

CHAPTER 4

Ethnographic study of a manager's engagements with written 'English' workplace genres in MNCs

Tiina Räisänen and Anne Kankaanranta

Introduction

Language-sensitive management research has recently begun to utilise linguistic approaches, particularly from applied and sociolinguistics, to advance the field and gain a better understanding of the dynamics involved in language use in managerial and professional contexts. Various researchers (e.g., Janssens and Steyaert, 2014; Angouri and Piekkari 2018; Gaibrois, 2018; Karhunen et al., 2018; Lecomte et al., 2018; Tietze and Piekkari, 2020) have called for adopting qualitative methodologies including ethnographic approaches such as observation and recordings of authentic interactional professional practices at the workplace. These approaches would not be possible without conceptualising 'language' as a social practice emerging in interactions. For instance, the notion of English as corporate language should not simply be seen as an object to be managed in a multinational corporation but instead as a set of dynamic practices that manifest in different ways depending on the situation and context (see Kankaanranta et al., 2018). Concurrently, as Tietze (2018) argues, traditional standards of language use are changing and her argument about the powerful gatekeepers of standard written English seems to imply another type of 'English', which would not conform to such norms and standards and for which sociolinguistic research uses the label of English as Business Lingua Franca (BELF in short; Louhiala-Salminen et al., 2005).

Although some ethnographic and ethnographically informed studies (Angouri, 2014; Lauring and Klitmøller, 2015; Räisänen and Kankaanranta, 2020) and those focusing on linguistic experts such as translators (see Tietze, 2018; Koskinen, 2020) already exist in the field, very few studies have investigated authentic written discourse by business professionals. Still, with ethnography it is possible to understand professionals' meaning-making and everyday practices in the analysis as it combines both the participants' (emic) and researcher's (etic) perspectives (Blommaert and Dong, 2020).

Integrating the concept of English as corporate language (ECL) with (socio)linguistic genre theory (Bhatia, 1993, 2008), this chapter takes an ethnographic approach to study an individual business professional's dynamic engagement with written workplace genres (text types). We analyse data from the professional's management work over a period of four years, including audio- and video-recordings of work practices, email communication, interviews and ethnographic fieldnotes. We aim to find out the dynamics of different written genres when the professional handles his daily management jobs in the multilingual organisational context. We show how the manager functions as a legitimate user of English and as a gatekeeper (see also Angouri, 2014; Logemann and Piekkari, 2015; Tietze, 2018) of written genres in the organisation. Taking the individual professional's management work as our starting point, we bring a new approach to looking at writing in the ECL (Kankaanranta et al., 2018).

We contribute to language-sensitive international management research by showing how an ethnographic approach and focus on written 'English' workplace genres can reveal the dynamics of the professional's language practices and management tasks. Simultaneously, we illustrate how organisational practices are manifested in actual genre use and how they are linked with other genres used in the corporation and with wider structures such as professional roles and responsibilities and organisational hierarchies. In essence, ethnographic and situated approaches enable capturing the relationship between global demands and local affordances.

English as corporate language

The conceptualisation of English as corporate language (ECL) in MNCs entails two views. First, it has been seen as a tool, a language that is a bounded entity which can be put to use and managed (e.g., Fredriksson et al., 2006; Luo and Shenkar, 2006; Piekkari et al., 2014). In this view, corporate language is seen at the top of the corporate language hierarchy and those with competence in the corporate language gain access to power (e.g., Neeley, 2013; Hinds et al., 2014). Second, ECL can be conceptualised as a social practice that manifests in actual contextualised language use when people work (e.g., Kassis-Henderson, 2005; Gaibrois, 2018; Langinier and Ehrhart, 2020). From the sociolinguistic language-as-practice view, language only emerges in social action and is always embedded in various layers of context, including the participants, the situation, and the organisational and societal context. Moreover, even if a person has linguistic and grammatical proficiency, it does not automatically mean that they are able to communicate effectively in a specific corporate situation (see Andersen and Rasmussen, 2004).

To maintain conceptual clarity (Suddaby, 2010), Kankaanranta et al. (2018) addressed this dual conceptualisation of ECL by applying Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical metaphor of social life. Their framework illustrates how the two different views to ECL may show at the two ends of a continuum: the frontstage 'official English' used in corporate communication (see Cornelissen, 2017) and the backstage 'working language' used among colleagues and close business partners. Although the framework does not address written and spoken language separately, implicitly the frontstage ECL seems to refer to written language and backstage ECL to both. Accordingly, the frontstage ECL would typically be used in one-way external communication reflecting corporate image and voice (see e.g., Hatch and Schultz, 1997) and would manifest as Standard English (SE), typically found in genres such as annual reports and media releases. It is different from the backstage ECL because it should make sense to a global, multilingual audience on its own, which calls for observing the norms and conventions of Standard English.

The backstage working language, conceptualised as English as a Business Lingua Franca (BELF, see Louhiala-Salminen et al., 2005), emerges in everyday – typically two-way – interactions such as emails and meetings between colleagues and business partners with diverse first languages. This sociolinguistic BELF resource emerges as a dynamic hybrid and its manifestation depends on the users' linguacultural backgrounds. It does not exist *a priori* with a certain identifiable structure that can be described in grammar books and dictionaries, which is the case with Standard English. In other words, BELF neither has native speakers nor does it exist as a language. Indeed, because of the speakers' multiple first languages, the resource can be conceptualised as inherently multilingual and multicultural (Janssens and Steyaert, 2014; Jenkins, 2015; Cogo, 2016; Ehrenreich 2016; Komori-Glatz, 2018; Räisänen, 2018). Since BELF emerges in two-way interactions, meaning-making is automatically negotiable: both in spoken and written interactions there is an opportunity to signal (non)comprehension, paraphrase and ask for and give clarifications. Although email is 'written' in the sense that it provides a permanent record, it is shown to consist of inherently two-way interactions comparable to dialogue with features of spoken language (e.g., Kankaanranta, 2005; AlAfnan, 2017; Roshid et al., 2018). BELF hence emerges in emails just as it emerges in other two-way interactions, and as the 'B' in the label advocates, the domain of its use is business, meaning that its users need to have knowledge and skills about working in business (Kankaanranta and Louhiala-Salminen, 2018).

By applying the conceptualisation of front and backstage ECL to authentic data, Räisänen and Kankaanranta (2020) identified a third, in-between stage on the ECL continuum where the language in spoken and written genres draws on and combines features of the two extremes. The mixed genre does not manifest in pure frontstage SE or as backstage BELF, meaning it is neither shared among the public at large, nor only with colleagues. Rather, it could, for example, be an agreement template in SE, which is adjusted in BELF interactions with the customer to fit the particular situation. The process of producing such mixed genres can involve various stakeholders both from within and outside the company.

Finally, although both international management research and sociolinguistics use the concept of ‘lingua franca’, the first one views it as language-as-tool, often close to SE (Harzing et al., 2011; Karhunen et al., 2018; for an overview, see Komori-Glatz, 2018) and the other one as language-as-practice, BELF (e.g., Kankaanranta, 2005; Pullin, 2013; Cogo, 2016; Ehrenreich, 2016; Millot, 2017; Roshid et al., 2018). Depending on the users and situations, BELF can emerge as closely resembling SE or as far removed from it. As Louhiala-Salminen et al. (2005; see also Kankaanranta and Louhiala-Salminen, 2018) argue, business is primary in BELF interactions, not grammatical correctness.

The dynamic notion of genre

The concept of genre has been used as an analytical tool in various fields, such as organisation theory (e.g., Yates and Orlikowski, 1992), applied linguistics and sociolinguistics, to account for workplace practices in business (e.g., Louhiala-Salminen, 1997; Angouri and Marra, 2010; Flowerdew and Wan, 2010; Lehtinen and Pälli, 2011). Instead of the structural characteristics of the genre, recently more emphasis has been devoted to the social practices, and knowledge production and dissemination through genres (Bhatia, 2008). In line with social constructivism, genres respond to and construct recurring situations in the workplace, and participants engage in the situation through genre. In a particular community of users, genres represent typified social actions: the users recognise the genres, what they mean in a particular situation, how to produce them, and how to react and respond to them (Miller, 1984). The users also identify the communicative purpose, content and form (including structure, language, vocabulary) of the particular genre (Swales, 1990; Bhatia, 1993). Genres thus disclose the corporate context and the specific situation with its participants and their relationships and should thus be seen in

their context (see e.g., Yates and Orlikowski, 1992; Kankaanranta, 2005; Angouri and Marra, 2010; Lehtinen and Pälli, 2011).

In other words, business manifests in genres in both public arenas outside the company – in official documentation, annual reports, media releases, social media spaces – and in private ones inside the organisation – in meetings, emails and chats. Some genres are more conventionalised than others (face-to-face vs. zoom meetings) although most researchers adopting the social constructionist perspective seemingly agree on the dynamic nature of genres: they develop and change with the changing affordances and circumstances.

Emails developed from business letters and memos (Yates and Orlikowski, 1992) are an illustrative example of an established, predominantly written genre that employees in the workplace engage with (e.g., Louhiala-Salminen, 1999; Nickerson, 2000; Park et al., 2021). For example, Kankaanranta (2005) showed how email genres in an MNC were used to further corporate activities and maintain relationships; more specifically, they exchanged information, forwarded other messages and made announcements. Thus, the genres responded to the various situations arising in the corporate context and operationalised the MNC's mission and strategy into everyday activities of its employees. To appropriately use a genre, the professional must have knowledge of the corporate and social context (Kankaanranta, 2005).

When looking at genres from the individual professional's viewpoint, which is our aim in this chapter, the picture becomes more complex. The individual carries out their work as part of the organisational practices, strategy and mission. The work is embedded in the trajectories of the business realised in various genres, with which professionals engage with, receiving, producing and disseminating essential knowledge. Typically, business professionals engage with multiple genres at work, often simultaneously: while participating in a meeting, a professional may read emails on the computer and respond to them, or comment on a document in an email message (e.g., Louhiala-Salminen, 2002). Such an approach to genre discloses not only the product but also the process and the business practices associated with genres.

Our paper combines the ECL framework with genre theory by investigating how the ECL comes into being as different written genres and as embedded in their production processes in the individual's everyday management work. While doing that it also reflects the daily linguistic reality of the MNC, where employees engage with genres at various points on the

ECL continuum depending on their roles, responsibilities and hierarchical positions. Our sociolinguistic and ethnographic approach views genres from the individual professional's language-in-use perspective and investigates genre production process through looking at what he does at work, with whom and through what medium.

Ethnographic approach to written genres by a manager

This chapter is based on a multi-site ethnographic research project with the first author following a professional's life in 2003-2020, from his student days in mechanical engineering through career advancement towards management positions in small and medium-sized (SMEs) and multinational companies (MNCs). The data include both the professional's reported practices (i.e., talk about his work in audio-recorded interviews and informal discussions recorded with notes) and actual practices (i.e., recordings and fieldnotes of the professional's work activities at work with the researcher present) and written texts collected at various times and at different fieldwork sites (see also Räisänen, 2018). The professional is referred to as a 'participant' as he was active in distributing research materials for the researcher (e.g., self-recordings and written texts) due to personal and professional interests (e.g., established confidential relationship with the researcher and interest in professional development). The first author has maintained regular contact with the participant throughout the years and has kept track of his work practices.

The participant (pseudonym Oskari) has worked in several management positions, first as a Project Manager and later as Operations (OM) and Key Account Manager (KAM), being based both in Finland and in China. He studied English as a foreign language for over ten years (including during his three-year professional education), progressing towards advanced proficiency level (C2). He has also completed an English-language MBA degree. Throughout his management career, Oskari has used both English and Finnish, his first language. Although he worked in China for several years and encountered and learned some Chinese, he never studied it systematically.

The focus of this paper is on the four years (2016-2020) Oskari spent at Service MNC as Operations Manager (OM, in 2014-2018) in China and Key Account Manager (KAM, in 2019-2020) in Finland. To exemplify the types of written genres and Oskari's engagement with them, we will use extracts from his jobs in Service MNC because the number of different written genres is the highest there of his career. Service MNC employs almost 4000 people and

provides customers with services and solutions. Its headquarters are in Finland, and it has offices in nearly a dozen countries on three continents; English is Service MNC's corporate language. The OM position entailed managing the operations in one of the Chinese offices, including team management in their communication and collaboration with the customers, starting from quotations, compilation of mutual non-disclosure agreements all the way to ending collaboration. As KAM, Oskari handled contract management for a customer with related documentation, such as non-disclosure and frame agreements. During his time in the company, Oskari had become an expert of contract-related language use (clauses specifically) and while working as a KAM he was frequently asked for advice by his colleagues.

Oskari was interviewed twice in 2016 and 2018 and once in 2020 in Finnish, later translated into English by the first author (total 4.5 hours of interview data). His work practices were collected and recorded in 2016-2018 with the first author present in various face-to-face interactions between Oskari and his colleagues, superiors, subordinates and customers, and observing his work practices at the office. The data comprise fieldwork with observation during 13 working days, 15.5 hours of video- and audio recordings, 137 pages of field notes and 341 photos focusing on face-to-face interactions, meetings, emails, messenger chat, business presentations, surveys and non-disclosure documents. Oskari has submitted research material in textual form (e.g., emails, messenger chat, survey for distributors, technical documentation, presentation slides).

Although the second author did not participate in data collection and fieldwork, she contributed to thorough discussions of the entire dataset in the context of other projects, and actively analysed the data for the purposes of this project. We acknowledge that tacit knowledge involved in the situations may still not be available for her despite the thorough discussions. However, this limitation has been alleviated with an aim for triangulation by means of additional, clarifying questions posed to the participant, who has explained the practices of the industry, companies and their activities, and verified authors' interpretations. These ethnographic research practices have enabled gaining an overall understanding of the context and situations.

Data analysis

In the analysis, the researchers first immersed themselves in the whole dataset and identified types of work situations (face-to-face, online) involving written discourse. Second, they

identified emerging genres in written discourse, such as emails, chat messages, project log documents, non-disclosure documents and websites. To contextualise situated language use, including the manifestation of different genres, the analysis of selected instances of genres applied genre analysis (Bhatia, 1993, 2008). First, textual genre study was applied to investigate genre features (lexico-grammar, pragmatic features, discourse organisation) after which contextual features of genre use (Bhatia, 2008) were analysed including the writer and the audience, the function and role of the genre in itself and in relation to other genres in the manager's work in particular and as part of the organisational practices in general.

After these analytical steps and drawing on an earlier investigation in the participant's genre repertoire (Räsänen and Kankaanranta, 2020), we identified frontstage SE and backstage BELF genres, and those mixing the two appearing in between the two stages. We classified the participant's engagement with the written genres into:

- writing (also editing and participating in drafting)
- reading (reviewing, confirming and accepting e.g., an official document)
- sharing, referring to and forwarding (an email)
- using (one document when writing another, e.g., a company PowerPoint presentation in a customer meeting)
- commenting

For example, when Oskari's job included writing an email to a Chinese colleague, the genre would be classified as appearing in the backstage, the corporate language would be BELF by definition (i.e., interacting with a Chinese speaker), and Oskari's engagement 'writing'.

Findings: written genres in the manager's work

In both of his positions in Service MNC, Oskari was in charge of ensuring that contracts with customers abide by the company principles and enable legally binding collaboration with them. All our examples illustrate these manager responsibilities via genre use, showing that genre work is about getting the job done and ultimately, about advancing the business of the company. This point is highlighted by Oskari in Example 1 when he elaborates on his managerial position (interview in 2020) where writing and language use are inherently involved.

Example 1

Yes, the big picture shows in practice, or if it doesn't, I'm not doing my job correctly. They are not two separate things. My job is the big picture, both in customer relationship and sales work

As Oskari says, one cannot separate the specific job tasks from the company's mission. For example, when a colleague was trying to advance their own specific viewpoint, Oskari would explicitly say that they must consider their company point of view and their business in the organisation (the global company or the cost centre). Hence, the company strategy and management communication were inseparable.

Oskari exercises his role as OM by assigning tasks for his team, simultaneously considering the wider organisational and legal points of view. Example 2 is an email message sent by Oskari to his two subordinates with an attached non-disclosure agreement (NDA). Before writing the email, Oskari had received an email from a customer (entitled 'Non disclosure agreement') with the NDA document attached, which he then forwards to his subordinates and refers to in the beginning of the email. Oskari engages in writing a backstage email using BELF and referring to a document manifesting in the in-between stage and having SE features.

Example 2

From: Oskari Lastname

To: Tim Lastname, John Lastname

Subject: FW: Non disclosure agreement

Attachment: nondisclosureagreement.xlsx

Hi,

FYI, I shortly discussed about this with John. This file must be handled with **utmost care**, it **must not** be distributed to anybody who is not directly working with the case or who has not signed a labor contract or the NDA with [our company].

Tim, could we have a meeting regarding this case tomorrow?

Best Regards,

Oskari Lastname

Oskari manages his team via colloquial, everyday language: salutation *Hi*, the abbreviation *FYI*, and addressing subordinates by their first name (John, Tim). These practices were common among the colleagues at the workplace. However, one example of more formal style is using the signature with first and last name. Here the signature appears automatically, which can be seen in the video recording of Oskari writing this email. He leaves it as it is, probably for the sake of efficiency.

Example 2 shows two genres at play: first, the email genre visible here illustrating ECL use at the backstage, BELF by definition, emerging between colleagues in their everyday work interaction. Oskari actively engages with the email genre by producing the message. Second, Oskari refers to the NDA document attached, which is a document between the company and a customer and where the language and the content has to be carefully written, checked, agreed upon and confirmed by the parties involved before project collaboration can begin (due to the confidential nature of the document it cannot be disclosed here). In the email, Oskari does not comment on the actual contents of the agreement, but only refers to it and explains how it should be treated and by whom. The level of attention is signaled by bold font to highlight that the file must be handled with utmost care. Compared to Oskari's email message to colleagues, the NDA document between business partners has more at stake. The engagement with the NDA genre requires participants' comprehensive understanding of agreements and overall business knowledge. Hence, we argue that the NDA genre falls in the category of the in-between stage and represents a mixed genre, because at some point the key content pertaining to agreements has been checked by the company and customers to adhere to specific SE legal terminology and discourse, although some sections will be revised by Oskari to fit the situation at hand.

In Example 3 Oskari explicitly comments on the contents and the language of an attachment, not only referring to it as in Example 2. The email message belongs to a trajectory of a business practice, manifested in different genres: starting from customer contact via email, leading to a customer meeting where Oskari introduced the company, using the PowerPoint presentation genre, which then led to compilation of the quotation by his subordinates and, subsequently, the email message. Example 3 provides information about producing a mixed genre, a quotation, which is attached to a backstage email. The quotation typically observing a predetermined format was first compiled by a local team of Oskari's subordinates (Tim, Department Manager, L1 Chinese; John, Team Leader, L1 Chinese; Leena, Quality Manager,

L1 Finnish), then emailed to Oskari who read it and then replied with requests for revision and editing. The task behind the use of the two genres involves serving the customer and ultimately – from the business point of view – closing a new deal. The tasks are accomplished in parallel in different genres – spoken, written, digital – and sometimes simultaneously through professionals' engagements.

Example 3

From: Oskari Lastname

To: Tim Lastname, Leena Lastname, John Lastname

Subject: RE: Review of Quotation for [customer] – Urgent!

Attachment: Quotation

Hi,

Some basic comments for the Detail Engineering quotation:

- Fix the headline, this is not onsite

3. Scope

- Add also here that work is conducted at [our company] office.
- add a clause to state that actual amount of work is defined and agreed mutually

4. Schedule and resources

- [customer] will not select resources, the work is managed by [our company]

5. Project Execution and documentation

[our company] will arrange people work in [customer] office for communication if needed.

- Site visits must be excluded, unless they are quoted with adequate price and times are specified. We can't create a situation that we need to go there e.g. twice a week and nobody pays a dime. For onsite work [hours] is too little.

I think we need to take some time to prepare the quotation properly. I would like that also Leena has time to give comments as well.

John, if customer wants to know our opinion on price, you can tell that via phone, but quotation can't be send before noon, that is clear.

Best Regards,

The genre here is a BELF email depicting interaction between colleagues in the backstage. The other genre is the Detail Engineering quotation to be ultimately sent to a customer. In the email, characterised as urgent, Oskari provides his ‘basic comments’ on the quotation document with requested edits listed in a numerical order under each corresponding point. By doing so, Oskari enacts his expertise and professional role as superior with the three recipients as his subordinates. Thus, Oskari’s requests, although direct imperatives (*Fix the headline* and *Add also here that work is conducted at [our company] office*) can be viewed as illustrating the routine nature of the situation for both parties. Oskari’s job is team management by making requests, while his team’s job is to draft the quotation, revise it according to Oskari’s requests, and in the pressing situation to do it quickly. Still, Oskari’s first language and culture being Finnish may also contribute to his directness (e.g., Kankaanranta, 2005; Stopniece, 2019). The quotation, a high-stake document, reflects corporate image and calls for a comprehensive understanding of contracts, knowledge of legal and contract terminology and overall business knowledge. The quotation genre is not pure backstage BELF used among colleagues, nor is it meant for the frontstage public-at-large. Rather, as quotations are format-bound, critical for business and customer relations, which Oskari’s email highlights, we classified the genre as mixed.

Although Oskari was in charge of the content and the language of various written genres as exemplified above, the company communications policy had established guidelines for communications in Service MNC which defined responsibilities in external communication and speaking to the media. Example 4, an interview extract, showcases the use of the company presentation genre (see also Räisänen and Kankaanranta, 2020). The PowerPoint presentation was compiled by the Head Office’s Communications Department which is responsible for producing frontstage genres, i.e., official texts and documentation, including media releases and annual reports for various stakeholders including the general public, as well as company templates for various documentation purposes. Oskari explains the company guidelines below (interview in 2018).

Example 4

We have company guidelines for communications, which defines templates, and even fonts that we should use

The company PowerPoint presentation was one of the templates produced by the Communications Department and applicable for employees in their individual presentations. In the three customer meetings observed during fieldwork, Oskari used the presentation template with basic information about the company but in each of the meetings the content of the spoken presentation and thus use of the PowerPoint varied. Each presentation was tailored for the specific customer to account for their business involvement and interests regarding Service MNC. As observed by the first author, and later verified by Oskari, his engagement with the presentation genre was that of using it as the basis in accordance with communications policy, but depending on the business at hand, its application in customer meetings was always a strategic decision by Oskari.

Discussion and conclusion

This chapter showcased an individual manager's engagement with written workplace genres in a multilingual organisation with English as corporate language (ECL) by using an ethnographic approach and data. Applying genre analysis and drawing on the notion of ECL, we identified some written genres in the ECL continuum with which the professional engaged with to do his management work in the organisational context.

The findings show how ECL and the genres used tend to correlate: BELF emerges in email genres in the backstage and as mixed genres in quotation and non-disclosure documents in the in-between stage, in which an SE template is modified and revised according to the situation. Moreover, the findings reveal how the manager engages with multiple genres simultaneously: in writing the email (backstage) the manager comments on a document to be sent to a customer (in-between stage) and manages his subordinates in their work. These findings thus concretely show what it means to view language as a social practice in the inherently multilingual reality of an MNC. Interestingly, some of the textual data could be characterised as SE when only the textual product and its linguistic form were investigated. However, as soon as we dive deep into the inherently multilingual backstage situation in its organisational context, in which the product is embedded and produced, do we see that actually the emerging language is backstage BELF. As the 'B' in BELF suggests, business is primary and grammar secondary in such interactions (see e.g., Louhiala-Salminen et al., 2005), but it does not prevent BELF from manifesting as grammatically flawless.

Our dynamic view of genre allows us to identify how a professional's voice shifts in accordance with the genre in question and the work practices involved in doing so. The manager engages with genres to do his work from a specific professional role, juggling between different genres and ECLs and acting as a mediator – even a gatekeeper (see e.g., Angouri, 2014) – between subordinates and customers. The Operations Manager's professional tasks, including assistance and guidance of his subordinates and securing a deal following organisational practices, become visible in his multifaceted engagement with a specific genre; simultaneously, he manages his team, conforms to legal obligations and advances the business of the company. Hence, the manager must develop generic competences: recognising, understanding and using specific genres appropriately to complete specific tasks.

Our ethnographic focus on everyday practices enabled us to make visible both the individual professional's tasks and the organisational, management and business practices that emerge in the individual's tasks. Indeed, the participant's reflections and understanding of his role as observing 'the big picture' can be seen in the authentic texts in which he comments on his subordinates' work and thus leads them towards company goals. This is how our ethnographic and situated approach allowed us to capture the relationship between local and global dynamics as called for by, for example, Angouri and Piekkari (2018), Gaibrois (2018), and Lecomte et al. (2018). To put it in linguistic terms: to capture the complexity of professional discourse and the engagement of professionals with genres, methodologies such as ethnography are needed for an integration of text-internal and text-external factors such as professional roles and responsibilities and organisational hierarchies (Bhatia 2008, 171).

This research has various practical implications. First, for individual professionals, active self-reflection on one's work practices involving language and genre use would make life-long learning more concrete and meaningful (e.g., Manuti et al., 2015). Individual employees would benefit from training in situation-specific language and genre use. For instance, as we have argued previously, engagement with mixed genres may require participants' comprehensive understanding of legal agreements and overall business knowledge to identify what is relevant and what is not (see Räisänen, 2018). Implications could also involve gaining insight about how business is carried out in different genres, how genres are embedded in business trajectories and how they change. With our dynamic view of genre in the ECL continuum we can identify practices involved in writing in multilingual contexts with recipients of different linguacultural backgrounds.

Second, implications for business education could involve incorporating individual perspectives and holistic approaches to business practices, for example, by being introduced to and working with authentic business genres while solving a business case. Students should learn how to engage with genres in different roles (e.g., as manager, customer, superior, team member), and what it means that genres do things such as managing interpersonal relationships and transmitting organisational strategies.

Third, our findings have implications for international management research in revealing how organisations are written into being in English as corporate language. Language and language use in multilingual organisations should be studied holistically as closely intertwined and situated within its context and as socially co-constructed by all its users, not only as corporate or management-level decisions, practices and processes. As Karhunen et al. (2018) argue, viewing language as a social practice emphasises the role of individuals and their interactions in the everyday process of forming an MNC. Such a dynamic social constellation should be investigated on the grassroots level, employing ethnographic approaches, which this study on a manager's written genre use demonstrates. Avenues for further research could therefore include ethnographic projects that study the whole organisation and with focus groups from different departments. Studies could follow trajectories of business practices and how they are manifested as different genres engaged by individuals, teams, departments and the entire organisation.

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