



U P L E G E S S

Union des Professeurs de Langues des Grandes Ecoles



## 6<sup>th</sup> GEM Conference

28 – 30<sup>th</sup> March 2012

ESSEC Business School  
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**The language factor in the context of international management: understanding the challenges for organisations and individuals**

**UNDER THE PATRONAGE OF THE CONFERENCE DES GRANDES ECOLES, THE CHAPITRE DES ECOLES DE MANAGEMENT, THE FNEGE, THE EFMD**

### Call for Papers

In a recent editorial of the academic journal, *Management & Avenir*, Luc Boyer spoke of the two dimensions of management: the scientific dimension of organisational sciences and the human dimension of people management, defined by Peter Drucker as “the transformation of human effort into performance”. If corporations, business schools and universities have emphasised the former, there is within organisations today a greater awareness of the human factor, of the management of people, of their talents and of their personal and professional aims and accomplishments at a time when the concept of work-life balance is gaining importance.

In business schools where the personal development of students is an important feature of the educational process, the crisis of the dominant economic models and ethics has led to a renewed interest in the human and social sciences in management education. Placing the

individual at the centre of the learning process along with the social and human sciences is, therefore, a challenge for the institutions of learning that we represent.

In the context of subjectivist approaches to management research, language, being both a means of representing the world and a communication tool, plays a central role in research focusing on social behavior in organisations. In France, researchers such as Chanlat (1990), Girin (1995; 2001) or Usunier (1987; 1990) have particularly stressed the importance of language within organisations. To better understand the human factor in organisations, researchers are calling for the cross-fertilisation of the disciplines in the human sciences, such as linguistics, cognitive and social psychology, the sociology of organisations, psychoanalysis, anthropology and ethnology.

Research conducted on communication shows the complexity of the multilingual and multicultural workplace and the need for further investigation in multinational companies into areas such as distance management, information and communication technologies, corporate language(s), knowledge management and knowledge transfer from the head office to its subsidiaries.

As Mintzberg said in 1973 and Rebecca Marschan et al. in 1997 in an article fittingly entitled “Language: the forgotten factor in multinational management,” (*European Management Journal*, 15(5), 591-598), language is central to the daily practice of managers but is nevertheless rarely an object of inquiry in the management sciences. A study of 1,128 articles published between 2002 and 2010 in the economics and management category of the CNRS shows that language-related questions are rarely addressed, which seems to confirm that since 1997 scholars have neglected this aspect of management. So is language still “the forgotten factor in multinational management”?

This conference is designed to provide a forum between practitioners and researchers of all disciplines who are interested in the impact of language and culture on performance in multicultural contexts. We welcome both theoretical and empirical papers which contribute to an interdisciplinary dialogue on subjects such as:

- What has applied linguistics contributed to management research?
- How has research in cross-cultural communication contributed to the improvement of internal communication within multinational companies?
- What does ethnology tell us about the communication between the national culture of the parent company and the subsidiaries of multinational companies?
- How can the latest findings in social psychology and sociology of organisations contribute to the understanding of cross-cultural organisations?
- How can affectivity and emotions in the interactions of a multicultural working group be understood and regulated?
- How does discourse analysis contribute to a better understanding of corporate culture?

- How do information and communication technologies impact on communication within cross-national virtual teams?
- What contribution have translation studies made to a better understanding of cross-cultural communication issues?
- How can organisations meet the linguistic and semantic challenge of transmitting concepts that do not exist in another culture? For example, how can aspects of corporate identity such as sustainable development or social responsibility be communicated to subsidiaries which are culturally very different?
- How can goals and learning contents be redesigned for a new language teaching curriculum in business schools?
- What innovative training methods can be adopted to promote a better understanding of the cross-cultural context in the global company?
- What is the place of rhetorical studies and theories of narrativity in management research and teaching?
- What is the role of narrative and storytelling in organizations? To what extent should the role of language games in a social constructivist paradigm be revisited?
- What are the policies of multinational companies regarding monolingual and multilingual communication? Which language(s) is/are used to conduct corporate communication?
- To what extent do multinational companies deal with the language factor in internal communication?
- How does language use differ between formal and informal communication contexts?
- To what extent are questions of language and verbal communication considered in French and international management research literature? What is the state of the art since the late 90s?

These suggestions are not meant to be exhaustive but to give an indication of the types of approach desired.

Proposed contributions in French or English will be welcome in the form of:

- Papers (6,000-8,000 words; exceptionally longer subject to editorial discretion)
- Short essays or case studies, or review essays of material, or literature reviews (4,000-6,000 words)

Author guidelines:

- Title: Times New Roman, 18, UPPER CASE, **bold**
- Author's Name: Times New Roman, 14, Lower Case, **bold**
- Name of institution: Times New Roman, 10, UPPER CASE, **bold**
- Text body: Times New Roman, 12, Lower Case

## TIMETABLE

- Proposal with abstract in English or in French (500 words): 15 October 2011
- Notice of provisional acceptance: 15 November 2011
- Draft for refereeing: 10 January 2012
- Referee reports and decisions: 25 January 2012
- Final draft: 15 February 2012

Please send proposals, papers, abstracts and any enquiries to:  
Dr Philippe Lecomte (Toulouse Business School)  
Email: [p.lecomte@esc-toulouse.fr](mailto:p.lecomte@esc-toulouse.fr)

Submissions should be sent by email attachment (Word). Please provide a separate, brief resume of the author(s) and full address for correspondence including phone, fax and email.

Full author guidelines for paper layout and referencing are at:  
[http://www.managementetavenir.net/management\\_avenir/recommandations\\_aux\\_auteurs/](http://www.managementetavenir.net/management_avenir/recommandations_aux_auteurs/)

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