

POWER AND LANGUAGE IN MULTICULTURAL WORKPLACE

THE OTHER AT THE WORKPLACE: Power and Language in a Multicultural Workplace

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Abstract – Tiivistelmä <p>Today’s work markets are increasingly shaped by the multilingual reality. The present research offers an intercultural communication perspective on language diversity and power relations at modern work environment. Study investigates how young professionals and their foreign colleagues perceive diversity affecting in their communicative behaviours in culturally heterogeneous workplace. Analysis of data from participants has been conducted through an analysis of open ended self-report questionnaire in a multinational company where English is used daily as a corporate language. In particular, results of present study indicate that more diverse language skills are attributed to perception of power. Respectively low proficiency in second language communication at workplace seems to cause feelings of alienation and exclusion among employees leading to misunderstandings and conflicts. In addition, the need of standardized language policies in organizational level is raised.</p>	
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<p>Tiivistelmä – Abstract</p> <p>Nykypäivän työmarkkinat ovat yhä kasvavassa määrin monikielisiä. Tämän tutkimuksen tarkoituksena on tuoda kulttuurienvälisen viestinnän näkökulmaa kielen monimuotoisuuden ja modernin työympäristön valtasuhteiden tutkimukseen. Tutkimuksessa kartoitetaan, miten nuoret ammattilaiset ja heidän ulkomaiset kollegansa kokevat monimuotoisuuden vaikuttavan heidän kommunikointiinsa ja käyttäytymiseensä kulttuurisesti heterogeenisellä työpaikalla. Tutkimusaineiston keruu on tehty analysoimalla monikansallisen yrityksen työntekijöiden avoimia kertomuksia työympäristöstään, jossa englantia käytetään työkielenä päivittäin. Esillä olevan tutkimuksen tulokset osoittavat, että monipuolinen kielitaito on rinnastettavissa valtaan. Vastaavasti alhainen toisen kielen taitotaso työpaikalla näyttää aiheuttavan työntekijöiden keskuudessa vieraantumisen ja syrjäytymisen tunteita sekä saattaa johtaa väärinkäsityksiin ja konflikteihin. Lisäksi tutkimus nostaa esiin stantardisoitujen kielipolitiikkaa käsittelevien ohjesääntöjen tarpeen monikulttuurisissa organisaatioissa.</p>	
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1. Introduction

“It is easy to see why a diversity of cultures should confront power with a problem. If culture is about plurality, power is about unity. How can it sell itself simultaneously to a whole range of life forms without being fatally diluted?”

Terry Eagleton

In the new global economy, language diversity has become a central issue for labour markets which have experienced a substantial change during past decades. Companies have expanded operations abroad and increasingly free-floating work force is more diverse than ever. Additionally, the nature of work has increasingly changed towards more specialist-oriented where experts from inter-disciplinary fields across borders put their capacities together in order to achieve set goals within a defined period of time. Multiple studies have noticed this tendency and during past years have focused on researching workplace diversity. Particularly in the literature on international business and management the main focus has been on out-comes of multicultural teams (Horwitz & Horwitz, 2007) and diverse work groups’ positive or negative performance (Ogbonna & Harris, 2006). In addition several comparisons between heterogeneous and homogenous workgroups have been made (Mannix & Neale, 2005; Larson, 2007; Harris & Sherblom, 2011). Subsequently, multicultural teams’ efficacy and effectiveness (Oetzel, 2001; Matveev & Milter, 2004) have been widely researched. Another equally important focus has been on discrimination and mistreatment of minorities at workplaces causing depression, anxiety, and hostility based on employees’ demographical variables (Meares et al., 2004; Ogbonna & Harris, 2006).

However, a number of organizational scholars have raised discussion on organizations’ language practices and intercultural training at workplaces (Marschan-Piekkari et al., 1999; Andersen & Rasmussen, 2004; Newton & Kusmierczyk, 2011). Next voices from different European universities have put into operation the term of intercultural mobility in order to promote

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intercultural awareness among young professionals through the project “ICOPROMO” (<http://www.ces.uc.pt/icopromo>). Similarly, European Union has been funding research projects, such as “DYLAN” (www.dylan-project.org) on societal multilingualism and linguistic diversity management aiming to provide scientific backing to the concept of multilingual repertoires as well as resources demonstrating that Europe's linguistic diversity can be an asset for the development of knowledge and economy (Meyer & Apfelbaum, 2010).

Yet, little attention has been focused on language diversity in multinational enterprises. Language has been claimed to be the forgotten factor in multinational management by several authors (Feely & Harzing, 2003; Luo & Shenkar 2006; Kankaanranta & Planken, 2010). Nevertheless language awareness, understood as the awareness of how speaking one or more languages or a particular language such as English is related to social and professional status, appears to be an extremely important but forgotten issue in contemporary business context (Méndez García & Pérez Cañado, 2005; Meyer & Apfelbaum, 2010). However, like Maznevski et al. (2000) and Vallaster (2005) point out, one of the greatest challenge of the multicultural organization research is that studies has been done in a laboratory settings with students rather than real-life up to date business settings. Therefore more fieldwork is required to fully understand multicultural groups' effect in current day's business context.

This study attempts to highlight the impact of language on work behaviour and discuss the implications of language fluency in the workplace from point of view of power. The initial assumption of this study is that individuals position themselves in in-groups/out-groups based on language proficiency and in addition, language proficiency is expected to create unequal power relations in the workplace causing negative consequences in work performance and efficacy (Ogbonna & Harris, 2006). Present research concentrates on language's effect on individuals' performance in one particular multicultural working environment. As numerous multinational companies rely on multicultural workers to perform work-related activities, this research will help

organizations notice the importance of communication in multicultural environment and pay more attention to adequate language strategies. It is desired that second language competence could be developed to be a tool for promoting and improving intercultural communication in organizations.

2. Diversity in Organizations

Modern-days' most common working environment is an organization, where professionals and experts from several nationalities and cultural backgrounds bring together their skills, capacities and values. Since the 1990's numerous organizations modified the work's modus operandi by applying less hierarchical organizational structures and divided workforce in work groups and teams of experts (Mannix & Neale, 2005). Members of these work groups increasingly represent international employees bringing together different expectations for working together in order to success in their mission. The fluent use of an established corporate language is frequently a necessity.

Over the years considerable amount of literature has been published on diversity management and on organizational behaviour. Additionally several academic articles have covered diversity's role in organizations (e.g. Mannix & Neale, 2005; Larson, 2007; Harris & Sherblom, 2011). One of the main literature's primary concerns has been how diversity effects on the organizations' functions and economic success. Yet, the concept of diversity, commonly understood as a quality of having many different ideas brought together, has varied across different studies. Harris & Sherblom, (2011) conceptualize diversity as a construct which includes demographic factors representing statistically expressed socioeconomic characteristics of a population such as race or ethnicity, age, gender, religion, social and economic class. Mannix & Neale (2005) adds to the concept of diversity non-demographic factors like education or person's functional background and organizational researchers Zaroni & Janssens (2004) extent the notion by inserting variables like group tenure and organization tenure. That is to say Zaroni & Janssens (2004) suggest that

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each demographic variable of diversity can be classified according to its level of visibility and level to job-relatedness. Thus Zanoni & Janssens (2004) divides diversity between an individual and a group phenomenon placing it to a specific organization context where diversity can be seen as a group of employees belonging to the same category. Similarly, network theorists like Valenti & Rockett (2008) have found that demographic factors influence individuals' tendency to form network ties within their organizations.

Previous research has described diversity in workplace from both optimistic and negative point of view representing diversity as a "double-edged sword". In contemporary organizational and managerial research literature the optimistic point of view presents diversity as a value which creates potential economic benefits for team outcomes (Zanoni & Janssens, 2004) and effectiveness (Gibson et al., 2003). Diverse groups are expected to have a broader range of knowledge, expertise, perspectives and produce higher-quality solutions than homogeneous groups of individuals do (Larson, 2007). In addition heterogeneous groups are expected to generate more creative solutions to problems than homogeneous groups (Mannix & Neale, 2005; Harris & Sherblom 2011). Similarly, cognitive diversity among heterogeneous members of a group has been claimed to promote learning, creativity, innovation, and problem solving (Meares et al., 2004; Horwitz & Horwitz, 2007).

Nonetheless, a number of studies have contemplated diversity from more pessimistic perspective. Mannix & Neale (2005) suggest that diversity can create social division, which in turn might cause poor social integration and cohesion, resulting negative outcomes for the group. Diversity has been claimed to cause significant difficulties resulting from tension leading to intra/intergroup conflicts (Horwitz & Horwitz, 2007). For instance, Valenti & Rockett (2008) note that differences among group members might bring on individuals to interact in ways that may weaken group performance and higher uncertainty may be the source for more conflicts, misunderstandings and frustrations. Management theorists Horwitz & Horwitz (2007) present a

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similarity–attraction perspective in order to provide an explanation why homogenous teams work better. Horwitz & Horwitz (2007) suggests that individuals have a proclivity to select persons who are similar to themselves, and team cohesion and performance increases because of the shared characteristics of the group members.

As stated previously, a great number of studies in the organizational field have focused on visible outcomes of diversity. However, diversity seems to have more complex impact on employees' performance dynamics at the workplace even when they are not aware about it. Maznevski (2000) states that group members bring with them unconsciously different priorities for processes like information-gathering and decision-making, as well as presumptions for group dynamics. In addition Vallaster (2005) suggests that individual differences in gender, age, tenure, culture and/or nationality have an effect on performance in teams and organizations. Her data supports the proposition that country-of-origin culture influences social interactive behaviour by creating an intention to build shared understanding. Similarly, Zanoni & Janssens (2004) make an assumption that the demographic categories reflect essential differences in attitude, personality, and behaviour between employees linking power, language and diversity together. Harris & Sherblom (2011) also concluded that diversity in language, culture, background, and values seem to affect small group communication in the working place. Moreover, Ybema & Byun's (2009) study reveals small, but meaningful differences in organizational actors' cultural identity talk that are intimately related to the specific power asymmetries within multinational corporations. Together these studies outline that diversity management and underlying power relations are relevant issue in modern organizations. However, to date there has been little agreement on what role language diversity plays at workplaces.

While a great number of definitions of diversity exist, in this study diversity is understood very broadly as any attribute people use to tell themselves that another person is different (Mannix & Neale 2005). The advantage of this approach is that it is applicable to any particular group in

organizational context and it does not concentrate on outcomes but the individuals' attributions.

This notion allows treating language proficiency as a characteristic, which makes the other person different.

2.1 Multilingual Reality at Workplace

In a multinational business environment several languages are used in day-to-day communication and people from different linguistic and socio-cultural backgrounds are brought together. Méndez García & Pérez Cañado (2005) and Fredriksson et al. (2006) use of the notion “multilingual reality” to describe a typical European business context and role of language in the workplaces where globally operating business professionals all are likely to need two or more languages to do their work. Language policies at the workplace seem to be highly contextual depending on the extent of the company's global network of subsidiaries, customers, suppliers and joint ventures (Feely & Harzing, 2003). However, any language standardization in the company sends a message to employees at various levels whether it is for career progression, gaining information or social context in coffee-table conversations. It seems essential to master the common language to be a fully integrated member of the organization. To achieve this, some companies have decided to adjust their staff selection policies taking into account the required language competence in the recruitment process so that the required mix of languages is obtained (Marschan-Piekkari et al., 1999). The desired language profile of the staff is already built before an employee enters to the company and company's attitude towards language skills plays a role in hiring, not at the workplace day-to-day practices. Another option to obtain optimal mix of languages is to provide language training but that is a slow, uncertain process which demands plenty of resources. Marschan-Piekkari et al. (1999) demonstrate how vulnerable such language-based communication flows are, mainly because they are extremely person-bound, but yet their power and positive or negative influence may be considerable. Language ends up to be an issue concerning individuals and their

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competences, which can be concluded by citing Marschan-Piekkari et al. (1999, p. 382)

“Companies don’t have languages, people do!”

Corporate language, referring to that all recruitment and personnel development is focused upon achievement of required standards in that one chosen language, is often chosen to facilitate formal reporting, and maintenance of policy and procedure documents and information systems of the company. A common corporate language facilitates informal communications between operating units and within cross-national teams fostering a sense of belonging as an element in diffusing a corporate culture (Feely & Harzing, 2003) and language’s influence in social structures of the company is highlighted (Louhiala-Salminen et al., 2012). Corporate language is the one everybody in the company should know in an adequate proficiency level. Previously published studies from linguists, anthropologists, and psychologists scholars have referred to language as a necessary tool of thinking. For example, in Slobin’s (1996) research on diversity of human language-structure thought and language are presented as inseparable units without which processing information does not seem possible. Additionally, language is claimed to have an impact on how person thinks about the world, for example having different concepts of time (Bloom, 2014). Consequently, different thinking behind language use may trigger misunderstanding at corporate level. Similarly Boroditsky (2001) claimed that languages force us to attend to certain aspects of our experience by making them grammatically obligatory and as a result speakers of different languages might be biased to attend and to encode different aspects of their experience while speaking.

Common language seems to be a key for well-functioning organization. Despite of some voices arguing English to be a ‘killer language’ par excellence, and likely to displace other languages everywhere and driving world to monolingualism (Rogerson-Revell, 2007; Coupland, 2011), English’s socio-economic and technological supremacy in today’s world is unquestionable. Anglophone countries, like United Kingdom and United States have long - lasting economic

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superiority in the global markets. Also other means of communication like the internet, and social media, have allowed more intensive internationalizing and increased global contacts using English as common language. English has hence established its near monopoly position as a global language of international commerce and business over Spanish, French or Chinese. The use of English as "lingua franca" (ELF), which refers exclusively to the use of English between speakers whose mother tongue is not English (Rogerson-Revell, 2007), has increased over the world.

Work groups need to use common corporate language to fulfil tasks and reach purposeful, task-oriented and persuasive way of communication in their professional area. The use of several languages is characterized by a high degree of adaptation where the most important factor seems to be the achievement of work-related goals. Ideologies of language and ethnic identity, individual preferences, and even linguistic competencies are secondary (Meyer & Apfelbaum, 2010). Business communication researchers Kankaanranta (2010), Louhiala-Salminen et al. (2005) and Rogerson-Revell (2007) have developed the term "Business English as Lingua Franca" (BELF) to refer English more concretely as a lingua franca in business contexts and underline the use of the language among business professionals operating internationally.

Nevertheless, by any means a common corporate language solution is trouble-free. Corporate language will often incur resistance, especially if there is a large body of corporate personnel lacking competence in the chosen language (Feely & Harzing, 2003). Corporate language may be chosen according to the organizations headquarters' geographical location, or according to the local offices or majority of immigrant workers. Moreover, language diversity has been presented as cause of misunderstandings at the workplace and in Vallaster's (2005) study group members reported have faced increasing uncertainty, growing dissatisfaction, strained group relationships and difficulties in handling role ambiguities, because of the diversity. Especially misunderstandings due to second language were emphasized. That is to say that even having a common language, English used in workplaces is claimed to not be cultural neutral or cultureless

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(Louhiala-Salminen et al, 2005; Kankaanranta et al, 2010) and either the use of same language does not guarantee homogeneous communication. Individuals' cultural and linguistic background differs and their use of English reflects these experiences, giving way to intercultural misunderstandings (Méndez García & Pérez Cañado, 2005). BELF communication is considered to be inherently intercultural and the context seems to be necessarily multilingual where BELF carries speaker's culture and thus the features of participants' mother tongue discourse, at least to some degree (Kankaanranta 2010). Furthermore, notion "lingua franca" is claimed to be inherently pointing towards issues of power and status attached to language use. Specifically the use of a majority language as a lingua franca may constrain or facilitate communication in different ways, depending on whether participants are native or non-native speakers of that language (Boroditsky, 2001; Meyer & Apfelbaum, 2010).

In business context the main aim is to get the job done, and language should facilitate communication worldwide, hence why English is frequently adopted at workplaces (Rogerson-Revell, 2007; Kankaanranta et al., 2010). However, language has an impact on internal communication effectiveness where symmetrical communication on employees' relational outcomes is fully mediated via fluent and transparent communication (Men & Stacks, 2014).

2.2 Language, Culture and Communication Behaviour Patterns

The first serious discussions and analyses of linking culture, language and behaviour together emerged during the 1950s with Kroeber & Kluckhohn (1952) treating culture as group effect and stating that "*culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behaviour acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups, including their embodiments in artefacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, on the other as conditioning elements of further action.*" (p. 181). Consequently organizational culture studies have concentrated on Hofstede & Minkov's

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(2010) research treating culture as collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one human group from another. While not deterministic, nationality has been a potent factor in explaining individuals' psychological attributes and behaviour and nationality has been expected to affect a person in numerous ways with four important accompaniments of one's nationality as values, cognitive schema, demeanour, and language (Hambrick et al., 1998; Hofstede & Minkov, 2010).

However, a group member can be particularly representative or unrepresentative of his or her home country (Hambrick et al., 1998) and several weaknesses in categorization of national cultural differences in intercultural communication have been observed (Lauring, 2003). There has been a strong critique towards national culture based classification in current cross-cultural management literature. Research in question does not understand cultural identities as coherent, stable entities, but as shifting social constructs that are dependent on specific interests made in a certain moment in a certain situation (Ybema & Byun, 2009). Moreover, a person may vary in the degree to which he or she identifies with, values, or expresses a particular cultural identity at any given time, depending on the salience and meaning of that identity in the context within which he or she is operating (Ely & Thomas, 2001). Additionally, clear conclusions of linking language and thinking closely together cannot be made hence previous studies cannot confirm whether experience with a language affects language-independent thought such as thought for other languages or thought in non-linguistic tasks (Boroditsky, 2001).

Cultural identity can be understood as socially constructed, complex and dynamic on-going process and not a mere result of the national culture. In this research, culture is considered from the communication perspective as a process, interaction and meaning. People are not taken as passive representations of their culture but regulators of a complex system, which they co-create during the interaction (Guirdham, 2011). In addition culture is perceived as a group-specific collective phenomenon within a social context and it is partially shared among individuals through values and

opinions, thought approaches and patterns of behaviour (Maznevski & Peterson, 1997; Maznevski et al., 2002). The relevance of culture does not lie in being conformed to in action, but in it being taken into account as an available resource for making sense of action (Barinaga, 2007). However, it is equally important to note that cultural differences in relational schemas can affect both perception and behaviour unconsciously. As Sanchez-Burks et al. (2009) state, performance in intercultural workplace interactions can be compromised even in the absence of conscious prejudice. For example, relational patterns can affect what verbal and nonverbal cues an individual notices in an interaction and the implicit value attached to these cues can lead individuals in an intercultural interaction to interpret and respond to the same situation very differently (Sanchez-Burks et al., 2009).

2.2.1 Communication Accommodation Theory

So far this chapter has focussed on language and culture's influence in organizations. The following section will discuss how the employee's behaviour in an intercultural workplace has been observed to change and how verbal and nonverbal outcomes may have significant social meanings.

Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) is one of the best developed tools relating to interpersonal adjustment between speakers emerged from socio-psychological field (Giles & Powesland, 1975). Communication Accommodation Theory is a cross contextual theory that emphasizes differences in motivation, communication strategies and reactions to the behaviour of others that characterize communication across all kinds of intergroup encounters (Gallois et al., 1995). CAT focuses to research linguistic moves, nonverbal behaviour and paralanguage people perform to decrease and increase communicative distance between interactants. Giles (2008) states that dialects and words change depending on whom we are speaking and people make upward and downward adjustments taking conversational goals into account in order to enhance interpersonal similarities. People are claimed to be prompt to converge to others they find socially rewarding which makes communication accommodation to function of the social power a target other is

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perceived to possess (Giles, 2008). Studies also report that people feel it is smoother and more enjoyable to communicate with those who accommodate to match their linguistic style than with those who do not. Linguistically communicators might change their accents, speech rate, word choice, utterance duration and syntax to match those of a conversational partner and also modify their nonverbal behaviours such as gaze or frequency of head nods, sometimes without even realizing it (Bi et al., 2014). In particular, participants may convert to their counterpart's language use by using the same language structure, accent, dialect, speech rate, and lexical diversity as their interlocutors in order to gain acceptance or approval (Ayoko et al., 2002).

However, despite communicating in the same language, differences in linguistic practices and perceptions have contributed significantly to difficult situations and poor relations among participants causing misunderstandings as each non-native speaker of English speaks English in a different way (Gallois et al., 1995; Largerström & Andersson, 2003). Yet, there are voices claiming that workers tend adjust their performance to the context independently from the cultural background perspective. Each context has unique features where interactants converge to gain approval or identify to their partner, or in contrast diverge to distinguish themselves from the conversation partner (Gallois et al., 1995). Skills and competences of the conversation partner and underlying stereotypes both seem to affect to which extent participants slow and simplify their speech, make more questions to check understanding or choose of familiar topics. Similarly Sanchez-Burks et al. (2009) show that individuals respond differently to nonverbal behavioural mirroring cues exhibited in workplace interactions, depending on their cultural group membership. Behavioural mirroring refers a specific type of nonverbal interpersonal dynamic, where people unknowingly adjust their physical movements and vocal tone in a manner, that it mirrors the behaviours exhibited by their interaction partner (Sanchez-Burks et al., 2009). It has also been reported to infer rapport and empathy in social interactions. High level of behavioural mirroring is generally experienced as a reassuring signal that the encounter is proceeding well. However,

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members of different cultural groups might have different interpretations and expectations about what behaviours are appropriate or inappropriate in a given interaction.

Yet there is not enough evidence to conclude that culture would have a significant impact to accommodate. Context where intercultural communication takes place has been highlighted as it takes into consideration the concepts of dependence and solidarity on one's in-group and impact of the situation and future orientation of the participants (Gallois et al., 1995). Importance of metacommunication about idiomatic speech patterns for speakers of English as a second language is prominent as the main aim in accommodating is to achieve clearer or smoother communication. Giles (2008) and Bi et al. (2014) concluded that people have been observed to adjust one's own behaviour to match that of other people, and it is prevalent in human communication even when people do differ in the extent to which they accommodate each other. Accommodation behaviour has been defined as the process in which one changes own verbal and nonverbal behaviours to match that of others to reduce linguistic or communicative differences (Ylänne-McEwen & Coupland, 2000; Giles, 2008). Especially in intercultural encounters accommodation behaviour is considered to be an important factor in many aspects of human communication, because it can foster a positive interpersonal relationship, increase feelings of similarity, affiliation, rapport, and liking and can also sometimes make people more cooperative and easily persuaded hence it can facilitate tasks like negotiation (Gallois et al., 1995; Bi et al., 2014).

Empirical studies upon communicating in second language (L2) at workplaces are largely based on investigating how successful communication process is (Kankaanranta et al., 2010). Business English as Lingua Franca (BELF) has been characterized as a "*simplified, hybridized, and highly dynamic communication code*" (Kankaanranta, 2010b, pp 380) where BELF discourse includes a hybrid of diverse features that reflect the speakers' mother tongue communication practices (Louhiala-Salminen et al., 2012). In this encounter between interactants three contextual factors seem to become relevant in their conception of BELF discourse: a) the shared business

domain, b) the shared special field of expertise, and c) the length of relationship with the communication partner (Kankaanranta & Planken, 2010). If the factors correlate, communication is perceived successful and common understanding seen to be reached. However, Ybema & Byun (2009) showed that in different organizational settings, cultural differences are enacted differently in people's identity talk, underlining the context-dependent nature of culture and learned cultural distance in intercultural encounters in order to create meaning within that particular context. It seems apparent that communication accommodation is highly contextual and person-bound.

2.2.2 Intercultural Willingness to Communicate

In addition to an intention to reach common understanding, Clément's et al. (2003) study brings up the second language (L2) use as one of the most effective avenues towards improving and promoting intercultural communication in a multicultural society. Willingness to communicate (WTC) model intends to explain individual and contextual influences in the choice to initiate L2 communication (McCroskey & Richmond, 1990). Influence over other is considered as the most immediate behavioural intention followed by communicative confidence, motivational propensities tied to the group and to the interlocutor and the affective-cognitive context, which includes intergroup attitudes, communicative competence, and aspects of the social situation (Clément et al., 2003). Past research has shown that two of the strongest predictors of WTC are individual characteristics like communication anxiety and perceived communication competence. Accordingly, willingness to communicate is influenced by immediate situational antecedents and the desire to communicate with a specific person is correlative with the state of communicative self-confidence in addition to interpersonal motivation, intergroup motivation, self-confidence, intergroup attitudes, social situation, communicative competence, intergroup climate, and personality (Kang, 2005).

Moreover, the term of Intercultural Willingness to Communicate (IWTC) defines more concretely one's predisposition to initiate intercultural communication encounters (McCroskey & Richmond, 1990; Sallinen-Kuparinen et al., 1991; Kassing, 1997). Intercultural Willingness to Communicate takes into consideration how ethnocentrism and ability to manage anxiety and uncertainty influences on individuals inclination to communicate with others of different cultural groups. Study suggests that more ethnocentric people may not feel the need or see the value in communicating with people from different cultures and are more prone to stereotyping, and having prejudice (Kassing 1997). Consequently, their levels of IWTC remain considerably lower than their levels of WTC. Yet prior cross cultural experiences play a significant role as findings suggests that people higher in IWTC tend to report having more friends in foreign countries which in turn provides initial evidence of construct-related validity for the IWTC scale (Kassing, 1997).

The model does not, however, explicitly deal with situations in which status-based linguistic accommodation and other social pressures might create second language (L2) use against the personal preference of the speaker. Given that individuals are more likely to perform a behaviour of which others approve, the belief that others support engaging in L2 communication might be sufficiently motivating to do so. Willingness to communicate (WTC) would, therefore, be enhanced to the extent that one perceives normative pressure to communicate in the L2 at workplaces (Clément et al, 2003). Therefore second language might be adopted because of the social norms and workplace practices, not personal interest or intrinsic motivation.

Related to shared context, here workplace, Marschan-Piekkari's research (1999) claims that multinational corporations' staff can develop close relationships so that they function in a way that everyone has access to, and is willing to share critical information in a flexible and integrative way with other units, for the mutual benefit. However, such free exchange of information requires a high tolerance for ambiguity, a co-operative rather than competitive atmosphere. A shared

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understanding of the exchange context, and social norms, can be reinforced by trust and personal engagement with others highlighting the importance on interaction (Marschan-Piekkari, 1999). In similar vein Scott & Myers (2010) underline the importance of an integrative framework seeking to explain the production, reproduction and transformation of organizational membership through communication. People monitor their behaviours and attempt to make behavioural choices on the basis of past actions and face uncertainty through information seeking and sense making taking into account their expectations and others. Newcomers tend to submit some control to the organization where power asymmetries are a product of interaction among dominant, resistant and submissive parties (Scott & Myers, 2010). Thus, the organization socializes employees into the organization's culture. Newcomers may choose to conform to socialization efforts and rules of the organization or they may choose to openly resist them attempting to modify role expectations. However, organization members often act in ways they perceive to be in their best interest. To illustrate the importance of a context in fluent second language communication, Silva & Sias (2010) state that communication is central and continuous to create organizational identity and perception of belonging in a group a particular social setting. Organization can form a big, fully integrated in-group and create strong sense of connection among members, which in turn might make communication more fluent and transparent, and hence reduce misunderstandings and possible conflicts at workplace.

2.3 Language-based Marginalization

So far it can be concluded that a shared knowledge in common language might guarantee efficient and positive procedures, but it is necessary to bear in mind that, individuals can engage in counter-productive activities such as gatekeeping (Marschan-Piekkari, 1999; Feely & Harzing, 2003). Despite diverse and flexible modern communication methods, there might occur a case of information distortion and loss in exchanges between individuals in different multinational companies caused by language differences particularly among non-native speakers of English

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(Marschan-Piekkari, 1999). This suggests that cultural and language differences might disturb fluent flow of information in organizations. The levels of English proficiency vary, and the fact that English is used as the corporate language in geographical areas where it is not generally mastered, may again cause inequality and imbalance of power and hinder knowledge sharing. Employees who master the dominant language might have access to a range of formal and informal communication channels, enabling them to engage in social bonding across the organization, while individuals lacking such linguistic resources find themselves isolated from information networks and decision-making processes (Marschan-Piekkari et al., 1999). Language skilled personnel as gatekeepers inevitably brings with it the risk that power will be used in counter-productive ways filtering, distorting or even blocking transmission, and therefore impeding rather than facilitating the flow of information in the organization. So whilst it is important to have diverse language skills within an organization, it is also of great importance that language-skilled personnel do not emerge as sources of organizational dysfunction themselves (Feely & Harzing, 2003).

Similarly, Méndez García & Pérez Cañado's (2005) study concludes native speakers' privileged position using the corporate language and delimiting how people behave in the workplace. Hobman et al. (2004) draws attention back to the work group involvement, which is related to individuals' involvement in task related processes, such as information exchange and collaborative decision making, and how much individuals feel respected and listened. In turn, Barinaga (2007) suggests that the feeling of confusion arises when individual attempts to separate him-/herself from aimless group discussion and tend to highlight one's distinctiveness in relation to the rest of the group.

Other scholars have highlighted the relevance of clear and explicit guidelines at the workplace as to when, how, and why each of the languages should be used can be perceived as problematic (Louhiala-Salminen et al., 2012). The distribution of the amounts of the languages used in the daily work may vary significantly (Kankaanranta, 2010) and use of different languages might

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lead to the emergence of alternative linguistic markets or language clusters within different organizational contexts (Vaara et al., 2005; Tange & Luring 2009). Language-based marginalization of non-natives seems to be a common social dynamic within the multilingual organizations and one that generates a sense of isolation from information processes and decision-making. This view is supported by Tange & Luring (2009) who observe a decrease in the amount of communication, suggesting that non-native speakers withdraw from exchanges or routines perceived to be non-essential if these require the use of English. Tange & Luring (2009) present this phenomenon as thin communication, which can be ascribed to the fact that people are confined to a limited range of linguistic registers in their second or foreign language, and may have a negative impact on organizational information networks and knowledge transfers. Similarly cross-cultural management scholars Feely & Harzing (2003) discuss language interfaces in businesses predicting that thin communication will trigger more problems of miscommunication, uncertainty, mistrust and conflict and unless these problems are professionally managed, they will bring harmful consequences for the business and its relationships.

What follows from having highly language skilled personnel at a workplace, is an emergence of a role of the language nodes (Marchan-Piekkari et al., 1999). Feely & Harzing (2003) study indicated that in the absence of sufficient language capability and due to lack of time or finances to adopt training or corporate language approach, companies become heavily dependent on their linguistically skilled personnel. These key employees might then become informal language nodes establishing themselves as the default communications channel between the company and the external world (Feely & Harzing, 2003). This practice places an extra burden on those acting as language nodes impairing their ability to perform their formal organizational duties. Use of language nodes also seems to introduce an increased risk of miscommunication, as the language node personnel might be inexpert in the field of work that is the subject of the communication (Feely & Harzing, 2003). These nodes might weaken the formal and established chain of reporting

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in the company, weakening the positions of the senior managers who are being bypassed which in turn creates a potential conflict. Language nodes seem to empower the employee who often does not have an official position in the communication network, but is taken away from his or her official work to translate (Andersen & Rasmussen, 2004). In other words, wide language skills can be seen increasing employee's power in horizontal level giving better access to information but also as extra burden.

However, research on international companies seems to pay very little attention to the impact of language on their organizational structure even despite the contribution of language skills to the communication processes (Andersen & Rasmussen 2004). Together with Marchan's et al. study (1997), Andersen & Rasmussen (2004) reveal the issue of language skills being ignored in almost all literature on informal communication. Staff with superior language capabilities can be considered to be able to build strong personal networks within the multinational firm, and language becomes an informal source of expert power. Advanced language skills make it thus possible to create personal ties to employees in other units opening up for possibilities to seek advice, access critical information earlier, and to speed up the decision-making process at subsidiary level.

The studies presented this far provide evidence that language contains cultural traits affecting on the individuals behaviour as individuals interact and make interpretations within their cultural and linguistic context (Luo & Schenkar, 2006). However, transparent knowledge sharing might reduce misunderstandings and possible conflicts. Yet, it can be seen that it is becoming increasingly difficult to ignore the power-relations in culturally diverse workplaces.

3. Power in Organizations

Power, commonly understood as the ability or right to control people or things, is constantly present in our everyday social interactions as humans tend to strive to fulfil their needs and goals using tools such as conviction and persuasion. Power has been a recurring theme in studies on social

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interaction in organizations as a basic force in all kind of social relationships, and an inherent characteristic of social interaction (Kipnis, 2006; Turner 2005; Greer & van Kleef, 2010; Handgraaf, 2008). Power and dependency have been linked together, concentrating on the state of needing something or someone else for support or help (Emerson, 1962). For example, Clegg et al. (2006) link division of labour together with power, following a classical “Webern” sense of legitimate power. This division seems to still be active in organizations from the point of view of hierarchical structures of dominancy and authority, where power is understood as a capacity, resource dependency, supervision, routinization, or formalization which seeks to increase the control over employees’ behaviour. In turn, recent research on power has considered power as the potential to influence, and consequently see influence as the exercise of power, proposing that power is based on persuasion, authority and coercion rather than dependency (Turner, 2005). Studies following this line of thought describe power as the ability of a person to influence others, and make them do things they would not do otherwise. Power is defined as the ability to change others’ behaviour, thoughts, and feelings (Anderson & Berdahl, 2002). In similar vein, Keltner et al.’s (2003) research on power focuses on the actor’s intentions or actions, treating power as dominance over other people.

It is noteworthy that social interaction does not happen in a vacuum, which is why studies on power often underline the significance of the context. Context is claimed to be one important building block of power, defined with reference to a particular relationship or group (Anderson & Berdahl, 2002). Therefore, power cannot be examined without an enquiry into its organization (Clegg et al., 2006). This study follows the idea that power is inseparable from interaction, and that all social institutions, including working life organizations, are potentially filled with power (Clegg et al., 2006). It is equally necessary to keep in mind that leadership communication is inherently power-based (Fairhurst & Connaughton, 2014).

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Consequently, it is necessary to contemplate how organizations are formed.

Communication scholars have studied organization from diverse theoretical perspectives and traditions using a variety of organizing systems like post positivism, postmodern theory or globalization theory (Mumby & May, 2005; Sias, 2009). Despite of other existing systems, current study relies on a theory of social construction for a variety of reasons. Firstly, social constructionism has been one the foundational theoretical perspectives for the interpretive turn taken in organizational research (Mumby & May, 2005) and social constructionism grounds other two theoretical perspectives as critical theory and structuration theory which are important to understand the informants' context, i.e. workplace.

Social construction approach is commonly used to research interpersonal relationships at workplace (Sias, 2009) making the theory natural to transfer to the study of power relations. According to social construction theory reality is socially constructed where human behaviour is grounded in knowledge and understanding of the world around the individuals (Sias, 2009). Consequently this knowledge is claimed to be a result of a social processes (Allen, 2005) and rather than being objective and real, knowledge is socially constructed and maintained. In other words, social constructionism rejects the notion of an objective reality and instead maintains that reality is subjectively built moment-by-moment through social behaviour through a dynamic process where reality changes as social behaviour changes.

Critical scholars of the social construction field are concerned with issues of injustice, asymmetrical power relations, and marginalization and emphasize individuals' role over the organization (May & Mumby, 2005). Similarly with the social construction perspective, critical theory conceptualizes language and communication as core to any understanding of organizational processes. However, critical theory goes beyond social constructionism in conceptualizing organizations as not just socially constructed, but including socially constructed systems of power, control, and domination (Sias, 2009). While members construct the organization, they construct also

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a system of domination that empowers some while marginalizing others. A primary goal of critical research is to identify and reveal the various methods of power, control, and domination, particularly the hidden or unobtrusive forms to which individuals are most vulnerable. At the micro level critical theorists emphasize the power and political nature of communication, revealing the ways communication reifies organizational structures and processes, making them appear real and natural and, therefore, immutable (Sias, 2009). Critical workplace relationship research hence addresses issues such as domination, resistance, and struggle looking closer how individuals communicatively enact and abuse power and control in various workplace relationships for example with supervisors, co-workers, etc. Moreover, critical research examines how participation in workplace relationships constructs and maintains organizational power and domination systems, how communication and discourse includes and excludes individuals from participation in relationship networks, how workplace relationships provide, or deny, access to “voice” and influence (Sias, 2009).

However, in any particular workplace there seems to be a common knowledge about suitable and polite communication strategies and appropriate speaking styles and power tips the balance between the behavioural approach and inhibition systems (Anderson & Berdahl, 2002; Mondillon et al., 2005). Present paper examines the role of communication in second language in creating, maintaining, and transforming organizations’ power structures.

3.1 Personal Power and Social Power

As described in the previous section, organizational hierarchy and influence over others appear as crucial factors influencing how people perceive and present themselves and others (Ybema & Byun, 2009). Especially personal forms of power, like status and dominance, are familiar terms in working environments. Status is understood here as the position or rank of someone when compared to others in a society, organization or group, whereas dominance is described as the influence, control

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or dominant position in a social hierarchy. In contrast to influence and dominance, other scholars describe power as the ability to do and get what you want, without being influenced by others (Mondillon et al., 2005). Personal power is strongly considered to be power over oneself and freedom from the influence of others (Lammers et al., 2009), ability to act for oneself or the experience of personal agency (Mondillon et al., 2005). In this case, power is the ability to ignore the influence of others, to control one's own outcomes, and to be personally independent. This type of power is often called in the literature as personal power (VanDijke &Poppe, 2006) and psychological scholars like Lammers et al. (2009) distinguish between social power meaning power over other people and personal power referring freedom from other people and argue that these two types of power have opposite associations with independence and interdependence. Accordingly Lammers et al. (2009) provides examples of personal power as the types of power that money or knowledge that a particular person possess brings. In other words, someone who has a lot of money or knowledge is less dependent on others than someone who lacks these things. Similarly, Galinsky et al. (2008) argues that power decreases people's dependence on norms and power is intimately connected with leadership. Fairhurst & Connaughton (2014) examines power from the point of view of communication placing emphasis on authorship and the formative power of language (e.g., the ability to categorize and label vaguely sensed feelings and thoughts). It is necessary to point out a very Western conception of the self as autonomous actor from society dominating this power discourse. Especially leadership communication is seen inherently power-based as attributional, context-dependent, and grounded in social constructionist processes concentrating on the individual.

Returning to the idea of power as influence over others and focusing on the organizational context, social power can be seen as managers' power over their employees (Lammers et al., 2009). Similarly and following the standard theory of power presented by Keltner et al. (2003), power is considered as the capacity for influence based on the control of resources valued or desired by others. Power is defined as an individual's relative capacity to modify others' states by providing or

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withholding resources or administering punishments. These resources and punishments in working environment can be material like money, economic opportunity, or job termination and social as knowledge, affection, friendship, decision-making opportunities or verbal abuse (Keltner et al., 2003).

It is also noteworthy that each of us makes assumptions regarding where and with whom power lies, and draw on hierarchies of power formed through the socialization process, which persons come often to take for granted (Harris & Sherblom, 2011). Cultural identities can be associated in the larger society with certain power positions, such that some cultural identity groups have greater power, prestige, and status than others (Ely & Thomas, 2001). An example of this is that historically social, economic and political powers have been perceived to be in hands of upper-middle-class white Europeans of wealth and privilege. This power hierarchy is still prevalent in some workplaces where privileged upper-middle-class, middle-aged, white male has more opportunities than other groups with different demographic factors (Harris & Sherblom, 2011).

In addition to division of power into personal and social power, some scholars have attempted to draw fine distinctions in cultural differences in perceiving power and claim that different societies weigh power relationships differently (Mesquita, 2001; Mondillon et al., 2005). Culture has also been claimed to predicate the extent to which power differences are accepted and consensually reinforced or disputed, challenged, and consensually negotiated (Keltner et al., 2003). Power may be associated with an obligation to uphold social norms depending on the salient cultural values (Mondillon et al., 2005). Yet another pertinent cultural value is power distance (Hofstede & Minkov, 2010) which refers to how much hierarchical inequality people accept and regard as legitimate according to societal norms like for example prestige, wealth, social status, caste system. For example Mondillon et al., (2005) argues that individuals from countries high in power distance tend to behave submissively and to be afraid in the presence of their superiors and in order to maintain power, individuals might tend to express and inhibit emotions differently,

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depending on the concept of power in their culture. Consequently Ybema & Byun, (2009) draws attention to ongoing negotiations and power dynamics in intercultural relations in organizational setting by stating that in multinational companies, management often remains firmly rooted in the parent country's culture. However, as discussed previously, culture is not considered to determinate the behaviour but organizational culture is seen as socially constructed among the members independently from any particular national culture.

3.2 Power Asymmetries

As presented previously, power is present in organizations not only because of hierarchical structures but also personal power holders as individuals. The distribution of power among different cultural identity groups inside the organization seems to be a key to how people think, feel, and behave at work (Ely & Thomas, 2001). One way to research people's perceptions of power and how they explain their behaviour is to apply attribution theory. Findings from the research on attributions are often related to expectancies, emotions, and behaviours in the workplace. Although attribution theory has its origins in psychology (Heider, 1958), it has been applied recently in leadership and organizational studies to explain fundamental cognitive processes by which people confirm cause and effect and give causal explanation for a positive or negative outcome of specific events (Martinko et al., 2006; Martinko et al., 2007). Recently attribution theory of leadership has been used to improve understanding of organizational behaviour, attitudes, expectancies and emotions, through investigation of the cognitive and affective processes (Ashkanasy, 2002).

In organizational context people actively search for causal explanations of the behaviour that they observe. Ability, effort, luck, and task difficulty are some attributes people assign on outcomes, especially when outcomes are disappointing or surprising (Ashkanasy, 2002; Martinko et al., 2007). High levels of ability were attributed to consistently high performance behaviours,

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promoting favourable evaluations, whereas low levels of ability were attributed to poor performance behaviours, promoting less favourable evaluations. The other cues included performance information, supervisory control, suggesting task oriented versus more general leadership styles and task control where the subjects were to evaluate explicit or creative outcomes (Martinko et al., 2007).

Despite of receiving criticism as naïve psychologists, attribution theory is firmly entrenched in the organizational behaviour research (Ashkanasy, 2002). Attributions account for a small but significant proportion of the variance in leaders' behaviours. However, the self-serving bias, where individuals tend to take credit for their successes and blame failures on external sources, has also to be taken into account. Another bias of the attribution theory is the false consensus bias, meaning that people in general view their own behaviour as normative, and expects other people to behave, perform, and make decisions that are typical of their own behaviour (Martinko et al., 2007). Still, gender, age, and culture all appear to be related to attributional tendencies and relevant to pay attention in organizational behaviour research.

Cross cultural management researcher Ybema & Byun (2009) investigates further the relationship among power and culture in multinational companies. Similarly, other scholars like Mondillon et al. (2005) have considered asymmetries of power in social functioning. It has been suggested that differences in power, or power dispersion, shape individual behaviour (Keltner et al., 2003; Galinsky, 2008) but the influence of power on interactions in organizational settings has been often overlooked (Keltner et al., 2008; Mannix & Neale 2005). However, Kipnis (2006, pp 177) identified some behaviour patterns where control of power caused subjects to:

- (a) *“increase their attempts to influence the behaviour of the less powerful,*
- (b) *devalue the worth of the performance of the less powerful,*

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- (c) *attribute the cause of the less powerful's efforts to power controlled by themselves, rather than to the less powerful's motivations to do well,*
- (d) *view the less powerful as objects of manipulation, and*
- (e) *express a preference for the maintenance of psychological distance from the less powerful."*

More recently, Keltner et al. (2003) associated with power a) positive affect, b) attention to rewards, c) automatic information processing, and d) disinhibited behaviour (pp 2). In contrast reduced power is associated with negative affect, attention to threat, punishment, others' interests, and those features of the self that are relevant to others' goals, controlled information processing and inhibited social behaviour (Keltner et al., 2003). Similarly, Anderson & Berdahl's (2002) empirical data supports the idea of powerful people is given more chances to speak than are individuals with low power.

These behaviour patterns seem to put native speakers of English, and/or the parent language, in a more powerful position than non-native speakers of any of the languages used in the workplace. Linguistic proficiency is claimed to be intimately connected to the acquisition of power within the multicultural team (Méndez García & Pérez Cañado, 2005) where high-power individuals are considered more likely to violate politeness-related communication norms by talking more, interrupting more, are more likely to speak out of turn, and are more directive of others' verbal contributions than are low-power individuals (Keltner et al., 2003; Mondillon et al., 2005). On the other hand whereas excellent language skills seem to empower the employee, weaker language skills may disempower the employee. Workplaces can experience phenomenon of language based marginalization, where employees withdraw from conversations or express ethnocentric perceptions of the others.

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A study by Meares et al. (2004) concludes that some workers enter organizations with more power based in part on their cultural backgrounds and these individuals have more privilege to talk (or not to talk) about issues of mistreatment in the organization. In similar vein Anderson & Berdahl (2002) point out attempts to link the effects of power on one type of behaviour, such as nonverbal communication or social perception. They state that, people with low power might perform a kind of self-censorship by inhibiting themselves from speaking. This suggests that the effects of power might be mediated by the subjective sense of power. Similarly, Luo & Shenkar (2006) study use of a language that members of a given constituency do not master, which limits their ability to converse. Luo & Shenkar (2006) conclude that insufficient language proficiency lowers members' access to information and hence their power within the organization.

When an individual perceives himself or herself to be dissimilar from to the rest of the work group, more likely it is that the person will develop feelings of alienation and lack of commitment which in turn may cause dysfunctional behaviours such as increased turnover, absenteeism and failure achieving group goals (Valenti & Rockett, 2008). Similarly, less powerful individuals may not be given full credit for their performances. Reduced power can also be associated with depressive mood and anxiety, which increase the likelihood of more deliberate, controlled social cognition (Keltner et al., 2003). A recent study by Summereder et al. (2014) suggests that the perception of justice and the perception of procedural justice have serious effects on individuals' work attitude and behaviour. Power dispersion may also create feelings of inequality and injustice and heighten intergroup competition (Harrison & Klein, 2007; Greer & van Kleef, 2010). Perceived dissimilarity may limit individuals' integration or involvement in teams (Hobman et al., 2004) and people with high power have been shown to pay less attention to others and tend to use stereotypes more (Anderson & Berdahl, 2002; Keltner et al., 2003). Power seems to increase the tendency to judge others unsystematically. The power holder might find that he/she is able to influence others because of the power he controls and such compliance may lead the power holder

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to believe that his ideas and views are superior to other persons (Kipnis, 1972). People with great personal power were observed to use self-praising comparisons more and emphasize their cultural distinctiveness (Ybema & Byun, 2009) making them less inclined to extra effort to individuate and make sense of others (Lammers et al., 2009).

Table 1– Resume of power’s and language’s possible effects on behaviour based on the literature review above.

Individuals who master the language (and have power) might:	Individuals who are not fluent in language (don’t have power) might:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Obtain better career progression ▪ Can demonstrate field of expertise ▪ Have access to critical information ▪ Function as “language nodes” ▪ Function as gatekeepers ▪ Modify hierarchical structures in the organization ▪ Have more influence ▪ Have more chances to speak ▪ Use more stereotypes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Withdraw from conversations ▪ Experience information distortion ▪ Experience inequality and imbalance ▪ Hinder knowledge sharing ▪ Feel isolated and confused ▪ Are more dependent ▪ Perceive dissimilarity ▪ Decrease amount of communication

4. Methodology

Organizations face multilingual reality in their everyday actions and there is evidence suggesting that language awareness plays a crucial role in regulating workplace behaviour (Méndez García & Pérez Cañado, 2005). The present study investigates how young professionals and their foreign colleagues perceive diversity to effect on their communicative behaviour in a heterogeneous workplace, and how speaking one or more languages, in particular English, is related to social and professional status. This research attempts to highlight the implications of language fluency and power at the workplace.

Previous studies outline that literature on power and language is diverse and complex. Power is often difficult to differentiate from related constructs as influence, compliance, control, dominance, authority, status and rank. Consequently, language research has focused on cross cultural management studies (e.g Feely & Harzing, 2003; Fredrikson 2006) and business communication research (Kankaanranta, 2010), where the aim is to minimize misunderstandings and possible conflicts at the workplace. Literature review on power at workplace, and earlier research on communication behaviours in diverse groups, suggests that power is based on the attributed position and the cultural background might have an effect on individuals' communication behaviour at the workplace. Organizational research in the real world is challenging but necessary to expand knowledge of organizational processes and improve understanding of specific organizational problems. Organizational research adopts an inter-disciplinary approach incorporating ideas and approaches from wide range of backgrounds (Gray, 2013). An additional challenge is that people working in organisations tend to be very busy making it difficult for the researcher to gain access. However, organizational research offers a very practical focus with an emphasis on achieving measurable outputs that are specific to a particular organization. Downside of organizational research is that results may be of significance to that particular organization but

difficult to generalize elsewhere. Taking this into consideration, following research questions are raised:

RQ1: How are perceptions of diversity in the organization and language use related?

RQ2: How do workers characterize the relationship between language proficiency and power?

4.1 Research Design

To date various methods have been developed and introduced to measure power and language. Some of the corporate studies have used methods like group performance analysis and different role-playing techniques (Anderson & Berdahl, 2002). As for psychological research, used methods are often self-report measures and group decision tasks on laboratory settings (Keltner et al., 2003) in addition to researcher's observations (Kipnis, 2006). However, these artificial laboratory settings studies have not observed the day-to-day interaction at the workplace. Consequently they do not seem to provide a full understanding of language's impact on power relations at workplaces. Additionally, participants of these studies are often under-graduate university students, who participate in research for course credit or economic reward. Another problem with role-playing technique is that it concentrates on imaginary managerial performance and decision-making processes where participants pretend to be members of an organization.

Cross cultural management field has been more conscious of laboratory settings' implications and has focused on members' subjective perceptions by using an analysis of member's situated knowledge as method (Ybema & Byun, 2009). Additionally, behavioural science has examined power by using ethnographic study in order to gain a deeper understanding of the role of organizational culture on behaviour. For example Heracleous (2001) employed strategy of a

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longitudinal case study and used methods of in-depth interviewing, participant and nonparticipant observation, cultural audits through focus group sessions, informants, periodic descriptive surveys, and document analysis to research the role of organizational culture in the context of organizational change. Newton & Kusmierczyk's (2011) claimed a need for more ethnographic methods of data collection for the purposes of describing workplace communication in particular setting.

As stated previously, the purpose of the present research is to examine how people perceive their language use in relation with power and how informants' own experiences and attitudes are related to their behaviour at the workplace. The empirical nature of the study has been taken into consideration and present research has been conducted through constructivism epistemology and interpretivism theoretical perspective (Gray, 2013). As methodology survey research has been used and data was gathered by an open ended questionnaire in a particular organization. This approach was chosen particularly thinking of organizational research where emphasis is on description on people's perceptions and the actual reality of practise. It was essential to conduct the research with methods that can provide information explained by workers' own words and researcher to remain sensitive to situation and context (Ybema & Byun, 2009). This way research gains a deeper understanding of different perspectives, such as those of professionals with different nationalities defining their role in the organization in question. Yet, it is challenging to measure emotional experience and member's inhibition of expressing attitudes must be taken into account (Heracleous, 2001).

Qualitative research is characterized by its aims, which relate to understanding some aspects of social life, and its methods tend to generate interpretive results. Data for analysis is often collected from a smaller sample than for quantitative approaches (Bryman, 2012). Descriptive survey was chosen as a system for collecting information to describe, compare, or explain knowledge, attitudes and behaviour (Gray, 2013). The qualitative survey with open ended questions has a number of attractive features, as time and cost effectiveness and researcher's impartiality.

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Additionally a survey provides detailed, intensive information in the single case (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Bryman 2012) and offers an inductive approach to explore diverse perspectives and it might serve a stimulus for company policy changes (Gray, 2013). Micro level study seems to describe processes better in the fast paced business and commercial world and good description of a phenomenon can form the basis of a sound theory. The results of diverse surveys made in organizations are also frequently quoted in the media and therefore, results of these studies can make a major contribution to society by providing great coverage.

From the academic perspective, present research attempts to bring academic research and real working life environment closer together by using real organization for data collection. The aim is to cover intercultural communication from multidisciplinary perspective focusing on lingual, psychological and organizational viewpoints. Faculty boarders crossing inter-disciplinary study attempts to take advantage of the different perspectives and backgrounds of various cross-functional experts promoting innovation and creativity as well as understanding phenomenon as a whole and increase the collaboration and transparency between departments. While the potential for producing innovative outcomes is high, is necessary to keep in mind that the potential for conflicts can be even higher. Cross-functional approach is likely to experience tension caused by diverse professional viewpoints and competing goals. Yet, cross-functional approach can be a particularly important source of new knowledge and describes the reality of current days' organizations.

4.2 Data Collection

Method used in present research was a staff opinion questionnaire, which is the most common survey used in business context as it can provide valuable insights into many elements of an organization operations and working practices (Gray, 2013) . Sample was, as usually in qualitative research, purposive (Bryman, 2012) and researcher selected participants following her criteria to select target population from the specific organization by using convenience sampling

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technique. Researcher made use of her personal and professional relationship with the organization to gain access and have a rich data source to understand organizational culture and context further. Data collection concentrates on two different centres of a multinational language school centres situated in the United Kingdom. The organization in question offers language training with cultural exchange, academic achievement and educational travel delivering courses and programs for children, teenagers and adults. The company has been founded in the 1960's in a Nordic country and it has done a remarkable multinational expansion to be present nowadays in 107 countries all over the world. Currently the company has approximately 500 offices and in total 40 500 employees across all continents. Organizations' corporate language is established to be English, independently language centres' physical location. Researcher was able to observe communication within the workplace and across parent office and local office and even though these notes do not provide valid data, they provide first-hand contextual information on settings and illustrate the interactions between individuals in more longitudinal and periodic way.

The non-random sample consisted of a number of professional young adults from different cultural backgrounds reflecting the characteristics of the research. Participants did not possess much prior working or cross cultural experience, but shared the characteristic of working for the same company during the summer 2014. The age range of informants was 18- 35 years. Four of the respondents were from in United Kingdom, one from Sweden and two from Finland. All participants speak corresponding native languages as mother tongue. Over all participants' general work experience ranged from few weeks to 3 years being the mean 1, 07 years and their experience in the particular organization ranged from two weeks to 5 months obtaining the mean of 2, 86 months. Selected participants represented middle management and operational level of the organisational levels. The current study was conducted in a field setting especially in order to increase the relevance of the findings to organizational settings, and it concentrated on informants' unique perceptions and subjective ideas.

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Data gathering consisted of formal, standardized open questions based on Tange & Lauring's (2009) study on language management and social interaction within the multilingual workplace. The questionnaire was written in corporate language, English. Key informants were 7 employees of a particular organization (6 women, 1 man), who were contacted via social network platform's private message system. Informants provided demographic information and filled the open end questionnaire describing their perceptions on interactions with other nationalities and how they perceive the language diversity and power in their workplaces. Questionnaire sheet is attached in the end of present study (see appendix). Participants answered the questionnaire during the period of December 2014 - February 2015.

Table 2: Profile of the participants

No.	Nationality	Sex	Age group	Position	Mother Tongue	Total answer length
1	British	male	18-25	Assistant Activities Manager	English	423 words
2	Finnish	female	26-35	Activity Leader	Finnish	497 words
3	Swedish	female	26-35	Course leader	Swedish	338 words
4	Finnish	female	26-35	Course leader	Finnish	323 words
5	British	female	18-25	Student Services Coordinator	English	300 words
6	British	female	18-25	Assistant Activities Manager	English	579 words
7	British	female	18-25	Activity leader	English	71 words

Informants' prior cross cultural experience was studied by asking them to describe their personal background, their overall working experience and their motives to work in the organization.

Participants were not required to specify their work background thus they did not provide additional

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data on their previous work experience. Informant's motives to work in the organization varied from informants' personal interests and previous first hand experiences to second hand information provided by their friends and family members.

N2: "I'm interested in international work environments and working with children... I have also been as a student in language travel back in 1998"

N1: "My mother has hosted students and I have always had a great time interacting with them"

Some of the informants had found vacancy by chance on internet. Overall participants' main motivation for applying for the particular job resulted to be the need for money.

N6: "Found the job through student employment during summer months."

N7: "I worked here after applying via an advert I had seen."

N3: "I applied and got an interview then I got the job as a course leader."

Informants' prior cross-cultural experiences varied from holidays and working experience to an exchange year abroad. No informant was first time involved in cross-cultural setting and impact of the previous international contacts was emphasized. Participants' own perception on their language proficiency in corporate language (English) was native or excellent.

N2: "I have studied as an exchange student in 3 different Spanish speaking countries (Spain, Mexico and Argentina) and I have worked as a practical trainee in Spain and Sweden"

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N7: "I had previously spent a short time working in an office in Germany with German being the language used."

N3: "In College I took part in an exchange program and went to Italy."

N5: "I have lived and worked in England for 3-4 months. The working environment was multi-cultural; we had people from many different countries. Furthermore, I have many international contacts and friends from around the world."

This introductory section provided a brief overview of participants. Analysis then goes on to describe the relation between of diversity in the organization and language use, and discusses how workers characterize the relationship between language proficiency and power.

4.3 Data Analysis

The aim of present research is to maximize the utility of information from small sample on the basis of attributions on language diversity. The first route in the selection was researcher's familiarity with it providing a local knowledge case. There exist intimate knowledge on the context and ample opportunity for detailed discussion. Present research is a snapshot on the language diversity placed in an organization context where case's complexity exemplifies in defined period of time, persons, place, and institution and it has both a theoretical and practical goal. On the one hand it aims to build on earlier research in the field, and on a practical level, to relay the findings back to the organizations involved to help organizations to improve their workplace communications in future, and use the findings in the improvement of international professional communication (Rogerson-Revell 2007; Charles & Marschan-Piekkari, 2002).

The analytic process of present research is a mixture of deductive and inductive approach. First, the seven survey responses were read and analysed by searching evidence of native speakers would feel that they would obtain better career progression, were able to demonstrate better field of

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expertise, or have access to critical information and hence more influence and more changes to speak. Respectively studying non-native speakers' answers the researcher's attention focused on withdrawal from conversations due to language barriers, and whether they experienced information distortion, inequality and imbalance or feelings of isolation, dissimilarity and confusion. In addition researcher examined informants' prior cross cultural experience and organization's role on language diversity management.

Coding frame was done by using thematic analysis to identify, analyse, and report repeating patterns or themes within qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis was chosen due to its nature as realist method, which reports experiences, meanings and provides acknowledge the ways individuals make meaning of their experience. The data analysis was done an inductive way following steps of becoming familiar with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes. Similar responses were identified by moving the data back and forth throughout the categories formed (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011). Informants' answers were classified into different categories (Table 3) as follows: positive/negative perceptions on diversity, adaptation behaviour, feelings of alienation and perceptions of power. Participants' responses were frequently revisited to ensure categories accounted for a sufficient level of nuance in participants' own words.

Table 3: Categorization of themes in data

Category	Survey questions
Positive/Negative perceptions on diversity	3. What does cultural diversity mean to your language experience in every day work assignments? 5. Is there anything you would like to change? 6. What guidelines does your organization have with regard to (language) diversity? 7. What effect does cultural/(lingual) diversity

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	<p>have on the social environment?</p> <p>9. In which ways language differences are shown in the organization?</p> <p>12. How do you feel when different languages are spoken in daily work situations/social situations?</p>
Adaptation behaviour	<p>4. In which ways have you adapted to the situation?</p> <p>10. How do language differences affect your communication and behaviour?</p>
Feelings of alienation	<p>11. What problems do language differences lead to in the organization?</p> <p>15. Who is included into decision making process and how much influence you feel like having in the organization?</p>
Perceptions of power	<p>8. What characterises a valuable employee?</p> <p>13. In addition to your workload, how often you are asked to translate?</p> <p>14. How would you describe power?</p>

Nevertheless, one limitation of an analysis of collected data is that it does not take into the consideration variables like researcher's view of theory might have changed and as result the interpretation differs. Participants might have been biased by memory recall or leading and assumptive questions (Gray, 2013). There can be double interpretation going on as researcher is making interpretations on others interpretations moving back and forth between data and theory which in turn can bias the research's outcome. Sample is also relatively small. Thus, the validity of present study can be questionable. However, present research can function as preparation of larger surveys, systematic hypotheses testing, and theory building as in the study of human affairs, general and theoretical (context-independent) knowledge is not more valuable than concrete and practical (context-dependent) knowledge (Flyvberg, 2006). The closeness of present study to real-life

situations views the subject directly in relation to phenomena as they appear in practice offering some important insights into language use in organizations and provides detailed context-dependent knowledge.

5. Results

In order to observe organization's implication on language policies and overall guidelines for working in multicultural setting, the informants were asked to describe what cultural diversity means to them in everyday work assignments, procedures and what in their opinion characterizes a valuable employee. The aim of these questions was to study how perceptions of diversity in the organization and language use are related (RQ1).

5.1 Language Diversity and Perceptions of Power

In general, cultural diversity at the workplace was described as something exciting and positive. Informants did not conceptualize diversity as a construct including demographic factors such as race or ethnicity, age, gender, religion, social and economic class (Harris & Sherblom, 2011) nor non-demographic factors like education or person's functional background (Mannix & Neale, 2005). Neither was cognitive diversity among heterogeneous members stated to promote creativity, innovation or problem solving as suggested by Meares et al. (2004) and Horwitz (2007). Interestingly, language was raised as a determining factor of diversity, as illustrated (N6) below. Similarly, learning from others was considered very favourable supporting contemporary organizational and managerial research literature's optimistic view point on diversity. Diversity's value to create broader range of knowledge, expertise, perspectives and produce higher-quality solutions were underlined (Larson, 2007).

N2: "Every day you learn something new."

N3: "It enricher my experiences and knowledge about the world. "

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N4: "If language experience refers to my language skills, cultural diversity is always an asset. When two or more culture meet, one always learns something new."

N6: "In my organization there are a plethora of nationalities with many languages floating around. This meant that I was coming into contact with lots of languages on a daily basis and had to deal with people who didn't speak my language well."

Data supported network theorists' assumption on demographic factors influence on individuals' tendency to form network ties within their organizations (Valenti & Rockett, 2008). Employees perceived language based segregation and grouping at work when people from same language group communicated in their mother tongue. In addition, during breaks at work employees seemed to search company from their own national group and division in local and non-local workers was observed. Corporate language was not used among non-locals during the breaks if it was not considered compulsory. Especially native English speakers, whose foreign language proficiency were inexistent or not advanced enough, highlighted segregation and raised negative aspects of the impact of language diversity underlining misunderstandings and conflicts. However, they did not raise any negative perceptions when everybody spoke English. This can be interpreted as supremacy of English language whereas wide language diversity was seen as a barrier in some communication situations. Monolingualism was considered well-liked and ideal way of communication at workplace. Participants described how (lingual) diversity affected on their social environment as follows:

N2: "I guess mainly it's a good thing that we learn from one another cultural things and language differences. Lingual diversity can also cause inequality in a certain destination where there is a prestige

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language. Those who don't speak this language as well as others can be shut out from conversations etc."

N1: "I think people from certain cultures tend to stick together, or be drawn to each other. It is hard to reach out on your own to people that speak a different language from your own."

N5: "Negatively – communication difficulties, such as things being lost in translation, misunderstandings of differences such as religions."

N6: "It depends on the ability levels of everyone in one language. If everyone is competent in one language even if it is not their mother tongue (for example English) then lingual diversity has little impact. However if there is not one well-spoken common language to unite people then there can be segregation and divides amongst people. People may start grouping off into their 'language'. Awkward situations can sometimes arise when there is lots of lingual diversity in regards to misunderstandings. "

Participants had diverse perceptions on what kind of employee is respected, distinguished and important for the organization. Desired and expected traits of a valuable employee focused on personal and organizational skills, and qualities like responsibility. However, the importance of communication and language skills emerged from the data. Ability to communicate and express ideas fluently was considered essential for a valuable employee. Also features like worker's overall experience on the field, knowledge on the specific tasks and intrinsic motivation and enthusiasm were underlined. Attitudes towards work were similar among all the informants hence no demographic categories reflecting essential differences in attitude, personality, and behaviour between employees (Zanoni & Janssens, 2004) was observed.

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N2: “Responsible, enthusiastic, organised, good language and interpersonal skills.”

N1: “A valuable employee is someone who is good with communication, maybe not just between languages but also in their own. Being able to express what they mean and ideas that they have.”

N3: “One that is working hard is enthusiastic and someone who is a good communicator.”

N6: “First and foremost, valuable employees have the necessary skills and knowledge to do their jobs. But they also go the extra mile, can be relied on and show dedication to their jobs.”

The discussion on organizations guidelines on diversity, official or common practices developed in time, was found challenging. Every informant pointed out the lack of instructions from organizations behalf. No one felt that organization would have given them any guidelines on language use or dealing with diversity in general. This seems to confirm Marschan-Piekkari et al. (1999) assumption that company’s recruitment policy determines beforehand the required mix of languages to the organization as well as guarantees sufficient proficiency in corporate language. Employees of the organization in question were selected into the position based on their existent language skills and language profile of staff was built before entering the company. This seems to show that it is more important in this particular organization to possess a specific language skill than other expertise or quality. After the recruitment process language issue was considered already covered and no further measures were considered necessary.

N1: “Company requires fluency in English. I assume there are no guidelines regard to diversity, just to use English with your international group in destination.”

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N2: "I am unaware of any guidelines that were in place"

However, researcher's deeper investigation showed that company does have a language policy addressed to teaching staff written in May 2014 valid until May 2016 where several language issues like use of mother tongue are considered. In sum organization's language policy promotes acquisition of more than one language even though English is used for all official publications and meetings. English is expected to be used where interaction involves large groups but however, when small groups are involved in project or practical work, it is considerate to be appropriate to exchange ideas and explore concepts in mother tongue. Unfortunately informants were not aware of the existence of this guideline according to which *"at x, diversity in all forms is celebrated and recognized as a wealth of opportunities for growth and enrichment. Acquisition of more than one language opens access to different cultures and perspectives and helps facilitate international mindedness."* The evidence suggests that language policies and practices at the workplace in question were poorly communicated internally from top management to entry level employees, which might have underlined the prestige of English. However, organization's language policies were not considered to be of crucial importance and their existence was unknown and not longed-for by the employees of the organization.

In tandem this setting of language diverse personnel created another presumption among employees. Native English speakers presupposed and expected that there would always be a language skilled person available to translate if needed. Data confirms the emergence of a role of the language nodes described by Marchan-Piekkari et al., (1999) and Feely & Harzing (2003). Informants' answers indicated that in the absence of sufficient language capability, employees became heavily dependent on their linguistically skilled colleagues confirming Feely & Harzing, (2003) study. In similar vein, native speakers of English stated that they were never are asked to translate in addition to their own workload. However, non-local employees did not consider this practice as an extra burden on their ability to perform their formal organizational duties.

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N6: “As a language school, it was expected that English be used most of the time. There were always people representing each language who were able to translate to English though... Never, as the company mainly works in my native tongue.”

In this particular organization employees' perceptions of diversity and language use were related mainly in communication situations where same language was not spoken. Diversity was conceptualized as a plethora of nationalities with many languages floating around. In every day work assignments diversity did not play big role for non-local staff but native English speakers manifested to see lingual diversity as a cause of inequality. Dissimilar language proficiency was attributed as a cause of misunderstandings and consequently in order to avoid such misunderstandings, language differences were considered time taking. Language differences were shown in the organization in also different hierarchical positions as course leader were always non-locals whereas middle management was local workforce. Even though working in a foreign language was perceived difficult at times, in general employees held a positive attitude and open mind towards diversity. Employees perceived to put in the same amount of work as each other and none found working harder based on their cultural background. Feelings towards speaking different languages in daily work situations varied from natural and comfortable to slightly awkward and alienated. Consequently, practices at workplace regarding language diversity developed according to the situation at hand, and were highly defined by the individuals and their interaction creating the lingual reality at the workplace. Data suggests that language proficiency and good communications skills are top qualities of a valuable employee at the workplace.

There is evidence that language plays a crucial role in regulating work behaviour. Yet, following the critical constructionism perspective, the present study observes how workers characterize the relationship between language proficiency and power (RQ2). In the organization power appeared in employees' accommodating behaviour, and asymmetries in power relations were

attributed to cause feelings of alienation. Informants conceptualized power as influence over others, position of authority and ability to make decisions. The next part of this paper discusses relationship between language proficiency and power more in detail.

5.2 Accommodating Behaviour

Informants came across the language diversity differently according to their mother tongue. For many of the non-local informants it had been possible to work and get by in daily life using English without facing any problems. Additionally non-native English speakers reported to have the ability to switch from language to another if needed, and no need of accommodating was perceived. Non-local employees' perceived communication competence was advanced enough them to initiate communication in second language without facing anxiety. Non-locals willingness to communicate (WTC) presented by Clements et al. (2003) was perceived higher than native English speakers.

N3: "I feel comfortable because I could understand Swedish, English, French and a bit of Italian."

N2: "I didn't experience problems."

N4: "It feels natural. I use different languages also in my spare time, so there is not much of a difference."

However, British informants attributed the effect on language adjustment and stated having modified their communication style when communicating with a non-native speaker. This behaviour is confirmed by Bi et al. (2014) concluding that people tend to adjust one's own behaviour to match that of other people to foster this way a positive interpersonal relationship, increase feelings of similarity, affiliation and liking. Native speakers gave positive image of themselves and made sure the message was going through accordingly in the communication interaction. In practice this was shown linguistically as native English speakers clarified accents, lowered speech rate and simplified word choice, to match those of a conversational partner. They

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also modified their nonverbal behaviours such as gaze or frequency of head nods (Ayoko et al., 2002). Native speakers reported that self-awareness on their own language use increased due to working in a linguistically diverse environment. Finding the common understanding was considered as the main goal of the conversation which supports the goal of BELF – getting the job done (Rogerson-Revell, 2007; Kankaanranta et al., 2010).

N1: “I learned to speak more clearly and to use correct English.”

N6: “I have had to become more aware of communication issues and ensure when these arise that I adapt my English to be more understandable.”

N5: “Everything becomes slower (speech and thoughts) with the aim of clarity and understanding as an ultimate goal in the communication.”

Non-native speakers faced uncertain interaction situations by using observation as an adaptation tool. Non-native informants reported to tend to observe the situation before acting and taking into consideration other’s point of view and trying to co-create common ground during the interaction. Non-native speakers’ seemed to manifest mayor sensitivity to behavioural mirroring cues by seeking reassuring signals that the encounter is proceeding well (Sanchez-Burks et al, 2009) and felt that they needed more information gathering before taking action. Following Guirdham’s (2011) study, culture did not here determine the action, but informed it and was respectively taken into account as an available resource for making sense of action (Barinaga, 2007). Non-native speakers positioned themselves in the role of a “visitor” who is expected to do the things host’s way applying “*When in Rome, do as the Romans do*”-thinking. Non-natives positioned their own cultural behaviour patterns to background and considered local customs as the correct way of doing things. Native English speakers did not rapport any traits of behavioural mirroring.

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N4: "I observe the situation first and then adapt my behaviour according to the situation (i.e. what I think is appropriate). "

N2: "Trying to understand people and their cultural backgrounds, and communicate with them as well as possible...Sometimes you need body language or explain things in other way."

N3: "By observing the situations first I can figure out how to act and by communicate I can approach the situation."

From the point of view of power, it seems that non-native English speakers disempowered themselves and performed a kind of self-censorship. They gave natives more chances to speak and attributed them more expertise. Native English speakers seemed to have capacity to modify non-native states by providing social resources as knowledge, affection, friendship, decision-making and opportunities (Keltner, 2003).

In addition to accommodation and mirroring behaviours, informants perceived language learning as one good way of adapting themselves to the environment. Especially native English speakers came more conscious on their reduced language skills and pointed out a desire of learning a new language and develop overall more awareness on multicultural setting.

N1: "I myself would like to learn other languages, so that if the time comes where something is hard to explain in English or someone may not understand I may be able to help with their native tongue."

N4: "No other way than that a common language need to discovered."

N5: "In the role of Student Services Coordinator it is incredibly important due to the nature of work which can be sensitive, stressful and at times difficult; mixed with an array of different languages, cultures and diversity requires a level of openness, patience and of course

cultural and language barrier awareness.. I would like to be able to speak more languages.”

This section of the study has shown that non-native speakers seem not to perceive language diversity as a problem. Non-natives did not underline communication problems further than small misunderstanding which can be solved quickly. Non-locals manifested diversity to have an effect on their behaviour by observing the natives and using non-verbal communication. On the other hand native speakers were observed to lower their proficiency by using more simple words and expression by talking slower in order to make sure the other part of the conversation could follow it accordingly. Awareness of lacking language skills was observed to merge when native speakers compared themselves to the non-native colleagues. However, general rules of politeness seemed to apply. There was no perceived power based stereotyping behaviour or violations of politeness-related communication norms (Kelter et al., 2003; Mondillon et al., 2005) and employees treated each other as individuals independently their national or cultural background.

5.3 Feelings of Alienation

The feeling of being different to the colleagues had an effect on workplace dynamics. In an attempt to discuss the implications of language fluency in the workplace from point of view of power, informants were asked how would they describe power or in other words, what having power mean to them. In general informants described power as ability to make decisions, possess privileged knowledge over others and use that accordingly to improve possible flaws at the workplace. Power was also strongly attributed to the hierarchical structures of the company. Informants projected solid organizational hierarchy and respect to one's status in the organization. Attributed power holders of the company were members of senior staff, who were thought to possess more work experience and knowledge. These hierarchies of power were formed through the socialization process and taken for granted when entering to the company. It is also necessary to

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point out the pre-existing power asymmetries at the workplace as native English speakers possessed higher rank in the organizational hierarchy.

In addition to social power traits as status and dominance, traits of personal power were perceived. Non-native speakers seemed to have freedom from the influence of natives (Lammers et al., 2009) and had the ability to act for oneself (Mondillon et al., 2005) by using diverse language skills as source of power. The senior management team was signalled to be involved in all decision-making processes but non-local employees used their horizontal power accessing to some information quicker.

N2: "Knowledge. You know something other people don't or you know it before they do. And you know how to deal with that power."

N1: "Power is the ability to have influence of others, making decisions that effect outcomes and being able to improve situations"

N5: "Superiority and control."

N7: "Position of authority"

Quite unexpectedly informants did not perceive language proficiency as cause of power inequalities but informants did point out the in-group/out-group phenomenon. Native speakers experienced feelings of being left out and excluded when non-native employees switched into their mother tongue. Native speakers stated to be concerned about social division in the workplace and pointed out problems like conflicts, misunderstandings and frustrations due to the language diversity more often than non-natives. Local staff reported having faced increasing uncertainty and alienation because of the language diversity. Barinaga (2007) suggests that the feeling of confusion arises when individual attempts to separate him-/herself from aimless group discussion and tend to highlight one's distinctiveness in relation to the rest of the group. Results suggest than native speakers felt excluded when they did not get all information due to lacking language skills.

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Language-based marginalization seemed not to be a common social dynamic within the organization but the one generating a sense of isolation from information processes (Welch et al., 2005).

N1: "Only when it is something important that needs to be discussed in English."

N5: "...there are certain situations that can make me feel alienated if I am the only one who doesn't understand."

N6: "If I don't understand a conversation, whether at work or in social situations, I feel slightly awkward. This is especially the case when I have no idea what the conversation is about or if it is regarding important matters. "

Participants highlighted miscommunication as a problem due to language differences. Problematic situations in foreign language use were perceived and strained group relationships were manifested to exist in some situations. Unfortunately informants did not describe more in detail what kind of situations they meant.

N5: "Conflicts, time delays, offence."

N1: "Miscommunication can be a problem, if someone has got one word wrong from translation it can make the biggest difference in the result of what they were meaning to say."

N7: "Discipline and miscommunication... Formation of friendship groups may be affected. "

Data supports that information-gathering is an important factor to individuals to feel respected and listened at workplace. In the light of informants' answers it can be concluded that knowledge provides confidence and power. Fairness in equal treatment and free access to

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information provide employees tools to manage uncertainties (Thau et al., 2009). Data supports also Marschan-Piekkari's research (1999) claiming that staff of multinational corporations can develop close relationships to function so that everyone has access to, and is willing to share critical information in a flexible and integrative way with other for the mutual benefit. Similarly, Hobman et al. (2004) draws attention to work group involvement relating it to individuals' involvement in task related processes such as information exchange and collaborative decision making. This has a significant impact how much individuals feel respected and listened. Clement (2003) offers an explanatory theory for communication anxiety and perceived communication competence claiming that belief that one can communicate effectively in a given situation seems to be empowering. Every informant felt they had a voice, and they were listened even they did not possess a certain hierarchical status or rank. Fluent communication was attributed to be a key factor to well working organization together with equal participation in decision-making processes, being informed, and to be able to promote innovative ideas that serve long-term organizational interests. Employees shared the desire of making a good team regardless from language diversity.

N3: "I feel that I could have some influence if I had ideas to improve the organization."

N4: "All the necessary information is shared with everybody in the company."

N1: "I feel we all have an influence in the outcome for the organisation as the actions we decide upon greatly effect the outcome for the organisation."

N5: "Also not matter how small the decision is, often it is best to communicate with the people as this an essential part of being part of a well-functioning team."

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These findings suggest that in general insufficient proficiency is perceived as dissimilarity creating tension between speaker and non-speakers of that particular language. Those who do not master the language feel that they are being left out from the important information and decisions. Hence it seems that good communication is transparent and equal to all independently their national background. Employees experienced a strong need of being part of the team/work group which increased their willingness to communicate. Data supports Men & Stacks's (2014) study how transparent communication, characterized by information substantiality and employee participation, largely contributes to employee's commitment and satisfaction a workplace. Yet, it worth of noting that misunderstandings at workplace can't be ever totally avoided even sharing the same language.

Table 4: Key findings

Positive	Neutral	Negative
Employee participation largely contributes to employee's commitment and satisfaction a workplace.	Prior cross-cultural experiences improve willingness to communicate.	Insufficient language proficiency is perceived as dissimilarity.
Learning from others was considered very favourable.	Hierarchies of power were formed through the socialization process.	Lack of guidelines on language use or dealing with diversity.
Practices regarding language diversity developed according to the context, and were highly defined by the individuals and their interaction creating the lingual reality at the workplace.	Non-natives demonstrate higher willingness to communicate whereas natives accommodate their speech more.	In the absence of sufficient language capability, employees became heavily dependent on their linguistically skilled colleagues.

6. Discussion

The main assumption of the present study was individuals to position themselves in-groups/out-groups based on language proficiency and in addition, language proficiency was expected to create unequal power relations in the workplace causing negative consequences in work performance. In the light of previous studies, it was also expected that perceived linguistic proficiency is intimately connected to the acquisition of power in multinational organizations.

The gathered data both supported and turned down the primary expectations. Firstly the relation between diversity and language use was seen mainly as positive matter. Employees perceived existing diversity to promote language learning supporting the research of Meares et al (2004) and Horwitz & Horwitz (2007). Particularly native English speakers experienced an increase in intrinsic motivation to communicate in second language. For non-native employees the willingness to communicate in English had more normative pressure. WTC was influenced by immediate context and the desire to communicate with a specific person was perceived to correlate with the state of self-confidence, intergroup motivation, social situation, communicative competence, and personality supporting Kang's (2005) research. Advanced proficiency in common corporate language was considered as a self-evident truth for non-locals as Feely & Harzing (2003) described. Data also confirmed Marschan-Piekkari et al.'s (1999) assumption on company's staff selection policies where the required language competence was taken into account in the recruitment process.

Secondly, multilingual diversity at workplace made native English speakers more aware of their own distinctiveness caused by monolingualism. Language skills served as trait to distinguish an employee and place one to in or out-group depending on language skills. This division created segregation among employees following Valenti & Rockett (2008) assumption that demographic factors influence individuals' tendency to form network ties within their organizations, and supported Mannix & Neale's (2005) prediction that diversity might create social division. Data also

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confirmed similarity attraction theory suggested by Horwitz & Horwitz (2007) that individuals have a proclivity to select persons who are similar to themselves, when speakers with shared demographic characteristics formed language clusters at workplace.

Interestingly employees adopted different strategies to deal with language diversity following Vallaster's (2005) proposition that country-of-origin culture influences social interactive behaviour by creating an intention to build shared understanding and have an effect on performance in teams. Non-native workers used more observation as a tool to reduce uncertainty in interaction situations. They studied the interplay before taking action and perceived the local way of communication as the correct one. Non-natives reported to use behavioural mirroring to reassure that the encounter was proceeding well and perceived to rapport and empathy in social interactions. Native English speakers adopted task-orientated way of BEFF communication where the aim was to get the message through and accommodated their communication to partners' level to guarantee mutual understanding. Native English speakers used own verbal and nonverbal behaviours to match that of others to reduce linguistic or communicative differences to foster a positive interpersonal relationship, increase feelings of similarity, affiliation, rapport, and approval as Ayoko et al. (2002) and Bi et al. (2014) described. Yet, natives perceived misunderstandings as a threat to fluent communication and possible cause of conflicts at workplace confirming Valenti & Rockett's (2008) assumption that differences among group members might make individuals to interact in ways that weaken group performance and creates higher uncertainty causing more conflicts, misunderstandings and frustrations. In addition monolingual employees felt that use of second language might isolate them from information flow and exclude them from important decisions. English was perceived as prestige language that everybody had to know and use displacing other languages and driving workplace communication to monolingualism. These findings will doubtless be representative of the business world's reality, but they raise also questions whether monolingualism supports language diversity.

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Yet, employees of this particular organization developed close relationships increasing substantially willingness to communicate and to share critical information. Workers possessed strong desire to create shared understanding for mutual benefit and get the job done well. This interaction was socially constructed in this particular organization and fostered transparent communication for common good following Hobman et al.'s (2004) study on work group involvement, which is related to individuals' involvement in task related processes, such as information exchange and collaborative decision making, and how much individuals feel respected and listened. There were no gate keeper or language node behaviours perceived to hinder information flow for vested interest. Language could be seen to function as control mechanism limiting information flow and purposely excluding others.

Thirdly, relation between language proficiency and power was complex. Employees' cultural background was not considered to be an issue but workers raised the ability to communicate as a characteristic of a valuable employee. Powerful employees were perceived to be the ones who could communicate efficiently and use persuasion to change others opinion or modify their behaviour. In similar vein, good communication skills were highlighted to give an access to senior management positions.

Finally, strong and diverse language skills were seen as source of expert power providing to an employee more independence from resources and others. Personal power was strongly considered to be power over oneself and freedom from the influence of others, ability to act for oneself and the experience of personal agency. Language skills were attributed to make workers more competitive on global scale following Luo & Shenkar' (2006) study that insufficient language proficiency lowers members' access to information and hence their power within the organization. However, perceived dissimilarity was not considered to limit individuals' integration or involvement in teams and did not support Hobman et al.'s (2004) research.

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These findings have important implications for mainly monolingual countries like United Kingdom developing language training both in national and organizational level in order to keep their workers competitive in global job markets. Especially during times of economic recession European Union citizens use their right of free movement to look for a job in another EU country, work and reside there without needing a work permit and enjoy equal treatment with nationals in access to employment. Past years a substantial increase in the workers moving from one destination has been observed. Situation has triggered United Kingdom to start public discussion on their worker's language skills. Since the year 2001 national newspapers The Guardian, The Telegraph and The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) have echoed the concern of the government on insufficient language learning. The Department for Education and Skills published "Language Learning" document in February 2002 to develop a strategy in order to change perceptions and raise awareness amongst young people and the wider public of language competence as a key contemporary life skill. Yet, too few employers support their employees in gaining additional language skills as part of their job and Britain's future economic prosperity and global standing is under threat because of an alarming shortage in the number of people who can speak a foreign language. As hiring policies seem already include the language skill as a recruitment criteria requirement, monolinguals can be left in unequal position in hiring process.

This study attempts point out significant changes in multicultural organizational communication. It can be concluded that in the knowledge society of the 21st century, language competence and intercultural understanding are not optional extras but an essential part of being a global citizen. It is known that language training is a long process requiring employee's personal motivation and commitment to succeed. Yet being receptive to intercultural issues can enhance the ability of an employee to see things from a different point of view. It seems that job markets are moving towards more multilingual professional sphere where the future belongs to those who speak

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multiple languages. Language can be seen as a tool of integration and social cohesion which bilingual programs foster.

Nevertheless, this study suggests that organizations create their own culture in its members' interaction following May & Mumby's (2005) and Sias's studies (2009). What is considered important in the organization is highly contextual and issues of injustice, asymmetrical power relations, and marginalization emphasize individuals' role in the organization. Organizations possess the legislative power to create their own corporate culture independently from national culture borders and hierarchies of power are formed through organizational socialization process. Information sharing is considered to be the key for effective and pleasant work environment where communication can include or exclude individuals from participation in relationship networks providing, or denying, access to "voice" and influence. However, social construction theory does not take a stand on whether power is positive or negative.

There are certain issues appearing in the literature that this study cannot confirm like stereotyping (Anderson & Berdahl, 2002; Keltner et al, 2003) or behaviour patterns identified by Kipnis (2006, pp 177). Power did not seem to increase the tendency to judge others unsystematically. Equally it is not clear to point who are power holders in addition to the hierarchal leaders and managers. The study did not perceive the existence of any ethnocentric behaviour patterns or self-praising comparisons emphasizing employee's cultural distinctiveness described by Ybema & Byun (2009). There was neither feelings of alienation and lack of commitment causing dysfunctional behaviours such as increased turnover, absenteeism and failure achieving group goals as Valenti & Rockett (2008) claimed.

In further research, this data could serve as basis for study of workplace attitudes leading to higher productivity and improved performance suggested by Men & Stacks (2014). Furthermore, Newton & Kusmierczyk's (2011) study highlighted the role of communication in the functioning of modern workplace. Successful participation at workplace seems to require sufficient language skills

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within the particular social setting. Data already suggested that language ability was an attribute that employees assign on successful communication and career progression. Present research has hence pedagogical implications to improve language training in organizations turning second language (L2) use as one of the most effective avenues toward improving and promoting intercultural communication in a multicultural society. Newton & Kusmierczyk (2011) underline the need of language programs for the workplace focusing on teaching and learning the language of routine workplace interactions in order to improve employability skills, interpersonal communication, intercultural and critical language awareness. Additionally, language awareness, understood as the awareness of how speaking one or more languages or a particular language such as English is related to social and professional status, seems to be an extremely important issue in contemporary business context and there is a growing discussion about benefits of bilingualism in working life.

7. Evaluation of the Study

From previous studies we know that language is a relevant issue at the workplace and the primary aim in this paper has been to increase understanding the relevance of language choice issues in multinational corporations. Yet, the results of this study should be interpreted with caution, because all of the measures were included on a self-report survey and the used sample was rather small which is not representative of the broader population. It is difficult to know how far the results can be generalized. Informants also made their own interpretations of the questions due to lack of instructions given by the researcher. It is necessary to take into account that workers of the organization in question were already interested in intercultural issues and the results would have differed if the data collection would have been done in mononational organization.

In addition, the validity and reliability of present study could have been improved by involving more different organizations or employees. However, the results of a study are repeatable as the questionnaire can be administered under the same conditions in the future to increase the

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stability by comparing and correlating the results with the initial test. It is important to note that in qualitative research results may vary according to every participant's different perceptions. In a case study setting, where the research is done in one specific organization in one particular moment of time, even using the same questionnaire, results can vary significantly. Also the generalizability of the results is limited by the exploratory, qualitative character of this one particular study. However, a major problem with the used method is that the findings lack rigor as they might be biased by the researcher's own opinions and interpretation differences between informants. In depth interviews would have given more detailed and extended information than a survey to gather more data on informants' perceptions and gather more specific examples. In addition, is necessary to bear in mind that the literature review was highly concentrated on the western literature, where power is often associated with individuals and research is largely based on Northern American data.

8. Conclusions

Over the past decades, researchers have somewhat overlooked power's and language's implications in a multicultural workplace both in the academic literature and at the company level. Outcomes of diverse groups have been classified both beneficial and negative but there has been a lack of a real-life research on the language practices happening at the workplaces now. This paper has explored and tried to describe language diversity's effect at workplace in detail.

The perceptions on language diversity at workplace were analysed by using a survey to empirically study in what way language functions as a source of power in an organisation. Support was found for the language proficiency making an employee more independent and hence more powerful. Strong language skills can translate to power at workplace. Despite the inability to demonstrate some of the hypothesized relationships, the support for the benefits of language diversity is noteworthy from the theoretical perspective. Given the prevalent use of hiring policies in modern workplaces, this case study also provides organizational practitioners with a much-needed empirical corroboration of the benefits of diversity and further demonstrates what forms of team diversity are more important than others with respect to organizational strategic outcomes.

The findings of this study, therefore, suggest that language diversity can potentially provide employees with competitive advantages. Present examination of the multinational language policies also suggests that improving second language competence can be seen as a tool of promoting intercultural communication in organizations and organizations should develop tailored language policies and guidelines to improve internal communication in multilingual workplace.

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Appendix

Survey questions have been retrieved from an academic article by Tange, H., & Luring, J. (2009).

Language management and social interaction within the multilingual workplace. *Journal of Communication Management*, 13(3), 218-232.

Date:

Gender: Male Female

Age: <-25 years 26-35 years 36-45 years 46-55 years 56-> years

Mother language:

Nationality:

What was your professional title?

Language proficiency in corporate language (English) according your own perception:

Native excellent good fair poor

The structure follows Hanne Tange's¹ semi-structured interview guide made upon diversity management.

1. Personal background (years of employment, how did you end up working here?)
2. Prior cross-cultural experience
3. What does cultural diversity mean to your language experience in every day work assignments?
4. In which ways have you adapted to the situation?
5. Is there anything you would like to change?
6. What guidelines does your organization have with regard to (language) diversity? Which of them are official and which have developed in time?

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7. What effect does cultural/(lingual) diversity have on the social environment?
8. What characterises a valuable employee?
9. In which ways language differences are shown in the organization?
10. How do language differences affect your communication and behaviour?
11. What problems do language differences lead to in the organization?
12. How do you feel when different languages are spoken in daily work situations/social situations?
13. In addition to your workload, how often you are asked to translate?
14. How would you describe power? (What having power means to you?)
15. Who is included into decision making process and how much influence you feel like having in the organization? With whom the information is shared?