

20th GEM&L International Conference on Management & Language

The human factor in language-sensitive international business and management

Dates: 26–28 May 2027

Hosting institution: University of Paris 1: Panthéon-Sorbonne

Address: 14 rue Cujas, 75005 Paris, France

Deadline for submissions: January 31, 2027, at 11.59 PM CET

Conference website: <https://geml.eu/geml-2027-conference/>

Call for Papers

“[T]he organisation does not have languages, people do” stated Marschan, Welch, and Welch (1997, p. 596) in their groundbreaking paper introducing language into mainstream management research. Three decades later, this observation still holds true. While organizations develop language strategies and “company-speak” (Aichhorn & Puck, 2017; de Vecchi, 2020), communication is fundamentally dependent on the language practices of human actors. However, the organizational context has changed profoundly. With the rise of digital technologies and artificial intelligence (AI), multilingual communication is more accessible and automated than ever before through generative AI tools (Menzies et al., 2024). Yet, as automated tools generate increasingly standardized, generic communication, the authentic human element has become harder to observe (Sahebi et al., 2026).

With the overarching theme of “The human factor in language-sensitive international business and management,” the 20th annual GEM&L conference centers on exploring humans in language-sensitive international business (IB) and management research and practice. In this context, the “human factor” refers to the irreplaceable capacities that human actors bring to multilingual organizational life. It encompasses the lived experiences, interpersonal relationships and ethical judgments that cannot be replicated by digital language tools. As macro-level trends such as climate change, geopolitical shifts, polarization, and migration

reshape global societies and workplaces (Chabowski et al., 2025), our understanding of human speakers is evolving away from rigid native/non-native binaries toward fluid linguistic repertoires, translanguaging, and decentralized linguistic authority (Dewaele, 2018; Dewaele et al., 2021). Addressing the human factor also means asking how responsible, language-sensitive management (Church-Morel et al., 2025) can meaningfully engage with aspects that are uniquely human in an increasingly digital age.

As we celebrate the milestone 20th GEM&L International Conference in Paris, we reflect on two decades of scholarship that have advanced our understanding of language in global business. From early foundational discussions about language and corporate performance, to critical explorations of identity, cohesion, knowledge sharing, and societal challenges (e.g. Tenzer et al., 2017), GEM&L has consistently pushed the boundaries of language-sensitive IB and management research. As AI and algorithmic communication redefine organizational processes, this year's theme honors GEM&L's twenty-year tradition by recentering the human agency and interpersonal nuances that lie at the core of multilingual management.

We welcome submissions addressing – but not limited to – the following areas:

- **Language and AI:** Despite the many affordances of AI-powered tools for improving communication, employees are increasingly experiencing AI fatigue, leading to cognitive overload, emotional strain, behavioral disengagement, and physical exhaustion (Lau et al., 2026). Scholars also highlight the risk of reproducing historical inequalities through the uncritical adoption of generative intelligence (Manky & López, 2026), alongside growing societal AI skepticism (Shi et al., 2026) and ethical concerns calling for regulation (Earnhart, 2024). At the same time, the integration of generative AI and neural machine translation is transforming organizational communication, raising critical questions around input data quality, algorithmic bias, translation accuracy, and how AI handles regional dialects and non-standard business registers (Vieira et al., 2021). With these topics in mind, we invite contributions focusing on the following, for example: How do current developments and debates in the field of AI shape communication and collaboration in linguistically diverse teams and organizations across various geographical contexts? Which practices for handling AI fatigue emerge in multilingual organizational contexts?
- **Language in cross-cultural communication and management:** Interest in language is a relatively new phenomenon in critical intercultural communication (see e.g., Wilmut et al., 2024) or cross-cultural management (see e.g., Mahadevan et al., 2020) after an era of relative neglect (e.g., Holden et al., 2015; Piller, 2011). Recent research has for instance explored how self- and other-perceived language proficiency differences can lead to the (re)production of cultural stereotypes (Gaibrois, 2025). Within this area, we invite contributions which investigate the role of language in cross-cultural management and intercultural communication across geographical contexts and from various epistemological perspectives.
- **Language and global virtual teams:** Global virtual teams (GVTs) have become a defining feature of international business, enabling collaboration across geographic, cultural, and linguistic boundaries (Bartel-Radic & Taylor, 2026). Recent research

highlights the effects of different forms of team member diversity, such as language, in explaining global virtual team processes and outcomes (Taras et al., 2019). This demonstrates the role of language proficiency in shaping peer evaluations in virtual teams (Tavoletti et al., 2023), and shows how non-native accents influence communication, trust, and collaboration in international virtual work (Szymanski & Brighi, 2025). We invite research that advances language-sensitive perspectives on global virtual collaboration by addressing the opportunities and challenges of managing the human factor in multilingual and digitally mediated teams and organizations. This may include, but is not limited to, studies of approaches to language proficiency, accent diversity, and AI-assisted communication; language-based power dynamics in the global virtual context; and the intersection of language with cultural and institutional diversity.

- **Linguistic diversity and global mobility:** Migration has constantly increased in the past decades and is forecast to become even more prevalent in the future (McAuliffe & Ceriani Cernadas, 2026). Language-sensitive research has therefore begun to study how limited host-country language proficiency affects migrants (e.g., Humonen & Angouri, 2023; Lønsmann, 2023; Śliwa & Johansson, 2020; Śliwa et al., 2024), including language-based discrimination (Back & Piekkari, 2024). Migration has therefore been identified as a fundamental emerging topic in language-sensitive research (Back et al., 2026). Contributions to this theme can include conceptual or empirical papers addressing how migration shapes the work experiences of all types of migrants, including refugees; how global mobility affects communication and collaboration in multilingual teams and organizations; and the role of companies in shaping the relationship between global mobility and language.
- **Linguistic diversity and ethics:** Increasingly, language is acknowledged as a diversity dimension in its own right, calling for its inclusion in Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion research and practice (Ciuk et al., 2023; see also Back et al., 2026; Church-Morel & Bartel-Radic, 2016). Scholars have started to study the relation between language ideologies and participation in multilingual professional contexts (Barner-Rasmussen et al., 2024). In a conceptual contribution, Wilmot (2024) has put forward the concept of epistemic injustice to explore how language, and in particular corporate language policies, may act as a source of epistemic injustice within the workplace. We welcome conceptual or empirical contributions which address language diversity as an issue of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion, or as an ethical concern.
- **Language in higher education:** The rise of generative AI is fundamentally reshaping what it means to educate future employees (Crompton & Burke, 2023). As AI tools automate routine data processing and analysis, the focus is shifting from teaching students how to conduct analysis to instead teaching them how to become good decision-makers (Varouchas, 2006). Against this backdrop, and amidst growing institutional Englishization in higher education institutions (Daly & Davy, 2018; Vigier & Bryant, 2025), we ask what pedagogical frameworks are needed to cultivate the linguistic, analytical, and ethical competencies required of the next generation of employees?
- **Methodological advancements:** As technology redefines communication, our methods must adapt to capture the lived, human experiences of language and how words construct organizational worlds (Muehlfeld et al., 2025). Rather than viewing linguistic

diversity as a hurdle, this track invites innovative qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods designs that treat cross-language research as an opportunity for dialogic, multivocal knowledge production (Couper & Piekkari, 2025). We welcome reflections on the human element within research itself – including researcher positionality, ethics, and viewing translation as an act of hospitality and inclusion across languages (Tietze, 2018, 2025).

- **Historical perspectives on language-sensitive research in IB and management:** As GEM&L celebrates its 20th anniversary, we invite reflections on the past, present and future of language-sensitive research in international business and management. Since Marschan et al.'s (1997) seminal paper, the field has matured into an integrated pillar of IB (see Brannen et al., 2014), as documented by key literature reviews tracking its institutional recognition in mainstream IB journals (Brannen & Mughan, 2017), multi-level dynamics (Tenzer et al., 2017), conceptualizations of language (Karhunen et al., 2018), and paradigmatic shifts (Piekkari et al., 2022). Against this background, we invite historical reflections and critical reviews mapping how our field has evolved and where it is headed next.

Submission Process

All submissions to GEM&L 2027 must be uploaded via the official GEM&L website: <https://geml.eu/geml-2027-conference/>

Please ensure that you see a confirmation message on the screen after submitting. Submissions sent via email or other platforms will not be accepted.

All submissions must be original and should not have been previously accepted for publication elsewhere. Following the best practices in IB and management research, GEM&L permits responsible use of generative AI when it supports scholarship without replacing human judgment. Authors remain fully responsible for the accuracy, originality, interpretation, and integrity of all submitted work. AI systems may assist with bounded tasks such as language polishing or translation of author-written text that is later reviewed and validated by the authors. AI may not be used to generate theories, arguments, findings, citations, or conclusions as if these were the authors' own intellectual contribution.

All papers will undergo a double-blind peer review process. Reviewers will be assigned based on subject matter expertise, and as part of GEM&L's collaborative review model, authors may be asked to review up to two other submissions. The generative AI guidelines apply not just to manuscript authors but also to reviewers. In addition, reviewers are reminded that manuscripts, proposals, and review materials are confidential documents. They must not be uploaded, copied, pasted, summarized, or otherwise shared in any AI tool.

To encourage a wide range of contributions and engagement, we offer two submission formats:

- Full papers (up to 10,000 words, including references and appendices):
These submissions should present mature, theoretically grounded research with clear methodology and contributions. Accepted papers will be presented in standard conference sessions and reviewed accordingly. These will go through the traditional double-blind review process and be presented in standard paper slots followed by Q&A.

Full papers will be eligible for the conference's Best Paper Award and the Best Doctoral Paper Award.

- Short papers (2,000–4,000 words, including references and appendices): This format is intended for exploratory, early-stage research or conceptual ideas that would benefit from feedback and discussion. Accepted short papers will be featured in interactive sessions set up to facilitate dialogue and provide constructive feedback to the authors. These submissions will also be peer-reviewed, with an emphasis on developmental potential. Short papers will be eligible for the conference's New Insight Award.

Formatting Guidelines

- Submissions must be in Word (.doc or .docx) format.
- Author name(s), institutional affiliation(s), and email address(es) should appear on the first page only. No identifying information should appear in the rest of the document to preserve the integrity of the double-blind review process.
- Use Times New Roman, size 12, with 2.5 cm margins on all sides.
- Include an abstract (150–200 words) and 4–6 keywords.
- Use APA Style, 7th edition for references. See the reference section for examples.

Detailed submission instructions and the upload portal will be available on <https://geml.eu/geml-2027-conference/>

Awards

GEM&L will recognize the following outstanding contributions presented at the conference:

- **Best Paper Award**
Sponsored by the European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD), this award recognizes the most outstanding full paper presented at the conference, based on criteria including originality, theoretical and methodological rigor, and overall contribution to the field.
- **Best Doctoral Paper Award**
This award honors the best full paper presented by a doctoral student at the conference. Selection criteria include originality, relevance, theoretical and methodological rigor, and the overall contribution to advancing either research or practice.
- **Best Reviewer Award**
This award acknowledges the essential work of our peer reviewers and will be presented to the reviewer who provides the most constructive, insightful, and collegial feedback.
- **New Insight Award**
This award will recognize a particularly thought-provoking or innovative short paper/early-stage submission that sparks new ideas or debates. Both submissions

from doctoral students and regular conference participants are eligible for the New Insight Award.

Timeline

Call for Papers Released: September 2026

Submission Open: January 1, 2027

Submission Deadline: January 31, 2027

Notification of Acceptance: March 15, 2027

Early bird registration deadline: April 15, 2027

Final registration deadline for authors: April 30, 2027

Conference Dates: 26–28 May 2027, with pre-conference activities on May 25th

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