



16th GEM&L International Conference on Management & Language

ISIT Paris, France

10-12 May 2023

Call for Papers

Language-sensitive research in IB and management: Current perspectives on societal challenges

Language is at the heart of how we make sense of and interact with the world around us. Languages, as a primary means of communication, can be described as systems of meanings central to the understanding of organizational, social, and global realities (Tietze et al., 2003). These realities are continuously changing, influenced by such forces as climate change, the recent pandemic, digitalization, and political conflict (Piekkari et al., 2021), and infused with societal tensions related to values, norms, and attitudes (Beugelsdijk et al., 2022). Organizations of all kinds are currently experiencing, but also driving, the volatile dynamics of these grand challenges and many are grappling with pressing issues concerning their environmental, social, and corporate governance in which language is present in a myriad of ways.

Against this backdrop, we invite researchers and practitioners focusing on language in international business (IB) and management to respond to this call for papers with proposals that consider how we – as a language-sensitive research community – can contribute to a

better understanding of current societal and organizational challenges. With GEM&L's overarching focus on language, IB and management, the topics below serve as a reference and inspiration for a constructive dialogue at the 16th annual conference. The call cross-cuttingly extends to proposals revolving around multilingual IB and management communication as well as translated IB and management language and discourse in connection with current societal challenges.

1: Language, management, and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

Scholars of all disciplines have been called to respond to the grand societal challenges articulated in the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and scholars working on IB issues, specifically (Montiel et al., 2021; Sinkovics et al., 2022). Currently, the notions of language, language diversity, and language management – the key concepts in IB – are surprisingly absent in the SDGs, much to the surprise and the dismay of many scholars (Harding-Esch & Coleman, 2021). In this light, we ask:

- How can language-sensitive research contribute to addressing the societal challenges that have been identified in the UN Sustainable Development goals? Specifically:
 - Goal 4: ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all.
 - Goal 8: promoting sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all.
 - Goal 10: helping to reduce inequality within and among countries.
- How do language management and language-related organizational issues make a difference in achieving these goals or hindering progress towards them?

2: Migration, the multilingual workplace, and the consequences for organizations

Organizations and societies are becoming increasingly heterogenous due to migration movements (Barmeyer et al., 2021) driven by forces of political instability, war, and climate change. A World Bank report (2021) estimates that climate change could displace more than 200 million people by 2050, especially those from the Global South. As such, organizations are becoming increasingly multilingual workplaces (Horn et al., 2020) where multiple languages intermingle. Moreover, organizations are key actors in the integration processes for migrants (Grosskopf et al., 2021), combining not only national languages, but also dialects and sociolects, professional or generational languages (Piekkari et al., 2014). Since language

represents the social worlds of its speakers, it is subject to hybridization (Gaibrois, 2018) and change, as shown by the examples of “Sheng” – a Swahili-English hybrid language spoken by young people in Kenya, or “Spanglish” – a mixture of Spanish and English, spoken by many of the descendants of Latin immigrants in the United States. Migration from rural areas to cities, or from emerging markets to developing countries, may even provoke the death of a language in the long run, directly affecting individual identities and organizations.

Contributions to this track could address, among others, the following questions:

- How do migration movements change language practices in organizations?
- What role do organizations and their approaches to understanding of language play in the integration of migrants?
- How can migration literature enrich and alter language-sensitive research on organizations and IB?

3: Beyond Global North perspectives on multilingualism

As language-sensitive research in IB and organizational studies has focused on Global North language contexts (mainly European and North American), we specifically call for research from and with a strong focus on contexts in the Global South, Middle East, Central and South America, and Southern Asia (Heugh & Stroud, 2019). Practice and recent theoretical developments on plurilingual realities from the Global South contexts are currently enriching and challenging the academic knowledge on language and language management (Ndhlovu & Makalela, 2021). Pushing forward in this direction is crucial to maintaining the relevance of IB and management research.

We thus invite language-sensitive IB scholars to move beyond the inter-lingual conceptualization of language (Tenzer et al., 2014) to intra-lingual conceptualizations (Selinker & Gass, 2008) by, for instance, considering:

- In what ways and to what extent do existing theories from language-sensitive IB research include or exclude Global South contexts, as well as find resonance or dissonance in them?
- How do realities in previously understudied language contexts challenge and develop current theory?

- How much is Western hegemony present in language scholarship? What forms does it take and how can it be challenged?

4: Language and multilingualism in the digital era

Digitalization and the use of digital technology are the current reality in organizations. The recent pandemic has intensified the need to adopt digital technology and altered how people, teams, and organizations communicate. Research has addressed, for example, the impact of language use and choice on virtual teams (Klitmøller & Lauring, 2013; Selmer et al., 2022; Taylor, 2021) or cross-border digital knowledge flows (Wang et al., 2020). Moreover, automated translation software may both facilitate and challenge cross-border communication (Barmeyer et al., 2021).

Contributions to this track could be guided by the following questions:

- How does language diversity influence digital collaboration across borders?
- Which implications does digital communication have on the management of language and linguistic diversity?
- What are the avenues for future practice and research on language in human-machine interaction?

5: The language-culture connection

Most contemporary organizations are multilingual and multicultural (Horn et al., 2020; Steyaert et al., 2011), either operating in international and thus “foreign” language contexts, or integrating people from a diversity of cultural and linguistic backgrounds. As a system of signs with a cultural value (Kramsch, 1998), language is closely related with culture, and the two phenomena are important elements of identity, expression, and organizational dynamics influenced by diversity management practices and choices (Wilczewski et al., 2018).

We encourage proposals that consider the interrelationship of language and culture (Piekkari et al., 2013; Piekkari et al., 2020). Languages and cultures are not to be reduced to national constructs, but rather encompass multiple levels such as regional, organization, industry, or gender (Brannen et al., 2014; Church-Morel & Bartel-Radic, 2016; Piekkari et al., 2014). The submissions could address, among others, the following questions:

- How does the intersection of language and culture affect researchers' approach to organizations?
- What role does translation play in communication in multilingual and multicultural organizational settings?
- How can we develop IB theory when analyzing culture-specific terminologies and difficult-to-translate practices in IB communication (e.g. Blenkinsopp & Pajouh, 2010)?

6: Methodological advancements in language-sensitive IB research

Language-sensitive researchers and practitioners face many methodological questions. We welcome contributions with a strong methodological perspective, for example, in relation to research design, data collection, or data analysis. We also welcome submissions that aim to break new theoretical grounds by considering the existing literature through the lens of language-sensitive IB research (Chidlow et al., 2014). Relevant submissions might include:

- Literature reviews of relevant and current state-of-the-art publications that can conceptually advance the field of language-sensitive IB research.
- Ethical considerations related to IB communication research.
- Underutilized qualitative methodologies such as multi-sited ethnographies, but also large-scale comparative quantitative studies, and mixed-method studies that employ a combination of quantitative and/or qualitative methods.

7: Critical perspectives on language in IB

GEM&L welcomes critical contributions from various perspectives and theoretical frameworks that explore themes linking language and language diversity with power struggles, social hierarchies, inequalities, and conflicts in the social world (Ristolainen et al., 2021; Romani et al., 2014; Boussebaa et al., 2014; Boussebaa & Brown, 2017; Vigier & Bryant, 2022). With this track, we explicitly call for papers that aim at providing alternative perspectives and/or explore the issue of redressing current circumstances to serve transformative, emancipatory, or equality purposes (Kim & Angouri, 2022; Piekkari et al., 2022; Wilmot & Tietze, 2022). Contributions submitted to the track on critical perspectives might be conceptual or empirical. More experimental formats such as essay-like papers are also welcome.

Contributions can address, but need not to be exclusive, to the following questions:

- How do power and inequality influence language practices in organizations?
- How can critical theory enhance our understanding of language and power in organizations?
- How do critical approaches to language in IB shed light on and question approaches that do not fall in this category and the ways in which management literature considers performance and effectiveness?

8: Open track on IB, education and training

Scholars working within such field as linguistics, communications, and management sciences are welcome to use this open track to submit work that does not directly fall under any of the above-mentioned tracks, but still deals with language in IB. We welcome empirical studies or conceptual pieces that focus on various organizational contexts, including for-profit private businesses, academic and teaching organizations, and non-governmental organizations or inter-organizational questions. We also invite consultants, trainers, and managers working in multilingual contexts to contribute to this track with relevant practitioner-oriented proposals.

Review board

Reviewers can include, but are not limited to:

Tamym Abdessemed, ISIT Paris, France

John Andrew, Melbourne University Business school, Australia

Jo Angouri, University of Warwick, United Kingdom

Christoph Barmeyer, University of Passau, Germany

Wilhelm Barner-Rasmussen, Åbo Akademi University, Finland

Madeleine Bausch, University of Chile, Chile

Betty Beeler, EM-Lyon, Campus Saint Etienne, France

Anne Kari Bjørge, NHH, Norway

Mary-Yoko Brannen, Honorary Professor of International Business, Copenhagen Business School, Professor Emerita San Jose State University, USA

Mike Bryant, ESC Clermont, France

Cristina Butler, Kingston University, UK

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Jean-François Chanlat, Université Dauphine, Paris, France
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Cheryl Cordeiro, Nofima, Norway
Peter Daly, EDHEC, France
Eric Davoine, FSES - University of Freiburg, Switzerland
Susanne Ehrenreich, Technische Universität Dortmund, Germany
Maureen Ehrensberger, ZHAW School of Applied Linguistics, Switzerland
Sabine Ehrhart, University of Luxembourg, Luxembourg
Shea Xuejiao Fan, RMIT, Australia
John Fiset, Sobey School of Business at Saint Mary's University, Canada
Claudine Gaibrois, University of St. Gallen and Bern University of Applied Sciences, Switzerland
Sina Grosskopf, University of Passau, Germany
Bernadette Hofer-Bonfim, Vienna University of Economics and Business, Austria
Sierk Horn, Munich University of applied sciences, Germany
Anna Kristina Hultgren, Open University, United Kingdom
John Humbley, University Paris Diderot, France
Marjana Johansson, University of Glasgow, Adam Smith Business school, United Kingdom
Komal Kalra, Newcastle University, UK
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Helena Karjalainen, Ecole de management de Normandie, France
Jane Kassis-Henderson, ESCP-Europe, France
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Miya Komori Glatz, Vienna University of Economics and Business, Austria
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Alexei Kovesnikov, Aalto University Business school, Finland
Hélène Langinier, EM-Strasbourg, France
Jakob Luring, Aarhus School of Business, Denmark

Philippe Lecomte, Toulouse Business School, France
Yih-Teen Lee, IESE Business School, Spain
Myriam Leibbrand, Vienna University of Economics and Business, Austria
Dorte Lønsmann, University of Copenhagen, Denmark
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Katarina Molterer, University of St. Gallen, Switzerland
Katrin Muehlfeld, University of Trier, Germany
Terry Mughan, Portland State University, School of Business, USA
Elena Orlova, Saint Petersburg University, Russia
Vesa Peltokorpi, Hiroshima University, Japan
Rebecca Piekkari, Aalto University School of Business, Finland
Elena Poliakova, IESEG, France
Henriett Primecz, University of Budapest, Hungary
Tiina Räisänen, University of Oulu, Finland
Sebastian Reiche, IESE, Spain
Guro R. Sanden, University of Gothenburg, Sweden
Estefania Santacreu-Vasut, ESSEC France
Martyna Sliwa, University of Essex, United Kingdom
Helen Spencer-Oatey, University of Warwick, United Kingdom
Aamir Suleman, Carnegie Mellon University Africa, Rwanda
Mike Szymanski, Moscow School of Management SKOLKOVO, Russia
Miyuki Takino, University of Tokyo, Japan
Carol Tansley, Nottingham University, United Kingdom
Danielle Taylor, Université Grenoble Alpes, France
Helene Tenzer, LMU Munich School of Management, Germany
Ankita Tibrewal, Aston University, UK
Susanne Tietze, Sheffield Hallam University, United Kingdom
Geneviève Tréguer-Felten, CNRS, France

Olga Untilov, Université Savoie Mont Blanc, France

Dardo de Vecchi, Kedge Business School, France

Mary Vigier, ESC Clermont Business School, France

Magdalena Viktora-Jones, Florida International University, USA

Michał Wilczewski, University of Economics and Human Sciences in Warsaw, Poland

Natalie Wilmot, University of Bradford, UK

Sachiko Yamao, Keio Business School, Keio University, Japan

Lena Zander, Uppsala University, Sweden

Ling Eleanor Zhang, Loughborough University, UK

Mette Zølner, Copenhagen Business School, Denmark

Instructions and deadlines

The short paper should indicate the key theoretical, methodological and empirical questions addressed in the paper, the conceptual field(s) informing the paper, if applicable the data set used in the paper and the major theoretical and empirical contributions of the paper. All submissions must be original and should not have been previously accepted for publication.

General instructions:

- Length of short paper: between 3000 and 4000 words, excluding references.
- Abstract (around 10 lines) to be included in the final program, with 4-6 keywords.

Formatting guidelines:

- First page with author's name, affiliation, e-mail and postal address.
- Text of the proposal: in .doc(x), anonymous, justified, 2.5 cm margins throughout.
- Title: Times New Roman, bold, size 16.
- Other titles: Times New Roman, bold, size 12.
- Text: Times New Roman, size 12.

Format for references:

Please use APA version 7. For instance:

Austin, J. L. (1962). *How to Do Things with Words*. Harvard University Press.

Steyaert, C., Ostendorp, A. & Gaibrois, C. (2011). Multilingual organizations as 'linguascapes': Negotiating the position of English through discursive practices. *Journal of World Business*, 46(3), 270-278.

Submission deadline:

Proposals in French or in English in Word format to be uploaded on the GEM&L website, www.geml.eu by **16 January 2023**.

All submissions will be subjected to a double-blind competitive review process on the basis of originality, rigor, and relevance. No author information or other identifying information should appear anywhere in the submission.

Please note that the conference will host a doctoral session, which will offer PhD students the possibility of discussing their doctoral thesis project with research fellows and prominent senior scholars in this field of research. The review process of PhD students' papers is subjected to the same rules as for regular papers.

All authors will be informed about the outcome of the review process no later than **20 March 2023**.

At least one author of each paper must register for the workshop and present the paper. A final paper is not required before the conference.

Awards

- Awards will be presented for the best conference paper and the best reviewer. The best paper award is sponsored by the European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD).
- Nigel Holden Prize: We have the pleasure to announce that a Nigel Holden Prize will be awarded to the best doctoral paper submitted in 2023. The award criteria include originality, rigor and relevance, as well as the use of sources in other languages than English.

Schedule:

Short paper: 16 January 2023

Notice of acceptance: 20 March 2023

Early bird registration deadline: 1 April 2023

GEM&L Workshop: 10-12 May 2023

For any information concerning the conference, please contact: scientifique@geml.eu

For registration information go to: www.geml.eu

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