many organizations such as multinational

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corporations (MNCs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), or entrepreneurial organizations are *de facto* characterized by the existence of multiple languages, with English perhaps being the most dominant one.

Despite English's status as a global language (Crystal 2003) and the global lingua franca (ELF) (Rocci 2009), its use does not prevent miscommunication and misunderstanding. Instead, it has been argued that its use glosses over issues of inequality in terms of access, skewing group relations colored by historical-political processes. Indeed, some scholars have proposed re-labeling the *multinational* organization the *multilingual* organization (Luo and Shenkar 2006; Fredriksson, Barner-Rasmussen, and Piekkari 2006). Yet, to date organizational scholars have paid limited attention to how languages are an intrinsic part of meaning negotiations in multilingual workplaces.

In this chapter, we follow some of the tenets of the CCO approach with its emphasis on the constitutive, creative, and performative character of language but apply it to the multilingual workplace. We offer a perspective which includes other languages than English and which considers translation and non-verbal communication as constitutive of management. The communicative acts are part of the collective practice of authoring, networking, enacting, and managing organizations. In this setting, it is particularly interesting to explore whether it is possible to manage multilingual and intercultural communication in the first place, and if so, how this occurs.

According to the Oxford Dictionary, to *manage* is defined as to "[b]e in charge of (a business, organization, or undertaking); run". This definition assumes a top-down perspective; a notion of being in control of something. Our take on managing languages differs from this definition insofar as we understand language in multilingual organizations to be fluid and collectively negotiated. In this regard, a choice as to which language to speak, in which situation, when or whether to translate, or when to use English as the pre-given shared language constitutes an important part of management communications within multilingual organizations. We propose an iceberg model that displays the different layers of communication and shows which ones are relatively directly accessible and which ones are used in the more hidden arenas of organizational life. We propose that translation permeates all layers of communication and represents not only a concept of how to understand communicative practices between members of different and distinct cultural groups, but also a collective practice occurring among organizational members (Piller 2007, 2009).

The chapter is organized as follows: we first introduce the iceberg model which visualizes the different layers of communication in a multilingual workplace, including the role of translation as a collective management practice. Thereafter, we briefly and selectively review several streams of research that have made contributions to understanding multilingual and intercultural workplaces: language-sensitive international business literature; work on non-verbal aspects of intercultural communication, and translation studies of translatorial acts. The language-sensitive international business research has investigated the role of English and its relationship with other languages in multinational corporations central to its inquiry. Thereafter, we address non-verbal acts of communication in the process of negotiations and meaning making, intermingling them with spoken or written communications. Furthermore, we ask whether communication can be managed collectively through translation in multilingual workplaces. The concluding section brings the respective insights together, addresses the constitution of contemporary multilingual workplaces, and provides an agenda for future research.

1 Different layers of communication in multilingual workplaces

In order to understand how language use can be understood in multilingual workplaces, it is necessary to understand the different layers of communication: those visible and audible, negotiated and translucent, as well as the interpreted and inaudible. The audible common corporate language is often focused on and attempted to be managed. However, most language-related issues occur below the surface and are inaudible or translucent in character. This means they are difficult to be formally managed or even to be appropriated by senior management. They are often managed through collective negotiations, including translation. Figure 1 visualizes our iceberg model, showing the different layers of communication in a multilingual workplace.

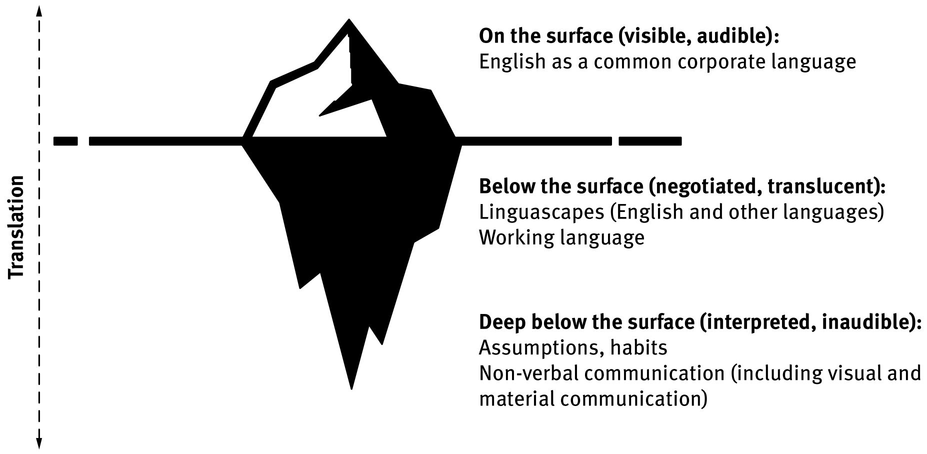

Figure 1: Layers of communication in a multilingual workplace

The purpose of this model is to visualize, i. e., to make explicit, the existence of different communicative areas. We have chosen this model to communicate to our readership that in multilingual organizations, these acts of constitutive communications exist and merit more attention. We acknowledge that these "layers" are interconnected with each other and in a mutually constitutive relationship – yet in this chapter we only outline some of these connections. We begin from the top of the iceberg and proceed down to the most inaudible facets of multilingual and intercultural communication. Throughout the review, we discuss the impact of these layers on the practices to influence, manipulate, shape, and sometimes control communication in multilingual workplaces.

1.1 On the surface: English as a mandated common corporate language

With scholarship focusing on the role of languages in international business and management research, it is by now an established field of inquiry (Karhunen et al. 2018; Tenzer, Terjesen, and Harzing 2017; Tietze and Piekkari 2020). This body of work can be divided into two broad areas: focus on a single language, typically English as a common corporate language and *lingua franca*; and focus on language diversity (Tietze and Piekkari 2020). In this chapter, we cover both areas.

As Figure 1 shows, we place the common corporate language in the visible section of the iceberg, because it represents a mandated language to be primarily used for internal inter-unit communications in the MNC. As Welch and Welch (2019: 624) explain, "[e]ssentially, a common corporate language is a form of language standardization introduced to reduce the potential for miscommunication arising from multilingualism". Through a unifying language, the top management seeks to gain benefits from facilitating information flow and knowledge transfer around the global entity, increasing efficiency (Luo and Shenkar 2006), creating a sense of belongingness within the MNC (Blazejewski 2006), as well as controlling and monitoring communications (San-Antonio 1987). A common corporate language can also be used for external purposes, for instance, to enhance employer branding (Kangasharju, Piekkari, and Säntti 2010) or facilitate communications with customers and suppliers (Neeley 2012b).

Figure 1 suggests that MNCs often (but not always) choose English as the common corporate language because it is assumed that everyone is able to draw on English to engage in communications. English enjoys the role and status of an established language in management knowledge and practice and is used as an international *lingua franca*, "an idiom that non-native speakers use with other non-native speakers" (Vandermeeren 1999: 276). The English language is also employed in exchanges between native speakers and non-native speakers (Tietze 2008). Thus, English is treated as the taken-for-granted language of international business (Nickerson 2005) and management (Tietze 2004).

We would argue, however, that the assumptions of everybody having equal access to English and of it being a universal language of knowledge are false. Critical investigations have shown that English alone is not able to capture all possible and existing knowledge in an unproblematic and objective way (e. g., Canagarajah [1999] for access to and teaching of English; Phillipson [1992] for its hegemonic influence; Steyaert and Janssens [2013]; Tietze [2018] for its influence on knowledge production). The literature we introduce next shows clearly that English as a common corporate language co-exists and blends with other languages. Its dominant and taken-for-granted status is perhaps *the status quo* for global corporate elites but not for others (Tietze 2004). The reality of multilingual workplaces features negotiations about which language to use with whom and why.

1.2 Below the surface: negotiated language use

In this section, we highlight collective negotiations of language use below the surface of the multilingual workplace and emphasize the contested position of English as a common corporate language. Indeed, any attempt to formally manage language diversity in a strict way is likely to fail or to be undermined. Steyaert, Ostendorp, and Gaibrois (2011) suggest that language use is always situated in contexts and driven by the language user. Instead of the concept of the common corporate language, they propose the term *linguascaping*. It captures the language decisions taken by language users *in situ* to manage and respond to language diversity as it prevails in their workplace.

While English plays an important and partly dominant role in local negotiations since other languages always exist in relation to English use, there are distinct discursive practices which shape the communicative encounter. These practices include, e. g., adaption to the language of the other, collective negotiations of a common language, and improvisation and changing of languages as used during encounters (Steyaert, Ostendorp, and Gaibrois 2011). They are constitutive of the relational, processual, and negotiated aspects of communications across language boundaries. As Figure 1 shows, the notion of linguascapes is useful to us because it highlights the various ways in which different languages are spoken alongside one another and how their space is negotiated in the multilingual workplace. This layer also represents communicative acts out of the reach of senior management's policy decisions about language use. Indeed, it can also be the place where such policies are deliberately flaunted.

Early studies in international business and management already questioned the intended integrating effect of a common corporate language (Piekkari et al. 2005; Vaara et al. 2005). Instead of promoting the integration between two previously separate organizations of a cross-border merger, the authors show how the choice and imposition of the common corporate language escalated disintegration and introduced language-based groupings alongside the traditional boundary of the acquired versus the acquiring organization. The new corporate language of the merged organization influenced staffing decisions and affected performance management of the

MNC. Language-based groupings were also found in another study, which looked at inter-unit communication in multinationals (Marschan-Piekkari, Welch, and Welch 1999).

These groupings formed a shadow structure which was hiding behind the formal organization chart, superimposing its own logic of interlinking foreign subsidiaries with each other. The above findings also point to a hierarchy of languages (involving English, Spanish, and Finnish as the main languages), which partly replaced a hierarchy of structure, and which exerted influence under the radar of corporate policy (Marschan-Piekkari, Welch, and Welch 1999). Taken together, while these studies do not explicitly articulate an interest in the constitutive use of language, they do so implicitly by focusing on agentic actions of employees who gain or lose power due to their language competence. In this sense, the early studies can serve as examples of how languages are part of negotiating the positioning of individuals and groups.

As mentioned above, in practice, it is highly unlikely that a common corporate language can be implemented from the top by senior management and that all employees (including knowledge workers) are in a similarly favorable position to use English in the pursuit of their work tasks. Instead, this management decision may be met with differing degrees of resistance and rejection (Lønsmann 2018; see also Kroon, Cornelissen, and Vaara 2015). Neeley's (2012a) empirical study set in a French MNC is a case in point as she investigated employees' responses to the introduction of English as the mandated language. Her findings attest to the emotive and partly dysfunctional consequences of such attempts to control language use. That said, English as the common corporate language of MNCs is not always introduced by the management fiat. Instead, language use may be driven by staffs' implicit assumptions that English is the default language, particularly in the absence of a formal language policy (e. g., Sanden and Kankaanranta 2018). Sanden (2018) proposes more local approaches to language management that are aligned with the specific language competences and communicative needs of each workplace.

To sum up, in all the above studies the language-based behavior is highly interactive and can be described as a collective (but still diverse) effort to work with languages constructively to establish relationships and to ensure that tasks are understood, executed, and targeted to meet shared objectives. These language phenomena are recurrent in multilingual workplaces and form an important part of the constitution of these organizations.

1.3 Deep below the surface: non-verbal communication

In this section we introduce the role of non-verbal communication – the interpreted and inaudible layers of communication, deep below the surface of the iceberg – in the multilingual workplace (see Figure 1). Non-verbal communication includes, e. g., body language, tone of voice, gestures, silences, as well as visual and material communication. In linguistically constrained environments, MNC employees often rely on gestures, symbols, and visual aids to ensure that the message gets across (Sunaoshi, Kotabe, and Murray 2005). We therefore consider non-verbal communication at least as important as verbal communication. While, on the one hand, difficulties in surface language communication are easily noticeable, on the other hand, tacit knowledge and assumptions underlying non-verbal communication are often bypassed as their meaning gets lost in intercultural communication; additionally, such loss of meaning is often not even noticed by the message producer.

In intercultural communication, "[m]ost miscommunication does not arise through mispronunciation or through poor uses of grammar [...] The major sources of miscommunication in intercultural contexts lie in differences in patterns of discourse" (Scollon, Scollon, and Jones 2011: xv). In other words, miscommunication primarily stems from different *ways* of communicating. This places demands on managing the multilingual workplace. Hall (1959) was one of the first researchers to shed light on the "silent language", asserting that it is not only the surface-level language that is used for communication. He discussed cultural differences in matters concerning the language of time, space, material possessions, friendship patterns, and agreements. For example, a delay in response in the United States implies a lack of interest, while in Ethiopia the time required to make a decision is directly proportional to its importance (Hall 1959).

Despite contemporary criticism of Hall's work – most of his work is relatively general and remains centered on differences in national culture as well as downplaying the significance of individual interpretations and agency – his insights into temporal and spatial dimension as constituting a silent language are still relevant for our purposes. Hall (1959) suggests that if one understands the basic cultural assumptions and non-verbal cues that accompany spoken communication, one is able to communicate effectively even without working knowledge of the local language. While we do not subscribe to this particular view, it is nevertheless important to understand how one's own and others' cultural assumptions are part of one's own and others' communicative actions.

One such cultural assumption was investigated in more detail by Henderson (2005) who found that members of a multilingual team continued to "hear" through their own respective cultural filters. Henderson (2005) defined language diversity to include not only a variety of mother tongues, but also a variety of ways of hearing and interpreting the tacit assumptions built into messages. According to Henderson (2005), individuals from different cultures also use differing interpretive mechanisms due to diverse backgrounds. This point is often overlooked as individuals assume they understand an issue in the same way, especially when using a common working language such as English. Henderson (2005) also described how members from different cultures have differing expectations when it comes to verbal exchanges that tend to be ritualized or predictable – greeting, thanking, taking leave, apologizing, distancing, or forms of address. If expectations are not met and there is a deviation from a predictable pattern, attitudes can be negatively affected. She explains how the potential negative consequence of language diversity is often attributed to the lack of language competence; yet, in intercultural communication it is the lack of communicative competence that is the culprit.

Non-verbal communication may sometimes be the only communicative resource available in intercultural exchanges. Sunaoshi, Kotabe, and Murray (2005) studied technology transfer on the factory floor in Japanese-owned automotive plants in the United States. Since the Japanese technical personnel and their American co-workers had extremely poor knowledge of each other's language and cultural background, a large part of teaching and learning the new technology took place by avoiding the use of English or Japanese altogether. Instead, the technical personnel relied on pictures, drawings, abbreviations, and numbers to convey meaning. They also demonstrated the new technology by showing, touching, and performing the tasks together using the actual tools and material. Yet, in such a linguistically constrained environment, some of the tacit knowledge was not conveyed at all (Sunaoshi, Kotabe, and Murray 2005).

In the above study, the Japanese and US technical personnel were physically co-located on the factory floor. However, when individuals representing different cultural groups do not share the same time or space, the risk of misinterpretation and other hurdles of communication increase even more. Many contemporary MNCs boast of their flexible work arrangements as an employment perk, competing for highly ranked positions on lists such as the annual Top 100 "FlexJobs". Interestingly, much, if not most, information exchange occurs through non-verbal communication via intonation, mimics, and gestures, much of which is lost if communication relies primarily on text or audio channels (DiStefano and Maznevski 2000; Maznevski and Chudoba 2000). Rich media, such as videoconferencing platforms, allow for transmitting non-verbal signs of support or disagreement but still cannot replace face-to-face contact (Andres 2002).

Although these studies are nearly two decades old, the same dilemmas prevail, especially during the current COVID-19 pandemic. More recent research findings show that global virtual communication can result in misinterpretations and difficulty in establishing relationships due to a loss of non-verbal communication (see, for example, Saarinen and Piekkari 2015). However, despite the increasing prevalence of dispersed global work and the dependence on virtual communication, understanding how the loss of non-verbal cues affects intercultural communication remains limited. Furthermore, questions related to how global virtual work ties in with the use of English versus other languages, efforts to translate and interpret, or with the use of visual materials call for additional research.

Another example of communication transcending time and space is the use of email. Louhiala-Salminen, Charles, and Kankaanranta (2005) offered concrete examples of how different discourse styles can induce negative emotions between members of cultural groups, especially when they occur outside face-to-face situations. In their study on language practices in two international companies established through a cross-border merger between a Finnish and a Swedish company, the authors found several discursive dissimilarities between Finnish and Swedish employees. While the Finns felt that their use of language was "efficient, straight to the point", the Swedes found it "blunt and direct" (Louhiala-Salminen, Charles, and Kankaanranta 2005: 411). Furthermore, the Finns felt that the Swedish way of communicating was "endless discussion, avoiding conflict", while, according to the Swedes, it was a "dialogue, consensus, everybody participates" (Louhiala-Salminen, Charles, and Kankaanranta 2005: 408). This difference was also apparent in email communication: the Finns tended to use direct requests (e. g., "please comment on this"), while the Swedes preferred indirect alternatives (e. g., "could you please comment on this"). Culture-bound discursive features seem to spill over to multilingual communication, particularly to email communication transcending time and space. This suggests that interpretations in line with particular cultural assumptions are more likely to arise when the counterparts are not face-to-face.

Emails and the use of virtual platforms are widely used forms of communication also in global virtual teams, where members communicate across language, cultural, temporal, and spatial boundaries. In terms of non-verbal communication, global virtual teams offer fruitful ground to explore how the electronic nature of communicating impacts expressions and interpretations across language boundaries. In their study, Saarinen and Piekkari (2015) explored the interactions of Finnish managers and Chinese team members in virtual teams. Communication occurred through email, videoconferencing, Lync, Skype, conference calls, as well as live meetings. They found that the lack of nuance, emotion, and tone of voice when communicating virtually induced confusion. In addition, due to the limited amount of time for communication, stories were often left untold and small-talk between team members was minimized. This resulted in Finnish team leaders coming across as hard managers instead of people-oriented leaders, with negative effects on relationship-building. The apparent efficiency of communicating virtually across borders may hide its negative consequences for leadership, management, and intercultural communication.

The study by Saarinen and Piekkari (2015) also showed that especially Chinese team members found it important to establish trust and face-to-face relationships, but in virtual communication, these aspects were lost. Consequently, one Finnish manager reverted to extensive travel to meet the Chinese employees face-to-face, to enable direct communication. Furthermore, using English in virtual contexts and adhering to culturally contingent interpretations may increase the potential for miscommunication and disengagement and decrease the value expected from these groups. Managers may have to consider more diverse ways of communication with their teams. This often means spending time developing effective communication strategies to overcome the shortcomings of virtual communication, as shown in this study. Thus, virtual communication transcending time and space may not only result in misinterpretations but also in the loss of non-verbal communication.

Non-verbal communication can also be expressive of differences and tensions between team members. Hinds, Neeley, and Cramton (2014) noted power struggles between the German and the US members of a software development team. The US-based team members felt that their position was less well established compared to their German counterparts and that the ownership of the project was predominantly German. This was largely due to the German team members setting the timeline of the project, which caused US members to work during their holidays. In addition, documentation was often in German only and the English translation took an unreasonably long time to actualize. Some team members also complained about others not using English – the formal corporate language – in email conversations but relying on German. Power can be displayed either unintentionally or intentionally through non-verbal communication such as giving precedence to the German calendar or the act of language choice (German or English). Such power struggles activate fault lines that define sub-groupings, resulting in an "us versus them" attitude amongst team members (Hinds, Neeley, and Cramton 2014). These examples demonstrate how non-verbal communication can have implications not only for the power dynamics of the group but also for transparent and effective communication.

While we have mainly discussed how non-verbal communication, or the lack of it, can result in misinterpretations or tensions, it can also have a unifying effect. Barmeyer, Mayrhofer, and Würfl (2019: 800) discussed how informal information flows in multilingual organizations on a *time-island*. In Italy, this time-island is the coffee break – a time and place where employees gather spontaneously and information is exchanged more informally. In the United States, the boundary objects are water coolers; in Sweden, 'kitchens or lounges' (*fika*). It appears that a transition from formal to informal discourse happens in a similar fashion across cultures, through a mutual understanding of what a coffee cup or a water cooler symbolizes: decelerated social time, or what the authors call a time-island. Although the type of beverage being consumed may differ, the non-verbal spatial cues conveyed by this type of social situation appear to converge across cultures.

Thus, the development of new technologies has a significant effect on mutual understanding and draws attention to the importance of multimodality, i. e., the use of non-verbal communicative resources alongside or instead of verbal languages in intercultural communication.

2 Translation as practice and change

So far, we have highlighted how the visible, common corporate language blends with other languages and communicative resources, forming the communicative landscape of the multilingual workplace. As the iceberg model suggests, what cannot be seen is indeed difficult to control, though it is possible to shape and influence by accessing the resources associated with each level (see Figure 1). In this regard, we would argue that managing communication below the surface of the iceberg is not an impossible task, albeit a difficult one, requiring continuous effort.

Employing translation is part of this effort as it can be seen as a common response to the simultaneous existence of several languages in the multilingual workplace. At the same time, it is a way for all members of the multilingual organization to participate in managing language by translating culturally bound communication. In doing so, they create a joint meaning for individuals from different cultures. In Figure 1, the idea of collective management is shown by having translation permeate all layers of communication in the multilingual workplace. It is a collective process where different individuals within groups of employees, team leaders, and managers engage in translating words, texts, and meanings. Translation is then seen as a practice (just like the use of English is a collective, sometimes policy-bound, practice), which is likely to be concurrent in most multilingual contexts. We offer, here, a more comprehensive understanding of translation.

In daily parlance, translation is often associated with the reverbalization of meaning in another language. We define translation more comprehensively and holistically to include transformation, change, and transference of human and material resources across languages, organizations, institutional fields, countries, and other borders (Piekkari, Tietze, and Koskinen 2020). Translation also means changing the original word or text to make it accessible to receiving audiences in local (i. e., other language) contexts (Westney and Piekkari 2020). In this regard, the concept of translation captures on-going change and transformation of products, services, strategies, management models, organizational practices, and knowledge when the global meets the local. Furthermore, translation highlights the importance of translators who make choices about what and how to translate. These include professional translators or interpreters, but also employees who perform the role of the local translator beyond their normal work responsibilities. Thus, our definition encompasses both the metaphorical and interlingual meaning of translation (Piekkari, Tietze, and Koskinen 2020).

We encourage CCO scholars to integrate translation as a key aspect of the communicative constitution of multilingual workplaces (Piekkari, Tietze, and Koskinen 2020). It can be applied to understand how meanings are constructed, negotiated, and resisted both when employed in multilingual contexts or when used to translate meanings as they derive from non-verbal communications. As an agentic force, translation has a strong performative function in these organizations through which decisions are either concluded or propelled into particular trajectories of action. Translation shapes emergent relationships and constellations between individuals, groups as well as organizational units. While the use of English or the employment of situated discursive practices enables communication across language boundaries, recent studies provide convincing evidence that *ad hoc*, localized translation work is widely spread and a common response to the existence of language diversity (Ciuk, James, and Śliva 2019; Kettunen 2016; Logemann and Piekkari 2015; Piekkari et al. 2013; Tietze, Tansley, and Helienek 2017).

These studies share a common understanding that translation is much more than a mechanistic act of changing a text from language A to language B. Rather, translation activity is seen as a discursive practice through which the multilingual organization is performed, constituted, and negotiated. On-going individual acts (Logemann and Piekkari 2015) and collective acts (Ciuk, James, and Śliva 2019; Kettunen 2016) of translation are agentic in that they have the potential to transform meanings, practices, and relationships. Translation work is also deeply imbued in particular socio-political contexts (e. g., Tietze, Tansley, and Helienek 2017). Thus, this contemporary stream of research argues that multilingual workplaces are spaces of agentic translation where meaning is made, manipulated, and rejected through acts of translation.

3 Discussion and conclusion

In this chapter, we have applied the CCO approach to the multilingual workplace and argued for the inclusion of languages (in plural), translation, and non-verbal communication in the communicative constitution of contemporary organizations. We have highlighted how organizational scripts are negotiated across languages, how translators can be regarded as authors and multilingual workplaces as linguascapes. All of the investigations pertaining to these matters are, implicitly or explicitly, based on Deetz's position (2003: 425) that "language is not the mirror of nature" – this is also true for how the English language and translation are used. However, this insight is yet to be fully incorporated into studies of the communicative complex character of multilingual organizations. Using English or translation are practices in situated contexts and as such they are not universal, objective, or more valuable than other communicative practices. In multilingual workplaces, this means that communicative acts involving the use (or non-use) of English, other languages, translation, and non-verbal communication are agentic in nature. Our intent in this chapter was to show that the existence of several languages necessitates actions, responses, and decisions, which contribute to the constitution of multilingual workplaces.

In order to understand communicative behavior in these workplaces, we have departed from a review of a variety of mainly empirical studies, which concerned themselves with the phenomenon of language diversity. Our review has drawn attention to the challenges and opportunities of managing multilingual workplaces that are characterized by multilingual, intercultural, and multimodal forms of communication. Once management is defined more broadly to include both a historically situated occupational role (i. e., the formal role of managers) as well as a collective practice, it becomes possible to speak about the collective process of meaning. We have also emphasized that non-verbal communication concomitantly informs the way employees interpret and shape situations.

Many contemporary organizations, including those with a more domestic orientation, are situated in multilingual realities. They struggle to find and use a shared language (often English) with all the disagreements and opportunities that this language brings along. Likewise, the relationship between English and "other" languages will remain an important aspect of today's workplaces. We have shown how specific discursive acts and decisions align groups or keep them apart. These shadow structures enable the sharing of knowledge but can also hinder it or change the body of knowledge through translation. Thus, understanding the communicative behavior, including when and to what effect translation is drawn upon, is a key aspect of the functionality of the multilingual workplace.

Returning to Hall's (1959) notion that much communication is silent, we argue that English is indeed treated as silent in that it has not been investigated or problematized outside an established, but still small, community of scholars. Translation in all its manifold manifestations is treated similarly, remaining silent in terms of the scholarly interest it evokes. Non-verbal means of communication are silent, too, but have (ironically) been more visible and researched by communication scholars. We see the current *status quo* in terms of blindness toward the dominant role of the English language as a serious gap in organization and management studies. A thought-provoking parallel can be drawn with blindness about how whiteness as an ethnic privilege is inscribed in the production of management and organization studies (Al Ariss et al., 2014). Al Ariss et al. (2014) argued that although whiteness in research is being hidden and unacknowledged, it shapes the process and outcome of research in significant ways, reducing social justice.

Therefore, based on our discussion of the multilingual workplace, we advocate a more holistic and inclusive understanding of communications within the CCO tradition. For example, managers of multilingual teams may wish to discuss the use of English, translation, and local languages openly and directly and develop practices that support the understanding of language use beyond technical correctness and expertise.

There is a well-established body of work within language-sensitive international business studies to draw on with regard to the status of use of English as the global language of knowledge, business, and management and its relationship with other languages through which multilingual organizations are linguascaped. Language practices also need to include translation (and interpreting) as well as acknowledge the existence and effect of non-verbal meanings. Such an integrated approach poses huge challenges not least in terms of gaining access but also in terms of the researchers' own language competences (for a detailed discussion, see Piekkari and Tietze 2016; Tietze 2018; Piekkari, Tietze, and Koskinen 2020). We strongly advocate that scholarship interested in communication and its constitutive performance concerns itself also with the phenomena and consequences of English, languages, translation, and non-verbal meanings as they unfold in multilingual workplaces and mingle with narratives, discourses, and authoring of organizations.

Our message poses a critical challenge for scholarship and practice because even domestically oriented organizations are increasingly becoming multilingual as evidenced, for example, by patters of migration. The flow of people across the globe changes patterns in workforce composition so that even domestic settings have long ceased to be monolingual and become more complex. We believe that a more holistic understanding of communication that comprises different languages, non-verbal acts, and translation is a necessary next step for scholarship of management communication.

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