



18th GEM&L International Conference on Management & Language

WU Vienna, Austria

8- 10 May 2025

Call for Papers

Challenges of language and communication in rapidly changing business contexts

In today's changing business environments, characterized by geopolitical shifts, technological advancements, and communities on the move, businesses and organizations are faced with new communicative needs (Lazarova et al., 2023). With the overarching theme of “Challenges of language and communication in rapidly changing business contexts”, the 18th annual GEM&L conference invites the language-sensitive research community to explore these complexities from multiple perspectives. With the following tracks, we hope to encourage scholars and practitioners to engage in discussions on how language and communication affect and are affected by changing business contexts.

1: Language in a changing society

We are living in a world characterized by volatility, crisis and significant geopolitical changes. The COVID-19 pandemic brought language-related social inequalities to the fore, raising questions about who is able to access vital information (Piekkari et al, 2021). The profound implications of ongoing global conflicts, as exemplified by the current war in Ukraine, are

more visible than ever before (Anghel & Jones, 2022). Furthermore, recent years have seen a rise in right-wing populism in Europe (e.g., Noury & Roland, 2020), the USA (e.g., Rodrik, 2021), and several other countries, often in combination with an anti-immigrant backlash (Kapelner, 2024). On a global scale, the changing role of BRICS nations in the future global order (e.g., Stuenkel, 2020) and the development of Africa towards an emerging market of new growth opportunities (e.g., George et al., 2016) deserve attention.

In this track, we welcome submissions that explore how such geopolitical changes and developments affect the role and the use of language in professional contexts on a global, national, regional or local level. This might, for instance, include the emergence of new language practices and/or shifts of language hierarchies in both external cross-border business relations and internal organizational language use, in both multinational corporations and small and medium enterprises.

2: Diaspora, migration, and communities on the move

According to the estimates by United Nations, there were approximately 280 million international migrants in 2020 (McAuliffe & Triandafyllidou, 2021). The growing economic inequality, demographic differences between rich and poor countries, political conflict, and climate change will further increase the number of migrants in the future (International Organization for Migration, 2020). Nevertheless, international mobility and the phenomenon of migration have only recently begun to attract the attention of international business and management (IBM) scholars (Groutsis et al., 2023). For example, Andersen (2019) highlighted the importance of language for skilled migrants, specifically organizational and self-initiated expatriates. More recently, scholars have examined language-based inclusion and exclusion, including discrimination (Back & Piekkari, 2024), misrecognition (Johansson & Śliwa, 2023), and perceived incompetence (Wilmot, 2024). However, this research domain remains relatively nascent.

This track therefore invites contributions that examine language and diverse aspects of international mobility and migration. Relevant subjects may encompass various areas such as the effects of language on intercultural interactions in multinational companies, focusing on how language use, skills, and linguistic boundary-spanning influence the relationships between expatriates and host-country employees (Liu et al., 2024). Other valuable investigations could explore the role of modern communication technology in shaping the experience of globally mobile employees. For instance, research might examine how communication with family and

friends in the home country can alleviate employees' loneliness while potentially limiting their social efforts to develop new relationships in the host country (Fan et al., 2023). We also encourage scholars to submit contributions on topics that are under addressed in IBM research on migration, such as the perspective of migrants on language-related professional experience (Groutsis et al., 2023; Harrison et al., 2019), low skilled migrants (Hajro et al., 2021), or refugees (Lee et al., 2020).

3: Language as a diversity dimension

This track seeks to address the gap between language and diversity literature, aiming to establish connections and foster dialogue between these two vital fields of study. In common models of diversity dimensions, language is often overlooked in contrast to categories like age, gender, or religion (e.g., Gardenswartz & Rowe, 2008), despite recent calls to consider it as a core aspect of diversity (e.g., Ciuk, Śliwa & Harzing, 2022). However, language constitutes an integral part of one's personal and social identity and a person's linguistic identity may intersect with their gender or other identity processes to impact their experiences within business organizations (Kalra & Danis, 2024). In international business settings, language skills can be seen as a competitive advantage and a key factor of employability (Gazzola & Mazzacani, 2019; Grin, 2016). Conversely, depending on the dominant ideologies and the respective languages spoken, language skills may also be a source of exclusion or discrimination (Bendl et al., 2012; Lønsmann, 2020; Mahili & Angouri, 2017).

There are fruitful avenues of research to be found through transposing diversity concepts to the specific case of language diversity, as demonstrated by Church-Morel and Bartel-Radic (2016). By recognizing language as a fundamental dimension of diversity, the track endeavors to explore how this dimension can be addressed by organizations, how it can be conceptualized, and which challenges and opportunities might arise due to linguistic diversity in business contexts. We also encourage scholars to address the intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989) of language with other diversity dimensions such as gender, ethnicity, culture, race, religion, or class.

4: Artificial intelligence (AI) and language

We encourage authors to consider how we, as a community of researchers and practitioners, can offer novel perspectives on language and technology in IBM. Recent advancements in technology, such as Open AI's ChatGPT, underscore the critical role of language in the digital

age, and present exciting opportunities for further research in the field of language, digital communication, and AI (Grimes et al., 2023; Kocoń et al., 2023). For instance, the use of AI tools in multilingual teams comes with challenges and opportunities. Scholars have therefore recently suggested that AI machine translation tools be taught cultural differences (Tenzer, Feuerriegel, & Piekkari, 2024). We encourage authors to explore the layers of imbalance in gender, race, and power that can come from using translation tools and text generators, as we acknowledge the challenges that must be overcome to advance towards a more equitable landscape in AI (Devlin, 2023).

In this track, authors are encouraged to explore how technological changes affect language and communication in IBM, both in company-internal communication as well as in external communication practices. We invite scholars to address challenges and opportunities of AI for communication in all types of multilingual professional contexts, including but not limited to, multinational corporations, small and medium enterprises and non-governmental organizations.

5: Novel methodological approaches to researching language dynamics in contemporary business environments

Changing business landscapes necessitate innovative research methodologies, which can advance our understanding of complexities associated with language in continuously evolving international business environments. In qualitative research, recent discussions focus on the balance between rigorous and contextualized research (Halme et al., 2024), the reconciliation of theory and context (Welch et al., 2022), and a pluralist contextual approach of qualitative procedures (Welch et al., 2017). Another important concern is translation, with questions such as the effect of interviewing across language boundaries (e.g., Welch et al., 2006), the fit between theory and data in linguistically diverse qualitative research (Shulist, Rivera-Santos, & Piekkari, 2024), or the monolingual dissemination of multilingual research (Tietze, 2018). In quantitative research, some methodological advancements could be achieved by combining data analysis methods and techniques, such as structural equation modeling with necessary condition analysis (Richter et al., 2020) or machine learning algorithms (Richter & Tudoran, 2024). Researchers have also suggested applying quantitative approaches to qualitative data (Tóth et al., 2017), such as the fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis (e.g., Ragin, 2008), as proposed by Kammerlander et al. (2024).

In this stream, contributions focusing on research design, data collection, and data analysis from various methodological approaches are encouraged, particularly those addressing the complexities of language and communication dynamics in contemporary business environments. We invite scholars to further elaborate on the discussions addressed above, and to propose novel ways of methodologically addressing the changing business landscape. Topics may include, for example, the role of context and translation in multilingual research, ways to enhance robust theorizing at multiple levels, and diverse methods to capture complex realities of a multilingual workforce (Presbitero et al., 2023).

6: Language and communication in shifting higher education landscapes

Technological advances such as the rapid development of AI and the use of virtual reality in enhancing intercultural learning and communication skills among international students (Li et al., 2024), allow for new ways of communicating across languages, but also pose new questions and challenges for higher education. At the same time, while the spread of English as a business lingua franca (BELF) can hardly be seen as a new development, it has had considerable implications for teaching language and communication. In particular, there are still calls to integrate BELF into Business English syllabi (e.g., Kaur & Birlik, 2021) and address the perceived gap between the classroom and the professions (Bhatia, 2022), while the conceptualization of BELF itself is being expanded to reflect hybrid, transcultural, and multilingual realities (Kankaanranta, 2023).

In this track, we welcome submissions from language and communication scholars focusing on teaching and higher education, especially in business school settings. Practitioners, consultants, trainers, and managers operating in multilingual environments are encouraged to share their expertise through practitioner-oriented submissions.

7: Open track

We invite researchers and practitioners from diverse fields to use this open track for submitting contributions that may not fit within the specified tracks but are still relevant to language in changing business landscapes. Authors are encouraged to consider additional challenges in international business communication in line with the theme “Challenges of language and communication in rapidly changing business contexts”. We welcome both empirical studies and conceptual papers that explore a wide range of organizational inquiries across business

organizations, academic institutions, educational institutions, and non-governmental organizations.

Review process

Peer reviews play a crucial role in maintaining a high scientific standard at the GEM&L annual conferences. GEM&L has access to a large pool of esteemed reviewers who are experts in the field of language in IB. All papers undergo a rigorous double-blind review process, wherein scholars working in the same or related research area evaluate the papers without knowledge of the authors' identities. As part of the submission process for the GEM&L 2025 conference, authors are expected to review two conference papers upon request by the handling editors. This collaborative reviewing system ensures fairness, engagement, and scholarly interaction within the academic community.

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, the data set used in the paper (if applicable), and the major theoretical and empirical contributions of the paper. All submissions must be original and should not have been previously accepted for publication elsewhere.

General instructions:

- Length of short paper: between 3,000 and 4,000 words, excluding references.
- The paper should include a title for the paper, an abstract (around 10 lines), a list of 4-6 keywords that best represent the content of the paper, and a list of references. These elements will be included in the final program.

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.
- Abstract and keywords: Times New Roman, size 10.
- Text: Times New Roman, size 12.

Format for references:

Please use APA version 7. For instance:

Piekkari, R., Welch, D., & Welch, L. S. (2014). *Language in international business: The multilingual reality of global business expansion*. Edward Elgar Publishing.

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. <https://doi.org/10.1016/J.JWB.2010.07.003>

Submission deadline:

Proposals in English in Word format should be uploaded on the GEM&L website, www.geml.eu by **13 January 2025**.

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 **17 March 2025**.

It is mandatory that at least one author of a co-authored paper must register for the conference and present the paper. This ensures that the accepted paper, which has gone through the review process, is presented and discussed at the event. Please note that there is no requirement to submit a final paper 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 to GEM&L 2025. The award criteria include originality, rigor, and relevance, as well as the use of sources in other languages than English.

Schedule:

Short paper submission: 13 January 2025

Notice of acceptance: 17 March 2025

Early bird registration deadline: 1 April 2025

GEM&L Conference: 8–10 May 2025

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

For registration information go to: www.geml.eu

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