

# СЕКЦИЯ “ВЕРБАЛЬНОЕ ПОВЕДЕНИЕ В РАЗЛИЧНЫХ СОЦИОКУЛЬТУРНЫХ КОНТЕКСТАХ”

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## THE ILLITERATE TONGUE AGENDA

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### Introduction

This article discusses the communicative challenges of international and interdisciplinary research teams. We will claim that an integration of linguistic self-reflexivity of the team communication and working into the research agenda bootstraps the effective and dynamic creation of an emerging epistemic community. In the course of the article we will reflect upon a possible research agenda which will include theories from organizational communication, epistemic cultures, applied linguistics and sociology of technology. The framework of this concept is an international research project, funded by the European Commission, spanning the three main domains natural science, computer science, and social science/humanities.

### 1. Defining a project

Any project which strives for uniqueness and the corresponding appropriate funding claims to be characterised by a radically interdisciplinary research agenda. Interdisciplinary usually depicts two or more different expert fields, however in the case of the project described in the introduction three different scientific cultures are brought together: social science and humanities/arts, computer science, and natural science. This means that the secure sector of bi-cultural dichotomies (see C.P. Snow's "The Two Cultures") is left behind and a tri-cultural region is being entered, which is naturally framed by a joint challenge of knowledge sharing and production.

Nevertheless the notion of intercultural challenges international projects are generally – and also in this case – framed by three main obstacles (axioms):

1. Internationality/Decentralism: Projects across spatial and temporal borders; -> merging of different national cultures and languages.

2. Defining 'one' (culture): Being inter-cultural addresses the merging of different scientific cultures and different special languages; -> formation process of 'one' epistemic culture with its own goals, methodologies, theories, etc.

3. Mixed 'capital'-portfolio: Striving for economic and/or social capital; merging of different framework related agendas.

Those obstacles prove the actual state or form of being in the world of each international research project in its primal stage: It is not yet an epistemic culture or even knowledge community but rather a loose network of '*knowledges*'. Whereas the first point (internationality and decentralism) is already discussed in a range of articles on epistemic cultures and organizational communication, points two and three will be discussed in more detail. Additionally, and for the sake of 'complexity-climaxation', these points will be framed by the terms technology and organizational communication. The latter term depicts the attempt to situate international research projects within the broader framework of organizational communication. Firstly, grand research projects correspond to the general definition of organizations, which is a group of people and units that works together with certain common rules and axioms. Secondly, the technological dimension has become a strong impetus for international research projects due to their geographical dispersion (the need of technological devices to overcome this physical gap) and the strong status of technological issues within grand research agendas (the Information and Communication Technologies as a continuously running research programme in almost any domains within natural science, computer science and social science/humanities).

### 1.1. Defining one (culture) / Being inter-cultural

The preliminary phase of an international research project is usually defined by a mutual notion of being inter-cultural or even alienation. One explanation for this impression can be given within a the context of organizational communication: Using language as a magnifying glass or cultural demarcation line, a variety of distinct 'expert' languages can be found within each participating discipline, each research institute and of course each partner country. Regarding technology, there is also a range of formal languages, each of them used and 'spoken' by a certain community, especially when strong computer science communities and research agendas in the field of ICT (Information and Communication Technologies) are at stake. This means that during the course of the project the partners will either have to speak with multiple tongues or would have to find a common language or ground in order to work jointly/together (the so called grounding-problem is a strong research trait within Artificial Intelligence and depicts the difficulty of teaching artificial systems to understand the world, i.e. teach them not only single word-units but also their meanings).

The language approach – especially regarding formal languages – provides a smooth trespassing to the field of methodologies and more paradigmatic specialties. Within the field of formal languages (computer science and natural science), there are certain paradigmatic decisions each researcher has to make before embarking on a project. Again, using the field of formal languages as an example, for the development of Modelling Languages there would be the (near-like) dichotomy of Model Driven Architecture or the Object Management Group.

However, speaking of different methodologies and trespassing, the notion of being inter-cultural also depicts the discourses within the field of Science Theory regarding the question whether there are distinct scientific cultures and if so, their philosophical substantiation. Jahr (2005) summarizes three core factors, which discern natural science and the arts/humanities:

- a) Differences regarding the existence of the object and its relationship to the natural habitat of human beings.
- b) Differences regarding the status of the experiment.
- c) Differences regarding the vertical and horizontal organisation of knowledge.

However, it is not only the ‘Two’ cultures, whose distinctness or (a)likeness is of importance. Analysing the differences and likewise the similarities or rather the potential interface of social science and the arts/humanities would be a fruitful endeavour especially in the field of epistemic cultures or the *manufacturing of knowledge* (Knorr-Cetina 1985).

The New Handbook of Organizational Communication (Putnam & Fairhurst 2001) contains a range of different points of departure for new and unifying theories. Tompkins and Wanca-Thibault demand the development of a new communication-based theory of organizations. For example, Fairclough (2002; 2004) or Paulsen et al. (2005) propose an integrative approach for organizational communication and techniques from Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The influence of linguistics (or applied linguistics) potentially accompanies a certain shift from the microlevel to the macrolevel within the field of organizational communication: In 1993, Allen et al. identified interpersonal relations as the most researched area in organizational communication, in particular superior-subordinate were of great interest. In the late 1980s the focus started to concentrate on the examination of the ways in which communication underlies the structure of the organization and its external environment (Jones et al. 2004). It was argued that “such a shift was necessary in order to recognize the bigger concerns in organizational communication, such as culture, hierarchy, power, and corporate discourse.” (Jones et al. 2004: 730). With a novel set of models and methodologies from applied linguistics (especially CDA), new definitions of communication and thus of the object of interest were possible. The term *discourse* is not bound to face-to-face interactions but

rather inherits a whole universe of discourse (written, oral, spatially-temporally mediated, etc.): “For many, particularly linguists, “discourse” has generally been defined as anything “beyond the sentence”. For others [...], the study of discourse is the study of language use. These definitions have in common a focus on specific instances or spates of language” (Schiffrin, Tannen & Hamilton 2003: 1). Schiffrin, Tannen, and Hamilton summarise three main categories of discourse definitions: (1) anything beyond the sentence, (2) language use, and (3) a broader range of social practice that includes non-linguistic and non-specific instances of language.

With this broad definition of discourse (No. 3), we can initiate a possible medium for the difficult term knowledge. First of all, how is knowledge visualized or materialized – through discourse. Second of all, the third category includes non-linguistic and non-specific instances of language, which leaves amply room for any kind or means of knowledge production from the “production process” to the actual “product”. Moreover, the expression “social practice” can serve as a bridge between linguistics and the field of epistemic cultures. Especially our cultural realities, being shaped by society / or social practice (Berger & Luckmann 2000<sup>17</sup>), is an important keyword in the everyday-life routine of international research projects. The state of being inter-cultural depicts two different *stati quo*: the participation in a group of different nationalities, each with its own cultural background and habits; and being a member of a specific academic domain among members of other domains. When it comes to the task of defining ‘one’ (culture) – for example, a common group representation or mutually acknowledged methodologies and paradigms – the notion of “social practice” as discourse implies a concrete point of departure for this difficult situation. The introduction of a certain degree of self-reflexivity regarding the means of cooperation and integrated work can be a helpful and promising tool for the optimization of the project output. For an overall (i.e. covering each scientific culture/community) self-reflexive approach CDA provides adequate methodologies. Fairclough (2005) proposes a version of CDA based on a critical realist social ontology as a potentially valuable *modus operandi* to organization studies, especially in researching organizational change. His approach “follows from certain ontological assumptions about the nature of social (and therefore also organizational) life, namely, that social phenomena are socially constructed, i.e. people’s concepts of the world they live and act within contribute to its reproduction and transformation; and that social phenomena are socially constructed in discourse” (Fairclough 2005: 916).

### 1.2. Mixed ‘capital’-portfolio: Striving for economic and/or social capital

Nin defines social capital as “capital captured through social relations”, and “[i]n this approach, capital is seen as a social asset by virtue of actors’ connections and access to resources in the network or group of which they

are members” (Nin 2001: 19). This definition puts in a nutshell Bourdieu’s notion of social capital: “Das Sozialkapital ist die Gesamtheit der aktuellen und potentiellen Ressourcen, die mit dem Besitz eines dauerhaften Netzes von mehr oder weniger institutionalisierten *Beziehungen* gegenseitigen Kennens oder Anerkennens verbunden sind; oder, anders ausgedrückt, es handelt sich dabei um Ressourcen, die auf der *Zugehörigkeit zu einer Gruppe* beruhen” (Bourdieu 1983: 190). Thus the notion of community or organization is of importance when discussing social capital. However, capital is always bound to communities, since specific forms of capital and their values depend either on cultural agreement or other regulative measures within communities. Social capital nevertheless is of importance when dealing with international research projects since social capital implies a concept of exclusion and inclusion – being inside or outside the organization machine. Only those who are inside the organisation or group can use their social assets such as connections or access to resources. On the other hand, outsiders naturally find it difficult becoming an insider, since their values (social capital) has to be accepted and approved of by the group members.

Projects within academia are then heavily influenced by the cultural capital of their members and the whole organization since cultural capital – such as academic titles – supports the social capital assets, for example when analyzing hierarchies within research projects, the higher the rank the more academic titles can be found (this is especially the case in Germany).

When dealing with scientific organizations (i.e. international research projects), and also generally speaking, academia is usually said to be more or less outside the harsh economic capitalist world, that Research and Development should be independent and free. Thus, a range of very interesting research projects deals with the specific measures of the academic marketplace: usually it is said that it were titles, reputation, and of course citation-rankings instead of hard, monetary currencies that count. However, the academic landscape has changed immensely in the past decades. Scientific units are not ranked anymore according to their inherent social capital (or the human capital, i.e. distinguished scientists) but according to their actual output in terms of publications and fund-raising results. This means that especially those scientific organizations which are funded research projects are often faced with the problem of having to act like a stock-listed company despite the fact that they lack the basic (legal) mechanisms of an economic capitalistic unit. For example, projects which are funded by the European Commission usually have a Project Management Board and a Financial Board. They are confronted with expert language from jurisprudence and the competences of their financial department often results to be crucial if not vital for the overall success of the whole research project. Certainly,

there is quite a number of modern researchers (of any age) which would be happy to commit to the rules of the stock-market and produce proper annual or even quarterly reports (the balance sheets, naturally, according to US-GAAP) as long as it would mean that they could pursue their research. But the actual tools for the organization to apply are not wholly regulated by the European Commission, they are also regulated by each participating university or research unit. These rules usually affect such delicate points as human capital (i.e. staff recruitment and employment regulations) and a range of economic capital and administrative regulations.

This capital-portfolio mixture, when research units are faced with ambitious demands concerning social capital assets and are at the same time forced to obey to certain economic capital restrictions (the less fundraising results, the less ranking and approval/recognition), certainly does not facilitate the overall working process within a scientific research organization or project.

To sum up, in order to achieve integrated and successful work within a major international project, problems of different (scientific) cultures and multiple languages have to be overcome as well as the obstacle of confusing role-dictations from the formal background.

## 2. Research Agenda

The following section will introduce a portfolio of methodologies and paradigms for an analysis of the inside-outside the organization machine phenomenon and will focus on a constructive and pragmatic approach for an integrated research environment for scientific organizations, i.e. networks of knowledge.

### 2.1. The RML Agenda

The notion of knowledge sharing and knowledge access reflects an appropriate point of departure: By following a strategy coming from the Open Source domain, metaphors such as the *bazaar* or *marketplace* (e.g. Raymond 2001) try to depict the way different norms and contexts influence processes of knowledge sharing and knowledge production. However, keeping in mind the surplus of languages spoken and used within an international and interdisciplinary project a first suggestion would be to let go culturally shaped metaphors in order to find a common research modelling language (RML). The RML is related to the concept of Modelling Languages or Markup Languages and depicts the notion of a dynamically adaptive language which can be understood, spoken and shaped by each researcher and partner of a specific project. However, the RML concept does not call for the development of Esperanto's sibling or even successor. It should rather – putting all metaphors, puns, ambiguities or other linguistic delicacies aside – take the three expressive units 'research', 'model' and 'language' very plain and simple and as a socio-pragmatic starting point:

**(a) Research** -> Focussing on the numerous knowledge production spaces within a project and on the development of a joint (virtual) knowledge workspace.

**(b) Model** -> Using models as a tool to de-contextualize and developing a joint and sustainable model of research activities and dissemination.

**(c) Language** -> Focussing on the numerous languages within a project and developing a unifying evolutionary framework for language.

## 2.2. The Technology Agenda

Taking language or rather the search of a common language as a milestone of the research endeavour lacks an important ingredient when it comes to organizational communication of international research projects. Howard (among others) claims that organizations are increasingly confronted with disparate localities of its members, i.e. the decentralization effect. The work within those organizations becomes possible exclusively by means of new media, such as email, internet (in general), mobile technologies. He calls these organizations *hypermedia organizations* – “they have adapted in significant ways by using new communication technology to conduct the business of social organization over large areas and disparate time zones, and at all hours of the day. The internet, cell phones, [...], all help to extend traditional organizations into hypermedia organisations” (Howard 2002: 552).

This means that technological devices constitute a core element within discourse and the development of epistemic communities. A research portfolio regarding this aspect would include the fields computer-mediated communication (Herring 2004, 2001; Scott & Timmerman 2005; the Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication), CDA (Alvesson & Karreman 2000; Fairclough 2005; Schiffrin, Tannen & Hamilton 2003), sociology of technology (Besselaar & Koizumi 2005; Bijker & Law 1992; Bijker, Hughes & Pinch 1987; Callon, Law & Rip 1986; Kuhn 1962; *Technology and Culture*), organizational communication (Jones 2004; Heracleous & Hendry 2000; Putnam & Jablin 2001; Satzger 2005).

## 2.3. The Collaboration Agenda

To collaborate across temporal, spatial and disciplinary borders is a challenge of any international research project. Especially when talking about collaborative knowledge production, the temporal-spatial-disciplinary divide multiplies the level of complexity. Anderson points out that “knowledge is not transcendental but rather locally produced and that knowledge is not forever but rather sustained in a community of practitioners (that may be world-wide in its distribution)” (2003: 2). A recent survey on the knowledge production structure of Open Source communities also proves that for example the core software code is usually produced by a very small and locally static group of developers, whereas beta-releases or bug-fixes are

usually produced by the broader software development community (Berdou 2004).

The disciplinary divide can also be related to the spatial divide, taking the notion of proximity or distance in terms of scientific standpoints. In order to collaborate successfully, it is even more important that dispersed teams agree upon a joint set of beliefs – on mutual knowledge. Cramton asks: “How does geographic dispersion of team members affect the mutual knowledge problem?” and “To the extent that geographic dispersion and use of new communications technologies affect the mutual knowledge problem, what are the consequences for collaboration?” (2001: 346). The notion of mutual knowledge or rather the process of acceptance or agreement upon a common set of beliefs is closely interlinked with the concept of social capital. Krauss and Fussell (1990) however use a different terminology and depict three mechanisms by which mutual knowledge is established: direct knowledge, interactional dynamics, and category membership (see also Cramton). The first mechanism is of course likewise difficult to analyze when interdisciplinary research approaches are needed. The direct knowledge mechanism is very likely to concentrate on the actual formal background – funding and administrative overall structure of a project. The second mechanism, interactional dynamics, is complicated by the fact of geographical dispersion and the multiple (specialist) languages spoken within an interdisciplinary project. Thus, throughout regular face-to-face discussions mutual knowledge is more easily achieved by means of negotiation and a rich set of communicative devices (verbal and non-verbal communication). On the other hand, if those regular and numerous meetings are missing, and only singular meetings are arranged, the whole process of collaboration is jeopardized regarding the additional danger of misunderstandings, i.e. participants are not used to understand the ‘language’ of their colleagues from different domains.

Further research portfolio assets are related to capital theories (Lin 2001; Berger & Luckman 2000; Bourdieu 1983; Carolis & Saporito 2006; Coleman 1988; Hassard 1995; Sismondo 1993), epistemic cultures and communities (Baraldi 1997; Brown & Duguid 1991; Latour & Woolgar 1979; Knorr-Cetina 2002a, 2002b; Rouse 1993), and references from 2.4.

#### 2.4. The Knowledge Management Agenda

Knowledge Management (KM) is influenced by a number of disciplines, such as information economics, organizational culture, organizational behaviour, artificial intelligence, quality management (Baskerville 1998) and is one of the most discussed issues within academics and practitioners in the field of information systems. Laymen may relate topics to KM such as storage and warehousing of knowledge as well as security questions regarding the storage and retrieval of knowledge. Land,

Nolas and Amjad (2005) specify seven different management activities to KM, for example:

- “the acquisition, including scouting for and the creation, of knowledge;
- encouraging the sharing of knowledge;
- managing the processes relating to the evaluation of knowledge”.

Land, Nolas and Amjad postulate to restrain from “the attempts to leverage knowledge for something regarded as ‘good’ but from the manipulation of knowledge at an organizational or individual level [...]” (2005: 12). Issues such as the source of knowledge, the dissemination of knowledge and the motives of the knowledge should be paid more attention to. This would call for the inclusion of ontological aspects and a basic philosophical tool-kit in combination with language development and structure (according to the RML agenda).

A socio-pragmatic approach to KM in international research projects certainly demands a discussion of knowledge dissemination and the visualization of knowledge networks in order to provide temporally-spatially independent access to the produced knowledge for each researcher of a project. Thus, the question of the adequate technological tool which could provide the demanded access is vital since the choice of the specific tool potentially influences the overall knowledge production process.

The research portfolio combines input from Actor-Network Theory (Cordella 2003, 2006; McLean & Hassard 2004; Tatnall & Gilding 1999), information systems research (Ciborra 2000; Flores & Spinosa 1998; Hamilton 2005; Madanmohan & Navelkar 2002), organization studies (Burrell & Morgan 1979; Fleetwood 2005; Lesser & Storck 2001; Orlikowski 2000; Wenger et al. 2002).

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## СОЦИАЛЬНО-ФИЛОСОФСКИЕ ОСНОВЫ ТИПОЛОГИЗАЦИИ КОММУНИКАТИВНОГО ПОВЕДЕНИЯ

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Главными темами гуманитарных исследований последних десятилетий стали коммуникация, интересубъективность, диалог в силу того, что процессы производства утратили первичную детерминирующую значимость для развития общества, уступив место процессам управления. Коммуникация как феномен, организующий эти процессы, определила особую значимость научной рефлексии в области изучения феномена языка, т.к. именно исследование языкового поведения – процесса использования языка как “излюбленного средства коммуникации” (Ф. де Соссюр) – позволило найти новый ракурс понимания экзистенциального отношения между людьми как отношения между *Я* и *Ты*. Философия диалога, экзистенциализм, социология культуры, философия языка открыли новый ракурс в анализе коммуникации, и исследования интересубъективности стали поворотными в изучении общества.