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Patchareerat Yanaprasart &
Claudine Gaibrois (eds.)

Overcoming barriers, bridging boundaries and deconstructing borders in multilingual professional settings: une perspective comparative

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Overcoming barriers, bridging boundaries and deconstructing borders in multilingual settings: une perspective comparative

Introduction

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When we read in the call for papers that the aim of the VALS-ASLA Conference 2016 (Geneva, January 20-22) was to examine "the role of language use in the construction of boundaries," we reacted with excitement. Sharing an interest in workplace interactions, which we investigate from our two different disciplinary perspectives (Linguistics and Management Studies), we decided to propose an interdisciplinary panel that would address not only the construction, but also the *deconstruction* of language boundaries in multilingual professional contexts. Four scholars and a discussant from different disciplinary and geographical backgrounds joined us in our initiative, which ended in an acceptance of the proposal and a fruitful panel session of four presentations and a discussion. Motivated by the positive outcome of our endeavour, we submitted a proposal based on our panel to the editor in chief of the bulletin VALS-ASLA. It is to our great pleasure that the bulletin's scientific committee accepted this interdisciplinary and internationally oriented editorial project.

The present volume focuses on interactions in different multilingual professional contexts. In a new global economic order where there is a profound restructuring of economic organisations across state boundaries (Williams 2010), language choice and the way it is used can hinder or enhance cooperation among co-workers (Lüdi et al. 2013, 2016). It can also affect the performance of the company as a whole (Chen, Geluykens & Choi 2006; Welch & Welch 2008).

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As a matter of fact, the workplace is not only a physical space where people work, but also a social space where people meet, interact and build relationships (Zhu 2014). In the multilingual and multicultural labour market, "language practices are even fundamental for the construction of cultural and linguistic boundaries, in the sense that it is through language use that cultural and linguistic group memberships are identified, problematised and negotiated and thus barriers between organisational members are established, modified, reinforced or deconstructed" (Yanaprasart 2016: 94). This may explain the reason why for a long time researchers on language diversity in the workplace have focused on the effects of "language barriers" (Holden 1987).

When it comes to overcoming language boundaries, social tensions between social actors arise because of different language ideologies. These are related to the diversity of the meanings of language use and their implications. Some view language speaking as using "standard language," which implies a monological norm based on a notion of relatively fixed and stable language borders. From this perspective, language is just a tool of communication based on the conception of transparency, and the choice of a common language constitutes the best way to promote international understanding.

Others assert that what prevails in transnational business activities is valorising language diversity resources so as to bridge the gaps, cross linguistic borders and give equal access to all participants in interactions whatever their respective competences. In this view, communicating in multilingual contexts is not about "perfect" language knowledge, following the ideology of standardisation emphasising homogenisation, sameness and stability (Cogo 2012), but all about "pragmatic" language use that allows finding practical solutions to immediate problems.

Furthermore, when languages come in contact, they are so deeply intertwined that it is difficult to determine the boundaries between the different languages involved (Makoni & Pennycook 2012). Various studies have investigated the effects of such hybrid language use on communication and collaboration in multilingual professional contexts. Mondada (2004: 21) showed that plurilingual practices mingle with "issues such as displaying expertise, constructing collegial relationships, accomplishing efficient collaborative work and organising specific participation opportunities." Gaibrois (forthcoming) concludes that from the perspective of its users, hybrid language allows to exchange information more effectively, to feel more comfortable in interactions as well as to have more possibilities to express voice and participate.

In the study of how language and group barriers can be transcended in multilingual companies (Harzing & Feely 2008; Harzing et al. 2011), a number of studies have elevated the roles of individuals with the "right linguistic capital" (Williams 2010: 85) to be able to exploit "the system of differences" socially and linguistically. To denote the extensive involvement of culturally and linguistically

skillful people in professional communication and their significant value to the team, terms such as "cultural broker" (Michie 2003), "cultural translators" (Jordan 2002), "intercultural speaker - mediator" (Byram 2008), "brokers between cultures" (Kramsch 1998), "language brokers" (Tse 1996), "boundary spanners" (Barner-Rasmussen et al. 2014), "bridge individuals" (Harzing et al. 2011), "language nodes," "language mediators," "bridge builders" (Marschan-Piekkari et al. 1999) or "multilinguacultural transcenders" (Yanaprasart 2015) have been coined.

The aforementioned terms, "nodes, brokers, bridge builders, boundary spanners, border transcenders", as well as the character of a border or boundary and its dynamic change (Yanaprasart forthcoming) are mostly metaphorically described. Boundary, barrier or border is evolving constantly and progressively through contacts between different linguistic and communicative patterns. The question is to know better how these linguistic actions are described and explained by encounters, which processes take place at the border, and what the consequences of such activities are.

Aiming to explore various language strategies and practices that multilingual employees put in place to transcend perceived barriers, this volume adopts a comparative perspective in various ways. First, the volume represents a platform for an interdisciplinary exchange between specialists in Linguistics, Management scholars and Education experts who share a research interest in language use in multilingual workplaces. Furthermore, it highlights numerous comparable aspects on the theoretical, methodological and empirical levels to better understand practices of language use in linguistically diverse workplaces and their effects on collaboration and cooperation. Findings from different national contexts (Austria, Croatia, Finland, France, Germany, Serbia and Switzerland) will be compared.

By examining language practices, this volume addresses the following questions:

1) Under what circumstances and in which context is language diversity considered a barrier and by whom?
2) How are practices of overcoming language barriers related to power issues?
3) What are the power effects of knowing and using certain languages to transcend language boundaries?
4) How are top-down policies and bottom-up strategies interrelated to deconstruct or reinforce language borders in professional communication?
5) How do monolingual or plurilingual solutions impact participants' language ideologies and the construction of their professional and that of group identities?
6) Which understanding of language do the various practices draw upon?

The aim of Wilhelm Barner-Rasmussen's exploratory paper is to broaden the theoretical understanding of the role of "boundary spanners," their language and cultural skills, their motivations in spanning group boundaries in international organisational contexts, as well as the positive and negative impacts of plurilingual boundary spanners on the day-to-day operations of international organisations at group and inter-unit levels.

While a frequent discourse about the need to manage linguistic diversity in the workplace is that "language is always a first barrier," the contribution of Patchareerat Yanaprasart points out that although such a "barrier" implies certain differences in policies, strategies and approaches related to the plurality of language-use ideologies, language can become a major instrument to push boundaries, to move people and to stretch their comfort zone to achieve their best. Since a team leader often plays a crucial role in the development and negotiation of the communicative norms that characterise the working team, his or her decision in using only one or more languages at work, in the work or for the work can have a significant impact on linguistic environment inclusiveness.

The research of Marlene Miglbauer examines the circumstances under which the use or non-use of languages facilitates transcending or reinforcing boundaries in international business settings. If implementing a *lingua franca* as the corporate language does not automatically lead to a full adoption within the company, the use of various languages in the workplace, in the maelstrom of language diversity, can make visible an interrelationship between language choice, language boundaries and identity construction.

Proposing to shift the focus from individuals' language skills to the role people's perspective on language diversity plays in overcoming language barriers, Claudine Gaibrois's article pays particular attention to the consequences of these perceptions for crossing language boundaries. Her study documents that language boundaries might be constructed or overcome depending on employees' perspective on multilingual encounters. While conceiving of communication in multilingual settings as fights between speakers of different language backgrounds contributes to construct boundaries, perceiving communication in multilingual settings as matters of inclusion or collaboration contributes to create participation possibilities and constructive cooperation.

By presenting examples of common practice to overcome barriers, bridge boundaries and deconstruct borders at the workplace, Sabine Ehrhardt interprets these practices as centripetal or democratising forces as they try to reduce the distance between people of different origins by creating inclusive spaces. Her contribution to a comparative perspective comes from the field of ecolinguistics, a rather new discipline which tries to combine various interdisciplinary approaches in the field of communication, especially in complex environments, with a high diversity of linguistic systems.

Silvía Melo-Pfeifer analyses the meanings of "authenticity" when university students portray a teacher, although multilingual, as a non-native speaker of the teaching language. In the context of language education, "authenticity" is interpreted as an academic language ideology based on the norm of the dominant native speaker and closely related to a rhetorical construction that states the acceptability and productivity of errors and other linguistic deviations when useful for academic purposes (academic "linguistic opportunism").

In the last chapter, Georges Lüdi discusses conceptions of multilingualism and plurilingualism. The author claims that with the current heteroglossia of linguistic territories and the increasing loss of boundaries between languages, social multilingualism represents the norm rather than the exception. Consequently, individual plurilingualism is a rising phenomenon in the global workplace. He therefore calls for a revision of current linguistic theories.

Lastly, based on these contributions by researchers from various national, geographical and disciplinary backgrounds, common red threads and complementarities as well as tensions and contradictions will be identified in the conclusion of this volume.

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Linguistic skills: the fundament of boundary spanning in international organizational contexts?

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Les personnes qui relient deux groupes de part et d'autre d'une frontière quelconque ont un impact significatif sur la façon dont la relation entre les groupes se développe au fil du temps en termes de communication, de flux de connaissances et de présence ou d'absence de conflit. Le rôle clé de ces personnes, appelées ici "passeurs de frontières" (Angl. "boundary spanners"), est particulièrement important lorsque la communication se déroule à travers de multiples frontières linguistiques et culturelles. C'est le cas dans les sociétés multinationales, mais aussi dans d'autres types d'organisations qui opèrent régulièrement à travers les frontières internationales. Cet article explore dans une perspective théorique comment les compétences linguistiques et culturelles des frontières et les liens entre ces compétences et d'autres aspects de leur comportement influencent l'émergence et le développement de relations positives ou négatives entre individus et unités dans de tels contextes organisationnels internationaux. Un cadre interdisciplinaire est développé et des propositions pour des recherches futures sont avancées.

Mots-clés:
Passeur de frontière, organisation internationale, communication inter-unité, compétence linguistique, framing.

Keywords:
Boundary spanner, international organization, interunit communication, linguistic skill, framing.

1. Introduction

This exploratory paper aims to broaden the theoretical understanding of individuals spanning group boundaries in international organizational contexts, or 'boundary spanners'. Research in the context of multinational corporations (MNCs) indicates that boundary spanners can bridge group boundaries, support flows of knowledge and social capital across these boundaries, and prevent or dampen the eruption of conflicts between groups (Kostova & Roth 2003). In this paper, specific interest will be directed toward boundary spanners' linguistic and cultural skills and their links to other factors enabling boundary spanning behavior – specifically framing, motivation and organizational context – in pursuit of an emergent research avenue fusing insights from multiple disciplines including international business and management research, linguistics, and psychology. A framework and propositions for future interdisciplinary research are advanced.

The paper draws extensively on recent research in the context of MNCs, where boundary spanners and especially their linguistic and cultural skills have been

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recognized as important for a number of positive outcomes. This is not a coincidence, as multinational corporations are multilingual and –cultural almost by default (e.g., Barner-Rasmussen & Björkman 2005) and rife with internal tensions along these linguistic and cultural boundaries as well as others, such as functional, unit, geographical and temporal ones (Carlile 2004). At the same time, multinational corporations derive a substantial proportion of their competitive advantage from knowledge sharing and interunit collaboration (e.g., Kogut & Zander 1993). Consequently, their performance can be severely damaged by interunit conflicts, and thus the capabilities of boundary spanners are, in principle, of significant value to them.

However, as will be argued below, boundary spanning capabilities are highly pertinent also to other types of organizations operating regularly across multiple boundaries in international contexts. Also, they are not only pertinent to managers but also to other organizational members. The capability to assuage tensions and advance harmonious cooperation across different kinds of organizational boundaries improves working conditions and ensures that less energy and effort is wasted on destructive, emotionally stressful tensions and conflicts. Hence, interdisciplinary research efforts to understand boundary spanners better are of broad relevance to both business and society.

2. Background

In recent years, international business and management scholars have become increasingly interested in the role of linguistic and cultural skills for boundary spanning in MNCs. This can be seen as part of the broader insight that language skills are indeed relevant to MNC management. This insight, unlikely to be perceived as path-breaking by linguists, was first advanced in the context of international business and management research in the late 1990s (Marschan et al. 1997; Marschan-Piekkari et al. 1999a, 1999b), and became part of mainstream research in this field even more recently. The two leading journals in the field devoted special issues to the matter only in the 2010s (Journal of World Business 2011; Journal of International Business Studies 2014).

Recent advances notwithstanding, the understanding of boundary spanning across linguistic and cultural boundaries in multinational corporations remains in its relative infancy. Key arguments motivating the present paper is that this understanding is in need of further development, and that systematic efforts are requested in order to extend it beyond the context of large multinational firms, which constitutes the empirical base of most current research on the topic. Boundary spanners exist also in other organizational contexts where linguistic and cultural boundaries are crossed, such as small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and other kinds of international organizations, playing equally important roles there (see e.g. Johnson & Duxbury 2010 for an insightful study of boundary spanning by Canadian diplomats). With increasing voluntary

and involuntary migration across national borders, boundary spanners are also likely to become more important in domestically operating organizations. Due to transnational mobility, even businesses deriving most of their turnover from domestic markets may have significant international diversity among their employees. This paper addresses a broad range of organizational contexts and thus aspires to contribute to our understanding of such contexts as well as large MNCs.

Multinational corporations are nevertheless an appropriate starting point. This is because they offer empirical insight into phenomena and dynamics that may also exist elsewhere, but in forms that are less readily observable and more difficult to interpret (Ghoshal & Westney 1993; Roth & Kostova 2003). For example, in domestic non-corporate contexts, boundary spanning may be pertinent to understand how relationships between ethnic or cultural subgroups develop over time in terms of accommodation, integration, negotiation and/or conflict mediation. Obviously such dynamics are important, but when they are framed in terms of key societal issues, individual boundary-spanners and their actions, motivations and resources may receive less attention – no matter how crucial they are for positive outcomes. Similarly, research on boundary spanners in the context of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) may face difficulties in parsing out actions and motivations related to boundary spanning from those related to innovation, entrepreneurship, and/or leadership, as individuals in small organizations often have multiple roles – even though a better understanding of each separate role might benefit both individuals and organizations.

Against this background, research in the context of MNCs may help us discern otherwise obscure patterns and interpret them with greater clarity. Hence the ambition here to draw on research in MNC contexts to provide a more general understanding of individuals spanning linguistic and cultural boundaries in organizational contexts.

The above argumentation suggests that boundary spanning may be of significant practical relevance for the wellbeing and professional success of individuals in multilingual and –cultural contexts, as well as for the organizations that employ and develop them. It has long been argued that the ability to share knowledge internally is a primary reason for the existence of multinational corporations (Kogut & Zander 1993). While we engage here with a broader category of contexts than just MNCs, the following question remains valid: if the ability to share knowledge is important, how can we minimize the negative impact of linguistic and cultural differences in terms of misunderstandings, tensions and conflicts? In a globalizing economy and society where an increasing number of people need to cross linguistic and cultural barriers on a daily basis both at work and in private, challenges related to these issues are bound to be prevalent as well as pertinent from a business viewpoint.

Recent research suggests that in addition to their skills in specific languages and cultures, individuals spanning linguistic and cultural boundaries in MNCs may also rely on behaviors such as framing (e.g., Cornelissen et al. 2011) and different forms of plurilingualism (e.g., Lüdi et al. 2013; Janssens & Steyaert 2014; Langinier & Ehrhart 2015; Gaibrois, 2016; Tietze et al. 2016) to ensure fluent internal communication. In other words, there is a range of language-related behaviors that potentially enables boundary-spanning individuals to frame day-to-day interactions in consensual terms, achieve communicative purposes, and leverage creative resources. Over time this is likely to contribute to the emergence of shared identities that encompass and envelop those of previously separate, and possibly conflicting subgroups, thus assuaging any tensions between groups and contributing to harmonious intergroup relations.

The above considerations highlight the need to conceive of language competences in a broad sense. In organizational contexts where linguistic and cultural boundaries are being spanned, both competence in discrete languages and ability to produce plurilingual speech are relevant abilities. Given that most international business scholars tend to have focused on discrete languages and operationalized them in a simple manner, the growing interest in plurilingualism is a welcome development suggesting an area of future collaboration between linguists and business academics.

Additional and complementary input may be provided by occupational psychology and its applications within Human Resource Management (HRM) – an area of research that may be helpful in deepening our understanding of individuals' motives to put their linguistic and cultural competences to use in multinational organizational contexts. In combination, the approaches mentioned above suggest a significant yet underexplored research avenue, the pursuit of which is the topic of the rest of this paper.

The literature reviewed below draws on an eclectic set of sources discussing boundary spanning behavior in multilingual and –cultural organizational contexts, with a particular focus on the issues highlighted above. Based on this review, a frame of reference and a number of propositions for future validation are advanced, in line with the exploratory approach of the study.

3. Literature review

This review is structured as follows. First, a summary is provided of previous research on individual-level language use in the MNC context, and on linguistic and cultural boundary spanners in particular. We then proceed to an overview of what is currently known about framing, plurilingual competences, and psychological preconditions for boundary spanning. These sections are summarized in a framework inspired by the well-established ability-motivation-opportunity (AMO) model of human resource management (e.g., Lepak et al. 2006), which views employee performance as a function of three components:

ability, motivation, and opportunity to perform. Analyzing the issues covered in this paper from the complementary angles of ability, motivation and opportunity provides a base for the subsequent development of propositions in the final section of the paper.

3.1 Individual-level patterns of language use in MNCs

Among their other seminal contributions to research on language in the context of MNCs, Marschan-Piekkari et al. (1999a, 1999b) observed that individuals with relevant language skills (which they termed 'language nodes') were often more extensively involved in inter-unit communication than their formal position indicated, and tended to have superior access to information compared to their less skilled colleagues and superiors. The latter in turn tended to delegate a relatively more extensive responsibility for linguistically challenging interunit relationships to these 'nodes'. Over time, this resulted in the latter receiving or actively taking on organizational roles that Feely and Harzing (2003) have described with the term 'bridge individuals'.

Subsequent research (e.g. Holden & von Kortzfleisch 2004; Vaara et al. 2005; Piekkari 2008; Tietze 2008, 2010) has shown that when demand for skills in a certain language in a particular organizational context exceeds supply, individuals with a command of the language in question are likely to gravitate toward formal or informal roles as gatekeepers, *compradors*[1], liaisons, or translators between their linguistically less skillful colleagues and relevant external parties, endowing them with access to networks and formal or informal influencing opportunities. This has often been interpreted in terms of these individuals accumulating disproportionate power (e.g. Vaara et al. 2005), but such roles have also been found to entail increased work pressures in the form of requirements for translation support, clarification of misunderstandings and other 'bridging' tasks that are not related to the actual work tasks of the individuals in question (e.g. Marschan-Piekkari et al. 1999a, 1999b).

Mirroring the formal or informal, yet undeniably to some extent special position of individuals with desirable language skills, linguistically less skilled individuals have been found to be susceptible to (real or perceived) negative personal consequences such as career-related degradation (Marschan-Piekkari et al. 1999b; Piekkari et al. 2005; Piekkari & Tietze 2012), status loss, or language-based ostracism (Neeley 2013; Neeley et al. 2012). Such consequences have been observed in a broad range of empirical situations including 'subsidiary employees lacking skills in the HQ language, expatriates lacking skills in the subsidiary language, senior subsidiary managers being less skilled than junior managers in a newly established common corporate language, subsidiary

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[1] This word has its roots in the Portuguese word for 'purchase'. It originated as a term for local merchants who acted as mediators between foreign producers and local consumers (Reis Rosa & Aquino Alves 2010).

representatives being more skilled in the common corporate language than their colleagues at HQ, and one party in a merger being less skilled than the other in the new HQ language, or the common corporate language' (Tietze et al. 2016: 328).

As this list indicates, an elevated or privileged formal organizational position does not necessarily protect organizational members from language-related negative effects. However, depending on other resources at their disposal and the surrounding institutional environment, organizational members may be able to influence and/or resist language-related policies and choices to a lesser or greater degree. Vaara et al. (2005) document a case where the Finnish employees of a newly merged Finnish-Swedish bank drew on the role of English as the international *lingua franca* of the financial sector to resist the imposition of Swedish as a common corporate language in their company. In that case, the global position of English was among the institutional resources that individual actors could leverage to influence local language choices. In other situations, organizational members may not be able to resist, or 'fight', corporate language policy decisions; their options may then be restricted to 'flight' (i.e. looking for another job) or 'adaptation' (e.g. improving their language skills or relying on other solutions, such as online translation services) in order to cope with new demands (Tietze et al. 2016).

3.2 Boundary spanning

Boundary spanning is a longstanding concept in organizational research (e.g. Adams 1976) and basically denotes the activity of individuals keeping or managing the contact between two organizations or two units of the same organization. It has been applied to many forms of organizational relationships including interunit relationships in multinational corporations (e.g. Kostova & Roth 2003), contacts between different units of a diplomatic corps (Johnson & Duxbury 2010), and relationships between suppliers and customers (e.g. Singh et al. 1994).

Building on Adams (1976), Ancona & Caldwell (1992), Callister & Wall (2001) and Richter et al. (2006), boundary spanners can be defined as individuals who are perceived by other members of both their own in-group and/or relevant out-groups to engage in and facilitate significant interactions between two groups (Koveshnikov et al. 2012). The activities of these individuals can be synthesized into four functions: exchanging, linking, facilitating and intervening. Definitions of and key references to each of these functions following Barner-Rasmussen et al. (2014) are provided in Table 1.

Function	Definition	Key references
Exchanging	Personal engagement in the exchange of information, knowledge and other such resources with actors in the other unit.	Ancona & Caldwell 1992; Mäkelä & Brewster 2009; Johnson & Duxbury 2010
Linking	Utilization of personal networks to enable other, previously unconnected actors to connect across unit boundaries.	Burt 1992, 1997; Kostova & Roth 2003; Johnson & Duxbury 2010
Facilitating	Personal engagement in facilitating/assisting others' cross-boundary transactions.	Boland & Tenkasi 1995; Harzing 2001; Johnson & Duxbury 2010
Intervening	Personal active intervention in inter-unit interactions in order to create positive outcomes, (e.g., resolving misunderstandings, managing conflicts or contributing to trust building between the two units).	Ancona & Caldwell 1992; Kostova & Roth 2003; Johnson & Duxbury 2010

Table 1: Definitions of boundary spanning functions

As Table 1 indicates, all four boundary-spanning functions require some degree of linguistic and/or cultural skills. Based on empirical studies of Finnish-Russian and Finnish-Chinese headquarters-subsidiary relationships, Barner-Rasmussen et al. (2014) concluded that especially the more advanced functions – facilitating and intervening – demanded a high degree of comprehension and extensive ability to actively manage and redirect interactions that otherwise might turn arduous or escalate into conflict. Based on Hong (2010), these authors also noted that intervening can involve mediation in existing conflicts, too, further accentuating the level of skill required.

3.3 Plurilingual competences and boundary spanning

The research reviewed above suggests that linguistic and cultural skills are key resources for boundary spanners in MNCs, but business scholars have tended not to delve deeply into the nature of these skills, mostly operationalizing languages as distinct or discrete (e.g., 'English', 'Japanese'), even in spite of empirical evidence that daily life in international organizations often entails the mixing of languages (e.g., Steyaert, Ostendorp and Gaibrois 2011) and involves also other linguistic resources such as 'company speak' (Welch, Welch and Marschan-Piekkari 2005). Janssens and Steyaert's (2014: 624) proposal for a 'human-centered multilingualism' where language is conceived as 'a social activity in which speakers mobilize multiple linguistic resources to express voice' is a rare exception in a leading international business journal.

However, recent research on multilanguaging (Lüdi et al. 2013), plurilanguaging (Lüdi et al. 2016) and/or translanguaging (García 2009; Langinier & Ehrhart 2015) suggests that this type of language use is one of the ways in which boundary spanners may exert their positive influence in MNCs. Other concepts that capture the linguistic eclecticism that individuals may draw upon to act as

boundary spanners are multilinguaculturing (Yanaprasart 2015), hybrid languages (Gaibrois 2016) and special languages and corporate sociolects (Tietze et al. 2016). These conceptual advances suggest that a broader and arguably more realistic conception of the use of linguistic resources may be gaining ground in business studies.

While there are differences between the concepts briefly mentioned above, they all point toward what Janssens and Steyaert (2014: 624) have identified, with reference to Pennycook (2007), as the need to 'think of languages not as clearly bounded, unified systems but rather as translingual practices.' In relation to earlier research on boundary spanners, this implies an imperative for future work to engage with a significantly broader set of linguistic resources – including but not limited to those listed above and different combinations, mixes, hybrids or blends of these. It further implies less attention toward language choice interpreted as 'Finnish', 'Russian', or 'English', and more attention toward situations where – for example – a Finnish and a Russian accountant solve a practical problem in imperfect English by drawing on a mix of terms specific to the accounting profession, company-specific abbreviations and concepts, and whatever words and expressions they may know in each other's first or preferred language.

Furthermore, language use in such an encounter will be conditioned by the interlocutors' understanding of each other's cultural background, which provides an additional resource they can draw on to try to interpret each other's words and behaviors. By drawing upon such multiplex combinations of linguistic and cultural resources, interlocutors may arrive at genuine mutual understanding, yet when asked, they may say that they usually conduct their meetings in English.

3.4 Framing and boundary spanning

Framing (see e.g. Bateson 1955/1972; Goffman 1974; Tversky & Kahneman 1981) is long established as a ubiquitous construct across a range of social science disciplines and particularly in management and organizational research, where it has been applied to managerial cognition and decision-making, strategic and organizational change, and social movements and institutions (Cornelissen & Werner 2014). It has variously been described in terms of 'how organizational actors process information and how the resulting interpretations mediate their actions' (Burg et al. 2014: 352 based on Daft & Weick 1984; Kaplan 2011; Walsh 1995), or individuals' use of signals, such as gestures or words, to 'evoke frames of interpretation for their behaviour or communicated messages' (Cornelissen et al. 2011: 1703, building on Bateson 1955/1972).

Framing can thus pertain both to how actors through their behavior can influence others' interpretations of situations, and to how actors' interpretations of situations influence their own behavior. The essence of framing is brilliantly

captured in the title of the book 'Don't Think of an Elephant! Know Your Values and Frame the Debate' (Lakoff 2004), where the sentence 'Don't think of an elephant!' immediately frames the situation so that it is very difficult not to think of an elephant.

Burg et al. (2014) argue that the cognitive processes underpinning framing play a key role especially in situations when information is complex, ambiguous or absent (Kaplan & Tripsas 2008). Such situations challenge actors to develop cognitive structures – frames – to understand and interpret their environment. Once developed, these frames then 'allocate the actors' attention, guide their evaluations of ambiguous information, and provide a basis for inference' (Burg et al. 2014: 352).

What is relevant for our discussion is the notion of framing as a complementary resource that boundary spanners draw upon to exert a positive influence on interunit relationships. This is what Kostova & Roth (2003) suggest in their seminal theoretical piece on boundary spanners in MNC interunit contexts, which underlines the importance of individuals in multinational corporations telling their colleagues in their own unit about positive or efficacious interactions with people in the other unit. Linking framing explicitly with linguistic and cultural skills as resources for boundary spanning in international contexts, Barner-Rasmussen (2015) has argued that the former both overlaps with and complements the latter.

Research shows that framing is partly culturally conditioned, for example in that identical conflict episodes are perceived differently across cultures (Gelfand et al. 2001), and that the effectiveness of framing efforts is influenced by the degree to which the frames in question are culturally familiar to stakeholders (Cornelissen et al. 2011). It has also been shown that individuals with advanced linguistic and cultural skills have access to different cultural interpretive frames (Thomas et al. 2008; Brannen & Thomas 2010).

In combination, these findings strongly suggest that different interpretive frames are an important cause of misunderstandings, tensions and conflicts in international contexts, and that individuals with advanced linguistic and cultural skills are potentially in a position to act as translators or interpreters of such frames. Thus, they may help dampen or alleviate any problems related to inappropriate framing before they escalate to hurt interpersonal and organizational cohesion. Linguistically and culturally skilled individuals are also likely to pre-empt problems by recognizing and avoiding clumsy, ambiguous or inappropriate frames before they are used, increasing the likelihood of message acceptance and decreasing the risk of antagonizing interaction partners.

The pattern indicated above suggests the potential in interunit relationships for a cycle of framing, interpretation and behavior where each stage can have positive or negative organizational consequences, each stage and each loop of

the cycle influences the subsequent one, and information about positive or negative interactions spreads more widely in the respective units for each loop of the cycle. This can give rise to a powerful effect of reciprocal reinforcement, yielding powerful virtuous or vicious circles of which especially the latter may be very difficult to break. A schematic illustration of such a process is provided in Figure 1. Boundary spanners can potentially intervene at every stage.

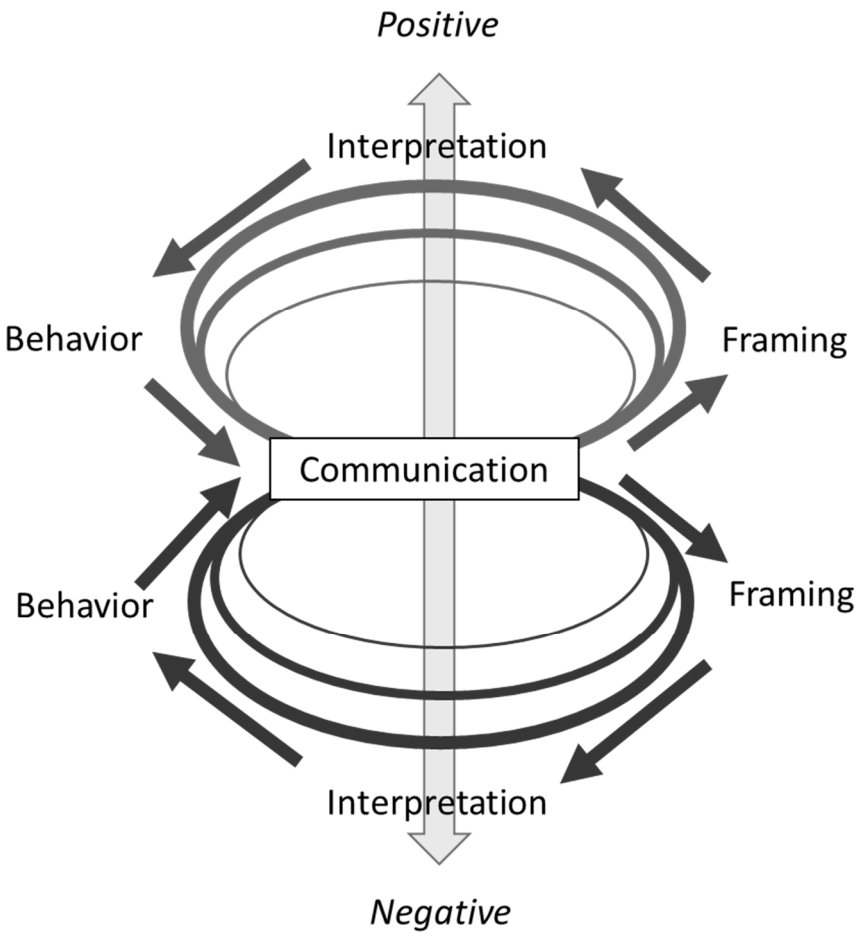

Figure 1: How communication in MNCs is influenced by boundary spanning behavior

A simple empirical example of how boundary spanners can influence processes of this kind can be found in Ribeiro's (2007) study of Japanese translators in Brazilian firms. The translators were found to go beyond the strict remit of their job duties and to act also as informal cultural buffers/mediators. In order to avert potential conflicts and misunderstandings, they occasionally acted independently to omit or rephrase messages they regarded as culturally inappropriate.

3.5 Motivation and opportunity in boundary spanning

We have referred above to the AMO model, which considers the work-related performance of an organization's employees to be a function of ability,

motivation, and opportunity to perform (e.g. Lepak et al. 2006; Liao et al. 2009; Jiang et al. 2012). Applying this analytical lens to the performance of boundary spanners demonstrates unanimously that the previous research reviewed above is heavily tilted towards ability. Linguistic and cultural skills (including plurilingual competences) are abilities; so is the knowledge of culturally conditioned frames to guide one's own actions and interpret and act upon others' actions. But we know very little about why people with the ability to act as linguistic and cultural boundary spanners may actually do so.

By highlighting boundary spanners' motivations and opportunities to act alongside their abilities, the AMO model draws attention to a number of issues that are mostly implicit in the literature reviewed above, yet permits some inferences regarding especially the motivations of these individuals. Firstly, multiple empirical studies (e.g. Schotter & Beamish 2011; Yagi & Kleinberg 2011) have shown that boundary spanning is not necessarily something that organizational members engage in because it is an explicit part of their job. Rather, individuals with the requisite skills may be requested by their peers and superiors to take on certain tasks – or may feel a duty to do so – even if they themselves do not actively seek these responsibilities and/or the tasks in question may be above (or below) their formal hierarchical position.

Secondly, and partly in opposition to the first finding, there are indications that individuals with the skills required to act as boundary spanners actively seek out opportunities to do so in order to accrue information, power and visibility advantages, thus advancing their own careers (e.g. Vaara et al. 2005). Thirdly, there is interview data to suggest that some individuals engage in boundary spanning because they enjoy communication and interaction with others across a broad spectrum and find it an interesting part of their professional life (e.g. Lönnholm 2012). These three tentative motives might be termed 'duty', 'ambition', and 'curiosity'. But the question has not been addressed systematically and we lack a holistic understanding of the possible links between different motivational aspects and paths into boundary spanning roles. In sum, current research offers only a limited understanding of linguistic and cultural boundary spanners' motivations to use their skills, and very little to help us grasp their possible reasons for not doing so.

As for the opportunity dimension, most research on boundary spanning takes as its starting point that the formal leaders of a group will also act as its boundary spanners in relation to other groups (e.g. Richter et al. 2006). Barner-Rasmussen et al. (2014) criticized this assumption and in their empirical study found boundary spanners at all levels of formal hierarchy, while far from all individuals in formal interunit liaison roles in fact acted as boundary spanners. However, their findings also suggested that given sufficient ability and motivation, persons whose jobs provide opportunities to interact across unit

boundaries (for example, an executive assistant in one of their case companies) are more likely to accumulate boundary spanning responsibilities.

The lack of 'competition' to act as the boundary spanner of a subgroup or unit could potentially be a second dimension of opportunity. So could participation in organizational control and coordination mechanisms such as job rotation, interunit teams, task forces, and committees. Within the field of international business and management there is a longstanding interest in such mechanisms and their positive organizational effects on knowledge sharing/transfer and different aspects of interunit collaboration and integration (see e.g. Hedlund 1986 for an early contribution). The generally accepted view in this literature is that networks and contacts formed as part of such interaction are an important aspect of the 'glue' that keeps an MNC together (e.g. Gupta & Govindarajan 2000).

However, the historical tendency in this field has been to focus on MNCs and subsidiaries as units of analysis, and individual-level analyses are scant, with rare exceptions that usually straddle the boundary between international business and management and human resource management (e.g. Mäkelä & Brewster 2009). Despite the obvious linkage between MNC- and unit-level coordination and boundary spanning opportunities for individuals, there are relatively few empirical pieces spelling out this connection in detail.

Summing up this discussion, it can be concluded that applying the AMO framework to boundary spanning raises a number of questions especially related to motivation and opportunity that can at this point be answered only at a superficial level. However, there are indications that all three dimensions are relevant and perhaps necessary for boundary spanning to occur. This points the way toward future research with a holistic and interdisciplinary approach that can account for the business dimension of the issue as well as for the linguistic and psychological dimensions. We may also infer some indicative patterns of progression from one dimension to another.

Opportunity alone does not seem to be a sufficient condition, as de facto not all formal liaisons attain boundary spanner status. Motivation may drive a person to accumulate relevant skills and seek relevant opportunities, thus contributing to building ability, but it is not equivalent to ability and thus is also insufficient on its own. In most cases, it seems that ability (in terms of skills in discrete language/s, relevant professional languages and sociolects, the ability to combine these language resources, and frame issues in a culturally acceptable way) precedes the other dimensions as a necessary or near-necessary condition for boundary spanning. Having attained ability, the path to a boundary spanning role may then proceed via motivation to opportunity, or via opportunity to motivation.

Motivation may drive individuals to seek relevant opportunities, while individuals who get relevant opportunities that they are not a priori motivated for and have not actively sought, such as unexpected job offers, must either reject these opportunities or recalibrate their motivation. However, under some conditions, opportunity or motivation may be sufficiently strong to induce individuals to acquire ability and proceed to become boundary spanners. To clarify which these conditions are is an important question for future research.

4. Conclusions and suggestions for future research

The above discussion can be summarized in the following propositions:

- Proposition 1: The broader the selection of relevant linguistic competences that an individual can draw upon in an international organizational context, the more likely that individual is to act as a boundary spanner.
- Proposition 2: Individuals who act as boundary spanners in international organizational contexts draw on framing as a resource to exert their positive influence.[2]
- Proposition 3: Individuals are motivated to engage in boundary spanning in international organizational contexts by duty, ambition, or curiosity, or a combination of these.
- Proposition 4: Not all individuals in international organizational contexts with the ability to act as boundary spanners actually do so.
- Proposition 5: If individuals in international organizational contexts with the ability to act as boundary spanners do not do so, it is due to a lack of either motivation or opportunity.

Exploring these propositions empirically demands a two-pronged strategy that is differentiated according to the primary level of analysis (organizational or individual), but in both cases based on genuine interdisciplinary collaboration between international management scholars, linguists and psychologists, and with significant input by the practitioners who constitute the object of study. Firstly, at the organizational level, consider the example of the Finnish and the Russian accountant above. Such situations are difficult to capture empirically because they necessitate observation of 'real' interactions between individuals to get sufficiently rich data. Interpreting such interactions requires sufficient familiarity with the full range of linguistic and cultural resources the interlocutors draw upon, which is something few researchers can muster alone. Finally, the validity of analyses of the data thus generated would benefit greatly from post hoc input by the involved actors to elucidate their reasoning. Traditional methodologies based on cross-sectional interviews conducted and analyzed by

[2] This wording accounts for the possibility that not all framing activity is positive. There can be negative framing.

researchers representing only one discipline cannot easily accommodate these demands. To address this challenge, researchers should strive towards longitudinal observation or even participation in regular organizational processes, draw upon interdisciplinary teams to collect and analyze their data, and work more closely with each other and members of the organizations they have studied to validate their findings.

Interdisciplinary collaboration will also be necessary to test those propositions that pertain to the individual level of analysis, but here the emphasis will be on drawing on insights from psychology and social psychology to understand the language-related actions of individuals in international business contexts. Such research could also use observation and analysis of real-life examples as a starting point, but could be followed up with psychological tests and/or in-depth interviews to validate hypothesized cause-effect linkages.

For example, an important question is to what extent people are hampered in using their linguistic and cultural skills in work-related contexts – or driven not to use them – for reasons that could be described as personal (as opposed to organizational). There may be many reasons for not drawing on the full range of one's skills, and thus remaining what might be termed a 'latent' boundary spanner. These could include uncertainty about one's competence (e.g., feeling uncomfortable about using a language in which one is perhaps not fully fluent), other psychological motives such as shyness or previous negative experiences, tactical motives (e.g., attempting to avoid extra work), or strategic motives (e.g. ensuring that the communication situation unfolds in such a way that also colleagues who do not have the requisite language skills can be included). In any case, the consequence may be silence, with subsequent problems for the organization:

> 'Every time they enter into an exchange with the holders of the legitimate competence, and especially when they find themselves in a formal situation, dominated individuals are condemned to a practical, corporeal recognition of the laws of price formation which are the least favourable to their linguistic productions and which condemns them to a more or less desperate attempt to be correct, or to silence.' (Bourdieu 1991:97)

Finally, in terms of the organizational impact of the avenues for future research briefly outlined above, an interest in the reasons why individuals use or do not use their linguistic and cultural skills also draws our attention to individual-level responses to sudden changes in the level of skills required to perform one's job. This question highlights the availability and quality of organizational support in the case of sudden changes that catch employees by surprise, such as mergers and acquisitions. A better understanding of individual reactions will be helpful to organizations in coming up with appropriate support measures, work conditions and opportunities in situations when competence requirements change significantly, assuming of course that these changes have not deflated employees' motivation to continue to act as boundary spanners.

In conclusion, while pre-existing linguistic and cultural skills in many ways constitute the fundament of boundary spanning in international organizational contexts, it is important to be aware that the structure of that context also exerts an influence on boundary spanning, as does motivation- and opportunity-related factors that may induce individuals to improve their level of linguistic skills over time.

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Stretching the boundaries of your linguistic comfort zone: an inclusive way to lead a multilingual team

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Negli spazi transnazionali, le attività valicano i confini nazionali e linguistici e problematizzano il plurilinguismo delle multinazionali. Un discorso frequente sulla gestione della diversità linguistica sul posto di lavoro sostiene che "il linguaggio è sempre una prima barriera". Una "barriera" che porta a differenziare decisioni, strategie e approcci seguendo schemi ideologici rispetto a "cosa", "perché", "come" "chi": quale lingua scegliere e perché, come utilizzarla, da chi, per chi e per quale scopo. Un dirigente assume spesso un ruolo determinante nel negoziare e potenziare le norme comunicative applicabili al gruppo di lavoro. La presente comunicazione porta su diverse tendenze di leadership in situazioni lavorative plurilingui, con particolare attenzione alle tipologie definibili attraverso i modi di comportamento comunicativo e alle zone di leadership. Emergono così due tipi di leadership identificati a seconda dei rispettivi comportamenti comunicativi: 1) la leadership crea un ambiente di inclusione linguistica in cui gli individui plurilingui comunicano le proprie idee con facilità, migliorando così le relazioni interpersonali e stabilendo un'atmosfera di lavoro positiva (follower-centred); 2) la leadership mantiene la propria zona di comodità linguistica al fine di perseguire gli obiettivi dell'organizzazione e ottenere risultati attraverso l'autorealizzazione e l'auto-proiezione del leader (leader-centred).

Parole-chiave:
Diversità e inclusione, squadra plurilingue, comunicazione della leadership, capacità della leadership, zona di disagio linguistico, inclusione linguistica, identità di gruppo, leadership inclusiva.

Keywords:
Diversity and inclusion, multilingual team, leadership communication, leadership capabilities, linguistic Dis-Comfort Zone, linguistic inclusiveness, 'Togetherness' identity, inclusive leadership.

1. Introduction

The globalisation of the economy is contributing to an increasing number of multicultural and multilingual workplaces and to the mobility of the workforce. These changes also pose several concrete challenges for workers, such as the need to be proficient in several languages to communicate with colleagues, clients and stakeholders across different countries or in diverse teams.

International leaders deal with multilingual[1] contexts, and they need to use language to craft everyday workplace interactions due to the central role of

[1] Whilst recognising the definition of the Common European Framework of Reference (2011), which makes the difference between multilingualism as a societal phenomenon and plurilingualism as an individual phenomenon, this paper opts for multilingual in English, which has the benefit of encompassing both individual and societal linguistic diversity (Weber & Horner, 2012).

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communication for group leading processes. A study of more than 1,000 companies on six continents by AMA Entreprise shows that there has been an increase in demand for multilingual skills among global leadership candidates (Fryer 2012). It reveals that global leadership development is changing and there is an emerging realisation that English may not be the exclusive business language in the future. This may explain partially why 14% of high-performance global companies hire only multilingual candidates for management positions, up from 10% in 2010, and the percentage of language training, provided by high-performing companies for all employees, increased from 10% in 2011 to 23% in 2012, following this study.

The aim of this paper is to explore the interrelationship between leadership models and capabilities (doing leadership), leadership communication styles (talking leadership) and leadership zones (thinking - developing leadership). Our particular focus is on communicative styles of leaders when interacting with their team members regarding language choice and language use. How important is it for multilingual leaders to take risks by stepping out of their linguistic comfort zone so as to better create an inclusive working atmosphere? In what way can plurilingual[2] speech (Lüdi & Py [4]2013) enhance team performance and other matters for the well-being of individuals?

2. Conceptual framework

2.1 Language use, communication and doing leadership

Encouraging and motivating subordinates as well as maintaining good relationships within the team are often associated with leadership performance (Yukl 2002). Chin (2015) defined leadership as "a process of social influence in which a person can enlist the aid and support of others in the accomplishment of a common task". In this way, leadership requires the efforts of others to achieve a goal. A team leader is someone who brings everyone together and makes sure that everybody feels part of the process. In this sense, a good leader has to know how to a) influence, encourage and engage people, and b) organise and maximise their efforts.

Considering leadership as a process or an activity rather than as a position or a personal characteristic, Schnurr (2013) suggests that leadership behaviours can be distinguished into two types of activities: 1) achieving transactional objectives or 2) performing relationally oriented behaviours. The first type refers to activities aiming to get things done, solve problems and achieve set goals, whereas the second type focuses on ensuring group harmony and creating a productive

[2] Focusing on the individuals' repertoire where a person's languages (and cultures) are not strictly separated, but interrelate in the communication skills as a whole (Lüdi et al. 2016: 3).

working atmosphere. Both activities are integrated aspects of the leadership process (Ferch & Mitchell 2001).

Furthermore, the changing nature of leadership entails a move from charismatic leader-centred to collaborative cross-sector leadership. In other words, there is an expectation that more participative and empowering styles of leadership, in particular by sharing leadership responsibilities or establishing co-leadership or collective leadership (Schnurr 2013), are among the more appropriate ways forward. In addition, it is a bottom-up leadership rather than the traditional top-down to be promoted. Recognising that a team can gain new insights more effectively can also benefit from a collaborative model. Leadership through collaboration, or "stewardship" in the terms of Marchand and Margery (2009), is believed to be more effective because leadership tasks are shared among employees at all levels. Contrary to the notion of co-leadership described by Jackson and Parry (2008: 82) as "two leaders in vertically contiguous positions who share the responsibilities of leadership", O'Toole et al. (2002: 79) assert that sharing leadership "is not just an issue at the top of corporations". Each employee should be given the opportunity to exercise leadership activities conjointly in the leadership processes.

When leadership responsibilities are shared and distributed among team members (Schnurr & Chan 2011) and participation is encouraged in an open and inclusive environment, new ideas, initiatives, solutions and creativity are believed to emerge (Yanaprasart 2016b). Thomas (1993) proposes thinking about the process of creating and maintaining an inclusive environment that naturally enables all participants from diverse backgrounds to contribute their full potential in the pursuit of organisational objectives. To be an effective leader in a diverse team means acknowledging differences and making use of them in a creative way to reach the team's goals, by providing the opportunity for full development of diverse talents and potential. It is essential for a leader to build a team in which all members feel fully integrated and can work well together (Thomas & Fly 1996).

Therefore, language use has a central role in doing leadership, argues Schnurr (2013). For Vygotski (1997), language is an instrument of communication and also constitutes a tool for the expression of thought and of mediation. It functions as a principal system of "symbolic mediation" for thought. Berthoud (2016) mentions two functions of language use: a conceptual function to increase the instruments of conceptualisation (cognitive resources) and a communicative function to optimise communication while constructing and transferring knowledge (linguistic tools). Whereas cognitive advantages imply knowledge enhancement by means of concepts deepening, de-familiarising, networking, and widening access to concepts, communicative assets refers to the styles of communication, the manners in which speakers organise their interactions, the maximisation or minimisation of their participation, the development of

leadership, the process of negotiation, the resolution of problems, the control of the action and the decision making.

Generally, groups that work together often develop and use regularly a shared repertoire of linguistic, discursive, and interactional behaviours when interacting with each other or with other group members. These practices may refer to appropriate ways of enacting power, making decisions, getting things done or holding meetings, etc. They are normally reflected in the group leader's discourse. Whereas the models of acceptable and expected behaviours are constantly reinforced and shaped among the members, it is their leader who, due to his or her special status, plays a crucial role in the development and negotiation of the discursive standard that characterises the working group.

In light of this discussion, it seems relevant to explore the ways in which leaders act and talk about language use and practices between them and their team or among the members in a multilingual context.

2.2 Leadership in a multilingual context: what language choice?

More recently, the word 'multilingual' has been associated with leaders' practices and leadership in the business investment sector. Multilingual leadership is defined as the mastery of 'three' languages of 1) expertise, combining business speaking, 2) non-profit/philanthropy speaking and 3) public policy speaking (Clark, Emerson, & Thornley 2014). For others, it is about multilingual experiences – leadership that includes various individuals who speak the language of different components of leadership (Maretish 2013). "Multilingual" leaders, teams, and strategies (Thornley & Clark 2013) in this sense refers to "a multilingual orientation" comprising a leadership made up of highly multilingual individuals who can enter into the conversation with a deeper expertise in one or more silos and can play across divergent perspectives. 'Multilingual' is used to describe, in the framework of this paper, three dimensions: a) the context: languages at work, b) the knowledge: languages as a work, c) the means: languages for work.

Since people are required to work together, those with different languages need to find language behaviour norms that are appropriate for their professional communication (Lehmann & Van den Bergh 2004). A survey by Rosetta Stone Inc. found that 90% of organisations struggle with language barriers in their day-to-day work, whereas upper management often is unaware of this issue (Forbes insights 2011). Language barriers can hinder collaboration, productivity, customer retention, or market expansion, and their costs are consequently high (Feely & Harzing 2003). Language differences can be referred to as "cost and noise" (Luo & Shenkar 2006). To reduce language barriers, at least at the management level, a *common, shared, new, universal, ideal subjective* language or code, seen as a panacea for the internal communication of linguistically mixed groups, has been proposed (see Steiner 1975; Peters &

Waterman 1982; Large 1985; Senge 1990; Kogut & Zander 1992; Phene et al. 2005). Having a common language of management is viewed as the carrier of best practice and the informal language of know-how (Holden 2002), a source of symbols encoding attitudes and behaviours to be shared by employees (Hedlund 1999), allowing leaders to see the world's business challenges as opportunities, think with an international mindset, act with fresh global-centric leadership behaviours, and mobilise world-class companies (Hoecklin 1995).

More and more companies functioning in a multilingual working context opt for an official corporate language as one possible solution – although not a "fully effective" (Harzing et al. 2011: 285) or all the time functional (Heikkilä & Smale 2011) one. English, "a global *lingua franca*", is predominantly chosen as the official language in international business contexts (Abdullah & Chaduhary 2012).

Though there is a general understanding that "English-Only" facilitates transnational communication, this solution is not a panacea through which all language differences can be resolved (Angouri 2013; Berthoud et al. 2013; Lüdi et al. 2016). There are studies that highlight implications of the relative dominance and unreflective use of English as the academic and business *lingua franca* within the field of leadership (Schedlitzki et al. 2016) or explore the issue of language choice and the importance of other languages for work matters (Evans 2013; Zhu 2014).

Results have shown that if Business English as a *lingua franca* is a 'must', multilingual professionals do not hesitate to increase their linguistic repertoire in their professional communicative practices. For strategic reasons, their language resources are activated under various forms of language use (Ehrenreich 2009; Pullin & Stark, 2010), including the use of language mixtures, mixed speech, interpretation and translation, the use of the *lingua receptiva* or the use of the language of the interlocutor (Lüdi et al. 2013). Language choice and use result from a constant process of negotiation between the participants. Therefore, languages other than English can also serve as *lingue franche* (Angouri & Miglbauer 2014; Cogo & Yanaprasart forthcoming; Yanaprasart 2016a), and communication in the international workplace is much more diverse than it seems at first glance (Lüdi et al. 2016).

To illustrate these practices, the following part will discuss a variety of language use models in the multilingual workplace as described by multilingual leaders.

3. Context, methodology and data overview

The data was collected in the framework of the Swiss National Science Foundation project[3] (SNSF n°100015_147315) entitled "Diversity Management Practices: Measures and Indicators". The focus of the project was twofold: 1) categorise different ways in which companies manage diversity at work as described by the field workers, and 2) identify the advantages and drawbacks of linguistic diversity in the Swiss context as a multilingual state.

As a first step, we collected official documents indicating the company philosophy, the concept of diversity and explicit management measures, as well as documents circulating in the companies and those presented to the public. As a second step, we conducted semi-structured interviews with the person in charge about the explicit and implicit management measures on their practices on diversity management.

Our interlocutors came from different groups: the industrial sector ("people in charge of diversity") (21 interviews), public institutions (offices of equal opportunity at universities/universities of applied science, or working for the Cantons or the Federal Swiss confederation) (17 interviews), scientific and academic teachers and researchers on this issue (14 interviews), as well as consultants, coaches and trainers of diversity management (10 interviews). It is to be noted that eight of 62 interviewees were men. On the geographical level, the study covered different linguistic areas. Interviews were conducted in English, French, German and Swiss-German. They were recorded and transcribed in these four languages.

In the framework of this article, the analysis will focus solely on the industrial sector[4]. English is the working language of the leaders interviewed as well as the language used in the interviews. Only some quotes were translated from French or Swiss-German into English.

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3 This investigation is both a continuation and the development and advancement with respect to an integrated project from the European Union's Sixth Framework Programme, Priority 7' Citizens and governance in a knowledge-based society' (Berthoud et al. 2013 for an overview).

4

Agro A	Agribusiness	Swiss-British international company based in Basel
Bk A	Banking	Swiss international company based in Zurich
Ins A	Insurance	Swiss international company headquartered in Zurich
Ins B	Insurance	Swiss company with headquarters in Winterthur
Ph A	Pharmaceutical	Swiss international company based in Basel
Ph B	Pharmaceutical	Swiss international company based in Basel
Ph C	Pharmaceutical	American international company based in Geneva
Ps A	Public service	Swiss national company headquartered in Bern
Ps B	Public service	Swiss national company headquartered in Bern
TCom A	Telecommunications	Swiss national company headquartered in Bern
TaB A	Tobacco industry	American international company based in Lausanne

4. Results

Leading a multilingual team beyond the linguistic comfort zone

Shoshan[5] gave an example of five top business leaders with multilingual talents: Mark Zuckerberg (English-Chinese), Michael Bloomberg (English-Spanish), Leo Apotheker (German-Dutch-French-English-Hebrew), Paul Bulcke (Dutch-French-English-Spanish-Portuguese-German), and Tidjane Thiam (French-German-English) and concluded that learning a foreign language may be just the key for leaders of today.

Speaking several languages seems to have value for top management in the Swiss context as well. Two of these five global business leaders lead Swiss international companies: Tidjane Thiam (Credit Suisse) and Paul Bulcke, who is quoted on Nestlé's website, "Being multilingual creates a stronger connection with peers, employees, and consumers, which is critical for a business like ours."

Likewise, none of the leaders we interviewed is monolingual.

The Regional Head of D&I for Switzerland (<Bank A>) speaks German and English and understands French and Swiss German.	The Diversity manager at <Public service B> also mastered three languages: German, Swiss German and English.
The Person in charge of a Swiss mandate with a global role (<Ins A>) mastered English, Welsh, Italian, and German and understands French and Spanish.	The Vice president in charge of diversity management is fluent in French, German, English and Spanish and understands Italian. Her D&I manager can speak French, English and German. <Tab A>
The linguistic repertoire of the Head of Diversity and Family Care at <Ins B> consists of Swiss German, German, English and French.	The Head of Diversity at TCom A works in German, English and Swiss German and also speaks Dutch, "a little bit of Hebrew and a tiny bit of French".
The Head of D&I at <Pharma B> has a mastery of Arab, English, French and German.	The Project manager at Pharma A is proficient in English and Chinese.
The Person in charge of D&I at <Public service A> has German as a mother tongue. English and Swiss German are her working languages.	

The advantages of being bi/multilingual are widely recognised, from being better at multi-tasking to sharper reasoning to gaining multiple perspectives

[5] On the website Entrepreneur coaching: https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/249924 (retrieved on 27.09.2016).

(Bialystock et al. 2012; Furlong 2009). Knowing a second language improves the brain's executive function (Carlson & Meltzoff 2008); speaking two or more languages increases a heightened ability to monitor the environment, which can help bi/multilingual people stay focused and quickly switch between tasks (Costa et al. 2009).

In the age of global business, monolinguals face serious one-language limitations. The capacity of going outside one's language capability – developing language competence beyond one's native comfort zone – has been increasingly highlighted. In the scope of our study, the term 'comfort zone' has been mentioned in relation to language use.

This leader explains that she is always ready to mobilise her repertoire to make her interlocutor feel comfortable, even if this requires going beyond the boundaries of her linguistic 'comfort zone':

(1) As a managing director, in general I try to speak the language of the majority, High German, Swiss German or French even if it's not really my comfort language. I try to make people sitting on the other side comfortable even though sometimes I was getting out of my comfort zone in doing that (Managing director, <Tab A>).

While "staying within one's language 'comfort zone' helps reduce psychic distance" (Piekkari et al. 2015: 14), successful leaders know that when stepping out of his or her 'comfort zone', they take a risk - a critical element of leadership (O'Brien 2006), learn to develop leadership skills (Ambler 2015), and show proof of flexibility and openness. By accepting to speak a foreign language imperfectly, a leader takes a risk and might feel uncomfortable, but will probably gain a follower's trust and will be better able to empathise with others.

(2) When you speak different languages, you have a kind of flexibility in your head which makes you very basically in terms of leadership a bit broader. You realize also the feeling of being uncomfortable. You can better feel what the other people feel, when you recruit people, when you work with people, when you lead people so you can realize what these people have to perform when it's not their mother tongue. It's very common in the business surroundings. You have to manage risks, you have to take risks, and this is basically uncomfortable. […] And when you do that by talking different languages, you can realize that I can do that. I can perform even if I am not in a comfortable zone (Executive Board Member, <Public service B>).

This statement not only points out how important it is for leaders to be multilingual, but also to act as such if they want to relate to followers. Taking the risk to speak even imperfectly the language of the followers might help them improve as leaders.

To give another illustration, "Talent Management Guide for Leaders" (2009) and "Living our Leadership Capabilities" (2008), published by <Agro A>, show that among eight behavioural leadership capabilities, "Steps beyond comfort zones" is one of these "core stones".

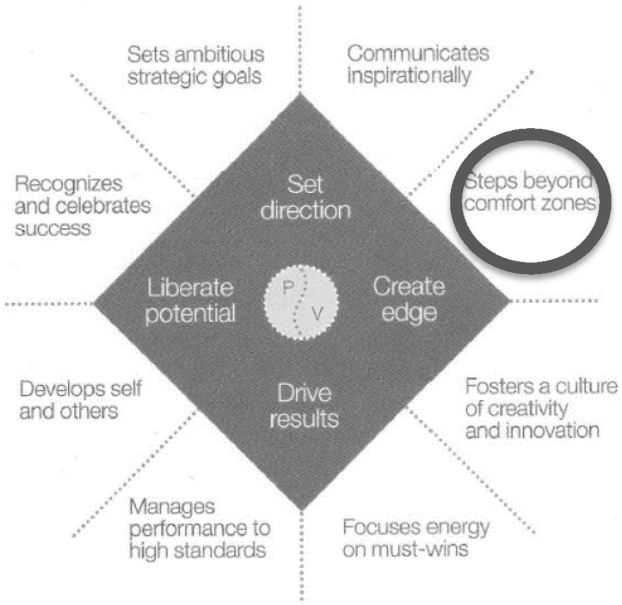

Figure 1: Leadership Capabilities Model (Living Our Leadership Capabilities 2008: 10)

"Helping others to leave their 'comfort zone'" is recommended[6] to the company's leaders. It gives two definitions of what it means to step out of one's comfort zone: 1) enables individuals and teams to work at their creative edge, 2) helps individuals manage uncertainty and risk with confidence. Therefore, leaders are requested to coach and support people to work at their edge and release their creative energy, as well as to demonstrate integrity and create an environment of trust.

The presence of "many languages" is described as "both a barrier and an asset", when leading a multilingual team (Head of Diversity of <TCom A>). Also, it is not only about managing language(s), but also about managing people who carry this powerful resource. The role of leaders is to be aware of the inability of followers to perform in the corporate language, which may generate resentment, emotion, inhibition, frustration and withdrawal.

(3) And maybe your level of English is ok so it's not that you don't know English at all. But it's not at the level where you can have a proficient business conversation and feel good about how you are sharing your ideas. This is an emotional element then. […] And this becomes the frustrating part for people, I think. And the role of managers is then becoming so important to go beyond that (Head D&I, <Pharma B>).

More importantly, "it is not only the languages that communicators speak, but also the language fluency of such communicators that matters", said Babcock and Du-Babcock (2001: 376). The insufficient awareness of leaders at different

6 "Taking personal risks, encouraging people to work at their creative edge, challenging team members and colleagues to achieve a balance between standardized and customized solutions, identifying and pursuing new opportunities by broadening the perspective and reframing the situation", (<Agro A>, Guide-book 2009: 14).

levels of proficiency of some professionally very competent followers may risk putting their important input in danger of being lost.

(4) We know from research that if somebody talks to you with an accent and somebody does not talk to you with an accent, you will pay more attention to the one without the accent; even if they are giving equal value statements. And that becomes really important then to manage these differences that that person is given enough time to think, that person is given enough time to express themselves and you really listen to what they are saying beyond the accent or the bad words (laughs). So it's really not an easy solution (Head D&I, <Pharma B>).

A successful leader does not believe in giving orders, but leading by example and becoming a role model for other colleagues and subordinates. Being remarkably multilingual herself, the vice-president in charge of diversity management and the Head of Diversity at <Tab A> both recognise that language mixing is part of their practices in general. By doing this, nobody feels left behind, but instead is given a chance to be at the heart of the interaction, to participate and share their views and knowledge.

(5) Sometimes I'm mixing. In meetings or presentations, people have terminologies which are not easy to translate (in this Swiss market) and knowing that the audience they all understand usually the other languages, they might use some terminologies which are just describing the concepts so well so they don't want to translate. So sometimes, they are a mix of languages (Vice-president, <Tab A>).

(6) I was listening to a conversation in Polish yesterday on the phone with someone from Poland and she is really mixing English and Polish depending on what she was talking. It was crazy and amazing to hear. Using some words related to business in English and for the rest she was speaking in Polish (Head D&I, <Tab A>).

Encouraging personal involvement through language use may allow the creation of trust among team members. Trust is critical to make people feel comfortable opening up so as to uncover their skills. By means of 'plurilingual speech' – varying from code-switching, code-mixing to code-crossing (Rampton 1995) – this multilingual leader sets a climate for her team and gives space for individuals to experiment, to make them familiar with the workplace culture and to feel comfortable striking out on their own. Multilingual employees are provided the flexibility to put their efforts into making things happen.

(7) Everybody has the possibility to express themselves in the language that they feel the most comfortable in. Sometimes, it happened that we started in one language and finished in a different language because you don't find the right word right away. […] Sometimes we have a presentation written in English but delivered in French or written in French but delivered in English. For people, they feel more comfortable because first of all you mix the languages that you can express yourself, understand exactly what you meant with the richness of your vocabulary. Your potential of vocabulary is much bigger and richer. So it's a mixture (Vice-president, <Tab A>).

"So, it's a mixture" (<Tab A>) - this communicative strategy may help to foster a culture of creativity and innovation as one of the behavioural cores of "Leadership Capabilities" (Guide for Leadership, <Agro A>), which is to seek out and make use of diverse perspectives, skills and experiences as well as to use emotional engagement to generate creative energy and new insights. Members are given a sense of contributing to success.

In the light of thorough reflection, a leader of <Pharma A> is convinced of the effectiveness of 'plurilingual speech strategy'.

(8) ich ha jez z'erscht Mal es Meeting müesse leite mit ere komplett neue Jury zäh komplett neu Lütt oder se Mal zämme bringt de findet mene Sprach und eh isch e Mischig zwüsche Basel-Hochdütsch-Änglisch [oder s'isch igend] üses Esperanto [wo mr do] jez gfunde hei (Senior manager, <Pharma A>) (Lüdi 2010: 16).

Now for the first time I had to run a meeting with a completely new group, ten completely new people, so you bring them together and find a language, and it's a mixture of Basel dialect, standard German and English, and if you like this was the Esperanto we worked out between us.

In a certain manner, this leader seized opportunities to stimulate cross-linguistic interactions when trying to explore the potential his team members had and to cultivate an atmosphere where innovation and new value creation could be driven through novel approaches. He encouraged members to think and act strategically, to step into the unknown and find new ways forward through thoughtful, meaningful ways of dialoguing and working together. This mix of languages challenged conventional thinking, then generated new ideas and drove superior solutions: "creative processes got going".

Another testimony from <Pharma A> gathered in the framework of an EU project (Lüdi et al. 2013, 2016) discusses the pressure on employees to speak English. With his multilingual skills in Arabic, French, Dutch, English, Spanish and German, Jamal, Head of Lab B, explains that he is ready to mobilise his limited German if necessary despite the dominance of English at work, strongly emphasised.

(9) Mara ne comprend pas assez l'anglais et je sais que Marianne s'exprime mieux en allemand qu'en anglais. [...] Elle doit comprendre le message dans le temps le plus court possible. Ça ne sert à rien de parler en anglais et puis je dois réexpliquer, redire (ou attendre quelqu'un à traduire), donc j'essaie de faire traducteur en même temps. Donc là, c'est vraiment pour faciliter, pour que tout le monde se sente à l'aise, tout le monde sur le même niveau, et puis voilà, efficacité ça veut dire vraiment immédiatement lorsqu'on a fini la réunion tout le monde connaît déjà le message (Head of Lab B <Pharma A> (Yanaprasart 2010: 147).

Mara does not understand English well enough and I know that Marianne speaks better German than English. [...] She must understand the message in the shortest time possible. It is useless to speak English and then I have to explain again, and repeat (or wait for someone to translate), so I try to be at the same time a translator. So, this is to facilitate, in order that everyone feels comfortable, everyone understands everyone on the same level, and then here, it means efficiency really immediately when meeting is finished, everyone already knows the message.

For him, "successful" communication is conditioned by the active participation of all participants. His ultimate willingness is to respect the heterogeneity of preferences and/or actual staff language competences. In this way, Jamal creates "an inclusive space" (Yanaprasart 2016b) for participation and fairness. Furthermore, to ensure the effectiveness of his leadership and his linguistic comfort in the meantime, "I use my language skills and if I cannot find the words in one language, I jump in another one", concluded Jamal. Hermann, head of

Labs A and B at <Pharma A>, describes his communication strategies with his multilingual colleagues as such:

(10) With French speaking collaborators, I normally speak English, but if I feel that they have a problem to express themselves, I offer them to say it in French, or they know a word in French which they don't know in German or English, then I help them; sometimes we switch in French, but usually I address myself to them in English or even German, because I know they know it (Head of Labs A & B, <Pharma A>) (Yanaprasart 2010: 149).

As the Head of D&I at <Bank A> says, "What prevails in multilingual business settings is not 'perfect' language knowledge, but a 'pragmatic' language use when attempting to find local solutions to practical problems". That is to say, "We have a lot of freedom to do things in German, or Italian or Japanese or Portuguese or whatever." With this way of managing, <Bank A> uses linguistic diversity to better value polyglot employees, recognise their achievements and strengthen their unique profile for collective goals (Yanaprasart 2016b). Likewise, at <Pharma A>, "letting people speak any language they want whatever language they feel comfortable in is important", says the project manager. This seems to be true for everyone at any level of hierarchy in this company.

From the perspective of Head HR of <Agro A>, language can become "a major instrument to move people, to socialize an idea, the idea of a leadership brand": "Whatever we do needs to be accessible, whenever we publish something, we have to publish it in so many languages and make it accessible in its deepest sense, in the way that language can stir us deep down inside". Baider & Cislaru (2014) address a close relation between language – use or choice – and emotions. For leaders, communicating inspirationally in the language of the other can create passion and excitement. For workers, speaking in their own language makes them feel comfortable (dimension of equity), but also allows them to convey nuances of ideas more clearly and precisely (dimension of effectiveness). Using the language of the followers is not only a sign of respect, but also ensures the in-depth reception of the messages transmitted. Following these reflections, leaders have to be evocative enough on the level of emotional connection to allow people to liberate their full potential. As suggested by Kansanen & Vohlonen (2010), when followers are emotionally engaged, feel motivated and interested, and if they consider the task personally relevant to themselves (Isen 1993), creative energy and new insights are generated, resulting in enhanced teamwork, thus stimulating innovation and problem solving (Milliken, Bartel & Kurtzberg 2003).

5. Discussion

On the whole, leadership is the ongoing process of choosing between safety and risk. On the one hand, leaders are expected to 'stretch themselves', to play an active role in providing their subordinates with a comfortable environment so they do not feel any anxiety, pressure or stress. This is believed to drive

performance, set and embody high standards, and secure high-quality results. On the other hand, leaders are asked to 'stretch their team' to push the boundaries and achieve the best of the members' collective strengths and capabilities. Leaders need to inspire and lead people in a way that they gain confidence, trust and courage to step beyond their comfort zones, habits and current capabilities. Staying for long periods of time in one's comfort zone might be bad for the development of the team and its performance (Ambler 2015).

(11) Because we are sitting in our comfort zone; you know we are successful, why should I change? It's a big question. Why should anybody who is successful and has a good life now change? It's all related to risk. Going out from the comfort zone, additional work, so this is a big question why. (Head D&I, <BK A>)

This view can explain why not only leaders but also their teams should learn to trust each other, take risks and step out of their zone of routine, considered a place where nothing particularly challenging happens, into a place of productive discomfort, where new skills can be learnt – called a learning zone. In light of collaborative leadership, a common new comfort zone can be created as a result of the learning process where A and B agree to leave their comfortable place to step into an in-between, collaborative contact space, which, however, also represents an area of friction where risks, difficulties, tension, anxiety, power struggle and resistance to change are obvious. The following graphic shows that a new linguistic comfort zone can be built, this by passing through linguistic discomfort qualified as the learning zone.

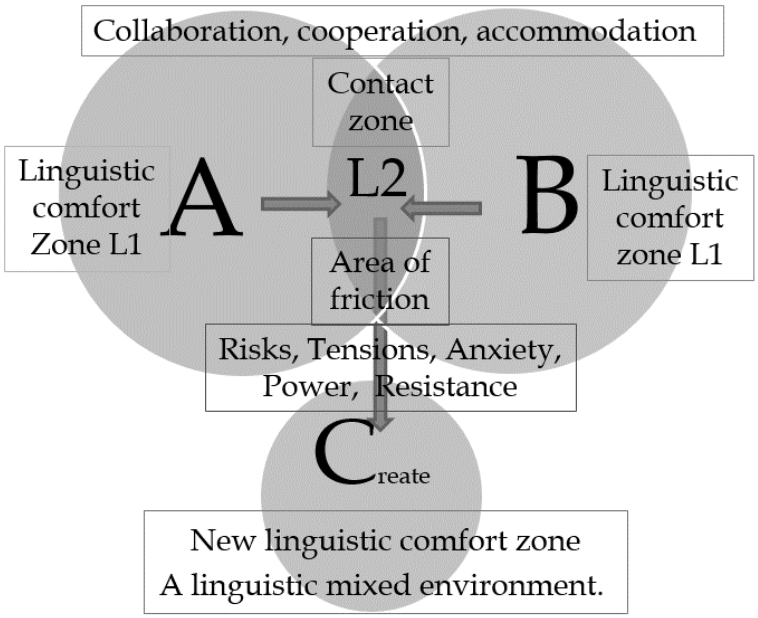

Figure 2: Zones of Contact - Zones of Comfort

More precisely, the borders of the three zones can be understood as being situated at "fuzzy boundaries" (Lakoff 1987). Zone A+B emerges from the meeting point between A and B, where it is no longer clear where exactly the

language border runs. It becomes a "third space" or "in-between space" (Bhabha 1994) – an overlapping space where languages come into contact, where a new system may take place, making boundaries between 'the own self' and 'the other foreign' disappear, hence a high potential for change and innovation – where speakers can feel free to use languages the way they want. This intermediate area, which is sometime even autonomous, is described by Erfurt (2003: 6) as "new spaces of multilingualism" ("neue Räume der Mehrsprachigkeit") or by Gugenberger (2005: 358) as a "third space of language" ("der dritte Raum der Sprache") to cross the language borders (see Zinkhahn Rhobodes 2016 for further details).

By developing a transition area Zone C, leaders equalise language power and create force, with respect to interlingual synergies. This new, enlarged *Togetherness-Linguistic-Comfort Zone* allows for including everyone in an inner circle. The findings revealed the attitudes of dynamic, polyglot leaders who prefer considering language choice and use in terms of various combinations, thanks to the shared-linguistic-resources dynamic of the team's members. Interacting in 'fluid' spaces (Montgomery 2011), speakers feel free to use their available resources to accomplish a task collectively to ensure local achievement. In this sense, what was perceived, believed, or considered at the beginning a problem has been identified, problematised and negotiated. If the concept of border implies conflict, trouble and uncertainty at the risk of reinforcing barriers, the effort of transcending boundaries and bridging gaps represents a particularly challenging zone of dialoguing, collaborating and establishing relations.

As this study has shown, the fact that multilingual leaders decide to prioritise one or another pattern of speaking (communicative function) or thinking/acting (conceptual function) appears to be less important than undertaking interventions aimed at arousing passages from one to another model of access to information (revealing function), this in a way that interactive confrontations between different conceptions of the world (intensifying function) will not only bring forth collaborative leadership, but also foster thickness of knowledge construction in consequence of mutual understanding enrichment.

6. Limitations, implications and concluding remarks

In sum, this article has explored a particularly complex aspect of professional communication: leadership performance and communication behaviours regarding language choice and language use by multilingual leaders. Specific interest was directed towards the roles they could play to bridge language boundaries. Its aim was to provide a more general understanding of the conditions under which the linguistic capabilities of polyglot leaders are of significant value to the team's communications in multilingual contexts.

"What is said" by leaders has also demonstrated that there are numerous ways of performing leadership in a multilingual professional context. In some circumstances, it is a leader-centred leadership style that seems the most suitable. To achieve objectives, leaders assure that the rule is respected, such as speaking the corporate language exclusively so as to advance rapidly within the ongoing activity (*a principle of progressivity*, Schegloff 2017; Heritage 2007; Kuroshima 2010).

In others, expanding, instead of minimising, the collective existing linguistic resources, in order to meet the demands of a team's members and ensure mutual comprehension, seems to be more important (*a principle of inter-subjectivity*, Schegloff 1992). To assure their self-engagement and to leverage their performance, activities are performed within the procedure of relationally oriented behaviour. Cunliffe & Eriksson (2011) highlight the importance of dialogue and suggest the recognition of divergent voices. In light of our study, relational leaders do not only share, distribute and do leadership in a follower-centred leadership style, but also recognise the importance of leading people by example and building trust. This *All-Languages-Together* approach is inspired by inclusiveness practices: to promote the satisfaction of the belongingness needs of each individual's uniqueness and foster a multilingual togetherness identity in an inclusive climate characterised by fairness, equality and unity in diversity.

Despite the local character of the study, the findings have provided new perspectives and insights into an intricately interwoven relationship between leadership capabilities and professional communications in multilingual settings. We have argued that the capacity of a leader to stretch the boundary of his or her linguistic comfort zone can leverage inclusiveness in the working environment and also inspire his or her followers to step into a trans-lingual learning discomfort zone, creating a new "togetherness-linguistic-comfort zone" in a modern perspective of inclusive leadership. Yet, our data are mainly based on leaders from multilingual backgrounds. In addition, we recognise the limitations of basing our claims on the points of views and practices of senior leaders, largely female (who might be better at learning languages or more sensitive to relationship quality), feeling at ease in their Swiss quadrilingual and multicultural working environments. An on-going fieldwork focusing on challenges leaders from monolingual backgrounds, at lower levels of the hierarchy and in other industries, face in relation to creating linguistically fluid interacting zones for more or less monolingual organisational members is being conducted (Yanaprasart forthcoming). The aim is to show under what conditions monolingual leaders can also assume the role of 'language brokers', 'language nodes', 'bridge builders', 'borders transcenders' and 'boundary spanners'.

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Language choice as a means to transcend and reinforce language and group boundaries in multilingual business settings

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In multilingualen Firmen in Europa hat sich Englisch als *lingua franca* inzwischen durchgesetzt. Aufgrund der Existenz der Sprachenvielfalt in multilingualen Firmen führt die Implementierung von Englisch als Konzernsprache jedoch nicht automatisch dazu, dass sie permanent in der Firmenkommunikation verwendet wird. Die Verwendung verschiedener Sprachen bringt mit sich, dass sowohl Sprachgrenzen als auch Grenzziehungen zwischen Gruppen von Menschen überwunden und verstärkt werden können. Zudem zeigt die Wechselwirkung zwischen Sprachwahl, Sprachgrenzen und Identitätskonstruktionen Auswirkungen, welche auf den ersten Blick nicht sichtbar sind. Bezugnehmend auf Interviewdaten mit kroatischen und serbischen Angestellten in internationalen Firmen in Kroatien, Serbien und Österreich, wird analysiert, wie Sprachwahl von den Angestellten als Mittel für die Konstruktion von Sprach- und Gruppengrenzen sowie kollektive Identitäten am Arbeitsplatz eingesetzt wird. Es zeigt sich in der Analyse, dass die Überwindung und Verstärkung von Grenzziehungen nicht strikt an die Verwendung der Konzernsprache bzw. lokalen Sprache festzumachen sind, sondern, dass Grenzziehungen zwischen Gruppen und Identitätskonstruktionen eng mit der Sprachwahl verknüpft sind, somit wesentlich für erfolgreiche Zusammenarbeit zeichnen und daher zur Komplexität der Sprachenpolitik am multilingualen Arbeitsplatz beitragen.

Stichwörter:
Sprachwahl, Sprachgrenzen, English als *lingua franca*, Identitätskonstruktion, multilinguale Arbeitsplätze, Sprachideologien.

Keywords:
Language choice, language boundaries, English as a *lingua franca*, identity construction, multilingual workplaces, language ideologies.

1. Introduction

(1) Check-in…Eventsaal…Grand Hall…Carrier…Welcome Package…Home Bases. Meeting points … Support team. Arme deutsche Sprache :-)

Check-in…Eventsaal…Grand Hall…Carrier…Welcome Package…Home Bases. Meeting points … Support team. Poor German language :-)

(2) Unsere Konzern Sprache ist aber nun mal Englisch…

Our corporate language is English after all…

(3) Zu "Unsere Konzern Sprache ist aber nun mal Englisch…": Heißt das, dass die Briefe und E-Mails an unsere Kunden in Englisch geschrieben werden?

In regard to "Our corporate language is English after all." Does this mean that the letters and email sent to our clients are written in English?

(4) Wir sind ein international Unternehmen. [Name der Firma] ist die Zentrale; sollten unsere Kollegen und Besucher aus Rumänien, Ungarn, Slowakei … immer Deutsch zu sprechen? Was ist die Verbindung zwischen Gebäude Sprache und E-Mails an die Kunden?

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We are an international company. [Name of company] is the headquarters; are our colleagues and visitors from Rumania, Hungary, Slovakia, … supposed to always speak German? What is the connection between company building, language and emails sent to clients?

(5) 65 Kollegen mögen bislang diesen Beitrag. Nachvollziehbar, denn es wurde da wirklich Großes geleistet und dennoch stößt man sich am Wording einer internationalen Organisation (bzw. vermischen Konzern- mit Amtssprache)? Nicht wirklich, oder? Von meiner Seite jedenfalls Gratulation zum erfolgreichen Move #1! Ganz großes Kino…und ein 66. Like ;-)

So far 65 colleagues have pressed the like-button. This is understandable as something exceptional has been achieved. And yet, people oppose the wording of an international company (or rather confuse corporate with national language). You are not being serious, are you? From me, congratulations on the successful move #1! Excellent…And Like number 66 ;-)[1]

These five posts from the intranet of a large company in Austria were written in reaction to a celebratory post by the marketing department upon the inauguration of a new office building. Even though the post was written in German, each German sentence boasted at least two English terms: parts of buildings, rooms as well as devices and office materials were expressed in English[2].The post instigated a lively discussion. More than 70 replies were written of which the 5 above have been chosen as a vignette for this paper.

What these five posts demonstrate is the role of language in the multilingual workplace on the one hand, and how language serves as a means to construct various boundaries not only between languages but also between people on the other hand. The posts themselves indicate that this topic is rather complex. While writer 1 criticises the use of English terms instead of their German counterparts in the original post, writer 2 considers this naming policy as justified since English is the corporate language. Writer 3 enquires about the nature of a *lingua franca* as corporate language as well as language practices in the everyday work life. Writer 4 hypothesises about possible German language practices and raises the issue of the relationship between company building, language policy and language practices. Writer 5 refers to the absurdity of this conversation which equates company building and language practices when the focus should be on celebrating the new building.

Next to referring to language use, in particular to language choice and its impact on language practices in the daily work life, what these posts also disclose is the concept of boundaries, i.e. language and group boundaries. The former encompass the boundaries between languages such as English and German

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1 Translations by author.

2 The contested beginning of the celebratory post. Words in italics indicate English words in the original post; translation by author:
The day started with a *check-in* in the *event* hall, the *grand hall*, where the *carrier* and the *welcome package* were distributed to staff members. Afterwards a tour around the *home bases* and the *meeting points* was provided and a *support team* helped with any questions about the new office space. […]

or, as the fifth writer states, 'the corporate and official language'. The latter subsumes boundaries between groups of people: employees vs non-employees (clients), and employees working in the HQ vs employees working in the subsidiaries abroad. The two different sets of boundaries are determined by the choice of language and yet, they are slightly different. While language boundaries are marked by the use of specific linguistic codes, boundaries between groups of people are marked by the linguistic code and its pragmatic use. It is the interrelationship and interplay between language choice, the construction of language boundaries and boundaries between groups of people, i.e. identity construction with a focus on multilingual companies in South-Eastern Europe which is the subject of this paper.

The next section provides a brief literature review on language choice and boundaries as well as the rationale of this paper. After the methodology section, the analysis of the data focuses on the interplay between language choice and the construction of language and group boundaries as well as identities.

2. Language choice and the construction of boundaries in multinational companies

In this paper the term language choice is applied since a choice is "made at the beginning of an interaction […] and applies to choices made at all levels of speech or writing" (Lønsmann 2011: 143). Language choice is thus evident when two or more languages can be chosen for an interaction. This macrolevel of language choice, i.e. which language to use for a conversation, rather than the microlevel of language choice, i.e. codeswitching within a conversation, is of main interest in this paper.

When interlocutors do not share a language, a common language for successful interaction is necessary. In European business contexts the language chosen is mostly English, which has also become the predominant corporate language in multinational companies (Louhiala-Salminen, Charles & Kankaanranta 2005; Rogerson-Revell 2007; Gerritsen & Nickerson 2009)[3]. Nevertheless, the language factor was initially not regarded as important for neither the companies nor for research (Fredriksson, Barner-Rasmussen & Piekkari 2006). The first studies on the role of language and English as a *lingua franca* in multinational companies emerged in the 2000s (e.g. Nickerson 2005; Louhiala-Salminen et al. 2005; Rogerson-Revell 2007; Ehrenreich 2010). Soon studies revealed that despite the introduction of a *lingua franca*, language practices were more complex (Nickerson 2005) and deserved to be addressed specifically in research. The more so as "communication [in global business] involves crossing

[3] But other languages may serve as *lingua franca* in organisations and business communication depending on geographical location and/or historical background. For example, French in Belgium (Mettewie & Van Mensel 2009), Russian in the Baltic States (Eurobarometer 2006), and 'scandinaviska' in Scandinavia (Louhiala-Salminen, Charles & Kankaanranta 2005).

language boundaries and operat[es] at the interface between several languages including those of the home country and the host country, the corporate languages and 'company speak'" (Fredriksson et al. 2006: 407). This complexity instigated another strand of research, viz. a focus on multilingualism and language diversity in companies (Angouri 2013; Angouri & Miglbauer 2014; Fredriksson et al. 2006; Gunnarsson 2014; Lønsmann 2014; Tange & Lauring 2009). The studies disclose the existence of a broader range of language use in the workplace despite an official company language. The foci of this field of research are widespread. For example, Angouri & Miglbauer (2013) analyse challenges on a communicative level which language diversity in workplaces poses to employees, while Lønsmann's study (2014) shows the impact of language choice on social inclusion and exclusion in the workplace. The discrepancy between organisations' language policy and the linguistic reality in the workplace is, for instance, highlighted by Angouri (2013).

A focus on languages, and in particular on language choice, inevitably leads to the matter of language boundaries. Generally, language boundaries constitute the borderline between two linguistic communities. According to Škiljan (2004: 16), a linguistic community is a group of people who shares the same idiom/language and thus each one of the group is considered a member of this community. Škiljan further distinguishes between a primary and a secondary linguistic community, which consists of L1 speakers and L2 speakers respectively. This distinction proves relevant for this paper as "the collective relations established by means of language are realised in two mutually connected dimensions, communicative and symbolic" (Škiljan 2004: 16). While the former ensures understanding the messages conveyed, the latter is important for identifying with a secondary linguistic community – both on a collective and individual level. Despite the difficulty of clearly defining the borders of a language, linguistic communities belong to a "'core' human group" whose individuals construct various identities" (Škiljan 2004: 17).

While some studies approach language boundaries in an organisational context from the perspective of success for teams and thus for companies (e.g. Feely & Harzing 2003; Henderson 2010), some other studies address the role of language boundaries for exerting power (Logemann & Piekkari 2015) and constructing group boundaries (Lønsmann, 2011; Tange & Lauring 2009). What can be drawn from these studies is that language choice constructs primary and, above all, secondary linguistic communities in multilingual workplaces. This means that boundaries are discursively constructed in each interaction; they are thus fluid. This conceptualisation follows Busch & Kelly-Holmes (2004: 6), who define "language boundaries [as] imaginary lines that run an ambiguous course" and which are considered as "social and political as well as discursive constructs". This is especially relevant when taking the language diversity and ideologies of South-Eastern Europe into consideration.

Linked to language boundaries are language ideologies (Gal & Irvine 1995), which constitute of "beliefs, or feelings, about language as used in their social world" (Kroskrity 2004: 498). They are determined by and create power relations between groups of people since these beliefs structure social behaviour (Seargeant 2009: 40). In business contexts language ideologies are, for example, disclosed in the choice of which language to implement as the corporate language and in the language choice and construction of group memberships in interactions. Research on language ideologies in multilingual organisations analysed the effect of ideologies on multilingualism and power in EU institutions (Wodak, Krzyżanowski & Forchtner 2012), in universities (Björkman 2014) and multinational companies (Lønsmann 2014). In particular, Lønsmann's paper investigates specific language ideologies (e.g. 'one nation – one language' and 'language hierarchy') and how they are tied to the social behaviour of exclusion of employees based on lack of language skills.

Another concept of relevance, in particular for the analysis of boundaries in organisational contexts, is the one of *linguascape* (Steyaert, Ostendorp & Gaibrois 2011: 277). Linguascape is defined as

> a discursive space in which an organization or any other actor frames and imagines how it can deal with its (de facto) multilingual composition by negotiating among various discursive options that distinguish between local, national and global spaces and that are oriented to more situational or enduring solutions

This concept proposes that language use is modelled by discursive practices and regards "the flow of languages that cross a specific organizational space [… as] discursively mediated" (Steyaert, Ostendorp & Gaibrois 2011: 270). The authors analysed which discourses their respondents refer to when talking about, or even justifying, the adoption of a language – English in this case – in everyday worklife. The analysis of language use in two multinational companies in Switzerland revealed six discursive practices: adaptation to the viable language of a certain location, adaptation to the language of the other (interlocutor), collective negotiation of a common language, simultaneous use of various (mutually) comprehensible languages, finding a compromise through a third language, and improvisation. The authors do not claim their list of discursive practices being exhaustive (Steyaert, Ostendorp & Gaibrois 2011: 276), they, however, provide a valuable insight into bottom-up strategies of language use in multilingual companies. Some of these practices serve as starting point for the construction of language and group boundaries in this paper.

Language choice and the construction of group memberships refer to another relevant aspect for this paper: the construction of identities. Following the social constructionist approach, which regards identity construction as occurring in interactional occasions and entailing discursive work (Fina, Schiffrin & Bamberg 2006), identity construction is done in each interaction and is highly context-dependent. In this paper, the data used is the semi-structured interview. The

interview consists of accounts of language use in the workplace. Yet, by talking about such accounts, identity constructions that occurred during these accounts as well as during the interview itself are disclosed and constructed (see Miglbauer 2012 for further details). This approach to identity constructions conceives boundaries and the construction of group memberships as fluid concepts rather than static traits (Butler 1993). Further, in regard to language choice, the term *boundaries* tends to be used to highlight overcoming (fluid) boundaries, while the term *barriers* tends to focus on preventing something from happening. This paper takes up the concept of discursive practices as being essential for the construction of various boundaries and provides an analysis of the construction of boundaries connected with identity construction by language choice in multilingual organisations. Analysing boundaries in connection with language choice demonstrates that the implementation of a corporate language goes beyond the often held belief of proper command of the language as being the main factor for successful communication. Rather, language choice involves the construction of new boundaries which have a decisive role for the communication between employees in a company. For showing this complexity, two aspects are specifically addressed: boundaries in connection with language choice and, second, the construction of identities in connection with language choice in South-Eastern European business settings where language ideologies have also been strongly tied to politics since the 1990s.

Regarding the first aspect, Lauring & Selmer (2010) stress the existence of parallel language-based communication networks next to a common organizational language in multilingual companies:

> Multicultural organizations are almost by definition also multilingual. Hence, although introducing a common organizational language may improve communication frequency it is also common to experience parallel language-based communication networks and frequent code-switching in multilingual organizations. (Lauring & Selmer 2010: 269)

In this paper, I draw on the hypothesis that a common organizational language transcends (language) boundaries while parallel language-based communication networks reinforce (language) boundaries among the diverse employees in multinational companies. The two hypotheses are tested with a focus on how language can both act as a facilitator and a barrier (Marschan-Piekkari, Welch & Welch 1999) when it comes to constructing boundaries among groups of people. Three sets of boundaries in the context of multinational workplaces have proven prominent: first, language boundaries between two or more languages; second, boundaries as borders of national countries; and third, boundaries between groups of people. The third set of boundary leads to the analysis of the second aspect, the interrelationship between language use, language boundaries and the construction of group identities of South Slavic-speaking employees in international business contexts – a context which has not yet been well-researched. By doing so, this paper reveals the complexity of language choice policy and its effects on language use, group memberships

and, consequently, on successful teamwork, which multilingual companies when implementing a corporate language may not always be aware of.

3. Data

The data for this paper comprise interviews that were conducted in English with Croatian and Serbian employees in multinational companies in Austria, Croatia and Serbia. The companies have subsidiaries all over Europe and English has been chosen as the *lingua franca* by these companies (as a top-down approach[4]). Despite the international orientation of the companies, the majority of the workforce in the subsidiaries are local employees. Due to a fairly acceptable command of English, the semi-structured interviews were carried out in English at the company premises. The interviews were transcribed verbatim, which means any language peculiarities have been left in the transcripts.

The interviews were conducted with female and male employees who work in multinational companies in Croatia and Serbia. The majority are in their early 30s due to the economic transition in the 1990s and the introduction of new kinds of jobs with altered (language) requirements. The interviewees were asked about their experience with various aspects of their work such as communication in the company, the role of English, working with expats, and postsocialism. The interview transcripts were coded with the qualitative data analysis and research software Atlas.ti. These codes were put into various summarising categories such as interculturality, communication, work tasks, mother tongue. For this paper the categories 'English: role', 'communication', 'local language', 'identity: employees', 'identity: regional' are relevant. These parts of the interviews have been analysed against the backdrop of language boundaries. The interviewees talk about their self-perceptions of the role of English and communication practices at work (Angouri & Miglbauer 2013, 2014). Yet, this paper does not solely analyse what is being revealed in this regard but how group memberships to linguistic communities are established. By doing this, this paper specifically focuses on the effect of language use and communication in regard to transcending and reinforcing (language) boundaries and simultaneously constructing group boundaries and identities.

4. Analysis

The analysis of the data is presented in three sub-sections. First, how language and group boundaries are transcended; second, how language and group boundaries are reinforced; and third, how language and group boundaries are

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4 In language planning, a top-down approach includes the implementation of a language in a particular geographical area via a language policy instigated by language planners. In a business context, such language planners, e.g. head of companies would implement a *lingua franca* in their companies via a company language policy.

simultaneously transcended and reinforced in the South-Eastern European (language) context.

4.1 Transcending language and group boundaries

Transcending language boundaries in communications indicates moving beyond one's own language community and passing the language boundaries of two or even more languages. If those language communities correlate with national/regional borders, these boundaries of political nature may be made irrelevant in these conversations when using a common language. The first example refers to transcending language and constructing new group boundaries with people from different linguistic communities.

(1) [English] plays a very uh (.) big role (..) I think (.) uh it's obviously widely spoken in the business community […] obviously the job is such that uh you communicate with uh (.) a very wide range of people in terms of geography in terms of background (.) so it's really great communication tool

In this quote, language boundaries and specifically national boundaries, which are transcended by the use of a common language or *lingua franca*, are highlighted. In general, the term English as a *lingua franca* is used "to refer exclusively to the use of English between speakers whose mother tongue is not English" (Rogerson-Revell 2007: 104). Already in 2002, Tagliabue wrote: "As European banks and corporations burst national boundaries and go global, many are making English the official corporate language". The interviewee makes the function of English explicit: to enable communication with 'people in terms of geography in terms of background', transcending not only national and language boundaries but also boundaries among groups of people (based on background).

The introduction of a corporate language facilitates communication between a linguistically diverse workforce. What impact a *lingua franca* as corporate language has on daily work life is revealed by the next interviewee.

(2) I mean all our written documents are in English (.) reports website contracts applications so (.) even our internal communication between ourselves when it's official it's in English so it's English all the time

As English is the official corporate language, external communication is in English. The boundaries transcended here are literally 'real' as they consist of brick and mortar by communicating beyond the office premises with clients and colleagues in the headquarters or other subsidiaries. Another boundary indicated is the one between official and unofficial communication, which may be carried out in different languages depending on the context. This refers to the fact that "communicative events are considerably more complex than the label of English as a *lingua franca* would suggest" (Nickerson 2005: 371). When it comes to the choice of language in official communication, the addressee of the interaction (headquarters, other subsidiaries) trumps the common mother tongue of the majority of office staff.

Language choice in this context constructs several group memberships. As members of the company and their individual identities as employees, they use English in their conversations. Yet, in some instances local language use may also construct collective identities such as the one of office staff (see discussion further below).

Example 3 refers to the case of language choice in daily language practices. When employees with different mother tongues meet and are supposed to interact with each other, language choice depends on at least three aspects: the communicative event, the people involved, and the balance between the majority and minority of language speakers (Steyaert, Ostendorp & Gaibrois 2011).

(3) if you have 15 people and just one non- non-Croatian speaker of course then you will speak Croati- uh you will speak English (.) so that's normal (.) and it's never happened that (.) somebody is you know like really excluded (.) in that way

In this sample, language difference serves as a boundary between people: those who speak a particular language and those who do not. Yet, in a business context, due to economic reasons, efficient team work is paramount. The choice of using a common language can be assumed common-sense behaviour (Angouri & Miglbauer 2014) as it transcends language boundaries and enables communication and team work. In sample 3, even though the choice of language ensures participation of all parties involved, it is phrased in a slightly peculiar way. A group boundary is indeed constructed by stressing the fact that someone (non-Croatian speaker) is different from the group of 15 Croatian-speakers and perceived as 'other'.

4.2. Reinforcing language and group boundaries

Next to transcending boundaries, language choice does not only construct but also reinforce existing boundaries. As outlined above, boundaries are fluid and discursively constructed in interaction. In multilingual companies, such boundaries can be drawn along language boundaries as in the following example.

(4) I use Serbian in communication (.) with uh (.) local staff because there's no need for us :to talk in English: ((laughing)) and also in communication with all of the governmental officials uh and courts bankruptcy administrators agencies meaning all the local (.) counterparts

The corporate language is used whenever necessary. If it is not necessary to be used, it is simply not in use – no matter whether the communication is internal or external, as some other interviewees state: "*what we speak the most is Serbian (.) and in the meetings when we have anybody who is present and who doesn't understand then we naturally switch to English*". Such a behaviour reinforces boundaries which are based on language knowledge, which in this context is the command of the local language or the mother tongue. The term *language clustering* has been introduced (Marschan-Piekkari et al. 1999), which is applied "when informal language clustering takes the form of informal

gatherings between the speakers of the same national language" (Tange & Lauring 2009: 224). Some interviewees hint at that: "*when you just talk to people it's usually Serbian*" or "*when we talk we talk in our language*". Language boundaries are constructed via the use of the local language and the national boundary is drawn around local professionals sharing the mother tongue. Here the local language is used to reinforce group boundaries based on the territory and the common mother tongue. These practices reveal that a corporate *lingua franca* seldom completely replaces the company's original language as a working language (Fredriksson et al. 2006; Angouri & Miglbauer 2013, 2014).

The next example demonstrates how members of the local linguistic community are granted access to the global nature of the companies. As Tange & Lauring (2009: 220) state, "access to a speech community is controlled by the ingroup members" and in a business context, the ingroup members are the jury in a job interview.

(5) I mean it's kind of a (..) given fact that your English is good sometimes even when we EMPLOY we uh (.) sit with people and then uh (.) talk a little bit even in English just to make sure that they have a sufficient level of knowledge (.) part of the interview we use(d) to have in English you know and (.) and the written test

Language choice is also a symbol of the initiation process and for assessment. In this example, the initiation process consists of the oral job interview and a written test. Both parts assess the command of English as employers strive to ensure that only people with sufficient knowledge of the corporate language join the staff. The boundaries reinforced here are the ones between people who 'function' as employees when applying the corporate language and those who do not and are therefore not recruited. In this case, English as the corporate language functions as a gatekeeper (Park & Wee 2011). It does not matter which linguistic community a job applicant belongs to, being able to speak the required *lingua franca* is an essential aspect for 'letting someone in' (among other skills obviously). English competence is, therefore, considered as a valuable skill and also linked to social mobility (Angouri & Miglbauer 2014). In the South-Eastern European context, having command of English facilitates working in jobs of higher prestige and higher salaries.

Yet, the intention to become a 'full-functioning member' may also be prevented or at least made more difficult by various aspects, one of which may be down to exclusion based on language choice. Ailon-Souday & Kunda (2003) reveal in their study how language choice is used to consciously draw boundaries between groups of people. They found that "[i]n joint interactions, Hebrew symbolized boundaries and, moreover, turned them into a social fact by creating exclusion, by practically sealing off social interactions from the comprehension and participation of American colleagues" (Ailon-Souday & Kunda 2003: 1082). Lønsmann (2014) also shows how language use (unintentionally) contributes to the sociolinguistic exclusion of employees – no matter of those who do not have

proper command of the local language or those who are not well versed in communicating in the *lingua franca*.

The next example refers to such a case. The interviewee works in the headquarters of a company with English as the corporate language. Most of the staff are German speakers and the local language is German, which, however, the interviewee does not have command of.

(6) we have helpdesk which is IT helpdesk and help with computer and something like that and it should be English-speaking and they *[the Austrian colleagues]* like speak English but then when I phone this number I said ok I have a problem with computer and they start asking me some (.) some very uhm technical things (.) I am not IT specialist and I don't know how to answer and then they get nervous and then I said o.k. I give my colleague and my colleague speaks German and they EASILY immediately uh (disperse) this (.) or I experience a lot times they told like do you have some English sp- uh German speaking colleague around you I can't understand what your problem is

While example 5 reveals a case of English being the gatekeeper, example 6 is about how the local language functions as a gatekeeper. There is deliberate refusal to use the corporate language in order to enable communication. The language choice is specifically constructed as a barrier. The IT helpdesk does not only construct boundaries around their group of IT experts but also constructs boundaries around the German speakers. The interviewee constructs a boundary around herself as the outsider who speaks a different language and is thus not included in the group of German speaking employees. Instead of successfully trying to transcend the language boundaries for the sake of collaborating effectively, the local staff reinforce group boundaries in a context where such a behaviour is slightly unexpected, as the interviewee also indicates. In fact, this example discloses that language choice which either transcends or reinforces boundaries is not always as exclusionary as assumed.

Once granted access to the ingroup, becoming a full-functioning member is a "process of socialisation, which involves the learning of collective norms and practices, as well as the acquisition of the group speech" (Tange & Lauring 2009: 220). The existence, or rather the importance of such 'group speech' is indicated in the following sample.

(7) there is a special English that we use because there are SO many nations I mean {company] operates in like 180 endmarkets so there are SO many ((laughs)) words [3 lines omitted] of I don't know how many thousands of words not too many thousands (.) that everybody can understand so

Group speak, or 'company speak' is a register "replete with acronyms, special terms, and management process terminology specific to the company, that evolves over time" (Welch, Welch, & Piekkari 2005: 13). Interestingly, the interviewee also states later in the interview that the 'special English' is influenced by other national languages and may be a toned down version of English. In this case the construction of boundaries is two-fold: on the one hand, the use of 'company speak' or 'special English' facilitates the deconstruction of

national and language boundaries. On the other hand, new group boundaries are constructed resulting in a global collective identity of employees.

4.3. Transcending and reinforcing boundaries

The two previous sections have disclosed how language choice can transcend and reinforce boundaries between people. Yet, depending on the context, language choice can also demonstrate both actions – sometimes even simultaneously. This is particularly the case when 'national languages' from the same language group and which are mostly intelligible for all speakers involved meet. Despite the fact that English is used as the corporate language when employees with different mother tongues work together, language practices that occur when people with two very similar mother tongues interact reveals another degree of complexity.

(8) we don't speak English between us but (.) with all of our offices EXCEPT for the Belgrade one Slovenian one (.) uh we speak in English [140 lines omitted] well (.) usually sometimes when we work (.) I mean together with Belgrade or Slovenian office we communicate in ((laughs)) we call it REGIONAL language (.) they talk in Serbian we in Croatian but we understand each other

Next to the setting (interactional context) and social identity (belonging to a region), the participants as well as the historical context are the dominant factors in regard to the determiners of language choice (Saville-Troike 2003). As already demonstrated in some examples above, the local language is used as language in office conversations. But, to make language practices even more complex, the corporate language English is not used in conversations with colleagues working in the subsidiaries situated in other former Yugoslavian successor states. As the languages are intelligible to speakers of each one of these, the use of the local languages transcends office and national boundaries. Yet, based on former political entities and the use of the term *regional language*, boundaries are reinforced again. Interestingly, the employees are aware of the fact that they communicate with each other in two languages, and by doing so, they create a new variety like 'skandinaviska' in Germanic language speaking Scandinavia (Louhiala-Salminen et al. 2005). The interviewee is slightly embarrassed when revealing the use and perception of a *regional language* to the interviewer. A regional identity based on language use and shaped and influenced by language ideology is constructed here. The existence of a regional identity was also mentioned by other interviewees. One of the interviewees indicated that *slovenska duska* may be the reason of why, for example, it is easier to speak to Russians than to Austrians[5]. This example also shows how the construction of boundaries are fluid and shift depending on the focus, setting, function of the conversation and social identity (Troike-Saville 2003).

[5] Comparison provided by the interviewee.

Another aspect which arose in the interviews and is specific to Slavic-speaking South-Eastern Europe, is the question of language ideologies and the shift from using local languages to using English as "a compromise through a third language" in the region (Steyaert, Ostendorp & Gaibrois 2011).

(9) when we are speaking with the guys from Slovenia they speak Slovene of course we speak Croatian and these two languages are very similar at least to me because I speak Slovenian as well and then when I try to speak to them I always try to use my Slovenian not to forget it (.) but (.) other people from company they also use English to communicate with Slovenians so this is for me something very strange because these two languages are (.) very very similar (.) and uhm (..) sometimes it's not so (.) nice to see that ((laughs)) […] because this uh English is completely foreign language and for Slovenian I don't get it as a completely foreign language because before we were all one country you know and this was not foreign language and now suddenly it became foreign language and some people really try to INSIST to that that Croatian is ONE and Slovenian is DIFFERENT and they don't try to (.) to find uh some solutions or whatever they are really this communication goes in English

Several points are addressed here. One of them is the construction of – both language and political - boundaries where there were 'soft boundaries' (Škiljan 2001) up until 1991. In this case two similar language varieties were used to communicate with each other. The interviewee hints at the fact that despite two separate linguistic communities, both of them used to belong to one larger group of linguistic community. Despite new national borders and thus stricter language boundaries since the 1990s, the interviewee does not see the necessity to construct and reinforce relatively newly established political and national boundaries by using a third (non-Slavic) language at the expense of local language use in the regional business community. This kind of language choice also affects the construction of group boundaries and identities as the construction of a regional identity as indicated in sample 8 tends to be at stake. Further, by bringing forth the argument that English is considered a foreign language while Slovenian is not, this perspective aligns with the critical literature of 'Englishisation' of the (business) world (Philipson & Skutnabb-Kangas 1999). Additionally, the interviewee criticises the ideology of *language hierarchy* with English at the top. While in international contexts, the use of English may be standard; in regional contexts this standard may be opposed.

5. Discussion

The introduction of a *lingua franca* is essential to enable communication between different groups of employees within companies. Regarding language use, multinational and multilingual companies are, however, quite complex. Despite these top-down approaches, the language diversity in multilingual companies tends to be more diverse than the term *corporate language* indicates. The analysis of the data in this paper reveals the mechanisms and fluidity of language choice and boundaries between languages and groups of people interconnected with identity constructions.

In regard to boundaries in connection with language choice, two hypotheses were advanced. The first hypothesis was that a common organisational language enables people to transcend boundaries as members of a different speech community are included in the multilingual speech community. This is in fact the main reason for implementing *a lingua franca*. Yet, at closer scrutiny it is revealed that such *a lingua franca* also serves as a gatekeeper in the workplace context. Lack of or little ability to speak the *lingua franca* hinders people to become 'fully-functioning' employees in a company. The implications of such a gatekeeper function are obvious in the South-Eastern European context. Due to historical reasons, those who are well-versed in English are the younger generations while the older generations were educated and socialised in the socialist era with a focus on learning languages other than English. At the time of the interviews, the majority of the local staff in these international companies were in their late 20s and early 30s. One interviewee points out the lack of employability of people who do not boast skills necessary for working in multinational and multilingual companies:

(10) I guess for people who are like 40 and something (.) don't know much about computers don't know much about foreign languages don't know much about uh (.) modern business (..) for them (.) this is very bad period and (..) you know I think that the entire transition (.) for us younger it's fine you know

The second hypothesis was that parallel language-based communication networks reinforce boundaries by excluding people who do not speak the local language(s) from the professional speech community. Such behaviour depends on the majority of language users, the critical mass in a communication and the company culture. The analysis shows that small instances of exclusion may occur in settings when the majority of the local language users do not have adequate command of the corporate language. Yet, this study further reveals the use of local languages also transcend boundaries, in particular, when people speak a similar and intelligible language for everyone involved. In the South-Eastern European context, these boundaries are fluid as "the idioms are genetically related and mutual comprehension is not excluded" (Škiljan 2001: 90). These boundaries also constitute relatively new national boundaries established in the 1990s. This recent construction of boundaries discloses the fact the languages are not necessarily automatically perceived as dissimilar. This is evident in the naming and use of the *regional language* and lack of understanding in using English in interactions when not necessary.

In regard to the interrelationship between language use, language boundaries and the construction of group identities, the analysis shows that there is not an either-or situation in regard to language choice in multilingual companies. The analysis demonstrates that language use does transcend and reinforce boundaries in interactions and occasionally they are transcended and reinforced simultaneously. Thus, transcending and reinforcing boundaries by the choice and use of language are on a continuum depending on the context and the

language(s) used. By doing so, group boundaries are transcended and reinforced and even new group identities are constructed. Employees construct various identities which are connected to language use. Local language use is a marker for regional identity and identity of office staff while English language use is tied to identity of global employees. Identity work is done continuously when transcending and reinforcing language boundaries during one's workday.

Further, the analysis also reveals that language choice in the business context is linked to prevalent language ideologies. English competence is regarded as a valuable skill which may grant social mobility due to working in jobs with higher salaries. Further, language ideologies – by creating, structuring and consequently transforming the social world – facilitate categorising people into groups to whom positive or negative values are ascribed. One such example in the data is the group of Slovenian colleagues who are ascribed a slightly negative value since they speak English rather than Slovenian with their Croatian and Serbian counterparts. Referring to *linguascapes*, the aforementioned Slovenians apply a discursive practice, which can in this context be considered unusual, in particular by people who oppose the construction of new language boundaries. It is evident that command of the corporate language is not enough for successful communication in the multilingual workplace. Opposition to new boundaries – either language or group boundaries – can have a major impact on individuals as they find themselves outside of groups in the workplace which further influences effective communication, team work and identification with the company. This may further affect the company whose goal is a 'full-functioning' workforce contributing to the successful performance of the company.

In general, not only multilingual companies are complex when it comes to language choice, but also language practices and identity constructions reveal and add a high degree of complexity to worklife in multilingual companies.

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Between language wars and paving ways: how metaphors of multilingual encounters contribute to construct and transcend language boundaries

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Forschung zu Mehrsprachigkeit im Internationalen Business hat sich bei der Untersuchung der Frage, wie Sprachbarrieren überwunden werden können, bislang vor allem auf mehrsprachige Individuen konzentriert, und deren Aktivität als Quelle von individuellem Einfluss interpretiert. Dieser Beitrag richtet im Gegensatz dazu den Fokus darauf, welche Rolle bei der Überwindung von Sprachgrenzen die Perspektive von Mitarbeitenden auf Sprachenvielfalt spielt. Basierend auf einer Fallstudie, die in zwei mehrsprachigen Unternehmen in der Schweiz durchgeführt wurde, untersucht dieser Beitrag, auf welche Sichtweisen von Interaktion in mehrsprachigen Kontexten sich Mitarbeitende von mehrsprachigen Firmen beziehen, und was die Konsequenzen dieser Sichtweisen für die Konstruktion oder die Überwindung von Grenzen zwischen Mitarbeitenden unterschiedlicher Erstsprachen sind. Die Ergebnisse zeigen erstens, dass Aktivitäten zur Überwindung von sprachlichen Barrieren nicht auf Individuen mit Kenntnissen in mehreren Sprachen beschränkt sind. Vielmehr findet sich eine Reihe von kollektiven Bemühungen, Grenzen zwischen Mitarbeitenden unterschiedlicher Erstsprachen zu überwinden. Zweitens erweist sich die Überwindung von Sprachgrenzen nicht primär als Quelle individuellen Einflusses. Zwar sind Sprachkenntnisse für verschiedene Formen der Überwindung von Sprachgrenzen unabdingbar. Die Mitarbeitenden der untersuchten Firmen schildern jedoch nicht, dass die Nutzung dieser Kenntnisse in verschiedenen Sprachen der betreffenden Person eine machtvolle Position verleiht. Vielmehr legt dieser Beitrag den Schluss nahe, dass Aktivitäten zur Überwindung von Grenzen zwischen Mitarbeitenden unterschiedlicher Erstsprachen die Schaffung von Möglichkeiten zur Partizipation und zur konstruktiven Zusammenarbeit zum Ziel haben.

Stichwörter:
Mehrsprachigkeit; Internationales Business; Sprachbarrieren; Überwindung von Grenzen zwischen Mitarbeitenden unterschiedlicher Erstsprache; kollektive Bemühungen; Sprachkenntnisse; Partizipation; konstruktive Zusammenarbeit.

Keywords:
Multilingualism; international business; language barrier; overcoming boundaries between employees of different first languages; collective efforts; language proficiency; participation; constructive collaboration.

1. Introduction: the perspective of International Business on overcoming boundaries in multilingual companies

In the era of globalization, migration and the spread of communication technologies, companies are "multilingual realities" (Brannen et al. 2014: 496). However, somehow surprisingly, language for a long time was a "forgotten factor in multinational management" (Marschan-Piekkari et al. 1997), and the "orphan of international business research" (Feely & Harzing 2003). It was only

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around ten years ago that language was put on the "international management map" (Piekkari & Tietze 2011). Today, the study of language diversity has established itself as a field in its own right, distinct from cross-cultural management or intercultural communication (Brannen et al. 2014).

Much of the language-sensitive research in International Business has tended to address language as one of the potential boundaries within organizations – or barriers, as they are often called (e.g., Marschan-Piekkari et al. 1999; Feely & Harzing 2003; Harzing et al. 2011). However, more and more, scholars have started to investigate how these boundaries can be transcended. More specifically, research has addressed how individuals having skills in various languages can contribute to overcoming boundaries between employees of different language backgrounds in multilingual organizations. These "boundary spanners" have recently been defined as "individuals who engage in and facilitate significant interactions between two groups" (Barner-Rasmussen et al. 2014: 887). Earlier, they have been called "bridge individuals" (Harzing et al. 2011) or "language nodes" and "language mediators" (Piekkari et al. 1999).

However, most research has interpreted transcending boundaries in multilingual organizations as a source of individual power, even if Barner-Rasmussen (2015) and Barner-Rasmussen et al. (2014) have highlighted the positive effects of individuals' boundary spanning activities for organizations. As Marschan-Piekkari et al. (1999) in their case study of a Finnish multinational corporation (MNC) proposed, people with relevant language proficiency have "the capacity to influence the formal communication lines and even threaten the intended functioning of the formal organization structure" (p. 437). In their study of a merger of a Swedish with a Finnish bank, Vaara et al. (2005) concluded that "the power position and influence of many (…) [bilingual persons, i.e., those speaking Swedish and Finnish] grew far greater than their official position would have implied" (p. 610f.). Barner-Rasmussen et al. (2014) agree that people with superior language capabilities are often able to accumulate considerable informal power and suggest that power might be a possible outcome of possessing the resources that enable boundary spanning. Also Peltokorpi & Vaara (2014) described "language nodes," in their case national middle managers in MNC subsidiaries, as "able to gain power by controlling knowledge flows across language boundaries" (p. 611). At the same time, they emphasized that those national managers reinforce existing hierarchies in the subsidiaries to protect their own power position.

Thus, research on overcoming language boundaries in multilingual organizations has mainly focused on the role of individuals with multiple language skills, and their boundary spanning activities have been interpreted as a source of individual influence. The present article proposes to shift the focus from individuals' language skills to the role people's perspective on language diversity plays in transcending language boundaries. It investigates how the

employees' view on communicating in a multilingual context contributes to both overcoming and constructing boundaries between speakers of different first languages. In a case study of two linguistically diverse companies based in Switzerland, the study explores which perspectives on multilingual encounters employees of multilingual companies draw upon, and what the consequences of these views for constructing or overcoming boundaries are.

In the following sections, I will first introduce the discursive approach as a conceptual framework for the study of the role employees' perspective on language diversity plays in constructing or transcending boundaries between employees of different language backgrounds. After that, information on the case study set-up, the data collection and the data analysis will be provided. In the findings section, I will present the six discursive resources or interpretative repertoires (Potter & Wetherell 1987; Wetherell & Potter 1992) people draw upon to describe how they experience communication in multilingual organizations, which were identified in the analysis. Finally, I will discuss how people's perspectives on language diversity contribute to constructing or to overcoming boundaries between speakers of different first languages.

2. Conceptual framework: constructing or overcoming boundaries as a discursive construction

In order to investigate the construction or transcending of boundaries between speakers of various first languages, this article adopts a discourse analytical approach based on the social constructionist premise that language constitutes worlds as much as it represents them (Berger & Luckmann 1967; Gergen 1985; Gergen & Thatchenkery 2004). From a discursive perspective, social practice is organized by discourse, which can be defined as "language in use" or "human meaning-making" (Wetherell 2001a: 3). Discourse builds objects, worlds, minds and social relations (Wetherell 2001b). One source of regularity is the discursive practices which "people collectively draw on to organise their conduct" (ibid.: 18). These regular ways of doing things in talk – practices – guide people and order discourse. In short, to "do" social life is to "do" discourse. The study of discourse therefore provides insight into human meaning-making, into the meanings that events and experiences hold for social actors (Wetherell 2001a).

The notion of the interpretative repertoire is one way to conceptualize the discursive regularities people draw upon. Interpretative repertoires can be defined as "recurrently used systems of terms used for characterizing and evaluating actions, events and other phenomena" (Potter & Wetherell 1987: 149). They consist of "clusters of terms, descriptions and figures of speech often assembled around metaphors or vivid images" (Wetherell & Potter 1992: 90) and serve as "resources for making evaluations, constructing factual versions and performing particular actions" (ibid.). For the analyst, the notion of the

interpretative repertoire offers "a way of understanding the content of discourse and how that content is organized" (ibid.: 90f.).

Importantly, discursive regularities such as interpretative repertoires are not a "set of hard and fast rules which people follow like social dopes" (Wetherell 2001b: 20). Rather, they represent flexible and creative resources. A discursive space is therefore a place of argument, "an argumentative texture or a discursive fabric that brings together many different threads which can be combined and woven differently" (p. 25). At the same time, "[a]s accounts and discourses become available and widely shared, they become social realities to be reckoned with; they become efficacious in future events" (p. 16).

From a discourse analytical perspective, people construct or overcome language boundaries in multilingual companies by drawing upon various interpretative repertoires on experiencing communication at linguistically diverse workplaces. These interpretative repertoires represent linguistic resources organizational members draw upon to organize their conduct. Speaking about experiences with multilingualism at work thus has an effect on social relations in multilingual organizations. It represents a constitutive part of constructing or transcending boundaries.

3. Case study set-up, data collection and analysis

3.1 Case study set-up and data collection

The present study is based on data collected in two multilingual companies based in Switzerland, which both produce consumer goods. The multinational corporation 'Globalos' (pseudonym) has its headquarters located in the French-speaking part of Switzerland and employs around 300,000 employees worldwide. The Swiss company 'Maximal' (pseudonym) is also headquartered in the French-speaking part of Switzerland and employs around 2500 people. Besides its headquarters, 'Maximal' has around 15 production and distribution centers that are located throughout Switzerland, in all of the country's four linguistic regions. The two companies strongly differ with respect to the languages that are used in the workplace, and especially, regarding their degree of "Englishization" (Dor 2004). According to employees, staff from a myriad of language backgrounds works at the multinational 'Globalos', and increasingly uses English as 'common platform'. At the Swiss company 'Maximal' on the other hand, the two national languages German and French are described as the most relevant ones. In addition, English was gaining importance due to an IT standardization project going on at the moment of data collection. In the wake of this change, English usage, especially in written communication, increased significantly and the linguistic complexity in the organization grew.

In both companies, semi-structured interviews (Holstein & Gubrium 1995) were conducted in order to collect employees' accounts of experiences with language

diversity. Interviewing for data production is an appropriate strategy for investigating my research topic because, as Alvesson (2003) emphasized, accounts in interviews can be explored as organizational discourse. The account is then viewed as a "discursive act" which constructs a particular form of subjectivity, and not as "mirroring the feelings and thinking of the interviewee" (Alvesson 2003: 29). In general, from a social constructionist perspective, interviews represent reality-constructing occasions for making meaning (Holstein & Gubrium 1995).

The interview guide covered different aspects of language use in everyday work. Organizational members accounted for their experiences and practices of using and adopting one or more languages. After asking interview partners about their position in the company and their everyday situation at work, the linguistic context in which they move was addressed: Which language is used in interactions between employees of different linguistic backgrounds and why? How are such language choices made and by whom – if they are made explicitly at all? When and why does English come into play?

At 'Globalos', I conducted 22 semi-structured interviews with employees working at the company headquarters. Of the 14 employees that were interviewed at 'Maximal'[1], 11 were based at the headquarters in the French-speaking part of Switzerland and three at one of the subsidiaries in the German-speaking part. On average, the interviews lasted 60 minutes. In order to capture the perspectives of employees in different organizational positions and occupations, systematically, organizational members of lower hierarchical levels were included in the samples. Contrary to linguistics (e.g., Angouri 2013; Angouri 2014; Lonsmann 2014; Gunnarsson 2014; Jansson 2014), much research on multilingualism in organizations in the field of International Business has mainly collected data on the managerial level so far (e.g., Barner-Rasmussen & Aarnio 2011; Harzing et al. 2011; Heikkilä & Smale 2011; Zander et al. 2011; Neeley 2013; Harzing & Pudelko 2013; Logemann & Piekkari 2015). The studies by Hinds et al. (2014), Lauring & Klitmøller (2014) as well as Peltokorpi & Vaara (2014) represent some of the more recent exceptions, suggesting a shift away from a mostly managerial scope.

At 'Globalos', the following categories of occupational functions are represented in the proportions stated: four middle managers (one Human Resources manager; one sales and distribution manager; the head of the pension fund; one regional manager for Asia); seven task-related, expertise-based functions, which do not include a leadership position (one finance and controlling

[1] At 'Maximal', eight interviews have been conducted by members of a research project from the Research Institute for Organizational Psychology of the University of St. Gallen I participated in. The research project was carried out within the research program Nr. 56, "Language diversity and linguistic competence in Switzerland" thanks to a grant of the Swiss National Foundation (SNF). I have completely re-analyzed the interviews for the sake of this study.

employee; one marketing adviser; one controller; one engineer involved in the development of new products; one graphic designer; one employee in charge of standardizing payment processes; one Human Resources employee); six employees on an assistant level or similar (four assistants; one commercial apprentice; one Human Resources coordinator); five members of service departments (one cafeteria employee; the administrative director of the cleaning department; one directors' canteen chef; one corporate hotel receptionist; the co-head of the dishwashing facility in the self-service restaurant). It is important to note that service department employees in leadership positions were grouped in the service department category in the process of analysis, because I considered that belonging to internal services was more relevant than their leadership position in the context of linguistic diversity. That is, I assumed that their experiences with linguistic diversity would be closer to those of other employees without leadership positions in the service departments than to those of middle managers in the company's 'core' sectors.

Within the 'Maximal' sample, the following categories related to occupational functions were represented in the proportions stated: one top manager and board member (the supply chain manager, who is also a board member); four middle managers (the IT standardization project director; the head of recruitment; the customer service director; one distribution manager); nine task-related, expertise-based functions, which do not include a leadership position (the corporate communications manager; one marketing employee; the IT superuser and internal communication manager; three IT standardization employees; one SAP specialist; one Human Resources employee; a local employee for the IT standardization project based in one of the subsidiaries in the German-speaking part of Switzerland).

In both cases the participation of people from different linguistic and national backgrounds was made sure. The choice of participants was driven by the wish to include people from a broad variety of native languages. At 'Globalos', the sample comprised employees with a French, English, Italian, Swiss German, German (from Germany), Spanish, Portuguese, Turkish and Arabic language background. In the case of 'Maximal', staff with Swiss German, French, Italian, English, Russian, Portuguese and Flemish as first language were included in the sample.

Interviews were conducted in English, French, Swiss German, Standard German and Spanish. They were all recorded digitally and transcribed verbatim in four different languages: English, French, German (interviews conducted in Swiss German were translated to standard German, since standardized written Swiss German does not exist) and Spanish. In the findings section, quotations will always first be presented in their original language and then in the English translation, although I am aware of the limitations of the technicist view of translation associated with the equivalence paradigm, which has been criticized

by translation studies (Chidlow et al. 2014). The original quote is included in order to make the linguistic diversity of the data clearly visible in the findings, thus answering Steyaert & Janssen's (2013) call to make the multiplicity of multilingual scholarship visible. In interview excerpts, bits that were left out in order to reduce the length of statements will be represented by "(…)", in instances where the loss of richness of data is minimal. The numbers (e.g., "126-129") indicate the line numbers of the excerpts that are quoted from the transcripts.

3.2 Data analysis

The first step of analysis involved identifying the interpretative repertoires on interviewees' experiences of language use in multilingual organizations. Starting with 'Globalos', I went through every account searching for these "clusters of terms, descriptions and figures of speech often assembled around metaphors or vivid images" (Wetherell & Potter 1992: 90), in a careful and detailed reading process. Stemming from my research interest in how members of multilingual organizations experience linguistic diversity, I focused on metaphorical descriptions of language use and choice in multilingual encounters and, more generally, in organizational contexts. This process was facilitated by feeding the interview transcripts into the electronic data processing program ATLAS/ti to organize, compare and categorize recurring accounts of language use.

At this early stage, I created a generous number of categories, in the form of codes, to insure that as many potentially interesting elements as possible were included in the analysis. In order to collect the many metaphors and lively images I encountered, and to represent the linguistic variety of the accounts, I also created codes which would wind up containing the quotation which gave the code its name, be it in English, French, German or Spanish. Other codes were more general and overarching. On the whole, during this first coding stage, I tried simultaneously to represent the breadth of the empirical material and to put some order to it. For this reason, I did not hesitate to label quotations in transcripts with several codes when this seemed to make sense. While categorizing, I also strictly avoided creating codes which involved any judgements which were not clearly contained in the accounts. As one important example, I created the code "Anglosaxon dominance" only after I had encountered that formulation in a transcript; in the course of further analysis, I assigned this code to a quote only when an interviewee used the label. Out of this initial analytic process, 490 codes emerged for 'Globalos'.

In the next step, I gradually reduced the number of codes by grouping them several times, looking for similarities in meaning. In order to increase reliability, I consulted external sources like dictionaries and lists of existing metaphorical

expressions[2] to "check individual intuitions regarding the conventionality and potential meaning(s) of a particular metaphorically used word or expression" (Cornelissen et al. 2008: 17). Out of this long concentration process, six interpretative repertoires resulted: 1) The military repertoire; 2) The competition repertoire; 3) The control repertoire; 4) The equality repertoire; 5) The participation repertoire; 6) The harmony repertoire.

In analyzing the interviews conducted at 'Maximal', I kept these repertoires and their key metaphors in mind, without, however, limiting myself to them or forcing the analysis of the Maximal case into the 'scheme' that emerged from analyzing 'Globalos'. Initially, I created 858 codes which I gradually reduced afterwards, using the same method as with 'Globalos'. The six repertoires identified at 'Globalos' were also found at 'Maximal'. However, in some cases, they appeared with different features.

The second step of analysis consisted of analyzing the implications of these interpretative repertoires for constructing or transcending language boundaries. The focus was on how the various understandings of communication in multilingual contexts help construct or transcend boundaries between employees with different language backgrounds. Since English frequently serves as 'common platform' at 'Globalos' and is increasingly used at 'Maximal', special attention was paid to the role of English throughout the analytical process.

4. Findings: six interpretative repertoires on experiencing communication in multilingual organizations

In the following section, six interpretative repertoires on experiencing communication in multilingual organizations, which were identified in the analysis of the 'Globalos' and the 'Maximal' companies, will be presented: 1) The military repertoire; 2) The competition repertoire; 3) The control repertoire; 4) The equality repertoire; 5) The participation repertoire; 6) The harmony repertoire. Using quotes from the interviews as illustrations, the understandings of multilingual encounters underlying the various interpretative repertoires will be introduced.

4.1 Military repertoire: multilingual encounters as fights between speakers of different language backgrounds

The military repertoire is organized around the central metaphor of the fight. It presents communicating in a multilingual context as an act of combat, and the interactions between speakers of different languages as meetings of adversaries on the battlefield. I distinguished two versions of the military

[2] E.g., Oxford Dictionary, Larousse (in French, German, English and Spanish), Das Digitale Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache, The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Collins English Dictionary.

repertoire. One concentrates on rhetorical battles, the other on battles between territories. The following quote introduces the core metaphor of the repertoire, and at the same time illustrates its rhetorically oriented variant. It is an excerpt from an interview with a graphic designer with German (from Germany) as a first language. The statement describes experiences in meetings held in languages other than the person's first language:

> Man kann ja auch verbal dann einfach niedergemacht werden, ne. Das ist dann auch einfach ein Kampf der Wörter, und da unterliegt man einfach (Globalos 11, 15)
>
> *You just can get bashed verbally. It is simply a fight of words, and you are just defeated. (Globalos 11, 15; my translation)*

In its other variant, the military repertoire draws a connection between a language and a territory. The battle is presented as occurring between languages which are, in this case, defined as linguistic "terrains." In the following example, a supply chain manager from 'Maximal' with French as first language draws upon the territorial variant of the military repertoire in order to describe interactions with people having English as first language, or Anglophones:

> Interviewer: [E]st-ce que les gens qui participaient, les Anglophones, des fois ils se (…) rendaient compte [de vos difficultés] ou ils essaient de vous expliquer un peu (…) ?
>
> Maximal 6 : Non, rarement (rigole). (…) Rarement. Et en terrain conquis.
>
> (Maximal 6, 126-129)
>
> *Interviewer: The people who participated, the Anglophones, did they sometimes notice your difficulties or tried to explain to you a little bit?*
>
> *Maximal 6: No, rarely (laughter). Rarely. And in conquered terrain.*
>
> *(Maximal 6, 126-129; my translation)*

In sum, the military repertoire portrays interactions between people with different linguistic backgrounds as fights. In one variant of the repertoire, the adversaries meet on the rhetorical battlefield, as in this statement by the graphic designer whose first language is German (from Germany):

> In Präsentation teilweise ist eine Sprache auch eine Macht. Besonders, wenn man mit Engländern zu tun hat. Oder es wird einfach vorausgesetzt, dass Englisch die Sprache, die Businesssprache ist. Und wenn man nicht perfekt ist und nicht die Nuancen versteht, dann empfinde ich das teilweise als Macht. (Globalos 11, 13)
>
> *In presentations, language sometimes also is power. Especially, when you have got to do with British people. Or it is just supposed that English is the language, the business language. And if you're not perfect and don't understand the nuances, then I sometimes perceive this as power. (Globalos 11, 13; my translation)*

In the other, territorially oriented variant, people are presented as "representatives" of languages defending their languages against others. The following excerpt from the interview with the administrative director of the cleaning services at 'Globalos', whose first language is French, provides an example:

> On [service nettoyage] est un des rares départements où on se bat pour notre français. (Globalos 12, 19)
>
> *We [the cleaning services] are one of the few departments who defend our French. (Globalos 12, 19; my translation)*

Also with specific regard to English, the military repertoire is therefore organized around an understanding of interacting as fighting. Analogous to the general features of the repertoire, people with different degrees of English proficiency are described either as involved in rhetorical battles, or as 'owners' of a specific language threatened by English.

4.2 Competition repertoire: multilingual encounters as games between people of different language backgrounds

The competition repertoire conceives of communicating as a game involving various participants. This might include several types of games, as its core metaphors indicate. Communication is sometimes portrayed as "play with words" (Globalos 8, 263-265), but even more often as a "power game" ("Machtspiel;" Globalos 11, 109). Therefore, language skills are presented as "trumps" ("atouts") that everyone "has to play" ("chacun doit jouer") (Globalos 6, 190).

Accordingly, people's 'position' in the game of words is not the same if their proficiency in the language used in the interaction differs, as this quote by the graphic designer, whose first language is German (from Germany), suggests:

> [Ich] empfinde (…) das auch als Machtpotential, eine Sprache zu beherrschen. Und dann ist man einfach in einer schwächeren Position, wenn man das nicht gut kann. (Globalos 11, 15)
>
> *I also perceive it as a power potential to master a language. And then you just are in a weaker position, if you don't do [master the language] well. (Globalos 11, 15; my translation)*

The consequences of being in the stronger position thanks to better "trumps" (Globalos 6, 190) in the interactional game are discursively constructed as follows by a marketing adviser from 'Globalos' whose first language is French:

> [J]e trouve toujours désagréable qu'un type puisse arriver et en fait avoir un avantage de par la langue. (…) [P]arce que quand on a un contrôle total de la langue, c'est plus facile de transmettre ses idées, plus facile de convaincre les gens (…). On a un meilleur contrôle de son audience, simplement. (Globalos 6, 184-190)
>
> *I always find it nasty that a guy can come and have an advantage by virtue of language. Because when you have a total control of the language, it's easier to transmit your ideas, to convince people. You simply have a better control of your audience. (Globalos 6, 184-190; my translation)*

Conversely, 'poor' language skills – in this example in English – are constructed as 'losing cards' in the organizational game. As a Human Resources manager from India working for 'Globalos' who was educated in English, puts it by drawing on the game metaphor:

> If [people] are not able to converse in English as well as it's needed (…), they lose out. (Globalos 1, 153)

Also at 'Maximal', English skills are presented as increasingly important "trumps" – if not 'entry cards'. The following quote from an interview with a supply chain manager, whose first language is French, gives an example:

> Je recrute beaucoup de gens chaque année. Pour moi l'anglais, c'est même pas une question, c'est exclu que dans n'importe quel rôle j'engage quelqu'un qui parle pas l'anglais. J'y pense même pas. (Maximal 6, 137)
>
> *I hire a lot of people every year. For me English is not even a question, no way that I hire someone for any role who doesn't speak English. I don't even think about it. (Maximal 6, 137; my translation)*

In sum, the competition repertoire presents communicating as a game of words. Frequently, this game is portrayed as a contest between people who are in different starting positions. In this perspective, language skills represent "trumps" in competitions on the rhetorical level. Also with specific regard to English, language skills as "trumps" are one of the core themes of the competition repertoire. However, the consequences of not having specific language skills are presented more drastically than in the competition repertoire in general. Those who do not speak English are described as "losing out" in the organizational game, or not getting employed at all.

4.3 Control repertoire: multilingual encounters as issue of mastering the situation

This interpretative repertoire is organized around the central notion of "control" of an interaction. Mastering the situation might comprise "being at ease" as much as trying to influence how one's utterances are received. The following statement by a controller from 'Globalos', whose first language is Turkish, gives an example which refers to English. The quote introduces the core term of the interpretative repertoire:

> Sometimes I feel "okay, my English is not really that good," (…) I have this feeling so that you know you want to control what you're saying and choosing the… - how do you say? - sophisticated words other than explaining something in an easier way, you want to (…) making it richer you know. (Globalos 8, 249-251)

When it comes to keeping or gaining a certain level of rhetorical control, people emphasized again and again the relevance of feeling comfortable in interactions ("the comfort level;" Globalos 1, 133). Also here, one's proficiency in a language is brought into play as a decisive factor. The following quote from an IT employee at 'Maximal', whose first language is French, emphasizes the importance of understanding others to feeling comfortable:

> J'aime bien comprendre ce que les gens disent autour de moi. (…) [J]'aime bien me sentir à l'aise. Je me sens à l'aise si je comprends ce que les gens disent autour de moi. (Maximal 9, 158)
>
> *I like to understand what people around me say. I like to feel at ease. I feel at ease when I understand what people around me say. (Maximal 9, 158; my translation)*

In sum, the control repertoire presents interacting in a linguistically diverse context as an issue of being or not being master of communicative

constellations. It portrays a lesser command of a language when compared with other interaction participants as hindering one's ability to influence the communication process and its outcome. With respect to English specifically, the control repertoire highlights a remarkable double-sidedness. In some cases, the use of English is portrayed as a means or, at least, an attempt to control communication processes. This especially applies to written exchanges, especially in the context of e-mail communication. The central concern here is the lack of influence on whether a message might be forwarded to other people. The following quote from the interview with a supply chain manager at 'Maximal', whose first language is French, gives an example:

> Dans des (…) e-mails (…), moi j'utilise très généralement l'anglais, parce que je ne sais jamais si mon e-mail va être copié à quelqu'un d'autre qui lui ne parle pas français. Peut-être que mon premier interlocteur, lui il comprendra mon e-mail en français, mais si il doit renvoyer ça à quelqu'un d'autre, j'ai pas envie qu'il soit obligé de traduire mon idée ou de la simplifier ou même de l'envoyer comme ça à quelqu'un qui va pas le comprendre. (Maximal 6, 41)
>
> *In e-mails, I very generally use English, because I never know whether my e-mail will be copied to someone else who doesn't speak French. Maybe my first interlocutor will understand my e-mail in French, but if he or show has to forward that to someone else, I don't want the person to have to translate my idea or simplify it or even forward it just like it is to someone who won't understand it. (Maximal 6, 41; my translation)*

In other cases, people emphasize the negative influence of the use of English on being at ease, as already illustrated in the first quote introducing the control repertoire. This statement by a local responsible for the IT standardization project at 'Maximal', whose first languages are Italian and Swiss German, provides another example:

> Die Hauptmeetings [des internationalen IT-Standardisierungsprojekts] (…) [werden] auf Englisch abgehalten (…). Und die [Sitzungen der] Abteilung [des Standardisierungsprojekts] innerhalb, (…) die machen wir jetzt auf schweizerdeutsch. (…) [W]ieso soll man vier, fünf Leute auf Englisch plagen, wenn es auf deutsch einfacher geht? (…) Da muss man ja keinen Umweg machen. (Maximal 12, 292-301)
>
> *The main meetings of the [international IT standardization project] are held in English. And the meetings of the internal department of the [IT standardization project], we do them in Swiss German. Why should one annoy four, five people by talking in English when it's easier in German? There is no need to make a detour. (Maximal 12, 292-301; my translation)*

Thus, on the one hand, using English is portrayed as making some feel uncomfortable, because of their limited English skills. On the other hand, if the interlocutor understands English, especially in written communication, the content of the interaction need not be translated. Therefore, the control repertoire at the same time describes using English as facilitating the control of one's utterances.

4.4 Equality repertoire: multilingual encounters as issue of being on equal terms

The equality repertoire is organized around the central metaphor of equilibrium. Its central theme is fairness in interactions between people with different

linguistic backgrounds – in verbal exchanges between individuals, and on the general organizational level. The following statement by an assistant with French as a first language who works for 'Globalos' illustrates the equilibrium idea by suggesting a balance of efforts by the involved speakers:

> [En Suisse alémanique] on a été chez des gens dans un restaurant où ils ne parlaient pas le français. Et cette dame a été charmante, parce qu'ils nous ont parlé en bon allemand [et pas en suisse allemand] tout le temps (…) Donc ils ont fait un bout de chemin et nous, on l'a fait aussi. (Globalos 9, 239)
>
> *In the German speaking part of Switzerland, we went to a restaurant where they didn't speak French. And the lady was charming, because they talked Standard German [and not Swiss German] to us all the time. So, they went part of the way, and we did, too. (Globalos 9, 239; my translation)*

Imbalance on the other hand is a frequent topic when it comes to the practice of switching to English when a participant does not understand the language of the other participants. This quote from a responsible for the standardization of payment processes at 'Globalos', whose first language is Spanish, gives an example focusing on people with English as first language specifically:

> Puede haber una reunion con 25 personas y todas hablan español y una no, entonces la reunión es en inglés. Porqué una cosa que sucede - y no es [Globalos], que noto mundialmente - es que las personas de hable inglesa, de origen hable inglesa, no hacen el esfuerzo en general de aprender otras lenguas. (Globalos 13, 279)
>
> *There can be a meeting with 25 people and all speak Spanish and one not, then the meeting is in English. Because what happens – and that's not just Globalos, it's something I notice worldwide – is that people who speak English, native English speakers, in general don't make the effort to learn other languages. (Globalos 13, 279; my translation)*

Another aspect of imbalance with respect to English is addressed in statements which emphasize the implications of the widespread use of English at the multinational corporation 'Globalos' for employees who do not speak English. In the following statement, the co-head of the dishwashing facility, whose first language is Spanish, cites the example of the welcome day. The interviewee, who chose French as interview language, describes the consequences of holding this information event for new employees in English only instead of both in French and English, as it used to be in the past:

> [L]a journée d'accueil (…), je sais que mes collègues [n'y] vont pas, hein. C'est plus d'actualité, ça, pour nous. (…) Je sais qu'avant, ils allaient comme moi, je suis allé. C'était en français. Puis après, il y a une ou deux collègues qui sont allées il y a quelque années et puis qui disaient « Ah, tu vois, c'est en anglais, on comprend rien ». (Globalos 21, 345)
>
> *The welcome day, I know my colleagues don't go. It's no longer of interest for us. I know that previously, they went, as I did. It was in French. And afterwards, one or two colleagues went a few years ago and said "Oh, you see, it's in English, we don't understand anything." (Globalos 21, 345; my translation)*

In short, the equality repertoire is concerned with fairness issues around the use of language in multilingual encounters. These are, on one hand, understood as interactions between linguistic groups. In this case, the underlying question in many cases is the relation between linguistic majorities and minorities. On the individual level, on the other hand, the equality repertoire emphasizes a person's

effort to achieve a balance of efforts. With respect to English, the equality repertoire highlights the adaptation to English speakers who do not master another language which could be a common language. The equality repertoire also stresses that the widespread use of English in official internal communication might have the consequence that employees on the lower levels who do not speak English are not on equal terms with other employees.

4.5 Participation repertoire: multilingual encounters as issue of taking part in interactions

The participation repertoire is organized around several similar or complementary metaphors and core terms. Not to master a language is presented as having the effect of "being blocked" ("être bloqué"; Globalos 12), and speaking a language thus means to "participate" ("sich beteiligen"; Globalos 22) or even to "integrate oneself" (Globalos 8).

Making it possible for other people to temporarily join conversations is a recurrent theme within the participation repertoire. Choosing a common language is presented as one means to facilitate everybody's contribution to a discussion, as this excerpt from the interview with a regional manager for Asia working at 'Globalos', who has Swiss German as a first language, suggests:

> Man sagt: "Du, schau, der versteht die Sprache nicht, dann nehmen wir die Sprache, wo alle verstehen, und dann kann er sich beteiligen an der Diskussion", oder. (Globalos 22, 382)
>
> *We say: "Look, that one doesn't understand the language, then we take the language everyone understands, and then he can participate in the discussion," right. (Globalos 22, 382; my translation)*

Furthermore, the repertoire comprises elements which emphasize participation on a more permanent level. In the following section, the controller with Turkish as a first language working for 'Globalos' argues for adapting to the language of the place where one lives by introducing the integration argument:

> I believe personally that if you are working in a different country, you need to do as much as you can, you know, to learn the language. (…) It's just because of the integration, because you have to integrate. (…) I mean you are living here and you are sharing an environment with them. (Globalos 8, 129-131)

In sum, the participation repertoire presents the lack of language skills as barriers in communication. These can be overcome either by a group of people adopting, at least temporarily, another person's first language in order to facilitate his/her participation, or by individuals learning the local language in order to participate long-term, that is, to integrate. This repertoire also strongly emphasizes the various and contradictory facets of English for participation. The following excerpt emphasizes the positive side of using English in interactions between people of different language backgrounds. The statement from an interview with the head of recruitment at 'Maximal', whose first language is French (with whom the interview was conducted in English, however), draws on an example from the private sphere:

> Our friends are (…) people [from] all different countries and English helps us to have a common platform. Then (…) I can communicate with people where French is not the main language. (…) I think this is a great chance, otherwise we could not communicate with each other. (Maximal 3, 187-189)

At the same time, other accounts highlight the drawbacks of the widespread use of English for people who do not master it well or not at all. This statement by a Human Resources coordinator from 'Globalos' whose first language is French, serves as an illustration:

> [O]n a (…) une nécessité de connaître l'anglais dans certains domaines de l'entreprise, eh bien, c'est clair que ceux qui ne connaissent pas l'anglais auront bien sûr plus de mal à s'adapter ou à être embauchés peut-être. (Globalos 20, 262)
>
> *There is a need to speak English in certain parts of the company, so it's clear that those who don't speak English will have difficulties adapting or being employed. (Globalos 20, 262; my translation)*

Thus, on one hand, English is portrayed as a "common language" which makes it possible to "include everyone" ("inclure tout le monde"; Globalos 4, 52). On the other hand, not being proficient in English is presented as a reason for encountering obstacles when it comes to climbing professional ladders or being employed or, as in other interviews excerpts, for being "blocked" or not being able to participate when information is distributed.

4.6 Harmony repertoire: multilingual encounters as matter of cooperation between people of different language backgrounds

The core theme of the harmony repertoire is good relations among people, as shown by terms such as being "very conciliatory" ("très conciliants"; Globalos 6, 160) or "always being patient" ("toujours avoir de la patience"; Globalos 9, 350) in interactions with co-workers of other language backgrounds.

One element of the harmony repertoire consists of helping, for instance by "coming down to the level of language" (Globalos 8, 265) of the interaction partner. Another form of helping consists in offering people whose proficiency in a language is lower active help, as in this excerpt from the interview with a responsible for the standardization of payment processes at 'Globalos', whose first language is Spanish:

> [Mi jefe que es de hable inglesa l]e facilita a uno el camino. (…) Por ejemplo, si (…) él se da cuenta que estoy buscando las frases, él empieza a preguntar. (…) "Es por esto?", "por esto?", "por aquello?". "No". "Entonces que quiere decir, que esto, esto, esto?". Y yo: "Sí, por esto es". (Globalos 13, 239-246)
>
> *My boss who is an English native paves you the way. For instance, if he realizes that I am struggling with sentences, he starts to ask: "Is it because of this?" "Of this?" "Of that?" "No." "Well, what is it you want to say then, that it is this, that, that?" And I [say]: "Yes, it is because of that." (Globalos 13, 239-246; my translation)*

Mixing languages represents another element of the harmony repertoire. It emphasizes the priority of finding a way to express what one intends to say over following the (unexpressed) norm of monolingual talk, as this quote by a finance and controlling employee at 'Globalos', whose first language is Italian, illustrates:

> [C]'est vrai que parfois voilà je devais chercher des mots, « comment dire ça en italien, comment dire ça en italien », et puis voilà, c'était des phrases où on y rajoutait des mots soit en anglais carrément soit en français. (Globalos 5, 35)
>
> *It's true that sometimes I had to search for words, "how do I say that in Italian, how do I say that in Italian," and then, there were sentences where we added words directly in English or in French. (Globalos 5, 35; my translation)*

Not being afraid of saying something is another theme of the harmony repertoire with specific regard to English. In the following quote, the controller from 'Globalos', whose first language is Turkish, describes his experiences in internal training sessions:

> [We have] (…) our [internal] training center (…). They organize courses - for a week or for two weeks. So people come from many countries. And the first thing the lecturer says when he kicks off the training, that "language is broken English." (…) So you don't need to be shy, because your accent, the way you try to explain, is not really good. So feel free. Feel free. (Globalos 8, 406-412)

In short, the harmony repertoire is characterized by its emphasis on good interpersonal relations among employees of different language backgrounds. Supporting people with limited language skills, mixing languages or encouraging the use of 'broken' languages represent some of the elements of the harmony repertoire. Even the creation of language forms which do not follow the usual rules of grammatical 'correctness' are included in the repertoire. An example is provided in this excerpt by an IT standardization project employee at 'Maximal', whose first language is Portuguese:

> I think now (…) the boundaries of the languages are becoming thinner, becoming narrow, more subtle (…). For us who work in that whole [IT standardization project], you have what we joke as the [IT standardization project language], which is jargon, which is sometimes ['Maximal'], sometimes [IT] system (…). And then you use that as a verb, you use that as a noun, as an adjective, you kind of throw those [IT standardization project language] words into the thing, and then it crosses all the boundaries. I mean you use that in German, in French, or whatever. (Maximal 10, 116-117)

Using the newly created IT standardization project language is discursively constructed as providing employees with more possibilities to interact than if they stick to natural languages. Also regarding English in particular, being tolerant towards errors and mixing languages is the harmony repertoire's general theme. The emphasis is on making sure that everyone understands each other rather than on the accurate use of English.

5. Discussion

The present study has investigated the consequences of employees' perspective on language diversity for constructing or overcoming boundaries between employees of various language backgrounds. Adopting a discursive approach, interviews with employees of two multilingual companies based in Switzerland were analyzed with respect to the understanding of multilingual encounters people draw upon when accounting for their experiences with communicating in their everyday worklife. Six interpretative repertoires, or

"recurrently used systems of terms used for characterizing and evaluating actions, events and other phenomena" (Potter & Wetherell 1987: 149), on experiencing communication in multilingual companies emerged from the analysis: 1) the military repertoire; 2) the competition repertoire; 3) the control repertoire; 4) the equality repertoire; 5) the participation repertoire; 6) the harmony repertoire.

These six interpretative repertoires have very different implications for constructing or transcending boundaries. These differences significantly depend on the role language proficiency plays in them. In the military repertoire, interactions are conceived of as fights on the rhetorical battlefield between people with various skills in the interaction-relevant language, or between 'representatives' of languages which belong to a terrain and to a group of people. Similarly, the competition repertoire portrays multilingual encounters as competitions between employees with various degrees of language proficiency, in interactions or regarding career progression and employment. Drawing on the military repertoire and the competition repertoire when accounting for everyday communication in multilingual organizations thus clearly contributes to constructing boundaries between employees of different language backgrounds. Although based on a less drastic metaphor, the control repertoire also does little to overcome boundaries. Given that speaking in a multilingual context is understood as an issue of mastering the situation, showing weaknesses in the interaction-relevant language is described as problematic.

The equality repertoire with its concern about fairness, however, shows a less one-sided perspective on communication at linguistically diverse workplaces: while underscoring unequal possibilities for speakers to choose the language of an interaction, it offers the option of a balance of efforts. Choosing a language which is no one's first language is presented as a possibility to meet on 'neutral ground', which therefore is discursively constructed as one possibility to overcome boundaries between employees whose first language is not the same. Going a step further, the participation repertoire, which frames multilingual encounters as an issue of taking part suggests possibilities for overcoming such boundaries. While lacking language skills is portrayed as an obstacle when information is distributed or when it comes to climbing professional ladders or being employed, various options for facilitating participation in multilingual settings are proposed. These include choosing a language which everybody understands or adapting to the local language in order to integrate. Additionally, in the harmony repertoire, communicating in multilingual contexts is understood as matter of cooperation, contrary to the military, the competition and the control repertoire especially. By suggesting to support people with limited language skills, mix languages or encourage the use of 'broken' languages, it relativizes the importance of language proficiency and focuses on good interpersonal relations. It thus strongly contributes to transcending boundaries.

These examples show that employees in some cases describe language skills as an important factor in constructing or overcoming boundaries in linguistically diverse companies. In competition-oriented notions of communicating in multilingual contexts, 'good' language skills represent important 'trumps' in the rhetorical and organizational 'game'. However, they become much less relevant in perspectives that focus on participation and especially on cooperation. Not to compete on the level of language proficiency or, in other words, not to compete based on a 'native speaker' ideal, thus offers more possibilities for transcending language boundaries. At the same time, a certain level of language skill is considered important in most interpretative repertoires and the elements they comprise. Mixing or using 'broken' languages from the harmony repertoire for instance is still based on a certain level of language competence. Facilitating participation, as suggested by the participation repertoire, or helping from the harmony repertoire requires even more proficiency in the interaction-relevant languages from the people who span boundaries.

The study thus shows that transcending language boundaries in multilingual companies is more multi-faceted than it has been described in language-sensitive research on International Business to date. First, it suggests that boundary spanning activities are not limited to individuals with multiple language skills. Research on "boundary spanners" (Barner-Rasmussen et al. 2014), "bridge individuals" (Harzing et al. 2011), "language nodes" or "language mediators" (Marschan-Piekkari et al. 1999) has concentrated on the role of individuals with multiple language skills to date. However, various interpretative repertoires that I identified comprise aspects of overcoming boundaries which are not mainly based on individuals' language proficiency. Examples include choosing a language which is no one's native language, using 'broken' languages, mixing languages or the creation of language forms which do not follow the usual rules of grammatical 'correctness'. These forms of language use do not consist of individuals bridging boundaries thanks to their extensive language skills. Rather, they consist of collective endeavours to overcome language barriers, involving both highly skilled and unskilled language speakers.

Second, in this study, interviewees did not mainly construct transcending boundaries as a source of individual influence, contrary to what has been suggested by several studies in the field (Marschan-Piekkari, Welch & Welch 1999; Vaara et al. 2005; Barner-Rasmussen et al. 2014; Peltokorpi & Vaara 2014). While language skills are needed in several forms of overcoming language barriers, using one's proficiency is not presented as putting the respective person in a powerful position. Rather, according to the accounts of the employees interviewed for this study, boundary spanning activities are oriented towards creating participation possibilities and constructive cooperation. Therefore, individual and *collective* efforts of boundary spanning

could be interpreted as contributing to empowering all employees involved, but also to organizational success.

6. Conclusion

This contribution investigated how employees' perspective on communicating in a multilingual context contributes to constructing or overcoming boundaries between speakers of different language backgrounds. The present case study of two multilingual companies based in the French-speaking part of Switzerland has shown that in such perspectives, transcending boundaries is not limited to individuals with multiple language skills, contrary to what language-sensitive research in International Business has emphasized to date. Rather, overcoming language boundaries is partly discursively constructed as a collective endeavor. Second, while language skills are needed in several forms of overcoming language boundaries, using one's proficiency is not presented as putting the respective person in a powerful position. Rather, this study suggests that transcending boundaries need not be interpreted as a source of individual influence, as International Business research has argued so far. Rather, such activities are also oriented towards creating participation possibilities and constructive cooperation and could thus represent an important organizational resource at management's disposal.

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Language ecology as a centripetal force for the multilingual workplace

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Dieser Artikel präsentiert praktische Beispiele der Überschreitung von Grenzen unterschiedlicher Art, welche sich speziell am Arbeitsplatz ergeben. Diese zentripetalen und demokratisierend wirkenden Kräfte verringern durch die Herausbildung von inklusiven Räumen den Abstand zwischen Menschen mit unterschiedlichen Ausgangsbedingungen. Mein komparativ angelegter Beitrag verortet sich in der Ökolinguistik, einer relativ neuen Disziplin, welche verschiedene interdisziplinäre Ansätze im Gebiet der Kommunikation zusammenfasst, insbesondere in komplexen Kontexten mit einer ausgeprägten Diversität von sprachlichen Systemen.

Stichwörter:
Mehrsprachiger Arbeitsplatz, Sprachökologie, Sprachenpolitik, Soziolinguistik, interkultureller Dialog.

Keywords:
Multilingual workplace, language ecology, language policy, sociolinguistics, intercultural dialogue.

1. Introduction

For a long time, language ecology as a branch of applied linguistics has concentrated on the protection of endangered languages, before focusing on language learning in the institutional contexts of kindergartens, schools and universities. Only recently, it has also been applied to the analysis of linguistic and cultural diversity of the workplace in international settings (Lüdi et al. 2001, Langinier & Ehrhart 2015; Trepos & al. 2016). This approach is interesting also for management studies as it transcends the traditional models aiming at opposing languages in contexts that used to be described as fierce battles between hostile armies.

In 2014, with our trinational and interdisciplinary research group GRETI we conducted interviews with people of different departments of the bilingual or even multilingual Smart factory situated in Hambach/Lorraine situated in North-Eastern France close to the German border. Smart is a subsidiary of German Daimler Benz. One of the reasons for the choice of this location was the bilingual tradition of this region. In the past, neighboring Alsace and parts of Lorraine had a bilingual population being able to use a Romanic language, French, and its local dialects parallel to Germanic languages like Moselle Franconian (also called Platt; it was considered a dialect for a long time) and also Standard German in some cases. Our objective was to find out about the representations of space and particularly the concept of border within the staff of the company. For the geographers of our team this was mainly analyzed through mental

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maps, for the people in management studies especially through the investigation of the organization of the workforce. As for the linguists, the sociolinguistic representations were examined: language boundaries between languages that were conceived as distinct entities or rather a view on a holistic repertoire of all the linguistic resources an individual person draws upon. In my contribution, I will focus on the last aspect without omitting the information I received through the interdisciplinary exchange with my research partners.

During our interviews, we were able to talk to people who did not necessarily have a special education in intercultural communication and multilingual dialogue, but who, by themselves, had discovered interesting solutions and efficient practices to face communicative problems in diverse settings at their workplace. We were particularly interested in practices like receptive bilingualism and translanguaging seen from the standpoint of their users. The information provided by this kind of research was collected through an indirect ethnographical observation, as we had the detailed description of experiences and behavioral patterns, through the representations of our informants. Nevertheless, we are well aware of the bias created by such a procedure.

We would like to support the hypothesis that the tradition of border-crossing in the region between Lorraine and Saarland makes it easier to create active interfaces for all kinds of communication in the company, between different levels of activity and also between people of different cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

2. Short definitions of central concepts

2.1 Ecolinguistics – language ecology

Language ecology or ecolinguistics (we do not distinguish between the two for our purpose) is a branch of linguistics originally committed to the protection of endangered languages or speech communities of minority groups, in order to strengthen their position and to encourage social justice. Later on, this approach has been used to foster language learning in the institutional contexts of kindergartens, schools and universities. It is important to mention that the changes brought about by the new ecolinguistic paradigm affected pupils or learners as well as their teachers as they tried to create new translingual spaces which could be accessed equally by both groups. Astonishingly, until recently, it has not been used for the analysis of the workplace in international settings. The ecological approach is interesting for linguistics as it proposes a unique learning space with an authentic learning environment as well as for management studies as it transcends some of the traditional dichotomic models of languages that were seen as opposing armies on a battlefield trying to occupy space snatched away from the enemy used in language didactics or the purely functional approach that has tended to prevail in management studies for quite some time. In the organizational context, ecolinguistics highlight how

multilingual practices are linked to the history and the space of their territorial environment, thus questioning traditional power games observed by management scholars (e.g., Tenzer & Pudelko 2017; Vaara et al. 2005 and many others).

In contrast to the war metaphors used by some sociolinguists (cf. the explanations in Calvet 2006), the virtue of an ecolinguistic perspective lies in the fact that it focuses on the link between different partners and on the quality of their relationship based on mutual exchange and reciprocal enrichment (Fill & Mühlhäusler 2001; Wurm et al. 1996). Both partners are transformed by the encounter, in a centripetal movement towards the common aim of approximation, for which an effort is needed from both sides:

> Ecolinguistics is that branch of linguistics that takes into account the aspect of interaction, whether it is between languages, between speakers, between speech communities, or between language and world, and that in order to promote diversity of phenomena and their interrelations, works in favour of the protection of the small (Fill 1993: 133).

More recently, ecolinguistics has also started to address negative aspects, beside the positive ones that are still prevailing, in order to give a complete picture of the situation observed. This twofold attitude is inspired by the study of the relationship between humans and their social, geographical or political environment:

> It concerns the negative or positive impact language has had and still has on the relationship between humans and what has been called the environment (ecologically named 'convironment') (Penz & Fill 2015:1).

For the workplace, research on management and language policy is of particular interest. Language policy can be divided into an explicit (definition by clear laws or regulations) and an implicit branch (definition by doing, not necessarily consciously or through introspection). Language management inspired by ecology has a holistic orientation and can be situated more closely to implicit language policy and tactical moves than to explicit activities and constructed strategies. For this reason, it is well fitted for the workplace where the language policy is often not clearly defined, but negotiated in a movement of power consolidation on the one hand, and, on the other hand, by the sharing of initiative in the decision-making through the empowerment of all persons employed in the work process.

2.2 Border – boundary – margin

Different terms are used for referring to spatial and symbolic limitations like border, boundary or margin. Konstanze Jungbluth, a researcher in the field of contact linguistics from the University of Frankfurt on the Oder situated on the German-Polish border, explained in a personal communication given in Luxembourg in 2016 that for her team of linguists, *borders* are (almost) impermeable limits, while *boundaries* are limitations that can be negotiated and *margin* relates to a new entity created from what formerly used to be remote

and located at distance from an imagined center.[1] In this process of re-centering marginalized spaces, centripetal forces prevail. In what follows, we will try to link those concepts to the management of human resources and the communication of the multilingual workplace.

2.3 Borders between languages

This booklet *"français au travail"* is a joint initiative of the French and the Québec governments, it can be downloaded free of charge.[2] The authors explain that the necessity to communicate in the international business sector often leads to monolingual habits, by giving a priority to the English language. The publication encourages firms to maintain or re-establish the use of French, especially for companies located in French-speaking countries or territories. While giving precious hints for raising awareness of linguistic vitality or the management of the multilingual space, the document keeps up the paradigm of languages separated by borders that are not easy to cross. It is representative of most of the publications by authorities in French-speaking countries or territories who see the existence of other languages as a threat to the use of French. They aim at reaffirming the position of French compared to other languages, and what they mean by "vitalité linguistique" is in fact the defense of one single language, French. The case where French is the stronger language and threatening another one is not foreseen or described, therefore the image is not complete in an ecolinguistic sense as it observes the relationship only in one direction and not in the other. This kind of language policy is neither explicit nor transparent. This attitude, which we cannot treat in detail here, has a long historical tradition in the "francophonie", the grouping of French-speaking countries (cf. Ehrhart 2012; Cichon, Ehrhart & Stegu 2012). It is not always in harmony with new developments in the globalized world, which require more flexible and sustainable solutions.

3. Case study set-up and data collection

Smart France is a subsidiary of the German firm Daimler AG with its headquarters situated in Böblingen close to Stuttgart in Southern Germany. Hambach is a little country town in France with a few more than 2000 inhabitants situated in the part of Lorraine which has a Germanic-speaking substrate, a Moselle Franconian dialect. It is also located very close to Alsace, another region with a rich bilingual tradition. In 2016, both regions were united with another region, Champagne, through the creation of a more comprehensive administrative unit of France, le Grand Est. Despite this attempt of political unification, these parts of France are rather different from each other, with a

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1 For the research center and its general activities see https://www.borders-in-motion.de/download 15.4.17).

2 http://www.francaisautravail.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Bonnes-pratiques-19-3-2013-complet.pdf (last access on 15/9/17)

long-standing tradition of regional specificities. The inhabitants of Moselle and Alsace, the region from which most of the work force in Smartville originates, have a long-standing tradition of addressing linguistic and cultural borders, by transforming them into manageable boundaries. Nowadays, the younger generations have a much weaker command of the Germanic languages. Nonetheless, the memory of the strong link to this linguistic and cultural heritage of their parents' and grand-parents' time is still alive and, people do not really perceive themselves as foreigners when crossing the closely situated national border between France and Germany.

In the professional context, communicative and linguistic solutions need to be adapted to each specific environment. This goes beyond the perfect use of grammatical rules as they are usually taught in the language class. In the Hambach Smart factory, we were able to interview people who did not necessarily have a special education in intercultural communication and multilingual dialogue, but who had by themselves discovered interesting solutions and efficient practices to face communicative problems in diverse settings at the workplace. This precious talent was not always visible to the management or at least not always highly valorized. A similar situation in Switzerland was described in publications like Duchêne et al. (2013). We are therefore of the opinion that the existing resources and their use could be more highly considered as a good practice of intercultural communication developed in situ, i.e. for the specific purposes of a given work environment by means of an ecological approach.

We hypothesize that the tradition of border-crossing in the region made it easier to create active interfaces for all kinds of communication in the company, between different levels of activity and also between people of different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. We collected data of various kinds: visual (photos and on-site observations of common spaces i.e. the linguistic landscape), audio (with interviews on representations) and graphical illustrations (through mind maps).

In spring 2014, we collected 15h of interviews working as binational, multilingual and interdisciplinary tandems consisting of researchers in linguistics, geography, sociology and management studies stemming from three Universities of the Greater Region: Universität des Saarlandes (Germany), Université de Lorraine (France) and the University of Luxembourg. Each tandem (consisting of at least one German and one French speaker) collected audio recordings which were then transcribed as a whole. They were analyzed through different methodological approaches for analysis (discourse analysis for the linguistic part and mental mapping for the spatial sciences) and finally, the results were exchanged and discussed between the partners from the different disciplines.

4. Findings

4.1 Observation-based findings

During our field research in the Hambach Smart factory, this German firm based in France close to the German border, we discovered that the employees were able to find new solutions to communicate with persons of another linguistic and cultural background, in the sense of negotiable boundaries, which were perfectly adapted to the local and professional context. In what follows, we would like to illustrate their innovative ways of communicating by linking them to some concepts in Management studies.

The linguistic landscape of the observed place is heterogeneous, with the use of

- the territorial language, French,
- the company's main language from the headquarters, German,
- a non-territorial language, English
- and hybrid constructions

This heterogeneity can be illustrated through a signpost located at the main entrance to the central building which indicates:

smart France
Entrée principale/
Haupteingang

This is a procedure used frequently on the site: an indication drawing on all possible resources of the repertoire held by the potential reader. *smart* is the name of the firm and also an English word not forming part of the French or German vocabulary. The word France can be attributed either to the French or to the English language. Then the indication is followed by the French and then by the German word saying that this is the main entrance. When we took the photo, there was also a van parked in front of the building with only the French inscription "sécurité incendie", corresponding to the official language of the territory.

The visitor's map of *Smartville* follows the strategy of the signpost at the main entrance: it contains words of hybrid origin expressing corporate identity (plastal, Magna Uniport), abbreviations accessible only to insiders (MLT, VDO), expressions in English (*smart mall, paint shop*) as well as, most frequently, bilingual inscriptions in French followed by German in letters of the same size.

In the lunchroom and cafeteria the menu was exposed only in French, but this monolingual mode was backed by a nonverbal illustration by means of the exhibition of plates with the different meal options.

The place for handing in the trays is indicated in French (big letters) and German (letter of almost half the size). Small adhesive pictures of *smart* cars are placed on the large windows of the canteen terrace with the function of deterring birds from flying into the glass surface. This language-neutral symbol is a strong federative signal for all employees. Like the other examples mentioned, its objective is clarity and optimization of the comprehension for persons of different linguistic environments. This is what we mean when referring to centripetal forces, forces that bring people of different backgrounds together.

4.2 Interview-based findings

For the present purpose, we find it particularly interesting to interpret our findings in the light of the concepts elaborated by Wilhelm Barner-Rasmussen et al. (2014) in their article on border crossing in International Business.

"Our focus is on individual "boundary spanners" whom we define as individuals who are perceived by other members of both their own in-group and/or relevant out-groups to engage in and facilitate significant interactions between the two groups (…). Previous research suggests that boundary spanners contribute significantly to inter-unit interaction in MNC's (…). They facilitate knowledge sharing and the development of collective social capital (…), effective collaboration (…) and value creation (…). However, little is known about what enables them to do so." (Barner-Rasmussen et al. 2014: 887)

Barner-Rasmussen and his research partners observed multilingual communication in Finland, with Finnish, Swedish and English as the main languages used. In their field study, a limited number of border-crossers, or boundary-spanners in his terminology, achieve a great number of results in the sense of a centripetal movement, they enumerate the following types of activities:

- Exchanging
- Linking
- Facilitating
- Intervening

In the introduction to their article, Barner-Rasmussen et al. (2014: 886) explain: "We examine the role of cultural and language skills as resources for individuals' boundary spanning ability in multinational corporations. Our combined qualitative and quantitative analysis shows that cultural and language skills influence the extent to which individual boundary spanners perform four functions: exchanging, linking, facilitating, and intervening. Boundary spanners with both cultural and language skills perform more functions than those with only cultural skills, and language skills are critical for performing the most demanding functions. Key boundary spanners have properties that potentially

make them not only valuable organizational human capital, but also rare and difficult to imitate."

In our data, the crossing of borders between languages, countries and ways of functioning is seen as natural and it looks as if no special effort was needed to do it. This is in opposition to research conducted in other environments (for instance in Finland by Barner-Rasmussen 2014) where only a very limited number of persons is able to act as a boundary spanner.

In a next step, we tried to link the descriptions given by our informants concerning their working environment and their general behavior in challenging situations from the intercultural point of view to the types of boundary spanners quoted by Barner-Rasmussen.

Example 1 Exchanging

Our informant - a 60-year-old man of Alsatian origin - tells us that he does not take notes during long instruction sessions in Germany. He uses the written material that is distributed (in German) and otherwise he relies on his memory, because, as he says, he wants "to live as a free man". He is then able to pass the information to his team either in French or in the regional variety of a Germanic language (this is part of the further transcription not reproduced here):

(1) Transcription "Faut vivre libre"

```
E1(enquêteur) Et si vous prenez des notes par exemple.Vous faites une
formation en Allemagne pendant trois mois vous prenez les notes en allemand
ou en alsacien en français ?
M2 (employé) : Non pas du tout
E1 Vous enregistrez comme ça
M2 Forcément y'a toujours un support papier qui nous qui nous est donné.
Mais ça s'arrête là. J'vais pas le charger plus y'en a assez. J'crois que
tout c'qui est papier faut faut pas se/ C'est pas la peine hein. Faut Faut
vivre libre [rire]
```

Referring to the activities quoted above, the situation described would fall into what is called "exchanging". For the informant, the fact of transmitting rather complicated messages from one language to the other does not constitute an action he is particularly proud of. He rather insists on the fact that he is free to choose the strategy he wants to employ, this is important for him to be efficient in his transmission work.

Example 2 Linking

Example 2 describes the use of French by a representative of the German headquarters, an effort made in order to speak directly to the whole staff, including not only the managers, but also the people employed in production stemming mainly from the French-speaking immediate surroundings of the company.

(2) Transcription "nicht um die Ecke kommen"

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A: als Frau xxx < eine Deutsche aus Böblingen> das letzte Mal hier war im
Dezember. Ähm das war ja 'ne Ansprache um um um m m um um/ ja es war für ja
auf jeden Fall 'ne große Betriebsversammlung ähm durch sie auch initiiert
und sie spricht natürlich dann nicht nur die Indirekten an sondern sie
spricht die direkten ähm Arbeitnehmer an. Das heißt die Produktion. Und
auch aus dem Grund weiß sie: da brauch ich jetzt nicht mit Deutsch oder
Englisch um die Ecke kommen auch wenn viele aus Lothringen kommen.
F: Mhm (bejahend)
A: Ähm das hatte auch ne Rolle gespielt. Ich muss diese Leute auch in den
Produktionen erreichen können. Das geht nur mit Französisch.
F: Mhm (bejahend)
A: Aber in meinem Arbeitsbereich denk' ich mal is' das'n bisschen
äquivalent Deutsch. Französisch. Da kommt man eigentlich fließend durch.
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According to types of activities identified by Barner-Rasmussen et al. (2014), we classify the scene described in this short quote as "linking". The German lady made a visible effort to speak in French, as she wanted her message to be directly understood by the whole team. It is interesting to see that she is not a native of the Hambach region with its long tradition of border-crossing and the effort it takes her to perform border-crossing is more strongly addressed than in example 1.

Example 3 Facilitating

The employees of an intermediate level between production and higher management levels, often perceive the change of languages as a game which helps improving mutual comprehension between people of different origin:

(3) Transcription "nette Spielerei"

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A: Also das/ je nach dem wer grad in welchem in welcher Sprache den Satz
anfängt so sprechen wir auch. Es wird auch was ich sehr intressant find'/
das war für mich nochmal ganz intressant ähm wenn ich dann wie in der
Schulzeit ähm dass man hier im Satz dann springt von Deutsch auf
Französisch oder umgekehrt. Ähm das fand ich i ist find' ich jetzt schon
fast wieder wenn ich das beobachte ist halt 'ne nette Spielerei. Und das
wiederum ist dann für mich doch 'ne gewisse Kompetenz die sich die Leute
unbewusst angeeignet hab'n. Und führt natürlich dazu dass dann ähm man
plötzlich wenn man spring'n kann innerhalb eines Sachverhalt's 'ne
Alternativmöglichkeit hat Information'n zu übermitteln.
F: Mhm (bejahend)
A: Die man wenn man nur auf einer Sprache fährt nicht hat.
```

The informant compares this type of behavior to language learning at school where pupils had to stay in one language. In this specific work situation, the employees developed the competence to switch between languages, in a more or less unconscious way, by offering them alternative manners to express what they have to say. This strategy is used in a great number of situations world-wide and is described as code-switching or translanguaging (García 2009) or dual-lingualism or receptive bilingualism (Lincoln 1979) and it seems to be very useful also in working place conditions. As for Barner-Rasmussen et al.'s (2014) categories, one could classify this attitude as "facilitating".

Our field data are based on personal interviews during which our partners described their actions. We are well aware that these descriptions are strongly influenced by their beliefs and representations and that they do not constitute a data set of ethnological observation.

Example 4 Intervening

In this extract, the informant describes the progress of an important meeting with partners from Paris and Stuttgart who initially had chosen to use English instead of the local strategy of bilingual conversation between German and French. When he realized that for the car production process, the two partners were speaking about something completely different by having the false impression of using the same language, he intervened as follows:

(4) Transcription "le Denglish et le Franglais, c'est deux langues complètement différentes"

M9 : L'anglais bah après c'est/Attend c'est peut être 5 % de l'anglais Notamment s'il y a des prestations à faire pour le projet
Parce que pour le projet il faut faire en anglais. Dès qu'il y a des présentations à faire dans l'anglais où qu'il y a des gens de Paris avec des gens de Böblingen qui sont avec.
Après c'est l'anglais. Au début c'était pas évidant non plus parce qu'on avait remarqué aussi comme quoi si on comprend allemand français et l'anglais hum. On comprend aussi un peu la façon de penser. Et des fois on a remarqué quoi comme quoi.
Pour rigoler on a dit quoi le Denglish et le Franglais c'est deux langues complètement différentes.
Parce que des fois ils ont parlé en anglais d'un sujet bah complètement… l'un a parlé de stylos roses et l'autre a parlé de stylos mauves et « ouais on est d'accord on est d'accord » Bah stop ça va pas parce que vous parlez de rose et l'autre parle de mauve. Ça va pas.

(For the communication between the people from Böblingen and Paris, sometimes English was chosen, but they became aware of the fact that the English used by the French "Franglais" and the English used by the German staff "Denglish" were not easily intercomprehensible and in some cases, misunderstandings about the production process were the result of that. So they chose to come back to French and German again and the communication flow was functioning again.)

This meta-level of linguistic awareness is more than just knowing how to use one or two languages. The informant here has a more important competence, he knows how to manage transitions between languages with the aim of optimizing the comprehension of partners with different backgrounds and where to intervene when he feels that the gap is becoming too big to ensure the well-functioning of understanding. Later on in his quote he mentions how he intervenes by encouraging the group to go back to their respective mother tongues or languages of origin.

Altogether, the quoted examples show different attitudes or solutions to face multilingual situations in a bilingual firm and its multilingual workplace. These can be seen as activities with a growing intensity of contact and agency, from pure exchanging of information, linking, facilitating to the more complex activity of intervening actively in the communicative process.

5. Discussion

In future research, it could be interesting to discuss whether the different action types of boundary spanning indicated by Barner-Rasmussen et al. (2014) are indeed expressions of different levels of intensity of contact or whether they are representative of different qualities of exchange. Is the attitude of a person always linked to any specific activity type or is it possible to move from one to the other? Some descriptions given by the informants show that there might be a development towards the more challenging ways of sharing and communicating. They told us that it takes time to better understand the partners from another background, and this is not limited to the mastery of grammatical rules only, but to the capacity of monitoring a communicative situation as a whole.

Our observations and the literature review show that the multilingual space of international companies can be managed in different ways. A workplace with different languages can be seen in a centrifugal manner by considering that languages are strongly separated from each other by borders that can be passed only with great difficulties and by displaying huge efforts. This traditional view is frequently linked to a top-down approach held by the company leadership.

By contrast, when taking a bottom-up approach and when looking at the authentic meeting places of languages in the firm and the professional activities related to them, we notice that there are numerous promising strategies of boundary-crossing used by the staff. This group of boundary-spanners can be a minority within the company (cf. Barner-Rasmussen et al. 2014) or form a bigger group or even the majority, like in the Hambach setting we presented here. The ratio or the distribution of those persons with pivotal influence depend on the general environment as the bilingual traditions in the surrounding region, the branch of industry and the corporate culture of the firm (with flat or strongly developed hierarchies).

6. Conclusion

Among the concepts of spatial and symbolic limitations mentioned in the introduction, there was, apart from borders and boundaries, a third category, margins. What used to be considered as marginal can be transformed into an innovative center of language creation (like the emergence of contact languages, lingua franca) and generally speaking, of new modes of communication.

García (2009: 140) describes it under the definition of translanguaging: "Translanguaging is the act performed by bilinguals of accessing different linguistic features or various modes of what are described as autonomous languages, in order to maximize communicative potential. It is an approach to

bilingualism that is centered, not on languages as has often been the case, but on the practices of bilinguals that are readily observable in order to make sense of their multilingual worlds. Translanguaging therefore goes beyond what has been termed code-switching, although it includes it."

This innovative view of language contact is a promising strategy of empowerment from which the totality of the working force within a company is able to benefit. Its strength is to give priority to centripetal forces, the ones that bring people together and underline their correspondences, in an ecolinguistic orientation. This force of relationship is urgently needed in our societies which tend to emphasize the centrifugal forces acting in favour of segregation and alienation (cf. Ehrhart, in prep.). In addition, the practices developed by our informants in Hambach could serve as a starting point for the development of innovative learning strategies for languages in the professional sphere and for other special purposes. In future research and by comparing our findings to those of other field work in different international companies, it would be interesting to see whether indeed the location in a region with multilingual practice provides a solid ground for further moves of internationalization of the company, especially when the awareness for the advantages of this resource is well established.

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"*Es ist nicht wirklich negativ, sondern eher authentisch*": l'authenticité plurilingue du professeur universitaire "non natif". Une étude de cas de la perception des étudiants à l'Université de Hambourg

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In this contribution, we analyse the perception of a non-native plurilingual teacher by a group of students of the University of Hamburg, namely in what concerns her "authenticity". In the studied context, we will claim that authenticity: i) is a dynamic attribute deployed and evaluated locally, dependent on personal traits of the individual, the perception of the context and the affordances attached to it, namely in what concerns the acquisition of disciplinary content; ii) goes beyond the evaluation of the linguistic repertoires of the teacher to embrace other aspects, such as agency and professionality, both of the teacher and the students; iii) is an academic language ideology attached to the norm of the dominant native speaker and based on a rhetoric construction that states the acceptability and productivity of errors and other linguistic deviations when useful for academic purposes (academic "linguistic opportunism").

Keywords:
Plurilingual authenticity, plurilingual repertoires, social representations, higher education, normativity.

Mots-clés:
Authenticité plurilingue, répertoires plurilingues, représentations sociales, enseignement supérieur, normativité.

1. Introduction

Les études portant sur l'usage du plurilinguisme en contexte éducatif se sont surtout penchées sur l'analyse des parlers plurilingues d'apprenants ayant un *background* migratoire et sur leur usage en salle de classe. À l'heure de la croissante mobilité universitaire, l'étude des répertoires pluriels des étudiants, notamment de leur évolution en contexte de séjour Erasmus, a également déjà fait l'objet de quelques analyses (Anquetil 2006; Robert 2011).

Cette contribution se situe au carrefour de ces études et interroge la perception des étudiants sur les répertoires plurilingues des professeurs universitaires, notamment lorsque ceux-ci donnent leurs cours dans une de leurs langues étrangères, celle-ci étant la langue majoritaire. Or, malgré quelques questionnements récents sur le contexte universitaire (Berthoud, Grin & Lüdi 2013, "Part III. Higher education", Steffen & Pantet 2011), cette question est très peu posée lorsqu'on se réfère à l'anglais comme langue de la

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mondialisation de l'enseignement et de la recherche scientifique, et encore moins lorsque d'autres langues sont utilisées comme langue de communication (telles que l'allemand, dans notre cas). Or, les répertoires linguistiques ayant un rôle considérable dans le travail académique (construction, transmission et divulgation des savoirs), il semble pertinent de s'interroger sur les perceptions concernant l'usage des langues dans ce contexte de travail, notamment sur les barrières spécifiques attachées à la communication exolingue qu'y prend place.

Dans cette étude, nous analysons la perception d'étudiants universitaires en contexte allemand sur les compétences plurilingues de leur enseignante du cours "Introduction à la Didactique des Langues Romanes", notamment en ce qui concerne l'usage fréquent de l'attribut "authentique". Cet adjectif avait été utilisé de façon spontanée par un tiers des étudiants pour évaluer les cours de Didactique. Pour comprendre la valeur de cet adjectif assez paradoxal dans notre contexte (voir section 2 de cette contribution), un questionnaire a été ultérieurement créé et passé auprès de la totalité des étudiants.

Nous prendrons les questions suivantes:

- sur le plan conceptuel: Qu'est-ce que l'authenticité plurilingue telle qu'elle est perçue par les étudiants universitaires, dans le contexte présenté?
- sur le plan disciplinaire et communicationnel: Cette authenticité permet-elle de rapprocher les étudiants des contenus disciplinaires dans le contexte présenté? Si oui, comment? Quelles barrières/frontières communicationnelles sont identifiées par les étudiants et comment leur ré/déconstruction est-elle perçue? En quel sens les perceptions des étudiants sur l'authenticité contribuent-t-elles à renforcer ou à déconstruire ces frontières?
- sur le plan épistémologique: Quelles tensions peut-on observer entre les deux pôles discursifs de mécontentement et de valorisation des discours plurilingues ("nicht wirklich" et "sondern eher") à l'université, dans le cadre d'une Didactique des Langues (DL) penchée sur le plurilinguisme?

Les données recueillies par questionnaire auprès des étudiants montrent comment tous ces paramètres entrent en jeu pour surmonter trois types de problèmes en milieu académique perçu comme monolingue mais étant, de par les biographies langagières des acteurs, multilingue en effet: i) décomplexer la situation potentiellement délicate de l'enseignante plurilingue; ii) déconstruire les représentations associées soit au contexte et aux contenus d'apprentissage, soit aux acteurs sociaux; et iii) créer de nouvelles conditions d'existence d'un contexte (les cours magistraux à l'université) tellement empreint de normes et d'asymétries académiques (comme le rôle d'expert alloué aux professeurs, qui en plus doivent évaluer les acquis, ou bien les cadres de participation assez monologiques). Pour cette contribution, nous prendrons en compte les deux premiers types de problèmes mentionnés ci-dessous, à cause de leur rapport

direct au contact plurilingue. Nous analyserons la fréquence du choix de l'adjectif "authentique" pour évaluer le cours de DL, les choix lexicaux attachés à la définition d' "authenticité", les positionnements discursifs des sujets et la structure de l'argumentation. Nous montrerons que l'étude des connotations associées à l' "authenticité" n'est pas réductible à *ce qui est dit* (analyse de contenu), sinon qu'il faut prendre en compte *comment on dit* (analyse du discours) pour faire émerger la complexité des représentations et leurs traces discursives.

2. Authenticité, *appropriateness* et accent

Dans le domaine de l'interaction verbale, l'authenticité a été souvent perçue comme une caractéristique des compétences communicatives du locuteur natif, souvent monolingue. De ce fait, elle est une idéologie linguistique qui fait partie intégrante d'une rhétorique monolingue valorisant une vision essentialiste de la langue et idéalisant le locuteur natif (McLeod & O'Rourke 2015). En tant qu'idéologie linguistique, l'authenticité serait "made up of beliefs and assumptions that appear "common sense" to members of a society and [would] therefore often remain unquestioned" (Cooke & Simpson 2012: 117; voir aussi Blackledge 2000). Ainsi, les attributs de l'authenticité seraient ancrés dans les discours des acteurs sociaux et reconnaissables à travers leur nature discursive figée (Subtirelo 2015).

L'authenticité serait une particularité positive de quelqu'un parlant une langue maternelle et ayant donc l'aisance pragmatique, stratégique, linguistique, etc. associée à un usage de la langue identifiée à "la norme" ou à des représentations de cet usage (van Compernolle & McGregor 2016). On voit bien l'environnement monolingue et monoglossique dans lequel le concept s'est établi et, par là, l'évaluation de l'authenticité des locuteurs et des apprenants de langues étrangères (LE): plus on se rapprocherait des normes linguistiques et communicatives monolingues du locuteur natif, plus on serait authentique, c'est-à-dire "rich, correct, true" (McLeod & O'Rourke 2015) et donc "légitime". C'est la dimension de "correspondance" attribuée à l'authenticité (MacDonald, Badger & Dasli 2006) qui voit le natif comme norme cible (et pas seulement dans le domaine linguistique) à atteindre. Ceci entraîne un paradoxe: être "authentique" serait être capable de se mettre dans la peau de l'autre, de l'imiter et de s'y mêler, de faire semblant d'être un natif, surtout en ce qui concerne l'accent et la justesse des énoncés et des comportements. De par cette authenticité hétéro-attribuée, on se verrait légitimé en tant que locuteur de la langue (même si le locuteur plurilingue ne se sent pas lui-même toujours légitime, comme le démontrent les études de Dewaele 2015; Dewaele & Nakano 2012 et Kramsch 2012). Dans cette conception de l'authenticité, l'accent, son attachement symbolique à une origine et sa conséquente (dé)valorisation (Kamwangamalu 2012: 169), est l'un des éléments les plus

puissants, de par sa "visibilité sonore": on ne parle pas comme un locuteur légitime si l'on ne sonne pas comme l'un d'eux. Donc, le fait d'avoir un accent pourrait être perçu comme une barrière communicative et symbolique entre interlocuteurs.

Si ce jugement de l'authenticité peut être critiqué en raison de son caractère imposé, fantasmé et biaisé par sa nature monolingue (ce qui a étonné l'enseignante du cours de DL dont porte cette contribution, à cause du choix assez paradoxal de cet adjectif), on voit bien, dans le cadre des sujets plurilingues et de contextes multilingues[1], les problèmes accrus de classification, de légitimité et de description qu'une telle compréhension de l'adjectif "authentique" entraîne. Que peut-on dire sur l'authenticité d'un sujet plurilingue, surtout en dehors des cours de LE? L'authenticité est-elle perçue différemment dans des contextes unilingues et multilingues? Par des sujets monolingues et plurilingues? Pourquoi les étudiants utilisent-ils l'adjectif authentique pour évaluer les cours d'une enseignante plurilingue non native?

Dans le cadre de notre contexte de recherche, l'enseignement supérieur, des études préalables ont montré que, malgré l'ambivalence, les contradictions et la complexité de l'évaluation des étudiants envers les enseignants étrangers à l'université (Kang 2014; Subtirelu 2013), c'est la perception de leur origine par les étudiants qui influence le plus l'évaluation qu'ils font de leurs performances linguistiques et académiques (Subtirelo 2015; voir aussi Plankans 1994). Dans ce cadre particulier, l'accent est hyper-valorisé dans l'évaluation (Kang 2014; Villarreal 2013), rendant compte d'un "preconceived accentedness" (Kang 2015: 228), d'un certain "annoyed ethnocentrism" (Bailey 1984) et relevant d'une idéologie linguistique qui cadre et légitime les rapports de pouvoir (Harrison 2012). Donc, encore une fois, l'accent a tendance à être perçu comme barrière en contexte académique.

La question qui se pose à la suite de notre cadre théorique, à la croisée entre la perception d'authenticité et l'évaluation des enseignants à l'université, est donc de savoir comment les étudiants (dé)valorisent la légitimité et l'authenticité de l'enseignant plurilingue en contexte académique. Quels sont les attributs de cette (il)légitimité et comment sont-ils figés par et dans le discours? Notre but est donc de savoir de quoi relève une telle "authenticité" plurilingue, puisque l'enseignante ne pratique que très partiellement des formes de "parler plurilingue" (Lüdi 1987; Lüdi & Py 1986).

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[1] Nous distinguons, dans ce texte, *plurilingue* et *multilingue*, le premier pour nous référer aux répertoires pluriels des individus et le deuxième pour parler des ressources langagières présentes dans un contexte spatiotemporel.

3. Étude empirique

3.1 Contexte et participants

Pour répondre à nos questions de recherche, nous nous sommes appuyés sur notre propre contexte de travail (l'Université de Hambourg) et sur la perception de nos étudiants, pour la plupart se catégorisant comme "natifs" allemands, quant au plurilinguisme de l'enseignante du cours magistral "Introduction à la Didactique des Langues Étrangères (Espagnol et Français)", qui est portugaise et utilise l'allemand comme langue d'enseignement[2]. Il s'agit du premier cours de DL dans le plan d'études, les étudiants fréquentant la troisième année du "Bachelor"[3].

L'étude a été conduite durant le semestre d'été 2014/2015, pendant le cours magistral, en milieu du semestre, les étudiants ayant été en contact avec les contenus didactiques suivants: évolution de la Didactique des Langues (où une attention particulière a été donnée aux Approches Plurielles), facteurs cognitifs et affectifs influençant les acquisitions linguistiques à l'école, la classe de langue comme système fait d'interrelations et l'approche par compétences. Le but de l'étude a été présenté comme étant l'évaluation des cours, les étudiants ayant autorisé la publication de leurs réponses, en cas de besoin.

Quant aux profils linguistiques des participants au cours "Introduction à la Didactique des Langues Étrangères (Espagnol et Français)", nous pouvons les résumer comme suit:

- Professeure portugaise (allemand comme 4ème LE, précédée du français, de l'anglais et de l'espagnol);
- 60 étudiants considérant, pour la plupart, l'allemand comme LM ou l'une de leurs LM (questionnaire et biographies langagières en début de semestre; cf. Melo-Pfeifer 2016).

Le questionnaire a été rempli par 40 étudiants présents au cours (66 % du total du public cible). En plus des disciplines linguistiques couvertes par cette étude – français ou/et espagnol –, ce public étudie encore d'autres langues, comme l'anglais et l'allemand, ainsi que des disciplines dites "non-linguistiques", telles que l'économie, la chimie, l'histoire, le sport, la musique et bien d'autres. La grande majorité provient de familles allemandes (les deux parents étant identifiés par 23 étudiants comme "allemands"), mais l'on trouve également des cas de familles turques (5 familles) et afghanes (2 familles), ainsi que 5 mariages mixtes (allemand-égyptien ou russe-kazakh, par exemple).

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2 Il s'agit en même temps de l'auteur de cet article.

3 Il faut ajouter que le cours théorique a une durée d'une heure par semaine et qu'il est accompagné de deux heures de "séminaire", où une partie importante des contenus est préparée et modérée par les étudiants eux-mêmes.

32 étudiants révèlent qu'ils ont des collègues parlant l'allemand en tant que LE, 40 confirment avoir des enseignants à l'université parlant l'allemand avec ce même statut. Interrogés sur le nombre d'enseignants parlant l'allemand comme LE, 15 répondent qu'ils n'en ont qu'une (l'auteure de cette étude), 13 indiquent en avoir 2 et 10 rapportent le contact avec 3 enseignants[4]. Dans ces deux derniers cas, il s'agit généralement de l'enseignante de Didactique et des lecteurs/tuteurs des LE dont ils poursuivent l'étude. Ceci dit, ces deux profils linguistiques sont assez différents, car ces lecteurs sont censés incarner la norme de leur langue maternelle, ce qui fait qu'ils maintiennent leur posture d'experts linguistiques de cette langue[5]. Donc, dans ce cas, le statut de sujets parlant l'allemand comme LE leur donne une légitimité accrue dans leur domaine d'expertise, justement parce qu'ils ne sont pas des natifs allemands.

Pour faire court, nous pouvons dire que, bien qu'il s'agisse d'un public plurilingue (langues des profils linguistiques, *background* migratoire, …), la majorité est très attachée à un environnement unilingue (la presque totalité du parcours académique est faite en allemand) et que l'université conduit d'une certaine façon, malgré les études de LE, à souligner les idéologies monolingues et monoglossiques dominantes (par exemple, l'expertise linguistique est liée à la nativité, par le fait même que la majorité des lecteurs sont "natifs" des langues qu'ils enseignent).

3.2 Méthodologie

Lors d'un premier bilan intermédiaire sollicité par l'enseignante, écrit en format libre, sur le déroulement du séminaire, plusieurs étudiants ont choisi l'adjectif "authentique" pour décrire (voire évaluer) le cours ou l'enseignante. Un(e) étudiant(e) a écrit la phrase énoncée dans le titre de cette contribution: "Es gibt Kleinigkeiten, z.B. in der Aussprache oder Grammatik, die auffällig sind, aber *es ist nicht wirklich negativ, sondern eher authentisch*". Cette évaluation intermédiaire a poussé l'enseignante à vouloir développer sa connaissance du sens de l'adjectif "authentique" (à la suite de Blommaert & Varis 2013), lorsqu'il est utilisé pour se référer aux compétences linguistiques non natives des professeurs universitaires à l'heure de la mobilité académique. Pour ce faire, un questionnaire semi-ouvert ciblant le sens de l'adjectif "authentique" a été développé. Ce questionnaire était constitué de plusieurs sections, notamment: i) le futur profil professionnel; ii) les constellations (linguistiques) familiales; iii) les contacts plurilingues à l'université, soit avec des collègues soit avec des enseignants; iv) l'évaluation des cours donnés en allemand par un locuteur "non natif"; et v) la définition du substantif "Authentizität".

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4 Deux étudiants n'ont pas répondu à cette question.

5 Voir Dervin & Badrinathan (2011) pour des analyses de la dichotomie "natif – non natif" et de la légitimité des enseignants natifs et non natifs dans différents contextes.

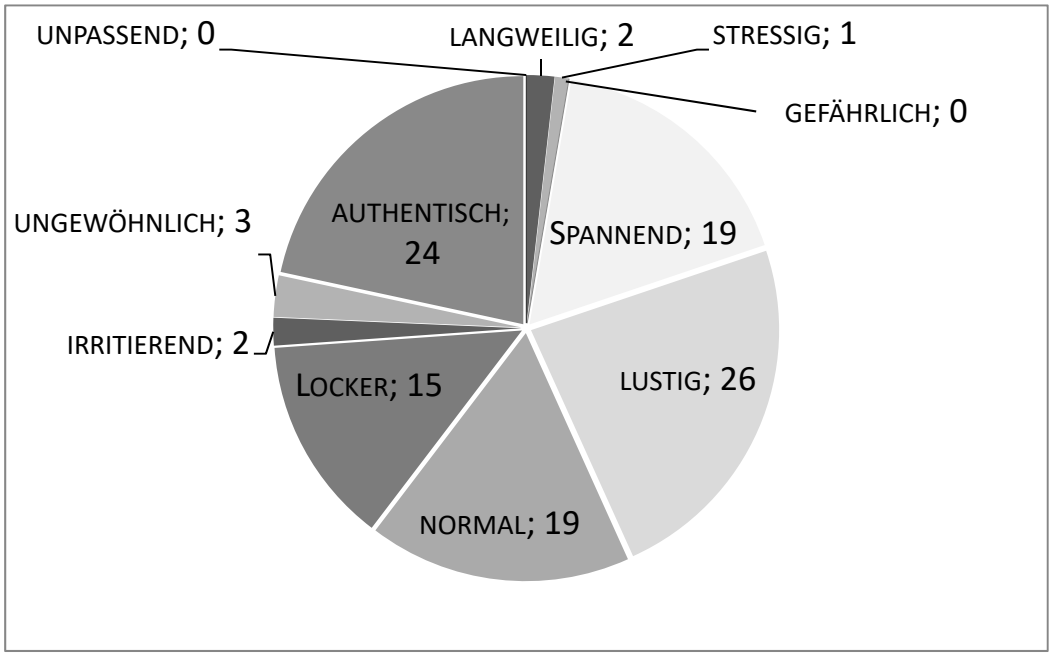
L'analyse des données obtenues a été faite à travers le croisement du traitement quantitatif des questions fermées et qualitatif des questions ouvertes (surtout par analyse de contenu et analyse discursive, Wodak & Meyer 2016). Après un balayage initial du contenu le plus fréquent des réponses ouvertes, trois catégories d'analyse ont été retenues pour comprendre la nature discursive de "l'authenticité plurilingue":

- les choix lexicaux;
- la structure de l'argumentation (choix d'intensificateurs et d'atténuateurs discursifs);
- la perspective énonciative (à qui est attribué un argument: moi, on, moi et nous)

4. Les résultats

4.1 Évaluation des cours "Introduction à la Didactique des Langues Romanes" en allemand langue étrangère par les étudiants

L'évaluation des cours "Introduction à la Didactique des Langues Romanes" a été faite à l'aide d'adjectifs à connotation positive et négative pré fournis. Les étudiants pouvaient cocher tous les adjectifs qu'ils jugeaient adéquats, ajouter encore d'autres adjectifs et/ou fournir une justification. Le graphique suivant montre l'analyse quantitative de cette réponse:



Graphique 1: Evaluation des cours de didactique.

D'après cette distribution, les étudiants font une analyse positive des cours, ainsi que des ressources linguistiques mobilisées par l'enseignante. L'adjectif

le plus employé est celui de "drôle" ("lustig"), suivi d'"authentique" ("authentisch"), passionnant ("spannend") et détendant ("locker"). Les adjectifs à connotation négative sont très rarement choisis ("stressant", "irritant" et "monotone") ou pas choisis du tout ("dangereux" ou "inadéquat").

Si nous analysons en outre les adjectifs ou expressions ajoutés par les étudiants, nous remarquons que la plupart est aussi de nature positive, même si quelques-uns laissent entrevoir les aspects jugés critiques par l'usage d'une langue étrangère.

Ainsi, pour les valeurs positives ajoutées par les étudiants, nous rencontrons "bereichernd" ("enrichissant", avec 2 réponses) et "interessant" ("intéressant", 3 réponses). Nous retrouvons encore des adjectifs tels que "bewundernswert" ("admirable"), "lehrreich" ("instructif"), "inspirierend" ("inspirant") et "ermutigend" ("encourageant"), avec une réponse chacun. Ces adjectifs ajoutés par les étudiants sont en rapport avec le métier d'enseignant de langues qu'ils envisagent et qu'ils évaluent comme étant dépendant des compétences linguistiques et de la capacité/aisance à parler dans la LE devant la classe – un public exigeant encore méconnu et fantasmé. Ceci dit, le cours donné en LE à l'université induit un effet de miroir "avant la lettre". Cette connexion au métier et aux savoirs disciplinaires est bien présente dans la réponse d'un(e) étudiant(e) qui évalue l'usage de la LE comme "tolle Methode, um ein Thema vorzustellen" ("une super méthode pour présenter un thème"). Cette réponse fait le pont entre les thématiques les plus récurrentes durant les cours de la discipline "Introduction à la Didactique des Langues Romanes", qui prône une approche plurilingue et interculturelle de l'enseignement-apprentissage des langues à l'école, et les moyens employés par l'enseignante pour faire passer le message didactique ("compétence plurilingue et interculturelle", "approches plurielles", "communication plurilingue et multimodale", "communication exolingue",…). Sur ce point, la "méthode" de l'enseignante consisterait à démontrer *in situ* la valeur pédagogique, la fiabilité et la justesse des théories plurilingues prônées en cours.

Du côté plutôt négatif, nous retrouvons deux adjectifs/expressions: un étudiant juge les cours mal structurés ("unstrukturiert"), ce qui peut ne pas avoir un rapport direct avec les compétences linguistiques de l'enseignante, et un autre confesse ses difficultés de compréhension ("manchmal erschwertes Verständnis"), un des jugements les plus communs dans ce type de contexte pédagogique (Bailey 1984; Subtirelu 2013, 2015). Alors, même si pas souvent référé, un problème lié au plurilinguisme de l'enseignante peut se poser: la compréhension peut devenir lente et difficile.

Nous remarquons donc que l'usage de l'allemand comme LE tend à être perçu positivement par les étudiants, en particulier en raison de la création d'un contexte d'apprentissage plus détendu, du rapport aux contenus disciplinaires et de son association à l'avenir professionnel des étudiants.

Lorsque les étudiants explicitent pourquoi ils jugent l'enseignante du cours "Introduction à la Didactique des Langues Romanes" authentique, les réponses (exemples dans le tableau 1) montrent que cette évaluation possède une importante dimension contextuelle (exemples 1, 2 et 3) et un attachement à une norme monolingue (exemples 4 et 5).

Réponses	Traduction
(1) Ich stimme zu, dass ich bei einer Einführung in die Fachdidaktik einer FS einen Nicht-Muttersprachler als authentisch empfinde, da hier der Inhalt des Sprachmittler des Lehrens nicht nur theoretisch sondern auch praktisch lernbar ist. Ich finde aber die Aussage "Es ist nicht wirklich negativ" etwas komisch, so als ob es in der Regel negativ hätte sein müssen.	Je confirme que je trouve l'enseignement de l'Introduction à la Didactique des LE par un non natif comme authentique car le contenu du médiateur de l'enseignement est appréhendé non seulement dans la théorie, mais aussi dans la pratique. Mais je trouve l'affirmation "ce n'est pas vraiment négatif" un peu étrange, comme si cela devait être négatif en règle générale.
(2) Fachdidaktik von jemandem zu hören, der selbst mehrere Sprachen beherrscht, ist sehr authentisch. Kleine Versprecher lockern die Atmosphäre auf und machen Mut, selbst die Fremdsprache zu sprechen.	Participer aux cours de Didactique des Langues donnés par quelqu'un qui parle lui-même plusieurs langues est très authentique. Les petits glissements de langue créent une atmosphère plus détendue et donnent du courage pour parler soi-même la LE.
(3) Spannend & authentisch, weil es in der Veranstaltung "Einführung in die Fachdidaktik" ja auch gerade dann steht wie man eine andere Sprache lehrt und lernt, was wichtig für funktionierende Kommunikation… ist. Das wird dadurch "erfahrbar" gemacht, lustig und locker ist die Sprechart der Dozentin, die auf eine unkomplizierte Art auf Deutsch als FS unterrichtet:)	Passionnant & authentique parce que dans le cours "Introduction à la Didactique des Langues" il en va bien sûr de comment on apprend et enseigne une autre langue, de ce qui est important pour une communication… qui fonctionne. Ceci est rendu "expérimentable", la façon de parler de l'enseignante est drôle et détendue, elle enseigne d'une façon simple en Allemand LE:)
(4) Sprachliche Defizite erschweren schon teilweise das Verständnis von schwierigen Fachtermini. Das ist schon negativ. Anderseits machen die Veranstaltungen so viel Spass, dass ich notfalls selbständig recherchiere.	Des déficits linguistiques rendent en effet partiellement difficile la compréhension des concepts disciplinaires. Ceci est en effet négatif. Par contre, les cours sont si amusants que je fais mes recherches, si nécessaire, de façon autonome.

(5) Es ist schon sehr authentisch, kleine Fehler sind absolut nicht schlimm, es kann aber negativ sein, wenn durch sprachliche Hürden die Verfolgung des Inhalts schwerer wird.	C'est en effet très authentique, les petites fautes ne sont pas graves, mais cela peut être négatif lorsque les barrières linguistiques rendent le suivi du contenu plus difficile.

Tableau 1: Jugements sur l'authenticité de l'enseignante.

La lecture de ces exemples met en évidence la nature contextualisée de la perception d'authenticité. Ainsi, dans le cas de cette étude, l'authenticité est perçue par rapport aux connexions avec les savoirs disciplinaires (exemples 1 et 3), rendant ceux-ci plus facilement appréhensibles en raison du lien entre les conceptions théoriques sur l'enseignement-apprentissage des LE véhiculées pendant les cours et l'incarnation, par l'enseignante, de ces mêmes conceptions. L'exemple 2 nous mène à pousser cette interprétation encore plus loin puisqu'il renvoie à la fonction de modèle du comportement discursif de l'enseignante, qui exemplifie et discute[6], dans le *hic et nunc* de l'interaction, comment on peut faire face aux problèmes linguistiques et de communication en LE quand on est plurilingue. De ce fait, le cours de Didactique des LE est perçu par les étudiants comme étant au carrefour des théories et des pratiques plurilingues, ce qui rend le contenu disciplinaire "erfahrbar", et l'enseignante comme possédant un capital multiculturel, plurilingue et expérientiel exploitable et rentable en didactique des LE (cf. Kang 2015). Le caractère situé de l'authenticité est également visible dans les exemples 3 et 4, qui se focalisent, au-delà des compétences linguistiques tâtonnantes de l'enseignante, aussi sur des traits supposés de sa personnalité: "drôle", "détendue" et "amusante".

Ainsi, l'authenticité plonge ses racines non seulement dans la perception des compétences langagières, mais aussi dans l'évaluation que l'on se fait de la personnalité de l'individu évalué. Ou encore, pour être bref, les compétences langagières ne sont pas la seule mesure d'authenticité et, en conséquence, un locuteur non natif peut se voir ou non attribuer la qualité d'authentique.

En ce qui concerne l'attachement à la norme monolingue, nous remarquons, par exemple, que le commentaire 1, tout en essayant de s'en détacher, fait référence à ce que serait la normalité perçue par la société et reproduite comme représentation sociale ("Ich finde aber die Aussage "Es ist nicht wirklich negativ" etwas komisch, so als ob es in der Regel negativ hätte sein müssen"). De plus, les commentaires 2, 4 et 5 positionnent la question de l'authenticité plurilingue dans le champ des fautes et des déviations par rapport à la norme linguistique

6 En effet, durant les cours, l'enseignante thématise fréquemment ses compétences linguistiques et utilise l'observation directe de ses comportements langagiers pour ouvrir des séquences parallèles métacommunicatives, métacognitives ou métalinguistiques, selon les problèmes repérés.

dominante. Même si les formulations sont faites de façon à atténuer un potentiel "face threatening act", comme le démontrent les expressions "kleine Versprecher" ou "kleine Fehler" (voir ci-dessous section 4.3.2), il est possible de cerner un discours social qui évalue négativement l'expression du locuteur non natif ("Sprachliche Defizite" et "sprachliche Hürden") et qui le posent comme seule source des problèmes de communication et de compréhension (cf. Villarreal 2013), oubliant le processus de co-responsabilité et de co-construction du sens dans la communication. En plus, nous pourrions ajouter le fait que l'on entretienne souvent une confusion entre la maitrise de la langue au quotidien et la maitrise de la langue de spécialité (dans notre cas, de la DL), dont l'adjectif "authentique" lui-même peut être en exemple. Ces aspects contribuent à une sédimentation des représentations liées aux locuteurs natifs et non natifs (Faez 2011; Subtirelo 2013), tout en catégorisant le langage de ce dernier comme déviant et, dans notre contexte, comme seul responsable de la diminution de la capacité à suivre les contenus du cours. Cette déviation par rapport à la norme monolingue est donc, encore une fois, pointée comme potentielle barrière à la compréhension et peut ainsi avoir un impact négatif sur la cognition et l'appréhension des savoirs disciplinaires.

4.2 Définition de l'authenticité

Une question à part entière concernait la définition de l'"authenticité" dans le cadre du plurilinguisme et de l'enseignement en LE à l'université. Les réponses présentes dans le tableau 3 font surgir des caractéristiques importantes.

Réponses	Traduction
(6) Aus dem realem Leben, aus der realen Situation. In Deutschland wird die meiste Kommunikation auf Deutsch stattfinden. Somit ist authentisch eine Vorlesung auf Deutsch zu halten. Auch wenn Deutsch nicht die Muttersprache ist.	En prise directe avec la vie réelle, la situation réelle. En Allemagne, la communication se passe surtout en allemand. Ainsi, il est authentique de faire les cours magistraux en allemand, et également lorsque l'allemand n'est pas la langue maternelle.
(7) Keine Angst mit Akzent und mit Sprachfehlern zu reden.	Ne pas avoir peur de parler avec un accent et de faire des fautes de langue.
(8) Es bedeutet, Inhalte darzustellen, auch ohne einer Sprache akzent- und fehlerfrei mächtig zu sein.	Cela signifie, exposer des contenus et se sentir fort, même si l'on parle une langue avec un accent et que l'on fait des erreurs.
(9) Authentisch ist es, wenn Dozenten sich trauen, trotzdem Vorlesungen auf Deutsch zu halten und beim Sprechen keine	Authentique, c'est quand les enseignants osent tout de même donner les cours théoriques en allemand et n'ont pas peur de faire des fautes lorsqu'ils parlent.

Angst davor haben, Fehler zu machen.	
(10) Authentizität in diesem Rahmen bedeutet für mich, dass die Mehrsprachigkeit gelebt wird und Fehler erlaubt sind.	Dans ce contexte, l'authenticité signifie pour moi que le plurilinguisme est vécu et que les erreurs sont permises.
(11) Es wird gezeigt, dass nicht alles perfekt sein & beherrscht werden muss, um verstanden zu werden. Bei einer Sprache kommt es drauf an, dass man sie spricht und sich nicht für eventuelle Fehler schämt, denn sonst kann man auch nicht besser werden.	On nous montre que, pour être compris, il ne faut pas que tout soit parfait et dominé. En ce qui concerne une langue, il en va de la parler et de ne pas avoir honte de faire éventuellement des fautes, sinon il n'est pas possible de progresser.
(12) Authentisch ist man, wenn man sich nicht verstellt. Wenn man nicht perfekt spricht, aber dazu steht und mit Fehler umgehen kann (sogar darüber lachen kann).	On est authentique quand on ne se déguise pas. Quand on ne parle pas parfaitement, mais que l'on assume et que l'on accepte de faire des fautes (voire pouvoir en rire).

Tableau 2: Définitions de l'authenticité fournies par les étudiants.

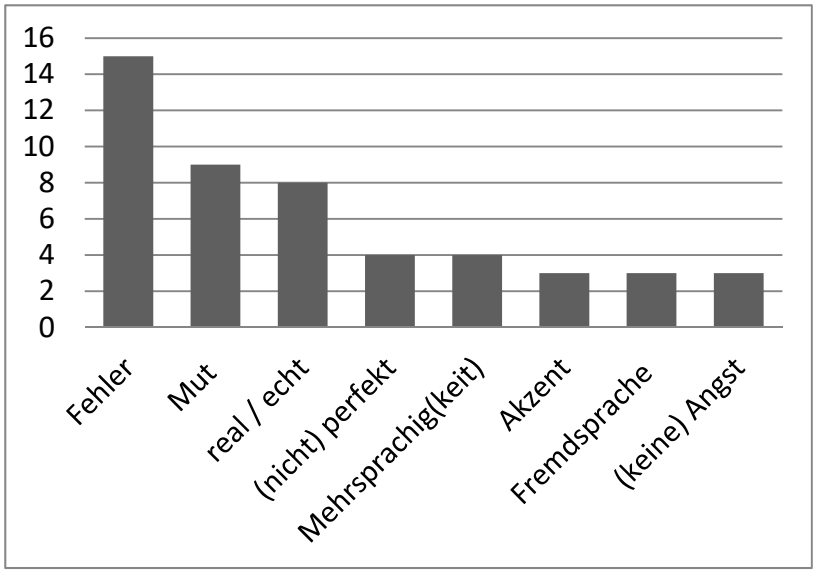
L'authenticité est liée, paradoxalement, soit à des situations unilingues, soit à des situations multilingues. Ainsi, dans le premier cas, l'authenticité serait la capacité d'adaptation à un environnement unilingue, perçu comme naturel et légitime (exemple 6). Pour trouver sa place dans cet environnement unilingue, le sujet plurilingue doit être hardi et capable de reconnaitre l'écart entre la norme monolingue et l'état de limitation linguistique dans lequel il se trouve et s'y adapter. D'un autre côté, la capacité de participer à des situations de communication multilingue est valorisée, décrite comme une forme de courage (exemples 7 et 10), de vécu (exemple 11) et de sincérité interpersonnelle (exemple 12).

Or, comme nous le verrons de plus près dans les deux sous-sections suivantes, l'éloge de cette capacité à participer à des situations de contacts de langues à travers le déploiement de ressources linguistiques hétérogènes – qui incluent les ressources dans la langue majoritaire – est toujours attachée à la norme. Ainsi, l'éloge de cette capacité est toujours faite en rappelant le manque de superposition entre les normes grammaticales et phonétiques/prosodiques (les termes "erreurs", "fautes" et "accent" étant souvent présents dans les définitions) de la langue majoritaire et l'expression de l'enseignant non natif (exemples 7 à 12). On pourrait conclure que la perception de l'authenticité du sujet plurilingue est de nature comparative et advient de la perception de l'écart entre les expressions considérées native et non-native, même si cet écart n'est pas toujours exprimé comme étant un problème. L'authenticité plurilingue plonge donc ses racines dans une orientation monolingue de la communication

et elle illustre une certaine tension entre une stable rhétorique monolingue et une autre du romantisme multi- et plurilingue.

4.2.1 Les traits sémantiques de l'authenticité

Comme nous venons de l'argumenter, l'authenticité plurilingue, même si évaluée positivement, est toujours estimée par rapport aux normes monolingues de la langue et de la communication. Le graphique 2 présente l'analyse des choix lexicaux faits par les étudiants pour définir l'authenticité:

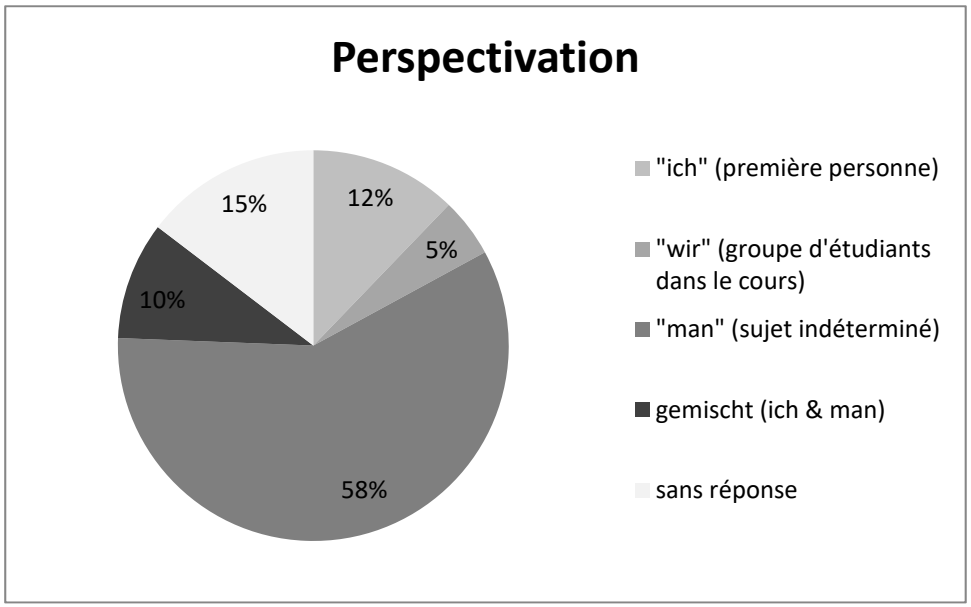


Graphique 2: Analyse lexicale des définitions d'authenticité.

Comme nous le voyons, l'authenticité plurilingue est attachée à trois ordres d'indexicalité, étant assez dépendante du contexte de l'énonciation. D'un côté, elle semble être ancrée dans la norme: "faire des fautes" et "avoir un accent" sont des traits saillants d'une maitrise considérée imparfaite de la langue d'enseignement, parce que comparée avec la norme du locuteur natif: "Man kann eine Fremdsprache selten so beherrschen, dass nicht auffällt, dass man kein Muttersprachler ist" ("Rarement on domine une LE au point que l'on ne se rende pas compte que l'on est un locuteur non natif"). D'un autre côté, elle est reliée aux traits du sujet parlant: il faut être courageux ("Mut zur Lücke / le courage d'accepter nos lacunes") pour s'exprimer auprès des natifs en faisant des fautes et en ayant un accent. Finalement, elle est évaluée par rapport au contexte: enseigner le plurilinguisme et la didactique des langues en faisant des fautes parce qu'on est plurilingue est acceptable, réel et "vorbildlich" (exemplaire): "Authentisch ist jemand, der, wenn er über Mehrsprachigkeit redet, auch tatsächlich mehrsprachig ist" ("authentique est celui qui, lorsqu'il parle du plurilinguisme, est lui-même plurilingue").

4.2.2 La structure de l'argumentation

L'analyse de la façon dont les étudiants attribuent la responsabilité de leurs commentaires ou s'inscrivent dans leurs prises de position – que nous avons appelée "perspectivation" - montre que les sujets ne se montrent pas toujours directement responsables de leurs opinions (graphique 3).



Graphique 3: Perspective adoptée dans les réponses.

L'analyse de ce graphique montre que l'authenticité plurilingue est définie:

- avec une certaine distance de la part du sujet qui donne la définition, puisque seulement 12 % des étudiants s'inscrivent personnellement dans les définitions (et 15 % ne répondent même pas);
- en tant que discours partagé au sein du groupe d'étudiants ("nous");
- surtout par référence à des voix hors-contexte (58 % utilise le pronom personnel indéfini "on" comme source de leurs croyances);
- comme généralisable, assumée par le groupe d'étudiants et un groupe indéfini ("man/on" dit que…).

Ces stratégies de prises de position, qui semblent mettre le "moi" à l'écart, nous amènent à considérer l'éventuel rôle des savoirs disciplinaires traités pendant le semestre dans la conscience du "linguistiquement politiquement correct" des étudiants. Ces réponses ont-elles été biaisées par les enseignements disciplinaires? Où montrent-elles le désir de ne pas être en contradiction avec des théories considérées plus modernes, plus à la mode dans les discours d'intégration et perçues comme respectant une certaine "doxa plurilingue" (Adami & André 2015)?

4.2.3 Le cas de "Fehler" [erreur]

Comme le montre le graphique 2, une unité lexicale apparait à plusieurs reprises: celle d'erreur (tableau 3). L'analyse de ses occurrences se révèle ainsi indispensable pour comprendre la nature de l'authenticité plurilingue telle qu'elle est conçue par les étudiants.

Occurrences	Traduction
(13) Keine Angst mit Akzent und mit Sprachfehlern zu reden.	Ne pas avoir peur de parler avec un accent et de faire des fautes de langue.
(14) Es bedeutet, Inhalte darzustellen auch ohne einer Sprache akzent- und fehlerfrei mächtig zu sein.	Cela signifie, exposer des contenus et se sentir fort, même si l'on parle une langue avec un accent et que l'on fait des erreurs.
(15) Authentisch ist es, wenn Dozenten sich trauen trotzdem Vorlesungen auf Deutsch halten und beim Sprechen keine Angst davor haben Fehler zu machen.	Authentique, c'est quand les enseignants osent malgré tout donner les cours magistraux en allemand et qu'ils n'ont pas peur de faire des fautes lorsqu'ils parlent.
(16) Auch mal Fehler zulassen.	Accepter aussi les fautes.
(17) Es wird gezeigt, dass nicht alles perfekt sein & beherrscht werden muss, um verstanden zu werden. Bei einer Sprache kommt es drauf an, dass man sie spricht und sich nicht für eventuelle Fehler schämt (…).	On nous montre que, pour être compris, il ne faut pas que tout soit parfait et dominé. En ce qui concerne une langue, il en va de la parler et de ne pas avoir honte de faire éventuellement des fautes, sinon il n'est pas possible de progresser.
(18) Authentisch ist es daher auch, Mal ein paar kleine Fehler zu machen: das ist ganz normal, sonst wäre es nicht authentisch:).	Authentique, c'est aussi faire parfois quelques petites fautes: c'est tout à fait normal, sinon ce ne serait pas authentique:).
(19) Wenn man nicht perfekt spricht, aber dazu steht und mit Fehler umgehen kann (sogar darüber lachen kann).	Quand on ne parle pas parfaitement, mais que l'on assume et que l'on accepte de faire des fautes (voire pouvoir en rire).
(20) Das man so ist wie man ist und keine Angst haben muss, Fehler zu machen.	On est comme on est et on ne doit pas avoir peur de faire des fautes.
(21) Die vielen Sprachen sprechen, die sie können mit wie auch ohne Fehler.	Parler les diverses langues que l'on connaît, avec ou sans fautes.

(22) Offen, freundlich, selbstbewusst sein und Verständnis gegenüber Schülern und Schülerinnen haben, die Fehler beim Spracherwerb machen.	Être ouvert, amical, sûr de soi et tolérant envers les apprenants de langues qui font des fautes.
(23) Seine Art und Weise eine Sprache zu sprechen und sich verständlich zu machen, mit oder ohne grammatikalischen Fehler.	Sa propre façon de parler une langue et se faire comprendre, avec ou sans fautes grammaticales.
(24) Ich denke, das bedeutet, dass Professoren und auch Studenten die Möglichkeit haben, so zu sein, wie sie sind, auch mit ihren Fehlern, denn die gehören auch dazu.	Je pense que cela signifie que les enseignants, tout comme les étudiants, ont la possibilité d'être comme ils sont, également avec leurs erreurs, parce qu'elles font également partie du processus.
(25) Dass auch mal Fehler passieren. Dass eine andere Lernatmosphäre…	Car il arrive parfois que l'on fasse des fautes. C'est une autre atmosphère d'apprentissage.
(26) Dass Sie, egal ob mit Fehlern oder nicht, gerne reden und von einem Thema begeistern können.	Que vous aimiez parler et que vous soyez capable de faire partager votre enthousiasme sur des thèmes, que vous parliez avec ou sans fautes.

Tableau 3: Occurrences du mot "erreur".

L'analyse des définitions montre que l'introduction du thème "erreur" est toujours rendue plus "soft" à l'aide de plusieurs marqueurs discursifs:

- de "neutralisateurs" discursifs: les étudiants évaluent le discours de l'enseignant avec et sans fautes sur un pied d'égalité ("mit wie auch ohne Fehler", "egal ob mit Fehler oder nicht", exemples 21 et 26);
- d'atténuateurs discursifs: d'un côté, les étudiants minimisent la fréquence des erreurs dans l'expression ("ein paar kleine Fehler", "eventuelle Fehler", "mal Fehler passieren", exemples 17, 18 et 25); de l'autre côté, ils tendent à atténuer leur gravité ("kleine Fehler", exemple 18).
- d'intensificateurs discursifs: les étudiants mettent en relief, d'un côté, la valeur des fautes dans le cadre de l'acquisition des contenus disciplinaires ("gerne reden und von einem Thema begeistern können", exemple 26) et, de l'autre côté, son caractère inévitable dans le cadre du développement de compétences en LE ("die gehören auch dazu", exemple 24).

L'analyse des réponses nous montre encore un effort considérable pour que l'enseignante ou les étudiants eux-mêmes ne perdent pas la face. Ainsi, pour "protéger la face" de l'enseignante, les étudiants évitent d'alourdir le poids de l'erreur dans la communication, à travers des moyens d'expression qui éludent

la fréquence et la gravité des fautes ou montrent leur potentiel – voire leur utilité – dans l'acquisition des savoirs disciplinaires. Pour ne pas perdre eux-mêmes la face, les étudiants, d'un côté, montrent qu'ils ont bien compris les processus d'acquisition d'une LE, le rôle de l'erreur et son caractère inévitable, par exemple, et, de l'autre côté, s'"autorisent" à faire des fautes en tant que futurs enseignants d'une LE ("Professoren und auch Studenten die Möglichkeit haben so zu sein, wie sie sind, auch mit ihren Fehlern"), l'une des hantises les plus fréquentes lorsqu'ils s'imaginent devant la classe (voir Melo-Pfeifer 2016), et ceci surtout lors du stage pédagogique (qui sera accompagné par la même enseignante).

5. Synthèse et perspectives

Notre analyse met en évidence une tension entre l'orientation monolingue des pratiques communicatives en milieu académique et la perception de l'utilité des pratiques plurilingues dans ce même milieu lorsqu'elles sont exercées dans un certain cadre disciplinaire (Didactique des Langues). En effet, si tout rapport contractuel entraine une certaine bonne volonté, basée sur une logique d'entraide entre les acteurs engagés dans l'interaction, notre contexte met en évidence une relation doublement asymétrique, que ce soit sur le plan des savoirs ou sur le plan linguistique. Cependant, dans le contexte analysé, cette asymétrie constitutive du rapport étudiants-enseignante est en quelque sorte (ré)équilibrée par le partage de différents types d'expertise: les étudiants se voient reconnaître le statut d'experts dans le domaine linguistique, tandis que l'enseignante se voit reconnaître son expertise à la fois didactique/scientifique et plurilingue, même si l'évaluation de cette expertise est faite dans des termes assez monolingues (d'où le caractère paradoxal du choix de l'adjectif "authentique").

Pour reprendre nos questions de recherche, nous dirions que, sur le plan conceptuel, l'authenticité plurilingue est perçue comme trait inaliénable de la communication exolingue, étant, d'un côté, une caractéristique à la fois linguistique, communicative et "psychologique" de la personne plurilingue et, de l'autre côté, la capacité à se faire comprendre auprès des "locuteurs/juges natifs", avec des fautes et un accent, sur des thèmes portant sur l'acquisition de la LE et le multi/plurilinguisme (rapport au réel et aux contenus disciplinaires). Dans cette perspective, l'authenticité plurilingue serait une idéologie linguistique et académique, matérialisée à travers des choix lexicaux et laissant des traces dans le discours (Blommaert 1999). Cette idéologie se rapporte, dans notre cas, aux traits attribués au professeur plurilingue qui, par le fait qu'il ne partage pas la LM de la majorité des étudiants, devient "réel", légitime et acquiert l'autorité pour enseigner la DL et du plurilinguisme, en raison de son capital culturel, linguistique et expérientiel. Cette perspective peut être mise en rapport avec les conclusions de l'étude de Kang:

> "Close analysis of the rating data and of the open-ended narratives suggests that (…) the NNES [nonnative English speaking] teacher educators were admired when it came to their enthusiasm about the content area and effort to make themselves understood by students in classroom interaction – to compensate for the language barrier, as pointed out by the respondents. Further, some of the teacher candidates listed the NNES teacher educators' experience of having successfully learned English as a second language and achieving bilingualism as a source of insight into what it would be like to be a second language learner for teacher candidates. The NNES teacher educators' multicultural experience was also viewed as an asset; that is, a form of cultural capital (Bourdieu 1977, 1991) to enrich the learning experience in a TESOL [Teaching English to Speakers od Other Languages] program" (Kang 2015: 245).

Sur le plan disciplinaire et communicationnel, nous pouvons dire que le rapport à l'erreur "en direct" permet aux étudiants de se rappeler le processus d'apprentissage d'une LE, de construire des typologies d'erreurs, de se rappeler les caractéristiques de l'interaction exolingue, d'observer la "crosslinguistic influence" dans les productions des sujets plurilingues, ce qui a un rapport direct avec leur futur professionnel:

> "The firsthand of experience of interacting with speakers of other languages (…), will help teacher candidates not only become more efficient listeners (Rubin 1998), accommodating speech with a varying degree of accent, but also understand what developmental stages their current and future students experience in second language development" (Kang 2015: 247).

Néanmoins, comme nous l'avons vu dans les sections 4.2.2 et 4.2.3, les étudiants tendent à ne pas directement pointer les éventuelles barrières communicationnelles et les façons de les re/déconstruire. En plus, quand ils les mentionnent (les fautes et l'accent qui nuisent la compréhension immédiate ou parfois une rapide appréhension des contenus), ils tendent à les dévaloriser à travers l'usage d'atténuateurs discursifs ou la prise d'une perspective plutôt reculée comme sujet de l'énonciation. Ces stratégies d'autocensure seraient, dans notre perspective, à mettre en rapport avec les relations hiérarchiques et le cadre institutionnel auquel nous avons fait référence, mais qui devraient faire l'objet de recherches supplémentaires. L'authenticité serait, dans ce cadre, une représentation teintée de contradictions liées au contexte: d'un côté, perçue positivement dans son lien à la valorisation du plurilinguisme et des compétences partielles (objet de la discipline de Didactique); de l'autre côté, liée à une certaine doxa monolingue académique (encore) dominante, qui accorde à l'accent et aux fautes de l'enseignante plurilingue un rôle dans la (in)compréhensibilité ou la perte de rapidité d'appréhension des contenus disciplinaires de la part des étudiants (cette dimension étant, cependant, plus rarement mentionnée).

Sur le plan épistémologique, faisant référence aux tensions observées entre les deux pôles discursifs de mécontentement et de valorisation des discours plurilingues ("nicht wirklich" et "sondern eher") à l'université, nous avons pu observer un rapport omniprésent à la norme du locuteur natif. Nonobstant toutes les stratégies pour ne pas perdre la face et celles de relativisation utilisées par les étudiants, nous avons pu remarquer que l'éloge de l'authenticité

plurilingue reproduit subtilement l'idéologie linguistique (académique) dominante – "un pays, une langue" donc "une langue d'enseignement" (que les professeurs devraient maîtriser). Pourtant, les erreurs, les fautes et l'accent sont acceptables car ils sont en rapport avec les contenus disciplinaires et sont modérés par les autres compétences de l'enseignant. Ceci dit, nous reprenons notre idée de départ, selon laquelle l'authenticité plurilingue est une idéologie linguistique basée sur la construction/mobilisation d'une rhétorique de l'acceptabilité de la faute, voire de sa productivité, autour de quatre éléments: i) l'exploitation des contenus disciplinaires; ii) la valorisation des savoirs et des compétences interpersonnelles, communicationnelles et didactiques de l'enseignant; iii) la création d'un environnement académique moins tendu, plus ouvert et "drôle"; et iv) l'"exotisation" et la légitimation du sujet plurilingue.

Notre analyse a pu montrer que le contexte académique étudié est "less overtly discriminatory and instead reproduce dominant language ideology in subtle ways" (Subtirelo 2015: 35). Tout en rappelant une étude de Ciscel dans le cadre de la dominance de l'anglais (2002), nous pourrions dire que cette subtilité dans la reproduction de l'idéologie dominante à l'université pourrait être le signe d'un opportunisme linguistique, qui voit les ressources plurilingues de l'Autre comme un instrument de profit ou comme offrant un rendement supplémentaire (dans notre cas, cognitifs et professionnels). Cet opportunisme pourrait être observé par l'usage de mots et expressions linguistiquement politiquement corrects (Calvet & Varela 2000) qui révèlent une domination linguistique bienveillante et même paternaliste. Ceci dit, les étudiants – comme synecdoque de leur milieu institutionnel – montrent qu'ils savent utiliser les circonstances du moment au mieux de leurs intérêts et qu'ils savent s'adapter aux conditions et aux ressources disponibles pour en retirer des avantages académiques.

6. Conclusion

Cette étude a pu montrer que, si les répertoires plurilingues des enseignants non-natifs ne constituent pas une frontière insurmontable dans la communication en milieu académique, ils restent perçus dans son écart par rapport à la norme. Pour pallier aux obstacles perçus par les étudiants, ce sont les contenus disciplinaires eux-mêmes qui semblent fonctionner comme médiateurs entre les représentations monolingues et plurilingues des répertoires. Ceci dit, les contenus de la Didactique des Langues et le fait qu'ils soient abordés à travers un prisme plurilingue et par une enseignante plurilingue semble avoir un potentiel transformateur des représentations monolingues attachées à l'enseignement académique.

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Discussion: aspects d'un réseau conceptuel innovateur pour saisir le plurilinguisme
A starting point for a new concept? Some reflections

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Une représentation sociale ancienne et tenace est fondée sur le principe que l'être humain est, pour ainsi dire 'par nature' unilingue, vit dans une communauté homoglossique (souvent appelé 'nation'), qui occupe un territoire clairement délimité par des frontières linguistiques géographiques dont les locuteurs tirent la légitimité du fait qu'ils parlent la même langue 'maternelle' (voir la discussion sur l' "authenticité" de la langue maternelle dans le cadre d'idéologies unilingues chez Melo-Pfeiffer *dans ce volume*). Il en résultait des conceptions 'additionnistes' ou 'séparatistes' du pluri- et multilinguisme[1]. Dans le cas d'un *multilinguisme social*, des personnes de langues différentes cohabitent dans les mêmes espaces sociaux ; le *multilinguisme institutionnel* garantit que ces personnes puissent communiquer dans leur langue au sein de l'institution respective; et le *plurilinguisme individuel* de son côté, correspondait, en fait, à un unilinguisme multiple (Grosjean 1985; Herdina & Jessner 2002; Heller 2006; etc).

Mais à l'heure où les territoires linguistiques deviennent de plus en plus hétéroglossiques et les frontières entre eux de plus en plus poreuses, le multilinguisme social constitue la norme plutôt que l'exception et les cas de plurilinguisme se multiplient, il s'agit de revoir les théories linguistiques et, si possible, les savoirs ordinaires respectifs.

Le lieu de contact

Une première réflexion concerne le lieu de contact entre les langues. Traditionnellement, on tendait à le situer aux frontières linguistiques. Dans des cartes géolinguistiques, ces dernières étaient en général (et sont souvent toujours) représentées comme lignes dans le terrain qui séparent des groupes

[1] Nous adoptons, ici, la terminologie du Conseil de l'Europe (2001) qui distingue entre le "plurilinguisme" des individus et le "multilinguisme" des institutions et au sein des sociétés. Certains auteurs dans le volume présent préfèrent parler de 'multi-' à la place de 'pluri-' même pour les compétences et pratiques des individus.

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linguistiques voisins constituant des entités politiques, historiques et démographiques nettes et homogènes – avec tous les problèmes que cela entraîne (le Tirol du Sud fait-il partie du territoire italophone et/ou germanophone, l'Alsace est-elle francophone et/ou germanophone?). Une autre conception, plus récente, met l'accent sur une "culture de la frontière" (Windisch et al. 1992: 510) dans la mesure où certains membres de communautés frontalières entretiennent des rapports étroits avec leurs voisins alloglottes. La frontière linguistique n'est alors pas vécue comme une ligne qui sépare, mais comme une 'zone de contact' plus ou moins bilingue; et ce bilinguisme n'est pas perçu comme un pis-aller, mais au contraire comme une source de richesse pour la société, qu'il s'agit de cultiver (voir les réflexions de Ehrhart (*dans ce volume*) sur les notions de *border, boundaries* et *margin,* la dernière pouvant être assimilée à celle de 'zone de contact'). Or, sous l'impact de la mobilité croissante, l'homogénéité des territoires linguistiques continue à s'effriter; par conséquent, la dernière observation vaut aussi pour de nombreuses communautés de pratiques plurilingues dans des grandes villes et des organisations diverses (chancelleries, entreprises, clubs de football, etc.) dans les centres mêmes desdits "territoires". Mais cela ne mène en général pas à de nouvelles "frontières linguistiques" qui passeraient à l'intérieur d'une maison, entre deux appartements occupés par des locataires de langues différentes – notons pourtant la possibilité d'une "réification" de telles frontières sur la base de représentations 'séparatistes' du pluri-/multilinguisme (Gaibrois *dans ce volume*), etc. – mais à une multiplication des zones de contact bi-, voire plurilingues. Par ailleurs, les contacts linguistiques se déplacent progressivement du terrain (frontières physiques *on the ground*) vers l'esprit même des locuteurs plurilingues (frontières mentales, *in the mind*) (Lüdi 2009). Dans ce sens, le locuteur plurilingue est lui-même le lieu de contact entre les langues comprises dans son répertoire. Néanmoins, beaucoup d'individus restent unilingues. Grâce à leur pluricompétence (y compris leur compétence pluriculturelle), les plurilingues peuvent alors assumer le rôle de "passeurs de frontières" ou *boundary spanners* et permettre le transfert de connaissances et de capital social à travers les groupes linguistiques et culturels (voir Barner-Rasmussen *dans ce volume*) – dans des entreprises multinatonales et au-delà – précisément à cause de l'existence de telles zones de contact à l'intérieur même de leur esprit.[2] On remarquera toutefois, avec Ehrhart (*dans ce volume*) que les passeurs de frontière ne sont pas nécessairement des individus, mais peuvent correspondre à des groupes, voire même à la majorité des salariés d'une entreprise dans des régions frontières.

Il est par ailleurs intéressant de voir que l'emploi d'une *lingua franca* peut servir

[2] Notons en passant que la version amplifiée des descripteurs illustrant les niveaux du CECR (version pilote de 2016) comprend des stratégies de médiation ainsi que des descripteurs pour des échelles telles que "Exploiter un répertoire pluriculturel", "Compréhension plurilingue", "Exploiter un répertoire plurilingue."

à créer des ponts entre locuteurs de langues différentes, voire différents groupes linguistiques, mais peut aussi ériger des barrières supplémentaires (Miglbauer *dans ce volume,* qui insiste sur la dimension "inclusion/exclusion" du choix de langue).

Les relations entre les langues

Une deuxième remarque concerne la nature des relations entre les 'langues'. Comme dans le cas du multilinguisme territorial, des conceptions 'additionnistes' ou 'séparatistes' du plurilinguisme individuel prévalent. On en trouve un reflet dans de nombreuses définitions:

> [bilingualism is] the native-like control of two languages (Bloomfield 1933: 56).

> Un individu est dit bilingue (multilingue) s'il possède deux (plusieurs) langues, apprises l'une comme l'autre en tant que langues maternelles (…) Le bilingue peut 'parler parfaitement' les deux langues. (Ducrot & Todorov 1972: 83)

De telles conceptions peuvent se matérialiser dans des métaphores "militaires" ou "de compétition" (voir Gaibrois *dans ce volume*). On notera, avec Ehrhart (*dans ce volume*) que c'est souvent le cas dans des publications au sein de la francophonie qui se battent contre une (prétendue?) 'menace du français' (voir encore récemment Truchot 2015).

Le concept des 'langues' sous-jacent considère celles-ci comme 'objets' décontextualisés, atemporels, idéalisés; il a été fortement influencé par des idéologies normatives des langues nationales. Or, comme dans le cas des frontières linguistiques, cette perspective 'séparatiste' du plurilinguisme n'est ni 'réelle' ni 'naturelle'; elle fait partie d'un ensemble de connaissances et de croyances quotidiennes, voire d'une réalité sociale construite dans un processus discursif historique. Comme alternative, les chercheurs proposent aujourd'hui une conception "intégrative" du plurilinguisme, qui explique bien mieux les données empiriques recueillies dans le cadre de recherches. Le répertoire plurilingue y est défini comme ensemble de ressources, acquis à l'aide d'une compétence acquisitionnelle plurilingue, foncièrement variationnelle, comprenant des éléments de registres et de 'langues' différentes entre lesquelles les frontières sont floues et mobilisé conjointement pour trouver des réponses locales à des problèmes pratiques (Lüdi & Py 2009). Cela correspond à l'approche "écolinguistique" préconisée par Ehrhart (*dans ce volume*):

Comme le préconisait déjà Grosjean (1985), la compétence plurilingue est quelque chose de particulier, qui suit ses propres règles. Il ne faut donc pas se la représenter comme la somme de plusieurs compétences unilingues ajoutées d'une à l'autre; la pluricompétence (ou "multicompetence" Cook 2008: 11) implique que les différentes langues qu'une personne parle ne représentent pas des systèmes séparés, mais sont perçues comme "un système imbriqué" (ibid.), c'est-à-dire comme une compétence intégrée, une entité d'un niveau de complexité supérieur (Ellis & Larsen-Freeman 2006) dans lequel s'imbriquent

des compétences partielles plus ou moins développées dans le sens d'un plurilinguisme fonctionnel (Conseil de l'Europe 2001).

Un accent sur l'usage plurilingue

Ajoutons que l'accent s'est déplacé de la "compétence" (comprise comme système de signes, voire comme ensemble de savoirs et de savoir-faire) vers "l'usage". Hopper (1998) affirmait que les structures linguistiques étaient foncièrement temporelles et émergentes. En effet, selon une conception socioconstructiviste de l'acquisition en interaction, "la grammaire est considérée comme un épiphénomène, un 'faire', de nature émergente" (Dewaele 2001). "Le modèle dominant" de l'acquisition impliquant qu'il existe quelque chose comme des langues cibles, natives, stables et homogènes et que l'acquisition correspond [sc. par conséquent] à un mouvement de rapprochement (*increasing conformity*) à cette langue cible est sérieusement critiqué (Larsen-Freeman 2006), entre autres dû au fait que "the concept of language as a rigid, monolithic structure is false" (Haugen 1972: 325).

Communiquer signifie que les acteurs mobilisent conjointement leurs répertoires pour trouver des solutions locales à des problèmes pratiques. Il est vrai que cela contredit une intuition profonde selon laquelle il faut, pour pouvoir communiquer, disposer d'un ensemble de formes et de règles préexistantes que l'on peut 'mobiliser' ou 'actualiser'. Les résultats de recherches récentes ne contredisent pas ces intuitions, mais ils les nuancent. En effet, dans des situations de communication extrêmes – p. ex. la création poétique ou la communication exolingue –, les ensembles de formes et de règles sont mouvants, les limites entre les langues s'estompent. On rappellera, ici, le principe de Schuchardt selon lequel "il n'existe pas de langues non mélangées" (Schuchardt 1884). Et ce sont en particulier les locuteurs plurilingues qui sont à même d'être créatifs et de transgresser les frontières des langues dans le "troisième espace" mentionné par Bhabha (1994). C'est la raison pourquoi des équipes mixtes plurilingues peuvent être plus performantes que les unilingues (Yanaprasart, *dans ce volume*). L'hybridité y est connotée positivement par contraste à une longue tradition dévalorisant le métissage.

L'usage comprend, bien sûr, des énoncés unilingues avec un haut degré de correction. Dans certaines situations, la focalisation sur une seule variété s'impose et les locuteurs 'débranchent' pour ainsi dire les langues non appropriées. Dans le mode bi- ou plurilingue (Grosjean 1985), par contre, la pluricompétence est activée dans son ensemble et les mélanges sont fréquents et permis. Ces mélanges sont fonctionnels, chargés d'un point de vue identitaire – et suivent une espèce de 'grammaire' (voir les études dans Milroy & Muysken 1995). C'est le "parler plurilingue" ou "hybride" (Lüdi & Py 2009, [4]2013), voire le "translanguaging" (García & Wei 2015) "multilanguaging" (Makoni & Makoni 2010) ou "plurilanguaging" (Berthoud et al. 2013). Ces phénomènes (nous

renonçons, ici, à une description détaillée) appartiennent au domaine de l'interaction. Par conséquent, j'irais jusqu'à affirmer que le lieu de contact entre 'langues' n'est ni le terrain, ni la pluricompétence des locuteurs, mais le discours, l'interaction entre locuteurs aux ressources linguistiques divergentes (Lüdi 2014; voir aussi Ehrhart *dans ce volume*).

L'anglais *lingua franca* comme forme de parler hybride

Une dernière remarque concerne le statut de l'anglais *lingua franca.* Commençons par constater la fréquence de l'anglais comme instrument d'une communication rapide dans la société de connaissances moderne. C'est la raison pourquoi beaucoup d'organisations multinationales le choisissent comme *corporate language* (voir Yanaprasart, *dans ce volume*) à un niveau macro du choix de langue. Mais il a été montré que ce choix peut entraîner des malaises, de l'insécurité, des déficits dans l'information, un manque d'engagement émotionnel, etc. (Lüdi et al. 2016). Or, il existe, à un niveau meso ou micro, un large éventail de stratégies de communication pour construire une communauté de discours globale sans tomber dans le piège de l'idéologie unilingue qui va souvent de pair avec la promotion de l'anglais *lingua franca* (voir les réflexions sur la complexité et diversité du choix de langue dans les compagnies multilingues dans Lüdi et al. 2016 et Miglbauer *dans ce volume*). On nommera p. ex. le mode de la *lingua receptiva* où chacun parle sa langue (ten Thije & Zeevaert 2007), le choix d'une variété de *lingue franche* régionales, l'interprétation simultanée ou consécutive par des professionnels ou par des pairs ou, justement, différentes formes de *parler plurilingue.* Il ne faut pas concevoir ces stratégies comme exclusives ou choisies une fois pour toutes; elles sont constamment renégociées – et réinventées – en fonction des constellations communicatives et des espaces ou cadres participatifs (Goffman 1981) changeants.

L'emploi d'une *lingua franca* implique que l'un au moins des interlocuteurs ne la considère pas comme sa langue première – et que les degrés de maîtrise varient considérablement. On entend souvent dire, dans des milieux internationaux, que "the language of good science is bad English" (König 2004). Même constat pour le monde des entreprises. Faut-il se plaindre d'un tel *Academic / Business pidgin English*? Pas si l'on en croit un haut dirigeant d'une multinationale bâloise:

> "Maintenant, j'ai dû diriger pour la première fois une réunion d'un jury complètement renouvelé, dix personnes complètement nouvelles, alors on les réunit, et on trouve un langage, c'est un mélange entre allemand bâlois et anglais, c'est en quelque sorte notre espéranto que nous avons maintenant trouvé (…) et c'est alors que des processus créatifs se mettent en route. Nous avons évidemment dû faire abstraction de la langue et avons mené notre débat dans notre charabia-espéranto [Chuderwälsch-Esperanto]". (TB <Pharma A>; traduit du suisse-allemand)

Ce récit est notable pour plusieurs raisons. D'abord, il confirme que le "parler

plurilingue" – dénommé, ici, " charabia-espéranto " – est aussi présent à l'étage des pontes et y fait partie des stratégies de gestion (Yanaprasart, *dans ce volume*); deuxièmement, le locuteur en est plutôt fier et insiste sur la relation entre cette stratégie de communication et la créativité; troisièmement, cela se passe dans une entreprise dont le même responsable affirme qu'elle a choisi l'anglais comme langue de l'entreprise. La mention du "mélange entre allemand bâlois et anglais" est révélatrice. Contrairement au stéréotype, la langue véhiculaire internationale n'est pas 'l'anglais', mais une forme d'anglais qui dépend des niveaux de compétence des acteurs, allant d'un mode unilingue-endolingue (très bonne maîtrise mutuelle de cette langue) jusqu'à un mode plurilingue-exolingue (qui entraîne des versions hybrides, 'bricolées' d'anglais, parsemées de "marques transcodiques"[3] de toutes sortes). Miglbauer (*dans ce* volume) observe en plus des caractéristiques propres à une entreprise particulière et parle, à la suite de Welch, Welch, & Piekkari (2005), de *company speech* ou *group speech.* En fait, l'observation de nombreuses instances d'anglais *lingua franca* révèle qu'on ne peut pas parler à proprement dire d'une variété, mais qu'il s'agit, dans la majorité des cas, d'autres formes de 'parler plurilingue' (voir p. ex. Hülmbauer & Seidlhofer 2013; García & Wei 2014) où des ressources d'origines diverses sont mélangées. Le malentendu fréquent résulte sans doute d'un transfert précipité d'idéologies unilingues, qui avaient présidé à la mise en place des états nationaux aux 19e/20e siècles, à la communauté internationale moderne. House a, sans doute, raison de dire que "English is already Europe's *lingua franca* and it's time for politicians and educators to acknowledge this" (Juliane House, *Guardian Weekly* du 19 avril 2001). Mais cet anglais est rarement pur. Toujours selon House:

> Rather than measuring ELF talk against an English L1 norm, one might openly regard ELF as a hybrid language ± hybrid in the sense of Latin hibrida as anything derived from heterogeneous sources. (...) Here I would further differentiate between phenotypical hybridity, where the foreign admixture is manifest on the surface (transfer is isolable), and genotypical hybridity, where different mental lexica or, in a Whorfian way, different underlying `Weltanschauungen' and conceptual sets, may be operative in ELF speakers. (2003, 573f.)

Les interlocuteurs de Ehrhart confirment la caractéristique hybride de l'anglais parlé en entreprise en distinguant entre "Denglisch" et "Franglais" (Ehrhart, *dans ce volume*).

Ajoutons que le même constat est évidemment valable pour toutes les autres *lingue franche*. Or, l'expérience d'enseignement en allemand langue étrangère relatée par Melo-Pfeiffer (*dans ce volume*) montre bien que – même en contexte académique – certaines marques transcodiques, voire déviations par rapport à la norme unilingue sont compatibles avec une évaluation positive de

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[3] Les "marques transcodiques" (*translinguistic markers*) sont des éléments phonétiques, morpho-syntaxiques, lexicaux ou pragmatiques qui apparaissent dans des énoncés dans une variété donnée (La) et qui sont perçus comme provenant d'une autre variété (Lb,... Ln), indépendamment de leur origine et nature.

l'enseignante et peuvent même représenter des traces d'une "authenticité plurilingue".

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Concluding remarks and perspectives

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Introduction

The intent of the contributions in this volume is to explore various language practices and strategies that multilingual individuals and groups put in use to transcend perceived language barriers for effective team communication and good collaboration.

By examining language practices, this volume has addressed the following questions:

1) Under what circumstances and in which context is language diversity considered a barrier and by whom?
2) How are practices of overcoming language barriers related to power issues?
3) What are the power effects of knowing and using certain languages to transcend language boundaries?
4) How are top-down policies and bottom-up strategies interrelated to deconstruct or reinforce language borders in professional communication?
5) How do monolingual or plurilingual solutions impact participants' language ideologies and the construction of their professional and that of group identities?
6) Which understanding of language do the various practices draw upon?

1. Power issues related to practices in spanning language boundaries

As the findings have suggested, the practices adopted to transcend language boundaries are power-relevant in various ways. On an individual level, boundary spanners (see Barner-Rasmussen) can be viewed as more powerful than they would be based on their organisational function. Whether they intend to or not,

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boundary spanners are able to determine information flows. In a broader sense, the intervention of a boundary spanner with skills in specific native languages of the participants might have positive effects on the well-being of the participants. This could have implications on the atmosphere of the interaction and thus be relevant to the level of knowledge exchange and efficiency.

And when these boundary spanners occupy the position of a group leader, the way they use language plays an even more central role in group leading and enacting power, in developing and negotiating the linguistic norms, discursive standard, and interactional behaviours that characterise the working group (see Yanaprasart). By stretching their own boundaries and stepping out of their comfort zones, leaders play an active role in reducing anxiety, tension and pressure by providing the team with a more relaxed environment. When pushing team members to stretch the sub-boundaries inside the team itself, leaders empower all individuals to cross their zone of routine, creating participation possibilities and constructive cooperation.

In terms of language use, Gaibrois's study has suggested the importance of collective efforts. From the employees' perspective, boundary spanning activities are neither limited to individuals with multiple language skills, nor based primarily on individuals' language proficiency. According to the employees, overcoming language barriers involves both highly skilled and unskilled language speakers and necessitates collective endeavours. However, on this collective level, it must be emphasised that if language practices can either transcend or reinforce language boundaries, they can at the same time construct, reconstruct and even deconstruct language barriers.

While helping to include interlocutors of differing mother tongues, using English as a *lingua franca* or using local or regional languages may also have exclusionary effects on those who do not master the corresponding languages at a satisfactory level (see Miglbauer, Gaibrois). As an example of the ambivalent role of English as a *lingua franca*, which both facilitates participation and excludes others, the use of local languages also makes full participation impossible for those who do not speak them. This raises the question of which employees are more powerful in multilingual business settings: those who speak English ONLY or those who speak English AND local languages (see Miglbauer and Yanaprasart).

2. The role of identity in practices to cross language borders

Language practices to cross language borders are also related to questions of identity construction. The negotiation processes around language use in multilingual contexts are closely related to questions of individual and group identity. Using the local language vs. using English as a *lingua franca* has very different implications on the level of identity construction. Miglbauer's study characterises situational identity constructions based on being the speaker of

the local language – a form of differentiation "against" the "English invasion" – or being the speaker of the common corporate language, viewed as contributing to the construction of a common corporate identity (using English as a unifying practice). At this point, it bears emphasizing that in a setting in which all participants interact in the *lingua franca*, in this case English, boundary spanners are not as necessary as in conversations where this is not the case, at least when it comes to boundary spanning based on language skills.

3. Employee practices and ideologies for transcending language boundaries

English as a *lingua franca* is by its nature a form of hybrid speech (see Lüdi). Other forms of hybrid speech have been observed, including options such as employing several languages at the same time "plurilingual *lingue franche*" (see Lüdi; Yanaprasart), "broken" languages (see Gaibrois), "hybrid constructions" (see Ehrhart), "language mixing" (see Gaibrois; Yanaprasart), "Charabia-Espéranto, Chuderwälsch-Esperanto," "le parler bilingue" (see Lüdi; Yanaprasart). This plurilingual speech represents not only collective and collaborative practices in the multilingual workplace. It could also be interpreted as a sort of "company speech" or "group speech" (see Miglbauer), which might facilitate the construction of a common corporate identity and, in the long run, contribute to creating a shared identity allowing transcendence of earlier subgroup boundaries (see Barner-Rasmussen). As opposed to the unilingual ideology and native-speaker norms, using a *lingua franca* or *lingue franche* by making "mistakes," having an accent or being imperfect has been described sympathetically as a form of "authenticity" (see Melo-Pfeifer), speaking not "perfectly" (see Yanaprasart) or without following the usual rules of grammatical "correctness" (see Gaibrois).

4. The relevance of context for overcoming barriers

These forms of communicative and linguistic strategies must not be interpreted as standardised "solutions," suitable for every interaction in every type of company. On the contrary, depending on the situational, organisational and geographical context, the same strategies might play different roles, have different impacts and might be perceived, interpreted and judged differently. Language mixing would probably look very different if the workplace were located in a monolingual region. Although multilingual employees can add value to organisations in terms of resources, in the monolingual context, companies look for and positively evaluate (top-down view) highly skilled corporate language speaking individuals.

As Gaibrois's contribution has shown, practices to transcend language barriers are closely related to language ideologies. Employees' descriptions of their practices to cross borders, overcome barriers or transcend boundaries are

based on different perceptions of language use. When it comes to assessing and evaluating a multilingual person on his or her language skills with native-speaker norms, this can be interpreted as viewing languages as separate entities. In this case, the first priority is to protect and fight so as to keep the norms respected. By contrast, collective and collaborative boundary spanning might occur when speakers acknowledge that the boundaries between languages become blurred in real situations. It is all about "all-together-languaging-practices" that can allow people to bridge gaps, dialogue, collaborate and establish relations (see Yanaprasart).

5. Building a bridge across disciplines

All in all, analysing practices for overcoming language barriers in a comparative perspective has proved to be very fruitful both on the theoretical and methodological levels. The comparison of empirical studies conducted in different countries and regions has shown the diversity of the global, national and regional contexts when it comes to questioning concrete practices in multilingual settings, comparing language ideologies and their relevance on identity constructions. The interdisciplinary exchange between specialists in Linguistics, Management scholars and Education experts has clearly shown that, although research questions and foci might be different, a quest unites research from these fields to understand practices of language use in linguistically diverse workplaces and their effects on cooperation. There clearly is room for a promising cross-pollination as well on the theoretical level (e.g., around the definition of the notion(s) of languages, language use and language choice) as on the methodological level (e.g., forms of data collection, methods, analysis and interpretation frames). It is our hope that this volume represents a starting point for fruitful dialogue.

Compte-rendu

Pandolfi, E. M., Casoni, M. & Bruno, D. (2016).
Le lingue in Svizzera. Analisi dei dati delle Rilevazioni strutturali 2010-12.
Bellinzona: Osservatorio Linguistico della Svizzera Italiana.

Das Buch *Le lingue in Svizzera* von Elena Maria Pandolfi, Matteo Casoni und Danilo Bruno enthält eine Auswertung der sprachenbezogenen Daten aus der Strukturerhebung von 2010-2012, welche die bisherigen Erhebungen im Zehnjahresrhythmus ablöst. Im Rahmen einer Rezension ist es natürlich nicht möglich, die Fülle der Resultate, die auf über 300 Seiten und nicht weniger als 370 Grafiken und Tabellen wiedergegeben werden, in wenigen Abschnitten zusammenzufassen. Deshalb muss die Auswahl der Themen und Ergebnisse in den folgenden Abschnitten gezwungenermassen sehr knapp gehalten sein – und es soll gar nicht erst versucht werden, die Resultate der Studie in aller Kürze angemessen wiederzugeben.

Der Band beginnt mit einer Einleitung von Georges Lüdi, der zusammen mit Iwar Werlen Auswertungen von früheren Volkszählungen herausgegeben hat (Lüdi & Werlen 1997, 2005) und deshalb die neueren Entwicklungen im Vergleich zu den früheren Erhebungen besonders gut beurteilen kann. Nach einem einleitenden ersten Kapitel folgt in Kapitel 2 eine Auswertung der Hauptsprache(n), deren Ergebnisse in Kapitel 3 in Bezug auf das Alter analysiert werden (was eine Art *apparent-time*-Auswertung erlaubt) und anschliessend drei Kapitel (4-6) über die Verwendung der Sprachen in verschiedenen Kontexten (Zuhause, Beruf und Ausbildung) unterschieden wird.

Das einleitende erste Kapitel enthält verschiedene terminologische und methodologische Festlegungen im Zusammenhang mit der Datenerhebung. Dabei geht es auch im Besonderen um methodische Neuerungen im Vergleich zu früher, die dazu führen, dass die neuesten Resultate in manchen Fällen nur bedingt vergleichbar sind mit denjenigen von früheren Volkszählungen – wobei dies im Text jeweils klar vermerkt wird.

Neu ist zum einen der Zeitpunkt und die Art und Weise der Erhebungen: Seit 2010 gibt es keine Gesamtbefragung der ganzen Bevölkerung im Zehnjahresrhythmus mehr, sondern eine kontinuierlich ablaufende Strukturerhebung, bei der regelmässig nur noch stichprobenhaft Personen ab 15 Jahren berücksichtigt werden. Die jährlich erhobenen Resultate werden im sogenannten *Pooling*-Verfahren (eine Berechnung von kumulierten Daten als Durchschnittswerte) statistisch aufbereitet. Zwar geht durch dieses Stichprobenverfahren ein gewisser Verlust an kleinräumiger Informations-

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dichte einher – was in Besonderen bei den kleineren Sprachgemeinschaften zu weniger präzisen Resultaten führt –, doch auch so sind durch die neue Erhebungsform zahlreiche Auswertungen möglich, bei denen zum einen die Sprachregionen und Kantone berücksichtigt werden, zum anderen andere Variablen wie die Nationalität, das Alter oder verschiedene Berufssparten.

Änderungen gibt es auch bei der Art und Weise, wie bei der Strukturerhebung die Fragen bezüglich der Sprache(n) und dem Sprachgebrauch beantwortet werden können. Dies betrifft im Besonderen die Erhebung der Hauptsprache(n): Hier kann zum ersten Mal mehr als eine Sprache angegeben werden – wobei nicht zwischen Standard- und dialektalen Varietäten unterschieden wird. Dies im Gegensatz zu den Fragen zum Sprachgebrauch im Beruf oder in der Ausbildung sowie in der Familie, wo es jeweils möglich ist, auch dialektale Varietäten (für Deutsch und Italienisch) anzugeben. Nicht mehr berücksichtigt worden ist übrigens in der Westschweiz der Unterschied zwischen Standardfranzösisch und den regionalen *Patois*, vermutlich vor allem, weil diese inzwischen (ausser in gewissen Regionen) so rar geworden sind, dass manche Befragte ihre gesprochene Alltagssprache als dialektal wahrgenommen haben (vgl. Lüdi & Werlen 2005: 39-41).

Die den Hauptsprachen gewidmeten Kapitel zwei und drei zeigen im Vergleich zu früheren Erhebungen keine fundamentalen Verschiebungen: Während sich die jeweiligen Hauptsprachen in den drei grossen Sprachregionen halten (und der Abwärtstrend des Romanischen ungebrochen scheint), zeigt sich ein starker Anstieg bei den anderen, sogenannten Nicht-Landessprachen.

Gerade bei der Frage nach der/den Hauptsprache(n) ergibt sich durch die Möglichkeit, mehr als eine Hauptsprache anzugeben, ein genaueres Bild als früher, besonders was den Anteil ein- bzw. zwei- oder mehrsprachiger Personen betrifft.

In einer eher restriktiven Lesart (d. h., wenn nur die Hauptsprache(n) berücksichtigt werden, sind rund ein Sechstel der Bevölkerung (16.6%) zwei- oder mehrsprachig, wobei es in Bezug auf verschiedene Variablen etliche Unterschiede gibt. Sehr vereinfacht zusammengefasst finden sich am wenigsten Zwei- und Mehrsprachige in der Deutschschweiz und am meisten im romanischsprachigen Landesteil sowie in Kantonen wie Genf und der Waadt; einsprachig sind häufiger die Schweizerinnen und Schweizer sowie ältere Personen, während die ausländische Bevölkerung und jüngere Personen tendenziell eher öfter mehrsprachig sind.

Bei den Fragen zum Sprachgebrauch (Familie, Arbeit und Ausbildung) wird jeweils unterschieden zwischen Standardform und gesprochener regionaler Varietät, d. h. in der Deutschschweiz zwischen der Standardsprache Hochdeutsch und den Schweizerdeutschen Dialekten und im Italienischen zwischen Standarditalienisch und den regionalen Dialekten. Wenn das

Diasystem des Deutschen und des Italienischen jeweils als Zweisprachigkeit innerhalb derselben Sprache ausgelegt wird, dann sind die Zahlen für eine individuelle Zwei- oder Mehrsprachigkeit erheblich höher, nämlich bis zu 45.4% schweizweit (bzw. 39.8 in der Deutschschweiz; vgl. S. 207 und 212, Sprachen in der Ausbildung, Kapitel 6).

Dieser differenzierte Umgang mit den verschiedenen Varietäten – teilweise als Diasystem und teilweise als zweisprachige Konfiguration – wird in den einzelnen Kapiteln jeweils klar erläutert, doch es ist fraglich, ob dieses Vorgehen wirklich befriedigend ist, da die Begriffe Zwei- bzw. Mehrsprachigkeit insgesamt zu unterschiedlich gebraucht werden.

Neben dieser Schwierigkeit beim Umgang mit verschiedenen Varietäten muss – wie Lüdi schon in seinem Vorwort hinweist – immer auch mitbedacht werden, dass die Art und Weise, wie die Fragen gestellt werden, einen Einfluss auf die erhobenen Daten hat. Die gewählte Formulierung (gefragt wird ausser bei der Hauptsprache nach den *gesprochenen* Sprachen) führt dazu, dass schriftliche (oder allgemein rezeptive) Kompetenzen wohl weniger oft mitberücksichtigt werden, was im Besonderen für den Deutschschweizer Raum eine Übergewichtung der Dialekte gegenüber dem Hochdeutschen nach sich zieht, vor allem in den Bereichen Beruf und Ausbildung, wo vermutlich mehr Personen mit der Standardvarietät konfrontiert sind als angegeben – wenn auch wohl in vielen Fällen eher rezeptiv als produktiv.

Nicht nur im Privatleben, sondern auch im Berufsleben sind die Landessprachen jeweils zentral; deren Bedeutung in den einzelnen Berufssparten und Kantonen variiert allerdings beträchtlich. Die Auswertung des Sprachengebrauchs im Berufsleben ergibt eine ganze Reihe von interessanten Ergebnisse, beispielsweise, was die Rolle des Englischen betrifft. Englisch wird von 17.2% als Berufssprache genannt (S. 154) und ist somit in diesem Bereich die bedeutendste Nicht-Landesprache: Funktionale Kompetenzen sind demnach für jede siebte Person nötig – aber in den allermeisten Fällen im Zusammenspiel mit einer Landessprache (die jeweils in jeder Region dominant ist): Nur 1.4% der Befragten geben an, einsprachig Englisch zu arbeiten.

Die Aufschlüsselung nach acht beruflichen Sektoren zeigt im Übrigen, dass jeder mehr oder weniger mehrsprachig ist: Je nach Sparte handelt es sich um 1.22 bis 2.03 Varietäten, die für den beruflichen Sprachgebrauch angegeben werden.

Die Auswertung der Befragten, die eine Schule oder eine berufliche Ausbildung besuchen, zeitigt ebenfalls eine Fülle von aufschlussreichen Ergebnissen, unter anderem die Tatsache, dass, wie die AutorInnen vermuten, rund 10% der Ausbildungen in jeweils einem anderen Sprachgebiet absolviert werden (S. 218).

In den beiden Kapiteln 7 und 8 wird die Situation in den beiden Kantonen Tessin und Graubünden nochmals detailliert ins Auge gefasst. In beiden Fällen hat die jeweilige kantonale oder regionale Hauptsprache (das Italienische bzw. das Deutsche) die Tendenz, dominanter zu werden. Was die Situation der beiden kleineren Landessprachen, des Italienischen und des Rätoromanischen betrifft, so lässt sich in beiden Fällen ein weiter fortschreitender Rückgang der gesprochenen Varietäten feststellen (wobei sich die Tessiner Dialekte besonders in den ländlichen Regionen recht gut halten: Rund ein Viertel der Befragten geben an, Dialekt zu sprechen). Die für das Italienische beschriebene Dilalie-Situation (Berruto 1987), die sich in mehreren Punkten von der Deutschschweizer Diglossie-Situation unterscheidet, ist also weiterhin recht präsent. Interessant ist im Falle des Kantons Tessin auch die Situation des Deutschen, das tendenziell eher von älteren Personen gesprochen wird, was der These einer von manchen befürchteten schleichenden Germanisierung entgegensteht.

Was das Italienische betrifft, zeigen sich im italienischsprachigen Teil Graubündens teilweise ähnliche Tendenzen wie im Tessin: Auch hier halten sich die gesprochenen Varietäten recht gut neben der Standardsprache. Schwieriger steht es um das Rätoromanische, dessen Rückgang im ganzen Kanton weiterhin unausweichlich scheint.

Das Werk endet mit einem Kapitel über die Situation der Landessprachen ausserhalb ihrer Stammgebiete und einem kurzen Fazit. Insgesamt gesehen gibt dieses Werk einen reichhaltigen und faszinierenden Überblick über den Gebrauch von Sprache(n) in der Schweiz, der eine beeindruckende Fülle an Daten und verschiedenen Präsentationsformen enthält. Dank der klaren Gliederung lassen sich trotzdem auch

Teilresultate relativ leicht finden. Allerdings wäre es manchmal einfacher, auch andere Suchmöglichkeiten zu benützen: Manches liesse sich vielleicht in einer elektronischen Fassung – welche leider nicht erhältlich ist – leichter finden.

Dass dieses Werk auf Italienisch – und zwar in einer klaren und angenehmen Sprache – verfasst worden ist, ist wichtig und zeigt auch für Lesende aus den anderen Sprachregionen, dass sich das Italienische als nationale Wissenschaftssprache ausgezeichnet eignet. Für diejenigen, die sich die Lektüre eines auf Italienisch verfassten Werks nicht zutrauen, mag dies zwar ein Grund sein, sich nicht eingehender mit dem Buch zu befassen – als wichtiges Standardwerk ist es für alle anderen mit ein Grund für den Erwerb funktionaler rezeptiver Italienischkenntnisse, wie sie zwar immer wieder angemahnt, aber bislang leider nur unzureichend vermittelt werden.

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Compte-rendu

Detey, S., Racine, I., Kawaguchi, Y. & Eychenne, J. (2016).
La prononciation du français dans le monde. Du natif à l'apprenant.
Paris: CLE International.

L'ouvrage collectif *La prononciation du français dans le monde. Du natif à l'apprenant*, mené sous la direction de Sylvain Detey, Isabelle Racine, Yuji Kawaguchi et Julien Eychenne, se compose de 264 pages accompagnées d'un CD-ROM. Il est issu de deux projets de recherche, *Phonologie du Français Contemporain* et *InterPhonologie du Français Contemporain*, et "vise à offrir des éléments de référence à tous les enseignants, étudiants et chercheurs en didactique du français et en linguistique française" (Detey et al. quatrième de couverture). Le CD-ROM permet d'illustrer les différentes variétés de français traitées, principalement de manière sonore, à l'aide de fichiers au format *wav*. Une liste des soixante-trois contributeur-rice-s est donnée au début de l'ouvrage (p. 5-6). L'ouvrage papier comprend six chapitres et le CD-ROM se compose de trois parties (le français natif, le français non-natif, les références complémentaires).

Le chapitre A, intitulé "Le prononciation du français natif", est rédigé par 5 auteur-e-s. Il vise à sensibiliser le lecteur avec différentes notions-clés indispensables pour une démarche de décentration de la *norme* vers une prise en compte des usages attestés et des différents paramètres à prendre en compte dans la variation. Après un rappel synthétique de certains domaines de la linguistique (morphologie, syntaxe, etc.), la classification des sons est abordée en analysant la structure articulatoire et acoustique des voyelles et des consonnes. Quelques processus phonologiques sont présentés (assimilation, épenthèse, etc.) afin d'illustrer la phonotaxe. La phonologie suprasegmentale est également traitée sur différents plans. La deuxième partie tente de faire le point sur les relations entre le français de référence et la norme. Une définition des trois principales normes (objective, prescriptive, subjective) permet de mieux comprendre l'évolution diachronique entre l'usage du terme de français "standard" à celui "de référence", terme qui sera retenu dans tout l'ouvrage. Les cas du schwa et de la liaison viennent illustrer cette complexité. La dernière partie cherche à définir la notion d'accent dont les frontières sont présentées comme à manier avec prudence. Plusieurs hypothèses sont proposées quant à l'origine de l'accent et de sa (non)réalisation chez certain-e-s locuteur-rice-s mais aussi sur les caractéristiques phonético-phonologiques qui pourraient permettre sa catégorisation. Cependant, les auteur-e-s rappellent que même si certains

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indices peuvent être mis en évidence, il est rare que, pris isolément, ils aient le même effet.

Le chapitre B, rédigé par 19 contributeur-rice-s, s'intitule "La variation géographique". Il regroupe 10 parties permettant de présenter une analyse de plusieurs variétés de français regroupées selon un critère géographique. Ces variétés sont dans l'ordre de présentation: le français méridional, en Belgique, en Suisse, au Canada, en Louisiane, au Maghreb et au Machrek, en Afrique subsaharienne, dans les départements et régions d'Outre-Mer de la France. Ces différentes parties présentent globalement la même structure (inventaire phonémique, allophonie et contraintes phonotactiques, aspects prosodiques, variation diatopique) ce qui facilite une démarche comparative. Les deux dernières parties concernent "les autres types de variation et la prononciation" et "la prononciation du français natif: pour aller plus loin". Tandis que la première permet de définir les différents types de variation (diachronique, diastratique, etc.), la deuxième tente de faire le point sur les tendances récentes dans l'analyse des processus sonores. L'auteure suggère que les méthodes de recherche ont évolué notamment grâce à la phonologie de laboratoire et celle de corpus permettant d'"établir les caractéristiques physiques et perceptuelles, les tendances distributionnelles et les régularités statistiques des systèmes sonores" (p. 79). L'implication de ces changements sont illustrés par les problématiques autour de la liaison, du schwa et de la variation diatopique.

Le chapitre C, qui s'intitule "La prononciation des apprenants de français langue étrangère" est le résultat de la collaboration de 43 chercheur-e-s et il représente la moitié de l'ouvrage. Il vise à présenter certains mécanismes dans le processus d'apprentissage de la prononciation du français (notion de transfert, *speech learning model,* etc.). Les parties suivantes respectent toutes la même structure soit d'une part, la description du système phonético-phonologique d'une langue particulière et d'autre part, une analyse de la prononciation des apprenant-e-s du français dans cette langue première (L1) en se focalisant sur "les problèmes de prononciation les plus observés" (p. 100). De cette manière, 19 types de locuteur-rice-s sont traités (par exemple: les anglophones, les arabophones, les coréanophones, les norvégophones ou les vietnamophones).

Le chapitre D, rédigé par 3 auteur-e-s, est intitulé "enseignement de la prononciation et correction phonétique". La première partie dresse un état des lieux de l'enseignement de la prononciation et notamment ses liens avec les découvertes en phonétique-phonologie (méthodes articulatoire, des oppositions phonologiques, etc.). La deuxième partie met l'accent sur l'importance de la formation des enseignant-e-s de langues sur deux points principaux: 1) le rôle de la perception dans l'acquisition et 2) l'articulation entre segmental et suprasegmental. Tandis que le premier point mène au fait qu'"il

est impératif que l'apprenant passe par la phase de sensibilisation et d'écoute et qu'il suive un entrainement soutenu à la perception" (p. 222), le deuxième va dans le sens d'un conseil "d'attirer l'attention de l'élève sur des fragments de parole beaucoup plus larges, dans lesquels l'information non-segmentale […] joue un rôle important" (p. 224). Dans la dernière partie, l'auteur déconstruit un ensemble de représentations liées à l'enseignement de la prononciation puis propose 7 principes de travail et 4 angles d'approches permettant de guider un-e enseignant-e dans le choix d'activités liées à un travail portant sur la prononciation.

Le chapitre E, intitulé "la prononciation des apprenants de français langue étrangère: vue d'ensemble", est un chapitre court dont les 3 pages permettent une vision synthétique du travail exhaustif mené dans le chapitre C. Trois tableaux renvoient directement aux pages où sont décrits les traits de prononciations relatifs aux différentes L1 des apprenant-e-s par rapport aux voyelles, consonnes et caractéristiques suprasegmentales du français de référence.

Le chapitre F, rédigé par 7 contributeur-rice-s, s'intitule "la prononciation des apprenants de français langue étrangère: pour aller plus loin". Ces perspectives prennent plusieurs formes dont la première est la phonétique expérimentale. Certains outils sont proposés afin de mesurer, de manière empirique, les stratégies articulatoires (palatographie dynamique, microphone nasal, etc.) et les corrélats acoustiques (formants, fréquence fondamentale, etc.). La deuxième approche se rapporte à la phonologie développementale en revenant sur différents concepts comme l'apprentissage implicite/explicite, la période critique ou la notion d'interférence. La troisième approche cherche à réintroduire l'importance de la prosodie dans la perception d'une parole "naturelle", "fluide" ou "intelligible" en prenant pour exemple l'accentuation, le rythme, les sandhis et l'intonation. La dernière partie conclusive de l'ouvrage traite de la question de la multimodalité expressive (expressions faciales et gestuelles) et de son importance dans la gestion des interactions en fournissant un contexte interprétatif et par extension dans l'enseignement/apprentissage de la prononciation.

Dans son ensemble, ce travail collectif permet de mettre à disposition d'un large public un ouvrage de référence pour des individus qui veulent trouver des éléments empiriques sur la prononciation du français contemporain. C'est un ouvrage rare et précieux qui permet une vision d'ensemble sur la diversité des publics concernés par la prononciation du français et qui devrait être incontournable dans les bibliothèques de sciences du langage et de didactique des langues-cultures. Bien que son intérêt et sa pertinence, dans le domaine de la phonétique-phonologie, soit incontestable, il serait possible de se questionner sur sa portée épistémologique en didactique des langues-cultures. En effet, même si l'approche choisie par les coordinateur-rice-s est

de déconstruire un certain nombre de représentations, dont *la norme*, par une démarche empirique et sociolinguistique, d'autres construits auraient pu également être remodelés en s'appuyant sur la didactique des langues-cultures contemporaine. La notion de *natif*, centrale dans l'ouvrage, est peu remise en question alors qu'elle fait débat notamment dans les travaux sur le plurilinguisme (Dewaele 2017) en affirmant que nous sommes tous natifs d'une langue et que, souvent, la réalité est plus complexe qu'une simple opposition entre une L1 et une L2. Dans une démarche ancrée dans la sociolinguistique et donc plus centrée sur l'humain en tant qu'individu social, il aurait été possible de questionner l'omniprésence du terme "correctif" quand il s'agit de l'enseignement/apprentissage de la prononciation. De la même manière, certains termes sont utilisés comme des synonymes là où ils suggèrent des positionnements différents comme quand les interférences phonologiques sont appelées des "problèmes" (p. 233). En accord avec les nouveaux rôles de l'enseignant-e de langue (facilitateur, médiateur, accompagnateur), il serait possible de parler de "médiation de la prononciation" (Miras 2013) afin de mieux rendre compte d'un processus humain global qui intègrerait une dimension idiosyncrasique en rupture avec celle uniquement nomothétique suggérée par certains descripteurs comme le *CECRL*. Bien que certains construits soient mis en question par plusieurs contributeur-rice-s, leur usage reste d'actualité, par exemple, les métaphores de "crible", "filtre" ou encore de "surdité" qui ne représentent pas au mieux les processus plastiques de la neurocognition humaine. Même s'il est certain que la formation en phonétique-phonologie des enseignant-e-s de langues devrait être améliorée, on pourrait se questionner sur l'impact d'une phonétique-phonologie parfois trop technique sur un possible rejet de cette composante de l'enseignement/apprentissage des langues. Il est certain que les recherches en phonétique-phonologie doivent être mieux actualisées dans le corps enseignant, cependant, on pourrait aussi espérer que les pratiques des enseignant-e-s sur le terrain (corps, chant, etc.) soient mieux prises en compte et analysées par les chercheur-e-s de ces domaines afin d'en définir les apports et limites. Pour conclure, il est donc clair que cet ouvrage est indispensable dans le domaine de par sa qualité et son exhaustivité, mais il semble important de continuer à diffuser une distanciation sur une phonétique parfois trop "corrective" au profit d'une approche plus ancrée dans des tâches sociales (Narcy-Combes 2005).

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Compte-rendu

Egger, J.-L., Ferrari, A. & Lala, L. (2013).
Le forme linguistiche dell'ufficialità - L'italiano giuridico e amministrativo della Confederazione svizzera.
Bellinzona: Casagrande.

Il volume recensito, edito da Casagrande (Bellinzona), è frutto di una volontà congiunta che ha portato a cooperare la Repubblica del Canton Ticino, quella dei Grigioni e la Radiotelevisione svizzera di lingua italiana; ciò che li accomuna è il vivo desiderio di sondare lo stato attuale di uno specifico italiano settoriale in Svizzera. Il valore di quest'opera sta infatti nell'essere, come afferma l'autore della prefazione al libro Michele Cortelazzo, "un quadro fedele, ricco e circostanziato della realtà ufficiale della terza lingua in Svizzera in ambito amministrativo" (p. 7). Il volume è il risultato di un lavoro a più mani, che offre in più punti un'interessante lettura stilistico-interpretativa del testo amministrativo. Consta in totale di otto interventi di autori perlopiù dell'area italofona, attivi nel ramo dell'insegnamento accademico o in qualità di giuristi presso l'amministrazione statale, che, assieme, forniscono una panoramica esaustiva della tematica, sviluppata attraverso l'analisi puntuale sia di testi informativi a larga diffusione – come i comunicati stampa – sia di documenti più strettamente normativi prodotti dalla Confederazione. Richiedere il punto di vista a specialisti di diversi settori è un approccio spesso adottato nell'affrontare la questione dell'italiano giuridico, un approccio di successo, che porta a risultati concreti, come dimostrano le più recenti pubblicazioni, ad esempio *L'italiano giuridico che cambia*, atti di un convegno omonimo sull'italiano giuridico, organizzato dall'Accademia della Crusca e tenutosi nel 2012, cui hanno partecipato per l'appunto esperti dai più svariati campi. Un'altra importante pubblicazione nel campo della ricerca sull'italiano giuridico, *Lingua e diritto – Livelli di analisi* di Jacqueline Visconti, si apre proprio con questo pensiero in merito all'interdisciplinarietà: "le idee più affascinanti nascono spesso alle frontiere tra discipline, in quei territori inesplorati in cui vengono meno le certezze, in cui si confrontano paradigmi e concezioni di provenienza diversa". Questo principio, ormai diventato procedere tipico in ambito giurilinguistico, è anche la norma del volume qui recensito.

Nel primo intervento di Angela Ferrari – *La versione italiana dei comunicati stampa dell'Amministrazione federale, tra tedesco, francese e italiano d'Italia* – si riflette direttamente sui comunicati stampa della Confederazione svizzera redatti in italiano. Nella prassi, nota Ferrari, i comunicati stampa presentano dei problemi, afferenti a tre ambiti: l'erronea costruzione grammaticale della frase (scelta erronea delle preposizioni, concatenazione sintattico-semantica

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dei costituenti sbagliata, ecc.), il registro – che talora cambia ingiustificatamente, dando luogo a fenomeni di "pseudo-precisionismo" – e la testualità, che rivela un mancato controllo della costruzione semantica e linguistica del testo. Questi gruppi di problemi sono fondamentalmente riconducibili ai tre seguenti fattori: una previa competenza approssimativa nell'uso della lingua italiana, il fascino dello scrivere denso e astratto e – come si temeva – un appiattimento quasi automatico sul tedesco che costringe ad adottare un *modus costruendi* estraneo alla lingua italiana. In generale, tuttavia, i difetti non sfociano in problemi di incomprensione; è in gioco piuttosto la naturalezza e la fluidità del discorso, di cui si percepisce fin troppo chiaramente la natura di "traduzione".

Nel secondo intervento – *Tra purismo e lassismo: forestierismi e linguaggio ufficiale* – Jean Luc Egger inizia facendoci notare che la libertà di lingua (e quindi anche la libertà di servirsi delle parole come meglio si crede) è sancita a livello costituzionale nell'articolo 18. La tematica della lingua tocca dunque da vicino lo Stato e si può dire che essa è di pertinenza statale. Il ricorso non ponderato al termine anglicizzante costituisce un'operazione artificiale che rischia, per effetto di straniamento, di allontanare inutilmente il cittadino dalle autorità. Pertanto questa tendenza è stata fortemente combattuta mediante diversi interventi parlamentari, che dimostrano, ancora una volta, che le lingue e l'uso della lingua da parte dello Stato sono un argomento politicamente delicato.

Nel terzo intervento – *Uno sguardo al contesto europeo: connettivi in testi normativi dell'Unione Europea* – Jacqueline Visconti parte dalla costatazione che legiferare nel contesto dell'Unione europea non è semplice: si tratta della redazione e dell’interpretazione di 24 versioni linguistiche della legge, sullo sfondo di 28 tradizioni giuridiche differenti. In generale, nota Visconti, in tutta la legislazione di lingua italiana si osserva una scarsa sistematicità nella resa dei connettivi. Le conseguenze sono pesanti: se nel passare dal tedesco all'italiano non vi è equivalenza testuale, allora non vi è nemmeno uguaglianza del messaggio di fronte ai cittadini, né eguaglianza dei cittadini di fronte al messaggio. La questione aperta da Visconti necessiterebbe di ulteriori approfondimenti data la delicatezza del caso.

Il quarto contributo – *Formazione all'analisi terminologica e variazione interlinguistica: alcune riflessioni sul dominio giuridico* – di Micaela Rossi e Chiara Messina presenta un corso di formazione per la traduzione nell'ambito del diritto, ovvero il master in traduzione giuridica denominato *Masterforum*, nato nel 2003. Ciò che interessa alle studiose è soprattutto vedere come i corsisti si relazionino con i vari problemi di traduzione. In generale, di primo acchito, essi tendono ad instaurare tra le varianti di più lingue un rapporto di sinonimia ingannevole, perseguendo un ideale di isomorfismo concettuale e producendo quindi delle traduzioni sbagliate. Solo alla fine del corso i

partecipanti dimostrano un cambiamento di paradigma: la comparazione parte da una reale analisi terminologica, che sottende a qualsiasi lavoro di comparazione.

Letizia Lala apre la sua indagine – *Le pagine web dell'amministrazione federale svizzera* – con un'ampia introduzione teorica, che ci ricorda come la scrittura on-line abbia esigenze di sintesi, decifrabilità e precisione informativa. Lala osserva che le pagine dell'Amministrazione federale in questo senso sono perfettamente in linea con le indicazioni date per ottenere un testo leggibile; si avverte chiaramente lo sforzo di far sì che il lettore non trovi alcun intralcio alla comprensione. La studiosa conclude che le pagine istituzionali della Confederazione svizzera sono organizzate in maniera chiara e in base a tutti i requisiti richiesti dalla comunicazione in rete.

Nel sesto contributo – *Lo strumento Omnia: quanto e come normare la scrittura amministrativa?* – Giovanni Bruno presenta lo strumento *Omnia*, un modello di scrittura amministrativa fornito ai redattori e traduttori svizzeri di lingua italiana. Si tratta di un documento in formato elettronico di 353 pagine, consultabile sul sito della Divisione italiana della Confederazione, che si presta a un uso diversificato a seconda dell'esigenza del singolo caso. I modelli proposti sono tratti dall'immane serbatoio di testi ufficiali pubblicati, ma, più in generale, *Omnia* comprende prescrizioni e raccomandazioni redazionali di vario tipo e con diversi gradi di assoggettamento a vincoli specifici: dà informazioni per esempio sulla denominazione degli atti normativi, lo stile da tenersi nei messaggi, la punteggiatura, l'uniformazione delle abbreviazioni, senza dimenticare di presentare le norme redazionali imposte direttamente dal Governo. Dopo l'analisi dello strumento *Omnia*, Bruno conclude dicendosi certo della sua utilità, perché "l'eccessiva libertà lasciata a chi scrive mette a repentaglio la certezza del diritto" (p. 147).

Lucia Udvari, nel penultimo intervento (*I verbi modali* müssen *e* sollen *nel diritto privato svizzero*), riporta la nostra attenzione su un particolare della traduzione giuridica: non è solo la traduzione della terminologia specialistica a essere delicata ma anche il modo con cui vengono resi i verbi modali che esprimono un dovere. La differenza tra i vari verbi modali è usata per esprimere il grado di discrezionalità della pubblica amministrazione ovvero la sua capacità d'azione. Per la loro traduzione è indispensabile una corretta comprensione che presuppone delle solide conoscenze del diritto o, in alternativa, una stretta collaborazione con i giuristi.

Per concludere, Jean-Luc Egger e Filippo Grandi in *Italiano giuridico federale: un dispaccio dal fronte* sottolineano come la parità dell'italiano a livello federale non sia un dato di fatto e come i fronti della battaglia a suo favore siano almeno due: bisogna combattere *per* l'italiano, facendo cioè rispettare le sue prerogative nei confronti delle altre lingue nazionali e combattere *con* l'italiano, adoperandosi per una cura formale di questa grande lingua di

cultura. Fortunatamente, scrivono gli autori, grazie alla vigilanza del servizio di legislazione di lingua italiana della Cancelleria federale il testo italiano degli atti normativi si distingue per la sua discreta qualità stilistica e la precisione del materiale.

A mio avviso, gli interventi fin qui riassunti si contraddistinguono positivamente per la ricchezza degli esempi, l'adesione concreta al testo amministrativo quale materiale di lavoro e l'attenzione al dato minutamente linguistico. In particolare, non risulta mai perso di vista l'equilibrio obbligato che deve esserci tra l'utilizzo di formulazioni standardizzate – la cosiddetta normatività, necessaria per l'univocità dei concetti – e la comprensibilità che gli scritti devono avere per i cittadini. Facendo di questo equilibrio la sua ratio, il volume non risulta mai esagerato nelle sue conclusioni, ma anzi profondamente ponderato. Il libro risulta anche molto ben organizzato dal punto di vista pratico: i riferimenti bibliografici, raccolti ordinatamente a conclusione di ciascun capitolo, risultano facilmente fruibili per chi volesse approfondire ulteriormente le singole tematiche; essi si contraddistinguono per il loro alto grado di aggiornamento e la loro pertinenza rispetto alle tematiche trattate. Va inoltre segnalato, all'interno dei capitoli, l'uso discreto di elementi paratestuali come tabelle e schemi riassuntivi, i quali aiutano ad assimilare meglio l'informazione. Uno degli aspetti più efficaci e accattivanti, a nostro modo di vedere, è tuttavia l'alternarsi, nelle varie sezioni, di temi prettamente linguistici – come può essere, ad esempio, la questione dei forestierismi – con altri di più ampia veduta, che sposano interessi anche più generali, come ad esempio la situazione inquadrata in un contesto europeo o l'analisi di siti internet. In questo modo, il volume riesce ad affrontare con schiettezza alcuni dei temi più fondamentali nel campo della scrittura amministrativa. Questo dà al libro il carattere di una vera e propria introduzione al tema della lingua amministrativa, adatta tanto a un pubblico di studenti universitari – che si può tuttavia già avvalere di validi strumenti, come il contributo di Sergio Lubello, *Il linguaggio burocratico*, edito nel 2014, o *Guida alla scrittura istituzionale*, di Michele Cortelazzo e Federica Pellegrino, pubblicato nel 2003 – quanto a persone più genericamente interessate ai meccanismi che reggono l'eloquio burocratico e le varietà istituzionali dell'italiano. Il dibattito dev'essere naturalmente approfondito, ma se si vuole incominciare da qualche parte, si può sicuramente partire da quanto offerto in questa raccolta: vi si trova infatti la chiarificazione di alcuni problemi di cui si era anche solo intuita o vagheggiata l'esistenza, dunque un punto della situazione chiaro e definito.

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