

Intercultural Organizing: The Role of Communication Strategies on the Factory Floor

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ABSTRACT

Taking a linguistic ethnographic approach this study explores the inextricability of communication strategies (CS) and work practices among workers of non-English-speaking-background, in a contemporary Australian manufacturing company. The notion of CS is conceptualized through a focus on both the ‘interculturality’ of interactions and the enactment and embedding of organizational/institutional discourses in the texture of day-to-day work activities.

Special emphasis is placed on the organizing properties of CS as a social practice in the workplace context and the processes through which organized work come together through communication. To this aim the notions of ‘site of engagement’ and ‘nexus of practice’ are used as the theoretical and analytical backdrop of the study to illustrate how the trajectories of body/action, talk and institutional order converge into concerted activities. The data comprise participant observation, interviews, retrospective commentaries and the recording of a large corpus of naturally occurring interactions. Specifically, participants’ pre- and post-event accounts of work interactions are contrasted with naturally occurring data in order to highlight the discursive construction of CS, in interviews, and their actual occurrence ‘on line’ respectively. This nested analysis sheds light in particular on CS’ meanings and relevance to individuals as members of the organization and the extent to which individuals themselves are allowed to participate in nexuses’ formation.

The author extends the evaluation of previous approaches and definitions of CS in mainstream Applied Linguistics research to include ongoing efforts at mutual coordination, and control of actions and knowledge by interlocutors in response to actual or perceived difficulties among interlocutors to communicate. In this respect, she argues that the notion of ‘problematic communication’ is also to encompass the interplay of agency and institutional order. The role and effective use of CS, in this regard, relate to the degree of individuals’ participation or lack thereof as well as resistance to/compliance with organizational goals.

The author proposes a multi-perspectival working model for analysing CS which is based on a flexible ‘multi-laminated’ theoretical and methodological framework. This framework encompasses the tools of sociolinguistic discourse analysis and mediational discourse analysis, embedded in ethnographic information on actual interactions and an ethnomethodological approach to interview data.

The multifaceted investigation adopted in the study enables a view of ‘communication skills’ learning, as referred to in ESP and workplace ESL programs, which goes beyond the ‘deficit view’ of merely being linguistic shortcomings. In this regard, the implications for learning communication skills in the workplaces are also discussed.

STATEMENT OF CANDIDATE

I certify that the work in this thesis, entitled “Intercultural Organizing: the Role of Communication Strategies on the Factory Floor”, has not previously been submitted for a degree, nor has it been submitted as part of the requirements for a degree, to any other university or institution other than Macquarie University. I also certify that the thesis is an original piece of research and it has been written by me. Any help and assistance that I have received in this study and the preparation of the thesis itself have been acknowledged.

In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis. The research presented in this thesis was approved by the Macquarie University Ethics Review Committee, as noted in Ethics Approval 5201000910.

Maria Laura Ficorilli

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Glossary and abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACCI	Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Aged Care	occupation providing institution-based care workers for older Australians
ALLP	Australian language and Literacy Policy
Ai Group	Australian Industry Group
AMEP	Adult Migrant English Program, Australia's federally funded settlement English program, providing 510 hours of classes for the majority of eligible migrants; administered via competitively tendered five-year contracts
ASQA	Australian Skills Qualification Authority
BCA	Business Council of Australia
Certificate III	in Engineering Mechanical Trade (Maintenance – Fitting and/or Turning) in Fabrication Engineering, etc. An intermediate level of certification to be accredited to operate in the trade.
DEST	Department of Education, Science and Training
DEEWR	Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relation
DIAC	Australian federal Department of Immigration and Citizenship
ESF	Employability Skills Framework
ESP	English for Specific Purposes
ISC	Industry Skills Council
LMS	labour market segmentation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
ESL	English as a Second Language
ISLPR	International Second Language Proficiency Ratings scale used by the AMEP and other accredited English language service providers in new student placement assessments

L1	first or primary language
L2	additional language, learned subsequent to L1
NESB	Non-English-Speaking-Background
NSW	New South Wales
TAFE	Technical and Further Education; Australian post-secondary education institution delivering (primarily) vocational training
TP	Training Package
VET	Vocational Education and Training
WCN	Workplace Communication Network
WELL	Workplace English Language and Literacy

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Rationale for the study

In the New Work Order era in which modern industrialized economies are located, employees, especially ‘transnational’ ones, despite being invariably considered ‘knowledge workers’ in the ‘knowledge economy’, face a different categorization when working on host countries’ factory floors. Organizations’ workshop floors resonate with low-status jobs, requiring low-level language and literacy skills and traditionally taken up by migrants who are willing to fill the shortages of manual labour. The response, at both government and organization levels, to this real or presumed state of affairs over the years and across eras of production systems and technologies has been of two contrasting kinds, with the most recent trend being an almost direct consequence of the globalized market: 1) provision of training in various kinds of communication skills, and/or reviews and audits of communication processes and systems; or 2) a lack of acknowledgement of the communicative issues related to the low level of language and literacy and increased recruitment among those who are perceived as ‘already-technically-and-communicatively-skilled’ as knowledge workers (Ehrich et al., 2010). In the Australian context, the backdrop to the labour market’s requirements has been a growing demand for higher level vocational and trade qualifications (Vocational Education and Training -VET), coupled with evidence of competition amongst holders of mid-level qualifications (diplomas, advanced diplomas, associate degrees, degrees) for the same jobs (Fredman & Moodie, 2013). There are about 4,650 institutes of which about 3,000 are private, catering to around 3.4 million students (Standards, 2014). Since 2011, quality assurance and regulation of courses and institutions has been handled by the Australian Skills Qualification Authority (ASQA). A 2013 process review, while noting that this was a new organization yet to develop and implement mature systems, also voiced considerable concern expressed by the provider community, particularly with respect to communication (*ASQA Process Review: Final report* 2013). Additionally, it can readily be seen that the policy documents produced by these reviews reflect concerns with productivity, labour force, inclusiveness and social inclusion. The discursive scenario, however, has remained largely unaltered with factory floor employees’ knowledge and communicative skills symbolically represented in ‘derisive terms’ (Vallas, 1998).

Although migration patterns, in Australia as elsewhere, have changed through the years both in terms of migrants' origins and the primary reasons for migration itself, finding work is still one of the overarching values for many people starting a new life in a new country (Clyne, 1994; Ficorilli, 2005; Kim et al., 2012). It not only means providing for one's own needs, as much as this might well be paramount. It also means finding 'self completion' in settlement adjustment and sense of belonging (Butorac, 2011). And the new language not only fulfills social and professional goals but is the key to sharing ownership of the workplace culture itself. On the other hand, from an organizational perspective, a high level of individual competence in communication is a routine requirement nowadays for all jobs, and effective communication is identified as a critical factor in the efficient running of organizations in much contemporary workplace communication scholarship. Recruitment of certain occupational categories has progressively concentrated in overseas labour markets and there is a widespread perception that communication problems and conflicts are endemic within organizations, and that communication practices need to be improved if workplaces are to function smoothly, safely and effectively. An increasing worldwide body of literature of case studies refers to problematic dealings and to communication issues arising from linguistic or cultural diversity, from increased information and systems complexity, and from organizational change (Australian Industry Group, 2007). Reported areas of concern are wide-ranging and can include aspects of spoken, written and electronic communication (both formal and informal), interpersonal and intergroup relations and conflict, as well as higher-level organizational communication processes and structures (Australian Industry Group, 2010). The recurring nature of these issues in both the related literature as well as my life-long observations as a language practitioner in organizations suggested to me that much more than learning communication skills would be needed to fulfil one's tasks and duties 'collaboratively and harmoniously' within one's work environment, as highlighted in the Employability Skills Framework (2002) and the reformulation of its key concepts over the years (Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST)/Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI)/Business Council of Australia (BCA), 2002; Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relation, 2012). It would rather mean for everybody involved on the factory floor to gain access to the organization's on-going 'Conversation', in the organizational terms of planning, decision-making and problem-solving. The particular question resonating in my mind at the inception of this research project was then related to what was meant by the term 'communications skills' as defined by job descriptions and training manuals.¹

In particular, it will be shown, how some migrants, despite their obvious language shortcomings (in L2 knowledge terms), were successful in bridging past knowledge and

¹ For the purposes of this project, we have defined Employability Skills as being "the non-technical skills required to effectively participate in the workplace". Generic Skills are broader and include language, literacy and numeracy skills and other skills required to participate in society. In Australia, the term Foundation Skills is now being used to describe the combination of Core Skills (i.e. reading, writing, oral communication, numeracy and learning) and Employability Skills.

skills with present and future ones towards progress and development, while others kept wading through the basic daily ‘goods and services’ type of transactions.

1.2 Problematizing Communication Skills into Communication Strategies: the educational and organizational contexts

As mentioned above the concern with defining the term ‘communication skills’ stemmed from my professional experience as a communication teacher in the Australian vocational education system. The VET system is characterized by a sophisticated and complex system of qualification requirements at different levels and across various strands. VET qualifications are largely contained in competency-based, national Training Packages,² developed in consultation with industry by way of the Industry Skills Council. This system can provide the basis and framework to build up both individual skills and previous learning experiences and knowledge of work and/or trades. It assumes particular relevance in a multicultural context where the workforce is often made up of people who have acquired and developed skills and knowledge in a different country. Furthermore, it assumes particular relevance insofar as immigration policies generally reflect the world’s widespread economic policies which see cognitive skills as one of the most significant predictors of a country’s economic growth (knowledge economy) (Fiorini, 2012, Hanushek & Woessman, 2008).

It was in this vein that the necessity of setting common standards for the attainment/recognition of specific skills and competencies has guided the formulation of an Employability Skills Framework as an overarching incorporation of general skills needed in every industry and a crucial component of vocational course curricula or Training Packages (TPs) in the Australian VET system.

Amongst all skills, communication skills occupy a key position in the Employability Skills Framework as they constitute a crucial component of all generic skills required in a workplace. This is apparent in some of the definitions of the eight key skills identified in conjunction with the personal attributes that make up the Employability Skills Framework, such as the following:

- Communication that contributes to productive and harmonious relations between employees and customers;
- Teamwork skills that contribute to productive working relationships and outcomes;

² A ‘training package’, in Australia, is a set of nationally endorsed standards, qualifications and guidelines used to recognise and assess the skills and knowledge people need to perform effectively in the workplace. Training packages are developed by Industry Skills Councils or by enterprises to meet the training needs of an industry or group of industries. Training packages prescribe outcomes required by the workplace, not training or education: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Training_package_\(Australia\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Training_package_(Australia))

- Problem-solving skills that contribute to productive outcomes, etc.;
- Planning and organizing skills that contribute to long-term and short-term strategic planning; and
- learning skills that contribute to ongoing improvement and expansion in employee and company operations and outcomes.

However, the increasing ‘specificity’ of job requirements, ‘labour market segmentation’ (LMS) (Alcorso, 2006; Castles, 2003) makes it difficult to define/identify what the requisites for ‘being employable’ are beyond the ‘specific technical’ skills required. In a word, it is difficult to identify what makes it possible to translate knowledge and skills into ‘employability currency’ (ability ‘to perform’ in a workplace).

Although it is clear how communication is seen here as a vehicle towards the achievement of workplace membership and towards both benefits from and contributions to the shared context that membership itself represents, unlike all other units of competency described in TPs, communication skills are neither clearly defined nor sufficiently outlined against work competence or more generally the ability to perform on the job. In sum, there is no clear fit between the competency-based approach of vocational education and the communication skills as embodied in generic skills and personal attributes (Review of Training Packages and Accredited Courses – Discussion Paper, 2014). This is in spite of changes in job demands and the growth of VET as a profit-making concern in which, as with education in general, the orderings of lists, tables, comparisons, specifications and outcomes – all that can be made readily particularised and accountable – have become increasingly prominent (Lingard et al., 2014; Robertson, 2012).

This gap leaves ‘communication skills’ as ‘an accessory’ rather than ‘an essential’ in terms of functionality and effectiveness on the job. The gap becomes even clearer in view of the lack of explicit and systematic recognition of cultural and language diversity in the above-mentioned Framework. This lack of or insufficient recognition – at an institutional/educational level – is often reflected at the organizational level in the case of multicultural, multi-lingual workplaces (D’Netto et al., 2008) where the diversity is often embedded in the organizational structure itself in very complex ways. Given the above, it is legitimate to assume that, in multicultural multi-lingual host societies like Australia, where knowledge and skills (human, social and economic capital) are often acquired and developed overseas, broader, deeper insights into how that knowledge and those skills are best transferred and mediated through communication into local practices and membership would be needed. In this vein, there seems to be a major need for a call for a re-conceptualization of what roles are played by communication and language in this process and precisely what is meant by the term ‘communication skills’ since, although extensively common, it is rarely clearly defined but rather used somewhat loosely to gloss over a range of issues which often go well beyond the usual scope of purely linguistic or discursive inquiry, even though communication may well be implicated as one factor.

In this respect, as mentioned above, the definitions provided within the Employability Skills Framework, despite the insufficiently explicit links to any applicable context, presuppose, beyond one's individual capabilities, access to affordances for those capabilities to be discursively enacted in membership and therefore translated into participation in organization in its broadest sense. Starting from the standpoint of Mantere & Vaara (2008), who see organizations as constituted by strategy processes enacted discursively, which in turn, involve participation and how this is made sense of in relation to what roles are assigned to specific organizational members, this study's preliminary concern is how the definition of communication skills fits within the overall strategic practices of a workplace where 'strategy' is broadly intended as the unifying theme that gives coherence and direction to the decisions of an organization's Strategic Management ('itself consisting of the analysis, decisions, and actions an organization undertakes in order to create and sustain competitive advantages') (Hitt, Hoskinson, & Ireland, 2004 p.4). For this purpose the construct 'communication strategies' has been adopted to encompass the integration of communication with strategies as a social practice in the contemporary organization. The assumption underlying the literature strand of strategy-as-practice adopted here (Whittington, 1996) as well as that of related notions such as organizational sense-making, organizational identity and membership is that communication *organizes*; it creates order out of potential disorder (Cooren, 2000). Longstanding beliefs about the functions of communication are that it is essential in solving important social problems, particularly those related to a perceived lack of community, a threat to cultural continuity, or a need for a smoothly-functioning social system (Pinchevski, 2005). This resonates with the post-modern organization where continuous changes are challenges to certainty and routine and may thwart efficiency and threaten individual security, and which, by being likely to originate communicative failure and the generation of uncertainty, also strengthen the fundamental interdependence of 'selves' and 'Others' (Deetz, 2008). For this purpose, within the concept of strategy-as-a-social practice, I adopt a critical discursive perspective that allows the discovery of how specific conceptions of 'strategy work' and the ways in which they are enacted in interactions are reproduced and legitimized in organizational activities and specifically in factory floor activities. In particular, the link between the analyses of discourses 'of' communication strategies and that of 'how/as they happen' in interactions, as shown in the methodology chapter (Chapter 4), will show in Foucauldian terms how discourse analysis will enable an understanding of different analytic perspectives of 'strategy': not as distinct 'ways of seeing' a particular domain of research, but rather as all 'embedded in social practices that reproduce the "way of seeing" as the "truth" of the discourse' (Knights and Morgan, 1991: 253). In line with Knights and Morgan's seminal work on 'strategy', this discursive notion of strategy as kaleidoscopically conceived is converted from 'a descriptive label' comprising a specific ensemble of researchable objects 'out there' in the world, to a discourse: an ongoing constituting and reconstituting analysis of what and how strategies emerge, are captured or enacted. In this respect, Knights & Morgan state:

strategy as a discourse is intimately involved in constituting the intentions and actions from which it is thought to be derived. Strategy, then, is an integral part, and not independent, of the actions or practices that it is frequently drawn upon to explain or justify (Knights and Morgan, 1991: 268).

Within this analytical framework of strategy as a discourse, and relevant to this study, the authors go on to refer to strategy's 'power effects' which are inextricably linked to the discourses that legitimate market economies.

As Fairclough (1995: 2) explains, the 'power to control discourse is seen as the power to sustain particular discursive practices with particular ideological investments in dominance over other alternative (including oppositional) practices'. In this sense, the study of communication strategies (CS) is set here to explore how and why some organizational meanings as well as the course of actions associated with them become privileged, taken for granted and reified (Hardy, 2001). Similarly, it explains why power relations that appear stable within workplaces (Clegg, 1989) are really the result of ongoing discursive struggles in which any shared meaning is secured by way of a process of negotiation (Mumby & Stohl, 1991). Furthermore, it indicates that although some discourses may seem to dominate, 'their dominance is secured as part of an ongoing struggle among competing discourses that are continually reproduced or transformed through day-to-day communicative practices' (Hardy, 2001: 28).

Specifically, I argue that this on-going struggle is what makes actors (whether individual or organizational) adopt a basic 'dwelling mode' rather than deliberately engage in purposeful strategic activities (Chia & Holt, 2006). In this dwelling mode, strategy emerges non-deliberately through everyday practical coping.

Whereas, from the 'Classical' perspective, (Hedley, B., 1977; Porter, 1979; Hamel & Prahalad, 1994; Rumelt, 1974) strategy is conceived in terms of prior conception of plans that are then orchestrated to realize a desired outcome, from a dwelling perspective strategy does not require, nor does it presuppose, intentionality and goal-orientation: strategic 'intent' is seen as *immanent* in every responsive action. Consistent actions taken are accounted for not through deliberate goal-orientation but, instead, by way of a *modus operandi*: an internalized disposition to act in a manner congruent with past actions and experiences, in a word, in a commonsensical way. Explaining strategy as immanent and even *in fieri* enables us to understand how it is that actors' actions may still converge into practices in accordance with the organization's purposes and be organizationally effective without (and even in spite of) the existence of purposeful strategic plans (Johnson, 1987; Pettigrew, 1985). Furthermore, it is my contention that it is through the adoption of individual communication strategies that actors, despite the denied affordances to full participation in the overall organizational agenda and therefore discourses, can still appropriate discursive spaces in nexuses of practices (Scollon, 2001, 2002, Scollon & Scollon, 2004).

1.3 Background to the study: the wider socio-economic context of the study

Although the organization object of this study was founded in the late 1970s, its current situation both at structural (hierarchical set up) and technological levels (production systems and human resources) is the on-going process of changes initiated in the late 1980s, and the beginning of the 1990s.

The 1990s and early years of the new millennium in particular, have meant significant restructuring and technological reconstruction in organizations world-wide which in turn have impacted on ideas of what constitutes an organization. The red-thread of discourses since then has been to link the organization portrayed as a community with similarly oriented values to economic success and above-average revenues. Associated ideas were those concerning a view of workplace reform as empowering individuals by affording them a shared ownership of agendas and in general a more democratic environment to participate in. Over the years this opening to participation has by and large translated in the set up of team-working and an increased level of shared responsibilities for roles that were traditionally subordinate and almost totally dependent on the immediate super-ordinate levels. A counter-trend has been the steady implementation of rationalist institutional practices such as down-sizing, multi-skilling and cost-reduction, the ‘more with less’ approach (Jackson, 2000), and consequent higher demands on human capital both in terms of performance (measurable competencies) and commitment. Although these changes within organizations and the discourses surrounding them are to be seen as inscribed in the wider socio-economic context of global markets and economies, they also have impacted on existing organizational systems in different ways. In most cases this overlap of ‘promoted’ autonomy paired with the opportunity to develop and improve on a personal level and the sharpening of organizational strategies of efficient production and competitiveness have led over the last 10 to 20 years to blended but not necessarily integrated old and new technologies. In particular, I suggest that the organization, the object of this research, is a case in point of this particular state of affairs where old and new still co-exist amidst a struggle for change and resistance to change which impact on relationships and interactions among the parties at play. In this sense, the Australian context, in which the organization in question is situated, is also to be considered from a broader socio-economic and political viewpoint as it crucially reflects the transformations and struggles occurring at the organization’s level.

1.3.1 The Australian Context: economic and work policy changes

Changes within Australian workplaces started to be formalized during the 1980s in line with the acknowledgement of the need to increase productivity through greater labour market flexibility. Reports such as the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) (1988, 1989, 1992 Workplace Communication Network, 1995) informed new directions in policies and reforms. The focus of these policies was mainly on retraining, skills formation and an overall re-design of jobs as a vehicle to favour and strengthen structural change in organizations and make Australian industry globally more competitive.

These formal acknowledgements of imminent desire for change paralleled reforms and revisions at the level of national wages and the adoption of efficiency principles such as 1988's Restructuring and Efficiency principle in the Australian National Wage Case Decision where employers, unions and employee efforts converged to further modify and implement new productivity trends such as: payment methods, performance-related pay, flexibility and multi-skilling, as well as quality control and innovative industrial relations procedures. In the manufacturing industry these trends have translated into the adoption of high performance production systems and lean processes (James, Veit & Wright, 1997).

The new sets of policies have had different impacts and have determined a differential pace in actual restructuring within workplaces depending on a number of other factors such as size, location and type of ownership of companies. However, one of the overall influences of the new policies has been on the notion of workplace culture, specifically on the shift from an old to a new way of managing. This shift focussed on the bi-directional communication of management-employees, collaboration, employee empowerment and views of employee knowledge that, together, were crucial to handle sharing of responsibilities at all levels of operations, from decision-making to production and quality control to team leadership.

The concept of 'knowledge worker' emerging from this new management paradigm entailed a flatter hierarchy and the taking on of new roles for all involved and has led to different ways of conceiving work knowledge itself and the associated discursive skills required of employees. Concepts such as 'workplace literacies' linked to the restructuring processes mentioned above have therefore developed into a significant body of research which necessarily has had direct resonance in the way discourses manage and are managed either to drive or resist change. In particular, as relevant to my study, the link between the workplace language and literacy issues implicated in these changes and Australia being traditionally a migrant host country where workplaces are invariably populated by employees of non-English-speaking-background (NESB) will be dealt with in the following section.

1.3.2 Australia as a host country: language and literacy policies and migration policies

As mentioned above, starting in the early 1990s, there has been a growing interest in communication, language and literacy demands related to competencies in education and training texts and practices (see the Commonwealth Department of Education and Training's Australia's Language: The Australian language and Literacy Policy (ALLP), 1991). This was marked by an increasing focus on the changes occurring in the contemporary workplace where competencies were no longer measured through technical parameters only but also in terms of language and cultural competence (du Gay, 1996). Although much of this work has had as an underlying premise the existence of a strong and direct link between lack of language and literacy skills and productivity which still informs government and industry interventions (Australian Industry Group, 2010; Industry Skills Council (ISC)/Workplace Communication Network & Workplace English Language and Literacy (WELL), 2010), it has also provided the platform for questioning the exclusivity of this causal link and, most importantly, the representations of language and literacy as indications of individuals' shortcomings or deficits, rather than shifting the focus onto their re-conceptualization as social practices (Gee, Hull & Lankshear, 1996; Jackson, 2000; Lankshear, 2000). However, despite this new turn, it has partially failed to address consistently the connections between this changed view of language and literacy competence and the globalized labour market. In particular, the interrogation of the social practices of language and literacy and the affordance or lack thereof of opportunities to improve or even apply those practices by employees of non-English-speaking background has in some way been overlooked. This gap resonates with a parallel non-acknowledgement of diversity and diversity needs in the management of Australian contemporary workplaces and specifically manufacturing companies, often translating into semi-skilled or unskilled workers falling through the cracks of reforms or interventions of various types (Ai Group, 2010; D'Netto et al., 2008).

The other side of the coin is represented by the long-standing concern for Australia to maintain a necessary intake of immigrants since the post-war period (Jupp, 2002, 2007). This need has been reflected in numerous government policies which have addressed the selection process as well as the challenges that have arisen from effectively managing a linguistically and culturally diverse workplace (Cope & Kalantzis, 1997; Bertone, 2000, 2002). The last decade, with the formulation of the Skilled Migration Program, in particular, has more and more reflected the business sector's needs for workers with particular skills indicating that if Australian labour force conditions persist, the pattern of migration is likely to replace the current 'supply driven' program (with its prevailing numbers of unsponsored entrants with the wrong skills) with a 'demand driven' one (Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2010).

In line with this framework there have been changes in the education sector and programs like the AMEP (Adult Migrant English Program), by and large provided to humanitarian and family reunion entrants and administered federally by the Department of Immigration

and Citizenship (DIAC). This program, in particular, has progressively aligned to government economic goals as Jupp remarks:

[Immigration policy in Australia] has always aimed at specific economic objectives: the recruitment of labour; the filling of skilled vacancies, variously defined; the avoidance of those likely to become unemployed or welfare dependent; and the encouragement of workers likely to become adaptable (Jupp, 2002: 143).

Accordingly, the program has seen a deliberate shift towards linking English language and literacy provision with outcomes in paid employment. This included the following measures: 1) An increased focus on vocational language learning outcomes (eg, writing a resume, doing a job interview); 2) Special elective English courses with an employment or employability focus; 3) The inclusion of industry links for transitioning AMEP students into low-paid service sector jobs, and vocational training links to jobs in, for example, Child and Aged Care, IT, etc.; and 4) Client individual learning plans requiring learners to identify employment and educational pathways (Butorac, 2011).

These measures which are economically oriented, despite being geared to providing the newly arrived with the basic literacy skills needed to gain employment, repropose the labour market supply-demand schema with the view of language and literacy being instrumental to fill up shortages in specific (generally low-status) labour sectors. As such, they fail to recognize and take into account the barriers that speakers of English as an additional language face, if and when they have gained employment, and whether or not they have the tools to negotiate discursive spaces for them to gain full membership within their workplaces.

Although the relationship between the level of language and literacy competence and the extent of competence in workplace communication is beyond the scope of my thesis, a final remark on this issue can be the following: the trend in educational and labour policies mentioned above suggests that the 'new generation of migrants' would likely face similar issues to those who, landing in Australia at various times in the past, have been invariably left behind in terms of the knowledge-economy requirements in contemporary workplaces. These 'new migrants' are, therefore, likely to remain peripheral themselves, to the 'global workforce'.

1.4 Objectives, scope, research questions and structure of thesis

The considerations formulated above have guided the proposition to be explored in this thesis, namely, that a transition is needed from the view of communication 'skills' as defined above (the skills necessary to partake in complex workplaces activities and interactions) to one of communication 'strategies' which explicitly incorporates not only the linguistic competence necessary to conduct work and create and sustain role-relationships but also the expertise to claim and maintain space towards and within nexuses of practices within a contemporary organizational structure. In this way, the present study

considers the use of communication strategies by speakers of English as an additional language, by default, ‘intercultural’, as it also incorporates their past, present and future knowledge of technologies and associated discourses as well as the knowledge of how these intersect with institutional orders and agendas: in a word, of what constitutes ‘organizing’ in the particular intercultural context in which they find themselves.

For the purpose of analysing the use of CS, as social processes of participation in knowledge and action, and in particular the complexities and extent of their use ‘in progress’, I claim that a pluralistic, multi-laminated, approach and different data sources are required. This study will endeavour to investigate by means of an in-depth analysis of ethnographic data, including observations, accounts of participants in preliminary and retrospective interviews (participants’ post-event commentaries on their own recorded interactions) and naturally occurring interactions collected on the factory floor of a manufacturing company. This research has three key objectives, summarised below, which bear a theoretical, methodological and applied relevance respectively:

1) Theoretical objective

To explore and problematise a set of theoretical approaches relevant to the concept of CS use in Applied Linguistics and as a social practice in the context of multicultural organizations. The aim is to define/identify what constitutes the strategies that ‘govern’ communication in such contexts and how they emerge by way of empirical investigation of naturalistic workplace data.

2) Methodological objective

To adopt a methodological and analytic framework, namely, the multi-perspectival model, which allows a ‘laminated’ perspective insofar as the different angles of view proposed not only co-exist during the analytic process but intersect at various points through a nested analysis to account for the intertextual and situated emergence of CS ‘as they happen’ and reflected upon by participants themselves.

3) Applied objective

To describe and account for the range and emergence of CS that workers who speak English as a second language utilize on the workshop floor and how these are embedded in work practices and organizational and individual goals for the purpose of maximizing the effectiveness of their communication and preventing or minimizing miscommunication.

By considering the ways in which instances of CS emerge in both preliminary and retrospective accounts of participants as well as in selected interactions themselves, and within the overarching framework of Linguistic Ethnography, the study is positioned within a multi-disciplinary space; as such it is based broadly within the disciplinary framework of interactional socio-linguistics, but also draws on concepts and analytic tools from a range of related strands of discourse and interaction analysis, with additional links to applied linguistics and organizational communication.

The research questions and sub-questions associated with the above research objectives are the following:

- 1) What are communication strategies on the factory floor of the workplace object of this study?
 - a) What is their role at the intersection between language and action?
 - b) How do they enact, resist, negotiate interaction orders?
 - c) What are the ‘intercultural elements’ at play in interactions and what role do CS play in this context?
- 2) How do CS emerge in verbal interactions and how are they conceptualized by participants through their accounts?
 - a) Do CS take on different functions in different events with different people?
 - b) How and to what extent are CS accounted for as a social practice?
 - c) How do participants conceptualize ‘intercultural communication’ in their interactions?

The remaining chapters of the thesis are as follows:

Chapter 2: WORKPLACE COMMUNICATION AND DISCOURSES: AN INTERCULTURAL ORGANIZATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

This reviews the main theoretical and methodological frameworks which have been applied to the study of spoken discourse more generally and to institutional and organizational settings in particular. However, the approach of the chapter is to explore the interconnections of key-notions and theories in their relevance to the data collected for this study rather than indicate direct and specific analytical methodologies carried out in the analysis itself. Through this ‘mapping out’ and against the backdrop of two overarching frameworks, Communication as Organizing and Linguistic Ethnography, the chapter locates the study within an integrationist approach and delineates the researcher’s positioning towards the project itself. In particular, the field of intercultural communication is viewed as embedded in the organizational discourse approaches that are adopted, whereas a critical discourse analysis approach highlights the intersections of the wider socio-political, institutional and local discursive levels. The connection between language and action emerging through the fieldwork is outlined through Scollon’s notions of Mediated Discourse Analysis (MDA) whereas Goffman’s ‘frames’ and Gumperz’s ‘cues’ highlight the interactional aspects of CS. The relevance of an ethno-methodological approach and its notions of ‘sense-making’ and ‘accounts’ are called upon as possible tools to explain how CS emerge as social practice. Theoretical implications of learning and using a second language in a workplace setting are also briefly discussed here.

Chapter 3: COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES AS ORGANIZING DISCURSIVE PRACTICES

This chapter provides an overview of how the notion of CS is defined and understood in different strands of the Applied Linguistics literature and proposes a re-conceptualization of the same in relation to organizational discourses in general and to this study in particular. To this aim, CS are illustrated as producing and reproducing the ‘organization’s order’ as well as individuals’ positioning towards and within it. As for the previous chapter, rather than presenting theories and notions as frameworks for the analysis of the study, chapter 3 aims at providing an as much as possible exhaustive theoretical backdrop that serve to highlight the relevance of different analytical venues.

In this context, the chapter also provides an overview of CS in relation to contextual factors (types of interactions and organizational and wider social/institutional contexts) and the weight these factors have on the methodological tools and interpretive process of CS themselves. The theoretical underpinnings of CS are traced here in the relevant work of two major scholars, John Gumperz and Ron Scollon. An Organizational Discourse perspective highlights CS’ ‘interdiscursive’ and intercultural mediating nature whereby actors in organizations adopt various diverse discursive practices at the same time and for different and, often-times, contrasting purposes.

Chapter 4: METHODOLOGY: RESEARCH DESIGN, FIELDWORK AND ANALYTICAL TOOLS

This chapter describes and explains the methodological approach taken in this study, and provides details of the research design, including a description of the data set and the data collection procedures adopted as well as the process of accessing the research site and conducting fieldwork. The ‘iterative’ research design’s rationale (initial interviews, natural interactions and post-event commentaries of participants on their naturally occurring interactions) and its links to data collection procedures and phases of analysis is also outlined here with a brief description of the Multi-perspectival Model approach adopted for the purpose. The identification of four macro-types of CS through this analytical approach is also illustrated in this chapter. The remainder of the chapter deals with the conventions used for transcriptions, the procedures for ethics approval and the ethical issues of the study.

Chapter 5: WORK AND TALK AT PLP: THE STRATEGIC CONSTRUCTION OF A WORKPLACE: LINGUISTIC ETHNOGRAPHY AND INTERACTIONAL ANALYSIS

This chapter explores the research site as an organizational context and the way in which it is constructed discursively: its past, present and predicted future circumstances. The analysis here is based on fieldwork notes and observations as well as participants’ accounts in interviews and informal chats and naturally occurring interactions. This chapter proposes an integrated analytic framework which encompasses Linguistic Ethnography, Critical Discourse Analysis, Mediated Discourse Analysis and Interactional Socio-

linguistics. This heuristic approach serves to illustrate how CS are immanent and emerge in any given (inter)action and through the ‘thick’ description of the site and against the backdrop of the institutional and individuals’ goals and aspirations. It also attempts to capture the process of formation of nexuses of practice and the role played by CS in the process itself at the intersection of language and technologies (the ensemble of humans and tools).

Chapter 6: THE ‘SENSE MAKING RECIPE’ OF ORGANIZING AND THE ROLE OF CS

This chapter aims at further exploring the role and emergence of CS as they are conceptualized by participants in initial interviews. The perspective adopted here further canvasses the approach illustrated in the previous chapters which views individuals’ conduct as meaningful, purposive and consistent with their participating (and the extent to which they do so) in nexuses of practice and actions and not as following a prescribed set of rules or patterns of behaviour. In this respect, the focus of this chapter is on the joint – researcher/participants – process of identification, interpretation and explanation of CS emergence, use and justification as social-institutional practices. An ethno-methodological approach is the overarching analytical tool to investigate the process of accounting for action and the communication required therein.

Chapter 7: CS IN INTERACTIONS AND HOW THEY ARE ACCOUNTED FOR AS THEY ‘ORGANIZE’

This chapter, through a nested analysis approach, links the focal themes identified in initial interviews to the enacted, naturally occurring interactions and to the participants’ accounts of those interactions as organizational and discursive practices. Specifically, in this chapter, retrospective interviews (or post-event interviews) are used as analytic tools through which participants comment on selected communicative events. In this context, the role of CS as emerging within ‘on-line’ interactions, is enacted or re-enacted through accounts and is mediational to the construction of discursive frames: time, space and situation of the (inter)action is re-constructed as the event is being accounted for. The analysis of CS is twofold: 1) as enactments of ‘real time’ organizing in the events at hand and, 2) as they are made sense of and at, the same time, employed by participants in retrospective discourses with the purpose of explaining how organizing practices themselves unfold. In this way, the main function of CS, to enact nexuses, as established historical practices, but also in continuous transformation (discursive and not only), is captured ‘as it happens’.

Chapter 8: CONCLUSION: CS AS INDIVIDUAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL TOOLS: ENFORCEMENT, RESISTANCE, NEGOTIATION, COMPLIANCE

This final chapter draws together the threads of the arguments and evidence put forward in the earlier chapters as well as pointing to the limitations of the study. Specifically, it highlights how the construct ‘strategy’, as difficult as it is to define, and despite the diverse

theoretical and analytical lenses adopted, underlies the practices and processes designed for the organization to continuously ‘fit’ changing environments and the structure of the setting, and for creating cohesiveness in the relationships among its elements in order to achieve and sustain competitiveness. The analysis of the accounts, in particular, shows how both individual (subjective) discourses and those which align more closely to an institutional vision reflect and are impacted upon by these continuously adaptive processes. The chapter also provides an evaluation of the theoretical, methodological and practical implications of the findings, and outlines possible directions for future research.

CHAPTER 2

WORKPLACE COMMUNICATION AND DISCOURSES: AN INTERCULTURAL ORGANIZATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

2.1 Introduction

This chapter and the next delineate the theoretical framework and methodological underpinnings of previous research which explored discourse practices in workplace settings. Specifically, the focus here is on previous investigations on the discursive intersection between language and action and how this intersection has been conceptualized.

However, rather than merely selecting and reviewing previous research even in broad strands, this chapter aims at locating the present study within the copious and often-times overlapping disciplinary frameworks and methodological and epistemological stances. To this purpose, situated examples of previous literature are presented to highlight the links or differences with the present study.

From the studies reviewed below, it is evident that no single body of work or theorizing can, by itself, provide a sufficiently comprehensive investigation of communication at work nor can it address satisfactorily the multi-faceted real-world and the concomitant theoretical problems linked to the conceptualization of both work and talk at work. Attempts are also made to point out some of the challenges and limitations that previous work has presented and to indicate how these gaps have been addressed by the present study.

The critical review of previous literature thus has three main objectives: a) to define the context object of scrutiny; b) to identify how the role played by discourse(s) in the relationship between context, the actions carried out therein and the organization of action itself (the institution) has been analysed; c) to present the theoretical background assumptions against which the methodological and analytical interpretive phase of this study is pursued.

Chapter 2 focuses on the construct of communication strategies (CS) as the ‘unit of analysis’ of the present work. Specifically, it deals with how CS have been defined and conceptualized across different strands of research and theoretical frameworks, the kinds of

discourses within which they are generated in multicultural workplace settings and how they intersect with work practices and their organization.

The outline of the chapter is as follows. Section 2.2 provides the mapping of the research fields pertaining to this work and their interconnections. In particular the notion of communication as organizing and the intercultural aspects of discourse in multicultural, multi-lingual workplaces are introduced. More specifically, in sub-section 2.2.2, the overarching discourse framework encompassing this research is given whereas 2.2.2.1 and 2.2.2.2 specifically highlight the relevance of ethnographic studies and intercultural communication studies to the present work respectively.

Section 2.3 concerns the epistemological stance of the study as well as the positioning of the researcher towards the research process itself. Section 2.4 and its subsections highlight how the theoretical approaches that were adopted to capture the discursive intersection of socio-political, institutional and local levels: from linguistic ethnography to critical discourse analysis and the community of practice approach, mediated discourse analysis, contained in Goffman's frames and Gumperz's cues. In section 2.5, an in-depth explanation of the nexus researcher-participants-context is given through the construct of motivational relevancies and the ethno-methodological approach. Section 2.6 outlines how CS emerge as social practice from organizational communication and action and the implications for learning to use a second language in a workplace. Section 2.7 highlights the need to address these implications in language learning programs in view of the challenges encountered by migrants seeking employment in the host country. Finally Section 2.8 provides concluding remarks to the Chapter.

2.2 Mapping out the research fields and identifying the research stance

This study adopts an integrationist social-theoretical framework whereby language (as a local practice) and context are seen as shaping each other and locally situated action is indivisible from the 'on-going conversation' within the context of action itself. In this capacity, the organization or workplace is viewed as constructed through the same integration of situated language practices, institutional actions and wider socio-political contexts (Cicourel, 1992; 2003; 2006; Cooren, 2000, Cooren et al., 2006, 2013; Giddens, 1991; Taylor, 2011; Taylor & Van Every, 2000) whereby actors move and talk in virtue of their capacity to adopt and mediate their activities through culturally and socially shaped mediational means.

Within this perspective, discursive practices are viewed as intrinsically 'intercultural' (Holliday, 1999, 2010, 2011; Scollon, 1981, 2002, 2003; Scollon & Scollon, 1979, 1995) and are explored as the terrain of attrition between institutional order (what the organization/institution 'prescribes' as policies, rules, behaviours) (Candlin, 1987, 2006; Candlin & Maley, 1997; Heritage, 1998; Sarangi & Roberts, 1999, Taylor, 2011), interaction order (the order which participants construct through interaction and within

which they interact) (Goffman, 1959, 1974, 1983) and workplace discourses (the ongoing discourses on, of and about work in the workplace) (Goffman 1959, 1968, 1974; Holmes, et al., 2011a; Holmes, et al., 2011b; Koester, 2010). Communication at work is thus seen as the ongoing strategic enactment of organizing diverse positions and reconciling potential conflict into concerted action and collaboration (Cooren, 2000; Jones, 2009; Taylor, 2011). Within this view, communication strategies (CS) assume contingent (depending on other meanings around them including those linked to the social context) and emergent meanings (surfacing from the flow of talk and simultaneous activities as well as actors' current and past orientations) where participants' agency is co-construed and integrated into the process and the context of social interactions is developed (Cooren et al., 2013; Taylor & Van Every, 2000; Sorsa, 2012). Built on these assumptions is the view of second language learning and its use by migrants in the workplace as impacted upon by the affordances available to them to participate in organizing, that is, in the co-construction of social meanings within the context itself.

2.2.1 Intercultural discourse practices in intercultural organizations: the role of CS

The context of the organization under scrutiny is Australian society at large as 'immigration context' inscribed in the global economic reality. The Australian workplace and the dynamics surrounding it of policies regarding employment, multiculturalism, language training and labour market, constitute the background to the study. In particular, the use of English as a second language at work is explored within discourses in relation to communication skills and how they relate to the organizing functions of communication itself.

Within this scope, intercultural communication at work is explored as both the outcome and the constituent of organizational interactional systems. In particular, this study adopts a perspective of co-cultural communication (Ganesh & Holmes, 2011; Orbe, 1998) which views all form of interactions as always and already intercultural beyond the ethnic-linguistic differences among individuals and at the same time as sites for interactional and institutional confrontations. Individual and group differences are then positioned within the web of relationships in organizations whereby groups are defined from a variety of perspectives ranging from ethnicity and role to job assignment and hierarchical and spatial positions (Peltonen, 2012). In this sense, 'intercultural dialogue' cannot be separated from broader processes of conflict whereby 'dialogue-in-use' (Carbaugh et al., 2006) presumes the existence of some sort of social problem or conflict.

The peculiarity of the research site, besides its being a multi-lingual, multicultural environment provides a special angle through which second language and discourse practices at large can be explored as they are enacted, talked about and learned.

In this sense Linguistic Ethnography (LE) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) are used here as the overarching theoretical 'tools' to define the intersection between the

‘linguistic/discoursal map’ of the workplace and the allocation of related resources and power respectively. Organizational Discourse (OD), in turn, provides the analytical lens for exploring the intersection between institutional discourses and interactional discourses (Grant et al., 2004; Hardy, 2004; Bargiela-Chiappini & Nickerson, 2002)

Within a case-study research approach, the methodological stances are further highlighted through the notion of ‘motivational relevancies’ (Sarangi & Candlin, 2001) which encompasses the said approach within the interactional frame between researcher and participants engaged in a collaborative sense-making process.

The ‘local, situated level’ (Layder, 1993) and specifically the ways individuals’ actions and interactions are impacted upon by the socio-political context as well as the institutional one, are analysed through an interactional socio-linguistic approach (Goldstein, 1997; Gumperz, 1986; Heller, 2001; Rampton, 1995, 1997a). More specifically, the interactional-socio-linguistic approach highlights the dynamics of role-relationships within and in connection to a workplace’s institutional boundaries and practices such as the allocation of space, tasks and resources.

The interactional scenarios are also focused upon through Goffmann’s frames and Scollon’s nexus analysis (Goffmann, 1974; Scollon, 2001a, 2002) which further outline the main function of CS, that of ‘organizing’: in terms of maintaining, producing and re-producing interactional, institutional and broader socio-political context’s order by discursively establishing and re-establishing role-relations, knowledge and courses of action.

Out of this perspective a re-definition of the construct CS ‘emerges’ both at the situated level of interactions and identified by speakers themselves as relevant to their life and day-to-day activities.

The notion of nexus of practice (Scollon, 2001a, b), the converging of interactants’ trajectories towards action (as it came to be over time, that is, incorporating the histories of actors, spaces and mediational tools), further reinforces the idea of CS’ mediational role in making nexuses themselves occur. Connected to the notion of nexus of practice is also that of Stock of Interactional Knowledge (SIK) (Peräkylä & Vehviläinen, 2003) which incorporates the actors’ knowledge, intrinsic in their participation in nexuses as well as their ‘intercultural’ orientations, behaviour and beliefs. This ‘converging process’ culminating in nexuses of practice, is seen here as a product of and producing organization and therefore crucial in the interrelationship between agency and context-structure. In this capacity, as illustrated in the following sections, the participation in nexuses presupposes the acknowledgement of diverse worldviews, of ways of interpreting and enacting organizational practices in the constant effort to organize work, in a word, the ability to use CS to this end.

2.2.2 Workplace studies: workplace discourses and organizational discourses

This and the following sections provide a detailed overview of literature on workplace studies set against the theoretical frameworks and epistemological stance adopted for this research and introduced in the previous sub-section. In doing so, an attempt is made to highlight the differences between the present study and previous ones in an effort to address issues not exhaustively addressed or not explored in the previous literature.

In particular, two major theoretical strands have been identified at the intersection of which the present research can be situated: workplace discourses and organizational discourses. By adopting Gee's distinction between Discourse and discourse (Gee, 2005) which recognizes the interrelationships between social relations, social identities, contexts, and specific situations of language use (Gee, 1989, 1992, 1993 1996), and, in relation to the present study, Organizational **D**iscourse with a capital **D** is here intended as "a socially accepted association among ways of using language, other symbolic expressions, and artifacts, of thinking, feeling, believing, valuing and acting that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group or 'social network' " (Gee, 1996: 131).

Thus, 'an Organizational Discourse' integrates ways of talking, listening, writing, and reading, but also integrates ways of acting and interacting, and holding beliefs and values within recognizable patterns of social networks or affinity groups (Gee, 1999, 2001a; Gee, Hull & Lankshear, 1996). It is because of this, that members of a Discourse can recognize others as either 'insiders' or 'outsiders'. In this respect, communication within a specific workplace or organization 'is' 'organizing' (or/and [un]organizing) according to an established and establishing structure or set of rules which are always 'in fieri', and therefore 'strategic' to the contingent moment, space and action.

Additionally Gee defines **d**iscourse with a lower case '**d**' as: 'any stretch of language (spoken, written, signed) which "hangs together" to make sense to some community of people who use that language' (Gee, 1990: 103).

Workplace discourses, with a lower case **d**, then, within Organizational Discourses with a capital **D**, always reflect a social and changeable practice: 'Making sense to one community of people may not make sense to another' (1990: 103).

Similarly it can be said that 'what makes sense' may not be fixed but rather 'in progress' at different times and spaces, depending on which actors' trajectories lie towards which nexuses, and their site and extent of engagement.

Thus, communication practices specific to a sub-culture (or different 'cultural [organizational] group') are, in a sense, analogous to **d**iscourse, in the manner that Gee uses the term. In other words, a specific discourse is made up of all of the language bits and uses that are associated with a specific Discourse. In this sense, a specific discourse can be referred to as a social language (Gee, 2001b).

Social languages are embedded within Discourses. Different 'social languages' are reflected in different patterns of vocabulary and syntax within communication nexuses. This distinction is what Grant et al. refer to as 'language in use' and 'language in context' (Grant, et al. 2004) whereby discourses and Discourse intersect.

As it will be illustrated below, the majority of workplace studies have partially failed to integrate the two perspectives consistently. On the one hand, they have not included the institutional/organizational discursive dimension to the analysis of both 'language in use' and 'language in context' and, on the other, they have not sufficiently explored the communicative patterns of 'language at work' or interactional dynamics between participants.

Apart from the more recent direction taken by workplace studies as presented in the work of Firth (1995), Grant et al. (2004), Iedema (2003, 2007), Iedema et al. (2004), Zucchermaglio (1996) and others, mainstream research of the 1990s, falling under the socio-linguistics strand, have included workplace 'contextual features' into the analysis by focusing primarily on the interactional and culturally diverse ethnographic settings. This previous research has been carried out through two key methodological and theoretical frameworks relevant to the present study: 1) ethnography of communication; and 2) intercultural communication. In many instances, however, ethnographic approaches as theoretical and methodological lenses have failed to explore beyond 'localities' of interactional workplace exchanges and ethnic/(inter)cultural miscommunication or, more generally, differences in communication. The present study is an attempt to address this.

2.2.2.1 Workplaces as ethnographic sites

Ethnographic approaches in workplace studies have a long-standing tradition, especially within the strand of case study research, since the necessity to treat workplaces as actual communities or 'groups' has long been acknowledged. This implies an 'insider' type of access into the research site to gain insights into not only what is said and done but also why it is said and done in a certain way and how it came to be.

However, in most previous studies, ethnography 'at work' has been the backdrop to other analytical tools such as CDA, interactional socio-linguistics, and pragmatics (face and politeness approaches) where role-relationships, power and face as well as intercultural features in interactions and multi-lingualism were the focus of the research (Bèal, 1990; 1992; Clyne, 1994; Clyne & Ball, 1990; Goldstein, 1997; Neil, 1996). Despite the ethnographic nature of the data being analysed, these studies tended to sideline crucial dynamics of the research process, namely: 1) the positioning of the researcher and the participants both towards each other and the research itself; and 2) the data generation process. By overlooking these two aspects of ethnography much of the research-as-hermeneutical-process and the bridge between macro and micro as already highlighted by Berger & Luckman (1967), Bourdieu's background knowledge (Bourdieu, 1990),

Cicourel's ecological validity and the researcher/organization's mutual stance is lost (Cicourel, 2003).

Although the focus of these studies has been on participants' perspectives and 'voice', especially through the adoption of qualitative approaches like participant observation and interviews, they partially fail to make explicit the sources or the process of acquisition of background information or ethnographic data which is crucial in the research process and the researcher's positioning between 'the objective' and 'the subjective' and through the phases, tools and motivation of enquiry.

In these studies, the 'description' of workplace activities and 'structures' are presented as 'real' with partial or no reference to sources and processes/generation of data. This is what Sillince (2007) refers to as 'reification of context'.

Despite the predominant 'subjective view' adopted in these types of study which aim at giving participants a 'front stage' role as they enact behaviours, activities and talk in their daily life contexts, participants' voice is not made to 'stand out' from the 'context' itself (Bakhtin, 1981). Contexts then become fixed backgrounds against which interactional data are analysed and interpreted but insights into actors' positioning processes and history-meaning makers are excluded (Cicourel, 2003, Sarangi & Candlin, 2001; 2003).

Work practices and actions beyond the strictly 'discursive' interactions which are not only enacted but established and talked about are also left out. This is what Blommaert refers to as Discourse analysis becoming textual only (Blommaert, 2005) whereby the process of context-construction and 'discourse structures' 'as they happen' is lost.

2.2.2.2 Discourses of 'intercultural communication in the workplace'

An analytical and methodological approach in researching multicultural workplace contexts has been the intercultural communication strand. As highlighted above, this approach has developed in close connection to ethnographic studies and a major body of literature in this regard developed during the 1990s. Besides taking a view of communication among individuals of different linguistic and cultural backgrounds as 'problematic' (Beal, 1990, 1991; Clyne, 1994; Clyne & Ball, 1990), this corpus of research has given little attention to socio-political and institutional dynamics of workplaces or to the practices, discursive and not, that constitute and are constituted through these dynamics (Spencer-Oatey, 2007; Spencer-Oatey & Jiang, 2003; Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009).

In this perspective, 'problematic communication' is viewed as stemming from cultural and linguistic differences reflecting in different communicative styles and miscommunication. Despite allowing a deeper understanding of these differences and particularly their linguistic realizations at a pragmatic level, this strand has had in most cases a limited functional scope; finding ways to avoid or minimize mis-communication and enhance

work-effective communication. This scope, as it will be shown below, will encompass much of the language learning/teaching theories to date.

Similarly, power relations and asymmetrical/unequal distribution of communication skills due to lack of linguistic competence to exercise/mitigate/resist power itself have been seen as intrinsically reinforcing hierarchically-structured social contexts whereby there exists a chiasm between a 'majority group' and a 'minority group'. In this regard, the socio-linguistic/post-structuralist strand has emphasized research into the use of English as a second language in the context of migration and multicultural workplaces as a reflection of the wider societal inequalities between host and migrant populations (Almeida 2010; Berman 2008; Bertone, 2004, 2009; Goldstein, 1997; Grossi, 2012; Rampton, 1995;1997b; Vallas, 1998). The dichotomy 'dominant group' and non-English-background speakers has also been dealt with by studies on Language and Identity including investigations of 'ethnic minorities' use of their first language at work (as well as code-switching and code-mixing) and the impact on in-group, out-group solidarity relationships (Ficorilli, 2005; Goldstein, 1997; Giampapa 2001, 2004, Rampton, 1995).

The scope of all these studies assumes a 'divisive view' of communication in the workplace based on the intrinsic differences between ethnic groups which are also produced and re-produced at discursive levels as linguistic and cultural enclaves (Day, 1994; Ficorilli, 2005; Goldstein, 1997). However, this divisive view has included in most cases the severance of linguistic and verbal interactional phenomena from the organizational context whereby interculturalism and multiculturalism have become inherent to both institutional and discourse practices and indivisible from them. Similarly, interrelations between linguistic and cultural differences and their actual relevance to both individuals and their daily practices within the workplace have been often overlooked if not omitted or limited to inter-language analysis (Piller, 2011; Scollon & Scollon, 1995, 2001). This view is further exemplified by Scollon when he even argues that, in most interactions, the intercultural quality is not even the most important one for understanding what is going on (Scollon & Scollon, 1995).

More recent studies concerning intercultural communication have by and large fallen under studies on globalization and trans-nationalism (Appadurai, 1996; Angouri, 2014). Movements of people and technology have changed the language(s) or, better, the language use's landscape of both societies at large and organizations in particular. Intercultural communication has lost its 'original', previous distinguishing marks in the process. A change in related discourses has also followed. Communication among people of different language backgrounds, especially in the workplace context, has now acquired 'normative' traits and has undergone an institutionalization process (Hardy, 2001; Friedman & Antal, 2005; Alby & Zuccheromaglio, 2006).

In this capacity, the use of English underscores market changes, and labour and migration flows. 'Practices' rather than language alone have become trans-national and the adoption

of 'a language' has become mediational to those practices (Bargiela-Chiappini & Harris, 1998; Sarangi & Roberts, 1999; Sorensen & Iedema, 2006).

This research strand, however, has focused mainly on macro-realities as reflected by 'global economy' phenomena and has tended to overlook the local, context-bound character and origin of particular discursive practices as context-constructing processes. As a result, in these studies, as in previous ones, the relevance these phenomena and associated practices have for individual second language speakers' nexuses of action in organizations, has not been sufficiently explored beyond problematic interactions, miscommunication and social discrimination (Roberts & Sayers, 1987; Roberts et al., 1992; Sarangi & Roberts, 1999). Instead, local context-bound practices are here viewed as being the product of mixed and continuously hybridizing institutional processes and systems where old practices co-exist with new ones (e.g. old and new technology systems require both old and new ways of communication), both movement of people and goods contributing to the hybridization process. This is not to say that hybridity and co-existence of diversity are not in themselves problematic. They are, however, acknowledged as difficult to research and investigate due to both their transient and often institutionally 'covert' nature (Cicourel, 2003; 2004). Diversity and continuously changing practices and adaptation processes are in fact in contrast with the notion itself of 'organization' as synonym of 'order' and 'structure', despite these being hardly fixed and established but rather constantly sought for. In this context, discourses of changes (policies, procedures, systems and technology) are perceived as 'destabilizing' unless 'institutionally planned' and institutionally made visible. They are also 'trans-cultural' and 'intercultural' by default as they encompass passages of complex interrelations of language use (discourses) and activities. The present research sets out to address this gap whereby 'localities' have been overlooked (Blommaert, 2005), partly cut off by the wave of globalization.

The Australian manufacturing industry as a 'macro-site' is an example of how global market and labour policy changes may have become reflected in an on-going hybridization process: previous migration flows of a mostly unskilled but necessary labour force co-exist with the current highly-skilled labour force as well as old and new technology and procedures. Crucially, how language as embedded in discourse strategically enacts, resist and transform the workplace is one of the main focuses of the present work.

2.3 Social action and communication practices in organizations: where does the researcher stand?

As highlighted by Coupland, Sarangi and Candlin (2001), studies in socio-linguistics require a research design inscribed in social organization and processes. The workplace context, site of the present research, is accordingly investigated through the lens of a social theoretical framework which views the 'organization' of the workplace in question as a highly-structured reality impacting on both activities and interactions.

Coupland, Giles and Wiemann (1991) illustration of Layder's (1994) distinctions in three major strands of social theory exemplify the position this study takes on. Specifically, they identify three different stances on what constitutes society: 1) social structure, whereby society is seen as having fixed structures constraining individual action; 2) social action whereby social meaning is achieved through communicative interaction which in turn is realized through: a) rational action (language is used strategically) and b) praxis (meanings are mutual interactional achievements); and 3) social behaviour which views society as a set of observable individual behaviours, inscribed, shaped by and shaping the social context at large. This third position adopts an integrationist stance by attempting to reconcile the first and second strand and, by addressing the micro-macro divide, the 'localities' of interactions with the wider socio-political context. This is also the view adopted by the present study. In this capacity, on the one hand, the specific research site object of this research provides the platform for the investigation of actions and interactions (or nexuses) as 'locally enacted' and constantly produced and re-produced, thus suggesting a construction of social norms from 'the bottom up' by conscious actors (Mead, 1932, 1934). On the other hand, the production systems in place, the machines and the hierarchical/role-oriented allocation of tasks are explored as 'pre-existent' constraints within which actors act, reinforce and reproduce old and new systems.

Taking the Mumby and Clair definition of organization as a starting point that:

Organizations exist only in so far as their members create them through discourse. This is not to claim that organizations are 'nothing but' discourse, but rather that discourse is the principle means by which organization members create a coherent social reality that frames their sense of who they are (1997: 181),

it is clear that a constructivist approach *tout-court* is not sufficient to explain social action within specific settings such as organizations. This becomes evident when actors and researcher act, talk and behave within 'categories' or 'orders of indexicalities' (Silverstein, 2003) referred to and 'used' to make sense of 'local activities'. From a socio-linguistic perspective these categories or discourse referents can be defined as linguistic codes or styles and can be assumed to be a rational and strategic choice by actors and researchers themselves. The notions of role, knowledge, activities and activities' processes and undertakings are then closely intertwined with both institutional actions and categories as well as personal ones as each constitutes and re-constitutes each other.

In this capacity, the perspective held by praxis theories (conversational analysts also fall into this strand – see Atkinson & Heritage, 1984; Zimmerman & Boden, 1991; Drew and Heritage, 1992; and more recently, Antaki, 2011; Antaki & Widdicombe 1998; Potter & Wetherell, 1987) which do not assume that speakers are fully rational but manage to handle largely unforeseeable 'talk contingencies' and emerging meanings in interactions, still presupposes pre-existing social structures of a highly-regulated type. Garfinkel's ethno-methodology, although following the interactionist framework, bases its methodological tenets of 'accounts' on 'the seen but unnoticed' (1967) by referring to procedures and rules through which and within which actors can make sense and conduct

their daily activities. Garfinkel's accounts are clearly based on norms which are recognizable, shared and accepted as a given. His 'breaching experiments' are acknowledged as actions 'breaching' social norms insofar as they cannot be explained according to those social norms themselves.

Giddens' notion of structuration (1987, 1991) further exemplifies this view by proposing that even the 'structural properties of institutions' can be recognized as realized patterns of behaviour across different social contexts. Among these patterns, language is the 'most local observable practice' and yet conducive to the dimensions of institutional order's discourse (Sealey & Carter, 2004).

Within this research framework, as Grenfell's remarks on Bourdieu's thought show: 'The objectivist side of the process implies the existence of social spaces as themselves structured (made up of entities positioned in relation to each other) and which are "corresponding" to "dispositions" to act and think in certain ways' (Grenfell, 2011: 27). And again:

It is worth emphasizing that this way of working requires a dialectical way of thinking, where identifiable structural relations are always seen as being both structuring and structured. Consequently, Bourdieu is looking to transcend the subjectivist/objectivist dichotomy, to constitute a new form of 'knowledge' (2011: 27).

This stance calls for a method of inquiry which integrates the subjective, individual (cognitive) sphere with the objective (social structure) sphere: a method of describing practices as a way of acting and thinking and one of describing the structure according to which practices are being established and have become 'established' in the structure itself (Bourdieu, 1977; Cicourel, 1992).

2.3.1 Organizational structures as objective and subjective reality: research process and motivational relevancies within an ethnomethodological approach

The myth that research is objective in some way can no longer be taken seriously. At this point in time, all researchers should be free to challenge prevailing myths, such as this myth of objectivity. As we try to make sense of our social world and give meaning to what we do as researchers, we continually raise awareness of our own beliefs (Janesick, 2003: 56).

As will be illustrated in the following sections, the research process is played out between this 'objective reality' made up of 'taken for granted structures' according to and within which individuals move and organize themselves and its interpretation as both objective, subjective and relative to ever changing circumstances and actors' positions. Accordingly, the researcher's positioning and re-positioning towards actors and actions also undergoes a negotiation and re-negotiation process.

This process is dynamically linked to the motivational relevancies, the aspects and dimensions of one's view of the world, actions, behaviour and attitudes as displayed in day-to-day activities and relevant to both researcher and participants during the research process.

The view of motivational relevancies as elaborated by Sarangi & Candlin (2001), and as explored in their later work (Sarangi & Candlin, 2003), in its reflexive process and on-going researched/researcher's positioning is the one adopted here within an ethnomethodological perspective whereby also adequate grounds of inference on how activities are ordinarily carried out and made sense of and held in common by both members of the society in question and the researcher. In this context ethnomethodology is employed to study how people as parties of the same community's 'arrangements', use the procedures for those arrangements to do 'going about knowing the world' (Garfinkel, 1967).

This overarching perspective then inscribes the way of understanding and interpreting the workplace under scrutiny 'as a society' and a relationship system can be summarized with Berger and Luckman's (1967) statement that '*Society is a human product. Society is an objective reality. Man is a social product*' (1967: 61) in so far as, indeed both the objective and subjective aspects of reality coexist 'as human products' in the process of interpretation if one views society in terms of an "ongoing dialectical process composed of the three moments of externalization (*awareness of and action towards reality*), objectivation (*action upon existing/accepted reality*), and internalization" (*orientation and projection of one's actions according to reality*) (ibid.: 129). Berger and Luckman present the idea that 'there is an institutional world. Institutionalization occurs whenever there is a reciprocal typification of habitualized actions by types of actors. Put differently, any such typification is an institution' (1967: 54). Therefore, the institution is formed by society by putting forth (among other things) a set of rules. Members of a group's following the rules means they are performing shared, habitual actions that create the institution. An institution is created over a period of time with the individuals all performing or re-enforcing these actions; it cannot be created instantly. In this way, a new member comes to the group and realizes the existent institution (Wenger, 1998), whereas the founding members did not have an institution prior to their establishment of it; rather, they had a set of rules that they created together and then subjectively bought into being, thus realizing the objective institution. Similarly, it is argued here that the researcher of a particular setting follows a similar path in understanding both the rules and the 'institutional life', the ecology, at large of the setting itself (Cicourel, 1992, 2007). In so doing, aspects of the relationship between individuals and context emerge that are especially relevant to the researcher as they are also identified as impacting on people's lives. Instances of these relevancies are especially those related to conflict-circumstances within institutions and/or shifting social structures that re-define one's positions, role and status towards and within communities (Barton & Tusting, 2005; Wacquant, 2004).

In this vein, Garfinkel's program for ethnomethodology is put 'at work' especially in unravelling the self-organizing properties of social activities, that is, to put it in another way, with the kind of work members do to organize their activities in the ways that they do and the ways they themselves explain how they do it.

2.4 The Discourse Framework: organization in the global market and communication practices 'at work'

Ethnomethodology and motivational relevancies as terrains of interpretive interplay of subjective and objective reality of structures, interactions and systems are then crucial in the interpretation of the relationship between language and context at large. The adopted discourse framework encompassing this relationship is described in this section which sets out to explore the links between 'local communication dimension', institutional discourse dimension and socio-political context at large.

A further element cutting across the three discursive dimensions is the physical and 'material nature' of action and interaction of the specific setting under scrutiny. This element is particularly 'tangible' at the 'local communication level', since artefacts, tools and the environment itself as mediational means enact and make enactment possible (both in terms of communication and action) through higher-order knowledge systems: as a response, for instance, to technology/market demands (e.g. the skills necessary to repair a machine go beyond the 'physical' knowledge of the machine itself. It involves the knowledge of the mechanics, the troubleshooting processes and, presumably, it includes the experience that the person who has to repair the machine has of similar occurrences and outcomes (Heath & Hindmarsh, 2002; Heath & Luff, 1991; Heath et al., 2000; Scollon, 2005b; Scollon & Scollon, 2005). In turn, these mediated higher-order knowledge systems are, at a discursive level, ideologically pervaded (Foucault, 1980).

Taking as a starting point the view of discourse and society shaping each other, in Fairclough's terms (1992), the three discursive dimensions mentioned above can be traced in their 'situatedness' within a multicultural organization.

The investigation of such a relationship-network is made possible by adopting the inclusive lens of Linguistic Ethnography through which is provided an account of the dynamics of communicative behaviour embedded in social practices and enacted through mediational means. Particular emphasis can be placed on meaning-making processes from an integrated historical, role-relationship and interactional/discursive level: the workplace's history and future direction of the market-economy, the participants, their current and previous position, both outside and within the organization, are explored as played out interactionally and discursively (Blommaert, 2005; Blommaert & Huang, 2009; Sealy, 2007; Goffman, 1974; Gumperz, 1982a, 1999; Rampton, 2007).

Based on the above assumptions, the case study of an organization within the paradigm of a linguistic ethnographic approach may potentially include the following analytical approaches: 1) a critical discourse analytical approach (the socio-political and institutional context dimension); 2) a mediated discourse analytical approach (the organizational discourse dimension); and 3) an interactional sociolinguistic (Gumperz, 1982) or ‘framing of discourse’ approach (Goffman, 1974) – (a communication practices, ‘as they happen’, dimension).

2.4.1 The ‘wider context’ dimension, globalization and the socio-political context’: the role of LE and CDA

The view of language (texts and utterances) as embodying and manifesting cultural discourses, attitudes and behaviours entails a critical stance towards every instance of discourse production or discourse source (and reception) as well as the settings, circumstances and individuals within.

However, as Blommaert points out, “there is an intrinsic bias which might restrict our ‘analytical view’ to ‘textually organized and (explicitly) linguistically encoded discourse and prevent us from considering where it comes from and goes to” (2005: 35). Besides ‘available discourse’, ‘textually organized and linguistically encoded’, which is easily analysable, we seem to be cut off from what occurs in the immediate surrounding of discourse production. To put it in Blommaert’s words this means:

bypassing the ways in which society operates on language users and influences what they can accomplish in language long before they open their mouths ... It means that analysis stops as soon as the discourse has been produced – while ... a lot happens to language users long after they have shut their mouths (Blommaert 2005: 35).

This view implicitly brings on two dimensions of ‘the surrounding society’ or, more generally, context: an immediate, local one, in this case, the organization, and a larger one, the societal context, at the intersection of which the individual language users operate. The socio-political context is the most difficult ‘to capture’ in terms of ‘analysable empirical data’ although, by default, workplaces and organization activities in the present day could be regarded as strictly anchored to what goes on outside them on many fronts. In this respect the role of CDA and LE is crucial to this type of analytical process. The object of research in the present study, then, emerges from this stance on discourse as a multi-laminated and multi-faceted mosaic, the details of which can only be achieved through an exhaustive view of the whole and its cohesiveness as well as its formation process: how it came to be, how it is and how it will be.

An instance of this language-context relationship can be seen in the classroom talk explored by Heller (2001). In her study, the form of content and sequencing in ‘patterns’ of both communicative and non-communicative interactional practices reflect and activate wider and higher-level norms and ideologies in the community/institution. These, in turn,

may reflect the ‘outside world’s’ cultural and ideological discourses (Fairclough, 1992) albeit beyond our direct sight. A more critical approach than Heller’s work, one working towards the identification of patterns in both discourses and discursive practices, would be to acknowledge the role of agency in individuals in taking on and using communicative tools as contingent and in response to emerging interactional occurrences and which therefore do not manifest in recurring, fixed patterns (Sarangi and Candlin, 2003).

An additional challenge in exploring the relationship between language and ‘the wider’ context lies in the unequal ‘power distribution’ and the different forms it takes, in circumstances and domains typical of organizations and workplace interactions. This unequal distribution of discursive space (especially crucial in the milieu of second language usage and competence) may create a void in terms of ‘analysable discourse’ (Blommaert, 2005). Both at language-in-use- (interactional affordances) and Discourse levels (migration, minority language and lack of linguistic competence), this void can be indicative of pervasive ideologies going well beyond the organization’s borders: spanning from interpersonal interactions, to hierarchical structures and access to resources and activities at large (Fairclough, 1995; Piller, 2010; Wodak, 1996).

In view of the above, any situated interactions (or for that matter lack thereof), then, can be ‘seen as being simultaneously a piece of text, an instance of discursive practice and an instance of social practice’ (Fairclough, 1992: 4). This three-dimensional framework testifies to the necessity of researching communication and discursive practices in institutions jointly to the contextual analysis of the institution themselves (Candlin, 1987, 2006, Candlin & Crichton, 2013; Candlin & Maley, 1997; Cicourel, 1992, 2003; Mumby & Clair, 1997) and, in turn, to the socio-political reality at large. Accordingly, Candlin, (2006), Fairclough (1992), Fairclough & Wodak (1997) and Wodak (1996) propose a view of a role for CDA as going beyond text analysis, that is, beyond the descriptive role, and rather as taking on an interpretative and explanatory intent. The process of interpreting and explaining is seen as dynamic and open as it may be affected by new and constantly changing contextual information. The shifting of discursive contexts calls for an inter-textual and inter-discursive analysis spanning across levels or dimensions of discourses as invoked by Bakhtin (1986), Candlin (2006) and Fairclough (1992, 1995). This hermeneutic process, as defined by Meyer (2001), implies expanding the analysis to a much wider context than the mere institution or organization, and overlaps with the one illustrated by Sarangi and Candlin’s motivational relevancies (Sarangi and Candlin, 2001): a method for understanding and generating meaning relations among parts and the context of the whole.

A more fine-grained analytical approach than CDA would allow, then, is in the identification of different discourses associated, as Bourdieu points out with specific fields of practice and organized as communicative genres (Bourdieu, 1990). This implied diversification plays out on different dimensions, again ‘locally and beyond’, and entails different distribution, access to and acquisition of (or lack thereof – ‘voids of discourse’, as defined above) not only genres that are particularly relevant and ‘valuable’ in specific sites but also spaces where they are played out and enacted (Blommaert, 2005). On the ‘wider-

context- dimension', the globalization scale, as illustrated in the following sections, one of the inter-relations between the three different dimensions is constituted by fluxes of migration into different countries (Australia in the present study) often channelled by labour shortages. Exemplary cases in multi-lingual, multicultural workplaces are those concerning the lack of recognition of 'official' value in competence in L1s and those of exclusion or elimination from particular spaces where 'cooperative genres' and 'diversity resources' could be effectively employed (Bertone, 2004; D'Netto et al., 2008; Ficorilli, 2005; Grossi, 2012).

A methodological approach encompassing CDA and LE is therefore needed whereby the analytical discourse approach cuts across historical, social and relational processes among individuals, their trajectories towards and within institutions. This is the descriptive, explanative and interpretative approach invoked by Fairclough (2010).

In this sense, Sealey's (2007) phrase 'who speaks what language(s) in what circumstances' exemplifies the recursive 'from-inside-outwards' trajectory indicated by Rampton (2007) and implied in the nature of the inter-disciplinarity of their analytical stance whereby meaning can only take shape through an ethnography of social relation, interactional histories and institutional regimes. Relevant to the present study is again Rampton's remark that:

the analysis of the internal organization of verbal (and other kinds of semiotic) data is essential to understanding its significance and position in the world. Meaning is far more than just 'the expression of ideas', and biography, identifications, stance and nuance are extensively signalled in the linguistic and textual fine-grain (Rampton, 2007: 585).

2.4.2 Workplaces as communities and institutions: inter-textual and inter-discursive practices

As highlighted above, the analytical framework provided by the integration of Linguistic Ethnography and Critical Discourse Analysis crucially allows for an in-depth investigation of discursive practices as constitutive of organizational actions. Within this scope, as seen above, ethnomethodology is the overarching theoretical and methodological tool to describe what members of specific societies or communities do, how they do it and in what circumstances: firstly it deals with phenomena which have to be specified, characterized, mapped or otherwise defined; secondly, if patterns are to be found in members' 'social life' what is to count as social life (and related categories) will have to be explained. The first aspect concerns the formal, rational criteria according to which such definitions and explanations should conform, and the second, how much and how these should be derived from descriptions made by social actors themselves. In this context, the very notions of 'community' and 'institution' are by default deconstructed and reviewed in a binary direction: what counts as a community and what counts as an institution in relation to members and their practices and vice-versa, how practices are viewed as such, 'in-context'.

the p. 71, 85, 87, 16. Within this broad scope, while linguistic ethnographic data shed light on what discursive interactions and artifacts and in which ways community's members use these in organizing their social life, and CDA provides the tools to explore how members' actions are constrained/empowered by the discursive resources available to them and how these are linked to institutional discourses and the wider socio-political context, ethnomethodology is concerned with how discursive (and non-discursive) practices are embedded in and referred to the community and used as a resource for organizational action by the members concerned. In this sense, discursive practices are then seen not only as secreted exclusively for the purpose of action, they are, in a sense, actions themselves, not merely representations of facts and therefore are considered in the way they are used in the course of other activities. In the same way, it can be seen that ethnomethodological concerns may begin to dissolve the common sense notion of 'community's (discursive) practices' as a topic of enquiry and focus instead upon general procedures whereby members construct and make sense of those practices as constituting the world in which they live. The problem here is how talk comes to be used and understood: the description of cultural knowledge and procedures of understanding required to employ it 'that way'. Again, it is to be expected that the descriptions of such structures of cultural knowledge and interpretive procedures would not be restricted to a domain constrained by a notion of 'community'. Such procedures would warrant for a wider level of analytic approach insofar as inter-textual and inter-discursive practices span, by definition, beyond the here-and-now and across discourses.

In this perspective, 'the late-modernity organization' (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999) is viewed as part of a wider context, the borders of which are constantly being redefined and redefining themselves. Major factors contributing to this redefinition are linked to the constant changing relationship between actors and practices enacted within and across the borders of organizations: migration of individuals, technology and capital being some instances.

The 'inside-outward' and 'outside-inward' trajectory of work and workplace discourses, then, have also changed the 'discursive' connotations of workplace discourse sites as such: from 'local asymmetries' (Holmes & Stubbe, 2003a, 2003b) to higher-order inequalities and ideologies as manifested in discourse. In this respect, as Iedema and Sheeres (2003) remark, from language in workplaces being analysed as "an objective and finite instrument analysts have turned to analysing language as a 'socio-political and strategic means to enacting and (re)negotiating identity and positioning' " (2003: 335). It is clear, then, that actors' negotiation and renegotiation of identity and positioning and therefore roles would have an irreversible impact on the setting in which those same actors operate although, in turn, individuals may also be diversely affected by this process.

As it will be seen below, this becomes particularly salient in relation to individuals' L2 linguistic competence, resources and access to those resources. Similarly, the discourse-oriented 'communities of practice' model originating from organizational theories of 'situated learning' (Lave and Wenger, 1991) has found its fit into discursive social identity

theory (Weedon, 1987; Butler, 1990) and therefore represents a further step towards the analysis of the relationship not only among individual members of a community but also between individuals and their 'endeavour ... defined simultaneously by its membership and by the practices in which that membership engages' (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet 1992: 464). It is to this relationship of members-practices that Tusting (2005) refers, by quoting Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999) who state: 'analysis of the discourse moment of a social practice can give insights into its dynamism which are not available from other moments' (1999: 48). Following a similar line, Tusting further argues that:

This is because discourse is shaped both by the social order, and by the ongoing activity and struggle involved in every day interaction. This activity and struggle cause transformations in discourse which reflect and construct change in the social order more broadly (Tusting, 2005: 45).

By examining local interactions in community of practices within this framework, Tusting's analysis allows the development of a clearer understanding of the processes involved in the reproduction and structure change in the wider social order (outward-inward) and thus beyond the communities themselves.

This shifting nature of workplaces is further exemplified by organizational theories and the more recent discursive approaches to organization communication (Mumby and Clair, 1997).

In line with Mumby & Clair, Grant et al. (2004) quote Potter & Wetherell's view in that organization's members' beliefs and behaviour, according to their perceived reality, are constructed by their discursive practices, that is: 'In short ... discursive practices in organizations "do not just describe things; they do things" ' (Potter & Wetherell, 1987: 6) (2004: 3).

This intersection between local discursive practices – language in use, as members' enactments and language-in-context (as defined by Grant et al., 2004) – the wider social order and discourses indicates the inextricability of the two. By this token, instances of language-in-use (namely, conversation and dialogue, narrative and stories, rhetoric and tropes) represent 'in fieri' forms of linguistic and textual exchanges among organizational actors that draw on broader discourses and produce discursive objects. These act as resources for action and for further conversation (Fairclough, 1992; Taylor et al., 1996). The texts thus 'constituted' in conversations are inter-textual and their significance is inter-discursive (Candlin, 2006). It can be further said that the inter-textual nature of communication practices in organizations is the catalyst for change insofar as these initiate and sustain transformation. From a discourse perspective any identified call for change initiates transformation – a discursive object that, becomes employable by others who can produce it and re-produce it according to broader discursive agendas.

A further shift indicating the 'from within outwards trajectory' is represented by those studies which place an emphasis on how institutional contexts inform and shape language and the way in which individuals perform and pursue their respective organizational tasks

accordingly (Drew & Sorjonen, 1997). Among these approaches instances such as the notion of Stocks of Interactional Knowledge (SIK) (Peräkylä & Vehviläinen, 2003) exemplify the intersection actor-organizational practices as the terrain where inter-textuality and inter-discursivity is played out, that is, where nexuses are formed and the institutional dimension is linked – albeit in an ever shifting fashion – to the broader socio-cultural and political context. However, the invoking by members of texts and discourses of different provenance not only redefine the boundaries of communities and organizations but also membership itself whereby identity and roles as well as affordances and constraints change constantly.

2.4.3 Organizational communication and actions: Scollon's Nexus, Goffman's Frames and Gumperz's cues

As seen above, the shift in perspective on workplaces as a continuum from communities of practice to organizations and institutional sites implies a shifting construction and re-construction of the relationship of actors-practices- sites-of-engagement (Scollon, 2001) which, accordingly, calls for a recursive type of inquiry. If we take as a starting point the trajectory suggested by Rampton (2007), the 'from inside-outwards' stance, the primary focus is on practices as a combination of acting, thinking and speaking within the structures which they generate and in which they are generated. Actions and language are, then, part of a network-order, the ramifications of which go well beyond the site in which they occur (Fairclough, 2010) as knowledge of 'how to do' as well as the way this is verbally expressed, are part of the history or milieu of individuals. This stance incorporating the notion of 'actions' and language into practices which, as researchers we have to 'engage' in prior to, during and after the investigation, is the backdrop of the present study. In particular three analytical perspectives are adopted to capture the intersection of language, action and interaction: Scollon's Nexus of Practice, Goffman's frames and interaction order, and Gumperz's contextualization cues.

2.4.3.1 Scollon's Nexus: the historical order of actors and actions

As highlighted in the previous section, Scollon's Nexus of Practice exemplifies the view of 'practices' as an embodiment of actors and spaces' histories both as individuals and as interactants. As Scollon notes:

The proper focus of our attention has usually been and should remain on human action rather than language ... The study of action is harder than we'd really like it to be because action is complex, both in the moment of occurrence and in the historical trajectories which give rise to action ... [As analysts] we are already engaged in the action under study. We don't have the option of asking whether we're involved in action; the only question is whether we're activist about it. Since we really have no choice but to be involved, it's rather important for us to make some choices in a principled way (Scollon & Scollon 2004: 55).

Scollon further exemplifies his thought through the notion of mediated action and mediated discourses through the use of ‘the metaphor of the extended hand’ and the gesture of handing – a child handing a toy to her mother, a teacher handing a paper to a student – whereby mediated discourses are at once language, thought and action. Although Scollon’s views derive mainly from his studies on children’s development – he is also concerned with agency and constructing mediational means by such speech as naming, his observations have relevance in terms of how some objects will take on major roles developmentally along with their insertion into practices.

Scollon used this analysis of child-adult interaction as an exemplary case-history of the creation of habitus. He implies that this analysis can lead us into institutional research and other macro societal issues.

Bourdieu used the term habitus, and derived it from an individual’s history and conditioning (Bourdieu, 1990). Scollon considers that the habitus is a complex network of social practices, or ‘an individual’s accumulated experience of social actions’ (Scollon, 2001a: 6).

The notions of ‘site of engagement’ and ‘nexus analysis’ further exemplify the concept of mediated action in an organizational setting whereby individuals are part of a network and, by virtue of their role and position, are expected to behave according to and possess an accumulated experience of social actions, a habitus, more or less concertedly enacted in specific sites and through specific (semiotic) tools – see Blommaert and Huang’s zebra crossing example (2009).

Along these lines, the concept of Nexus Analysis can highlight the variety of relations between practices and actors such as simultaneity, disruption and integration, as well as the problematic aspects in nexuses themselves as, for instance, conflicting practices (old and new) and attrition in the dynamics of activities and related interactions that manifest (Scollon, 2001a).

Nexus analysis, then, as ‘the methodological arm of mediated discourse analysis’ (MDA), adequately reflects the ‘mediation’ between discursive practices and action whereby synchronic and diachronic elements originate outside and inside the site and language, as well as the other semiotic aspects of actions, spaces and objects, develop and evolve in a constant exchange with institutional practices (e.g. the acquisition of machinery in compliance with ever-changing applications of Occupational health and Safety’s (OH&S) policies, the consequent changes in operating systems, and employment of material and human resources) (Jones & Norris, 2005).

At a later stage Scollon focuses on the dimension of time and the crucial difference that time frames can make in identifying what is going on in an interaction. Notwithstanding people become engaged with ‘mediational means’ at particular points in time (time frames), both people and mediational means have a history and origin. By including these histories and origins in the interaction to analyse, the outcome of the analysis itself might

change. This not only points to the importance of defining the ‘interaction’ as such, but also to the fact that a ‘mediated’ discourse analysis would highlight the ‘actions’ taking place within the discourse and the objects acted upon. Those actions then would become the focus for the analysis of the discourse produced concurrently.

The Scollons’ (2005) recount of a camping trip and the use of a camping stove to boil water to make tea, exemplifies the direct engagement between the discourse and the action (‘shall I turn this off’), the internalization of the ‘on-line’, contingent discourse (‘Instructions for Lighting’), and the action upon a meditational object, ‘the tea leaves’ connecting a discourse belonging to a different, earlier time frame to the action as it happens at the moment of the interaction taking place. The fact that both objects (camping stove and tea leaves) have different provenances from the action being taken may impact on discourse (the questioning of how to/whether to turn something off/reading of instructions in a different language), action (the turning off of the stove), and the boundary object (the reason for using particular tea leaves). This example illustrates also the relevance that inter-culturality or trans-nationalism can have on actors, action and discourse, as shown above.

2.4.3.2 Interaction order in Nexuses of Practice: Goffmann’s Frames

The previous section defines the notion of nexus of practice as an analytical means by which the historical relationship between practices/actions, actors and spaces is highlighted during processes of engagement since the knowledge and meaning underlying these actions are organized according to specific structures. These symbolic/tacit forms of knowledge (Argyris & Shon, 1995) have an intrinsic relationship with objective social conditions (social settings) through ‘meaning constructing’ processes. In the phenomenological tradition: primary acts of consciousness and cognition are generated by mental structures – Goffman’s tenets – and thinking sets up differentiated, therefore structured intentions. Individuals’ perceptions (acts of knowing) are always formed in relation to a ‘pre-given’, and generated with and through previously constructed ways of seeing the world. In this way social agents are structurally constructed according to the social context in which they operate. This can be summarized in what makes us ask ourselves: ‘What is it that is going on here?’ (Goffman, 1974), about any given situation in which we find ourselves, and behave accordingly. The conceptual similarity between the notion of site of engagement/nexus analysis and Goffman’s interaction order is in the underlying ‘shared expected type of engagement’ that is evoked in a particular situation, in a particular setting and at a particular point in time.

According to Giddens (1988), Goffman’s detailed enquiries into the micro-forms of practical interactional behaviour centre on physical co-presence rather than on social groups. While groups continue to exist when their members are not together, encounters, by definition, only exist when the parties to them are physically in each other’s presence.

This co-presence condition ignites specific behaviour or interaction order to which actors tend to respond in an 'orderly' manner.

For Goffman, and his notion of 'presentation of self' (Goffman, 1959), talk is the basic medium of encounters, but talk is not all: the body is also crucial. The body is not simply used as an 'adjunct' to communication in situations of co-presence; it is the anchor to the communication itself which can be transferred to 'disembodied types of messages' (Giddens, 1988). In this respect also, Goodwin (2000) talks about the need to investigate 'the public visibility of the body as a dynamically unfolding interactively organized locus for the production and display of meaning and action' (2000: 1491).

With reference to the lay-out of and moving of actors' bodies in a given space in general, and a factory floor in particular, this notion of body as organized locus is of crucial importance in relation to how activities and tasks are organized, singularly, in teams, and at different or converging locations at different times. Additionally, this resonates with employees' situation awareness as defined in connection to production systems (see Chapter 5) whereby actors act in a network involving both other individuals and machines. It is worth also mentioning in this respect recent research into complex work environments, for instance, a railway control room as investigated by Hindmarsh and Heath, in which:

personnel have, as a matter of their daily activities, to make reference to, and mutually constitute, the sense and significance of a continually changing range of 'objects' displayed on screens and in documents [and] talk and bodily conduct is used within organizational activities to produce coherent and sequentially relevant objects and scenes (Heath & Hindmarsh, 2000: 76).

Goffman's frame analysis further exemplifies how, essentially social actors organize their experience in terms of recognizable activities, 'frames of references' – a set of connections among objects, events, behaviours, constituting an autonomous but recognizable structure of relevancies, the answer to the question: 'What is it that is going on here?'

Goffman develops the concept further by pointing out the multi-dimensional character of frames: the interplay between primary and 'secondary' frameworks and the constructed frameworks of social relationships during encounters or else 'nexuses of practice' (e.g. the instructions given to a machinist by a foreman while repairs on the machinery are being made by a fitter and the intruding of the latter in the 'primary conversation', the whole verbal interaction being within earshot of other machine operators).

Another notion, 'footing', is crucial to the understanding of frames and closely linked to Goffman's interest in boundaries, centre, margin, focus and (dis)engagement in interactions. Footing occurs especially when the interaction conditions are conducive to frame shifts as in the case illustrated above whereby more individuals are present but only two of them are engaged in a mutual interaction (Levinson, 1992) and the interaction itself is prone to include/exclude participants at any time and is therefore prone to changing altogether. However, as noted by Giddens, the notion of frames, so exemplified, exposes

the limitations of an ‘autonomous conception’ of interaction order. In particular, he observes the need for the analyst ‘to think rather in terms of the intersection of varying contexts of co-presence, knit together by the paths that individuals trace out through the locales in which they live their day-to-day life’. He continues by remarking that this venue would best indicate ‘modes in which every day social activity is implicated in very broad patterns of institutional reproduction’ (Giddens, 1988: 279).

This opening to how interactants attend to the simultaneity of multiple realities, adjust constructions and manage disruptions, gives way to the analysis of the relationship between the pre-given (of an interaction order) and the locally/interactionally constructed. As shown in Chapter 3, this situated interaction’s analysis also resonates with the formation’s process of nexuses of practices as convergence of actors and actions.

Not surprisingly, one of Goffman’s interests lies in how roles are acted out, with various ‘keyings’ and deceptions played upon them through practical activities and occupations, power and stratifications. In his ‘Introduction’ he states: ‘In what follows, then, I make no literary claim that social life is but a stage, only a small theatrical one: that deeply incorporated into the nature of talk are the fundamental requirements of theatricality’ (Goffman, (1981: 2-4).

In this conceptual view also falls his distinction between the ‘front and back regions’ of institutional action, which incorporates the distinction between formal public performance and more informal activity ‘where the impression fostered by the performance is knowingly contradicted as a matter of course’ (Goffman, 1959: 114).

This is particularly relevant in the observable contradictions at play in the day-to-day activities in the workplace whereby ‘official talk’ is the locus for the reconciliation of the contradictions themselves through accounts (practices, procedures, work activities in general are explained and justified according to rules and accepted norms even when ‘things go wrong’ or not exactly according to plans – [e.g. a machine breaks down just after being repaired]).

This perspective will be highlighted in the following sections in relation to the notion of status and role which individuals take on as members of an organized setting and as bearing relevance in terms of the researcher’s role and position towards research site, participants and their role itself.

2.4.3.3 Gumperz’s cues: intercultural practices and discourse strategies

Like Goffman’s principles governing the notion of framing, Gumperz’s contextualization cues imply that participants make inferences about situations and their ‘required participation’ based on background knowledge and experiences as well as their competence in de-coding verbal and non-verbal cues themselves. According to Gumperz, the assumption that these processes form part of people’s cultural repertoires entails a

view, held in much of the relevant literature, that inter-cultural interactions in contemporary multi-lingual, multicultural work environments, carry with them an additional challenge and possibly the requirements of additional cue recognition skills as people from different language and cultural backgrounds come to interact (Gumperz, 1982). Gumperz's early work on contextualization cues pointed to the way in which 'marginal features of language', as addressed by de Saussure (1959), allow us to relate what is said to the contextual knowledge. He went further on investigating what in actual terms meant that '[w]hat we perceive and retain in our mind is a function of our culturally determined predisposition to perceive and assimilate' (1982: 12) and, in so doing, pointed at how cognition and language are affected by social and cultural forces. One of the outcomes of his presuppositions related to the devastating social consequences for members of minority groups who do not share and cannot easily access linguistic resources shared by a dominant group and the similarly damaging imbalance of status and power resulting from this. These presuppositions have had resonance in much of the literature concerning workplace communication (Mumby & Clair, 1997; Roberts et al. 1992; Roberts, 1999). In the present work, along with Gumperz, the way we behave and express ourselves are seen in relation to underlying categories of a specific code and these categories as open to external influences. Within this framework it becomes evident how, in a specific interactional setting like the workplace, 'external influences' are represented not only by the physical, more 'material' features of the setting itself (machinery, production systems, etc), but also by organizational attitudes, beliefs and predispositions. Gumperz's notion of cultural relativity then can be extended beyond that which narrowly regards culture as an ethnic-related variable. In this respect inter-cultural communication, too, can only be taken as empirical, discursively and locally constructed. Scollon and Scollon best summarize this construct as the 'inter-discourse approach' which, they argue, '[s]et[s] aside any a priori notions of group membership and identity and [...] ask[s] instead how and under what circumstances concepts such as culture are produced by participants as relevant categories or interpersonal ideological negotiation' (Scollon & Scollon, 2001: 544).

This stance is particularly relevant if considering how the contemporary workplace has become increasingly 'hybridized' due to mergers, external and internal movements of not only people but also resources and 'know how', whereby cultural group membership can no longer be taken as a given. In this way, inter-cultural communication is intended as occurring at different, sometimes overlapping, levels encompassing not only culture in an ethnic/linguistic-related sense but also in an organizational/institutional sense including and not limited to technology, resources, roles, spaces and expertise. If, again, organizational discourses are to be encompassed into wider societal discourses and for the most part are seen as producing and re-producing the cultural forces as intended by Gumperz, in turn mirroring 'institutional forces', inter-cultural communication, as one of the outcomes of multilingual/multicultural workplaces and globalization at large, can also be seen as an 'institutionalized' construct. Hence, on a continuum, we can see local, situated interactions among ethnically, linguistically, technically diverse individuals

reproducing wider socio-political discourses such as those of migration and employment-related migration policies, and the political economy of language as human capital value through their day-to-day interactions (Bourdieu, 1990, 1991, 1993; Heller, 2005).

In the context of this study, then, Inter-cultural Communication is viewed as kaleidoscopic in so far as ethnic-related differences that Holliday refers to as ‘big culture’ co-exist with enactments of ‘small culture’, defined as ‘relating to cohesive behaviour in activities within any social grouping’ (Holliday 1999: 241) and, it can be added, embodied in organizational culture(s). As mentioned above, this view, partly drawn from the principles of ‘community of practice’ work by Lave and Wenger (1991) and Wenger (1998), takes ‘group practices’, both work-related and discursive, and the immediate context in which they are enacted, as the relationship individuals themselves have with their practices, and their own positioning towards each other and towards the organization (Vaara, 2000; Varmer & Beamer, 2005). In this context, language proficiency and/or the use of a second language takes on social relevance to this mutual shaping between communication and practices whereby actors adopt and enact discourses and ‘vocabularies’ embedded in and constituting the organizational practices themselves. In this sense, the research setting of this study calls for a special focus on both the discursive construction of Intercultural Communication (IC) that social actors adopt in relation to their day-to-day experiences and the picture that emerges in relation to the organization’s attitudes and beliefs in regard (e.g. the actual acknowledgement or lack thereof of diverse groups and communicative practices (D’Netto, 2008; Heller, 2003; Ficorilli, 2005)) and how key functions of inter-cultural practices are used in interactions.

Gumperz’s currency is here called upon in the analysis of the interaction processes themselves whereby shared meanings, or the lack thereof, are investigated not only in terms of propositional content and illocutionary acts (Schiffrin, 1994) and, to a certain extent of ‘activity types’ (Goffman’s frames and Levinson’s activity types) (Levinson, 1979), but also in terms of evidence of whether interpretive conventions or ‘vocabularies’ are shared in relation to organizational/institutional orders (the connection culture-society-individual) in which participants are ‘allocated’ specific spaces and roles (Sarangi, 2000).

2.5 Explaining the nexus participants-researcher-organization: ethno-methodology, and motivational relevancies

As highlighted in the sections above, situated discursive practices are seen in this study as inextricably embedded in work activities as well as the orientations, attitudes, and positions that actors producing those practices display and/or are perceived to display in a given context.

The ‘red thread’ of this complex dynamics of action-discourse-actors-context can be identified ‘from within’ to the extent to which those who initiate and carry it through in more or less routinely guises can explain it and we, as researchers have access to them.

In this respect Ethno-methodology, as a theory and a methodological stance at the same time, provides the tools to make sense of this process through its focus on the 'reflexive accountability of action' (Garfinkel, 1967; Heritage 1984). As Maynard and Kardash note, the order (procedures, steps, etc) of activities is explainable insofar as activities can be carried out in the same order. In this regard, they observe:

Self-generating order in concrete activities, an order whose scientific appreciation depends upon neither prior description, nor empirical generalization, nor formal specification of variable elements and their analytical relations. Moreover, raw experience [...] is anything but chaotic, for the concrete activities of which it is composed are coeval with an intelligible organization that actors already provide and that is therefore available for scientific analysis. Members of society achieve this intelligible organization through actual, coordinated, concerted, procedural behaviours or methods and practices (Maynard & Kardash, 2006: 1483).

Garfinkel, the founder of ethno-methodology, coined this word for the studies he was engaged in while working on how jurors, in their deliberations, struggle with issues of evidence, demonstration, relevance, facts versus opinion, and other methodological matters. When Garfinkel turned to the Yale cross-disciplinary files and came upon terms such as ethnobotany, ethnophysiology, ethnophysics, etc, he realized that 'methodology' was what the jurors were producing as a consistent feature of their decision-making process (Garfinkel, 1974). If we think of the actions and practices involved in day-to-day activities on a factory floor by members belonging to a specific group, this approach can be seen as the means through which participants define themselves and by which they are defined. In other words their behaviour is accountable to rules which allow engagement in concrete and embodied practices that are orderly in their own right and are not explained or provided for in the rules that these practices make visible. Rather, they are 'seen but unnoticed' norms with which members produce and manage settings and situations. Paradoxically, this network of norms only becomes noticed and accounted for when it is breached by contingent events. It is then that common sense rationalities would make manifest a person's ordinary awareness of alternative possible courses of conduct while at the same time trying 'to accommodate' or make sense of the contingencies' by treating them as possible occurrences for practical purposes. This conceptual view of activities resonates with Goffman's 'front and back regions' of institutional action mentioned above whereby the distinction between official performance and non-official or informal activity is accounted for in a 'logical' way. In other words, as Heritage puts it, '[t]o explain breaches of the norms, we cite accounts which are overwhelmingly treated as excuses or justifications for the breach', – see the justifications we give for not responding to a greeting – (Heritage, 1984: 116). In view of the above, Garfinkel again points out that 'by the same actions persons discover, create and sustain [standardized expectancies]' (Garfinkel, 1967: 66-67).

Similarly, Scollon explores a variety of relations between practices such as simultaneity, disruption, and integration and points out that, often, several practices are underway at once. His notions of site of engagement and nexus of practice, although with a different

epistemological position, point to the fact that 1) social participants are aware 'of the norm' in Garfinkel terms, and share the same 'semiotic meaning of space and action' (Blommaert, 2005, 2007) in Scollon's terms; 2) they are capable of reflexive anticipation of the breach of interpretive norms; and 3) by way of 1) and 2), they are 'inter-subjectively' aware of what to expect from each other and may choose or not to engage in concerted actions. This is the reason for which nexuses occur in the first place.

It is, then, clear that ethno-methodology, as well as Scollon's notions of site of engagement and nexus analysis, provide the tools to interpret the intertwining dynamics among actors, practices and context and further trace the red thread through to organizational and institutional order by the actors' 'normative accountability'. Both in natural interactions, as observed/witnessed by the researcher and in the accounts given by participants, it becomes visible how 'organizing, channelling and, in a sense domesticating' the ways in which interests may be realized are actually realized (Heritage, 1984).

It is to be stressed that for Garfinkel normative constraints are a form of constraint that tends to bind (to the context and situation) rather than be absolutely 'binding', and therefore may influence actors as to what to do in particular circumstances but still gives them some leeway. Accordingly, accounts of occurrences are given, not facts.

Another aspect of ethno-methodology and its ambivalence as theory and method relevant to this study is in the realization of accounts and related principles that link it to the work of Harvey Sacks illustrated in a joint publication 'On Formal Structures of Practical Actions' (Garfinkel & Sacks, 1970). Specifically, Sacks and Garfinkel argue that the distinction between 'indexical expressions' (those expressions the meaning of which derives from their relation to immediate aspects of reality) and 'objective expressions' (whose sense is presumably not context-bound) brought about by sociological epistemologies is pointless.

For Sacks and Garfinkel, objective expressions by default depend on an orderliness that necessarily ties them to the situation of their use. They then propose a policy of 'ethno-methodological indifference' whereby the status of objective expressions is not investigated in terms of their adequacy. Rather, the orderliness and the practical means by which those expressions attain their sense is under scrutiny.

In particular Garfinkel's interest in accounts and accountings resides in the way they manage, organize and are ordered by the empirical circumstances in which they occur or which they describe. Accounts are then treated and dealt with as dependent on the same interpretive circumstances and interpretable contingencies as the activities, procedures and occurrences they describe. In this capacity Heritage notes that Garfinkel's notion of accounts is best highlighted as the following:

their 'fit' to the circumstances they describe is 'loose' and subject to adjustment by ad hoc devices: that accounts like actions, are understood by reference to a mass of unstated

assumptions and that the sense of an account is heavily dependent on the context of its production. Descriptive accounts, in short, are indexical (Heritage, 1984: 141).

In this way ethno-methodology is here intended as encompassing and complementing nexus analysis and ethnography by providing the tools for a joint interpretation of data and ‘construction of accounts’ by both participants and researcher. These joint perspectives and interpretive processes are defined in the following section as motivational relevancies in line with Sarangi and Candlin’s (2001) view on exploring the space between what is expressed and what is not in accounts.

2.5.1 Ethno-methodology and motivational relevancies: the ecological balance

Ethno-methodology, then, as the interface of methodology and joint co-construction of interpretation embedded in the research process itself, is particularly relevant to this study for two reasons: 1) it ‘uncovers’ ‘norms’ (ways of doing things, procedures, behaviours, etc) that although seemingly ‘loose’ (taken for granted in individuals’ day-to-day lives) are conceived as pre-existing to action and linked to an organizational/institutional order; and 2) it allows a ‘common ground’ between researcher and researched whereby their motivational relevancies both individually and mutually are played out (Sarangi & Candlin, 2001).

The first reason can be said to be linked to what research in socio-linguistics indicates as its field of study: the integration of analysis in and of local context of production along with the history of particular interaction orders and individual cognitive processes (Sarangi and Roberts, 1999). This partly coincides with Bourdieu’s concept of habitus as quoted by Sarangi and Candlin (2001):

‘an immanent law’, laid down in each agent by its early upbringing’ and as a locus of dialectic between ‘objective structures’ and the ‘cognitive and motivating structures which they produce and which tend to reproduce them’, and a construct whose mediating function is to make individual practices ‘sensible’ and ‘reasonable’ to others (Bourdieu, 1991: 64).

Given the specific research site as a highly hierarchically-structured site this view highlights the relationship between language use and practices, access to communication and the hierarchical/social differences themselves. Similarly, Foucault points to the ‘formation of enunciative modalities’ (Foucault, 1972) which identify positions, power relations and domains in an institutional site. The latter specifically impinges on the adoption by the researcher of recognizable methodological stances.

Therefore the key methodological issues, as the function and scope of ethnographic observation and the descriptive/explanatory/interpretive analysis that it allows, and most importantly the relationship of analyst/participants, all converge into the notion of motivational relevancies.

Sarangi & Candlin (2001) identify three main conceptualizations of motivational relevancies: 1) as reflecting the researcher's interests – 'preferred motivations in studying social phenomena'; as 'points of views', specific orientations, motives and values; 2) in relation to context and how this impacts on language use and the different perspectives, depth and layers to explore (social and ideological dimensions of research 'into context' or 'ecological validity') (Cicourel, 1992); 3) in terms of mode and field and how these are connected to topic as talk in interaction and discourse in and on specific sites. This latter reading of motivational relevancies is bound to the researcher's ability to search, notice and identify key features peculiar to the practices embedded in the site and linked to the research problem at hand insofar as it implies a 'preparedness' on the part of the researcher that goes hand-in-hand with her/his motivation to decode/recognize particular practices.

Motivational relevancies, then, are inextricably linked to the objective/subjective contrast in the research stance mentioned above, as they define the description/explanation continuum present at every step of the methodological procedures adopted in a given study, from observation to transcribing, coding, analysis and interpretation to the formulation of analytical constructs used to make sense of not only what is observed but also of 'what lies, so to speak, beneath or behind the object, as Foucault would have it' (Sarangi & Candlin, 2001: 22).

Within this view all stages of investigation reflect the interplay research-researched-researcher and these elements' balance is what ecological validity implies (Cicourel, 1992). Garfinkel conceptualizes this view of research as balance when he cites Husserl in relation to:

Expressions whose sense cannot be decided by an auditor without his necessarily knowing or assuming something about the biography and the purposes of the user of the expression, the circumstances of the utterance, the previous course of the conversation or the particular relationship of actual or potential interaction that exists between the expression and the auditor (Garfinkel, 1967: 4).

This 'mutuality of experience' is viewed here as a process which has its fulcrum in the participants' views and orientations (Giddens, 1979; Goffman, 1974; Schutz, 1962). However, Sarangi and Candlin (2003) elaborate further through viewing this process as reflexive towards both researcher's processes of inquiry and interpretation and participants' actual practices. Recursively, relevance and reflexivity overlap in the shared understanding and interpretation of reality. Fundamental to these authors is not only 'collaborative interpretation' but also the constant acknowledgement of difficulties in pursuing this venue through research whereby it is not possible at all times to access reference to participants' knowledge and ultimate expertise (Cicourel, 2003, 2004; Roberts and Sarangi, 2003; Sarangi & Candlin, 2003; Candlin, S., 2003).

Crucial in the research sense-making process is also the shifting role of the researcher as s/he positions herself/himself towards and is positioned by actors along and against the

‘local contingencies’ and ‘factions’, especially in circumstances of inherent problematic interpersonal/ organizational relations and power struggle (Cicourel, 2004).

It is amidst these extreme contingencies that the balance between research-researcher-researched is at stake and research to document this dynamic interplay is called upon.

2.6 Second or additional language use and communication strategies: a strategic learning enterprise

As pointed out in the previous section, it is in this research process/context of interpretation among participants and analyst’s motivational relevancies that the object of scrutiny of this study, second language Communication Strategies, emerges conceptually. By a broad definition, the use of strategies is made sense of in terms of a more or less defined hurdle, challenge or difficulty to achieve a set goal. Through the use of communication strategies, interactants strive to achieve their goals within an organizational order (and its goals), by negotiating spaces and roles, resisting or complying with the order itself and, overall, trying to overcome conflict. As highlighted above, the use of English as a second or additional language or, more broadly, the inter-cultural discursive dimension of communication, is conceptualized, in this study, as constituted by and constituting the organizational order as a multicultural institution whereby the use of a second language itself is only one of the diverse practices at play among groups and individuals whose diversities range from ethnicity to worldview and technological background. Similarly, second language CS are enacted within this institutional order and therefore they are ‘immanent’ in so far as they emerge as responses to contingencies and can therefore be accounted for. This point is particularly crucial when considering that the ability to account for CS implies a knowledge of and a membership in the organization and its discourses, the acquisition of which are constantly ‘under review’ and re-negotiated. As cited above, Maynard & Kardash (2006: 1483) identify this acquisition process by members of a social context as follows: ‘Members of society achieve this intelligible organization through actual, coordinated, concerted, procedural behaviours or methods and practices.’ As shown in the following sections, this theoretical approach to the use and learning of CS, as close as it is to the view of an institutional interplay between actors and organization towards the construction of an order, is critical for a reconceptualization of learning communication skills in the workplace.

2.6.1 ‘Organizing’ agency, status, role and the implications for learning

According to a Vygotskian theory of the relationship between social organization and individual consciousness (Vygotsky, 1978; Lantolf, 2000; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006),[DELETED]

In line with Scollon's belief as outlined in Section 2.4.3.1 above, Lantolf and Thorne (2006) conceive socio-cultural norms as mediated by and through language. What is meant by mediation is:

the process through which humans deploy culturally constructed artifacts, concepts, and activities to regulate (ie, gain voluntary control over and transform) the material world or their own and each other's social and mental activity (Lantolf and Thorne, 2006: 79).

In the process of mediation involving the use of 'cultural artifacts' such as language, the socio-cultural meaning has to be incorporated into our thinking process – 'learning to think this way' – but eventually we internalize this process and take on agency. Agency is an individual's 'capacity to mediate and regulate his or her own activity through culturally organized mediational means' (Lantolf and Thorne, 2006: 69).

An individual assuming agency in a social role takes up the position of subject, but the way s/he enacts the role is itself shaped by the socio-cultural context in which s/he find herself/himself formed and is mediated through the language(s) s/he speaks. What Lantolf and Pavlenko note about agency is that: Agency 'is never a property of a particular individual; rather, it is a relationship that is constantly co-constructed and renegotiated with those around the individual and with the society at large' (Lantolf and Pavlenko, 2001: 148).

In the same vein, Giddens (1991) sees self/identity as continually re-created on the basis of changing experiences of daily life and the shifting and contrasting reality of contemporary institutions. For Giddens, this 're-creation' is reflexive and includes both communicative trajectories (discursive constructions of self) and institutional and social processes.

The dialectic between self and others or society at large extends to, or better inscribes, the conceptualization of status and role, of crucial relevance in relation to actions and interaction within an institutional setting. Sarangi (2010a), drawing on Linton (1971), defines status as 'the position of an individual in the prestige system of a society' whereas 'a role is the dynamic aspect of a status: what the individual has to do in order to validate his occupation of the status (Linton, 1971: 112). This definition implies a view of roles that are transformed over time and also multiply in relation to different activities and therefore can have conflicting, ubiquitous aspects.

Bearing in mind the position that an individual may have within an organization, it is relevant to quote Berger and Luckman's view that:

[E]ach role opens an entrance into a specific sector of the society's total stock of knowledge. To learn a role it is not enough to acquire the routines immediately necessary for its 'outward' performance. One must also be initiated into the various cognitive and even affective layers of the body of knowledge that is directly and indirectly appropriate to this role (Berger and Luckmann 1967: 94).

Berger and Luckman go on to say:

[O]n the one hand, the institutional order is real only in so far as it is realized in performed roles and that, on the other hand, roles are representative of an institutional order that defines their character (including their appendages of knowledge) and from which they derive their objective sense (1967: 92).

Goffman's (1959, 1961) theatrical notion of role enactment or performance stresses further the situated character of role, especially in its formulation of backstage and front-stage notions mentioned in the above sections. For Goffman, role is a requirement of life in society and the basis through which 'tasks are allocated and arrangements made to enforce their performance' (1961: 77).

From all the above it can be said, then, that the knowledge required to take on and sustain a role in an organization is inclusive of the discursive appropriation of both agency and the constraints within which it is enacted: in the space between agency and constraints, the strategic element of discursive practices is played out. As shown in the sections below this view of communication strategies calls for a reconceptualization of second language learning in general and workplace communication skills in particular as the linguistic shortcomings' approach is to be broadened to include the lack of discursive means to appropriate agency and comply with or resist constraints.

2.6.2 Workplace communication skills beyond the 'skill-deficit' view

The contextualization of learning to communicate in a second language is well established in research and, in particular, the field of ESP is currently addressing the vast array of issues concerning the 'tools of the trades' in professional and workplace communication (Paltridge & Starfield, 2012; Candlin & Sarangi, 2011).

However, 'specific' ESL workplace oriented courses such as Workplace English Language and Literacy (WELL), and communication modules attached to Trades Certificates or vocational courses in general, seem to generally address either general second language shortcomings or, as in the case of WELL, ad hoc requirements (mainly of a technical nature) identified by specific work industries and work settings (Industry Skill Council). Recently, new language and literacy training packages (CGEA and even more recently the Foundation Skills Training Package) have begun addressing work practices broadly and related language requirements in an integrated way by pointing at the cognitive processes required to accomplish specific tasks (Industry Skill Council's Foundation Skills Training Packages Implementation Guide 2013). However, in these instances the connection between language, language practices and work practices is not adequately addressed nor is specific reference made to context-specific genre-requirements.

While former provisions of language training are aimed at targeting some form of 'linguistic gaps' rather than context-based, interactional and institutional practices requirements, the latter do not sufficiently target the language-in-use and language-in-context links inherent in carrying out specific tasks peculiar to specific contexts requiring

different levels of language competence and background knowledge. This type of program, although considering the cognitive dimensions of tasks, tends not to focus on the process involved in their accomplishment but rather on the ‘finished product’ or objective.

It is worth noting here that vocational programs in particular, although addressing at times very technical, industry-specific topics and content, are not considered as a professional training requirement and do not seem to regard communication on the factory floor as part of ‘professional practices’. Communication training courses invariably target management personnel and are tailored to related requirements.

This trend poses a contrast to the occupational lists of highly-sought-after qualifications as migration visa requirements are altered in accordance with strong labour market demand and in line with the knowledge economy (Skills Occupational List – SOL – see Chapter 1). Shortages of technical skills required at workshop floor levels are among the most common. Surely this phenomenon calls for a shift in what is traditionally viewed as ‘a professional qualification’ in relation to labour market demands.

The concept of ‘factory floor’ occupations falling outside the professional areas is paralleled by a paucity of studies on ‘factory floor communication’ as pertaining to ‘professional communication practices’. Similarly, communication in a second language in the same context has been mainly, if not almost exclusively, researched in terms of the ‘overly problematic’ situations posed by both cultural difference among interlocutors and/or more generally their linguistic deficits in L2. This conceptualization of ‘second language use on the factory floor’ (as it is currently addressed by both training policies and the literature at large mentioned in the previous sections) fails to ‘contextualize’ second language practices in two ways: 1) it does not consider them as entrenched in workplace practices and therefore as shaped by and shaping the organizational/institutional context within which they are enacted; and 2) it points to a view of language and communication more as an accessory or mechanical tool rather than an integrating and constituent part of people’s lives within specific settings.

This conceptualization of language is also ‘disengaged’ from discourses of organizational communication as relevant to members of the organization themselves, such as communication skills and their learning. Indeed, within this, presuppositions about communication skills are seen as largely determined by the separate entities of existing social structures and/or individual cognitive structures (Crotty, 1998) although these structures do not operate jointly and have no influence on each other. (See the skills-based communicative competence models in vocational education and training certificates as highlighted in the Employability Skills Framework in Chapter 1.)

If we adopt Sarangi and Roberts’s view of workplaces as “Social institutions where resources are produced and regulated, problems are solved, identities are played out and professional knowledge is constituted” (Sarangi & Roberts, 1999b: 1), it is clear that notions of communication skills and ‘proficiency’ in a second language need reconceptualizing in relation to the practices inscribed in and which inscribe the

organization within the frame of a social/institutional setting and have to be intended as inclusive of not only technical knowledge but also ‘relational and institutional knowledge’.

In the changed scenario of today’s economy this becomes all the more crucial at a discourse level whereby interactional communicative requirements go hand in hand with organizational/institutional policies and practices.

2.7 Conclusion

As shown in the above sections, existing research in the domain of workplace communication draws on a wide range of epistemological and methodological positions, both theoretical and applied, and is usually situated in interdisciplinary loci. This chapter has provided both a critical analysis of these positions and a framework for the present study by highlighting how it is located within the main theoretical frameworks and methodological approaches commonly applied to the investigation of spoken discourse in workplace settings.

Within an overall integrationist social theoretical approach and the overarching theoretical backdrop of linguistic ethnography, the broad analytic paradigms considered and briefly reviewed here are: CDA, MDA, interactional sociolinguistics, intercultural communication, communities of practice, ethno-methodology, organizational discourse and organizational communication.

The approach adopted here, however, is a holistic one whereby the different theoretical positions are critically explored in their connections and overlapping stances and, most of all, in relation to their relevance to this study and to the interests and stance of the researcher. For this reason, these positions are not reviewed as discrete areas of thought. The researcher’s analytic focus on these approaches covers a similarly broad spectrum. Discourse analysis methodologies can be generally classified into two major strands, the ‘macro’ and the ‘micro’ levels of analysis respectively, and also reflect the degree to which their investigations account for (or are embedded within) the local and wider socio-political context. In workplace communication research, as highlighted above, this distinction refers respectively to studies which focus primarily on the contextualization of talk in broad social and power relationships or organizational systems (language-in-context) and those which focus on the negotiation of meaning and communicative processes in task-oriented interpersonal or intergroup interactions (language-in-use).

However, in this study and particularly in this chapter, these two epistemological perspectives are viewed as calling for an inseparable dimension of analysis. This would ecologically link both language or discourse in its fine-grained enactment within the specific setting under scrutiny and an analytical focus on organizational-institutional aspects (role and power-relationships, participation and policy/market-related issues as well as logistical, technological or inter-group ones. In this context, communication

assumes a mediational role in organizing actions and interactions in concerted activities. This stance calls then for an integration of textual analysis and a more macro-level and/or critical discursive approach in an attempt to ‘explain why communicative behaviour varies according to the specific structural conditions in which it takes place’ (Wodak 1996: 7) and how these conditions came to be (Scollon, 2001b). Within this perspective, research based in interactional sociolinguistics (Drew & Heritage, 1992; Gumperz, 1982a 1982b, 1992, 1999; Holmes & Stubbe, 2003b; Sarangi & Roberts’, 1999a, Roberts & Sarangi’s, 2005) and those based on a critical organizational discourse paradigm (Fairclough 1989, 1995; Grant et al., 2004; Iedema, 2003; Mumby and Clair 1997; Swales 2004; Wodak 1996) are integrated with notions such as ‘sites of engagement’ and ‘nexus of practice’ which highlight the discursive trajectories of individuals in given local interactions.

In sum, the analytical approaches summarized in this chapter also take into consideration the ‘strategic aspect’ of communication in organizations (Knights & Morgan, 1991) broadly intended as an ‘organizing instrument’ striving to reconcile diverse positions and interests towards a negotiated common goal, principally drawn on in the discussion and analysis of miscommunication and problematic talk which follows in subsequent chapters.

The next chapter turns to a more specific overview of the literature concerning Communication Strategies in Applied Linguistics and how this research can be integrated into organizational communication and organizational discourse studies at large. The chapter will include a summary and discussion of relevant definitions and models of Communication Strategies in the existing literature, followed by an outline of applied research focusing on discursive strategies in a range of workplace settings and at different levels of analysis.

CHAPTER 3

COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES AS ORGANIZING DISCURSIVE PRACTICES

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a critical overview of the various ways the concept of communication strategies (CS) has been defined and understood in the existing literature and the kinds of models and constructs that have been generated from and alongside these models. It does so by highlighting the relevant aspects to consider for CS identification and definition in relation to this study's theoretical and epistemological stance. Additionally, it provides an overview of properties and functions of CS themselves, the way they are linked to contextual factors (interactions, organization and wider social/institutional contexts) and the weight these factors have on the interpretive process of the interactions themselves by both researchers and participants.

Although the study concerns the use of an additional language on the factory floor, selective reference is made here to significant bodies of research in which communication strategies are among the interactional features investigated but where the primary focus/domain of inquiry does not specifically pertain to the use of English as a second language. This research locates studies on CS within the wider fields of Second Language Acquisition (SLA), language teaching and learning, psycholinguistics, interactional sociolinguistics, social psychology, intercultural communication and organizational studies. As will be shown in the following sections, the array of paradigms and levels of analysis through which CS have been explored depend mainly on the conceptualization of the context in which identified CS themselves occur and on the methodological and analytical perspective adopted, namely, the identification of criteria and steps and procedures for their description, interpretation and explanation (Candlin & Crichton, 2013).

In the present study, CS are explored within an integrationist social theory framework (see Chapter 2) according to which communication is encompassed within the organizational structure and its related discourse systems of which actors play a part in different roles and with a different extent of participation (Goffman, 1963, 1972, 1983; Coupland, et al., 2001). Within this framework, the context, and functions of CS are illustrated as producing and reproducing the 'organization's order' as well as the wider context's social structures. Furthermore the focus is on how CS interpretation is mediated by speakers' roles, actions

and positioning within and across the circumstances of action themselves and the discourse(s) adopted.

The outline of this chapter is as follows:

Section 3.2 and its sub-sections provide an overview of the functions CS may take in relation to the epistemological and theoretical approaches adopted by CS literature across different schools of thought. It also attempts to illustrate the links between different theories by reconceptualizing CS constructs such as interlanguage and intercultural communication against the backdrop of organizational discourse approaches. Here, the different strands of research and their theoretical underpinnings from referential joint meaning construction to collaborative theory and sociolinguistics are also overviewed.

In section 3.3, the construct 'CS' and its theoretical underpinnings are traced in the relevant work of two major scholars, John Gumperz's and Ron Scollon's respectively in the work on the 'inference process' of interactants through contextualization and the mediated nature of intercultural communication through nexuses of practice. Section 3.4 highlights how CS constitute a part of 'interdiscursive' functions and their intercultural mediating nature whereby actors in organizations adopt various discursive practices at the same time and for different, contrasting purposes. As highlighted in the previous chapter, 'interculturality' here is reconceptualised in broader terms than simply difference in ethnicity and language. Rather, it is viewed in relation to the relevance it takes on in relation to context and interactions and to the analyst's interpretation. Finally, section 3.5 provides concluding remarks through summarizing the main points of the chapter.

3.2 Strategic discourses: Interlanguage, intercultural communication and organizational discourse

Previous research on CS incorporates a number of different perspectives on both the nature of communication and the strategies involved in achieving communication itself. The construct of CS is both multidimensional and multilayered and both identification and definition of CS are closely linked to the assumed model of communication and the epistemological stance within which it is explored. An overview of the different paradigms adopted for the study of CS, in this and the following sections, will show how their identification and definition are related to the significance assigned to the context in which they are enacted.

3.2.1 Communication, strategy and discourse within an applied linguistics' perspective

The notion of 'Communication Strategies' traditionally refers to a long research tradition within the field of SLA mainly concerning the use of L2 and the strategies employed to

overcome breakdowns in or enhance communication due to learners' linguistic shortcomings in L2 (Bialystok, 1984, 1990; Faerch & Kasper, 1983, 1984; Poullisse, Bongaerts & Kellerman, 1984; Tarone, 1983; Wagner, 1995). However, as pointed out in Chapter 1, for the scope of this study, the term Communication Strategies is adopted but reconceptualised within a discourse analytical framework and in particular within an organizational discourse framework: a complex set of meanings (Philips and Oswick, 2012) and a 'body of knowledge' and related 'organizational praxis' (Mantere and Vaara, 2008). In this sense, while in the growing body of literature examining strategy from a discourse perspective, much of the focus to date has been on the way in which the discourse of strategy has developed and the effects of the resulting discourse of strategic management on organizations and individuals, the contribution of organizational discourse analysis in explicating the role of strategy discourse is here threefold: 1) it provides a counterbalance to the tendency to see strategy as a natural and unavoidable organizational activity and instead, it highlights the constructed and immanent nature of strategy; 2) it reframes the discussion of strategy to include a discussion of the role of power and participation in the constitution of strategic discourse and the manifestations of that discourse. The highly rationalistic discourse of traditional strategy research and practice often obscures the important power effects of discourse; and finally 3) it connects the discourse of strategy to the sets of practices that are associated with and support this discourse (Knights & Morgan, 1995; Mantere & Vaara, 2008).

The term CS is therefore adopted for two reasons: 1) in order to distinguish the concept from 'communication skills', the term frequently designated to indicate 'instrumental dimensions' of communication as required to conduct 'effective communication at work' (see Chapters 1 and 2) to emphasize the 'strategic' element of communication as encompassing work and discourse practices in their dynamic, binding relationship with each other at both the local/interactional and wider social context (Kuhn, 2012; Phillips & Oswick, 2012) and, at the same time to embed the notion itself into an applied linguistic analytical approach to language-in-use and language-in-context whereby language is studied in its systematic relating and attributing meanings to (inter)actions and their environment and the effect the unravelling of this process may have on our understanding of the environment itself.

As for the notion of communication, it is here viewed as embedded in the discursive organizational context, and therefore as 'organizing'. In this respect, Cooren et al. propose 'the dynamic of communication as both system and product' (2006, p. 15), as deriving from the concept of autonomous systems – from a cell of conversation as a system of adjacency pairs to the model of an organization constituted through conversations. Communication is then viewed as a network of transactions and obligations which maintains and is maintained by the system of structures or 'context order'. In the same vein, Bargiela-Chiappini and Haugh propose a paradigm shift in relation to 'face-work' in the context of organizations towards a research stance grounded both in 'social

constructionism’ – where meaning construction does not depend exclusively on our engagement in the world but has an existence outside of our engagement and ‘interpretivism’, where social reality derives from processes through which social agents engage and negotiate their position towards actions and situations. This stance considers ‘face’ as being beyond one’s individual persona, but rather in existence because co-constructed in interactions (Bargiela-Chiappini & Harris, 1997; Bargiela-Chiappini & Haugh, 2009). This is also Giddens’s stance towards research in terms of duality of system/structure, (Giddens, 1991; Wenger’s duality of participation and reification (Wenger, 1998), and Taylor and Van Every’s duality of conversation and text (Taylor & Van Every, 1999, 2000).

Similarly, a distinction is made between communication and discourse whereby the term ‘discourses’ in organizations is seen as product and ‘producer’ of organizations or organizations’ cultures but not as conveying the same dynamics of interconnections among systems as communication (Boden, 1994; Czarniawska, 1997).

On the one hand, the term communication, by referring to the transactional mechanisms that constitute a network, instantiates role-relations complementarity and interdependency, simultaneously constructing and constructed by agency. On the other hand, at a higher, more abstract level, discourses can encompass ‘Organization Discourses’ (reference-type of talk or text shared within the same organization or by more organizations/organization-systems) (Gee, 2005; Scollon, 2001b).

The strategic dimension of communication is here intended as encompassing both the interactional systems (the network of day-to-day interactions among people) and the discursive construction of the organizational context itself (the discourses and Discourses of the organization). CS, at the interaction level, are used to enact the discourses of the organization even and overall when concerted action is required against individualistic motives and viewpoints (Taylor, 2011). CS can then be also seen as ‘sites of struggle’ (Jones, 2009) besides sites of engagement (Scollon, 2001a,b; Scollon & Scollon, 2004).

Goffman provides a further and complementary view of ‘strategic interaction’ (1969) when he states:

As G. H. Mead has argued, when an individual considers taking a course of action he is likely to hold off until he has imagined in his mind the consequence of his actions for others engaged, their response to this consequence and the bearing of this response on his own designs. He then modifies his action so that it can now include what he envisages will usefully modify the other’s response (1969: 47).

This behaviour implies ‘tacit moves’, Goffman’s central concern in comparison with ‘expression games’, where participants take on roles explicitly but which are secondary, for Goffman, in the enactment of interaction orders.

Taking as a starting point these definitions of ‘communication’ and ‘strategies’ allows two sets of inextricable CS’ core elements to emerge: 1) properties, such as awareness,

adaptiveness, planning and orienting (Goffman's 'operational code') which are 'functional' to structure/order-imposing and, in reverse, functional to constraints and control-resistance; and 2) functions dependent and existing in relation to the above order, constraints and control, and purposive to minimizing and pre-empting the consequences of opposing forces or alternatively repairing or enhancing a desired convergence of intents.

Within this view, two presuppositions constitute the basis for the identification and interpretation of CS: 'all talk is problematic' (Coupland et al. 1991), and all 'communication is strategic' (Jones, 2009; Roberts, 1992). The interrelation of these presuppositions derives from the applied linguistic tradition that first dealt with CS in SLA research whereby the construct 'communication strategies' has been intended as 'problem-solving language devices' used to make up for potential linguistic deficiencies and/or manifest problems of communication (Dornyei and Scott, 1995a, 1995b; Kellerman et al., 1987; Tarone, 1977, Yule & Tarone, 1997) and, in Canale's extended concept, 'to enhance the effectiveness of communication' (Canale, 1983). However, as it will be shown in the following sections, even in the tradition of applied linguistics 'there is no universally accepted definition of CS' (Dornyei & Scott, 1997). Broadly speaking, there is no binary, clear cut opposition between problematic talk and strategic talk as it is testified by the different terminology used to refer to both constructs. Both terms are in fact respectively applied very loosely to any interactional problem and problem-solving devices and, conversely, quite narrowly to very localized processes of 'communication difficulties' and compensation/repair's linguistic devices.

In this context, as shown in the following sections, in order to capture the full diversity and complexity of the phenomena in question both from 'local' perspectives (the interactional negotiation of meaning, shared goals), the role-relational level and pragmatic level (achievement of goals, politeness), and from an organizational perspective (construction and re-construction of 'local' and institutional order), CS are here investigated as embedded in workplace practices. This is where communication and organization constitute each other: communication maintains and reproduces an interaction order within an institutional order against individuals' opposing interests.

3.2.1.1 Problematicity and intentionality: reconceptualizing CS' functions at the discourse levels

As seen in the previous sections a multileveled and comprehensive definition of CS is required to fully capture the dynamics involved in contexts viewed as systems: creating and being strategically created (Duranti and Goodwin, 1992). CS' identified main functions across the disparate strands of Applied Linguistics – repair, reinforce and enhance messages or pre-emptive action – are, in this way, inextricably linked to the presupposition that meaning resides in the interaction of linguistic form and social context, the presuppositions and goals of participants (van Dijk, 1987; Linell, 1995), and/or on how their meanings are co-constructed as an interaction unfolds (Ten Have, 2007). In this

respect, two levels of interpretation will be considered here: 1) the meta-communicative level which encompasses the type of intentionality/consciousness relative to the functions of CS and the notion of ‘problematicity’ (Bargiela-Chiappini & Nickerson, 2010; Dornyei & Scott, 1997; Roberts, 2009, Roberts et al., 1992) (and see participants’ accounts in Chapter 5 and 6); and 2) the discourse level, the degree/types of interconnection between language use, interaction/interactants’ actions and context.

The integration of these two perspectives implies not only the existence of a predominantly ‘rational actor’ and her/his strategic goal-oriented nature of social interaction but also a ‘social indexing’ behaviour based on role-relational relationships and status, thereby reflecting the stance taken by Bargiela-Chiappini & Harris (1997) when they elaborate on the inextricability of the individual from her/his social interactions whereby, despite individuals enacting unique behaviours, their actions are constructed in interactions as well.

As shown in the following sections, this link between individual behaviour and attitudes and their engagement in social action emerges on a continuum of different levels or aspects of discourse. By levels of discourse is here intended the scope and depth at which discourse production and reception is investigated in relation to underlying methodological and epistemological issues, namely, the way in which context impinges in the interpretive process of interactions. This is particularly relevant in consideration of how strategies of communication, by their nature, span across texts and contexts, aimed, as they are, at both immediate ‘localized’ outcomes and higher social and institutional ones.

3.2.1.2 Discourse levels and organizing discourses: a polyphonic analytical view

This section highlights the connections between context and interactional discourse as established by the diverse underlying conceptualizations of CS in the past and current literature and in relation to the epistemological paradigms within which they are framed. It is assumed that the call for strategic action is closely linked to the perceived contextual demands of the (inter)action. As mentioned above, beyond the inception of CS research in Applied Linguistics which viewed CS as a ‘circumscribed phenomenon’, strategic communication is here intended not only as discursively enacted to serve immediate (spatially and physically) interactional goals (Duranti & Goodwin, 1992), but also in its discursively producing and reproducing micro-social dimensions which, seen in their entirety of ongoing, sequential exchanges, contribute to constructing macro-social ones (Blommaert, 2005). This latter approach to the analysis of strategic communication in particular can be investigated through two major analytical perspectives: 1) the dynamics of interactional exchanges, the localized employment of language with its task-at-hand orientation and accomplishment; and 2) the historical and social factors that underlie the text and inter(action) under scrutiny. A further perspective which may be considered as an integration of the first two is the ‘communication as organizing’ approach with its focus on specifically organizational phenomena which are discursive in nature and reflect the

institutional practices. It can then be said that the polyphonic nature of organizational discourses conventionally can be analysed at ‘laminated’, (intersecting) levels representing a spectrum of ‘categories’ or key features of CS. These levels are meant to capture the degree of social significance reflected in the interactions: from the ‘local meaning construction’ to the wider institutional and socio-political context. The different perspectives that this identification yields also reflects differences among degrees of ‘strategizing’ (reconciling contrasting views and organizing concerted action) aimed at both individual (local) and organizational/institutional objectives. As pointed out in Chapter 2, this differential in degree of strategic communication is especially crucial in relation to the joint interpretative process of both analyst and participants.

The main characteristics attributed to CS and related commentary on the main theoretical approaches within which they have been investigated are briefly summarized below.

1) ‘LOCALIZED’ APPROACH

a) LEXICAL/GRAMMATICAL/PROPOSITIONAL APPROACH

This approach implies: replacement, repair, rephrasing (at the ‘local’ level to overcome language/referential deficiencies) (Canale, 1983; Faerch & Kasper 1983, 1984; Tarone, 1977, 1983; Yule & Tarone, 1997). This approach focuses on information or content where there is either a predicted/perceived difficulty in communicating or a problem arises at a lexical/pragmatic level (lack of L2 proficiency or noisy environments). This includes studies on interlanguage and collaborative theory.

b) THE PRAGMATIC AND TALK-IN-INTERACTION APPROACH whereby CS are seen to occur respectively at one or all the referential/propositional and relational/social/membership dimensions of language use (Firth, 1996; Tannen, 1981; Trenholm, 2010); CS in this sense are also related to face and politeness.

They are investigated as employed to achieve specific and localized interactional goals relating to task-based or relational outcomes (Bavelas, 1985; Grimshaw, 1981, 1990; Tannen, 1981; Verderber, K. S., Verderber, R. F., and Berryman-Fink, C. (2009), Drew & Heritage, 1992)).

2) INTERACTION ORDER APPROACH

This approach expands on the previous interpretive approach above by including aspects reflecting more closely the organizational context such as hierarchical role-relationship. They can be broadly divided in two strands:

a) Strategies employed to overcome ‘socio-cultural’ or/and intercultural differences. These are also analyzed as diverse communicative styles deriving from not only a different socio-cultural or ethnic/linguistic background (Gumperz, 1974, 1982; Gumperz, Jupp & Roberts, 1979) but also from a professional, generational and/or organizational background (Scollon & Scollon, 1995, 2001).

b) Interactional devices aimed at managing multiple, (and sometimes conflicting) goals simultaneously which include affective, relational and identity management dimensions (Coates 1987; Stubbe and Holmes, 1995; Holmes, 2007), as well as negotiation and re-negotiation of the interaction order.

The strategic element here is geared not only to overcoming/avoiding incorrect inferencing due to divergent expectations, assumptions, attitudes but also, to drawing on one's own and interlocutors' experiences and stock of interactional knowledge (Gumperz, 1992; Perakyla & Vehvilainen, 2003) in order to achieve interactional alignment and working consensus.

3) INSTITUTIONAL ORDER/ORGANIZATIONAL APPROACH

This approach to interpretation, aims at investigating 'macro' functions of CS. CS in this instance are analyzed as part of a more complex set of interactional dialectics embedded in the intertextual or interdiscursive fabric of the organization or wider social structures (Smart, 2003; Candlin, 2006; 2011). Within this perspective, the major objective is to achieve complementarity or reconcile the different worldviews of the agents at play (Layder, 1993). In this sense, organizations are considered as typical sites of "competing discourses" (Lee, 1992) or 'inherent struggles' (Jones, 2009) where meanings are not invariably shared and where relationships and interactions are seldom neutral in terms of power.

As Lee (1992: 189) points out, "the meaning of a particular utterance is often open to negotiation and may be subject to 'mystification'." This may provide language users with a tool for "deleting or stressing particular aspects of reality" (Ng and Bradac 1993: 144), or with an alternative interpretive frame for understanding intergroup differences. Strategies, at this level are used to either 'do power' or resist it in more or less overt ways.

As mentioned above, the distinction of discourse dimensions and related analytical approach is linked to the degree to which contextual factors are deemed to enter the interpretive processes of the interactions under scrutiny. However, in this respect, it is to be noted that the perspectives highlighted so far point rather to a continuum of analytical discourse approaches or indeed a Venn like concurrent application rather than a sharp distinction among them whereby the same approaches also overlap and operate at different levels in order to explain the complexity of the observed phenomena.

Grant et al. (2004) also point to this complexity as requiring comprehensive approaches and readings of discourses that extend their analysis beyond organizational borders and at the same time acknowledge the limitations of researchers' monological perspectives and methodological choices dictated at times, by academic and professional considerations. In this regard, by referring to Mumby and Clair's and Oswick's stance respectively, they state:

... studies of organizational discourse that take a critical perspective expose the ways in which discourse constitutes and reconstitutes social arrangements in organizational settings. They emphasize how discourse is used to produce, maintain or resist power, control and inequality

though ideology and hegemony (Mumby and Clair, 1997). More specifically, critical discourse studies see organizations as dialogical entities where discourses vie with each other for dominance (Oswick, 2001). They regard organizations as ‘sites of struggle in which different groups compete to shape the social reality of organizations in ways that serve their own interests’ (Mumby & Clair, 1997, p. 182) (Grant et al., 2004: 15).

They refer to this approach as a polyphonic approach resonating the multiperspectival model proposed by Candlin and Chrichton whereby different and opposing voices strive for acquiring power (Candlin & Chrichton, 2013).

In this respect, the ‘localized’ use of CS which can occur at a lexical level and/or span across sentences, although ‘locally bound’ both linguistically and contextually, can be analyzed as a whole of chronologically sequential acts, everyday attitudes and behaviour of an organization’s members.

In this sense then, Grant et al. (2004) are concerned with talk-in-interaction (Silverman, 1999) and in many instances this approach can be said to be ethnomethodological in orientation in that it explores the role of discourse in shaping social order in everyday organizational conduct.

This perspective goes beyond the ‘local’ exchange (although it may include it) and points to the constant production, through ongoing linguistic and textual exchanges drawn from broader discourses, of discursive objects that act as resources for action and for further conversations (Fairclough, 1992; Taylor et al., 1996). This state of affairs also points to the ‘intertextuality’ of text in conversations whereby several ‘texts’ and conversations are called upon to initiate organizational change insofar as they also identify a need for change (Ford and Ford, 1995).

The discursively enacted ‘need for change’, at any organizational level (environment, market, or more generally at a political agenda level, is a discursive object that, once produced, is reused by other actors in possibly different exchanges and circumstances with more or less degree of strength or resistance and in relation to broader discourses, such as ‘strategic change’, ‘marketing policy’, planning, etc.

Similarly, the intercultural dimension may be characterized as a localized (lexical level), discrete event (code-switching/mixing) (Poncini, 2004), as the local manifestation of communicative patterns (conversational, communicative and interaction styles) (Aritz & Walker 2009) or, as a ‘general’ feature of a whole event, phase of discourse and explicitly and implicitly associated with cultural differences in the sense highlighted above (Holmes & Stubbe, 2003; Scollon, 1995, 2002). These include pragmatic/relational aspects of language such as politeness, face, organization and structure of exchanges but also mediational objects such as machinery or work procedures which are not explicitly recognized as ‘intercultural’ although they have diverse place of origin than the locality of the interaction at hand.

This is also the case of organizational political agendas where CS may be investigated as impacting on or chosen for implementing more or less ‘overt’ policies regarding the distribution of roles/labour, acknowledgment of diverse professional provenance, employment of transnational staff, etc (Angouri, 2009, 2014).

As far as the context beyond the organizational one is concerned, the ‘macro-level’, CS may be seen emerging out of inherently problematic aspects of social or institutional structures as they enact the constructing and maintaining of largely invisible aspects of the same structures (Mc Tear and King 1991; Wodak, 1996) and where both goals and status are enacted interactionally (Jones, 2009; Werkhofer, 1992). In this respect, strategic discourse embedded in action may reflect unilateral participants’ advantages whereby no alignment is actually sought (Candlin 1987).

Hence, with the latter point in mind and with reference to these differences in approaches and dimensions of interpretation, it can be said that CDA allows an overarching focus on how people manipulate the forms of language (e.g., vocabulary, or discourse structure and style) or intentionally withhold information in order to keep boundaries between groups, prevent their ownership of discourse or silence group members themselves (Jaworski 1997).

Discourse processes can thus be analyzed as a means of masking or mystifying reality, and/or as a means of exclusion, and as a powerful tool for any individual or group concerned with shaping ideology or gaining power over others, something that has obvious relevance to the choice of specific strategies of communication over others.

In this capacity, as it will be highlighted in the following sections, organizational studies provide the framework whereby actors, intentions and objects, construct, and are constructed by, the reproduction of organizations through communication (Cooren et al., 2006).

This connection micro-macro level of discourses is seminally reflected in Goffmann’s choice of organizational sites as object of investigation where mediating devices are employed to negotiate problematic ‘institutional principles’ whereby “... social structure gains elasticity; the individual merely loses composure” (1967: 112).

As seen above, the core difference in identifying CS in different terms will admit different kinds of contextual information or interpretive frameworks to the analysis.

The ways in which these constructs are conceptualized and defined inevitably results in what kinds of data are to be analyzed, which ‘instances’ of CS are identified and how these are categorized and analyzed. Problematic (as deriving from ‘sites of struggle’) and strategic talk are then to be acknowledged as ‘relative’ and not ‘absolute’ concepts and not in binary opposition but in concurrent occurrence, which inevitably makes them something of a ‘dynamic notion’ both from a theoretical and analytic perspective.

The following sub-sections will illustrate how the different paradigms and perspectives align themselves or diverge from these background assumptions on the construct of CS. Literature will be reviewed from the inception of CS studies in the 1980s where the use of CS was conceptualized as a 'response' to a 'lack' of L2 lexical items, to the turn marked by the 'discursive school's, through Gumperz's intercultural discursive strategies (1982), and the Scollons' (Scollon, 1995; Scollon & Scollon, 2001) intercultural discourse framework and nexus of practice writings.

Finally, within the organizational discourse framework of 'communication as organizing' (Cooren, Taylor & Every, 2006) CS will be reconceptualised as constituting/re-constituting the organization of practices themselves within an institutional order where interactants strive to attain organization through consensus or otherwise.

3.2.1.3 CS in referential meaning and inter-language: the joint meaning construction

As outlined in chapter 2 and the above sections, there is an underlying assumption that workplaces are 'strategic contexts' (Roberts, 1992;), 'sites of struggle' (Jones, 2009; Mumby and Clair, 1997) where, however, "collective conscience is founded" (Durkheim, 1803).

In this vein, as shown by CS studies in Applied Linguistics, progressive changes in research approaches manifest early in relation to the increased focus on frequency and occurrence 'in context' as well as the perceived different degrees of effectiveness with which communicative and interactive difficulties are dealt with (Tarone, 1980; Dornyei & Scott, 1995, 1997; Brown, 2000). This reflects in a decisive 'social turn' (Block, 2003) and discursive turn (Shiffrin, 1994; Tannen & Hamilton, 2008) in language research.

The core perspectives of CS research in Applied Linguistics reviewed here regard their broad conceptualizations in relation to problem-orientedness and consciousness (Dornyei & Scott, 1997) which, in the present study will be reconceptualised as "problematic/critical interactions" and "intentionality" in line with the view that all communication is, to a certain extent, '... an imperfect process... and intrinsically flawed, partial and problematic' (Coupland, Wiemann & Giles, 1991: 3) and that 'language use is always strategic' (Kasper & Kellerman, 1997: 3). However, rather than attempting to reconcile opposite strands of CS research, namely the SLA and cognitive processing approach/position, the interactional/sociolinguistic approach (Kasper & Kellerman, 1997) and the organizational discourse one, this section aims at showing some connections in all the perspectives and at reflecting not only in terms of the assumptions made in different sets of research paradigms about where CS are located on a proposed continuum towards a deeper level of interpretation related to their social significance but also on, as Blommaert and Rampton put it:

key theoretical and methodological developments in language study: named languages have now been denaturalized, the linguistic is treated as just one semiotic among many, inequality

and innovation are positioned together in a dynamics of pervasive normativity, and the contexts in which people orient their interactions reach far beyond the communicative event itself (2011 p.1);

As Rampton notes (1997b) the shifting approach which manifests itself from the inception as experimental research, rapidly has broadened its scope by increasingly adopting a less aseptic setting for the investigation to be carried out and allowing for a broader range of action for the participants. Experiments very soon stop being conducted ‘in isolation’ (Faerch & Kasper, 1983; Selinker, 1972; Tarone, 1977; Bialystok, 1990; Poullisse, 1987) and start including ‘doing and interacting’.

On the other hand, the early sociolinguistic/interactional approach views them as ‘a mutual attempt’ of two interlocutors to find a common meaning in interactions by using strategic linguistic/non linguistic devices aimed at signalling the lack of the appropriate resources and calling the interlocutor for help or finding an alternative way of expressing oneself (Tarone, 1983; Wagner, 1983; Wilkes-Gibbs, 1997; Wagner & Firth, 1997). Even in the early stages Tarone states: “CS are seen as tools used in a joint negotiation of meaning where both interlocutors are attempting to agree as to a communicative goal” (1980: 420). Similarly, *Canale’s extended concept*, (Canale, 1983; Dornyei, 1997), proposed that CS involve any attempt to “enhance the effectiveness of communication which implied a broader view than the restriction of CSs to problem-solving devices.

Also, an example of the broader interpretation of “strategy” surfaces in L1 communication studies, where CS research has focused on ways of achieving “critical social goals such as gaining compliance, generating affinity, resolving social conflict, and offering information” (Wiemann & Daly, 1994). In a similar vein, methods to manage potentially difficult discourse situations (e.g., how to interrupt someone how to hold the floor, or how to close a conversation) are also viewed as communication-enhancing strategies.

Although the language learning aspect is not the primary focus of this study, it is interesting to note, in this research strand, the shift in focus from the linguistic form (initially the ‘lexical deficits’) to the referential meaning, in particular the cognitive decisions made to accomplish reference (Kasper & Kellerman, 1997).

Studies on cognitive processes involved in referential communication have since shown increasing awareness of the socio-cultural impact on this processing such as the cases in which the speaker has to make decisions concerning the knowledge, status and needs of the interlocutor in order to choose the best referential strategy (Yule & Tarone, 1997).

Similarly, parallel studies on Interlanguage (IL), like Tarone’s, (1983), show how IL performance strongly varies with different types of elicitation tasks. Selinker & Douglas (1985) suggest that this variation with task equals to a variation with ‘context’ in so far as ILs are created along a continuum of ‘discourse domains concerning various slices of life that are important and/or necessary for these learners to talk and/or write about’ and that

reflect ‘lived experiences’. Consequently, within these ‘internally-created domains’ IL structures are created differently.

In this capacity, it can be said that CS as constitutive of IL, are incorporated into communicative situations which both constrain and facilitate their use. As specific circumstances and events tend to occur in some situations more than in others, knowing the situation means an increased ability to refer to objects, actions and concepts as well an institutional order.

Thus the notion of interlanguage is here viewed as language use embedded within situations whereby interactions encompass shared and negotiated referential activities and therefore skills as required by the context.

As shown in the sections below, referential activities are here of particular relevance not only in terms of the physical reality (objects and actions) invoked in interactions but also in terms of individual’s role-relations, context’s constraints and affordances (interaction and institutional order).

3.2.1.4 Collaborative theory, sociolinguistics and discourses

As seen in the previous sections the view of CS as embedded in situations transcends the linguistic shortcomings’ and the repair/compensatory perspective. The existence of ‘a social context’ presupposes an interplay among interactants’ interpersonal meaning and the dynamics of its co-construction ‘in context’. The emergence of CS role is crucial to this interplay.

Within this strand, Collaborative Theory, (Clark & Wilkes-Gibbs, 1986) further identifies one of CS functions, that of ‘referring’ as a collaborative process. As Wilkes-Gibbs states: “the processes and products of collaboration respond to such factors as people’s goals, their knowledge, their roles at any point in a discourse, and the evidence they can use to coordinate their beliefs” (1997: 239).

Collaboration’s procedures as highlighted by Clark and Brennan, (1991) and Schober and Clark, (1989) are, in this sense, described as ‘an opportunistic and strategic process’ through which participants can manage previously established beliefs in order to achieve further common ground. This perspective resonates in the communication as an ongoing organizing enterprise (Cooren and the Montreal School) where the overt goal is ‘concerted action’ towards an institutional goal (institutional order and beliefs) and, at the same time the achievement of personal ends through pursuit of recognition and hierarchical status (Taylor, 2011).

Given the above, the implications for interactional sociolinguistics-based studies are clear as CS, so defined, would be enacted in interactions where individual goals and collaborative activities have to be negotiated as well as type and extent of participation

(Poncini, 2002; Spencer-Oatey, 2000; Spencer-Oatey & Xing, 2010), individual and shared knowledge (Wilkes-Gibbs, 1997), experts and novices' positions (Isaac & Clark, 1987; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). In a word, an interaction order within an institutional one is the object of communicative transactions whereby collaboration and cognition are negotiated and views traded off. This last assumption in particular bears the presupposition that collaborative and cognitive processes are intimately connected. The knowledge that people have to coordinate affects the processes by which they use language. This, in turn, can affect the knowledge with which each participant begins and carries out the exchange. CS are then constitutive and constituted by the ensemble of these processes: a notion that has crucial relevance in relation to the stocks of interactional knowledge (SIK) as participants' tool-kit (Peräkilä & Vehviläinen, 2003).

Although studies related to the Collaborative Theory, 'retain a psychological flavour' (Wilkes-Gibbs, 1997: 274) especially in its attempts at generalizing across individuals and in the employment of experimental and quasi-experimental approaches to investigation it also lay the foundations for exploring the dynamics of interactional social forces in discourse as well as their cognitive and linguistic aspects by converging with trends in social psychology and cognition. In this respect, it is noteworthy how, through the interactional approach, even if the initial research focus is on individual strategic action, socio-political contextualization is warranted since macro- social structure is reproduced at the micro-level of intra- and inter-individual cognition and communication.

Within this view, the sociolinguistic approach as set out by Rampton (1997), critically assesses and problematize assumptions and beliefs of traditional CS studies within the perspective of second language acquisition and use. Indeed Rampton goes beyond these problematizations by deconstructing the whole notion of CS, through a definition of CS themselves as symbolic tools in specific contexts of interpersonal interactions (Rampton, 1995).

Specifically, Rampton (1997) argues against the essentialist assumptions of 'non-nativeness' and 'problematicity' as respectively a source of problematic communication and the result of lack of linguistic proficiency.

In this regard, even without taking a distance from the definition of CS in terms of perceptible problematicity, the sociolinguistic perspective generates a number of facets related to interpersonal meaning, membership, and context which can hardly be ignored and require a more open-ended, ethnographic approach.

Rampton gives a number of examples in which the 'problematicity' takes on different traits than the ones proposed by CS previous studies and where the relationship/dichotomy nativeness/non-nativeness is acted out as a resource rather than a problem source and social meaning, rather than linguistic shortcomings present interlocutors with difficulties.

In his own study on a network of multilingual adolescents in a UK neighbourhood (Rampton, 1995), Rampton emphasises the different ways in which the symbolic role of

L2 CS are enacted and the re-conceptualization and re-contextualization that notions like ‘avoidance’, ‘refusal’, collaboration (previously investigated from a linguistic deficit perspective), as well as phenomena like code-mixing and code-switching, require in terms of the role-relationship and solidarity among members of different ethnicities and backgrounds.

Specifically the focus of sociolinguistics would be that concepts like ‘authorized inferences’ and ‘recipient design’ are not ‘socially neutral’ (Hinnenkamp, 1987: 173) and are impacted upon by particular membership categories. In this context Rampton states:

these judgements of social category membership can actually present a considerable obstacle to collaboration and mutuality, and the central thrust of research on cross-cultural miscommunication is that talk between L1 and L2 users often generates a great many ‘unauthorized’ unintended inferences which have a significant effect on how the interaction progresses (1997: 298).

These views also resonate in the discursively constructed ethnification processes present in the workplaces described by Day (1994) and the way they end up being employed as categorization devices and often attached to causal factors for conduct and/or more generally to labour distinctions and stereotypes.

This viewpoint of cross-cultural communication although still partly associated with problematization, it allows for a larger scope than that proposed by linguistic shortcomings. Specifically this scope relate to participants’ social values, their perceptions of social order, and the ‘procedures’ they use to maintain, restore or disrupt it (Gumperz, 1992; Scollon, 1995; Scollon & Scollon, 2001; 2002). In this respect, Shea (1994) shifts more explicitly towards a re-conceptualized notion of ‘problematization’ when he states:

... how utterances are interpreted is mediated by how speakers are positioned and their discourse structured: whether interactional authority is granted and referential perspective is recognized, or whether participation is reduced and neglected. It is not cultural differences in and of themselves but the way they are taken up and negotiated which critically determines the shape and success of intercultural interaction (1994: 379).

Within this perspective, the investigation of CS, concerned with moment-to-moment discourse processing provides the opportunity to interpret the ways in which social reality is constructed through interaction. This assumes particular importance in relation to L2 learning and use in the workplace context and within the experience of migration and how these impact on interactional discursive processes.

In this vein, as it will be shown in the following sections the ‘discursive school’ broadens the focus and depth of enquiry beyond the speaker’s production of utterances to also include ‘the hearer’s evaluation of these utterances’ (Kadar & Bargiela-Chiappini, 2010: 4). This dyadic notion of discourse encompasses contextual factors as related to the wider institutional and broader context. Additionally, the explanation and interpretation of exchanges and contextual interactions among participants will be the object of chapter 6

where participants themselves will evaluate their utterances in light of the strategies required to carry out specific tasks in the specific circumstances.

3.3 CS, Discourse strategies and intercultural practices: a nexus analysis of language-in-action

As seen above, the shift from the psycholinguistic and cognitivist paradigms to the discursive, context bound approach of sociolinguistics allowed the reconceptualization of both the notion of problematicity and that of L2 use in terms of the native/non native dichotomy.

However, the linguistically ‘localized’, and therefore ‘more visible’ element of CS phenomena viewed as code-related and problem solving is still ‘retained’ in most literature on CS and ICC. In this capacity the investigation is still circumscribed to categories such as native vs non-native interactions whereby other social and individual factors remain partially covert by the assumption of lack of linguistic competence, shared norms of communication and ‘cultural differences’ (Aritz & Walker, 2009; Beal, 1990, 1992; Bowe & Martin, 2007; Clyne, 1994). This strand of research is in line with studies of discursive interactional devices aimed at overcoming these difficulties (Clyne, 1994; Holmes & Riddiford, 2010; Holmes & Stubbe, 2003; Neil, 1996) as well as with studies which view ‘cultural skills’ as a learnable tool-kit (Ashdown, 2010; Friedman & Antal, 2005).

The ‘discursive turn’, in this sense, further distances itself from these stances by a more in depth approach to the conceptualization of CS use in ICC: as Duran & Shepherd put it, as a passage ‘from mistakes to hybridization’ (2009: 149).

In this way, CS become as constitutive of and constituted by the fabric of social (inter)action and can be seen as ‘regulators’ of societies’, interactional rules and as mirrored by ‘politeness norms’, in a broad sense, whose underlying principles reflect the history and moral constitution of a society’s interactional rules themselves (Bargiela-Chiappini & Haugh, 2009).

Gumperz’s view of discourse, also mentioned in the previous chapter, can be read as a seminal example of this strand of research in sociolinguistics whereby a shift in focus at different levels can be noted, namely: a) the speaker loses the connotation of learner and becomes a language ‘user’; b) the context, as constitutive of interactions, text and discourse becomes the terrain of investigation; c) the traditional binomial problematicity-compensation/repair extends beyond linguistic and non-linguistic manifestations to differences in ‘discourse functions’ and, in turn, to management of discourse functions’/expectations within social structures and in coordination with other semiotic resources (Duran & Shepherd, 2009).

Beyond the ethnic and cultural background differences then, the notion of ‘culture’ is here assumed to be in an inextricable connection to communication’ as action among and by

agents whose membership involves multidimensional cultural diversity (age, gender, professional, skills, etc.) enacted also through diverse artefacts and across different activities (Scollon & Scollon, 2001) (see Chapter 2).

Accordingly, CS, as embedded in interactions and situations are then also practices-in-context as made up of 'culture', lived through, enacted, and co-constructed in interactions or 'culture as it happens' (Bargiela-Chiappini, & Gotti, 2005; Duranti, 2003).

In this respect a set of nexuses of actions, as actors' historical and contemporary trajectories towards and within sites of engagement become the units of analysis whereby CS are the 'bearing structures' of nexuses themselves.

Two foundational positions, Gumperz's and Scollon's are here reviewed in detail and compared as representing analytical perspectives of intercultural communication viewed as shifting and relative rather than stable and definite. In this respect, within the broad construct of intercultural communication itself, constructs like politeness/face, communicative styles, pragmatic functions, use of honorifics and forms of address, avoidance, humour as well as ways of inferencing, – namely all that in ICC mainstream research is assumed to 'differ cross-culturally' is here reconceptualised in relation to the historical, personal, social and material circumstances that constitute the contexts of interactions and the contexts' practices. In turn, these practices are assumed to be available to interactants as 'socialized individuals' enacting the 'ground rules' of social interaction (Goffman, 1967: 30-31). Within such a framework the focus is on what counts as 'intercultural' and what counts as 'strategy' and, in turn, the realization of strategies themselves in relation to circumstances.

3.3.1 Contextualization cues as strategies: the inferential and analytical processes in communicative events

Gumperz's focus on ethnographically-based sociolinguistic investigation points to the empirical viability of analysis of specific speech or communicative events explored as interactively constituted and culturally framed encounters and which are closely tied to dynamic and continuously changing contexts. Talk and communicative practices construct 'the organization of the event' (Gumperz, 1995). This is what Goffman calls 'interaction order'. In "Discourse Strategies" (1982), his seminal work on this issue then, Gumperz goes beyond the empirical focus on interethnic and intercultural communication viewed as an 'a priori problematic phenomenon' to explore the typified communicative practices in interaction, what level of linguistic signalling they reflect, how they relate to speakers' communicative and social background and how they affect interactive outcomes in key encounters. The analysis, at this 'activity level' highlights the strategic element as "the ability to create and maintain communicative involvement and to achieve communicative ends" (Gumperz, 1995:7) albeit through providing the context with 'semantic importance: what levels of linguistic signalling they reflect, how they relate to speakers'

communicative and social background and how they affect interactive outcomes in key encounters.' (1995:7). It can then be said that from an organizational discourse perspective, the different functions of different strategies reflect the different levels of organizational norms of the interactions (from local to intermediate and macro). In this respect, Gumperz defines contextualization cues as:

any feature of linguistic form(or any other semiotic encoding) that contributes to the signalling of contextual presuppositions" that is, in order to signal the links between messages and context, strategies follow signalling norms bound to the requirements of the context itself and which in turn require specific inferencing processes (1982: 131).

The ability to be active part of an interaction through the correct and sustained interpretation of contextual presuppositions (or cues) implies the ability to create and maintain such involvement which rests on shared conversational inferences. Gumperz distinguishes between symbolic signs which communicate via well-known grammatical and lexical rules and indexical signs (and among them contextualization cues), which, on the other hand, communicate by virtue of direct conventional associations between signs and context, established or transmitted through previous communicative experience and, it can be added, from an organizational viewpoint, through belonging to an organization. A major issue in Gumperz's research is to show how and under what conditions discursive practices work, a) to create communicative conventions and b) to affect interpretation.

In talking about the functioning of indexical signs in interpretation, it becomes necessary to distinguish between meaning in the linguist's sense of reference, and situated inferences. The latter are crucial in communicative practice. In everyday talk, situated inferences always take the form of assessment of which outcomes a speaker intend to achieve: interpretation of messages can be quite different from propositional content. It is assumed that contextual information is communicated as part of the interaction process and therefore its analysis and investigation have to address in detail the interaction process itself: including the speakers' inferencing processes.

However the intrinsic ambiguity of inferential processes is such to require specific choices of strategies to overcome the difficulties associated with the processes themselves.

To gain insight into the use of these strategies a preliminary two- level, integrated investigation is required: a) an ethnographic approach (highlighting participants' motives in their choice of verbal strategy) and b) a conversation/interactionalist one by exploring what speakers actually say to delimit/identify what 'activity types' or 'activities' are being enacted through language and by taking into account both analyst and participants' perspective.

Activities viewed as constructed by speakers and analysts during the interpretation process respectively on-line and off -line are similarly conceptualized by Goffman as frames and are subject to constant change in the course of the exchange, that is, they are reflected in 'interactional moves'. Moves are strategically constructed and interpreted and ultimately

the whole 'structure' of the discursive practices employed in an interaction and, in turn, reflecting 'the wider context', relies on these constructs and the processes through which they are built. Gumperz's example of a court room cross-examination is exemplary of the co-construction of moves and the engagement along these moves of both speakers (Gumperz, 1982).

This social perspective views actors engaged in strategically formulating and positioning their moves in order to accomplish communicative ends in real-life encounters and therefore employing CS to construct and 'hold together' interactions according to the social order.

The analysis of CS is then aimed at showing situated, on-line interpretation: the inferences that are most likely to occur and how participants not only 'construct' but also respond to them.

In studies of intercultural and interethnic communication, detecting systematic differences in interpretive practices might enable the identification of individuals' difficulties in creating and maintaining communicative involvement and conversely detecting pre-emptive and compensatory moves can shed light on how these difficulties are either avoided or overcome. This is particularly relevant in workplace communication whereby through participation in similar 'networks of relationships' over time, participants have been socialized into similar network-specific communicative practices. Although their backgrounds are about as different as they could be, certain communicative conventions and interpretive practices are likely to 'become shared'. It is long-term exposure to similar communicative experience in institutionalized networks of relationship and not only language or community membership as such that lies at the root of shared culture and shared inferential practices (Wenger, 1998; Peräkylä & Vehviläinen, 2003). Similarly, the significance of cross-cultural and intercultural differences may be less relevant to interactants than the overall group interactional dynamics during the exchange (Duran & Shepherd, 2009; Piller, 2011; Scollon, 2001; Scollon & Scollon, 1995) as well as the diversity related to organizational roles and positions as highlighted in the previous sections and in chapter 2. The process of interpretation in interactions then, automatically shifts from merely what something 'means', and, ultimately, agreement on specific interpretation presupposes the ability to negotiate repairs and re-negotiate misunderstandings, on how parts of an argument cohere, follow thematic, topic shifts and shifts in presuppositions. In these processes there is no established discourse model for interactants to converge to except the agreement processes on conventions that are the product of shared practice. The challenge is to show how this agreement is reached: whether through contextualization processes or the shared formation of ever changing and creative communicative patterns within and through the social norms in place at the speakers' sites of engagement (Scollon, 2001), or, in organizational terms, within the institutional constraints/affordances.

3.3.2 CS as nexuses of ‘intercultural actions’

Sites of engagement as defined in Scollon & Scollon’s 1995 work, recur as the backdrop in Scollon’s (2001, 2002) notion of ICC which takes as a starting point a model of social interaction to analyze the negotiation of face relationships. As Gumperz, the authors adopt the term *involvement* as a way to place emphasis on the process of constructing a “person’s right and need to be considered a normal, contributing, or supporting member of society” (2001: 46). Involvement is realized by such discourse strategies as paying attention to others, claiming in-group membership, using first names, or to show that the speaker is closely connected to the hearer. On the other hand, they use the term *independence* to stress the individuality of the participants. Independence is realized by such discourse strategies as making minimal assumptions, using formal names and titles, or by giving options to the interlocutor.

Scollon and Scollon’s work on intercultural communication departs from the reified concept of culture and goes from conceiving intercultural communication as Inter-discourse Communication (Scollon, 2001; Scollon & Scollon 1995) to providing a mediational view of intercultural communication, and in later writings describing it as Nexus Analysis (Scollon, 2002; Scollon 2005a,b; Scollon & Scollon, 2004) in that culture cannot *be* conceived as detached from circumstances and agents and the social actions they engage in, their sites of engagement.

Further to this, Scollon’s notions of ‘discourse systems’, grammar of context and politeness systems are to be seen within his definition of intercultural communication:

the entire range of communications across boundaries of groups or discourse systems from the most inclusive of those groups, cultural groups, to the communications which take place between men and women or between colleagues who have been born into different generations (Scollon, Scollon & Jones, 2012: xiv).

This broad scope points to the fact that:

A nexus analysis makes visible the trajectories along their separate timescales of people, objects, discourses, and the places of the built environment for the purpose of making visible the histories, the ideological positionings, the control and blockages, and the linkages through boundary objects, the built environment, discourses and people that have constituted the moment of the nexus as an object of interest for analysis (2002:15).

And further to the fact that:

It is not at all arbitrary how we talk about these trajectories and about this nexus at which they converge; any discourse about this nexus is itself a strategic and ideological choice which foregrounds some of the trajectories and their concomitant timescales and backgrounds others (2002: 14)

and that the question to be asked by analysts is ‘What interests does it serve to discursively construct this moment as one of intercultural communication?’ (2002: 17).

Thus, there are theoretical reasons for foregrounding questions on how people interact with each other in contexts, where clearly and increasingly there coexist multiple types of diversity even within ‘the same group’.

In this context, sites of engagement within an organization are to be considered at the backdrop for any analysis on communication as they represent sites where actions and actors converge from different directions. ICC specifically has to be conceptualized within an ‘organizational and institutional order’ within which agents operate according to and through establishing and maintaining guidelines in the face of potential disruptions or problematic interactions (Candlin, 1987, 1997; Cicourel, 1992, 2007).

Within this framework the Scollons’ work further address how ‘discourse becomes action, and action becomes discourse,’ (2002a) and the relevance of nexus analysis in this process. In this sense, for Scollon, actions are part of discourse and vice-versa. He identifies at least three ways in which discourse and action are inextricably connected: the concurrent engagement of speakers with action, the internalization of the discourse by individuals through practices, and the use or ‘discursive’ production of a ‘boundary object’ linking a discourse of a previous occurrence to the action being carried out at the time on which we are focusing (see Scollon’s recount of a camping trip in chapter 2). This corresponds, in mediational terms, to Bourdieu’s habitus (Bourdieu, 1990). It also shows how discourse constructs and it is constructed around action and, in a sense, above communication whereby an exchange level among interactants (an interaction system) occurs within a wider system: speakers ‘use’ discourse(s) to communicate by referring/enacting a discourse repertoire (discourse practices) which intersects with time and historical or present circumstances. In this way communication drawing on discourses of diverse provenance in terms of time, domains and space is by default ‘intercultural’.

As Scollon states:

My thesis is that every social action whether carried out as what Goffman (1971) would call a ‘single’ or together with others in an active and socially integrated participation structure occurs at an intersection of multiple lines of actions, discourses, material and biological life trajectories and are therefore inevitably culturally complex. The conclusion is that to construct only some of these as cases of intercultural communication is to ideologically truncate significant structures of meaning and social process (2002b:2).

Boundary objects then, form links between discourses or social institutions: timescales are incorporated in social (inter)actions and discourses are carried out across time and space through the mediational means we use and the habitus of social actors involved.

Referential meanings are then incorporated within the ‘historical bodies and historical spaces (Blommaert & Huang, 2009) and therefore go beyond the propositional content and become referential strategies (Layder, 1993). The use of referential strategies become especially evident in an observer’s eyes when an interaction occurs between expert and novice (or within specific interaction orders such as superior – subordinate, expert – non-expert, etc.) whereby negotiation-meaning relative to tools, procedures and tasks has to

explicitly span across time, space and agents in order to be successful. As Scollon suggests, in this instances a complete cycle of ‘discourse to internalization’ and habitus can be seen whereby another individual internalizes the discourse and so on (Scollon, 2002b).

This is the case, for instance if someone is taught by someone else how to use a machine, instructed to perform a certain task or simply informed on previous events in light of which future action will have to be taken. A set of communicative steps and procedures are put in place which are certainly not identical to an instruction manual but certainly functional to the requirements at hand and which, in time, become routinized and possibly ‘invisibly’ referred to unless and until unforeseen problematic contingencies make it necessary to be appealed to more explicitly. It can be argued then that a differential degree of strategies in interaction are employed in relation to the level of intervention required.

If nexus analysis is the tool through which these intercultural junctures can be identified and examined, culture so conceived is not reified rather it is ever-changing, an outcome of dynamic action and interaction at a particular place and point in time. Scollon (1996a), as quoted by Castillo Ayometzi (2009), points to a problem of reification whereby we attribute a national, linguistic or ethnic identity to people involved in an interaction, and then assume that interactants are representatives of those ‘objects’. The result is that what is actually going on becomes secondary as interactants themselves are assumed to be acting as tokens of their “cultures,” with no personal histories, nor social placements. In this regard, Scollon (1996a: 10) states that:

... culture is a very loose collection of mediational means organized into much smaller discourses to which all persons have access. “[T]he language we use must always be borrowed from some discourse which is located in time, history, and society, and our listeners hear not only meaning but also the time, history, and society from with we have borrowed our language.”

In Duran & Shepherd’s words then, in investigating ‘intercultural communication’: “it is important that the detail of each situation is treated in its specifics” (2009: 153). The analysis of these ‘specifics’ is what ‘mediated discourse analysis’ with its focus on the mediated action, is concerned with.

There are at least three relationships spoken discourse might have to action. It might be the action itself as in the case of performative speech acts. It might be crucial to the action in supporting it or enabling it as in the case of exchanging or discussing procedures of activities or tasks or, thirdly, it might be simply a parallel action. Similarly, Goffman’s (1963) highlights the multiple involvements social actors have in their complex of ongoing activities.

It is in this forms of mediation or ‘inter-discoursiveness’ between actions, discourse, agents and their respective past, present and future trajectories that CS are employed and acquire functionality(ies). The strategic element of communication within and along the activity then becomes fully ‘internalized’ like the written instructions on Scollon’s camping stove

which, after being read the first few times become internalized through action. This is how Scollon illustrates the process:

The (still) highly visible discourse on the surface of the stove had become invisible through genesis amnesia. I could say simply that I lit the stove. The bits of discourse through which I came to incorporate that practice into habitus had become invisible (Scollon, 2002b: 11).

Also through his work on the ‘ontogenesis of social practice, Scollon (2001a) shows that virtually all practices originate externally to the social actor, mostly prior to his or her existence. In this way, an external discourse becomes habitus and, “... in this way one is the discourses in which one has participated” (Scollon, 2002b:12). It can be argued then, that, in the case of CS, repeated use may have internalized and modified the ‘cultural differences’ between agents and amalgamated CS and actions in a way that makes it difficult to identify them, in a word, they have been ‘institutionalized’. However, critical moments arising from the diverse trajectories of actors that meet in sites of engagement can make the CS functionality process ‘more visible’ and ‘accountable’ as ‘restoring and enhancing devices are put in place to guarantee the course of action under way and as these devices are recognized as such by participants.

In this context, the nexus analysis of converging trajectories of agents, objects and actions and its relevant discourses are itself a strategic and ideological choice which foregrounds some of the trajectories themselves and their concomitant timescales. Therefore, if we consider intercultural communication as a confined enactment of language exchange among people of diverse language background and by having recourse to racial and essentializing assumptions about the participants, crucial links concerning the intersecting trajectories of people, objects or discourses from their origins to the nexus in question would be lost.

In conclusion, the choice of how to set the links among trajectories and between these and contexts is partly that of the participants and partly that of the analyst and it concerns a discursive choice and, as Scollon states: “one which strategizes the foregrounding of some lines of the nexus and the backgrounding of others, which strategizes a focus on some of the boundary objects and the backgrounding of others” (Scollon, 2002: 14). From this it should be clear that the answer to whether or not a moment is an occasion of intercultural communication depends on what notions of discourse or communication are governing the analysts’ and the participants’ understanding of the situation.

It can be assumed then that the strategic element of communication runs on a continuum of differential functions within and across intercultural discourse systems (the language we borrow from different discourses, located in time, history and society(ies) and individuals. The communicative ends, accordingly, are related to the communicative practices which are the make up of nexuses and social action.

Within this view, CS are then conceptualized as mediated linguistic actions and have to be defined according to the angles from which nexuses of interactants’, mediational tools and

setting intersect. If we consider the Scollons' perspective in exploring communication of multilingual workplaces in the context of globalization, it can be seen how the basic tenets of CS, as identified above, namely problematicity, intentionality and functionality, are crucial in the process of description, explanation and interpretation of interlocutors as well as analysts' motives and in relation to the institutional setting in which nexuses are captured.

3.4 Interdiscursivity as a system of practices: CS in critical moments and negotiations of agency-order

As seen in the previous section, the relational nature of practices is exemplified by the interdependence of the individual and the social in interaction even in the event of differences in behaviour or attitudes as Bargiela-Chiappini (2003) argues:

... if an encounter or undertaking is to be sustained as a viable system of interaction organized on ritual principles, then these variations must be held within certain bounds and nicely counterbalanced by corresponding modifications in some of the other rules and understandings (2003: 1456).

This is what makes individual-‘interactants’, agree to enter and accomplish transactions’ – the seen but ‘unnoticed rules’ described by Garfinkel (1967) and the ‘face work’ talked about by Goffman (1967) – in order to achieve a commonly accepted outcome according to the system of rituals or rules in place in a particular place and at a particular time.

The use of strategies within this system of ‘rules’ and ‘rituals’ then, are ‘invisibly’ triggered by perceived or real problematic or critical moments in interactions. They become part of the system of interactions themselves and the interactants’ repertoire. This interrelation between, context and interactants, based on transactional dynamics of verbal exchanges, namely the interaction order, is what according to Taylor gives rise to a ‘relational view’ of organization and individuals’ identity within the organization itself (Sarangi, 2010; Taylor, 2011). Here CS are to manage the relational dynamics and the diverse worldviews already existing and/or potentially generated by it. As Taylor notes, “the view of interactions as transactional in nature is inscribed in that of organizational communication seen as the study of ‘circumstantially grounded relationships’ and the role of language in constructing them” (Taylor, 2011: 104).

This conceptualization of organizational communication, reflecting the influence of Goffman (1959, 1963, 1983) and Garfinkel (1967), finds its key features in the ordinary activities of actors as they go about their daily business and it resonates with the reflexive characteristics of sense-making discourses: the interrelation between physical space, objects and discourse itself through agency (Weick, 1983; Giddens, 1984). Within this framework, agency is made up of the ‘situated relationship’ in which individuals find themselves enacting their role in transactional exchanges. It produces and is produced by transactional exchanges (Taylor, 2011).

Taylor further conceptualizes agency in that there is no buying without someone else selling and vice-versa. The interactive talk originating from this gives rise to ‘patterns of organizing’ (Taylor, 1978) whereby people who repeatedly work together, adopt common practices and end up ‘self-developing’ roles, identities and distribution of authority. In this way complementary roles emerge within organizations and system-units even where the role assignment has been deliberately left ambiguous (Kong, 2002; Sarangi, 2010a). The underlying process of relational patterns of actions/interactions is described by Taylor as follows:

There is first a process of “change.... A hierarchy of actions is therefore implied: CAUSE→CHANGE→OBJECT LOCATION. One level of agency is directed to the change itself, physically transferring the valued object from a source to a destination. A second, hierarchically superior level of agency is directed to motivating, directing and giving meaning to the change activity (2011: 108).

The conversations that he analysed showed that a pattern of superimposing a cause agency on a change agency was reiterated in all of the conversations he recorded. It typically took the form of a question-answer sequence where one person raised the question of how to proceed, or suggested an action, and another took a decision whereby a pattern of precedence is established over time and, with it a system of procedures, preferred mode of problem solving, roles and decision-making. An example from his study illustrates the point: “A says “Good, so what do we do now?” C follows up, “Uh, I guess we turn the answers in, right?” and L confirms “Yes, OK.” (Taylor, 1978: 243). Here, the model of exchange shows how a pattern of ‘agency constructing’ is shaped through interactions where a superimposing cause agency acts on a change agency and it can be added that the process becomes a recognizable one by all parties involved, namely a procedure.

It is interesting to note how Taylor observed the process through which groups internalized scripts ‘of their own making’ – the same internalization process of repeated practices that Scollon notices (Scollon, 2002b) (see Chapter 2 and above), resulting in a rapid improvement of efficiency in a work unit, to the point where, in some cases ‘prescribed’ or ‘official’ organizing processes increasingly faded and no verbal exchanges were needed. Similarly, as shown in the notion of CoP role relations and distribution of tasks and responsibilities become shared knowledge and acted upon as such without the need for verbalizing what is commonly understood.

The communicative event, involving a source and a destination then – at a deeper level – does not only provide an exchange of information or knowledge but a ‘modal object’. It is through this communicative process of continuous and progressive adjustments and internalization that agency, ‘the cause of action’, is enabled: “... a duty or obligation (devoir), a desire or motivation (vouloir), a knowledge or belief (savoir) and a know-how or the power to act (pouvoir).” (Taylor, 2011: 113).

These different levels of agencies are tied together by communication and this implies a conjunction of actors, as change would not occur unless *all* parties are involved. These mutually constructed roles in the context of a communicative relationship, as illustrated below, give rise to what Taylor & Cooren later define ‘worldview’ (2006).

However, as agency is enabled in any organizational transaction whereby two or more people are involved, at least two or more points of views are at play (this also resonates in Goffman’s participation framework). Whether a worldview is engendered with one’s role or, as ethnomethodology studies report (Garfinkel, 1967; 1988; Heritage, 1984; Heath & Luff, 2000), is reflexively constructed within the transaction itself, it can be viewed as a property of relationship(s). Hence, the role that communication takes on in organizational systems and processes, in order not only to ‘enable agency’ but also to sustain and maintain it through the constant recursive ‘re-enforcing’ of an interaction order despite the diverse interactants’ worldviews, is crucial.

Specifically, a strategic element in communication enters the enabling of agency process as highlighted above, through negotiating, sustaining, nurturing as well as imposing, the complementarity property against the worldview property of relationships. In this respect, CS negotiate the ‘cause of action’ or ‘modal object’ along its transition as a duty, a motivation, a belief and a know-how of its actual enactment. As such, CS, are enacted along the continuum ‘complementarity-opposing worldviews’ through the functionalities, highlighted above of pre-empting, enhancing and repairing communicatively the sense-making co-construction of shared practices and the social order. This may occur without necessarily building consensus, since, everyone (or every community) has a different interpretation of the ‘collective purpose’.

CS then are negotiating tools which actually sustain the order of organization through and across interactants’ transactional trajectories and specifically: a) acting as links between the ‘enabling agent’ or authority and the ‘acting agent’; b) re-enforcing and internalizing practices and routines; c) establishing shares of responsibility, competences, roles and relationships; d) integrating diverse worldviews and divergences in relation to power and legitimacy.

3.4.1 CS as interdiscursive: nexuses in sites of engagements, situated activities and discourse types

As seen above, the notion of organization as essentially a dynamic relational system constructed through discursive transactions and situated relationships makes it crucial to identify interaction orders through the trajectories of agents, tasks and roles and the related functions that CS take on accordingly. Contexts of interactions and within them, enacted agencies of this system, are often transient and overlapping especially in complex organizations and work settings such as factory floors. In this sense, the notion of sites of engagements, nexuses of practice the communicative events constituting them, best

represent this transiency and point to the need of adopting an analytical investigation of systems' network in order to capture the dynamics of this mobility 'as it happens'.

In the real world, the adoption of the Systems Approach in most contemporary complex organizations, although promoting groups or teams aimed at developing their own internalized and established practices of problem-solving, with established procedures, roles and decision-making hierarchies, makes the management of work itself a difficult objective (see chapter 4). The complexities deriving from the adoption of this approach, hybrid in nature, (Bakke, 1959; Bertalanffy, 1950; Checkland, 1981) derive from the notion of 'continuing system' whereby systems and sub-systems of human activities, their internal and external interdependence have to find a 'balanced dynamics' between multiplicity of purpose, functions and objectives as well as an ongoing, strategic dialogic approach (Barnett, 1996). As Barnett puts it 'The goal is to have higher level ongoing strategic conversations, not fixed plans, as the basis of future business success and innovations' (1996: 347).

In this context, it is clear how groups operating as system units for example, can develop into almost independent community of practices through the 'disparities between their scripts' and those of the organisation (Taylor, 2011) and how a second-order *inter*-group organizing process in order to negotiate community-wide authority is needed — a 'metaconversation' (Giroux and Taylor, 1995; Robichaud, Giroux and Taylor, 2004; Taylor, 2011).

The macro and micro relations or transactions carried out across this multi-centric and multi-layered, organization mirror contemporary organizational theories and practices such as coordination/integration, goal-setting, power and decision-making. Such diverse organizing practices and actors' sites of engagements warrant an equally diverse employment of communication which aims at both maintaining common ground and reconciling divergent worldviews and therefore it is strategic in nature. 'Interdiscursivity' is what best represents the dynamics of communication in sites of engagements and it is intended here as a set of diverse codes, linguistic and interactive practices combined in transformative and overlapping communicative events which, more often than not impact on the formation of orders of discourse, hegemonies, role relations both at a local and at a socio-political level (Fairclough, 1992; Candlin 2006; Candlin & Maley, 1997; Iedema, et al. 2004). In the present work, since action and discursive practices are seen as intersecting dynamically with the institutional setting, interdiscursivity then enacts the different perspectives of participants, their ideological and macro-institutional understandings and provenance, their degrees of agency across which they operate.

In these sense, interdiscursive strategies as also illustrated by Candlin (2006) are called upon by the inherent tensions between the drive to achieve complementarity and integration and the unavoidable plurality of worldviews. Since the process of agency enablement/maintenance, may be initiated and enacted in different sites of engagement, with different goals and purposes, critical moments, where attrition and power struggles

manifest, occur and interdiscursive strategies are called upon. This is exemplarily illustrated by Candlin (2006) through an account of an early study (Candlin & Lucas, 1986) of Family Planning Counselling Talk:

What is clear so far is that the term 'strategy' is being used in two ways: first, that discourses and their semiotic realizations are themselves strategic in nature in that they are linked to purposeful practices constituting the 'work' of the institution, and, second, that they both also serve, strategically, to advance the overall goals of the institution. There is, however, a third and more local way in which strategy is used...how the Counsellor expertly negotiated the pragmatic space as a kind of discursive continuum...discursive processes that occurred...within the activity (2006: 7-8).

In this study, interdiscursivity as a complex of strategies, is deployed as a 'mediating tool' among three elements at play: 1) the institutional function of the Counselling profession; 2) the institutionally set ethics and regulation of the specific context –whereby advice cannot be explicitly given; and 3) clients' expectations based on the context in which the communicative event occurs and the purpose of their visits – a counselling session on family planning. These elements are shifting during the interaction whereby the counsellor has to interdiscursively manage her institutional, professional and personal identity towards her clients' voiced expectations (Sarangi & Roberts, 1999). Hence the recourse to a diverse repertoire of discourse strategies within and across discourse types in a skilful and purposeful sequencing (Sarangi, 2000; Candlin, 2006).

In this respect, given the association between communication and particular social practices and in turn their related discourse types within specific work activities, interdiscursivity points to a close interrelation between context, setting, activities and self, indicated as the four 'research elements' (Layder, 1997: 132ff) the interplay of which is to be the focus of any investigation.

It is to be noted, however, as pointed out at the beginning of the section, that in complex organizations, more than in professional institutional settings such as the one object of the study above, these four elements are not only interrelated but often blurred. Their discursive construction as well as that of the agents' roles within them therefore, is equally overlapping and unstable, with unclear and confusing boundaries both in terms of hierarchies, tasks, responsibilities (self) and in terms of context (values, forms of social and economic organization and power relations, control and distribution) and 'setting' (the social and institutional structure and practices within which a particular *situated activity* takes place). Examples of this state of affairs can be found in the rapidly changing 'local practices' and the state of progressive transition that these determine, such as production systems, importing/exporting and logistics' procedures and, at a higher level of the organization in mergers, joint-ventures, out-sourcing.

This lack of defined boundaries, in the cases of complex organizations, calls for a shift in analytical focus, along the concept of interdiscursivity, towards three intersecting points of investigation: 1) from 'setting' (or situation) to what Layder defines *situated activity*

(Layder, 1993); 2) from interactions to what Sarangi calls *discourse types* (Sarangi, 2000); and 3) from problematic exchanges to what Candlin defines critical moments (Candlin, 1987, 2006).

Situated activity is best described in Layder's work focusing on a face-to-face, or mediated social activity as, "*symbolic communication by skilled, intentional participants implicated in the contexts and settings*" (1993: 71) and, it can be added, mobile across settings and roles. The notion of activity as both situated and 'mobile' then, as shown in chapter 5, is particularly relevant to the analysis of complex organizations, where this 'mobility' of engagement by actors is on-going, (sites of engagements shift from the factory floor, training room, quality testing room, etc.), and where activities as well as roles and tasks are transient and inter-changeable. In line with the view of actors' engagement, the identification of discourse types, as conceptualized by Sarangi (2000), within and across activities and social practices becomes increasingly bound to actions to be undertaken and tasks to be accomplished whereby how actions are 'communicated' become focal.

This perspective entails the analysis of CS as interdiscursive in nature and as they encompass and bound themselves to actions spanning across sites of temporal and spatial engagements as Jones describes them: "... *those moments in time and points in space where mediated actions occur.*" (Jones, 2004: 1) or, as Goffman (1963) puts it: 'where the action is'.

As transactional moments par excellence they are also critical moments because transient and magmatic, potentially allowing for misunderstandings and conflict due to both their transitoriness and the diversity of 'the communities of sense making' they reflect (Taylor, 2011).

As seen in chapter 2, with respect to temporal and spatial engagements (Scollon & Scollon, 2003, 2005) also points to the complexity of pace and time as consisting of multiple, overlapping timescales towards which participants converge from different directions and with different view angles. In this regard to sites of engagements Jones suggests:

... [they] are not a matter of 'objective' moments or locations, but rather of the patterns of orientation towards time and space that participants bring to these moments and locations, mediated through what I will be calling attention structures, cultural tools that reside partly in built environments as 'frozen actions' (Norris 2004), partly in the social practices that grow up within communities, and partly in the habitus (Bourdieu 1977) of individuals in the form of goals, plans, memories and strategies (Jones, 2004: 1).

CS by both drawing from transactional discourses' originated elsewhere, then, do construct, collocate, adjust and transfer the action by communicating it within and across sites. In this way, an understanding of the use of CS explain 'where and how sites of engagement actually come into being in relation to 'real time' and 'real space'' (Scollon (2001 b). By 'constructing' the time, the space, the action into the activity, CS not only enable the convergence of participants (and their agency) but also guarantee and sustain their involvement or motivation towards coordinated and integrated actions. Furthermore,

by ‘communicating action’ they reinforce situated knowledge or frames and are in fact themselves embedded in situated knowledge, indeed working against different worldviews and ways of making sense but at the same time allowing for the ‘spontaneous’ and tacit formation of practices.

3.4.2 CS and the construction of discursive intercultural: negotiating sites and nexuses of knowing and doing

As seen in the above sections, the notions of sites of engagement and nexus analysis shed light on the different properties and functions of CS and the discourse levels or ‘inter-texts’ (context, setting, activity, agency – as incorporated in sites of engagement but also as discursively created across time and sites), at which CS can be deployed and identified by participants as different circumstances require different strategic edges.

Nexus analysis in particular is taken as the foundational tool of the investigation into the intersection of language and work practices in order to capture the converging of agencies, objects and actions’ trajectories in their more or less momentary and/or more or less routinized nature whereby worldviews are confronted, adopted or accommodated to. Within this framework a perspective of intercultural communication within an organization is adopted whereby junctures are created out of elements of ‘different provenance’. Thus, sites of engagement are the outcome of strategically and discursively constructed ‘inter – and intra-cultural junctures.

As illustrated in chapter 2, the view of intercultural communication adopted here is in line with two perspectives: 1) on the one hand with the view that goes beyond the ‘clear-cut’ ways of communication between people from different language and ethnic background – and includes for instance, issues faced by groups established ad hoc for a common goal or activity and whose membership involves multidimensional cultural diversity (such as age, gender, national, ethnic or cultural inheritance, degree of professional experience, or professional training, to name a few); 2) on the other, it acknowledges the situated, locally and dynamically constructed nature of the ‘inter’ as Duran & Shepherd put it (2009: 148) in relation to the participants’ mutual conduct, beliefs, values and strategies within the social context and the activities they have at hand. In other words, actors and the roles they play as embedded in the context also determine the degree of ‘interculturalness’ in relation to how people make it relevant in their discursive and non-discursive practices (Scollon, 1995; Scollon & Scollon, 2001; Duran & Shepherd 2009; Meewis & Sarangi, 1994; Sarangi, 1994).

Further to the notion of the individual as well as her/his enactments as relational and co-constructed, in the particular context of the multicultural workplace, as Meeuwis and Sarangi state:

these cultural classifications of colleagues, superiors and subordinates can serve as functional strategies in the development of the professional and the social hierarchical relationships of

these different groups ... 'culture' is already intercultural per se. Cultural identity is an accomplishment of the 'work' interlocutors do in intercultural – or interculturally constructed – interaction (1994: 310).

In line with this perspective is the often taken for granted link between intercultural communication research and business communication research (Bargiela-Chiappini, Nickerson & Planken, 2007) whereby these concepts, apart from indicating a shift from the communicative differences as the object of research of previous mainstream studies on intercultural communication, also point to how organizational cultures have changed the conventional concept of culture linked to geographical boundaries for a broader view incorporating economy, society and culture (Castells, 1997, 1998, 2003), a trinomial that more often than not blurs the division of social and work culture itself as individual work-life and social life progressively blend.

So, although the idea of 'cultural typicality' as an absolute (Duran & Shepherd, 2009) is no longer pursued within this framework, a context-dependent and constructed view is apt to incorporate the notion of intercultural communication as-it-happens within organizational settings whereby as culture is constructed at many different levels and in different dimensions so is the degree of 'interculturalness' in communication. In turn, this stance on IC bears a similarly inherent kaleidoscopic and multi-levelled view towards critical or problematic moments in interactions and what counts as CS in interactions themselves.

Two premises are warranted here in relation to the mention of critical moments. One regards the unequal footing on which communication is assumed to occur in intercultural, multilingual contexts which also implicitly carries the issue of who 'owns' the language adopted and the related discourses (Angouri, 2010; Aritz & Walker, 2009; Day, 1994) and to what extent this ownership is significant in relation to criteria adopted to measure success especially in relation to the organization's view of collaboration, leadership, goals setting and achievement.. The other regards the relationship between intercultural interactions and the roles, agencies, and activities in which participants are engaged, namely the organizational context in its historical, interpersonal, and role-relational aspects. The interrelation of these two premises is exemplified by the interactional enactment of cultural differences in its multi-layered levels, embedded within the organizational context itself and therefore viewed as institutional. In this regard the use of CS as practices used to overcome, reconcile, accommodate these differences is also viewed as institutional.

The deployment of CS as a range of conversational mechanisms and resources become discursive interculture through the continuous sustaining and local management of diverse interactional, interpretive and action-related practices.

The notion of discursive interculture is best illustrated by Koole & Thije (2001) as 'establishing a mutual basis for communication' despite the fact that 'the mutual basis may exhibit the dominance of one cultural group over another' (2001:572) but also given that, (although within an extended view of the concepts) cultural and ethnic groups are defined

in a way by both their contact and their relation (Day, 1994; Ficorilli, 2005; Goldstein, 1997; Neil, 1996). It is highly illustrative, in this regard the ‘upstairs/downstairs’ metaphor (office floor/workshop floor – see chapter 5) exemplifying the co-residential pattern of diversity (Duran & Shepherd, 2009: 152). In this respect, it is assumed that agents rather than being tied to their differences, are constantly ‘making’ and ‘sharing’ new elements of culture which, in this way becomes discursively constructed in interactions. This process has to be captured in its incorporating cognitive aspects of the participant orientation towards prior knowledge (shared or not shared) and their actual interactional processes, their human action in context or communication.

This view of communication as the mediating tool of culture and human action is the work of CS as social practices of discursive interculture whereby the construction of common ground is relentlessly sought for.

CS as discursive interculture can be seen as working at three levels: 1) the linguistic (semiotic) or local level, whereby more or less visible communicative differences might be/become relevant in interactions; 2) the interaction order level or that of ‘intermediate’ social organization, at which level, distribution of knowledge as well as competencies/responsibilities maybe based on cultural differences and also related to ‘intercultural discourses’; and 3) the institutional level (values, beliefs, attitudes, power relations within both the organization and the socio-political context at large (Layder, 1973).

As it will be shown in the next chapters, the connections among these three readings of CS functions are inextricable as power relations, enacted in ‘localized’ exchanges are both the product and the generator of broader and wider scope discourses which encompass transnational employment and migration, knowledge transfer and construction as well as discourse and objectives’ ownership.

3.5 Conclusion

As indicated in Chapter 1, the overall objective of the present study is to explore the applicability of a flexible conceptual framework, incorporating multiple perspectives, analytic methods and data sources as a way to comprehensively address the complexities of ‘real world’ cases of strategic talk in the workplace, its functions and outcomes.

This chapter and the previous one have provided a starting point for this exploration with an overview of the past and current theoretical frameworks and methodological approaches most commonly applied to the study of strategic spoken discourse, while at the same time providing an interpretation key to define and identify strategic spoken discourse itself within and across workplace studies. Within the historical dimension of the organizational setting, the interactions in which strategic spoken discourse is seen to emerge have been broadly identified as falling into two types: 1) those aimed at either accomplishing a task at

hand in difficult conditions; 2) those aimed at obtaining working consensus and alignment despite different and conflicting worldviews and conversely, forcing/resisting worldviews themselves. Both types are therefore viewed as inherently problematic transactions among parties.

Another aim of this chapter has been to propose CS analysis through three major analytical models: Goffman's frames and interaction order, Gumperz's interactional sociolinguistics model and Scollon's mediated discourse analysis.

The intersection of these three models, under the overarching umbrella of Linguistic Ethnography enables the interpretive links among contextual factors (with its historical and social constituents), practices (with their mediating significance) and discourse (with their organizing, constructing and transforming functions). The dynamics of this complexity has also been compared to the complex systems' theoretical model. In this vein, the notions of interdiscursivity and discursive interculture have also been identified as key interpretive tools enabling a closer investigation to 'real life' occurrences in complex settings.

This overview however, is not intended to represent an exclusive or exhaustive theoretical and methodological direction, rather a starting platform pointing at the potentials of interdisciplinary interpretive models.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGICAL AND ANALYTICAL DESIGN

4.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodological and analytical design of the study: the access to the research site, the fieldwork, and the investigative tools (data collection techniques and analytical instruments). A dynamic, holistic approach is adopted with the aim of capturing the process of both uncovering the communication practices and the dynamics of a ‘hectic-by-nature’ setting where those practices unfold. This approach is best represented by the ‘multi-perspectival model’ (Candlin, 2006; Candlin & Maley 1997; Candlin & Crichton, 2013; Crichton 2010) which is adopted here as an approach, rather than a model, encompassing multiple methodological and epistemological stances.

Sub-section 4.1.1 provides a brief outline of the research design’s rationale and the topic’s theoretical outline.

Section 4.2 and its sub-sections outline the study’s research design, its epistemological approach, scope and rationale and its links to data collection procedures and phases of analysis.

Section 4.3 deals with the analytical approaches and the theoretical framework in which these are inscribed. Section 4.3.1 in particular, shows how this approach yielded the identification of four macro-types of CS.

In Section 4.4 the process of accessing the research site and a brief history of the organization itself is provided as well as an account of how the recruitment of participants was carried out. The background of participants and of the organization is also provided here.

Section 4.5 gives a detailed account of the methods and techniques utilized to carry out the fieldwork. Specifically, a description/rationale of the procedures adopted to collect the data are provided here.

In Section 4.6 the conventions used for transcriptions are described. Section 4.7 deals with the procedures adopted for ethics approval and the ethical issues of the study are also outlined here. Finally Section 4.8 provides a short summary of the whole study design, its objectives and limitations.

4.2 Background to research design: multi-perspectives of language, action and organization

Starting from and expanding the focus on the identification and re-conceptualization of communication skills in communication strategies (CS) in a second language as used and developed around work practices in a contemporary organization, this section explains the overall methodological design as it is related to the object of investigation. In line with Cicourel (1992), and as explained in Chapter 2, it is argued here that particular organizational contexts require the researcher's acknowledgement of the need for ecological validity. In this respect, the multi-perspectival approach, (as mentioned above) is what best exemplifies the methodological pursuit of ecological validity through which, in the present study, CS use is investigated from the following multiple angles: 1) the view that institutional contexts, namely workplace settings and the activities carried out therein interpenetrate with others in 'mutually consequential ways'; 2) that participants' communication defines, interprets and enacts 'live' these contexts according to their purposes and membership in specific workforce categories in a contemporary organization and furthermore in relation to their knowledge, place and position as members or not of that same community (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998); and 3) that researchers are to document the process of data generation and are therefore accountable for how they are situated and situate themselves 'along the way' within the multiplicity of contexts they set out to explore.

The above objectives are inscribed in the following research questions as already stated in the introductory chapter:

- 1) What are communication strategies on the factory floor of the workplace object of this study?
 - a) What is their role at the intersection between language and action?
 - b) How do they enact, resist, negotiate interaction orders?
 - c) What are the 'intercultural elements' at play in interactions and what role do CS play in this context?
- 2) How do CS emerge in verbal interactions and how are they conceptualized by participants through their accounts?
 - a) Do CS take on different functions in different events with different people?
 - b) How and to what extent are CS accounted for as a social practice?
 - c) How do participants conceptualize 'intercultural communication' in their interactions?

The research questions formulated in this way encompass the investigation of discourse practices as joined with their ‘social contingent existence’ where individual histories of the actors (their experiences) and the history of the space (rules, constraints, behaviors) in which the actors encounter converge incessantly (Blommaert & Huang, 2009). Parallel to these continuous convergences of language, action and actors, what Scollon calls Nexuses of Practice (2001, 2002, 2004), is the analysis of communication as the ‘managing tool’ for organizing. In this way, communication as organizing (Cooren, 2000), as outlined in Chapters 2 and 3, is by default strategic in its call for attaining organizational and institutional outcomes through the enacting of established and newly generated practices (Candlin, 2006). The stance adopted here of strategy-as-practice (Sorsa, 2012 Whittington, 1996) is then what drives the rationale of the methodology behind the type of access sought to the research site, the data collection procedures and the theoretical underpinnings of the research methodology. In this context, the researcher’s positioning within this framework and throughout the process itself assumes crucial relevance as will be highlighted in the following sections.

4.2.1 Study Design and rationale

As mentioned above the analytical approach is therefore grounded in two basic assumptions encompassing the methodological design and procedures chosen for the study. First, interaction is seen as a dynamic process where meanings and actions are jointly negotiated ‘in progress’ between the individuals involved in a given interaction. In turn, social identities, social categories and individual intentions are constantly produced and reproduced through processes of contextualization, shifts in footing, and in and out frames whereby interlocutors are adapting to each other’s actions and the constraints/affordances of their context. Secondly, it is assumed that an understanding of the context of an interactional sequence is crucial for interpreting spoken discourse. This includes the background knowledge and perceptions participants themselves bring to an encounter, and their shared experiences and history intersecting with the history and situated discursive construction of the workplace itself. This nexus, individual-organization, in particular bridges the local communicative event to the social meanings of discourse in an even wider context: the wider institutional and socio-cultural and political context. In order to undertake adequate investigation of this connection and its dynamic and undetermined nature, the analytic methodology used here combines the insights and approaches of a number of different theoretical perspectives. However, a unifying framework of interactional sociolinguistics was selected as the encompassing one because of its discreet, fine-grained but at the same time wide-spanning focus on the interactional and interdiscursive make of communicative episodes in the workplace context where social and interactional trajectories intersect (Gumperz 1999: 454).

With the purpose of reconciling the ‘local’ and the ‘broad’ discursive contexts, within an interpretive case-study paradigm, a four-phase mixed-methods approach has been designed

for this study. It is to be noted that, given the unpredictability of the research site in terms of participants' work duties and organizational policies, the four phases have not been conceived to be carried out strictly in a sequence but rather in an overlapping way. However, the term 'phase' is still adopted here since it reflects the order in which the data collection procedures started.

This four-phased process is inscribed in a nested analytical approach insofar as its methodological focus, the identification of Nexuses of Practices and the CS constituting them, is discursively co-constructed and made sense of by both researcher and participants. Additionally, the phases themselves reflect a twofold approach: 1) the different angles from which data are collected and analyzed (from participant observation to interviews); and 2) the temporal dimension for which data (previously occurring interactions) are co-analyzed (by researcher and participants). The nested approach then entails the following phases:

1. Participant observation: the researcher observes and participates in the interactions the participants carry out during their work routines on the factory floor;
2. Initial interviews with nine participants: a collaborative conceptualization of what are and what counts as CS through an analysis of focal themes emerging from participants' views and interpretation of action and discourses in nexuses (Roberts & Sarangi, 2005);
3. Self-recording of naturally occurring interactions among participants while at work;
4. Selection, by the researcher, of previously recorded interactions to be listened to by participants in retrospective interviews whereby participants themselves account for actions and discursively describe, explain and interpret both actions and the embedded discourses.

In this context, the process through which the conceptualization of CS is constructed as constituting nexuses of practices reinforces the notion of 'managing tools' in crucial sites and critical moments. CS first emerge as discursive constructs in interviews and then, within the context of interactions, as they are accounted for in retrospective interviews, they are discursively 're-constructed' as transformative and situated functions associated with both local, contingent activities and discourses. This analytical process highlights the 'polyphonic views' (see Chapter 3) of organizational discourses whereby participants shift positions between the conceptualization of CS as 'routine communicative practices' in 'routine work activities' and the accounts they give of situated interactional episodes (or communicative events) whereby CS emerge as 'order making and seeking' enabling and sustaining engagement of members amidst tensions, shifting and contrasting positions.

Additionally, the analysis of this process, by allowing the identification of the differential extent of participation in action and discourses, also highlights the extent to which participants can contribute or resist transformation of practices and how contribution and resistance are negotiated.

The overall methodological aim of this four-phase approach, then, is the identification of links between the kind of knowledge that regulates our thinking (macro), revealed in

interviews and the unconscious ways in which we enact this knowledge in talk and text in actual interactions (micro) (Nicolini, 2011).

Crucially, CS, in this polyphonic context, are investigated as multi-level tools aimed at functions ranging from an individual sense-making of one's personal (as well as institutional) management of tensions and conflicts to purposes contingent to the activities at hand, such as negotiating work procedures to coordinating a job with a colleague (or among divisions), explaining safety policies or reconciling contrasting views about or against the policies themselves.

4.2.2 Nested rationale: accounting for shifting perspectives, sites of engagement, space and time

The view of CS as embedded in work activities (the actual job) and practices (overall 'workplace life') as well as in the language used to enact these activities (and life), implies a notion of CS as both outcome and constituent of situated knowledge (Atkinson, 2002; Bandura, 1997, 2006; Hutchins, 1995; Lave & Wenger, 1991). As stated by Garfinkel, activities through which members operate and manage particular settings of organized everyday affairs are those through which members themselves make those settings accountable (1967). More recently he also states: "... social orders ["phenomena of order"] are identical with procedures for their endogenous production and accountability" (2002: 72). In other words, social order in a particular setting is produced by methods and ways of doing things which members employ to manage organized everyday affairs. This social order is made available for study through the recognizable, embodied accounting practices of the group members of that particular setting.

If practices and methods are 'accountable' through 'accounting practices' this is also what makes them identifiable and consequently interpretable. An investigation into communication's features which aims at explaining a context's actions requires a holistic-integrated approach of research methods and a multi-perspectival positioning towards the object of enquiry (Candlin & Crichton, 2013). As the word 'positioning' indicates, the investigation then implies a process whereby situated knowledge regarding the field is progressively shared, being contributed to and continuously shaped by both researcher and participants.

'A context-dependent knowledge', as Flyvbjerg puts it (2006), is by definition 'in fieri' and therefore a special type of engagement on the side of the researcher (in learning and interpreting), and implies an 'inherently multi-method in focus' approach (Flick, 2002) employing 'multiple interactive and humanistic methods' (Rossman & Rallis, 2003).

In the case of this type of research conducted 'on the 'workshop-floor'', other factors seem to be calling for this approach such as the spatiality, physicality and the particularly strong embodiment of language in actions and tools (Scollon, 2001; Wertch, 1991). In so far as

the researcher moves along an insider/outsider continuum between the core and periphery of the community (participation through to the interpretation phase) the demands to shed light on the nature and reasons for actions as they unfold and overlap in several 'action-contexts' (Giddens, 1984) impose an adaptation-binding process. As Geertz (1995) puts it: "The Field" itself is a "powerful disciplinary force: assertive, demanding, even coercive" (p.119). The details, symbols and artifacts, and the interactions between both symbols and artifacts and people and all of this and oneself become the researcher's field (Blommaert, 2007, Bourdieu, 1984, 1993).

Therefore, the guiding rule of selecting a research approach/methodology rests on the appropriateness of the approach/methodology to the research questions to be addressed, or, "the nature of the inquiry and the type of information required". In this context, the mixed-method within the case study approach as exemplified above, is deemed apt to provide insights into processes of actions and practices and at the same time mitigate the reflexivity entrenched in the study itself by establishing, from a more distant perspective, the fundamental relationship between types of CS and the situations occurring in context.

4.3 Analytical approaches

The mixed-method design, as outlined in the previous sections then adopts an open-ended format of data collection procedures and forms of inquiry (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Lofland, Snow, Anderson & Lofland, 2006; Silverman, 2006). More specifically an integrationist, critical stance is adopted here with respect to the research process itself (see Chapter 2) whereby the organizational structure, by providing a context for action, at the same time, enables actors to change incessantly that context both discursively and not discursively.

This stance constitutes the backdrop of the methodological stances adopted by the researcher for this study which can be exemplified as follows: 1) the participative/interactive position of the researcher herself towards both participants, action-context and situations; 2) the investigation into and through the participants' knowledge and views of work and the language and communication strategies developed around it; 3) the view of practices as 'in progress' as well as the focus on the 'making' of communication strategies around those practices; 4) the acknowledged need for analytical tools which account for a multi-laminated inter-textual/inter-discursive investigation of the actors' interactions (Candlin, 2006).

To this purpose a preliminary holistic analysis on all sets of data collected was conducted and aimed at combining/linking the findings from different sources of data in order to categorize elements defining speech strategies, their embedding in work practices (or nexuses) and their relation to specific critical moments (see Chapter 3). This analysis was carried out in two stages reflecting the analytical model indicated by Sarangi & Roberts and dealt with in Chapters 4 and 5 (Roberts & Sarangi, 2005): 1) CS were identified within

focal themes both in data generated through participant observations and in interviews whereby key concepts and categories addressing the research questions were also identified. To this aim a linguistic ethnographic approach (Ball & Ormerod, 2000; Creese, 2008; Erickson, 1992; Tusting & Maybin, 2007; Rampton, 2007; Rampton et al. 2004) was combined with an ethnomethodological approach (exemplified in the sub-sections below) (Garfinkel, 1967; Heritage, 1984; Baker, 2002); and 2) analytical themes generated by focal themes, were identified through a discourse analytical approach which provided the interactional evidence of CS emergence and use ‘in fieri’, that is, enacted in communicative events.

The complementarity of the approaches lies in the recursive and heuristic approach to both generation and analysis of data where Discourses and discourses in use were investigated across individual’s, inter-relational and community histories as well as ‘as they happened’. The attempt is to strengthen the identified links between participants and researchers’ views of CS practices and the systematic observation of these practices themselves.

The following sub-sections will explain in more detail the integration of linguistic ethnographic and ethnomethodological approaches as an attempt to gain as in-depth as possible an insight into the participants’ sites of engagement, the formation and re-formation of nexuses of practice and the role played out by CS in nexuses themselves.

4.3.1 Linguistic Ethnography and ethnomethodological interviews as research and social practices: the emergence of themes and ‘order’

Linguistic ethnography as outlined in this chapter and in the subsections below, where it is called upon to access and investigate the complex social context object of this study, is further conceptualized here as encompassing the whole research process and in particular the data generation process and the analytical one as instances themselves of situated language use whereby researcher and participants’ positioning are reflected.

This interplay between the investigated discourse practices and the investigation process itself entails the processual nature of meaning creation in the making of context (Rampton et al., 2004) which, in turn, calls for a detailed account of how meaning in context is created and made sense of by the same members who populate it.

In this sense, the co-construction of CS as a construct in interviews conceptualized as interactional social practice (Talmy, 2011; Talmy & Richards, 2011; Richards, 2011; Mann, 2011), aims at discovering the processes through which CS define action and organizing: their relational existence to specific contexts of discourses and their embedding in action as it happens. The integration of LE and ethnomethodology sheds light onto the sense-making talk around work activities, procedures and related discursive practices and the strategic nature emerging from the latter, situated as they are in organizing. CS are then reflexively emerging as functionally situated in communicative interactions and at the

same time ‘situating’ in the sense that the way they are accounted for and made sense of orient both participants and researcher towards organizing itself. CS then are defined as strategically embedded in participants’ own individual and social histories in relation to work and discourse practices (Modan & Shuman, 2011). In particular the focus is on how the interlocutors’ position themselves and others within organizing, and the ‘order’ through which people, actions and objects are (or should be) coordinated, decided upon, interpreted at specific times in specific moments. The resulting picture is one in which CS acquire different functions and meanings depending on who employs them, how and in what circumstances. At the same time, the ways in which they are conceptualized ‘in context’ reveal the interaction order, the level of participation in or authority over organizing and the type of resistance to or power of organizing itself.

4.3.2 Initial interviews: communication strategies as intercultural organizing

This section focuses on the focal themes revolving around CS conceptualization and through the participants’ sense-making accounts and positioning in the initial interviews.

The notion of orders of indexicality is the overarching framework under which the analysis is carried out and one of the platforms for the joint construction of meaning and interpretation of CS use and function: participants’ descriptions, explanations and interpretations of their own sites of engagement within the organization, their current and historical role-relationship and their peculiar view-angle (Silverstein, 2003). The second fundamental theoretical underpinning regards ‘communication as organizing’ and the role CS take on in creating and re-creating affordances for being part of, and to what extent, or being excluded from organizing itself (or convergence of nexuses). In this sense, the way in which CS are conceptualized and situated (although immanent and ‘local’) reveals the different discursive terms in which organizing is conceived and constructed, what discursive actions are constituted of, by what linguistic means and what different ways it is responded to and perceived, and the ‘interpretive repertoires’ (Potter and Wetherell, 1987: 146-57) participants draw on to make sense of it. In particular the intersection between the orders of indexicality by which CS’ functions are made sense of and situated and views of ‘organizing’ reveal the polyphonic and overlapping views through which organizing is discursively constructed. In this sense (see Chapters 2 and 3), organizing emerges as intercultural in nature whereby differences in communications among individuals of diverse ethnic and language backgrounds cannot be linked to (or at least not exclusively to) discrete linguistic differences (Gumperz, 1996) but rather to ever shifting and contrasting worldviews deriving from a variety of factors (from personal histories to status and group belonging) which in turn change with the contingencies in which participants find themselves (Holliday, 2010). Ethnic and language diversity, then, cannot be considered separately from both contextual factors that either point to diversity or make them contingent to specific communicative events.

CS cannot be defined outside their context of occurrence nor can their functions be pinpointed to the context in unequivocal ways. Rather, their construction and the way it is 'discursively situated' in action and discourse defines participants' orientation and positioning towards organizing and their personal histories in relation to it (Silverstein, 2003): the type of order they view that seeks to achieve, by/for whom and by what means. Participants' reporting on the discursive management of crucial sites and critical moments, also highlights what strategies acquire or fail to acquire different functions in relation to the interactional demands and competing ideas of included or peripheral contributors to discourses and actions. Additionally, participants' accounting in interviews unravels the 'methods' they use not only to deploy strategies when needed but also the methods in describing the modalities in which they use them. The whole interview process, in this way affords a historical outlook of their trajectories towards the nexuses they describe and how their discursive practices came to be.

In this sense the ethnomethodological approach reveals how CS, so co-defined and co-conceptualized, become 'discourses of strategies' (what is employed communicatively to achieve institutional and personal goals) and 'strategic discourses' (how these strategies are portrayed in relation to one's status and position within the organizational context). As mentioned above, both the interlocutors' conceptualization of CS when explicitly mentioned in the interviews and the identification by the researcher of CS within emerging themes, allows to explore the dynamics of sites of engagements and the creation of nexuses, in a word, the relations between communicative episodes, work and the interactional practices required to sustain and enable these nexuses, to make them 'functional' at both a micro (local) and at a macro (organizational) level.

4.3.3 The interactional evidence: joint acknowledgement of critical nexuses as analytical themes: the role of MDA

As highlighted above, the integrative approach to the two sets of interview analysis (the initial and the retrospective interviews) is adopted with the aim of identifying and strengthening the analytical links between focal themes emerging in initial interviews and analytical themes emerging in naturally occurring interactions. Furthermore, this analytical process also highlights the strategic ways in which participants discursively construct their roles and others' while accounting for enacted interactions and, in particular, for critical nexuses of practices (Candlin's 'critical moments').

In this context, 'interactional evidence' (or communicative events) among the recorded, naturally occurring interactions are selected according to what focal themes indicate as being 'critical': moments of contested power-roles, authority, or conflicting organizational views and practices. The participants' retrospective commentaries shed light on these critical moments, (here better defined as nexuses given the inextricability of 'local actions' to the wider, institutional trajectories of converging activities and actors), and in particular

on how they are managed/not managed, how they themselves hold, lose, or shift their position or make others' positions shift.

As indicated in Chapters 2 and 3, then, within the broad interactional sociolinguistic discourse framework (Goffmann, 1963, 1972; Gumperz, 1982;) the analytical approaches employed to show the enactment in natural interactions of the focal themes identified in interviews are as follows:

- 1) ethnographic background of interaction (what is the actual situation, who are the participants, what is their role-relationship, what makes the event happen in the way it does and what happens afterwards); Stock of Interactional knowledge;
- 2) the mediational tools involved (machinery, tasks, tools, policies, sites of engagement);
- 3) framing/footing (how the participants position themselves towards each other throughout the interactions, the language devices and the physical actions used for the purpose, the stance towards the situation at hand, the movements);
- 4) lexical/indexical choices (the language uses [whether technical or plain], the types of vocabulary [literal or 'metaphorical' or jargon]; the reference to the past and future situations or occurrences; policies and practices;
- 5) turn design (how and to what extent the interlocutors take the floor, what is the distribution of turns and their length, in what forms they are uttered (questions, imperatives);
- 6) speech acts (instructions, explanations, orders, reprimands, prohibitions, refusals);
- 7) overall structural organization of encounter (links to other sites of engagement and wider social context, formal/informal meeting), planned/unplanned; decision making; action planning; conflict resolution;

As will be shown below, and as highlighted in Chapters 2 and 3, the notion of 'nexus of practice' and the theoretical underpinnings of MDA are viewed as intersecting with the above approaches in so far as the analysis of strategic discursive practices, realized through the discourse features which constitute analytical themes, are inscribed into the historical bodies, minds and actions incessantly converging into nexuses of practices which in turn, respond to the ever-changing organization's rationales.

4.3.3.1 CS as mediational tools: creation and maintenance of critical nexuses across time and space

Nexus of practice are in Goffman's (1963) terms, 'where the action is'. In Scollon's view (2001b), these moments in time and space are to be defined not so much in terms of time and space as in terms of "the convergence of social practices which opens a window for mediated action to occur" (Jones & Norris, 2005). Questions remain, however, as to where and how sites of engagement (where nexuses occur) actually come into being in relation to 'real time' and 'real space'. As Scollon cited in Jones & Norris (2005), notes:

time is always more complex than 'a moment', consisting of multiple, overlapping 'timescales' towards which participants are variously oriented, and space, as further pointed out by Scollon and Scollon (2003), is always more complex than a physical location, consisting of the interaction among the built environments, the relationships among participants (or interaction order) and the meanings assigned to the various semiotic tools introduced into the space. Thus, the same moments in time, and the same points in space may for some people function as sites of engagement whereas for others they may not. In fact, like social action, sites of engagement are concrete specific irreversible and unfinalizable (R. Scollon, 2001a: 4). At the same time, it is 'at' these sites, that more durable social practices, social identities and social groups are constructed (Jones & Norris, 2005, p.141)

In this context CS are explored as the catalyst for nexuses to occur, be created and re-created and in some cases maintained as established practices, at least discursively. CS so conceptualized reflect the temporal/spatial trajectories of organizational actions as converging to make things happen, get the job done or simply keep the system in being. To foreground this study's analysis the discursive enactment of actions and therefore of organization will be considered within four temporal and spatial frames (see section 3.3) which have been identified in four macro-types of CS:

1. CS for future actions: interactions on work to be done and course of action to be undertaken: the future **time** and **place** of actions are constructed discursively among participants. CS construct projected actions in the **future**. In this type of interaction timing is crucial) as the invoked actions usually intersects with other coordinated actions which preceded or will follow the ones to be carried out in the future. **Space** is also usually projected, that is, the action is to occur elsewhere.

Participants in interactions invest themselves or are invested with (future) agency by 'authority-agents' (or the institutional sets of rules). For example, some tell others what to do, and how and why to do it, by interpreting an historical nexus through which a practice has been established as well as agency and authority. CS may be employed to serve the following aims: 1) to establish an interaction order in the decision making process; 2) to establish the type of information/knowledge needed to undertake the action; and 3) to negotiate the information/knowledge to utilize in order to succeed in accomplishing the task.

2. CS oriented to action while on a task: time, space and physical actions are co-constructed discursively in interactions. **Tools** are central to this type of interaction.

The activity at hand is communicated while on the task – synchronously – and the interactions concern the action being performed and the instruments being used. Collaborators invest each other with agency by way of expletives, instructions, advice, etc. This occurs when an action is undertaken collaboratively and agency is ‘shared’.

3. CS as relational talk: interactions do not pertain to any work-related action. They include recounts, requests for advice, gossip, opinions, etc.)

“It’s time off”: a momentary suspension of ‘immediate’ institutional goals. However, CS are employed by agents to retain/maintain their relational role within the organizational network. Although topics revolve around matters not pertaining to work (such as family and, hobbies), agents are aware that an interaction order is to be maintained through which face, hierarchical status and personal space are also maintained. This can be evident in the careful ‘organization/timing’ of the down-time at the workers’ disposal especially in the presence of a superior and also in the turn-taking management of the interactions themselves where turns are taken ‘voluntarily’.

4. CS as ‘institutional talk’: interactions pertaining to work but not tasks to be accomplished. They include comments, opinions, recounts on procedures to be adopted or that were adopted in the past, policies and technology.

CS are employed here to build and maintain an ‘interdiscursive’ account of the organizational system in its various aspects: e.g. work/actions are discussed in terms of technical procedures, institutional policies, technology, management, etc. These include discursive shifts in relation to past, present and future as well as reference to different spaces or sites of engagement. Semiotic resources (tools) are crucial as they constitute the interdiscursive structure of the interactions (masks, screens, training, etc). However, they are rather invoked in relation to the institutional/context order rather than their contingent utilization as instruments for action.

In these instances the interaction order as well as authority-agency and roles play out an important function in relation to maintaining/resisting the order itself depending on whether ‘the institutional’ overlaps or contrasts with individual stances. CS here may function to express a point of view on how work should be done or that has been done) – it is a preparatory investment of agency aimed at the prevention in the future of past mistakes. CS are then realized to construct alignment or dis-alignment with institutional views and policies and/or with interlocutors. The agent undertaking this form of engagement takes on the role of the ‘preacher’ and uses alignment/dis-alignment with the organization according to their personal or group advantage.

As seen above, the four types of CS, within the view of CS as organizing, identify the positioning that actors take on in the organized activities themselves in relation to time, space and institutional order or, in Goffman’s terms, within their constructed frames. It can be concluded that the use of CS is per se constituting and reconstituting an order. The analysis of CS so identified can consequently allow an insight into the ability and

affordances that actors deploy to discursively shift time, space and order and therefore the extent of contribution they can give towards or the resistance they can hold against the context itself.

4.4 Access to the site, recruitment and participants: the fieldwork begins

4.4.1 Contacting potential research sites

The envisaged dynamic relationship of three elements inter-playing in the methodological approach, the researcher (position, previous knowledge and experience in similar sites), the data collection procedure (day-to-day heuristic fieldwork and ethnographic techniques) and the topic-object of the investigation guided the choice of the research site.

I thought the type of participants I needed would have to be among skilled and semi-skilled manufacturing workers since, unlike process workers, they would possess specific skills and also be more likely to be working in teams and engage in ‘prolonged’ work interactions resulting in ‘established’ practices of both work and communication. They would also have a range of vocational qualifications (at a certificate or diploma level, and possibly higher awards).

After having tried unsuccessfully to gain access through ‘official’ channels such as ‘cold contact’ (telephone and email) with HR representatives or managers, recruitment agencies, industrial associations, councils and groups and even unions, I decided to use personal acquaintances who either worked or who knew people working in middle level or high management positions in manufacturing companies. This proved to be the most viable pursuit resonating with Milroy’s (1980) ‘friend of a friend’ method of access since I was experiencing the difficulty of access that previous studies conducted in workplaces have well-documented (Bargiela-Chiappini & Harris, 1997; Cicourel, 2004; Ficorilli, 2005; Grossi, 2012; Mullany, 2007; Poncini, 2004). I made contact with four manufacturing companies: a large Australian/multinational food company, a medium-sized German pharmaceutical company, a medium Australian/multinational power-transmission components company, and a small steel fabrication/engineering company. After gathering information on all four companies through my initial contacts, I opted for the power-transmission components company. The reasons for this decision concerned: 1) the diversification of technology products and the existence of different divisions within the one plant; 2) a good number of specifically qualified personnel; 3) low staff turn-over and few occasional staff; 4) long history (50 years); 5) the relatively small size of the plant which made it logistically easier to conduct the fieldwork.

4.4.2 Entering the field

My fieldwork started with the recording of my thoughts and impressions as soon as I began contacting the potential research sites. Thanks to my work and research experience previously conducted in workplaces (Ficorilli, 2005), I was already aware of the difficulties I would encounter in seeking the type of access needed to carry out my study. I presented my project in very simple terms: a ‘study of work-related communication among factory floor employees who spoke English as a second language’. The rationale I provided concerned the improvement of vocational curricula’. The initial negative responses revealed a chiasm between the management level and the ‘floor’ (as it was often referred to). It was clear to me that communication among factory floor people was a sensitive issue. When contacting managers I sometimes used the phrase ‘intercultural communication’. I believe this evoked issues dealt with in past companies training courses but that had never been considered by the management to be relevant to workshop floor personnel. In other cases my request was associated with a lack of language and literacy skills. Another issue which was possibly familiar to management in relation to non-English speaking background personnel but had never been addressed at an organizational level. Negative responses were justified with comments such as: “there isn’t much communication going on in the workshop”, “people are busy they do not have the time to talk and it’s too noisy anyway”. In many cases I was given an answer to the effect: “it would be difficult to understand them”, “do you speak Vietnamese?” In a couple of instances I was asked for more details on what exactly I needed to do, then I was usually directed to another person in charge of HR and this never resulted in a meeting taking place. Three of the companies I approached through personal contacts gave me access with no questions asked. This clearly indicated to me that my presence in the workshop floor and my contact with the people working there needed some form of endorsement by ‘insiders’.

4.4.3 Access, recruitment and induction

After ethics approval was granted and my contact person had spoken to the HR manager about my research and had given me the ‘go ahead’ to introduce myself directly, I contacted the manager by way of an informal email (see Section 4.7 below and Appendix 5), and asked for a meeting, justifying the request with the need to further discuss the following: provide the modalities of participants’ recruitment; agree on a starting date for data collection, request specifically the kind and the frequency of access needed, and possibly have feedback/indications on specific requirements from the organization. I received a reply stating that an intense period of negotiations had begun between the management and the workshop floor employees in order to reach an enterprise agreement. The moment was critical, everyone was tense and people were very suspicious and reluctant to engage in something involving interviews or observations by ‘an outsider’ that could possibly be associated with management (Sarangi & Roberts, 1999). The HR

representative dismissed the possibility of her introducing me to the employees. Due to my previous research experience, I suggested the involvement of someone who was trusted by the employees themselves such as a foreman or supervisor. However, at a later stage, when the person was contacted by HR with this aim in mind, he declined. A period of negotiations also began for me as I tried to propose solutions to overcome these difficulties. In this attempt I provided the HR manager with a schedule of the intended fieldwork whereby she could make amendments and also be informed of my presence at the plant at any time. In the end she agreed to put a flyer on a notice board (on the office level!) asking for participants who would be interested in participating in the research. I sent her the flyer which she amended by requesting that she be contacted instead of myself and placed it on the notice board (Appendix 1). I then negotiated to first meet with the participants, prior to scheduling the interviews/observations on the following days, hoping more participants would join in the meantime.

4.4.4 Recruitment

Only three participants were in the AV room to meet me on the agreed day. I gave a very short presentation of my project and answered questions on the purpose of the study and details of data collection procedures. All participants were enthusiastic to participate. I asked them if they could ‘spread the word’.

In the following two weeks six more employees joined the study.

The very first two participants who asked HR to meet me convinced four other people from the same division and one from another division to participate. The other two participants came from other divisions. The fact that five participants came from the same division and the modality of their joining the research determined the setting up of my fieldwork and ultimately the direction of the study. These employees were ‘from maintenance’ or the ‘Tool Room’ (as the designated space was called). The Tool Room was the core of the whole plant as it was here that the production processes originated: from the design to the drawing, programming and construction of tools to be utilized in the actual production. This Room would be the focus of my fieldwork.

4.4.5 The participants

At the end of the recruitment phase I had nine core participants (see Table 4.1 below). However, during my fieldwork a few more employees participated indirectly in the study because of their frequent interactions with the core participants. I will refer to these as ‘non-core participants’ (see Table 4.2) in resonance with Goffman’s notions of ‘ratified’ and ‘non-ratified participants’ and participation management (Goffman, 1981).

Table 4.1 – Summary of ‘Core Participants’

CORE PARTICIPANTS									
NAME	COUNTRY OF ORIGIN/ETHNIC BACKGROUND	EDUCATION	OTHER LANGUAGES	YEARS IN AUSTR.	YEARS AT PTS	ROLE	PREVIOUS ROLES AT PTS	PREVIOUS JOBS	
ANTHONY	INDIA	-HIGH SCHOOL -TECHNICAL COLLEGE-INDIA (4YEARS) TOOL/DYE MAKING	MALAYALAM KANNADA	13	5	CNC PROGRAMMER IN TOOL ROOM	TOOL MAKER/CNC OPERATOR	-TOOL MAKER (INDIA)-SIMILAR COMPANY -1 PREVIOUS JOB AS A TOOL MAKER IN SIMILAR COMPANY (AUSTRALIA)	
ALBERT	INDIA	-HIGH SCHOOL -TECHNICAL COLLEGE-INDIA (4YEARS) TOOL/DYE MAKING	TAMIL KANNADA MALAYALAM	4 1/2	3 ½	TOOL MAKER/ CNC OPERATOR IN TOOL ROOM	TOOL MAKER/CNC OPERATOR	-SIMILAR COMPANY – INDIA, LATVIA -WASTE MANAGEMENT/RECYCLING COMPANY-AUSTRALIA	
ARTHUR	LAOS	YEAR 10 (AUSTRALIA) CERT III FITTING AND TURNING	LAOTIAN	36	15	FITTING & MACHINING/LEADING HAND IN TOOL ROOM	SUPERVISOR	A SIMILAR COMPANIES IN AUSTRALIA	

BRANDON	INDIA	-TRADE- BOILERMAKER/ WELDER (INDUSTRY INSTITUTE OF TRAINING-INDIA) -TAFE ACCREDITIATIO N (18 months) -WELDING INSPECTION TRAINING (ON GOING)	KANNAD A	5	4	BOILER MAKER/WELDER/T EAM LEADER (when supervisor is absent) IN FABRICATION	SAME	2 PREVIOUS JOBS IN SIMILAR COMPANIES (AUSTRALIA)
JACOB	GERMANY	-YEAR 10 (AUSTRALIA) -CERTIFICATE (INTERMEDIATE) MECHANICAL ENGINEER	GERMAN	58	32	SITE SERVICES MANAGER IN TOOL ROOM	SAME	MAINTENANCE IN SIMILAR COMPANIES (CANADA, GERMANY, AUSTRALIA)
JAMIE	SAMOA	SOME SECONDARY EDUCATION (SAMOA)	SAMOAN TONGAN	13	3 ½	LOGISTICS- WAREHOUSE IN	CASUAL MACHINE OPERATOR	REMOVALIST WAREHOUSE- WHOLESALE
LIAM	FIJII	YEAR 10 (AUSTRALIA) CERT III ENGINEERING	FIJIAN	OVER 20 YRS	7 YRS	SUPERVISOR (3 ½ YRS) IN FABRICATION	WELDER	WORKER IN SIMILAR COMPANIES

PAUL	CAMBODIA	FABRICATION HIGH SCHOOL (Y12)/TAFE CERT III MECH.ENG.	KHMER/C HINESE	17	16	MACHINE OPERATOR PRE-FORM	PROCESS WORKER/MACHINE OPERATOR/FITTER/LE ADING HAND	WATCH REPAIRER/SALESMAN IN CAMBODIA
STAN	UKRAINIA/POL AND	TECHNICAL SECONDARY FITTER MACHINIST (POLAND) CERT WELDING, ELECTRICAL, MECHANICAL (ENG)	UKRAINIA N POLISH	28	18	MAINTENANCE IN TOOL ROOM	PRODUCTION SUPERVISOR IN PRE- FORM	-TRUCK DRIVER, WAREHOUSE (POLAND) - LABOURER/WELDER/BU ILDING INDUSTRY (AUSTRALIA)

Table 4.2 – Summary of ‘Non-core Participants’

NON-CORE PARTICIPANTS			
NAME	FIST LANGUAGE	ROLE	DEPARTMENT
ADRIAN	AUSTRALIAN ENGLISH	IMPROVEMENT ENGINEER	UPSTAIRS/OFFICE
BILLY	AUSTALIAN ENGLISH	APPRENTICE	TOOL ROOM
BARRY	AUSTRALIAN ENGLISH	MAINTENANCE/FITTING AND TURNING	TOOL ROOM
CHAN	VIETNAMESE/CHINESE	MAINTENANCE	TOOL ROOM
DAN	AUSTRALIAN ENGLISH	MAINTENANCE/TOOL MAKER	TOOL ROOM
HANNAH	ARABIC	PRODUCTION MANAGER	FABRICATION
JACK	AUSTRALIAN ENGLISH	DESIGN ENGINEER	UPSTAIRS/OFFICE
JAKE	AUSTRALIAN ENGLISH	SUPERINTENDENT	FABRICATION
RAUL	ROMANIAN	DESIGN ENGINEER	UPSTAIRS/OFFICE
ROBERT	AUSTRALIAN ENGLISH	MAINTENANCE/MECHANICAL ENGINEER	TOOL ROOM
RICK	AUSTRALIAN ENGLISH	MANAGER	HARDWARE
SAM	AUSTRALIAN ENGLISH	SAFETY OFFICER	PLANT-WIDE

4.4.6 Induction

Following this phase I had to undertake an induction session in compliance with safety requirements for people who had to have access to the workshop floor. In ten minutes I was guided through a booklet (see Appendix 2), indicating the potential hazards of a workshop, and the signs and instruments in place to avoid accidents. I was then given a hard hat, hard boots, a visibility vest and anti-glare protective glasses. I also signed a form whereby I declared I had been inducted

4.4.7 The research site

PTS (Power Telecommunication Solar) is a highly diversified manufacturing company which makes it almost in Australia especially in regard to power-distribution products since the bulk of their manufacturing is now based overseas. Its facilities are located on 5 acres in Sydney's western region and include an 8000sqm plant. The company had its origin in Victoria in the late 1950s and it was acquired by PTS Ohio in the early 1960s. It serves worldwide markets through international operations in Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, England, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa, Spain and Thailand.

PTS Australia has a multi-level structure (management, middle management, production floor – see organizational chart', Picture 5.1 in Chapter 5) and different sections for processing and production comprising in-house manufacturing, engineering, testing, sales and administration. The manufacturing facility includes wire forming, forging, casting, plastic, moulding and extrusion, sheet metal work, powder coating and assembly. The facility is supported by a Tool Room which includes manual, semi-manual and computer-automated machines like CNC (Computer Numerical Control) dice making machines (see Picture 5.3 in chapter 5).

The plant has three major operating divisions: PTS which produces a range of products for the power distribution market (Picture 4.1 below), power transmission (Picture 4.2) and communication markets (4.3); Rack Technologies which produces a range of cabinets and enclosures for the data communication, electronics and security markets; clear energy which manufactures solar power products and sustainable energy systems.

As will be discussed in Chapter 5, product technology comes almost exclusively from the American head office along with major development strategies.

Picture 4.1



Picture 4.2



Picture 4.3



4.4.8 History of company

After WWII, an electrical engineer in the USA came up with an innovative idea that became the catalyst to the formation of an organization that would ultimately grow into an international company with operations all over the world.

Responding to a customer's concern about conductors breaking at the point of support, the engineer thought of pre-forming armour rods into a helix with an inside diameter somewhat smaller than the outside diameter of the conductor.

The theory was that helically pre-formed rods, when applied over the conductor, could provide a secure fit without end-clamps, as well as 'armour' to protect the conductor from abrasion and fatigue at points of attachment. This idea proved successful and the product was branded.

Major milestones in PTS's history in Australia have been:

1999: entry into the communication market;

1997-1999: progressive expansion in Asia starting in the late 1990s through relationships and partnerships with power and telecommunication companies and with the consolidation in 2001 of a customer-based network in Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, China, India, Japan and the Philippines. The planning has been to localize manufacturing where possible while building PTS's presence in the region.

2004: establishment of a subsidiary, PTS Asia, in Thailand. By purchasing the assets of a local company, PTS opened an avenue into regional South East Asia power industries and specific market segments where specialized design and products required engineering expertise. Access to many projects has, however, been limited because of the cost

competitiveness of local suppliers and shipping of many standard hardware products from Australia, import duties and preferences for local manufacturing. PTS's overall prices to customers were in an uncompetitive position. From this originated the decision to establish a local manufacturing base in Thailand itself.

2007: PTS acquired 84% of BELOS S.A., a manufacturer of fittings and equipment for power utility and mining applications based in Poland, Central Europe. BELOS is integrated into PTS's international subsidiary companies.

2008: PTS entered the Renewable Energy Market through the formation of a Joint Venture company called CLEAR Energy (Australia) Pty Limited.

This new venture is in line with a new global strategy for PTS which began in 2007 with the acquisition by PTS Corporate in the US of a manufacturer and integrator of solar energy systems in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

2009: acquisition of the Dulmison Business. Dulmison is based in Australia with operations in Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, China, Mexico and the United States.

PTS has been expanding progressively in the Asia-Pacific region following the establishment of branch-plants manufacturing and distributing in the area. Although this has decreased general manufacturing costs, PTS struggles to remain competitive both in terms of market costs and in terms of advancement in technology whereby it still partly depends on old procedures and machinery. The principle that has been governing PTS Australia's operations so far is "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." This is in contrast to the long standing tenets of so called 'lean manufacturing' in place at PTS's mother company in the USA. At the time of the fieldwork PTS Australia was about to start, from scratch, lean manufacturing training and restructuring in compliance with the new organizational direction.

4.5 Fieldwork: methods of data collection

As illustrated above, in the present study, data collection represents a process of learning 'in loco' (Flyvbjerg, 2006) whereby at times, interviews, participant observation and naturally occurring speech recording blend during the fieldwork, as they take on the form of interactions between researcher and participants. However, as mentioned above, the data gathering process also maintains the above methods in distinct phases.

Specifically, initial interviews (see Appendix 3), as a set of open-ended and closed-ended questions and based partly on preliminary observations established my position as 'learner' and therefore are co-constructed as 'balanced' interactions, with participants' expertise mitigating the power relation intrinsic in the relationship of interviewer-interviewee. Initial interviews were conceived as having the following broad aims: 1) gathering background information on participants; 2) establishing what constitute CS for participants' and their

views of CS use, functions and effectiveness; 3) how CS intersect with participants' roles, positions and work practices.

A different phase of the interviews aimed at exploring participants' definition/description of CS and at identifying related practices and functions they associate with them. These were investigated as inscribed in: a) language biographies and language learning experiences and benchmarks and how they relate to their job qualifications and expertise across time; and b) perceived barriers preventing 'flowing communication' at work. Each interview lasted between 50 minutes to 1 hour and 45 minutes. A total of 10 ½ hours were recorded.

4.5.1 Participant observation

Participant observation entailed observations of work activities and interactions among ratified and non-ratified participants and were recorded in field notes. During observations, the researcher would shadow participants wherever and whenever possible. During lunch and other breaks from work participants were not observed as I was advised by the HR manager that this would be perceived as an intrusion. Another factor determining this decision was due to the environment being composed of males only. The handful of women working on the floor, mainly in 'packaging', had lunch in another venue. Although being a woman had yielded its advantages as in the best ethnographic tradition – a female is by default less threatening when investigating a close-knit community (Milroy, 1980) – in this case it did carry the disadvantage of making me 'too visible'.

Observations were carried out over a period of 4 ½ months. I spent four to five hours predominantly with one participant at a time with a frequency of three times a week. Three out of 9 participants could only be observed for a couple of weeks due to the hazards entailed in the nature of their job (glaring welding, use of steel wires in a limited space and frequent use of a forklift in a limited space).

The observation period also allowed the gathering of other more general information concerning the whole workplace in order to capture not only the process of actions 'on line' but also its rationale and 'history' and the role played by actors (Scollon & Scollon, 2003, 2008). This approach was 'participant' to the extent to which I could 'mingle' with and shadow participants in their day-to-day activities and also have informal brief chats with them (Agar, 1980; 2008; Giddens, 1984; Hutchins, 1995; Sarangi & Candlin, 2001).

More specifically, observations focused on the following: 1) collecting background information on the workplace itself (location, demographics, role and level of employees, skills required, the workplace's major communication systems, type of documentation utilized, type of business and type of work processes involved, target markets, type of training, informal instruction provided and cultural value system of the workplace; 2) the setting's lay-out of participants' operations, key people working with and around them,

positions and specific ‘contingency roles’ requirements and the language skills and practices associated with these roles (Clyne, 1994; Holmes, 2005; Stubbe et al., 2003; Willing, 1993).

Whenever possible field notes were complemented by informal interviewing and recording of natural speech in which I participated.

4.5.2 Recording of naturally occurring speech

Core participants were asked to carry a voice-recorder during their work and/or during their breaks), whenever and wherever possible. I specifically asked them to carry it for prolonged periods of time in order to reduce the observer paradox’s effects and also to capture as many activity-types and interactions as possible. The bulk of the self-recording phase occurred during work-related activities with only a few interactions recorded in the canteen or in the changing room. The self-recordings provided about 48 hours of good quality recordings. Eight participants out of nine agreed to self-record their speech, although only the recordings from five participants are used in the present study. The other three participants could not record enough of their natural speech due to time constraints, the nature of their job and/or excessive background noise.

4.5.3 Retrospective interviews

Retrospective interviews partly followed the model of ‘retrospective protocols’ (or think aloud/verbal reports), traditionally defined as verbal descriptions of one’s cognitive processes and experiences (Ericsson & Simon, 1993, Faerch & Kasper, 1987). However, while these are usually used to record concurrent or very recent cognitive processes which a participant can account for in formulation of speech or other cognitive activities (as they are able to retrieve the processes themselves from their short memory), in this study a different procedure is used. Reasons of practical and methodological order and stance were at the basis of this difference in procedure: 1) it was not possible to conduct the interviews within a short time of the recording as the researcher had little control over the timeline of self-recording; other procedures like those adopted in ‘beeper studies’,³ or Brown and Rodgers (2002)’s verbal protocols were also impossible to operationalize given the nature of the participants’ work; and 2) the aim of the study differed in focus from the recording of individual mental processes employed in the formulation of speech features in a seemingly absent context. Rather, the aim was to find a strong connection between the

³ Beeper Studies (formally known as Experiential Sampling Method) are a self-report data gathering technique. Participants receive a beeper and booklet. At random intervals, researchers page participants who then fill out questionnaire forms. Beeper Studies create a record of someone’s experience and state of mind by recording spontaneous descriptions of activities, context, and mood over several days or weeks. Aggregated data reveals patterns of use and clues about the experience that inform design strategy and concepts (Punzo & Miller, 2009).

introspective recount and the context of occurrence of the interactions being investigated which called for an ethnographic approach. The outcome was a shared and co-constructed (researcher-participant) description and interpretation of the interactions and the language employed in light of previously shared knowledge during the fieldwork. Only five participants out of nine's retrospective interviews comprised comments on and elaborations of all the three previous phases. The other four participants (for the reasons explained above), could only elaborate on the previous interview and the researcher's observations. However, in this study, only three retrospective interviews were analyzed due to limitation of space.

With reference to the self-recorded speech in particular, after listening to selected recordings each participant was asked to express their view on and/or further clarify the content, context and specific event occurring or being talked about in the passages and/or whole interactions in question. (When comprehension was difficult mainly due to background noise, participants were also given transcripts to better follow the recorded speech.) A selection of interactions was necessary due to the time frame of the interview (between 1 and ½ hours with the exception of one participant who was interviewed twice for a total of approximately 3 hours and one who was only interviewed for 20 minutes). The selection was based on three criteria: 1) the length of the exchanges (only interactions lasting at least 3 minutes were considered – whereby clear references could be made to people, topic and events); 2) the degree of engagement of the participants in the exchanges themselves whereby their contribution to the interaction taking place was highly significant in relation to their role, positioning and history of the activity at hand; 3) the 'critical' content displayed by the interaction itself (opposed views among interactants in regard to undertaking actions, actions already undertaken, tasks at hand, discussions of work procedures, organizational policies and past and present problem solving processes). The focus of these interviews was on the following:

- 1) the identification/description of the particular interaction;
- 2) the reasons/history behind the particular exchanges;
- 3) whether they considered the specific exchange/activity effective/successful;
- 4) the identification of differences in type of language/communication practices in relation to different events and activities.

Despite the retrospective interviews being conducted two to three months after the collection of the naturally occurring interactions (due partly to the time necessary for the transcriptions to be carried out, partly to the participants' personal and work commitments) the selected interactions were all recalled except for two instances. The highly contextualized speech and familiarity with both circumstances and interlocutors that were involved facilitated their reporting/accounting on the interactions under scrutiny. In some instances the researcher's observation of specific exchanges would also facilitate this process.

In the overall scheme of the methodological stance, then, retrospective interviews represented a crucial further step into a cooperative approach towards the mutual goal of understanding the links between communication practices and situations of occurrences. Additional reasons of a more practical nature, added to the rationale for using retrospective interviews as clarifications, were also needed for the comprehension of the recordings due to background noise, overlapping, the sometimes highly technical nature of the interactions and difficulty in identifying their interactants.

4.6 Transcriptions

The number of interview hours transcribed was 21 whereas about 25 hours of self-recorded speech were transcribed. The latter set of recordings presented some difficulties for transcribing: 1) the high level of background noise due to the activities being carried out in the workshop; and 2) the nature of verbal exchanges due to participants moving around the plant in order to carry out maintenance tasks while engaging in various and interrupted interactions with frequent change of topics, scenarios and interlocutors. This problem was almost completely resolved by the researcher who recognized the speakers' voices and/or asked participants themselves when in doubt.

Due to the large amount of natural speech, preliminary 'neutral' transcription conventions were adopted. At first, the priority was to identify situations, the context of events, topics and the main interlocutors so that a detailed, fine-grained transcription of the data would not be required (see transcription conventions – Appendix 4). By and large, conventions were adopted in relation to the analysis' requirements at a later stage (Antaki, 2011; Lapadat, 2000).

4.7 Procedures and ethical issues

Ethics clearance was sought before officially contacting the HR representative and requesting 'in principle' permission to conduct my study in the company (Appendix 5). This was carried out through a brief email (Appendix 6) outlining the objective, scope and procedures of the study and seeking a face-to-face meeting to further clarify these issues. During the meeting I was made aware of issues to consider in the planning of interviews and observations, namely, the necessity to conduct the interviews outside working hours and to conduct the observations in a way that would not distract/disrupt employee participants from work. On this occasion I had consent forms for individual participants prepared in advance for the HR representative to peruse (Appendix 7) whereas the 'Company Consent Form' (Appendix 8) was signed at this time. 'Participant Consent Forms' were signed when the participants were met at the first interviews.

As mentioned above, participants were recruited on a voluntary basis through a flyer (see Appendix 1) and had to contact the HR representative before meeting or contacting me.

During the initial interviews some negotiations took place with participants as to how, when and where observations and recording would take place and all the issues raised by the participants themselves were taken into account (preferred hours of the day, preferred activities/situations, when and if I could take photos, commitments they had on specific days, etc.). After talking to all participants a rough observation schedule was circulated among them and also sent to HR.

During observations and recordings of naturally occurring interactions all employees who were interacting with participants were made aware at all times of my study and the fact that their voice might be being recorded. Verbal consent was sought and recorded on the spot. All the material collected during fieldwork (including consent forms, the company's documentation, recordings, etc.) was stored by me in a locked facility at all times. Codes or pseudonyms are used in the study to protect anonymity and confidentiality and any references which could lead to the identification of people, places and objects were removed.

However, as seen above, conducting research in a workplace, company or private enterprise bears ethical issues beyond those related to anonymity and confidentiality. Policies and guidelines in regard to these issues are generally scarce or not sufficiently implemented (Grossi, 2012). This results in unnecessary difficulties faced by the researcher to access these type of sites and groups operating in the sites themselves.

Two major factors were identified as being 'context-sensitive': 1) the traditional division between management and production floor workforce (i.e. 'the upstairs' and 'the floor'); and 2) the perception of communication in a second language as 'problematic' and in some cases 'beyond remedy'. In the end, the mutual trust established between myself and the participants made this study possible. Additionally it contributed to enhancing my awareness of tensions and struggles intrinsic in particular research sites.

4.8 Conclusion

The descriptive, explanative and interpretive approach of this study takes as its starting point an overall ethnographic perspective on data collection and analysis.

In this context, I took on the role of the 'learner' towards both work and related language practices occurring 'on site'. However, previous exposure and familiarity with the type of research site object of the present study placed a special emphasis on my motivational relevancies and made me a special kind of learner. In this sense, the demands of establishing differences between 'routines' and 'episodes', 'standard measures' and 'critical incidents' was somewhat more pressuring. For this reason, the integration of the ethnomethodology and MDA approaches adopted here was crucial to capture the nexuses of practice in progress, in a word, the converging trajectories of individuals, machines and

institutional goals as they are respectively enacted at local, organizational and wider socio-political discourse levels.

The rapport established with the participants during the study was crucial in obtaining an insider-type of access to both routine and special practices. An accurate interpretation of the findings required the adoption of different angles from which to explore settings, views, accounts and 'ways of doing and saying' in order to keep subjectivity in check.

However, the limitations of research relying on a single case and a small sample of participants are also noted here. What is gleaned from interviews might not directly reflect what is actually going on, but rather what the participants feel or believe to be going on; what is reported about past experiences is also the participants' perceptions of past experiences and not necessarily what has occurred.

Problems associated with observational data, namely, that they record only what is seen and is expected to be seen, were also taken into consideration. However, the aim was to attain interpretive consistency through an integration of sources and findings, that is, on the basis of how data analyses fit sampling design and procedures (Candlin & Crichton, 2013; Candlin, 2006; Crichton, 2010). It is hoped that by employing multiple perspectives and methods, each method would compensate the other and strengthen the interpretive process.

Other limitations relate to the scope of the study and are due to both ethical and practical factors. One of these concerns was the lack of interviews with members of the company's management. Although this set of data would have yielded invaluable insights into the topic under scrutiny, it would have possibly compromised the relationship of trust the researcher had established with the participants from the workshop and ultimately it would have posed ethical issues for the reasons explained above.

A limitation of a more practical nature, concerns the relatively short duration of the fieldwork (although this has become an accepted ethnographic practice (Pink & Morgan, 2013) and the impossibility in most cases of observing participants' activities and interactions more closely due to safety rules preventing me from approaching hazardous work stations and machinery. Last but not least, the gender difference, although bearing the advantage of minimizing if not neutralizing the potentially intimidating presence of an outsider (Milroy, 1980), nonetheless prevented me from 'blending in'.

CHAPTER 5

THE STRATEGIC CONSTRUCTION OF A WORKPLACE: LINGUISTIC ETHNOGRAPHY AND INTERACTIONAL ANALYSIS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter aims at highlighting the processes through which CS emerge in work activities and their related discursive enactments. Specifically, the focus will be on the relationship between different communicative events in nexuses of practices and the organizing roles of CS. As outlined in Chapter 4, a case study approach is taken here through an in-depth situated analysis or ‘thick description’ of multiple sets of interactional and ethnographic data gathered intensively over several months. This further extends the conceptualization of strategic organizational talk presented in Chapter 3 by showing how a case study approach together with fine-grained ethnographic techniques (Gumperz 1999; Roberts, Davies and Jupp 1992; Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1992) as well as a linguistic ethnographic stance (Rampton et al., 2004; Rampton, 2007; Rampton et al., 2015) can account for the complexities of communication in workplaces of the type under scrutiny. In this ‘holistic’ sense, the general patterns of communication observed, and the ways in which instances of exchanges in specific sites of engagements are selected, contribute to trace not only the actual discursive occurrences of interactions but also the unfolding of ‘strategies’ in the organizational actions and actors’ trajectories towards nexuses of practices.

As seen in Chapters 2 and 3, in the organizational behaviour literature, the notion of strategy underlies the practices and processes designed for the organization to continuously ‘fit’ changing environments and the structure of the firm and for creating cohesiveness in the relationships among its components in order to achieve competitiveness (Johnson, 1987; Pettigrew, 1985; Whittington, 1993, 1996). The linguistic ethnographic account in particular, shows how discourses reflect and are impacted upon by this continuously adaptive processes and more specifically how strategies in discourses aim at keeping this fit viable by means of power, resistance and negotiation (Knight & Morgan, 1991).

It further shows how, ultimately, communication strategies contribute to the creation, maintenance and re-creation of ‘nexuses of practice’ in sites of engagements, geared to channel on-going transformations and diverse worldviews towards concerted action whereby resources are drawn upon at individual, organizational and institutional levels.

The social (human force) and work organization or ‘socio-technical systems’ (Long, 2013) in particular, are described here as underlying discursive nexuses of practice whereby the use of tools and technology, the material and physical aspects of the company are integrating part of the nexuses themselves (Heath, Luff & Knoblauch, 2000; Forsyth, 2009). In this sense, the relationship technology-humans is investigated as a set of processes of ‘ecological adjustments’ that have occurred overtime. The analysis of the data collection process and generation of data ‘as it happened’ as well as that of episodes and interactions, further allowed the identification of types of CS (as already highlighted in Chapter 4) emerging in nexuses and constituting the discursive organization of the workplace. CS are then identified as discursively enacting, sustaining and validating work and organizational practices through assigning different agencies for both managing and performing action.

To this aim the present chapter attempts to answer the following research question(s):

- 1) What are communication strategies on the factory floor of the workplace object of this study?
 - a) What is their role at the intersection between language and action?
 - b) How do they enact, resist, negotiate interaction orders?
 - c) What are the ‘intercultural elements’ at play in interactions and what role do CS play in this context?

The next section, 5.2, provides a brief outline of the analysis’ methodological and theoretical underpinnings and a description of the data sets generated during the fieldwork. In particular, Sections 5.2.2 and 5.2.3 describe the subjective/objective ‘continuum dimension’ (see also Chapter 4) through which the researcher generated data and the process through which the motivational relevancies (Sarangi & Candlin, 2001; 2003) are jointly constructed with the participants.

Section 5.3 describes the past, present and future organization of the company, its physical setting, structure and work systems and the ways these impact on and are impacted upon by interactional and discursive practices among employees.

Section 5.4 further investigates the discourses generating the researcher and participants’ relevancies, such as the division between management and workshop floor (‘upstairs’ and ‘downstairs’) and that pertaining ethnic diversity among the workshop floor employees.

Sections 5.4.2, 5.4.3 and 5.4.4 provide a narrative of the data collection process and the negotiation required to carry it out as well as the researcher’s shifting position during the process itself.

Section 5.4.5 focuses on the centre stage of data collection: the Tool Room.

In Sections 5.5 and its subsections the role- relationships of employees working in this area and their hierarchical current and past status are investigated. Particular focus is on how these relations among participants, their roles, status and ethnicity are strategically played out in this particular site of engagement and how, in turn, problematic discursive nexuses continuously emerge from past, present and future courses of actions.

Section 5.6 provides a summary of the chapter and concluding remarks on the relationship between problematic nexuses of practice and communication ('critical moments in crucial sites') (Candlin, 2006) and the way they impact on the organizational and operational setting of the company. In this context, the different roles that CS play within these nexuses are also summarized here.

5.2 Communication as organizing: an ecological perspective

This section briefly outlines the methodological and theoretical framework adopted to explore the communicative patterns embedded in the life and activities of the research site as a whole. This approach takes an organization-wide perspective on interrelated institutional processes and aspects of communication, in which 'localised' phenomena are seen in the context of a system (Argyris & Schon 1995; Gatenby & Jones 1995; Sligo and Bathurst, 2005). In this study, the approach sets out to examine two types of interrelationship: 1) at a macro-level, the interrelationship between communication, how is it viewed in relation to action and practices and in relation to the wider socio-political context, whereby, communication itself is both institutionally and 'locally' constituted in nexuses, established overtime as 'organized action'; 2) at a micro-level, the interrelationship between people, the exchanges they engage in, the tools they use and the spaces in which they work.

This intersection between communication, action, and practices is examined as open, non-linear, emergent and ever changing (Scollon, 2001b, 2005b). Additionally, as it will be shown below, for one of the divisions of the company where prolonged fieldwork was carried out, this emergence is reflected in the relation between structures (the rules and established work practices of participants), and concurrent adaptive processes of both individuals and technology (Urry 2005; Larsen-Freeman & Cameron 2007) resulting in an ongoing struggle between institutional constraints and the push for change (Jones, 2009).

As shown in Chapter 2 and 3, the identification and contextualization of the ways in which 'organized action' is discursively constructed, sustained and/or repaired through CS, despite disruptions and the divergent trajectories of the parties involved, what Candlin (1987, 2006) calls 'critical moments', entails encompassing into the analysis, cross-cutting insights from micro and macro-level analyses and focussing on different aspects of the same data and different data sources (Cicourel, 1992; Phillips & Oswick, 2012). In this regard, two major theoretical approaches are adopted here: 'communication as organization' (Cooren et al. 2006; Taylor et al., 2001) and, Linguistic Ethnography

(Blommaert, 2007; Rampton et al. 2004; Rampton, 2007; Rampton et al., 2015; Sealy, 2007). These approaches also constitute the theoretical framework of the fine-grained analysis of interactions carried out in the following chapters.

This interpretative process entails incorporating both the dynamic moment-to-moment interactional occurrences and the ‘built-over-time’, knowledge-based engagement of individuals in concerted action. In turn, it presupposes an as in-depth as possible understanding of the environment, the participants and their relationships as well as the different perspectives through which they are investigated. As Kress (cited in Hardy, 2001: 27) observes:

Texts are the sites of the emergence of complexes of social meanings, produced in the particular history of the situation of production, that record in partial ways the histories of both the participants in the production of the text and of the institutions that are ‘invoked’ or brought into play ... (Kress, 1995: 122).

Only such an inclusive viewpoint allows the identification of the practices participants can be observed to engage in and the critical moments occurring during their actual enactment, as manifestations of resistance to and possibly incipient transformation of those practices. The focus of this research process is then on both what triggers the moment-to-moment interactive strategies and what governs their dynamics: the sequential aspects of strategic use of language in interactions as well as the constraints that are imposed on it by the organizational context. In this sense, the ‘requesting ways’ of work interactions emerge as if attaining compliance or agreement was generated by power or resistance: the processes of organizing actions become practices whereby language is strategically geared to sustain or transform those practices according to circumstances *ad infinitum* (Cooren, 2001). How practices are created, maintained and reinforced discursively is the object of the linguistic ethnographic account provided by the next section.

5.2.1 Linguistic ethnography and ethnomethodology through a multi-perspectival model

This section provides a rationale and description of the data sets selected for the ethnographic approach adopted in this study and it briefly outlines its methodological and analytical focus.

Ethnographic investigations have had a long standing place in workplace studies, bringing together different perspectives on the social organization of the settings in question and the agents within (see Chapters 2 and 3).

However, the ‘overarching’ ethnographic approach in the present study, inscribes the discursive organizational system (the ways discourses are constructed and enacted around communication and work) namely ‘Communication as Organization’, conceptualized as communication transcending the actual local enactment of activities in order to become

corporate hegemony and organization itself (Cooren, 2000). In turn, Linguistic Ethnography as a tool to uncover the mechanics of individuals' discursive interactions in context (Rampton et al., 2004) is complemented by an ethnomethodological approach: a holistic approach to the generation of data through observations, informal exchanges with participants and interviews. In this way, a joint sense making (researcher- participants – why things happen the way they do and are communicated the way they are) has been enabled. This stance is in line with the notion of organization as a retrospective 'sense-making' activity, (Weick, 1979) and presupposes an 'a posteriori' structuring of ours and others' (inter)actions through a subjective interpretation process. This is what constitute a 'narrative organization' (Taylor (1993; Taylor & Lerner, 1996; Taylor & Van-Every, 2000) whereby a narrative makes sense only because of its organization in a system of differences whose articulation can be described and analysed. For such an organizational story to make sense, all elements, physical actions, actors and discursive ones have to be analysed in their discursive, progressive but structural dimension. The Multi-Perspectival-Model (Candlin & Chrichton, 2013) as mentioned in Chapter 3 provides an encompassing framework whereby an integration of analyses is possible by the juxtaposition of different data sources and the different ways of generating data through the researcher's distinction of one's own and actors' perspectives on actions and discourses.

By encompassing both the analysis of organization as constructed through communication – the question posed by LE, "who speaks what language(s) and in what circumstances" (Sealy, 2007) – and the 'explication of the seen but unnoticed' in specific circumstances by participants to those circumstances (Garfinkel, 1967), and via the lenses of motivational relevancies (as highlighted in Chapter 2) the MPM allows the investigation of concurrent work practices (action) and discursive practices by also capturing the joint (participants-researcher) process of the social discursive construction of those practices.

More specifically, the data generated in this way highlight the following: 1) the communication practices and critical interactional moments observed and recorded in specific work activities and in combination with technological procedures – the process through which the organization comes to be; 2) the contextual/institutional conditions in which discursive practices are enacted and embodied – the tensions between actors, context and institutions; 3) the participants' accounts and interpretation of practices and their sense-making of ordinary activities; and 4) the network of role-relations among participants, their order and the aggregation/disaggregation process of inter-actions' systems and sub-systems.

This analytical approach brings together the understanding of organization as a holistic system (Checkland, 1999). In line with organization theories', notions and practices such as strategy (Knights & Morgan, 1991); negotiation processes (Putnam, 2004); decision making (Huisman, 2001); inter-organizational collaboration (Hardy et al., 1998), organizational change (Pettigrew & Whipp, 1993); and workplace control (Knights & Wilmott, 1989) are embedded in the 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973) of both "fine-

grained linguistic analysis out to broader ethnographic backgrounds and wider political and ideological accounts” (Sarangi and Roberts 1999a: 1).

Finally this analytical approach also provides insights in the way organizational practices are interactionally enacted and reproduced in verbal exchanges and therefore how the tensions inherent to actors’ different worldviews manifest and require strategic management ‘in action’. However, the interactional analysis of data as such will be dealt with in the next chapters.

The process of generating data as a holistic and recursive cycle through ethnographic lens and the theoretical underpinnings of how this intersect with the researcher’s narrative of the organization is described in the next section.

5.2.2 The subjective/objective continuum, semiotic perspectives and CS motivational relevancies

The process of generating data from multiple sources and produced within a network of complex and dynamic interactions is a dynamic process itself which has its starting point during fieldwork. The different stages of data collection in a naturalistic context entails the researcher’s herself shifting positioning within and towards ever-changing orders of interactants in ever changing interactional systems. In this context, participants’ and researcher’s accounting narratives become embedded into an ‘organizational narrative’. This narrative is a sense-making tool and accounts for the networks of relations and nexuses that are constructed and construct communication strategies as a process, emergent and captured in their occurring.

As it will be shown in the following chapters then, the interpretation of CS use and functions, shifts between semiotic discursive enactments of power and resistance whereby practices and therefore nexuses and boundaries are contested and redefined.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, this process of understanding and interpreting of a society and therefore an organization, can be summarized with Berger and Luckman’s (1967) view of the three moments of externalization, objectivation, and internalization.

It is this interpretative process that becomes central to the linguistic ethnographic approach whereby contextual reality is necessarily constructed by multiple view angles and takes on semiotic value in relation to the researcher’s motivational relevancies and the practical relevance to the participants she sets out to uncover. However, as highlighted in the following sections this relationship between researcher, the product and its creators is also a changing one during the research process. Accordingly, the semiotic value assigned to discursive practices and, in this case to communicative strategies may also be a dynamic one implying different readings of institutional rules and contextual contingencies, (requiring different managing strategies). This also reflects in the narrative co-construction of the organization by both researcher and participants as a sense making process of

actions into practices: the request of explanation of actions by the researcher makes them accounted for as ‘practices’, encapsulated in the day-to-day made sense for, activities.

5.3 The technology of past, present and future and the interactional processes

This section and the following, focus on how the observed aspects of day-to-day operations on the factory floor and especially how the related types of interactions in which employees engage during work underpin the types of organizational system in place: coordination processes, decision making and goal setting. These systems are the outcome of different and, at times, contrasting organizational structures as they have been adopted across the years of the company’s history. The relationship between communicative behaviours and work is captured as continuously discursively constructed and emergent, never fixed nor predictable but still converging into nexuses of practice: what people do, how they work and talk and know what to do and say from previous and reiterated engagements (see Chapter 2).

In the following sections, the established connection between technology and organizational structure as highlighted by Jones (2009) and more specifically and the post-structuralist approach adopted by Hatch (2006) is adopted as the backdrop to the analysis undertaken here. Also Thompson’s (1967) seminal work in describing the types of task environments in which PTS’ work functions, and the dimensions of coordination, and processes found in the operations themselves is considered here. Clark’s (1996) notions of classes of coordination are additionally used to describe types of collaborative behaviours and interdependence and to extend this framework further by integrating concepts of joint situation awareness, task transmission/sharing and general cooperative behaviour as they apply to the different divisions of the organization. Communication patterns and discursively constructed operations are focused upon as they impact and are impacted upon by these interdependence dynamics. The notion of ‘situation awareness’ in particular, is also used to outline the type of information or frame of reference that intractants have to possess to effectively communicate with each other or perform concerted action.

In this respect, the context-specificity of verbal interactions themselves is highlighted, whereby context(s) is/are intended as the ensemble of events, people, setting, tasks and actions at hand but also as practices established over time, or, in a word, as sites of engagement. Nexuses, as they happen within sites of engagement, are where the mediational symbolic load (participants’ views, beliefs, knowledge and attitudes), is, and, what makes the interactions themselves possible. Both nexuses of practice and the processes through which they form are outlined here as emerging from observed actions, episodes reported in interviews and recorded interactions in which participants express their views on their role, tasks and the company’s work system. One site of engagement in particular, became the focus of the investigation of these nexuses’ dynamics: the Tool Room.

This and the following sections outline the close relationship between technology, work systems and discourses. The aim here is to highlight the discursive enactment of strategic action intended as ‘a pattern of decisions and actions that managers take to use core competence to achieve a competitive advantage and outperform competitors’ (Jones, 2009). The focus is on how these actions have to be discursively made sense of and channelled towards ‘organization’ despite the evident divergence in ways of working, thinking of the different actors and the different technologies employed.

According to Jones (2009), technology is the combination of skills, knowledge, abilities, techniques, materials, machines, computers, tools and other equipment that people use to convert or change raw materials into valuable goods and services. Different kinds of work (technologies) in organizations need different kind of structure to control their activities. This allows the company to adapt and react to changes and uncertainties in the environment in a strategic way. There are two major levels of technology in organizations: 1) Individual level: the personal skills and knowledge that individuals possess; and 2) Functional or department level: the procedures and techniques that groups work out to perform their work and create value. The latter are also described as unit systems.

Drawing on Woodward’s technical complexity theory (1958, 1965), described as a measure of the extent to which a production process can be programmed in order to be controlled and predictable, Jones further distinguishes between: 1) high technical complexity (transformation processes can be programmed in advance, fully automated and predictable; and 2) low technical complexity (conversion or transformation processes depend primarily on people, their skills and knowledge and not on machines. Woodward identifies 10 levels of technical complexity associated with three types of production technology: 1) small batch and unit technology; 2) large batch and mass production technology; 3) continuous-process technology. A combination of these three types of technology was observed at PTS.

The small batch and unit technology involves making one of a kind, customized products or small quantities of products entailing a flexible conversion process with techniques adapted to individual orders. This system scores low on the dimension of technical complexity because of the impossibility of programming conversion activities. In this capacity the production depends on the skills and experience of people working together. For this type of technology an organic structure is the most appropriate whereby companies facing a dynamic and uncertain environment can process and distribute information and knowledge faster which thus results in an increased ability to respond to changes in the environment.

Mass production, allows the organization to standardize the manufacturing process and make it predictable. A mechanistic structure best supports this technology as companies operating in a stable environment may not need to make decisions quickly. Likewise, many of the day-to-day decisions and operating procedures maybe formalized and centralized.

In the Continuous –process system tasks can be programmed in advance and the work process is predictable and controllable in a technical sense although there is still potential for major systems breakdown. This is the main reason for an organic structure to be the most appropriate for this technology.

PTS is an example of mixed structure whereby production is diversified in small batches, standardised and continuous and many of the decisions are ‘more or less’ centralized (made at a more or less local but still hierarchically structured level) on a day-to-day basis. The Tool Room in particular is the section where this type of structure is more evidently geared to a ‘mixed’ organization of work. However, as will be highlighted below, also this section of the company presents mixed structural characteristics in the way decision making processes are conducted and work activities are run.

The relation between technology complexity and structure is best summarized by Woodward’s findings as exemplified in figure 1, and 2 below.




	<div> <div>Low</div> <div>Technical Complexity</div> <div>High</div> </div>		
Structural Characteristics	Small-Batch Technology	Mass Production Technology	Continuous-Process Technology
Level in the hierarchy	3	4	6
Span of control of CEO	4	7	10
Span of control of first-line supervisor	23	48	15
Ratio of managers to nonmanagers	1 to 23	1 to 16	1 to 8
Approximate shape of organization	 <div>Relatively flat, with narrow span of control</div>	 <div>Relatively tall, with wide span of control</div>	 <div>Very tall, with very narrow span of control</div>
Type of structure	Organic	Mechanistic	Organic
Cost of operation	High	Medium	Low

Figure 5.1- Relationship between technology and organizational structure

SUMMARY OF WOODWARD'S FINDINGS ON THE DESIGN FEATURES OF EFFECTIVE ORGANIZATIONS			
LEVELS OF ORGANIZATION AND CHARACTERISTICS	UNIT AND SMALL-BATCH PRODUCTION	TECHNOLOGIES LARGE-BATCH AND MASS PRODUCTION	PROCESS PRODUCTION
LOWER LEVELS	INFORMALLY ORGANIZED	ORGANIZED BY FORMAL STRUCTURAL ARRANGEMENTS	ORGANIZED BY TASK AND TECHNOLOGICAL SPECIFICATIONS; WIDE SPANS OF CONTROL
UPPER LEVELS	INFORMALLY ORGANIZED; NO CLEAR DISTINCTION BETWEEN LINE AND STAFF	ORGANIZED HIERARCHICALLY WITH CLEAR LINE AND STAFF DISTINCTION	INFORMALLY ORGANIZED; NO LINE-STAFF DISTINCTION; NARROW SPANS OF CONTROL
OVERALL CHARACTERISTICS	FEW LEVELS; BROAD SPAN OF CONTROL; NO CLEAR HIERARCHY; LOW RATIO OF ADMINISTRATORS TO OPERATING EMPLOYEES	EMPLOYEES CONSCIOUS OF DESIGN; CLEAR JOG SPECIALIZATION; CLEAR CHAIN OF COMMAND	MANY HIERARCHICAL LEVELS; MODERATE CONSCIOUSNESS OF DESIGN DIMENSIONS
MOST EFFECTIVE STRUCTURE	ORGANIC	MECHANISTIC	ORGANIC

Figure 5.2 – Relationship between production systems and organizational structure

Woodward’s study led to the contingency approach that assumes that the most effective organizational structure depends on external conditions. The study showed the usefulness of the comparative method in detecting relationships among organizational characteristics rather than studying a single case. The model provides a framework to analyse manufacturing organizations and to detect similarities and differences using unit, batch, mass and flow production as a shared language. Although the contingency theory provided useful insights, the analysis lacked refinement. Most organizations now operate in what contingency theorists call a dynamic environment that requires an organic organization. Contingency theory also adopted technological determinism as a key assumption that negated the possibility of using one technology in multiple ways. It also assumed that one factor could change while the other variables remained constant. In practise, this objective proved impossible. Organizations often use multiple technologies at different levels and this is what occurs in the organization object of this study.

Furthermore, since the work of Woodward, there have been significant advances in production technology, which include the use of robots, numerically-controlled machines, and many applications of the computer to remote control of equipment which falls under the definition of Computer Integrated Manufacturing (CIM). Specific to the systems in use in the company object of this study, CIM is the result of three sub-components: 1) Computer-assisted design (CAD) – computers are used to assist in drafting, design and engineering of new parts which allows significant variation in specifications with minimum of redesign cost; 2) computer-aided manufacturing (CAM) and computer-numerical-control (CNC) through which computer- controlled machines are used in materials-handling, fabrication, production, and assembly allowing fast switching between product runs and variations; 3) Integrated Information Networks (IIN), a computerized system that links all aspects of the firm – accounting, marketing, purchasing, inventory control using a common database and allowing an integration of decision making

processes. The adoption of CIM promotes an integration of small batches, standardization or mass production and possibly production processes within one organization whereby the switching between variations of products' specifications and batches' size is quick.

Despite the mandatory, continuous mutual adjustment and flexibility due to the high level of task environments' instability– how quickly the elements in the environment change, how quickly the materials to be utilized change, but also how responsive the situation is to those changes with respect to the projected future, the organizational structure of the company appears all but horizontal and organic as shown by the chart below:



Picture 5.1- Organizational Chart

PTS's tall multi-levelled hierarchical structure is reflected at the level where production tasks are carried out whereby the span of control of supervisors is also quite narrow with each supervisor overseeing a maximum of approximately 10 workers. My observations in two different divisions –Welding Bay and Pre-form/Wiring suggested that unpredictable but locally solvable problems could only be handled by the supervisor and in some cases by the next level up (manufacturing or warehouse managers or superintendents). This is the case of break-downs or blockages when the machine operator, although qualified to deal with the problem first hand is not allowed to do so but has to inform the supervisor who liaises with the maintenance team. Similarly, although the majority of operators are multi-skilled and can handle differentiated tasks, they are not involved in team-based decision making or adjustment where immediate response is required but their intervention is limited to explaining members of the maintenance team (when they come to the machine) how the break-down or malfunctioning occur.

The adoption of these systems over the years, as highlighted above, has resulted in an increase in isolated, individual work at the workshop level in the quest to minimize down-

time costs and increase productivity. Employees receive specifications in print and perform the work accordingly: unless a breakdown occurs or a problem in deciphering the specifications arises. The role of the supervisor of each department, accordingly, is confined to ensuring the workers are on task and minimal disruption occurs in case of breakdown of replacements of parts. In the following section it is further described how interactions and therefore discourses are impacted upon by the use of technology and in turn how this also impacts on the role relationship of interactants.

5.3.1 Coordination

The argument that technology determines structure is further exemplified by the notions of 'tasks' operational levels' and 'people's coordination'.

Thompson (1967) defines three types of coordination: *standardized*, *planned*, and *mutual adjustment*. Under *standardization*, there are established rules or routines for how people should coordinate their activity. As with traffic rules, standardization improves performance per unit cost, by reducing coordination costs in both financial and cognitive terms because rules remove many uncertainties about how people should coordinate their behaviours. Standardization functions best in stable task environments. In some task environments however, team members must *plan* their coordination processes based on the task at hand. They will establish task-dependent schedules, work assignments and milestones. When the task environment doesn't lend itself to standardization or even planning, team members have to coordinate through continuous *mutual adjustment* to each others' activities. This requires constant communication to make sure that coordination requirements (and expectations) are clear and that activities are performed with minimal confusion and maximum benefit. As a result, mutual adjustment is the most costly form of coordination. This can happen, for example, when the task environment is very dynamic and unpredictable. At PTS, mutual adjustment is almost only exclusively carried out between the members of the Tool Room and supervisors of the other departments and sporadically the workers of other departments. This will be best illustrated in the following section highlighting the types of collaborative behaviours originating from types of coordination.

5.3.2 Collaborative Behaviours

Collaborative behaviours are closely dependent on both production technology and type of coordination. Clark (1996) describes the behaviours that people engage in to carry out joint actions, like a conversation. These behaviours can be connected with the different types of coordination, with each type of coordination requiring a different subset of collaborative behaviours. In the case of PTS this is also dependent on the type of tasks/jobs in which people are both engaged on a contingency basis or routine basis, ranging from the sharing

of tools to the requirement of more people at the same time to perform a job (as it is the case of the moving of heavy objects, etc.) and on whether or not people perform jobs in the same division, at the same machine or work station (and therefore have varying degree of contact with the same or different people). The occasions in which collaborative behaviours occur may be needed may be more or less unpredictable or could be a combination of both predictability and unpredictability, as well as just which members need to coordinate. Clark further points to the fact that whether or not teams coordinates through mutual adjustment, people would need to identify with whom to connect, make contact with them, transmit and receive the message, identify the nature of the information and respond to it. This process can be more or less synchronized (as in the case of situations that have to be dealt with 'in real time' because of events that can compromise the work of others and in this way, cause interruptions/delays in task accomplishment (this is the case of production divisions or maintenance units). As already mentioned this type of collaborative behaviour only occurs consistently among members of the Tool Room and these and the supervisors (or above) of other departments since there are no teams on the factory floor nor groups who, can be said, more or less consistently, carry out specific jobs in collaboration.

Generally speaking, then, in case of break-downs interactions between machine operators and maintenance employees (Tool Room's employees) are almost invariably mediated by the floor's supervisors and on some occasions by supervisors' superiors. This latter case is shown in all interviews of which examples are illustrated below.

An instance of the role of communicative mediators that supervisor undertake is exemplified by the situation in the Pre-Form/Wiring area where I observed some of my participants.

The Pre-form area consists of an open space of about 250sq where 13 workers operate individually on different machinery. Some of the machinery are 10m to 15m long and quite close to each other. There is virtually no space between the machines except for one or two standing operators moving from one end of the machine to the other. Following the distinction proposed by Thompson and cited above, work interdependence in this area can be described as mainly pooled interdependence as there are simultaneous operations but there is no immediate work flows between roles and only sporadic occurrences of sequential interdependence occur when tools are exchanged or help is sought to remove excess scrap metal.

Each person works mostly independently at one's machine or work station and most communication either with the person next to them (geographically horizontal) or with the supervisor (socially vertical), especially in a crisis situation High noise level is not conducive to verbal communication and there is much shouting especially by the supervisor. Although multi-skilling is common (operators are qualified and experienced to handle different machinery and engage in an array of tasks), during the observation phase I

noticed that work is highly ‘controlled’ and no teamwork or even brief interactions ever occurs.

In this division, the supervisor, Connie’s ‘job function’ confers her a ‘status’ of gate-keeper rather than coordinator or liaison with different divisions. Stan, from the Tool Room calls her by the nick-name of Mother Chook for her controlling and bully demeanour and especially for her screaming to communicate with workers. As will be shown in the following excerpts this type of interaction between subordinates and superordinates are acknowledged by participants as affecting their sense of ‘face’. However, the way they manage their face itself is also a matter of their chosen positioning towards authority. In this regard, Stan states:

Excerpt 5.1

1. S She’s yelling she doesn’t talk to people that’s [the problem].
2. L [I don’t think] she can talk. I think she can only [yell because of the noise]
3. S [She no, no, probably] she doesn’t know how to talk. That’s the way how she talk
4. and that is, that is her problem
5. L Do you think it’s um, language or [because I]
6. S [nature]. Nature. Not [her language. I don’t] think he
7. L [it’s, I think it’s]
8. S she have, she have a problem with the language. She’d understand very well. But uh
9. L But I think she’s like the way I see like she yells because of the noise and so she ca, I
10. think it’s um –
11. S No, she always [talk, she always] argue with the people. No is she-e-e, if she wants
12. you on
13. L [She’s been so (inc)]
14. S are on the other side, then she d-won’t go and she will yell to you, come over and do
15. this, do this. That’s, that is [Connie].
16. L [Uh] do you think she has um (...) how can I say? Leadership problem like she
17. wants to be
18. S She’s-[she’s] very good company like her because she-she’s very good pusher, she
19. doing
20. L [inc]
21. S [well] That’s why eh, she is wh, very hard worker. She work by herself. She doesn’t
22. – doesn’t let anybody to muckin round and that is for the company very convenient
23. but not for the people
24. L No, [but that’s-that’s (incomp)]
25. S [She-she-she does harass] people you know? She’s got the, oh she’s got the
26. leadership-ship problem you know? [That’s] for sure
27. L [um], um because she doesn’t um, she seems to me that (...) that’s
28. my opinion but I think the more you yell the less leadership you have. I think
29. It – because if you [need to yell]-
30. S [she’s lucky] she’s gotta some people with, they listen. They’re angry and once
31. hehe one tried to complain and he get working and no further complain

As seen above, Connie’s main function is that of maintaining the work flow on track no matter what and this is what allows her to ‘defend’ and keep her assigned agency in spite of others’ contestation of space.

A detailed instance, of the high tension between Connie and the workers in her division is also reported by another participant, Paul who works in the Wiring Area a section of the Pre-form Area under Connie's supervision. The lack of recognition of his expertise (he was previously leading-hand of the division) and in general the possibility to 'have a say' on work and work procedures in which he is engaged is a major concern for Paul. When I ask whether he finds it difficult to communicate on the job he explain that he has all the information to perform his tasks on the work-order kept in his file and he is only supposed to communicate to his supervisor in case of break-down or other types of accidental interruptions. He explains:

Excerpt 5.2

1. P ... ahh it wasn't difficult because I don't think its difficult for me because I know
2. exactly what to do and I know more than supervisor (.) yes so there's a problem that
3. I got it might be the supervisor don't even know but its only when you gotta problem
4. you just got got to just the report "I got this point this problem"
5. you just to the supervisor, but because I know more than the supervisor know but
6. it's in the role because she supervisor or he supervisor I gotta let them know yeh-
- ...
7. I gotta follow [the work-order] on by the date, they got it, but there is some
8. particular point like material left over by a little bit when you finish the job some
9. material still left over by a little bit I only just go and ask supervisor whether she
10. wanna finish them all or leave stop that much is that only is hardly ever good
11. discussion like 'how this job gonna go' like what is the problem, why I can't do
12. the job

In what follows, Paul also questions the ways his supervisor enacts the organizational priorities and he describes how he prefers to avoid talking to his supervisor since ultimately, exchanges may lead to confrontation rather than communication:

1. P ... but can it say this way uhm with the working in the working field you know the
2. job you put the job is is alright/you put the job is first priority is something
3. important you gotta go where is coming here we know the job is that the first thing
4. you need to get things done but don't forget the way you talk is very important the
5. job is very important but the way you talk is so important you forget the people is
6. more important than the job at the end of the day you gonna look at the way they are
7. health you not gonna put so much pressure on people because of the job
8. L I agree 100%
9. P the job is very important but you need to treat the people nice too you don't wanna
10. come in here with upset or stressed
- ...
11. P you can't stop what the people want to say that's the problem then you have to do it
12. and when the people talk you like that you feel like not too much communicate you
13. just take your work you take your work and you do the job
14. L mm avoid ahm mm @
15. P it's not the enemy but it's avoid is better

Paul in particular, resents his supervisor's interventions which he sees as an interference by someone who does not have sufficient knowledge of his job and clearly has a controlling role rather than a coordinating one.

Excerpt 5.3

1. P ... because the way she talk, or because of the way the woman talk like that, that's
2. why they placed in that position so they reckon that probably a little bit easy to have
3. to you know the right
- ...
4. P you have to capable doing what the people are doing before you want to control
5. people if you don't know you should talk in a nice way get people to help you out,
6. you won't lose your position in what you are doing

The strategy he adopts in these particular nexuses is that of resistance through avoidance of conflict. In this regard, he explains:

Excerpt 5.4

1. P she I dunno I but I don't think its suitable for me when you're in charge you need to
2. know the way how to talk and communicate with people it its very important
3. L yeh yeh ok do you have any problems of communication with, in general, not with
4. her only but in general?
5. P uh I don't have problem but sometimes with her I know her like that its ... just
6. wanna get away you know, take whatever I get

Avoidance is the course of conduct that he adopts in most cases (see one of the recorded communicative events in which also Jacob participates (see Excerpt 5.42, below) where Paul chooses to physically leave the scene.

From all the above, it can be argued then, that the link between tools (not only in the physical sense but also in the sense of systems, procedures and methods) and coordination depends on (1) the type of coordination used to perform a task, (2) what type and how many of the required type of collaboration behaviours are supported by the tools, (3) how well that support is implemented in terms of human factors and cognitive usability, but also (4) in what way the tool facilitates or not a cooperative concept of operation or within an organizational view, what structures are in place that favour conversation in Clark's terms or, what is in place to implement 'higher level ongoing strategic conversations' in Barnett's terms (1996). This last point is best illustrated by the notion of organizational interdependency which sheds light on the link between production system and 'institutional requirement' of collaborative behaviour as enacted communicatively.

5.3.3 Types of Interdependency

Interdependence means the extent to which departments depend on each other for resources or materials to accomplish their tasks. Low interdependence means the departments can do their work independently of each other and have little need for interaction, consultation or exchange of materials. High interdependence means the departments must constantly exchange resources. There are three types of interdependence:

- Pooled Interdependency
- Sequential Interdependency
- Reciprocal Interdependency

Pooled interdependence is the lowest form of interdependence among departments. In this form, work does not flow between units.

Sequential interdependence exists when the outputs of one department become the inputs of another in serial form. This is a higher level of interdependence than pooled relationships. The preceding unit must complete its tasks correctly in order for the latter unit to successfully complete its tasks. It creates a higher need for horizontal integration mechanisms.

Reciprocal interdependence is the highest level of inter-dependence. Reciprocal interdependence exists when the output of one unit serves as the input for a second unit, and the output of the second unit serves as the input for the first unit (see Figure 5.4, below).

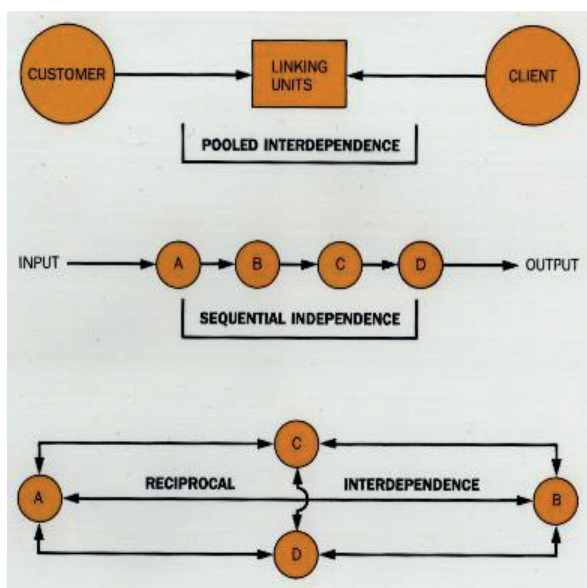


Figure 5.3

Reciprocal interdependence occurs in organizations with intensive technologies which provide a variety of products or services in combination, to the client. A new product development company is an example, where design, engineering, manufacturing and marketing all must work towards combining all their resources to suit a customer's product needs. Intensive technology, because of its reciprocal inter-dependencies, requires the highest level of management requirements as they are to be closely coordinated. For this type of inter-dependence a horizontal structure would be appropriate as high levels of horizontal communication and adjustment are required (see Figure 5.4).

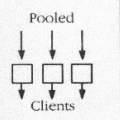
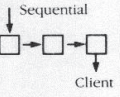
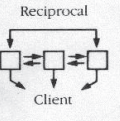
<i>Form of Independence</i>	<i>Demands on Communication, Decision-Making</i>	<i>Type of Coordination</i>	<i>Priority in Structural Grouping</i>
 <p>Pooled</p> <p>Clients</p>	Low	Standardization, Rules, Procedures	Low
 <p>Sequential</p> <p>Client</p>	Medium	Plans, Schedules	Medium
 <p>Reciprocal</p> <p>Client</p>	High	Mutual Adjustment, Group Meetings	High

Figure 5.4

In these types of systems, managers from multiple departments are often involved in face-to-face communication. As seen above, and how will be highlighted further by both the interviews’ analysis and that of naturally occurring interactions, although PTS has different levels of interdependence among departments, horizontal communication and face to face meetings have almost entirely been replaced by Computer Integrated Manufacturing (CIM) and Integrated Information Networks. This is best illustrated by Jacob, the Site Service Manager during an interview when the researcher asks how often meetings occur among the workshop’s floor employees in order to coordinate operations:

Excerpt 5.5

1. L how often?
2. J I’m not- as often as they used to, uhm, this is a name a name not a name another
3. culture that’s changed a bit we used to have a meeting when we used to acquire a
4. tender of quite substantial amount of money and all the guys who were in the
5. manufacturing used to be in the meetings and we would discuss how we were gonna
5. handle and divide it all up into different divisions
6. L before the tendering or [after you]-
7. J [after] the tender was put in and we won the tender then the sales and
8. manufacturing we used to have meetings in regards to how we were gonna handle it,
9. aghh we buy this, we handle this, we manufacture that, we purchase this from
10. subcontractors and we put it altogether so we deliver on time, we used to do that a
11. lot, uhm, we all we don’t have that as much as we used to but that’s because we have
12. grown in different divisions and they reckon the computerization’s taken over from [that]
13. L [inc]
14. J [but] I find that a little bit of a flaw in that I think it’s easier to know where
15. everybody stands in the c-company if to- if to finish a tender or finish a project so we
16. can deliver on time so all the bits and pieces come together, we don’t do that as often
17. as we should, but that’s my opinion, that’s not my say anymore
18. L ok so when was the last meeting of this type?
19. J I, uhm that’s from years ago yeah we don’t, we have meetings now only the safety
20. committees or other things but I’m not in the safety committee but I get the direct
21. results of some of these meetings, do this do this, buy this and so forth, so we split it
22. around in meetings, we do have meetings in regards to our overseas divisions to

23. make sure what what they're after we do here ahh I do have some projects for that,
24. ahh we have meetings here where we talk with manufacturing if we don't have any
25. tooling or any manufacture procedures and how do I do that ahh we do have
26. meetings in regards to regarding the moving or rea- rearranging equipment or
27. shifting material offshore or machinery offshore, stuff like that we do that but not as
28. group meetings as in the manufacturing side

However, despite the lack of consistent interdependence enacted through formal meetings among managers of the different divisions, face to face 'impromptu' meetings occur between the Tool Room's employees and both the management and workers of other departments especially in relation to contingencies such as break-downs, urgent maintenance and/or unplanned variations of specifications (e.g. product design variations requiring the building of new dies). These communicative mutual- adjustment-occurrences though, are somewhat 'centralized by the Tool Room's management and specifically by Jacob himself as he takes on, for 'his' department, the role of overall coordination of the workshop floor's divisions. Both observations and interviews report this state of affairs. Jacob, in particular, refers to his roles as spanning across all divisions when he states:

Excerpt 5.6

1. I don't have meetings with my men, I have one leading hand, and I've just got another
2. guy now who's gonna take over from me, there's three of us that run the department but I
3. look after the whole area then I distribute that individually to my personnel so and we
4. have a meeting of my personnel and if there's a, a how can I say, a problem with
5. equipment or a problem with occupation health or a problem with cleaning I get all the
6. guys together and say look guys we need to sweep our act get our act together and tidy up
7. our workshop it looks bad we have to do things properly

He also refers to the importance of face-to-face communication as opposed to the use of technology to get the job done. However, the way he describes the interactions with 'his personnel' still indicates a top-down approach whereby the interactions themselves are 'guided' by him towards his desired outcomes which are in line with those of the organization. When asked how he manages communication on the floor, he states:

Excerpt 5.7

1. L so ok would you say you sort of adjust or accommodate to some extent for people –
2. J yeh I do, I don't do it the same for everybody, I do, I take everyone on their own
3. merit because I've got four or five different languages in my department plus on the
4. floor ahh in the factory and I try and understand what they're trying to get across to
5. me if I do it in a way that I don't care then I'm not achieving what I want to do you
6. know that's the way I look at it
- ...
7. J well it's a tone of voice you gotta do too you can't be too abrupt or too rude or too
8. demanding, I'd rather how can you say in the old language, I'd rather throw ideas at
9. him and see what comes back in the way of understanding how he thinks to do the
10. job, so I what they call in the old way I throw some pebbles and see how the pebbles
11. come back, in the way of communicating, if I tell him to do a certain job and he

12. understands then he walks away, if he looks at me a bit strangely and I said you
13. don't understand this and he says no I'm not sure then I'll explain it to him in a
14. different way so he gets the message, I do that with all people, ahhh not only with
15. with ahh people from overseas but Australians because sometimes my interpretation
16. what I want done is different to the apprentice that I have as an Australian uhhh he
17. thinks differently and I don't want him to think differently, I want him to do in the
18. way I want him to do because that's the way it has to be fit into whatever his gotta
19. do, the system, and you know sometimes the timeframe of doing the job is limited
20. and I don't want to overstate the timeframe when I can do it in a small timeframe,
21. I never think on my own only I like to see I always ask questions from the other
22. person how they would think just in my mind to see he's not stupid he's got his own
23. way of thinking, do some research see how he thinks and then we improve on that or
24. I go with him and I agree with him, it's not always everything I think it's always the
25. right way, 'cause they gotta mind of their own and I always think he's got a way of
26. doing it that I may not even think of so I have to look at both sides of the fence
27. L ok that really interesting ways of doing and ways of speaking
28. J exactly, I mean I'll give you an – I'll give you a quick example if a person in the,
29. manufacturing, production area works on this machine all day and they come up to
30. me and I say no that's wrong what you're doing, they've been doing this day and
31. night it's better for me to go up and say what can I do to make it better for you to
32. work here or how can I prepare the machine to make it easier for you to work and
33. the information they have is a lot more informal than a bloke that sits behind a desk
34. all day and hasn't got a clue what's going on on the floor

Interestingly, as shown from line 25 to line 34 Jacob does acknowledge the gap, not only in communication but also in information between 'the upstairs' and the floor. However, he views this as an unavoidable and long standing issue which has to be dealt with 'locally' (by him) rather than at a managerial level.

Anthony's account also resonates with Jacob's description and justification of how interactions, and therefore operations, are conducted on the floor. In the excerpts below Anthony refers to other places where he has worked and explains why at PTS there are no meetings but rather interactions among only a few people at a time, those who are involved in the job at hand where instructions are handed down rather than discussed:

Excerpt 5.8

1. L ...Um, do you have meetings?
2. A Very rarely.
3. L Very rarely.
4. A Because, the way, the culture is very different like I told you the other day. The
5. culture here is very different. We are very point blank and you know, instead calling
6. up a meeting and discussing and going to a computer and [inc] and things like that,
7. we get [told what we need]
8. L [inc]
9. A yeah it's all hands on, you know? So usually what happens is my boss is not here
10. now, uh he comes up and says, Anthony we've got to do this, that and that and
11. obviously you'll have to do this first and second that and third one of that or
12. whatever. So I go over and design it. Once I design it, I always try to see if I can do
13. it any different from whatever my initial concepts are, whatever. And once it has
14. come to a point where I think yeah this is what it is

He also remarks on the chiasm between the decision makers (upstairs) and the people who work on the floor. Specifically when asked about the 6 Ss training he says:

Excerpt 5.9

1. A See, if there is a group of 10 people from the shop floor there should be one person
2. from the management sitting in there as well. He should understand how hear or
3. listen to what these guys are saying actually
4. L Um
5. A You know what I mean? So they are listening at training and they're airing their
6. views in a separate chamber and you're doing in a separate chamber and the guy
7. who is actually conducting the course is someone who is saying that he would try to
8. get these things together and he is not part of the system at all he is just comes, does
9. his course, gets his money, out he goes. You know? This is, this is what I say is
10. common sense, you know what I mean?
- ...
11. A Yeh wife and husband, the husband says can I have pasta, pasta today?
12. L (@)
13. A Okay? Okay? And I'll be home by 9 o'clock, I'm at work, I'm very busy I can't
14. move. Okay. And the wife says yeh no problem I'll give it a shot but I'll be home
15. only at quarter past, uh at quarter to 9. So there's the difference of only 15 minutes
16. okay. But nobody is checking to see if there's any pasta available or should we go
17. and buy it? You know that sort of things you know?

Lines 13 to 17 in particular, highlight the lack of communication between 'upstairs' and 'downstairs' and suggest also, on the side of management, a lack of knowledge of the context and at worst, a lack of willingness to gain insights into the needs of the context in which the training (intended to implement lean manufacturing) is to be conducted. As shown in Chapter 6, (excerpt 6.30) this state of affairs contributes to the general skepticism that substantial changes are going be initiated by the management and followed through effectively.

As far as the 'conversation' between machine operators and/or production people and the Tool Room is concerned Anthony also shares Jacob views in regards to making an effort to communicate when issues arise or when mechanical or technical assistance is sought on the production areas. However beyond the possible linguistic shortcomings he also identifies difficulties of interactions due to the difference in technical knowledge and generally the fact that machine operators belong to a different generation and have been using old machinery. As indicated by Jacob, these issues are dealt with at a 'localized' but 'centralized' level on a contingency basis:

Excerpt 5.10

1. A yeh at times certain people with the way they speak okay? If I speak like in a proper
2. using technical words and technical items they would not understand what it is or
3. what they because their English is like you know?
4. L Limited?

5. A Limited or whatever, so what happens is at times you've got to understand what
6. they're trying to say because even they are not technically sound to explain their
7. problem to us
8. L Yes.
9. A So it's a bit of you got to see as well as it's,
10. L yes
11. A it's just not communication you've got to, you've got to try and visualise what the
12. problems are, I mean Jacob is very good, [so the]
13. L [yes, yes]!
14. A people when they come and speak
15. L yes
16. A he understands everything, every bit of it and I'm standing there and I'll be looking
17. up into the sky I wouldn't have got a single word, but so saying, he's got that knack
18. of it don't how, [he's very good] at it.
19. L [yeh, yeh, yeh]and he repeats everything 600 times [until they get it]
20. A [yeh he is very] good that way and mh, the thing is I think
21. the moment the problem starts, like he picks up a few words from the problems
22. and he pretty much goes into the area of where the problem is, [you know]?
23. L [Yes]
24. A From there he is figuring it out as well? Whereas me, we have to look from the
25. outside what it is, what he is talking about, then look at the problem, and that, by the
26. time you get there the sentence is finished what this bloke is trying to say. So in fact
27. I need more explanation and they're finding it hard or whatever at times.
28. L Yep
29. A Yeh but – but my interaction up at that end is also very limited. It's [not that –

As seen above then, the interdependence between the Tool Room and the other sections is mostly under Jacob's control and it is apparent that this is partly due to his stock of interactional knowledge and to his experience in not only dealing with non-English-speaking-background employees but also with technology issues in use at PTS, spanning from old to new systems. As delineated in Chapters 2 and 3, the above instance also illustrates how the notion of 'intercultural communication' then, takes on a broader scope than the one concerning spoken interactions and different communicative styles to include diversity in other areas such as technical knowledge, competencies and ways of doing.

When it comes to strictly technical matters however, the level of interdependence between the Tool Room and the 'upstairs engineers' is somewhat de-centralized and left to the individual technicians (Anthony and the design engineers from upstairs, Jack and Raul) to manage. The meetings between these usually occur in the side-shed of the TR where issues such as those regarding compatibilities between models and drawings or similar are discussed and negotiated. Anthony reports that there are no difficulties of communication on these occasions whereby an agreement has to be found in spite of diversity of opinions, in view of the desired functionality of the tools before they can be used for production or the smooth proceeding of operations in general (see also Chapter 7, excerpts 7.20, 7.26, 7.33, 7.39).

Excerpt 5.11

1. A I don't know if they have a problem listening to me (@).
2. L Maybe too fast! (@) Well if, if they get it right I guess, um
3. A I mean things are all going smooth, we haven't had any issues or something or you
4. know? I don't know if they are being more attentive when I am talking, so that could
5. be an option, I don't know?
6. L Do you have um, a lot of interactions with them? [Frequently, yeh]
7. A [at times yes]. Yeh I had to.
8. L Because of the drawings?
9. A Yeh because of the drawings at certain times, they send a model, there is no drawing,
10. so things like that you know what I mean? And obviously they need to know when
11. I'll get it, what I get it, how I do it or whatever and you know? [Yeh] there is
12. interactions always.

When asked what role Jacob has in these interactions, he states that his experience in the company contributes to speed things up and generates more options to pursue rather than directions to take:

Excerpt 5.12

1. L Anyway. Um, okay, um what, how does Jacob come into play in on these, in the,
2. in this process?
3. A Well, what-what experience he is, over the years with the time he has spent here, 30
4. odd years or something like that he's got a lot of knowledge. As for PTS products
5. goes, he's got good knowledge. Okay? So there's lot, see this drawing is a
6. manufacturing drawing only okay? The basic drawings, dimensions are in there, not
7. the entire, the whole profile is not there, okay? So for that we need to go further into
8. the Australian Standards book
9. L [um]
10. A [from] where we get the drawing
11. L Yep
12. A and other than that when it (...) I'm working on a (inc) day only from the past 6
13. years or whatever, he's been working for that, with the last 30 years or something
14. you know?
15. L Uhm.
16. A So there are certain things, certain things which he knows is better or works better,
17. just out of pure experience you know? So there are always suggestions, why don't
18. you try this or try that or try this, you know what I mean? And whereas our scope is,
19. we are getting there, it's not that we don't know certain things, but we have to sit and
20. think for him, it just flows on.

This is also highlighted in Chapter 7, (excerpt 7.34) where Anthony states that Jacob still has to be kept informed of the course of actions being undertaken but does not intervene in the decision making process especially in relation to the design's mechanics and processes.

Another aspect of the workshop floor operations which entails interdependence is the one concerning occupational health and safety. As mentioned in Chapter 4 and above, in line with the 6Ss training and the related changes in OHS's implementation procedures an OHS officer, Sam, was appointed a short time before fieldwork commenced. However, despite the general principles underlying the lean manufacturing systems which point to a shared

ownership of a safety work environment at all levels of the organization (Anvari et al., 2011), Sam's role appears to be more concerning control and inspection rather than implementation. Excerpt 5.13 below reports Anthony's view on this issue prompted by the researcher's observation during the retrospective interview, that Sam is very 'vocal' with people as his voice is constantly heard in the background of the recordings:

Excerpt 5.13

1. L He's always around yeh. Okay.
2. A When you don't need him the most (@)
3. L (@) everyone [is the same].
4. A [When-when] somebody is going to do something bad he is around there in that
5. corner.
6. L No, yeh um
7. A Which is a good thing in a way (@)
- ...
8. A Yeh I know that's what I'm saying, like in most cases, if you are very dumb, you
9. need people around you, you know what I mean?
10. L (@) Yes.
11. A But any person with-with a basic IQ and a basic common sense, [you] wouldn't
12. come-
13. L [yeh]
14. A across many issues and [you don't need policing],
15. L [yeh but sometimes]
16. A like you don't need policing around, you know what I mean?
17. L [Yeh].
18. A [It's like] this, [everywhere they] say
19. L [sometimes there's] um, it's-it's um, a requirement
20. A Yeh
21. L and that
22. A yeh at times yeh.
23. L (incomp)
24. A But what I'm saying is in most cases all the streets are marked, say in 60, 50, 40 or
25. whatever the speed limits are but you still you need the police around every now and
26. then to catch you otherwise eventually they no uh-uh there's nobody, less-less work
27. for them you know what I mean? Let's do it, who cares, who's going to catch us you
28. know?

Here, Anthony is pointing to the lack of motivation towards changing habits on the side of workers but at the same time also a lack of genuine interest in implementing from the management side rather than enforcing through, once again a centralized, top-to-bottom approach.

In sum, as will be shown in more detail in Chapter 6, participants seem to position themselves differently with respect to their roles in the communicative chain among divisions: Anthony, in virtue of his expertise, appears to be taking the floor more consistently in the divisions' 'interdependence conversation' when it comes to interacting at technical levels and in particular when the employment of the new technology is concerned whereas he tends to follow instructions in regards to modification, adjustments

or repairs of preexisting machinery or tools. Similarly, Jacob’s intervention in the ‘conversation’ between Anthony and the design engineers ‘from upstairs’ is somewhat limited to being informed on the procedures decided upon (see also Chapter 6 and 7) whereas it tends to be prominent when it comes to issues pertaining jobs that are ‘already running’ and where pre-existing technology or a mix of old and new technology is being used.

As illustrated in more detail in Chapter 6 and 7 then, generally speaking, this is in line with the type of engagement, the other workers of the TR, in charge of maintenance, have across divisions whereby, except for routine operations they have to call Jacob on site in order to go ahead with jobs or ask him for the ‘go ahead’. This is the case of Stan who chooses not to take any initiative in regards to the tasks he is called upon in the other divisions without first seeking Jacob’s approval before proceeding (see excerpt 6.36, 6.42 and 7.36, 7.37, 7.43).

From the above it is clear that production technology, structure and coordination types strongly influence collaborative behaviours and types of interactions. This relationship is exemplified by the synopsis below.

SMALL BATCH, CUSTOMIZED PRODUCTION = CONTINGENT TASK/ACTIVITIES	LARGE BATCH, STANDARDIZED, PLANNED PRODUCTION = ROUTINE ACTIVITIES
↕	↕
WIDE SET OF COLLABORATIVE COLLABORATIVE BEHAVIOURS & HIGH SITUATION	LIMITED SET OF BEHAVIOURS & LOW SITUATION
AWARENESS (WITH WHOM, WHEN, HOW, WHAT ABOUT)	AWARENESS
↕	↕
WIDE RANGE OF VERBAL INTERACTIONS	LIMITED RANGE OR SPORADIC INTERACTIONS

The connections between technology, individuals and work at hand is further highlighted through the notion of Situation Awareness (SA). SA, as the awareness of individuals within an organized environment, of the mechanics of their coordinated actions, underpins the nexus of discourses, sites of engagements and actions themselves in its formation and continuous transformation within the ‘company works’. As illustrated in Chapters 6 and 7, SA is quite problematic across divisions where communication is often hurdled by politics of hierarchical nature and contrasting interests and worldviews are at play both at institutional and individual levels.

5.3.4 Situation Awareness

Of crucial importance within the adoption of technology processes and related behaviours is the awareness at an individual, group and ultimately at a network level of the technologies and processes themselves and the status of related operations.

Endsley (1995) has identified three levels of situation awareness. Level 1 is the basic awareness of available information. It answers the question, “What information do we have about the task to be performed?” or “Where are the tools?” It is information that can be shared with others (or pooled) for use by others because it has a global, non-situated frame of reference. In contrast, Levels 2 and 3 SA address the meaning of the information in the present and future with respect to available courses of action. Levels 2 and 3 SA require a situated frame of reference with respect to available courses of action. This makes pooling level 2 and level 3 information across organizations problematic, and so interdependence regarding information at these levels tends to be sequential or reciprocal. In contrast, distributed team members performing an intensive task using reciprocal interdependence and coordinating through mutual adjustment to each others’ actions require complete Levels 1, 2, and 3 SA to collaborate effectively. As mentioned above, at PTS, level 2 and 3 are highly problematic as the computerized production systems do not favour communication between departments on a regular basis rather on a contingent one when logistical or mechanical complications, breakdowns or other unexpected situations occur. Communication is therefore constant only within the members of the Tool Room and within those of the warehouse whereas it is sporadic and contingency- based between these two groups and members of the other departments. Jamie’s excerpt from an interview illustrates this point:

Excerpt 5.14

1. J ... six of us. Six of us have to work together for everything to be done.
2. If we don’t work together none of it can be done.

Interactions among the team members are so routinised and frequent that have become inextricable part of work activities themselves. ‘Meetings’, intended as more formal interactions are not considered necessary except in specific circumstances, as the following excerpt shows:

Excerpt 5.15

1. L Uhm and the six of you how many times do you have meetings at work?
2. J Uhm roughly we hardly have any meeting we go basically everybody know what’s
3. happening and everybody know what to do before the end of the day so the only
4. time we have meeting when it’s something when we not doing something right, or
5. something went wrong then we have the meeting

The following also shows the chain of interactivities in the case of missing parts to be tracked down whereby a backward process has to be carried out and communication among the parties involved is crucial:

Excerpt 5.16

1. J Sometimes the customer, sometimes the stuff **we** stand out **we** put the labels on the
2. cans. They send **us** an email that it's not there so **we** go back to the code chase the
3. number, chase everything. And if the paperwork says it's in the box it means it's in
4. the box. If the paperwork says it's in the box but it's not in the box then it's **our** fault
5. L ... Uhm okay when you have a problem at work with someone or a problem with the
6. job itself, what do you do?
7. J I have to find out what's really going on or the first person you look for is my
8. supervisor. I need to find out what's going on, which one is going and when is going.
9. L Okay. What uhm what if something goes wrong and do you have to report it to the
10. supervisor?
11. J Uhm (.) Yes
12. L Every time?
13. J No, no only if something major. Only if something I know is going to come back
14. and **hunt our warehouse**
15. L @@
16. J Which is one of us – which is one of us sends something out and it's wrong all three
17. of us are in trouble
18. L Yeah of course it come back to you
19. J And it haunt us

Interestingly Jamie acknowledges the ownership of responsibility at a team level, his, his supervisor's and a senior worker's, for any mistake that is made at this final stage of production. The result of the mistake, 'their' warehouse becoming 'haunted', points to the fact that the stock which is supposedly ready to be shipped will be 'sitting in the warehouse' until the problem is tracked down by following the procedures in a reverse way. However, until this is done there will be a stalling and a consequent loss of money. Jamie's jocular observation on missing parts in the ready-to-ship product in the excerpt above, resonates with Jacob's remarks on the computerization of manufacturing processes whereby a problem may be overlooked until the very end of the process itself. As we can see from the above SA of team members is a crucial element in the formation and maintenance of 'socio-technical' systems whereby continuous adjustments to technology and to each other have established nexuses which are nonetheless transforming at all times.

In the following sections an account is given of how technology and organizational structure integrates or attempts to integrate old and new systems of working and how nexuses of practice, in this regard, provide sites for discourses which also reflect and enact this dichotomy as well as strategically try to reconcile it. The researcher's account of the access to the research site and the data collection process as well as the verbal data from interactions and interviews analysed below show the intersections of the various systems and processes through which the historical mind and body of the participants have come to account for and make sense of the organization of their work.

5.4 The many hats of the researcher: accounts of the nexus ‘upstairs’ – ‘downstairs’

This and the following sections deal with the fieldwork carried out in this study and include the first contacts with the organization, the setting up of appointments and meetings with the HR manager of the company and my actual stepping onto the factory floor. It further focuses on my observations, interviews, informal conversations with employees around the company and my positioning across the workshop floor and towards participants and non-participants and, in particular between management and factory floor. As shown below, my positioning would be a choice of self representation in terms of alignment with either management or floor’s employees due to the tension between these two groups. Although I chose to represent myself and my research in as ‘neutral’ terms as possible, by stressing the project’s language educational aim, the rapport building with my participants entailed an unavoidable aligning process. This process, would also accompany the shaping and construction of my motivational relevancies and those of my participants as they progressively became ‘participants’ to my study.

The chiasm between management and workshop floor employees in my research site, where the majority were of migrant background (approximately 170 out of 240), manifested through the several conversations with the HR manager and other management staff, indicated several connections with the long standing perceived or real, problematic communication among workshop floor employees and between these and management itself. Both groups referred to each other as ‘the people downstairs’ and ‘the people upstairs’ respectively. This state of affairs warranted a deeper investigation into how and to what extent these difficulties and ‘lack of English’ were overcome in order to get the job done and in particular, if any strategies were being employed to reconcile the parties at play in order to serve work and organizational requirements.

5.4.1 The Organization’s history, ‘ethnification’ discourses and language practices

The chiasm between workshop floor and management was a recurrent theme in both correspondence and conversations with the HR management in my quest to gain access to the research site. In most literature on multicultural workplaces this chiasm is almost invariably associated with the traditional subordinate position in which migrant workers are employed due to lack of skills, specialized training/education and language competence and the resulting ‘work enclaves’ (Bertone, 2009; Clyne, 1994; Colic-Peisker, 2011; Goldstein, 1997; Grossi, 2012; Piller, 2010, 2011). Although the socio-economic and political context had changed with the increasing need to employ personnel from overseas in order to fill Australia’s skills’ shortages, the overall view of factory floor staff as mainly employed under ‘demand and offer’ conditions rather than human capital to become part of the organization’s capital and growth seemed unaltered. The literature, in this regard, pointed to the traditional view of Australia as ‘an employer/host-country’ for low

workforce through intake of unskilled migrants coming at various times and historical circumstances. This view has facilitated what Day calls ethnification processes within workplaces whereby 'ethnic groups categorizations such as 'Chinese', 'Polish' were often inappropriate and even contested categorizations among employees' (Day 1994: 218) and expressions have been coined such as "referring to collective of people, in particular expressions which have the potential to refer to people as members of social groups generally and ethnic and cultural groups specifically" (Day 1994: 218).

Indicative in this regard, during my conversations with the HR manager was her perception that communication with most of the workers employed in production could only be possible through a representative of the ethnic group whom, she believed, was the only one proficient enough in English and who usually acted as a spoke-person. After a few conversations with the same HR manager and a few initial visits to the company I realized that the manager view of each group having a spoke-person who was the only one able to communicate in English had been influenced by the very tense enterprise bargaining through which the company was going. I later learned that spoke-people were not necessarily of the same ethnic group but unions' representatives. There was no direct contact between the HR manager and workers. Besides the above mentioned chiasm, others factors started to emerge that would hinder communication and rapport between the parties: the gender of the manager (a woman) and the constraints within which she covered her HR role which was confined to administrative tasks (payroll and benefits administration) with no real decisional roles related to the management of human resources such as training, assessment, succession planning and labour relations as she later confirmed in other informal conversations. Therefore within her role-capacity and view there would be no communication with floor employees except in specific circumstances such as enterprise bargaining processes in which Unions' representations were heavily involved and whereby the workforce participated through a spoke-person.

Discourses of 'demand and offer' thus seem to continue to dominate the employment management principles of this type of organizational settings whereby traditionally, factory floor employees are synonymous with manual work, low education and lack of language skills (Iredale, 2001).

Jacob, the Site Service Manager describes what looks like a deliberate choice on his side to employ personnel of non-Australian background in the following terms:

Excerpt 5.17

1. J [If you look] at my department and have a look at the personnel you'll probably find
2. that 95% or 90% are all immigrants of [some sort]
3. L [yes, yes]
4. J there-there's not many there that are dinky di Australian except for a couple of
5. young guys that have come through the system. Uh and I've done that so they're,
6. two reasons, I've done that for the last 20 years I've hired all, sort of always hired
7. somebody I've hired some bad ones and I've hired some good ones you know and
8. [that's] just like it is.

9. L [yes]
10. J But it works for me you know?
11. L [Yeh]
12. J You know?

Although not explicitly expressed, it is clear how Jacob makes a distinction between Australian and non-Australian as he also ‘attempts’ to give reasons for his decision to hire non-Australians: their perceived ability to provide ‘easy-to-engage’ low level manual labour or, as he states in another interview (Chapter 6), specialised ‘manual’ labour (Italians were good builders, Yugoslavs good carpenters, Germans good mechanics).

This view corroborates the literature concerning immigration phenomena and industrial relations policies in so far as, on the one hand, across the years and the different contexts, one of the outcomes of immigration intakes has been the formation of ethnic work enclaves (Beckhusen et al., 2012; Clyne, 1994; Goldstein, 1997; Ficorilli, 2005; Waldinger, 2000), on the other, at the industrial relations level especially, trade unions have made a pragmatic, as well as a principled shift to embrace immigrant workers from non-MES (mainly English speaking) countries (D’Netto, 2008). However the transition from a centralized system of conciliation and arbitration to a more deregulated labour market has nonetheless compounded the disadvantage suffered by these workers (Teicher et al., 2012).

From the perspective of language proficiency a further process of ‘enclavization’ has taken place whereby the limited exposure to speakers of languages other than one’s own not only has limited the acquisition of the second language but has also contributed to the further confinement of these workers to specific subordinate roles and tasks within workplaces. It is often the case that these groups are those more ‘culturally distant’ or from non-European source countries (Jupp, 2002; Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2006). In Chapter 7, excerpt 7.13, in his categorization of Arthur his leading hand of Laotian background, Jacob implicitly links his language skills to the fact that once in a supervisory position, Arthur was not able to handle the pressure. However, in the excerpt below Jacob does not see Arthur’s language as an impediment:

Excerpt 5.18

1. J And I’ve – I’ve been overseas with him through work and he’s-he’s a nice guy you
2. know I really get on with him fine he does what he, what I ask him to do and he does
3. it quite comfortably without any back raised you know? But again sometimes I have
4. to reverse the reverse side of things to make sure that what I ask is-is the same thing
5. what’s going to happen.

However, it is clear from the excerpt above how the lack of language skills makes the communication flow in one direction only and therefore makes it easier for Joe to ‘ask for something to be done’ without ‘any back raised’. This resonates with the reasons, he hints at, for hiring non-English speaking background workers (see previous excerpt, 5.17).

Talking of a colleague, a female production manager, a similar hierarchical level to his, Jacob associates diversity, cultural difference and therefore attrition on issues of management and ‘know-how’ to gender and professional background. However, it is evident that the backdrop of his argument is the ethnic and linguistic background of the person in question:

Excerpt 5.19

1. J [the-the] difficulties with-with Hannah is-is [another], it's-it's ano-another door.
It's a
2. L [okay]
3. J difficult door. She's in charge of manufacturing
4. L okay
5. J but this is not racial but she's a [woman] who's done [manufacturing] for circuit
6. boards
7. L [huhm][yep]
8. J ... [it-it's the way], the way she comes at you, you must, she-she-she speaks with a,
[with a, with an Afghani accent] and we all take the Mickey out of her you know?

Here Jacob evidently finds it difficult to reconcile the ethnic, linguistic and gender with the Hannah's managerial position.

In the excerpts above it is evident how he employs discourse strategies to make sense and explain the hiring of labourers with low English skills. Throughout the interview he chooses the migration and ‘imported labour’ Discourse as a site of engagement to inscribe the localized company's need to employ a particular type of worker and his individual call as an agent of the organization itself. The rising of Hannah to a managerial role does in her own words put at risk the company's establishment.

However, as he states, later in the interview, the choice to ‘place’ Hannah in such a role is justified by the fact that “she's good at pushing the goods out of the door”, get the production flow and the goods ready to go. The analysis of a communicative event in Chapter 7 (Excerpts 7.22, 7.23, 7.25), between Jacob, Anthony and Hannah will further highlight these dynamics. Excerpt 5.19 above also introduces another point, (see Chapter 2 and 3): the view that diversity and problematic communication go beyond differences in ethnic background to include professional and cultural/organizational differences.

Albert and Arthur, the highly specialized tool makers from India make this point during a casual conversation I had with them while on a break. Anthony, in particular, identifies different diversity issues concerning employees working in the production area, specifically their lack of technical knowledge. However, he states that work is paramount to diversity or racial issues:

Excerpt 5.20

1. A yeah nah nah maybe it's offensive because of the culture or whatever the culture I
2. came from or whatever, but still I've been able to get it across and people stop using

3. it against you, you know, things like that.
4. L Yeah, yeah
5. A You have to work, we-we can't go by the true word what they said because that's
6. what-what, maybe that's not what they mean at times.

As seen in excerpt 5.10, above, he also acknowledges the ability of Jacob in combining his technical knowledge with the interactional skills he employs to communicate with workers of non-English-speaking-background. Here Anthony acknowledges Jacob's ability to understand and recognize the problems the workers are trying to explain. This resonates with both Jacob's SIK and the role of control he takes on in relation to the course of action to be taken: identification of the type of the breakdown, decision on how to go about it and the organization of repair (authorizing order of parts, payment, etc). Jacob is familiar with the nexus at hand and how it is to unravel. He is himself the catalyst of the nexus through the strategies he uses to resolve the difficulties in communication that can potentially make it more problematic.

Also Albert, the other Indian tool maker finds the generational and technical background differences, besides the linguistic one, as hindering effective communication:

Excerpt 5.21

1. Al There are a few Asian people who are here working – ahh in the beginning I used to
2. find it difficult to understand their slang of English
3. L Asian, Chinese, Vietnamese?
4. Al Vietnamese. Yes all those.
5. L Okay.
6. Al Basically Chinese Vietnamese are
7. L [Korean]
8. Al [Korean yes, we called them Ma Ma- Malaysians]
9. L [Malaysians]
10. Al No Malaysians Malaysians are alright. What we call the Asian people Chinese (...)
11. Middle East South –
12. L [South East Asia] in Indonesia they speak I mean they usually study English –
13. Al [so ahh,] I don't say they are bad in English. They are good in English but because
14. we have not communicated before with them so we find it difficult in the initial
15. stages. They could, not be saying the right thing but I won't be thinking is right
16. because of the language –
17. L Yes, yes I understand. So what do you do like can you like okay for example
18. someone says something you don't understand. What- would you do like what would you actually say?
19. Al Ah I try to split the English in a simple form or I try to avoid difficult words or just
20. try just try to put in simple technical language that they understand. Firstly we try to
21. see you have to see what they are trying to do and what they're trying to say to us.
22. L [On, on]
23. Al [on the job] From our maintenance department we go and see we try to solve some
24. problems regarding the tool or regarding the machine. The first thing that normally
25. comes is that – ohh the people in the maintenance department have not fixed it. It's a
26. common thing it's a blame game people normally do so you can't say that he's right
27. or I am right unless we know what the problem is. So we try, it's very hard to
28. convince experienced people or an aged person or an experienced person –

In this excerpt Albert explains how, communicating with others on the workshop floor may be difficult due to the fact that interactions between himself and the workers in production are rare and therefore there is no established practice to facilitate them.

Albert works at a CNC machine (computer numerical control tool making machine) and his job only requires sporadic interactions with other workers mainly concerning the manual (rather than the electronical) making of tools for production. Additionally he points to the difference in work, 'professional status' and age causing difference in perspectives that are hard to reconcile in interactions.

As shown above, both Anthony and Albert refer to most of the employees as 'production people' or 'Asians'. These workers are mainly of South-East Asian background (Vietnamese and Cambodian) and they have been working for TPS for a long time. They are semi-skilled personnel and the only communication they engage in occurs in cases of malfunctioning or breakdowns of the machines they work on. As mentioned in interviews, although it is acknowledged by all that the machine operators (the 'production people') are the best qualified to know what happened to their machine, they are also perceived as hardly being able to express it in words making it difficult to take timely appropriate action. Despite recognizing the hurdles

Albert also finds that 'walking to the job' is one of the effective nexuses employed to solve the problem at hand, a point also raised by Jacob. Both Anthony and Albert, in the excerpts, above indicate in particular the visualization of the problem by the maintenance technicians as crucial 'to fix the problem' despite the linguistic and cultural differences. The sites of engagement and the nexuses that are created as a consequence, thus entail the use of CS that strive to establish:

- 1) a channel of understanding (spatial, temporal and mechanical) and cultural differences;
- 2) a concerted actioning upon the problem (the parties involved show, explain, talk about the breakdown and invest each other with agency-order;
- 3) what course of action and series of steps is decided by the authority-agent;
- 4) whether the course of action is organization-viable (justified by present, past and future purpose-serving motives).

The notion of socio-technical systems here best describes the processes of adjustment that have taken place across the years in order to overcome not only linguistic shortcomings but also to integrate as much as possible human skills and technology. The Maintenance Department or Tool Room is where the changes are 'managed' whereby old production systems and machines are to be integrated with newer technology, as it will be shown in the sections below.

As Jacob remarks, in one of the interviews, practices and, in particular, communication practices are established overtime whereby one's 'Stock of Interactional Knowledge' (SIK) comes into play:

Excerpt 5.22

1. J It's an important issue that you need to comprehend a certain amount of English to
2. get by, you need to know where the toilets are, you need to know what the sign
3. means, that's the first thing, you gotta understand that if the English is there, ahh he
4. understands the comprehension then I can deal with that, ahh comfortably, I can give
5. him tasks to do, I can give him a piece of paper to, I won't give him a written paper,
6. I'll give him a drawing, can you make that? If I give him a piece of paper with all the
7. information he needs on it, yeh I can do that, and ahh I'll let him go, and if he needs
8. help, then we assign him somebody to give him help, so it's a two way street
9. [The]-the most [of the] concept because depends on how I talk uh if I talk too
10. complicated
11. L [right]
12. J or too high-hierarchy uh some of the nationalities don't comprehend that so therefore
13. I simplify it and then-then I ask the question I ask the reverse question –
14. L uhu, [yeh]

Here Jacob explains how, over the years, he has 'learned' how to communicate with workers with limited language skills. Interestingly, he describes the interaction as a 'one-way' process where little participation other than 'comprehending' and executing what is needed is required of the worker. In this respect, Jacob states "... the comprehension then I can deal with that, comfortably ..." indicating in this way that he is invested by both the 'individual' and the 'institutional role' to take control of how work is to be administered through communication.

Communicative roles as reflecting organizational/institutional roles especially among superordinates and subordinates are not uncommon in such contexts as factory floors. It is often the case that the foreman or supervisor acts as an 'intermediary' between the group of workers s/he supervises and other employees or superordinates. This often occurs in the case of groups of workers of the same ethnicity (Ficorilli, 2005; Goldstein, 1997) and where there is a strong perception of lack of communicative skills whereby the most linguistically confident 'takes the floor'. However, it may also occur that the foreman acts as a gatekeeper, as seen above (Excerpts 5.1, 5.2, 5.3) or as a 'pusher' as in making sure the product is ready by the deadline through preventing or minimizing any disruptions or interruptions during worker's activities (including pauses that workers may take) ('pushing the product out of the door' – see excerpt 5.1 above from Stan's interview). Similarly Jacob also describes the same supervisor, Connie, as 'pushy' when he states:

Excerpt 5.23

1. J ... she's very aggressive with her ways to get the job out.
- ...
2. I But she's uh, she's got a very loud voice and uh, very pushy person like Hannah.
- ...

3. J And she screams at people because she's [finds] it difficult to
4. L [she]
5. J communicate with people or to try and get them to do things.

On the contrary Liam, the supervisor of Fijian background in the Fabrication department, points to the fact that despite the linguistic shortcomings of the workers in his team as well as his, interactions are made possible by a general good-will to make an effort to communicate and his own attitude, a 'non top-down', cooperative, egalitarian and hands-on approach. In this respect he states:

Excerpt 5.24

1. L it's probably all of them, English, my English, their English, comprehending them,
2. what they are trying to say, so it's a combination of everything
- ...
3. L for me its pretty challenging, at home I speak in Fijian to the kids and they know
4. what to do, here if you speak English people still get confused, in my department,
5. I would have showed them, I talk with my hand, instead of uh ... directly telling
6. them verbally. If I want someone to make something, ill pretty much show them how
7. to make it what I'm trying to get across, how to do it, so I do less time more action

Luke's easiness in communicating with the team he supervises has also been acknowledged by the management as he states:

Excerpt 5.25

1. L but who did somebody show you first how to manage the paperwork and all this
2. stuff
3. Li not really, they just said I was good with communicating with the boys, and they just
4. said, 'cause I was the first ever supervisor they ever employed
5. L they didn't have a supervisor before?
6. Li No and the boss thought I was good in getting the boys to work and do the job and
7. he said ill open up a position for you and you can control it all, but this I'm still, it's
8. too technical sometimes, all I see is that that ok that has to go out that day, I don't
9. get – I try not to get too much involved

However, he feels that his role is quite confined to his leading his team rather than 'getting into technical things' which he perceives may be out of his sphere of action as it appears in the following excerpt where is also indicated that his alignment (with his team and therefore on the side of the workshop floor employees) would be compromised by the politics involved at the management levels. The remark below is prompted by the researcher asking about an entry on one of the work-orders which are part of the paperwork Liam has to deal with:

Excerpt 5.26

1. Li but like you get used to it, its like changing gears on the car you know what I mean
2. L ok so these are all estimated work orders

3. Li oh I don't know what that means @ I let them talk about it upstairs and I just sit
4. there and smile

This position of his is further reiterated when Liam explains why he finds it easier to communicate with speakers of English as a second language as a result of an alignment process whereby a common goal has to be achieved in agreement:

Excerpt 5.27

1. Li well I reckon yeh its good cause we have ... not so much ... I feel ... not being racist
2. or anything but I feel that Australians have a disadvantage,
3. L who
4. Li Australians in general
5. L uhm in this way ahh I think yes ['cause]
6. Li [yeah] coz they are so stuck to one-
7. L mono lingual – one single mindset
8. Li If I come across to an Australian I will confuse them,
9. L @
10. Li do you understand what I mean if I come across to an Australian I will confuse them,
11. where if an employee that wasn't an Australian went up to an employee that had a
12. different ethnic background, that supervisor will be able to understand them because
13. our whole lives is trying to catch up in the lingos, trying to comprehend
14. L interpret and actually there are saying automatically you can see there is more than
15. just one way to say things
16. Li and that's not being racist or anything, people are telling me how do you understand
17. [inc]
18. L @ because nobody asks
19. Li @ because they are used to speaking English and understanding English whereas
20. I feel if you come from an non speaking background you are far more understanding
21. to people that have a different kind of language in their background, my whole life is
22. been challenging, trying to understand what people are trying to say

Liam's remarks here resonate with a solidarity element at play among himself, his team members and the workers on the floor in general which facilitates communication and alignment through accommodation.

It is clear from the excerpts above that even in the case of multi-skilled employees who are proficient in English, communication and participation is somewhat thwarted by 'production priorities' and therefore seen as somewhat unnecessary and, given the perceived linguistic difficulties of the participants, viewed as a hindrance rather than an advantage. Additionally, for these reasons, when a breakdown occurs or maintenance is needed at a machine, transactions and explanations between maintenance personnel and machine operators is carried out by supervisors. In this way, communicative participation on the side of the workers is limited or at least 'mediated' by a superior or someone perceived as more proficient in English whose organizational role is to minimize down-time and disruptions.

Anthony further points to this when he states in Excerpt 5.10 (lines 12-16) above: “I mean Jacob is very good, [so the] ... people when they come and speak ... he understands everything, every bit of it.”

However, both Anthony and Albert also point to communication problems that seem to go beyond the language shortcomings. In particular, they both acknowledge that there is a divergent worldview between the ‘maintenance people’ and the ‘production floor people’ as such and that it manifests in a ‘blame game’ among departments. Generational differences as well as differences in technical background and knowledge are identified, here and elsewhere among the factors causing divergence of views in doing and knowing.

Both employees then, recognise the need of ‘trying to understand’ by ‘going and seeing’ what the problem is (Albert: “From our maintenance department we go and see we try to solve some problems regarding the tool or regarding the machine.” – Anthony: “... so what happens is at times you’ve got to understand what they’re trying to say ... it’s just not communication you’ve got to, you’ve got to try and visualise what the problems are ...”).

As shown above and in the next sections, the nexus of ‘walking to the job’ (the visual and physical location of the problem at hand) is a recurrent one. CS are called upon here to facilitate the process or enforce it. In this regard, Jacob, in another interview, remarks on the necessity to have a thorough understanding of what the machine operator has to say since: “... he’s the one who’s on the machine 24/7, he knows better than everybody else what’s wrong with it.”

This is a crucial point as it does mark the institutional role of CS (get the job done despite divergences and objective difficulties to communicate) of investing all parties with equal agency. However, despite the acknowledged necessity to interact between the maintenance team and the workers in the production section, it is interesting to note, that, overall, participation in the process of decision making or more generally, in day-to-day work verbal exchanges, on the side of the latter is limited. Besides being perceived as non-proficient in English and therefore ‘difficult’ to communicate with, ‘production people’, as they are often referred to, are also seen as belonging to another ‘generation’, not only in terms of age-group but also in ‘technical’ or ‘organizational’ terms: recruited in an era in which manual labour rather than skills was in demand.

Here, the reverse of ‘communicative labour’ (Fairclough, 1995) occurs whereby the workplace does not pose expectations on migrant workers but does not afford benefits and opportunities either, as described by Iedema and Sheeres (2003), or rather these benefits and opportunities are not equally distributed. Given this climate, as testified also by the hurdles encountered to gain access to this type of research sites, the use of a second language as the focus of my study, could be considered a context-sensitive issue also due to its association with low literacy and difficulty in communicating more generally. This issue also appears at odds with the notion of “communication as central to capitalism because one has to express oneself, one has to speak, communicate, cooperate” for capitalism to succeed (Lazzarato, 1996: 136) and therefore a highly contested terrain.

However, as shown in the following section, this is also the place where communication strategies are embedded in the present actions and past history of the organization and transcend the actual, local interactions: they do serve the organization by establishing practices (production people are not supposed to talk but produce), roles (the spokesperson or gatekeeper) and ‘communicative’, non-communicative tasks (speaking to or for someone who cannot speak).

5.4.2 Access to the fieldwork: the visibility/invisibility issue and the Panopticon

As seen in Chapter 4, the modalities of access to fieldwork into research sites like the one object of this study have often been a crucial point of discussion in the extant literature.

The circumstances at TPS prior and during the time of fieldwork, had, in this capacity, extensive impact on the way I conducted my fieldwork in the organization. However, as I had to discover later, the same circumstances had been a long standing state of affairs between upstairs (management) and downstairs (workshop floor). My fieldwork was delayed and at one point put in doubt by the ‘very tense situation’ determined by an enterprise agreement bargaining process whereby the factory floor people were described by HR Management as “suspicious of every management’s move”. In one of the numerous meetings I had with the HR manager, although I explained that I would have to spend a significant amount of time on the factory floor, amidst the workers, to observe the interactions they engaged in, she voiced her concerns as follows: “you would probably be associated with the management itself as someone wanting to have information on their intentions.” Besides the mistrust that my presence would generate, the HR manager also pointed out that given the limited communicative skills and inability to express themselves probably no one would want to participate, unless “there would be something in it for them”.

She went on describing what she believed to be the general attitude of the workers on the factory floor:

Excerpt 5.28

1. HR: In general they don’t want to learn. Some have to be commended for the effort.
2. Although with an accent they make themselves understood very well.
- ...
3. HR: Some might have the qualifications of a brain surgeon – I wouldn’t have a clue –
4. but with the very limited language they possess they are stuck.

In some cases this divide showed in more exacerbated tones as in the words of Jake, the production manager of the fabrication section. Jake was appointed as my ‘escort’ during one of the few ‘guided tours’ of the factory that I was offered to avoid incidents due to the ‘dangerous areas’ of forging, welding and the warehouse. I would learn from him that:

Excerpt 5.29

1. JA ... many people have been given the opportunity in the past to change jobs, you
2. know, say from packaging, to production but most didn't want to change, they're
3. lazy they'd rather do the same job, they don't have to think ...

Again, as I will discover later into the fieldwork process, things 'on the floor' proved to be quite different from the management's perspective, especially in regard to the extent of language skills and the level of interactions occurring among employees. This is in line, as mentioned in Chapter 4, with what D'Netto et al. define as scarce knowledge on the side of the management, of both roles, skills or professional status and communication employed on the job by employees of diverse background (D'Netto, et al. 2008).

As it will be shown in the next section, the preliminary conversations with the management in the attempt to gain a status of 'acknowledgement' or rather, a 'privileged' angle of observation, would shape my positioning towards my participants and research as well as the way in which I physically treaded the workshop's floor, a mined territory.

The first stage of my data collection, besides the aim of gaining access to the organization as an insider, was characterised by my multiple transits between the two levels or sites of engagement. During my visits to the HR manager and therefore, to the upper level, I gradually acquired credibility as a researcher or at least, given my persistence, as someone serious about gathering some knowledge about a state of affairs that most, at a management level, believed beyond purpose. It took a long time and a cautious gradual relinquishing of control to the management to finally have a relatively 'free' access to the floor. I had to 'be visible' at all times, show alignment with the management's views, go through guided tours and accept 'guidance' on how to conduct my research. I got gradually in-between' the divide and through the gates.

5.4.2.1 The negotiation of data collection: an enterprise agreement

Based on my previous research experience in workplace fieldwork and especially on factory floors, I knew that proposing different ways in which I could circulate the workshop floor, approach and observe potential participants would allow the management to ponder how to best control my movements inside the factory and also over the process of recruitment. Two proposals in particular, although they were given more consideration than others and were discussed by the HR manager with other management representatives were eventually dismissed:

- 1) meeting employees at lunch time in the canteen where I would approach them informally and talk to them about the participation in the project;
- 2) the intervention of a 'middle-man' (foreman) whom employees trusted and who could 'intercede' in my favour.

The first proposal was rejected because of the annoyance my interrupting their lunch would have caused. The HR manager justified this rejection by saying: “they don’t want to be interrupted at lunch, they’re jealous of their time”.

A potential ‘middleman’, Jake, at first strongly refused to be my ‘guardian-angel’ as reported by HR. However, it was later decided, despite his reluctance, that he would have to monitor my movements every time I arrived at the plant.

As far as the recruitment process was concerned, the only least-intrusive way of recruiting participants that I could think of, was to place leaflets on the company’s notice board. Although sceptically, the HR manager edited the leaflet (see Appendix 1) by indicating herself as the first contact rather than myself. The waiting game began. In a week time HR sent me an email asking me if I wanted to go ahead given that only two employees of African background had contacted her. However, soon after another one joined in. Six other employees in the following week decided to participate.

When I met the first 2 employees to my surprise they were of Indian and not African background. However, as I had anticipated, the first to come forward were those with a high level of language competence. Throughout this time and the recruitment process, there was still a lot of uncertainty on my side as to how I would approach and shadow the participants on the job after the initial interviews and how I would put it to the management as I was still unclear about the extent to which I could impose my presence on the floor without interfering in their routine and above all without appearing intrusive.

My gut feeling was that: 1) the management felt very uncomfortable about my presence on the floor and specifically my being in contact with the floor’s employees; 2) on the one hand I would have to carefully distance myself from the company’s management in the attempt to form a trustworthy relation with my participants, on the other I had to maintain an image of professionalism and ‘objectivity with the management; 3) I would have to clearly define the scope of my research so as not to include anything that could indirectly suggest that information on their relationship with the company’s management was sought or anything that could evoke either shortcomings or virtues on both sides. I decided to stick with the study’s purpose described in my ‘contact email’ used to approach all my potential research sites:

... One of the aims of my study is to explore the possibility of improving the fit between communication modules of Training Packages and real workplace needs. Currently, there is a lot of emphasis at a federal level, on the revision of vocational courses in terms of communication skills.

This also matched my profile of ESL teacher at TAFE which I adopted as my ‘official’ identity when interviewing participants. I realized that this would be my congenial hat at this stage as I had had years of assessment interviewing as a teacher under my belt and the teaching/learning perspective would be a natural/neutral theme emerging out of the conversation with my participants anyway. However, as I soon realized I would often

change hats after sometime into the interview, replacing the original one with that of educational or family advisor, language expert or simply interlocutor on day-to-day matters. In two cases, by the end of the interview I also wore the hat of confidant on matters regarding open conflict with the company's management. This marked the beginning of my entrusted relationship with all my participants. However, it also meant that changing hats had to be sustained on a continuum basis: from someone who had been given access to the floor because privileged by the management to someone who sympathised with the cause of the workers and therefore in conflict with the 'upstairs views'.

As described in Chapter 4, I decided to carefully craft a proposal to schedule my access to the factory floor which gave the management the opportunity of a say over the time I would spend on the floor and above all the knowledge of where I was, with whom and at what time. This marked my official access to the factory floor.

5.4.2.2 The induction to visibility: from ally to suspected collaborationist

An induction session was arranged with the Safety Officer, Stephen, soon after I discussed my schedule with the HR Manager. I was given a brochure (see Appendix X) a pair of anti-glare glasses, a helmet and a visibility vest. I was then taken for an official tour on the factory floor. I was then told where to walk or stand and, vice-versa the areas I had to avoid for safety reasons. Interestingly, the visibility vest and goggles and, as I soon realized, the internal lay-out of the factory being designed as a panopticon (see pictures below) accounted for more than an observer paradox as my own visibility to others allowed my observation of others)



Picture 5.2 – The Panopticon

In fact, during the whole duration of my fieldwork on the floor, it soon became clear that my every move was being observed and recorded at all times: the more visible I was to everyone the more I could observe. On a day on which an evacuation drill was scheduled, I was on top of the roll list and mine was the first name to be called out loud as I tried to keep a low profile and mingle with the rest of the employees. On my first day of 'official observations' in the Tool Room an exaggeratedly high office chair was brought down from upstairs and given to me to sit on so that I could take notes, be out of the way and be

visible at the same time. I had been given rules with the privilege to observe and be observed as a lot of ethnographic literature reports to be the case when ethnography is conducted in highly structured social contexts (Schiefflin & Ochs, 1998).

From this point onwards my position became fluid as I had to continuously adjust to new and unexpected situations: from being diverted to other areas without notice to being accompanied by the Site Service manager, Jacob, around the plant. My approach was that of 'knowing' what to do and say 'without notes' (Geertz, 1973).

At one point, my accidentally breaking the rules, by walking on the grey areas to talk to a group of machine operators instead of remaining on the green pathways meant someone had to be 'appointed' as my escort, 'to make sure I was safe at all times'. As pointed out earlier, and, as it became clearer, the case was in fact that, in the management view, my interrupting the workers gave them the opportunity to take breaks during their work. However, after 'this incident', as mentioned above, Jake, despite his reluctance, was to take on the role of escort. This also meant that I would be associated with the management as Jake himself, a production manager of the Fabrication department was not liked by the majority of the floor employees for his role of 'gatekeeper' and his view on the employees' abilities and attitudes mentioned above. From this moment on, every time I visited the factory I had to call on Jake through the receptionist. He would then come to the reception to accompany me to the area where my participants worked and escorted me out when I had finished for the day. Fortunately (although this caused further delays with my fieldwork) Jake resigned after a few weeks and I then became free again to move around the plant.

Soon after, a further opportunity opened up to gain more insight into the factory floor's life through my participants. One of the conditions posed by the management was that I interviewed participants after working hours (usually 5 pm) this meant that at around 6, once the interview was over, no one was around and my participants offered to show me around the floor whereby I could take pictures and ask questions on the physical space, artefacts and machines in use throughout the factory as well as on the general housekeeping practices and the impact of these on the communicative ones. These data will be dealt with in the following sections.

5.4.2.3 Old and new nexuses in one site of engagement: the Tool Room

It was almost inevitable that the Tool Room would become 'the basis for my operations' since most of my participants belonged here (see Table 1 in Chapter 4). Other reasons included the relatively safer environment in comparison to the production areas and the management's less preoccupation of my potential disruption of production employees' work activities.

The Tool Room's activities constitute an integrated site of engagement of technology, people's skills, knowledge and equipment. These elements are in flexible interdependence. The operations are performed with the aid of a variety of instruments ranging from totally manual (lathes, bending), to semi-manual (turning, drilling) and computer-operated machinery (Computer Numerical Control or CNC – see picture 5.3 below).



Picture 5.3 (CNC and myself pretending to operate it)

The highly collaborative behaviours during phases of work are examples of continuous intra- and inter-units mutual adjustment as well as adjustment to the external environment (market, customers, and suppliers) whereby expertise and knowledge are mandatorily shared within a common scope. In this context the Tool Room has a peculiar and crucial role by acting as a 'conductor' between the outside and inside of the organization as well as among the company's units. Its role as a connector with the other units is not limited to tooling production, feedback from and adjustment to clients' product specifications or generally to services and maintenance but it also extends to the implementation of safety procedures. This role in particular involves coordination among the whole set of units and it includes the implementation of standardization of procedures and measures and the consequent adjustment of work procedures and equipment.

However, the activities and behaviours observed and recorded in the Tool Room are indicative of the state of transition through which PTS is going whereby, as highlighted above, new and old technology and practices coexist. In particular, although high flexibility and quick response to customers' demands are mandatory in order to contain production costs and remain competitive (e.g.: by reducing or eliminating stockpiled inputs and outputs) and dictate a mutual adjustment type of coordination this is still only partially facilitated by both manufacturing technology such as computerized linkages between design and production and the company's organizational structure and development strategies. The general principle governing maintenance procedures and specific jobs is 'If it ain't broke, don't fix it.' This is partly due to the old machinery utilised for both tooling and manufacturing and the cost/benefit rationale attached to it: the replacing of one machine would at this particular stage of the company's life, implies the replacing of the whole system of methods, process and procedures including the re-training of specialized staff. More specifically, the employment of a combination of old non-computerized machinery (often performing only one operation at a time) and new ones determines gaps in the required linkages between inputs, conversions and outputs which are normally

achieved through CIM. This state of affairs is dealt with through manual tool making or, as it is referred to, 'machining', by skilled, experienced personnel who can fit, adjust and repair/operate respectively components and manual or semi-automated equipment.

However, in this scenario, both coordination and mutual adjustment with production units is extremely costly and laborious. This is evident during the design engineering phase and the programming of tool's making whereby only a limited range of tools are adaptable to old machinery still in use in production. Interactions between the engineers and the programmer are frequent whereby alternative solutions are sought to overcome this problem. As seen above, it is often the case that engineers from upstairs meet in the tool room to discuss the practical side of tools' application and which phases of adjustment designs have to go through to meet the production systems. Two levels of expertise clash as observed during fieldwork and in communicative events as well as reported by participants.

Additionally, there co-exist mature aged personnel, in charge of manual tooling/machining or general services (3 of the key staff are close to retirement) and a younger generation of technicians highly specialized in CAM.

From a workshop floor coordination point of view, procedures for task distribution and prioritization are informal and contingent to circumstances: knowledge and skills of personnel are flexibly geared to unpredictable needs. However, apart from routine tasks, staff continuously report to and depend upon the manager's decisions to undertake jobs. This state of affairs is reported by Jacob in one of the interviews illustrating how individual initiative, team-work and participation in general, are limited (see excerpt 5.6).

My observation and informal chats with the personnel during fieldwork further suggest that the demand of high flexibility and quick response to relatively unpredictable events together with highly technical expertise have only partially created an integrated unit system among the personnel. In fact, in the Tool Room individuals are only partially autonomous and rarely behave as teams with self-management of task distribution and decision making rather they are quite dependent on the decisions of the Site Service Manager, Jacob. However, despite the highly centralized organization of work, the Tool Room is governed by a form of loyalty and socio-technical systems whereby technology and social norms have facilitated this adaptive process over time. As Forsyth puts it: "Cohesiveness increases with interactions, for the more people do things together as a group ... the more cohesive the group will become ..." and, although "... situational factors can turn interactions into a negative rather than a positive ... this relationship is surprisingly resilient" (Forsyth, 2009: 136).

In this context, Jacob has the crucial role of 'keeping it all together' as he accounts for his involvement in the management of 'his men' from the recruitment stage till the establishment of a communication and interaction system with them aimed at converging diverse positions and worldviews towards 'organized goals' (see Chapter 6).

It can be said then that the control of work organization is in turn conducive to centralization practices that, although ‘enforced top-down’ do become accepted and therefore ‘institutionalized’ whereby there would be a threat of communication failure if the system does not preserve the meaning across the different contexts. In this sense, ‘contingency roles’ like those of Stan and Arthur (see table 1 in Chapter 4) although unstable and subject to both limitations and unpredictable changes, become functional to the overall organization. Patterson et al. (2007) defines collaborative cross-checking as a strategy where members of a system with different perspectives examine another’s actions for validity and/or accuracy, such as a pharmacist verifying a physician’s unusual order. Her findings suggest that some value is lost when human communication is subrogated by automated systems. She sees as crucial the ongoing role for personnel with weakly defined roles, who can operate outside the routinized processes when necessary.

Exemplary episodes of this type of behaviours are such as those resembling Roy’s (1959) famous study “Banana time” whereby a manufacturing factory floor team finds a way ‘to survive’ the often hardly bearable conditions of monotonous work by playing jokes on each other and naming these breaks after the improvised jocular activities they carry out, ‘banana time’, ‘peach time’, etc. The excerpt below illustrate these cases where, while in the middle of a work related activity, Jacob ends up being reprimanded by Arthur and Dan, the Australian tool maker (see Table 4.2 in Chapter 4), for eating bananas and leaving the skin in the wrong bin. This is apparently, a recurrent habit of Jacob, as in other interactions other employees complain about it:

Excerpt 5.30

1. A You gotta do it now and we do the drill first and go.
2. D Yeah suppose you do [inaudible]
3. A [inaudible] 10 by 50. Nothing there.
4. J 10 by 40? 10 by 40?
5. A Yeah too short?
6. J How many you got there?
7. A One box
8. J Show me that box. [yeah all right]
9. D [I want to know] where do all these flies come from here? [inaudible] at the
- 10 bottom of your bag.
11. A Yeah down the corridor
12. J What flies?
13. D Fucken all flies in my end [inaudible]
14. A Yeah you use, you use banana that’s why. They like banana!
15. J [inaudible] I eat the banana and throw the skin in here.
16. A No still in there!@) you eat the banana, you eat the banana and you throw the, skin
17. in there [inaudible]
18. A 10 by 75?
19. D Ah I’ve got, I got 10 by 75. [inaudible] 75
20. A All right

These, as well as other episodes then testify to the level of flexibility that teams or employees working together for a long time have achieved despite the rigidity of hierarchical and structural constraints and internal differences in worldviews. In particular, they show how the difficult reconciliation of old and new as they manifest in knowledge sharing and organizing is played out at the interactional communicative levels of collaborative behaviours. The next section will further highlight the process through which the current nexuses of practices have come to be and the role that the intersecting discursive strategies have played out in this process.

5.5 PTS's present, history and future: an ensemble of problematic nexuses

The organization's history, current and future situation in terms of structure, production systems and related coordination of activities as outlined above sheds light on the relationship between past and current systems of work activities, roles and technology and how these systems are 'kept' together and made sense of in participants' discourses and accounts. Here it is shown also, how, the contrasting views of workers, on what work is like and what it should be like, is enacted in particular communication patterns and discursive strategies. Of crucial importance, in this respect, is the focus on the temporal dimension of the organization: the changes occurred across the years in terms of systems, behaviour and activities and on the way in which time parameters are discursively constructed, talked about and used in interactions. Four instances, in the following sections, are analysed as emblematic of the processes involved in nexuses' formation and their strategic discursive enactments. Specifically, it is highlighted how communication strategies are used to reconcile apparently discrepant aspects of work systems, the role of individuals within the systems and to make sense of established and changing institutional practices to which continuous adjustment is required in order to achieve 'organization'.

5.5.1 The olden days and the red hot stick

As noted above, Jacob, the Site Service manager, is the 'most qualified' to exemplify these transformative processes for two main reasons: 1) he has worked for the organization for over 35 years and across the several structural and managerial changes the company has gone through; and 2) he perceives himself as having had enough agency throughout the different organizational eras to discursively enact and identify 'legitimacy' (or others' agency) in accounting for the changes themselves (the agents he talks about are indicated in bold in the excerpt). He describes some of the transformations that have occurred, specifically the marketing and product customization phases, as follows:

Excerpt 5.31

1. J [that-that]-that's um eh for example if a **salesman**
2. comes up and he says I've got a 1.5 million tender here that **I've just** won and all the

3. manufacturing people, wh-which are affiliated in the product that this guy has
4. tendered for –
5. L All of them? Also the process workers?
6. J Not – not the process workers [but] **managerial or supervisors**, [management
7. managerial]
8. L [but] [inc] yeh okay]
9. J because what we have to do is dissect the whole project. Now **the salesman has it**
10. **all worked out.**
11. L Uhm
12. J He comes up and he says this is the tender we got
13. L uhm
14. J and here's the copy of the whole books of what **we're gonna make**
15. L yeh
16. J if you look at this particular page, 1 to 5 it's what **we're gonna buy**. Between 5 and
17. **6 we're gonna sub-contract** it and between 6 and 20 **we're gonna make**. Now in
18. that making of this tender there's, this portion goes in this department so **he looks**
19. **after that**, the other one goes in here and then **these we-we have to make** but we
20. **haven't got any tools for. So then I get involved and I make the tools** so they can
21. **manufacture** and the question gets asked; when is this going to be delivered? It has
22. to, we've got six months to make it. So we go ahead then and make all the
23. equipment, we make sure that manufacturing at the same time has all the materials.
24. I make the tools and then the labour cost is all involved. That now is ...
25. L reduced [I mean the]
26. J [it's] it's not as
27. L [fluid]
28. J [the] way it used to be [you know?]
29. L [it's not as], wh
30. J uh because **computerization can do it now and there's now it tells you**, you
31. have to make that. Now **if somebody makes a mistake** and all of a [sudden we
32. have to]
33. L [and then it goes] all in circles [like]
34. J [yeh] [yeh] [yeh] I [because you've got], you've got 1.5 million sitting and ready to
35. go out the door and there's one bolt missing, you know what I mean?

To be noted is the way Jacob describes the way agency is distributed among the parties involved in the various phases of the project from tendering to delivery and how the project 'gets dissected' with no real flow from action to action and among the people involved to the point where mistakes might not be detected until the very end. In another interview he also points out how computerization has taken away much of the communication among managerial staff in regard to activities' organization at different levels. It is noteworthy here that he relates the technological changes and consequent lack of communication to his loss of decisional power:

Excerpt 5.32

1. The tender was put in and we won the tender then the sales and manufacturing we used to
2. have meetings in regards to how we were gonna handle it, ahhh we buy this, we handle
3. this, we manufacture that, we purchase this from subcontractors and we put it altogether
4. so we deliver on time, we used to do that a lot, uhm, we don't have that as much as we
5. used to but that's because we have grown in different divisions and they reckon the
6. computerization's taken over from that but I find that a little bit of a flaw in that I think

7. it's easier to know where everybody stands in the c-company if to finish a tender or finish
8. a project so we can deliver on time so all the bits and pieces come together, we don't do
9. that as often as we should, but that's my opinion, that's not my say anymore

However, despite the adoption of computerized systems to handle the growth of divisions and volumes of production, Jacob remarks that his job has in effect 'quadrupled' and although he states that 'nothing has changed in our manufacturing method but slowly the place grew and its grown', he goes on describing the sequential shifts in production systems and the consequent conversions of both materials and equipment thus pointing, at the same time, to the retention of 'old ways' in combination with new ones:

Excerpt 5.33

1. J I started in PLP we had 30 people working in the floor, we had half a dozen people
2. in the staff in the staff in the front office with accounting and I started off as a
3. mechanical tradesperson of repairing things of what they had and yeh, I had another
4. gentleman with me which was an electrician and after 12 months of service here they
5. employed an apprentice and my company grew and we were taken over by PLP
6. Australia, PLP USA I should say
- ...
7. J 1978, I got, I just, just got I started in 78 and then about 6 months later we were
8. bought out by the PLP group uhm nothing has changed in our manufacturing method
9. but slowly the place grew and its grown (...) in the last 12 years it's quadrupled in
10. size in manufacturing
- ...
11. J [um] well the role, the role], my role is-is cr, how can you say, quadrupled many
12. times
13. L yeh [oh]
14. J [at] the beginning when I took this job on I was looking after the, probably about the
15. same amount of people
16. L um
17. I but I only had one department
18. L um, um, [yeh]
19. I [now] I've got five and there's 150 people here. But I've still got only six to ten
20. people. And the olden days um I just looked after some basic equipment now I'm
21. looking after some sophisticated equipment and a lot more of it because we've
22. grown uh in, we've now got uh three or four divisions in this company of different
23. size, -

As shown in the following excerpts the changes in manufacturing systems have coincided with more radical changes in the overall production processing towards a more immediate and time efficient response to market demands and the required mutual adjustment between internal and external stake holders. Jacob has 'fit in' these shifting systems by way of an 'agile' but centralized approach to operations whereby through his small team he keeps control personally of all the activities carried out on the floor at all times:

Excerpt 5.34

1. L Uh what about in terms of management of work and people, I mean, you-
2. you've, yeh you've [mentioned actually]
3. I [Well what work is difficult]
4. L I suppose] you've already-

5. I The work is difficult to manage uh because you don't know what's around the
6. corner. If for instance I have, I know from the beginning to the end of the month that
7. I've got x amount of work to do that would be terrific. But there's always a ball, a
8. curve ball that comes into the scenario where you don't plan on this thing but it's
9. just, it's got to fit in somewhere and it's not just one it's sometimes there's two or
10. three and you think well how you gonna do this? And it's, the time frame is the same
11. at the end, they still want it at the end [of the month]
- ...
12. ... now it's uh it's the manufacturing or the operations manager he says uh Joe I
13. need you to make or the-the costing guy who does all the costing says we're-we're
14. short a few tools. I said what are you short of? He says this, this and this and I say
15. ooh it's going to take me three months to go, no he says you've only got 3 weeks. So
16. then I have to get the red hot stick out [and] look for ways for how we can solve that
17. problem. That's – that's sometimes...

Jacob prefers face-to-face communication with the personnel on the floor as well as a direct intervention 'on site' before any decision is made. The following extracts exemplify his 'hands-on' 'front-line' approach. The way he reiterates his own involvement in all the actions at hand through the use of 'I' is noteworthy:

Excerpt 5.35

1. My role is the tooling side, the building, looking after the building and looking after the
2. mere equipment and machinery and also occupational health and safety of workers and
3. everything I design and do. I do all that, all, that's-that's my role. I'm sort of ah, what
4. they call a Site Service Manager, but I have a lot of hats, if you know what I mean?
- ...
5. ... because I've got four or five different languages in my department plus on the floor
6. ahh in the factory and I try and understand what they're trying to get across to me...
- ...
7. ... my thing is my picture is the big picture and these guys look at the small picture, so I
8. have to take, I have to look at their view, that they're working on, but in the overall, I
9. look at the overall context of how it fits in the whole –
- ...
10. ... there's three of us that run the department but I look after the whole area then I
11. distribute that individually to my personnel –
- ...
12. ... I-I look around and if I see any injuries in the factory I go out of my way you know I
13. stop I fix things straight away or I stop if they don't follow the rules in the way of
14. safety ...

My shadowing of Jacob during fieldwork suggests that, in fact, except for the tool design and programming for which highly specialized personnel are employed (Anthony and Albert), he seems to deal personally, and in a 'face-to-face' mode with all other operations concerning services and support and which require goals-setting, scheduling and planning and decision making both at project and local/operational levels. Very few activities are outside his direct supervision and these are mostly routine maintenance activities. His job is all the more difficult because of the physical distance between his office (a side-shed adjacent to the Tool Room – and the other divisions' units. This does not allow easy access

to the other managers for mutual adjustment whereby he is the one who almost invariably goes to their divisions. Anthony, the tool maker in charge of design and programming makes a remark on this issue on a couple of occasions while conversing with colleagues:

Excerpt 5.36

1. I Where's Jacob?
2. A Just roaming around.
3. I Uh?
4. A Just roaming around.
5. I Roaming around.
6. A (@@)
7. I Like [inaudible]
8. A [inaudible]
9. I I should call him uh Jacob the Goat. Say that's what they do, they roam around.
10. A Yeh. Nah he should have something you know? He's always on the run.
[inaudible]
11. I [he runs] away from me!
12. A He's got so many things to do.
13. I Yeh every time he sees me, whoa, what do you want? –
14. I Time to go I think, but I don't know where Joe is. Might have gone home?
15. A Yeah, he gets side tracked like that quite easily.
16. I Got the back door [inaudible] (@), I don't think so.
17. A He looks at so many things, he's got so many things up on his chest
18. I yeh
19. A you know?
20. I Yeh too many things at once.
21. A (@)
22. I [inaudible] do it I suppose.
23. A Yeah I know but, at times,
24. I [inaudible] it gets done hey?
25. A Yeh.
26. I Yeh.
27. A I mean you can't blame him as well, you know what I mean?
28. I Yeh.
29. A You can't blame him, he's putting his best foot forward, [he's got so]
30. I [inaudible]
31. A and many things and pretty much the whole place come up to him for anything and
32. everything.
33. I Keep coming to him for extra work, yeh.
34. A Yeh

In this way Jacob has established nexuses of practices whereby he, personally 'walks to the job' as maintenance and repairs are needed that require his supervision. It is evident that principles of control rather than integration and distributed participation override the coordination requirements of PTS's current organizational system. The necessity to adapt to new procedures and technology in a relatively short time has triggered a compensation response whereby although old ways of doing things have been replaced by new technological ways these have not been yet completely incorporated into the whole whereby collaborative behaviours and communication have not been favoured.

Jacob further describes this phenomenon as follows when talking about Connie's way of stocking up piles of finished product the 'just-in-time' practice that was adopted by the company in the early 1990s, instead of shipping it timely, 'on demand':

Excerpt 5.37

1. J [Again she's], she's a, she's a supervisor of-of one department. She's been there for
2. 25 years uh?
3. L Yeh so it's, yeh it's interesting that (...) [gender roles is sometimes]
4. J [what-what-what] she has to change and this is the difficult part, she is still doing
5. stuff that we used to do in the past and she doesn't want to change to the, a new way
6. of doing things to be on time or lean manufacturing.
7. L Um. What do you mean she doesn't want to change like she's?
8. J Well processes of uh we don't have to do it this way, we can do it this way. You
9. know? She'll do 50 boxes, makes them all up and they sit there and then she can
10. only fill one at a time.
11. L Okay.
12. J But the whole area where she's working it's all full of empty boxes. But why not
13. wait for the product to come through the line, put it in a box and then [get rid] of it?
14. L [and get].
15. L Oh okay. Yep.
16. J No but she fills, she makes 50 boxes. Stacks them all up in a pile. Chokes everything
17. up and then she gets one box at a time as the product comes down. So rather than do
18. that, that's just what we call lean manufacturing. So if the product comes down the
19. shoot [chute], put it in a box, do a count, close the lid put it on a pallet, it's finished.
20. L Um
21. J Then grab another box and fold it up, by that time that's folding up the next one is
22. coming down. She does it differently. [Doesn't] want to change.

Connie's 'obsessive' stocking of product 'ready to go' is underlain by the way she communicates with the employees she supervises in the Pre-form division, a top-down approach due to her being invested by authority-agency to exert control and make sure work is performed without disruptions or even interruptions. As seen above in the words of Paul (Excerpt 5.2) and in those of Stan (Excerpt. 5.1), this state of affairs is conducive to non-communication or avoidance.

Another major organizational initiative that Jacob reports as likely not to integrate easily in the current systems is the running of a lean manufacturing training, The '6'Ss'.⁴

⁴ What we call "6S" derives from "5S" the method of workplace organization and visual controls popularized by Hiroyuki Hirano (1990). The origin of 5S seems rooted in the works of two American pioneers who were scrupulously studied by Japanese managers. These were Frederick W. Taylor's *Scientific Management* (1911) and Henry Ford (1922). The labels for the 6Ss in western countries are:

1. Sort – Distinguish between what is needed and not needed and to remove the latter.
2. Stabilize – Enforce a place for everything and everything in its place.
3. Shine – Clean up the workplace and look for ways to keep it clean.
4. Standardize – Maintain and monitor adherence to the first three Ss.
5. Sustain – Follow the rules to keep the workplace 6S-right—"maintain the gain."
6. Safety – Eliminate hazards).

The training started as I had just concluded my participant observation and the first round of interviews. It was well under way when I was conducting the retrospective interviews. I was then able to gather impressions and comments from my participants in regards to the effectiveness of the training itself. Despite the training of staff on principles of ‘lean manufacturing’ could be seen as an attempt is to create an environment with highly autonomous but stable subdivisions which are self-adaptive and responsive to change and, at the same time would operate like collaborative teams, the implications for change that it bears, in respect to participation, shared knowledge and responsibilities, are far too unrealistic to achieve for most employees. It is interesting to note here that the presumed implementation of these ‘new ways’ coincide temporally, with the retirement of Jacob. A new generation of managers who are ex-apprentices of Jacob himself will be in charge of implementing the change.

The following excerpts illustrates Jacob’s thoughts on the incumbent changes from a global market point of view which again suggest his ambivalent position, between old and new, change and continuation, world-wide and local perspective:

Excerpt 5.38

1. J yeh that’s happening everywhere, the manufacturing side is diminishing in Australia,
2. uhm its gonna be an import/export type scenario I can see that in the future –
- ...
3. so there are changes but you have to change with the change, you know what I mean
4. can’t be this tunnel vision person of the past, you get left behind
- ...
5. J [It’s] difficult to ship everything a-a way I see it, it’s difficult to ship everything off
6. shore and become an importer [because] uuh then you have to keep so much stock
7. where um,
8. L [right]
9. J if we can handle something in an emergency we can instantly reply to that request
10. L uhm
11. J and uh then you know supply the, whatever the customer wants instantly where if
12. you, our opposition used to do that. They shifted everything off shore
13. L uhm
14. J but then when they got an order that we wanted next week they said nah, nah you’re
15. six weeks away, where they come to us and we give it to you next week. The-that’s
16. the sort of concept [that’s] changed a bit for us

At a local level, he acknowledges that his retirement would determine a remarkable change in terms of how work is passed on and distributed, namely communicated and organized. In this regard he envisages that computerization in substitution of verbal and visual communication will take some time to take root as also exemplary of a generational change:

Excerpt 5.39

1. J The personnel in-in, in my, in my own department it’s all verbal or drawings you
2. know?
3. L Um

4. J Um so there will be some changes there. And there will be some, in my opinion,
5. there will be some little rin, how can you say it? Resentment or little bit of
6. re-resistance because of the age factor. You're talking to an older group of people
7. and the young one tries to tell you what to do so there will be some difficulties there,
8. I-I feel yeh? [But] he's got to learn
9. L [um]
10. I some how.
11. L Um. So was the natural uh your natural successor in-in a way that?
12. I Not my choice but some, my-my boss chose him to-to take over as I, as I leave (...)
13. L Okay.
14. I But there is a lot of lack of knowledge in some processes you know?

Jacob's remarks on the on-going training on lean processes in view of implementing the related changes in production systems also show his dual stance on transformations of the existing ways especially with regards to employees' behaviour:

Excerpt 5.40

1. J Most of this training stuff is-is to-to-to make things better, faster or smoother or-or
2. other things you know? I bo, I've been through these psychology training courses to
3. make people think differently, to make them think more cleanliness to make them
4. think more productive like you know?
5. L Is it running now the [inc]
- ...
6. J The cleanliness and it's also safe environment so to make sure the operator doesn't
7. hurt themselves and you don't damage the machinery. The other side of it is also to
8. try and think of the operator to get some information out of him to help in
9. manufacturing to a more concept and simpler way of moving material or
10. manufacturing material and when you pay somebody peanuts you don't expect them
11. to do all the thinking for you they're going to say what do you want me to do and
12. that's what I'm going to do you know? But the idea is to try and fish some
13. information out there and take responsibility of what they're doing so to make it
14. more [friendly-] [environment] to work in. It's [sometimes] it-It's a matter of what
15. you put in the box and get out the door or do you have 25 boxes and you try and fill
16. them all at once [but] nothing goes out the door, now what's [more]
17. L [uhm]
18. J achievable? What goes out the door we get paid for. What doesn't go out the door
19. sits there as uh, as stock.
20. L Uhm
21. J So you have to look at the filling the box up and getting it to the warehouse to ship
22. or filling the box out to sit in the warehouse and go nowhere.
23. L Um, [um]
24. J [So] that's sort of the lean manufacturing process [and] also the internal process of
25. L [yeh]
26. J how you manufacture your things or you process wh-manufacturing to try and make
27. it easier for the operator without having too much eh strain on the operator's health.
28. L Um
29. J So you've got to look at both sides of those coins yeh?
30. L Um, [um]
31. J [It's] quicker to make the machine go faster and the operator still works at the same
32. speed, you [know?] but at least at the end of the day there's more product going
33. L [um]

34. J out the door. That's what's sort of lean is all about.
35. L Okay. Yep.
36. J It-it comes back to cost of manufacturing, cost of processes and cost of OH&S.

Interestingly, the definition Jacob gives of lean manufacturing clearly indicates the difficulty he has in conceiving cooperation rather than compliance on the side of employees and in turn the difficulty he foresees in changing mentality and behaviour of employees themselves.

The way he comments on the assumed benefits of the training and the organizational presumed changes to follow can be summarized in his remark: 'a new 'label' for an old thing that's never going to work'.

It is evident from the above, that, in this climate, highly centralized decision-making processes as those emerging from my observations and the participants' words represent a mechanism to compensate for the lack of reciprocal relationships which such a hectic environment would call for in order to reduce uncertainty to manageable levels. However, at the same time this type of centralization has not been conducive to collaborative behaviours and generally to the formation of cross-functional-expertise teams with the autonomy to communicate, interact and self-adjust to contingent situations and changes. This is what the 6 Ss would try to address amidst everybody's scepticism.

5.5.1.1 Aunty Mary and the Sheriff: change in roles of historical bodies and minds

Despite the organization's structure remaining constantly centralized across the years, and unaltered in regards to hierarchical orientation and discourses, the dynamics of changes in policies ranging from employment/recruitment and production systems, to safety procedures have impacted upon the definition and boundaries of roles and competencies both at discourse levels and interactional/localized ones. Except for the case of Jacob, to flattened and, consequently 'more democratic' ways of communicating the organization of work, have corresponded over time, a blurring of roles and responsibilities' boundaries as well as of competence-sphere (Iedema & Sheeres, 2003; Sheeres, 2004). This has resulted in a shifting of positioning by employees who strive to discursively construct and define the boundaries of their role and even their tasks in relation to both management's view (what jobs and how these are assigned to them) and to each other's. This is exemplified in Stan's words reported in Excerpts 6.35 and 6.36.

It is indicative how Stan, in this regard, although he perceives his change of status and role as a loss, he does acknowledge that both his past status and role would not have a place in the changed environment where less responsibilities is actually best. However, in one of his naturally occurring interactions he discursively construct the struggle he has put up through the years to resist against what he perceives as deliberate actions by the management to demote him.

Another instance of the changes taking place at PTS and the attrition between old and new ways of thinking is the recent employment of a safety officer coinciding with the incumbent implementation of new safety policies and procedures. This position was newly created at TPS and, although the aim of the new policies is to create a safety culture as the result of collective efforts, the effect of the safety officer's presence at PTS is that of a top-down enforcement of compliance to accepting responsibility for rather than sharing ownership over safety at work. The excerpt below is a monologue by Sam whereby, during a short break he gives 'a lecture' on the attitude workers should adopt towards the current safety requirements and how their non compliance may result in accidents. It is interesting to note that the 'tirade' may have been triggered by Sam's knowledge of my recording however, it originated by a question from one of the workers who inquired about a new welding mask's device. Sam starts explaining how since he got on board PTS, all the hazards and safety issues are being addressed and resolved in compliance with OHS policies. Sam goes on justifying the closure of a short-cut access to a toilet as a measure to prevent eye glaring as the workers go through the welding area to reach it. The following excerpts illustrates Sam's views on this particular issue and OHS measures' implementation in general:

Excerpt 5.41

1. I Huh? What's that?
2. S [inaudible]
3. I3 Yeh, yeh
4. I2 [inaudible] on charge and basically swap them over.
5. I3 What's that?
6. S Eh for the fresh air flow for the masks, the welding masks [inaudible]. We slowly
7. plugged in all the loop holes [inaudible]
8. I2 Sorry?
9. S [We're] slowly closing all the loop holes.
10. I2 [Yeh]
11. S You were whinging. Yeh, well, they're, they're shut, we're shutting doors and
12. saying right, that's what you gotta wear. If you've got a problem with it, tough luck,
13. that's what you've got to wear. So they can't whinge about this or that, something
14. else [inaudible]
15. I2 [gotta be a] bit of a whinge if they close the welding bay off and nobody can walk
16. in there.
17. I3 Well they're starting to reconsider now. It's I don't want to close the welding bay
18. off.
19. I It's not about closing it off it's just put the chain across it, the whingers are the
20. people who walk through when they go to the toilet.
21. S Exactly.
22. I2 Yep. [Walk around] [inaudible]
23. I4 Is there a requirement to make sure you go the shortest distance between [your]
24. S [no!]
25. I4 [work] area and the toilet?
26. S No. You do what is supplied by the company. And if you want to walk through, you-
27. you expect to have a flash when you walk through all the bloody-(incomp)
28. I2 [cover over] your head
29. I4 shouldn't be happening personally because the welding bay is only for the welders.

30. I2 Yeh.
 31. I3 You should put, you should put a sign that says only authorised persons [inside].
 32. S [no, we've] got that.
 33. I3 Oh okay.
 34. I2 It's done, it's been given the [inaudible]
 35. I [inaudible]
 36. I2 but he's under pressure by the other guys to keep it open [so they can] walk through
 37. I3 [who is this?]
 38. I2 [inaudible] anyway [inaudible]
 39. I4 then we use it
 40. I2 As the supervisor, I-I don't have any control in the area. Okay I can advise,
 41. but [inaudible]
 42. I4 [but you do] have control of [inaudible]
 43. I2 [inaudible]
 44. I4 welding
 45. I2 yeh, yeh.
 46. I4 You can justify that easily. [inaudible]
 47. S Well, I said to them get some more screens. They got screens and they started using
 48. screens as bloody dividers and I said get your [dividers out]
 49. I3 [@@]
 50. S and, and start using them as screens.
 51. I5 (incomp)
 ...
 52. I4 You can put the chain [across the] area
 53. I3 [inc]
 54. S and then observe what other people do whether they complain about it, they comply
 55. with the rules or they just dump the [material there]
 56. I2 [why they got to complain]? It's-it's just
 57. I3 No people shouldn't be using it as a walkway to get to the toilets. That's as
 58. simple as.
 59. S No.
 60. I4 There's [no way]
 61. S [inaudible]
 62. I3 [and if they] use
 63. S [inaudible] asked not to, okay and they all boo hoo'd it, but like I said to Alan
 64. yesterday, it's just like the cuts out on the site there, okay. I asked for people not slop
 65. all the shit all over the bloody floor. Okay they've got the cups, things quieten down
 66. a little bit, you only have to look down on the floor okay, from 7 o'clock when it's
 67. perfectly clean okay until about 9 o'clock [inaudible]
 68. I3 [inaudible]
 69. S [inc] everywhere!
 70. I3 This one's [inaudible] I don't know what has happened there. Fuckin, [inaudible]
 71. I4 [inaudible] You've got complete notification in there, people getting [inaudible] and
 72. someone will eventually have a [inaudible]
 73. S It's not like [inaudible] at the shop, because when this new law comes in there'll be a
 74. thing called contributing negligence okay, so if they want to have a, have a go at me,
 75. they want to be careful because the courts are going to have a go at them. I'll-I'll
 76. wear my responsibility, but if somebody is 95% negligent, okay, then they'll have to
 77. wear it. This is something that-that's got out of hand. Oh, I got hurt because I didn't
 78. give a shit. Now it's your responsibility and it's your fault. The answer is no, you got
 79. into trouble because you were 95% negligent so therefore you wear 95% of the
 80. blood [inaudible]
 81. I uhm.
 82. S Let's see how many people start going around bloody just tossing fuckin safety out

83. the bloody window because they don't give a shit! It's-it's-it's too much of that
 84. now. Okay. The system [inaudible], all right. 25 years ago whether Jarrod or myself
 85. will remember okay, there were no safety systems in bloody place and there were
 86. about one or two people getting hurt at the very most because if we all looked after
 87. what we were doing, looked after our mates.
 88. I4 If you hurt yourself and chopped off your arm, then you're stuck, you [won't get
 89. any] money
 90. S [You're stuck] [inaudible]
 91. I3 You reckon?
 92. S Every employee and every worker
 93. I2 knew!
 94. S knew, you-you look after [inaudible],
 95. I3 Nah.
 96. S Accidents happen because of negligence of some sort. You know.
 97. I3 I was reading an article sometime back, where it says, I think it was in 2000-2001,
 98. when the new work cover laws came in.
 99. S No. they revamped them.
 100. I3 Yeah whatever, [okay]
 101. S [they revamped] them. They weren't new rules, [they were just] [inaudible]
 102. I3 [inaudible] renamed it or whatever, okay
 103. S yeh
 104. I3 but since then, the number of deaths on work sites, has it gone down?
 105. S No.
 106. I3 And they reckon, if at all anything, the number of accidents have gone up with the
 107. new rules and regulations.
 108. I [inaudible]
 109. I3 and they reckon the output has gone down.
 110. S You know I'll tell you the reason for that, when they first, well [inaudible] AN
 111. [what is it?]
 112. I3 [and the worst] industry is the building industry.
 113. S Yeh, um, what is it, um, [inaudible] anti lock breaks
 114. I4 ABS
 115. S Yeh, ABS, when they first brought ABS in, okay they did a trial in taxi's okay, they
 116. were having people getting rear end accidents. They brought ABS breaks in to stop
 117. that from occurring from people slamming into people. Okay? They found that there
 118. were more accidents to those that were given ABS breaks. Why? Because they were
 119. relying on the system okay to get them out of trouble every time. The system will
 120. save them. Right? And this is, this is the false thoughts that people have, okay? If I
 121. walk across the plank the system will save me. So therefore, they're take more risks.
 122. They push the actual safety to the limit and when something does go wrong, it's not
 123. small any more.
 124. I3 yeh
 125. S it's catastrophic. It's like an aeroplane dropping out [of the] sky
 126. I3 [yeh]
 127. S It's the same thing with the bloody walk way, zebra crossing.
 128. because you're on a zebra crossing you have right of way
 129. right of way, so they walk out in front of trucks [inaudible]
 130. I3 [no matter what] yes. No matter [what]
 131. S [how many], how many [times]
 132. I [it's the mentality) here in Australia.
 133. S How many times have you seen a VW shuttering to a stop when he comes to
 134. I3 yeh
 135. S a walk way because the bloody 13 year old just strolls out to the middle of the
 136. [bloody road]

137. I3: [yeah exactly]
 138. S just looks at the truck and goes I'm on a zebra crossing you've got to fuckin stop!
 139. I3 Yeh, I don't care, [he doesn't]
 140. S [like bullshit]
 141. I3 He doesn't even, they don't even bother looking at the [inaudible]
 142. S no, no, stick to 110 tonnes at 80, in bloody [inc]
 143. I3 yeh, yeh
 144. S okay it doesn't happen, that's where a lot of them are getting hurt. So the same with
 145. safety system. It will always save me

The shift here is from what should be a promotion of participation in having a say over one's own safety to a rebuke of assumed negligence on the side of the workers. The prevention, closing access to a venue as a way to avoid accidents, is discursively constructed as a form of punishment and an enforcement to comply. Sam here uses several examples of 'contribution to negligence' as a way to reinforce his view of shared responsibilities to prevent accidents.

It is noteworthy how Sam emphasises the shift in rules and policies across the years and how they should reflect a shift in mentality and behaviour on the side of employees which in fact does not occur.

The picture below exemplifies the company's policy and stance towards accidents and the correspondence in loss of time, and the way in which to 'motivate' prevention: one of the employees reports that a bbq is offered when the number of injuries is less than the one reached at the same time the year before.



Picture 5.4

Despite the call upon employees to share and report information on safety issues which implicitly implies expressing concerns related to their individual circumstances in the work environment in which they operate, the episode below best illustrates the lack of say employees' experience even in regards to issues of high relevance to their comfort and safety perceptions. This episode which I observed from hearing distance, concerns the removal of a wooden platform from underneath the machinery operated by Paul in the Wiring Area. Jacob is concerned that the platform may cause trip overs as people walk by but he ignores the issues raised by Paul in relation to his knee and back condition (of which he speaks during an interview) whereby standing on concrete may cause him harm. Additionally, standing on the board allows him to see where all the scraps falls and also separate the wires of different length. Both Jacob and Paul engage in an extenuating diatribe which does not yield any form of explanation or negotiation nor is conducing to some form of conciliation. Although Jacob asks for the reason for which Paul does not want to have the board removed he seems more interested in making Paul agree to his own decision and ultimately his responsibility for removing the board. Paradoxically here Jacob wants Paul to participate in the 'new' nexus of practice: that of safety's shared ownership from the part of the person 'on the ground'. He does so by asking a series of 'rapid-fire' questions (see lines 4, 7, 9, 11, 13, 16,18). However, Paul verbally resists this call on 'transformation' (line 21 and 57: 'it's up to you') and the turn-taking sequence in the excerpt results in a total lack of correspondence between interlocutors. Paul, not only rejects the questions but even refuses to acknowledge the potential hazard indicated by Jacob. He does so by implicitly appealing, in reverse, to the new practices and policies which would require safety measures when hazards are directly signalled by workers who can be potentially impacted by them whereby this is not the case (see lines 1,3,5,10, 15, 43, 45, 57, 68). Paul tries until the end to resist Jacob's imposition by invoking his agency as the operator of the specific station and therefore as the most qualified to know what's best for himself and the work he has to perform but in the end has no choice but 'leaving the field' while the platform is being removed:

Excerpt 5.42

1. P Why is that? Not really the board.
2. Ar: [inaudible]
3. P What is the problem out on the port?
4. J That's the question I ask.
5. P I have, I have no problem why you've got a problem I'm working it (incomp)
6. problem.
7. J What do you need the board for?
8. P I need to [inaudible] the wire.
9. J What wire?
10. P [inaudible] wire no good. But the main thing I have no problem [inaudible].
11. J How do we get rid of all the [inaudible] on the floor?
12. P It's not good. You can't see [inaudible]
13. J [What are] you looking for?
14. P [inaudible] test, put everything in without looking, good wire, bad wire, no good.
15. But I don't have a problem with the board. No problem.
16. J I don't think you heard me. Why have we got the board here?

17. P Let me, I have to see it?
 18. J What, what I want to know is, because [inaudible] board.
 19. P Yes.
 20. J Why don't you just give me the board?
 21. P It's up to you, but I can't see here.
 22. J It's-it's not, not the question I asked.
 23. P But I'm telling you many times [inaudible], I can't give you because I can't see here
 24. when you doing like this. [inaudible] pick up the wire.
 25. J What, what are you looking for?
 26. P [inaudible]
 27. J What we got here? What we got here?
 28. P Yeah but who's going to be here?
 29. J [inaudible]
 30. P [inaudible]
 31. J Why do you need the board?
 32. P How many times you want to tell [inaudible], I said listen look [inaudible]
 33. J [inaudible]
 34. P [inaudible]
 35. J I haven't got my glasses.
 36. Art [inaudible] not right [inaudible]
 37. J What you're telling me by, by lifting the board up, you can see on top?
 38. P Yeah.
 39. J Why don't we lower the machine ?
 40. P You can see on top
 41. Ar Yeah, [inaudible] drop the whole thing down.
 42. J The whole [inaudible]
 43. P I don't know. It's up to you. What you want to do? I have no problem.
 44. J All I'm saying to you, why can't we get rid of it?
 45. P But it's no problem. Why do you want to get rid of the board? [inaudible]
 46. J [inaudible] What I want to know is why we need the board? Why, why do we have
 47. to have the board? [inaudible] I want to ask you, I want to suck some information out
 48. of you and you're not giving me [inaudible]. I can't see, what do you want to see?
 49. P Yeah that's what I'm doing [inaudible].
 50. J What are you looking for when you're looking for the sheet?
 51. P [inaudible] take them out.
 52. J Where? Where do you look?
 53. P Up here, you know when you look at this? Then you go up high and look it up and
 54. when you [inaudible] from the side there like that. [inaudible] All good [inaudible].
 55. Look at like this, all good. Everything is good, fine.
 56. J If we lower, if we lower the table, [inaudible] straight on.
 57. P Oh it's up to you, I have no problem
 58. J No it's not up to me
 59. P No, no, no, I'm [inaudible]
 60. J What I'm saying to you, [inaudible] you know what I mean? Surely you can see
 61. what the problem is or you can do it here? Do you know what I mean? What do you
 62. reckon? How much we got here [inc] We get rid of this. I'll show ya. I'll show ya
 63. P Have to drop it down.
 64. J Bring, bring this down. Just have that much, bring this over here. This table sits on
 65. the wall. When he, if he's got a problem looking at this, put that here
 66. P No! I'm not going to do that, [inaudible]
 67. Ar Put another rack, put another rack right out over here.
 68. P You know how work here, I work here, I have no problem, I don't know why you've
 69. got a problem?
 ...

70. Ar: But he doesn't like it sitting on there, he want, he say he want to sit on
 71. J Fuck what he likes, we're just trying to make it easier for him you know? You have
 72. a thing here, exactly where the (...) If I speed this thing up

As it is seen above, in the end Paul refuses to engage any further since he cannot contrast authority nor have any participation in the imminent changes in his work environment. However he does succeed in declining any responsibility in the decision for the changes.

It is interesting to note that Paul's direct supervisor did not take part nor was involved in the event and later in the exchange between Jacob and Paul himself.

As it clear from the above thus, rigid hierarchical differences which even at the level of different divisions seem to hinder rather than promote the process of information sharing, problem solving and task assignment distribution seem to counterbalance the advantages of computer assisted manufacturing. Although this system would greatly be cost-beneficial for small and large production batches as it enables easier flow of conversion activities throughout the whole cycle of production (from design to supplies intake and raw materials management to timely sub-assembling and assembling, finished products and high frequency deliveries to customers in the shortest time), it has not afforded any form of participation to workshop floor's staff rather it has resulted in a greater extent of labour segregation. Workers operate individually through work orders and drawings to refer to and collaborative behaviours are seriously limited.

5.6 Conclusion

In sum, although PTS seems to present a mixture of manufacturing processes and production systems requiring varying task interdependence and 'non-routine technology' both at a division and at an individual level, still relies on a centralized, rigid structure. In this capacity the different types of collaborative behaviours observed in connection to the different types of coordination are not supported equally among divisions and hierarchical levels. Coordination is carried out and maintained mostly by supervisors at an intra-division level and, at a higher level, among divisions by their superiors. Although flow of operations is guaranteed by CIM this is not conducive to communication as employees mainly work in pooled interdependence or sequential and do not need nor are encouraged to engage in problem-solving or decision making activities. Mutual adjustment on a contingency basis is only carried out between the Maintenance/Tool Room and the different divisions through their super-ordinate supervisors. At a more local level personnel from this division also interact with employees of other divisions although interactions are often mediated by supervisors. However when non-routine maintenance or services are required, coordination is carried out and managed also at a local level by the Site Service Manager, Jacob. Principles of control and management rather than integration have been conducive to limited participation and autonomy in team-problem solving or decision-

making on the side of the workers. This seems to have been a legacy from a former organizational structure.

This chapter has provided a 'holistic' account of the overall work organization and role-relationships of employees as they manifest in interactions. The focus spans from the wider Australian socio-political context to the institutional and organizational practices observed in the research site as well as the 'localized' interactional, discursive construction of those practices. In this way, it attempts to reconceptualise the notion of context as one where borders and positions are infinitely produced and reconstituted in interaction and discourse together with 'interaction orders' (Goffman, 1974) and community practices (Wenger, 1998). In particular the analysis of the intersection between individual/interpersonal meaning and order and institutionally ordered social relationships is the measure of the ecological validity of the contextual account (Cicourel, 1992, 2003).

Communicative strategies are identified at this intersection as both indicators of transformation and devices to achieve cohesiveness whereby constant reference to past, present and future practices both at an individual and institutional levels strive to create binding processes of work, nexuses in sites of engagement.

CS then, beyond the mere organizational purpose of 'getting the job done' take on the crucial role of making sense of 'getting the job done in the way it gets done'. In other words they are emerging as conveners of social practices whether contested or complied to. However, their complexity is such that laminations of multiple, overlapping timescales as well as agencies at play are difficult to capture in real time and real space. Notwithstanding this complexity, CS types have been identified which can fall broadly into the 'continuum taxonomy' provided in Chapter 3: CS which are used by authority-agents (telling subordinates what to do by appealing to institutional past or present practices); CS used to reconcile divides and conflict (agents have or momentarily take on a similar authority level – the walk to the job-nexus); CS employed to find agency and equal status (Stefan and his deployment); CS that consolidate conflict and disparity of status (avoidance).

At a general level PTS has established effective quality systems and management based on a customized approach to customers' needs and market demands. These have presumably been implemented through the last two decades since the Award Restructuring policies of the early 90s. However, quality improvements and strategies do not seem to be fully integrated into production process through the promotion and support of involvement on the side of the workers despite their being the linchpin in product quality improvement. Award Restructuring notions like multi-skilling and skill development as well as the freeing up the work demarcation boundaries are still permeated by a 'behaviourist' view and approach to the organization of work. The predominant belief, ranging on a continuum from skilled and supervisory level to production tour-court is that work shop tasks are mechanistic and minimal and therefore the need for operators to fully understand and control the process through information and skills is unnecessary, let alone the possibility to plan and direct the production in autonomous team structures as conceptualized by

theories on autonomous team-based work. Concern is rather concentrated on minimizing factors that may dissuade or distract the operator from performing the tasks at hand whereas transformations from a predominantly hierarchical structure to a predominantly decentralized participative structure depending upon an individual's initiative are only partially under way during specific phases of work activities (requiring more specialized knowledge). This coexistence of old and new elements results in a lack of clarity in terms of requirements/responsibilities, level of initiative and creativity expected of the employees and ultimately in a lack/renunciation to participation and initiative altogether which in turn reinforces a centralized view/perception of management at all levels. As a consequence, although coordination processes comprise all the three elements of standardization (the production lines still retain this system), planning (skilled and semi-skilled workers all follow work-orders guidelines) and mutual adjustment (occurring on a regular basis solely in the Tool Room and in other areas only in specific circumstances, e.g. when a machine has to be shared, repaired, etc) they are predominantly achieved through a centralized type of organization and supervision.

It can then be argued that the case of PLP is somewhat emblematic of a worse state of affairs than that described by Iedema when he states: 'Many organization have adopted a post –bureaucratic rhetoric while at the same time retaining traditional structural hierarchies, expert and specialization boundaries, and procedures and processes whose intent is top-down control rather than bottom-up facilitation' (Iedema, 2003: 2).

As it will be shown in the following chapters PTS does not seem to adopt a post-bureaucratic rethoric, on the contrary, rather an overt top-down control approach to work organization and related discursive practices. It also looks like the unionized setting has further contributed to the employment of unmitigated, expected communication strategies, within specific nexuses of practices or, as Myers-Scotton puts it 'communication rules' or 'rules of engagement' responding to stringent institutional constraints (Myers-Scotton,X).

This is also partially due to the exacerbation of a state of affairs which has seen the decline of the Australian manufacturing industry in a relatively short period of time and which determined a survival-response attitude towards the cost-competitive labour force of near South-East Asia.

Overall the perception is that although PTS Australia is strategically relevant to the Asia-Pacific region's market, decision-making processes regarding cost allocations, establishment of branches, partnership and new sales and market strategies, at a decision level, all that goes beyond local and localized running issues of the plant, occurs overseas. One of the outcomes of this practice is that changes tend to be enforced rather than implemented, on a 'top-down' basis and purposive to cost containment and reduction. Shop floor tasks and shop floor personnel are 'geared' to the demands of overall market, general cost/investments and market strategies rather than become conscious participants and implementers of the processes themselves.

CHAPTER 6

THE ‘SENSE MAKING RECIPE’ OF ORGANIZING AND THE ROLE OF CS

6.1 Introduction

Following the linguistic ethnographic analysis of the workplace through the fine-grained description and identification of sites of engagements and the nexuses of practices and the role of CS therein, carried out in Chapter 5, this and the following chapter aim, at further exploring the role and emergence of CS as they are conceptualized by participants, respectively, 1) in interviews and 2) in retrospective interviews based on their listening to selected natural interactions.

The same theoretical stance underlie the approach to the analysis of this chapter: the view of human conduct as meaningful, purposive and consistent and as deriving from participating in such a nexus of practices and not from the deployment of rules, goals and mental contents, as in the traditional rationalist and functionalist view (Gherardi, 2001; 2006; Nicolini, 2011).

The focus of this chapter in particular, is on the joint – researcher/participants – identification, interpretation and explanation of CS emergence, use and role as social-institutional practices. To this purpose, preliminary interviews are analysed as marking the beginning of participants and researcher’s relationship as interlocutors and joint constructors of accounts of both actions and the communication required therein. The context of preliminary interviews is also where orders of indexicality – the perspective peculiar to one’s own position in time, space and type of engagement – are established.

In this and the following chapter then, the process of accounting, as delineated by (Garfinkel’s ethnomethodology), in interviews and retrospective interviews, is the analytical focus through which the links between the kind of knowledge that regulate our thinking (macro) and the unconscious ways in which we enact this knowledge in talk and text in interactions (micro) (Nicolini, 2011) are identified.

Weick’s quote of Forster (1979, 1995) exemplifies interviews as the analytical tool to elicit this process of discursive construction of organizational practices: ‘How can I know what I think until I see what I say?’ (Weick, 1979: 207; 1995: 61 quoting Forster, 1927). In his

‘recipe’ for organizing Weick highlights how sense making is a retrospective process in which individuals first act and then reflect on their actions to interpret what they mean. In his book, *The social psychology of organizing* (1979), by investigating the concept of retrospective sense-making, he unravels also the concepts of enactment, vicious circles, equivocality, memory, causal chains and openness which underpin his idea of organizations: in a word, accounting brings together the macro-dimension of organizing, the discourses regulating the socio-institutional nexuses which agents invoke, and the micro-dimension, the actual explanations of actions or enactment of nexuses of practices which manifest on a day-to-day basis

Furthermore, sense-making discursive practices of enactment, entail invariably the sense-making of crisis situations (Weick, 1995) (cf the ‘critical moments’ of institutional activities in specific communicative events – Chapter 2). As it will be shown below, accounting discourses in these instances are influenced by the institutional contexts in which the organization and its members are embedded, and sense-making of crises’ situations often serves to maintain the structures of these institutional contexts.

The conceptualization of CS in the initial set of interviews then, indicate not only the discursive processes involved in participants’ description, explanation and interpretation but the references that they construct to episodes of actual interactions in which they took part: the act itself of accounting, as (re)-enactment of what occurs in these episodes also reveals discursive strategies as associated performances or practices, that is, as part of the situated make-up of strategies’ employment. In this sense the analysis of the excerpts in this chapter is implicitly the analysis that participants themselves carry out of CS as they see and enact them ‘in context’ and therefore this chapter is a follow up to the previous one in that it construct a link between the first research question of the study -

- 1) What are communication strategies on the factory floor of the workplace object of this study?
 - a) What is their role at the intersection between language and action?
 - b) How do they enact, resist, negotiate interaction orders?
 - c) What are the ‘intercultural elements’ at play in interactions and what role do CS play in this context?

and the second one-

- 2) How do CS emerge in verbal interactions and how are they conceptualized by participants through their accounts?
 - a) Do CS take on different functions in different events with different people?
 - b) How and to what extent are CS accounted for as a social practice?

- c) How do participants conceptualize ‘intercultural communication’ in their interactions?

The chapter is organized as follows. Section 2 provides a brief outline of the methodological and theoretical underpinnings used to explore the concept of CS as social practices as they emerge and are co-generated from the interview data, the description of the data sets analysed here, and the approaches employed to conduct the preliminary interviews.

In section 3, 4 and 5 the analysis of the interview of 3 key participants respectively are carried out.

6.2 Interviews as nexuses of social practice: the co-construction of themes and organizing

Starting from the theoretical backdrop of research interview as social practice (Mann, 2011; Talmy, 2010; Talmy and Richards, 2011), the analysis of initial interviews constitutes here an integral part of the nested analysis (Candlin, 2006) carried out in the next chapter. Furthermore, the ethnomethodological approach allows for an investigation of the interviewing process itself: the initiation of a recursive analytical approach to data whereby not only meanings but also the process of meaning-making is carried out through knowledge sharing and establishing common ground for the interpretation of the phenomena under scrutiny: ‘a back and forth’ approach from data generation, to a joint interpretation and explanatory co-construction of nexuses of practices. The analytical approach in this chapter is two-dimensional: 1) focal themes (Sarangi & Roberts, 2005) emerging in the interview-interaction (cf Chapter 4), are identified as discursively re-enacting interactional episodes, described as repeated actions or practices whereby participants, their position(ing), power and work roles are delineated; 2) interviews, as they happen, are explored as mediational tools used to identify, conceptualize, and situate strategic discursive practices and their association to organizational contexts, episodes and performances and in their function of ongoing construction of nexuses.

CS, in interviews are, in this way, explored as embedded into focal themes through which participants make sense of what they do, how and why they do it and in most cases what happens while they are doing it.

Additionally the ethnomethodological approach (Garfinkel, 1967) by highlighting the sense-making of actions and behaviours (why things are done in the way they are done and how the ‘sense-maker’ positions oneself towards those actions – aligns/dis-aligns) enables to further define CS in relation to ‘organizing’. CS are reflexively emerging as functionally situated in communicative interactions and at the same time ‘situating’. In this way, an order, through individual and social histories is created and recreated as new circumstances occur and the ways they have to be dealt with are invoked (Modan & Shuman, 2011).

The discursively constructed ‘order’ of how people, actions and object are (or should be) coordinated, decided upon, interpreted at specific times in specific moments (Silverstein, 2003) manifest through the use of four macro-types of CS as they are delineated in Chapter 4. The resulting picture is one where CS acquire different functions and meanings depending on who employs them, how and in what ‘critical’ circumstances. As it will be shown in the next chapter, the nested analysis further allows a two-dimensional approach whereby, 1) an analysis of CS as they happen in interactions is carried out and, 2) participants themselves describe, explain and interpret the use of CS as they happen in the situations under scrutiny.

Within the overall aim of organizing, CS are then attributed functions such as avoiding potential future problems, enhancing quality performance, repairing mistakes or unsuccessful operations, seeking/enforcing consensus. At the same time, the ways in which they are conceptualized reveal the interaction order, the level of participation in or authority over organizing and the type of resistance to or power of organizing itself.

In the following sections, three key-participants’ interviews will be focused upon (Jacob’s, Anthony’s and Stan’s – cf Chapter 4, Table 4.1). However, for the analysis, close references will be made to both the other 6 primary participants’ interviews and the informal conversations the researcher had during the observation period with primary and secondary participants.

The rationale for focusing on the three participants in question lies in the respective job roles, power position in relation to the organization and above all in their role relationship in regards to each other. This aspect, in particular, is crucial for three main reasons impacting on the overall analytical framework of the present work: 1) they are key-participants in the naturally occurring interactions investigated in the nested analysis chapter (Chapter 7); 2) their specific jobs allows them a wider scope in the discursive construction of nexuses of practice in the workplace, they are ‘representative’ in terms of their inter-cultural background: ethnic, professional and generational as well as their migration history.

6.3 The move from past to present: the historical formation of nexuses

As seen in the previous sections, going beyond the conceptualization of interview as research instrument and towards that of interview as an instance of social practice or conversational interaction is deeply consequential for what roles interviewers and interviewees take on during the encounter, in brief on what they might say or hear. The interview ‘as context’ itself as well as the actors in it do not act in terms of eliciting views but rather in terms of generating and shaping them (Rapley & Antaki, 1998). In this section and the following sections, the twofold approach, the ethnomethodological and the interactional approaches are adopted as overlapping and complementary in so far as the co-

generated themes revolving around the identification and conceptualization of CS as discursive practices are emerging in and as accounts. To put it in Heritage's words:

the body of common-sense knowledge and the range of procedures and considerations by means of which the ordinary member of society make sense of, find their way about in, and act on the circumstances in which they find themselves (Heritage, 1984: 4).

As it will be shown below, whether or not the question on what CS are, and how they are used is explicitly asked, the interviewee engages at various times in sense-making work through which s/he explains, attributes, justifies, describes and otherwise portrays possible sense or orderliness in the various events, sites, co-participants' behaviour which they experience. In this way strategic action and discourse is co-constructed as underlying the actions accounted for. Additionally, a 'performative stance' is to a large extent usually taken on by the interviewee as a competent member of the social category to which the interviewer has implicitly assigned him. This implies an arranging and enactment of past experiences and one's engagement in and action upon events, in accordance to the membership negotiated upon during the interview. This process of membership's assignment also sheds light on how social reality is discursively constructed depending on the current personal context and the historical circumstances from which orders of meanings are attributed (Silverstein, 2003).

As Silverstein further (2003) puts it: 'in studying accounts, we are studying displays of cultural particulars as well as displays of members' artful practices in assembling those particulars' (Silverstein, 2003: p.114). This is indeed acknowledging that: 'by analysing how people talk to one another, one is directly gaining access to a cultural universe and its content of moral assumptions' (2003: 108).

As it is shown in this section and the following, themes were not emerging by themselves but were rather occasioned and co-constructed through the engagement of both parties. In particular, what will be shown is the interactional negotiation of positioning towards the questions asked and answered and the situating 'moves' of both questions and answers. The outcome is a continuous preparation or a 'setting the scene' for accounts of truths, facts, attitude, beliefs, and alternately for 'noticings' or offers by the interviewer, of topics or descriptions for further accounting.

This 'setting-the-stage' moves are particularly significant because of the specific reciprocal orientation of researcher and interviewee. Three main factors guided the interview as a carefully balanced interaction: 1) Jacob's status and position as a senior manager and the researcher's position and status; 2) the potentially context-sensitive topic, multilingualism and English spoken by non English speaking workers; 3) the specific research topic (CS) as an abstract and difficult concept to define or contextualize. The first factor implied the effort to balance both interactants' expertise in order not to invade each other's field. This entailed 'giving the interviewee enough slack' to claim his own space. This move enabled him to place emphasis on his 'accountability' at two levels: a) in his self-representation as a competent member of his community and institution, especially in relation to his rank

and, b) as a knowledgeable informant in regards to the communicative challenges among L2 speakers on the factory floor.

As will be shown below, the joint CS topicalization (Talmy, 2011) is achieved through Jacob's guiding the interviewer across a historical construction of organizing across the years which also overlaps with his own personal history.

It is noteworthy here, as mentioned in Chapter 4, that Jacob joined the research project, at a later stage than the other participants and after the researcher had conducted extensive observation. This resulted in the researcher's acquisition of a great deal of background information about Jacob which, at the interview time was mutually acknowledged. The researcher's choice in terms of sequencing of questions was also guided by these prior insights.

The opening question, 'Was PTS your first job?' aimed at both breaking the ice and gaining some background of Jacob as a PTS employee and it represents for Jacob the platform to both establish his experience in his current job and in multicultural environments. His answer that his first job was with Qantas (which he does not mention at first, was located in Vietnam) is immediately followed by the mention of another work experience, this time in Canada of which he starts to talk extensively. His pointing to the bi-lingual context as more of a political issue rather than an ethnic one, 'the school system there you have to learn French anyway', prompts the researcher to acknowledge the historical debate of Canadian bilingualism which is followed by Jacob's:

Excerpt 6.1

1. J The president ... he sorta plugged it all up fixed it all up the French in
2. Canada want to be independent of their own they want to have French first
3. and English second and the rest of the country is the other way around but
4. it works yeah
5. L the language policy was ahh

When the researcher asks him how he found it different from working in Australia, he states that the multicultural and migrant context was very similar, the cold weather was the only difference. He states:

Excerpt 6.2

1. J ... you slowly fit into the system", it's very similar to here, very
2. similar, the Canadian system, multi-national countries immigrate to Canada as they
3. do here in Australia, you do have some difficulties with some ... ahh
4. nationalities uhm
5. L some groups?
6. J ohh some groups are different to others they just don't mingle or they don't
7. you know . you have to [inc] sometimes they have some resentment of what your
8. nationality are, that's just the past coming out again

This is the start of his hinting at the problematic aspects of multicultural environments. The reference to multicultural workplaces – as settings where people of diverse backgrounds are ‘by default’ co-existing, is clear. The back-channelling of the researcher at line 3 – ‘some groups’ – does not elicit the name of the specific group nor as she had hoped, the specific difficulties alluded to in the previous turn. It is only after a second prompt by the interviewer which also signals an alignment, that more, is revealed:

Excerpt 6.3

1. L so it's more of a mixture of culture and language rather than only language,
2. J Yes it's like it's like when my parents come from Germany after the war you know
3. we take in consideration we lost, the war or the Germans lost the war,
4. L we did too, [the Italians did too @@]
5. J [and there is, exactly], so the resentment from the war is passed on especially 5 years
6. after the war ended, the resentment was still there, it was difficult to cope with that
7. but we had to, the social services weren't available as they are today there.

Diversity and especially cultural diversity as a problematic challenge in multicultural workplaces is also highlighted at a later stage of the interview in connection with the organizational practice of ‘hiring’ personnel and the challenges it poses.

Jacob's views in relation to diversity continue to emerge in reference to his heritage and migration past, in particular to the Snowy Mountains Scheme where his parents worked and where work was ‘partailed’ almost in accordance to ethnicity:

Excerpt 6.4

1. J ahh my father was from a mechanical background so he went in the mechanical
2. system of the Snowy Mountain Scheme you get other people they have no, no
3. background, and they went into the labour, labour forces, as labourers you know,
4. some Italians were builders and stuff like that, and then you had everybody of
5. nationality, you had 50 nationalities in that scheme at the time

The acknowledgement on the side of the interviewer of this historical period prompts his views on what his idea on diversity from an organizational point of view is as he compares his own experiences of working in Germany and Canada:

Excerpt 6.5

1. J I find very similar to Australia in the way of culture regarding of the nationality, you
2. have to adapt in my way of thinking to the nature of where you're living, you still
3. have your own culture in the way I mean you eat your food, the way you do
4. things at home but on the outlook of life you have to change whatever else you're
5. doing, if you don't you become an outsider I think, i-it makes it harder to blend in
6. with the rest of society
7. L [yeah]

From this point onwards the researcher tries to switch the focus from past to present having in mind to shed light on changes on the job that might have affected communicative interactions. She asks Jacob about similarities between his past and current role. Again by locating himself at the ‘centre of the action’ he dwells on the past and proposes again the notion of work distribution according to ethnicity:

Excerpt 6.6

1. J: back in the 70s we had a lot of Vietnamese due to the Vietnam war and a lot of the
2. production personnel, because they, their English or the English was not the best of
3. the vocabulary of the Vietnamese, but we hired a few, a lot of them were
4. Vietnamese as production personnel as production people yeh
5. L in production [inc] so the-

In fact, as emerged from observations and other participants’ interviews a large part of the production divisions’ employees are still of South-East-Asian background and still talked about as ‘hard to communicate with’. It is clear, at this point, how Joe is constructing his view of multilingualism from an organizing point of view although he has not talked about communication explicitly yet. This view incorporates his interactionally producing a denotative self distinction as one who ‘organizes’ and is therefore accountable for organizing.

The researcher, at various times, tries to shift the conversation towards differences in communicative practices from the past to now. Again, these changes from across the years are closely related by Joe to the changes in the organizational structure of the workplace, namely a major shift in the overall running of the plant: the adoption of CAM (computer assisted manufacturing). This change affected his span of engagement in organizing and implicitly it affected the dynamics of communication from his perspective. This is also highlighted at a later stage of the interview when the interviewer asks whether he attends planned, official meetings (see excerpt 5.5 in Chapter 5).

Before this point though the researcher prepares the ground for ‘situating’ the changes into a specific communicative practice which emerged a few exchanges earlier when Jacob pointed to one of his pioneering roles at the onset of PTS: ‘hiring’. This is a turning point where the conceptualization of CS as embedded in situated practices start to take shape.

In the following excerpt, Jacob still dwells on the past and points to the problematic nature of ‘hiring’ in specific circumstances where he deprecate himself for not having been able to ‘read the cues’ before hiring whom would turn out to be ‘unable to fit’ or more generally, unsuitable for the job:

Excerpt 6.7

1. L but if you had to hire, you mentioned the tool room, if you had to hire someone,
2. I mean the criteria that you would use now would be different to the criteria you
3. would have used 20 years ago
4. J possibly, but some of it I still keep the same. I’ve hired some religious fanatics and

5. I have to be careful how I have to do that again
6. L @ religious @ they would use the workplace as a (.)
7. J not so much I, and(.) I didn't terminate him and he left on his own, but I made a
8. vow not to hire that (...) particular type of person again
9. L [inc]
10. J It made it difficult to work under those conditions that they were trying to enforce,
11. L they bring that stuff to work –
12. J the other thing that happens too depending on where they come from the eastern
13. countries, some of their some of their past problems they try bring to this country
14. and that to me I find that-

However it will take the researcher another turn to get down to the actual account of hiring practices and the type of discursive strategies associated with it. As it is shown in the next section, Joe's need to explain the way in which he currently carries out his hiring role is to be sought in a past institutional practice whereby the 'objective tool' of an IQ test is to be replaced by background knowledge of job requirements and experience in recognizing new personnel's potential and skills.

6.3.1 Jacob's 'questions in reverse': 'when the interpretation is not there'

The passage from past to present and more specifically from the site of engagement of 'hiring' to the involved and embedded communicative practices that make it a nexus requires another more explicit move from the researcher. The excerpt below reports this move and how, still, Jacob returns to past practices and how he interpreted and acted upon them:

Excerpt 6.8

1. L ... but technically, technically and linguistically apart from the cultural [inc] what
2. criteria do you apply, how do you know that the person you want to hire has no
3. problem in communicating, consulting a document for example or communicating
4. simply do you interview them [inc]
5. J yes I do ahh in the older days I used to give em a test @ which you can't do
6. anymore,
7. L written test or
8. J ahh tick tick tick test, like an IQ type test thing you know, that was part of
9. the culture going back 20 years, now I look at their, I talk to them face to face and
10. have a look at their CV, I ask questions some are a little bit tricky questions but I ask
11. questions and see what their answer is, uhm, you don't always win but you try you
12. know
13. L ok so you can actually [understand]-

By accounting for the practices of hiring, Jacob explains how they stem from a previous institutional practice (IQ or aptitude tests used to be administered to potential employees in the 90s but were replaced by short-listing and face-to-face interviews as practices more sensitive to Equal Employment Opportunities (EEO) policies). It is as if the 'test' given to

potential employee, would be used a tool to legitimize the decision of hiring or otherwise. In this sense, the discontinuation of this practice seems to be described by Jacob as a limitation to his power in evaluating a person's abilities. It is to be noted the shift from the use of 'I' – 'I used to give em' – to the use of 'you' – 'you can't do anymore': the invoking of 'you' as a super-ordinate agency, organizational policies, which is invested of the power of ending the practice itself. However the swift turn to explaining his current practice, "now I look at their – I talk to them face to face" indicates no real difference in his way of appraisal of someone's suitability. The asking tricky questions is a way of testing their suitability. Interestingly he uses the metaphor of 'winning' as to indicate a war of wits or an intelligence game whereby his adversary might be also able to trick Joe into employing them despite they might not be suitable for the job. Jacob goes on explaining how he can get across this difficulty by employing strategies of a different nature:

Excerpt 6.9

1. J [and] I can see, I'll give you a good example, if a tradesmen starts and he comes to
2. work with a little fishing box (.) instead of a big tool box, I can tell straight away
3. there is something wrong you know what I mean, and you put the person you hire on
4. trial for 30 days or 60 days whatever the case may be, whatever what the law allows
5. me these days, and I can see then how the person performs in the task that I've
6. actually required [inc], so I do a lot of visual things in my own mind argghh
7. uhm I can see and can take all of that in and make my own decision, if I find that the
8. chap is not performing or what he does in a day my apprentice can do in an hour ahh
9. then either there is something wrong or the interpretation is not there that he's been
10. given the task and I ask questions and if continues then I say look sorry you're just
11. not fitting in or I have to let you go, but I'm a fair guy I'm reasonably fair, you know

These devices which he has developed overtime indicate his personal process of appraisal which appeals to specific frame references and nexuses of practice, "little fishing box – big tool box" as if the latter, presumably containing more or heavier tools was therefore an indication of the skills of the person it belongs to.

The 'visual strategy' is again framed within the institutional constraint of probation time "you put the person you hire on trial for 30 days or 60 days whatever the case may be, whatever what the law allows me these days" which again is expressed as a form of limitation of his power.

In the final two lines Jacob concludes his evaluation by stating that the failure to perform by an employee is due to the lack of ability to 'interpret' what one is told to do. It is here clear that Jacob does not only refer to the required 'technical' skills set one is to have to tackle a task but to the ability to understand the 'mechanics' of a task in relation to the organizational requirements: in one word, the ability to position oneself and one's actions within nexuses of practices, concerted activities and intents of the workplace.

Jacob's questions are the communication strategies he then uses to establish a set of bi-directional exchanges, of which he is in control, and through which he initiates a

negotiation of meaning with the interlocutor whereby he tries to accommodate to the possible lack of understanding of the new-comer.

When the researcher probes him further he elaborates:

Excerpt 6.10

1. L so you find communication is not the problem? I actually find it's very efficient uhm
2. way of cross –culturally ... communication [among]
3. J [no] most people you see that apply for a job have some sort of vocabulary of
4. English
5. L Of?
6. J English of their second language, if uhm depending on nationality if they come
7. straight of the ship or the plane or the boat or something like that, they got no
8. English, it makes it hard because it's a–, it's an important issue that you need to
9. comprehend a certain amount of English to get by, you need to know where the
10. toilets are, you need to know what the sign means, that's the first thing, you gotta
11. understand that. if the English is there, ahh he understands the comprehension then I
12. can deal with that, ahh comfortably, I can give him tasks to do, I can give him a
13. piece of paper to, I won't give him a written paper, I'll give him a drawing, can you
14. make that? If I give him a piece of paper with all the information he needs on it, yeh
15. I can do that, and ahh I'll let him go, and if he needs help, then we assign him
16. somebody to give him help, so it's a two way street

And in the following turn:

Excerpt 6.11

1. J I try and talk to the person who I'm trying to get to do a task and I ask the question
2. do you understand what I'm saying, and then I said you know I do it discreetly so
3. it's not embarrassing, and I say look this is the most important part you gotta do this
4. this and this and then this has to fit in here, ok you understand that, and they are like
5. yeh yeh, ok let it go, if he is not sure I do it discreetly, without embarrassing
6. anybody I said this is important it has to go into here and that's the way it has to go

It is interesting to note above, how Joe points to the difference between 'comprehending', which refers to the actual L2 proficiency and 'interpreting', the actual understanding what needs to be done, how and why: the fitting into and acting within and accordance to the nexuses. He also implicitly points to the fact that the latter, the interpreting side of communication takes priority as it enables the listener to 'get the job done' by executing what one has been told to do. After a few more situated examples of how Joe manages to negotiate meaning and make sure the message is understood, the researcher does mention 'communication strategies for the first time:

Excerpt 6.12

1. L ok that is a very interesting point, what is your idea of communication strategies,
2. this is one –

3. J well I do my personal, self analysis of the person I know what he is capable of
4. achieving, his understanding of the English language might be some difficulty so I
5. try and simplify it to get my message across that's the way I work
6. L so ok would you say you sort of adjust or accommodate to some extent for people –
7. J yeh I do, I don't do it – the same for everybody, I do, I take everyone on their own
8. merit because I've got four or five different languages in my department plus on the
9. floor ahh in the factory and I try and understand what they're trying to get across to
10. me if I do it in a way that I don't care then I'm not achieving what I want to do – you
11. know – that's the way I look at it so I what they call in the old way I throw some
12. pebbles and see how the pebbles come back, in the way of communicating, if I tell
13. him to do a certain job and he understands then he walks away, if he looks at me a
14. bit strangely and I said you don't understand this and he says no I'm not sure then
15. I'll explain it to him in a different way so he gets the message, I do that with all
16. people, ahhh not only with with ahh people from overseas but Australians because
17. sometimes my interpretation what I want done is different to the apprentice that I
18. have as an Australian uhhh he thinks differently and I don't want him to think
19. differently, I want him to do in the way I want him to do because that's the way it
20. has to be – fit into whatever his gotta do, the system, and you know sometimes the
21. timeframe of doing the job is limited and I don't want to overstate the timeframe

Jacob's conceptualization of CS here goes further beyond the difference between 'comprehending' and 'interpreting' that he gives earlier in which, a reference to L2 and the use of communication devices as constituting nexuses of practices is also explicit (see above the use of drawings, repetitions, 'questions in reverse, etc). Here, Jacob explains how he uses 'a personal self analysis of the person ...' that is, he appeals to his specific knowledge (SIK) (of the interlocutor, his capabilities, his way of thinking and complying with the system), to establish a channel of communication whereby the surface structure of the (inter)language (see Chapter 3) ('...because I've got four or five different languages in my department...' is secondary to the cues he is able to interpret from the person's interactions and ability or non, to engage in nexuses of practices ('and he understands and he walks away – if he looks at me a bit strangely and I said you don't understand').

Jacob also returns to the concept of 'interpretation' when talking of how he uses similar cues to communicate with Australians as well as non-native speakers. Here, he seems to invoke more in depth a re-conceptualization of 'interpretation' as a way to reconcile the interlocutor/employee's views to the organizational system from whose authority he is invested with. The 'pebbles' metaphor alludes to the way the organizational views are interpreted and actioned upon – how and how much these – individual interpretation and actions differ from the institutional goals.

In the above excerpts Jacob illustrate his views on what constitutes 'fitting in' for a 'newly appointed employee' and therefore becoming part of 'the existing nexuses of practices rather than proposing new mediational means (the little fishing box) of engaging with the workplace . In this context, answering Jacob's questions in reverse means interpreting instructions in the right way: knowing and engaging appropriately in the nexuses of practices. In excerpt 6.2, Jacob gives a historical account of what he intends by 'fitting in' in the context of new countries such as Germany and Canada, a theme that will become

recurrent in all the interviews and which signal also his own resistance to diverse worldviews and transformation processes (see excerpt 6.2, 6.7). Diverse world views need then to be channelled into recognizable and established nexuses or else could jeopardise the control rather than the management of ‘his department’ (Excerpt 6.12, lines 7-11: ‘because I have five or six languages in my department...’). It is clear here how Jacob’s aim in engaging in interactions with his personnel here is not one of favouring participation and collaboration (he, in fact does not expect any voluntary contribution from their part), rather one of channelling their diversity into organizational goals.

In this context, Jacob’s mention of the Australian trainee Billy as someone who thinks ‘differently’ alludes to the generational gap and related contrasting worldviews and therefore communication discrepancies it may manifest. Jacob goes on by referring to the agency/authority he is invested with whereby the overall interactional outcomes depends on the fact that he is the one who has the big picture (enabling him a privileged view angle on how things are to be conducted/performed).

Excerpt 6.13

1. J ... big thing is my thing is my picture is the big picture and these guys look at the
2. small picture, so I have to take, I have to look at their view, that they’re working on,
3. but in the overall, I look at the overall context of how it fits in the whole –

Ironically, even though he states: ‘these guys look at the small picture’ (as they do not have access to the big one) he acknowledges that ‘I have to look at their view’, as he also mentions elsewhere (see Chapter 5), since they have a thorough knowledge of their jobs (the machines they work on and their mechanics). Asking for the employees’ opinion however, seems to be a merely ‘political’ exercise and something that is perceived exactly as such by the employees as well as shown in the next sections. In Joe’s words:

Excerpt 6.14

1. J ... it’s important, and it gives them a bit of self esteem how you can say if you give
2. them a bit of responsibility and they do it well, so praise is always a good thing to do
3. and thank them for it don’t be abrupt and then don’t do that, a bit of praise a bit of
4. thank you goes a long way with all the personnel-

His view confirms Iedema’s view (2003) regarding the post-bureaucratic approach to management of contemporary organizations where little or no control over decision making and goal settings, beyond the warranties of working conditions and remuneration is afforded to employees; rather, a localized level of decision-making in terms of team-work and small-group management is granted.

The concept of ‘interpretation’ as one of the communication strategies allowing employee to perform a task in compliance with the organization’s system can then be seen, within this perspective, and through Jacob’s eyes as the ability to execute a task in compliance

with ‘the big picture’ or the organizational view despite these may be only partially visible to the executor at best or not visible at all at worst.

Interestingly, at this point of his career, Jacob finds himself in almost the same position as his subordinates: receiving instructions rather than participating in the decision-making/goal-setting processes. Furthermore ‘his big picture’ has, as a consequence, progressively shrunk. He indicates this as a consequence of the post-computerization era (see Chapter 5) whereby processes are programmed, sourced and communicated to the different sections via computer. He complains that in this way most of the information is lost in the process and mistakes are made which are not detected until the end of the process itself. This turn, from Jacob’s description of his being in control of interactional outcomes with ‘his personnel’ (a localized, rather than broader level of control) to his being sidelined from the broader picture, is prompted by the researcher as an attempt to move away from the local, space/time-bound action (the Tool Room) which Jacob still has a power grip on, to the organizational/institutional dimension on which, he still only holds a ‘bigger picture’ than his personnel. To this purpose the researcher asks whether he participates in management meetings regarding maintenance issues related to production planning:

Excerpt 6.15

1. J I, uhm that’s from years ago yeah ah we don’t, we have meetings now only the
2. safety committees or other things but I’m not in the safety committee but I get the
3. direct results of some of these meetings, do this do this, buy this and so forth –

Jacob’s mentioning safety meetings marks another turn whereby the researcher tries to elicit thoughts on CS and safety practices by pointing to previous studies regarding communication shortcomings as one of the main cause of injuries. Again Jacob switches to the ‘local’ and to an ‘accountability mode’ whereby he again invests himself with a monitoring authority over employees’ compliance to safety policies. Interestingly, he ascribes the total responsibility to employees ‘for not following the rules’ rather than to a lack of language proficiency or training responsibility on the side of the company. ‘Fixing things’ equals to action upon employees behaviour through repressive measures rather than informative ones (cf Sam’s stopping the access to the closer toilets to prevent employees from walking amidst metal scraps which in turn, was not supposed to be left in those areas and to impose on the welding bay’s workers to use the appropriate screens – Chapter 5, excerpt 5.41) to ‘teach them a lesson’, as to say.

Excerpt 6.16

1. J I-I look around and if I see any injuries in the factory I go out of my way
2. you know I stop I fix things straight away or I stop if they don’t follow the
3. rules in the way of safety, I don’t reprimand them but I say look until you
4. change your ways of doing things I’ll stop the machine until you do it rightly

5. because I don't want to see them getting hurt either, ahh that's always been
6. my philosophy, I'd rather wait that little bit longer rather than fix a finger
7. up that's not there anymore or whatever the case may be, so I'm very self
8. conscious personally on safety

It is clear from the above that the ethnomethodological approach to the interview adopted by the researcher allows the construct CS to gradually emerge through the meaning-making of practices, actions and discourses. More specifically, the identification and definition of CS is constructed by highlighting the relationship between these three elements and the way they relate to organizing.

Of crucial importance, in this context, in the interactional meaning-making process, is the shifting mutual positioning of interviewer and interviewee towards organizing and the role communication plays in achieving the nexuses that constitute it: the researcher's questions imply the organizing function of CS and their embedding into practices which are in turn discursively constructed and accounted for. Similarly CS are also situated historically in relation to practices. Jacob's positions himself across two eras of PTS: pre-computerization and post-computerization. He also presents his life as spanning across two eras: pre-migration and post-migration. This and his status of manager are what grant him from the beginning, the viewpoint of the expert both in regards to multiculturalism and communicative practices and their connection to organizing.

CS then emerge as tools for Jacob to describe organizing: the strive is to 'achieve' within timeframes and other institutional constraints such as OH&S procedures and to reconcile conflict and contrasting worldviews. The situated meaning CS acquire is often in relation to make sure people 'fit in' and interpret correctly the instructions given. The recurring communicative practice Jacob adopts, 'asking questions in reverse', a theme recurring throughout all the three interviews (the initial and the 2 retrospective ones), is a way to acquire information (on breakdowns or other division- or machine-related specific issues), coordinate and make decisions rather than sharing opinions or more generally overcome linguistic difficulties. Interestingly, the same strategy is adopted by him when he is given instructions from 'upstairs' and has to do "a little bit of fishing" to find out what is actually required of him. In the earlier part of the interview and, as mentioned above, he laments the current lack of participation and engagement in the overall process of manufacturing that the introduction of computerization has determined (see excerpt 5.5 in Chapter 5). By the same token as the employees who work under his supervision (and generally all others who work on the floor) he has a limited view of the overall operations of the company as he asked to carry out tasks in a compartmental way.

In sum CS are identified within their situated occurrences and in relation to the functions they take on from the view point of the 'user'. In Joe's case CS are embedded in various aspects of organizing: namely coordination through reconciling worldviews according to the institutional constraints/requirements.

In this capacity they are embedded in discursive activities such as ‘instructing’ and ‘asking for information’: in both cases, they may be pre-emptive of wrong interpretation on the side of the person instructed or of different views on how to proceed with a task. In the case of ‘job interviewing’ that Jacob mentions, for instance, they have the function of ascertaining whether the candidate would ‘fit into the system’. In this capacity the diversity in background of participants in interactions is also seen as potentially disruptive of the system’s order rather than in terms of individual shortcoming or disadvantages, the execution of orders being the major requirement of the workforce on the factory floor.

It is crucial to notice that although ‘asking questions’ can generally be interpreted as a bi-directional interactional activity from which it depends what further action can be taken, in Jacob’s conceptualization, this activity is a monoglossic one: to fulfil one-sided purposes whereby the interaction order has already been established. Jacob’s position within the organization and his positioning himself across the years reveal his and the company’s organization ideology in terms of a post-bureaucratic model of organizing (Iedema, 2003) whereby strategies and in this case, communication strategies are constructed through discourses of control and limited or no participation from the side of the workforce.

6.4 Tool making: pre-, post-migration and the language of transformation in the workplace

This section concerns the analysis of Anthony’s initial interview. The emerging themes linked to L2 use and communication at work in general as well as their constituting the backdrop of CS conceptualization as nexuses of practices are the focus of the analysis. As for Joe interview’s analysis, the approach is here twofold: 1) ethnomethodological in the way that sense-making processes are explored; and 2) interactional, in so far as both the relationship researcher/interviewee and the unravelling of this relationship itself during the interview – the mutual positioning and relative ‘moves’ towards topics and emerging themes – are the red thread of the investigation. In this capacity, the brief meetings between participant and researcher as well as the period of observation preceding the interview constitute the knowledge basis for the interview itself. Anthony’s role and status as opposed to Jacob’s as well as his different ethnic and professional background are the starting point for the mutual positioning, type and mode of questioning which would backdrop the interview process. It is noteworthy here, as mentioned in Chapter 4, that Anthony and Albert are the first employees to accept to participate in my research project. Although never explicitly mentioned by neither, retrospectively I interpreted their participation as a way on their side to seek visibility as representatives of the group of Indian tool makers working and living in Sydney and, as I had to learn later, belonging to a well established association.

As shown in the following analysis, Anthony’s self identification as a tool maker from India, will provide the broad framework of the interview process and of the recursive themes revolving around his professional life pre and post-migration. In particular, it will

guide the topicalization in a recursive, back and forth direction in relation to migration and employment, diversity and communication in the workplace.

In this capacity, CS within nexuses emerge as conceptualized by Anthony in relation to two organizational systems and therefore to two views on organizing: the Indian ‘mentoring and learning on the job’ system and the Australian ‘labour fragmentation and cost driven system’. Anthony’s stance as shown below, although projected towards future more advanced technological systems or more generally towards continuous transformation is captured in his describing both systems and the way he has adapted within the Australian organizational environment.

In this regard the researcher questions and ‘moves’ (chained to or shifting from the previous topic) are aimed at best capturing Anthony’s positioning towards the current organizational context and his use of CS in the sites of engagement and nexuses of practises therein.

The opening question “You come, you come from India?” starts the conversation on the differences between the two countries in terms of qualifications and professional background as intertwined to the migration experience. Anthony attributes his finding a job within 15 days from his arrival in Australia to the training received in India which he states, is more comprehensive and allows more versatility compared with the Australian system:

Excerpt 6.17

1. A “So that’s the only downside I see, whereas back in India, more then apprenticeships
2. there are apprenticeships, which operate in the same fashion at what is done here, but
3. you do a course at the centre that’s available wherever it is offering it and you spend
4. all your five days or six days up there. There have all the machines.”
- ...
5. “So the thing is like, as a tool maker when I come from India, I can do a few
6. different varieties.”

His educational background translated in an ‘intercultural communication’ difficulty in the job interview site of engagement in Australia, indicating a difference in nexuses of practice:

Excerpt 6.18

1. A “So when I came from India the biggest problem when I start, wh-when I went for
2. interviews was uh they used to say what are you good at? Now obviously I, I have to
3. speak about myself what I can do and what not
4. L Yes
5. A and when they say I can do plus tools, I can do moulds, I can do that, I can do this
6. and I know this and this and that, they say um, hang on, hang on, can you know that
7. you can’t. You know what I mean? Because the way the system up here is not very
8. [inc]

It is clear here how the intercultural element does not regard linguistic differences per se rather as seen in Chapter 2 and 3, differences in professional background and work specialization which in Australia is far more specific. The theme of labour segmentation and over specialization recurs at various stages of the interview.

Excerpt 6.19

1. A From the management point of view, since labour is a bit cheaper there, you don't
2. have to know all the jobs all the time. There's certain people who will do certain jobs
3. and here the thing is if I have to work on a conventional machine, I will go and do it
4. and bring it. There you'll have operators for individual machines and things like that.
5. L Oh you have
6. A So as a tool maker you're more on supervising things, making sure things are going
- all right and putting all things together in the final stages.
- ...
7. A whereas here, here in Australia since labour is so expensive and what not and what
8. else, you pretty much, it's ah like a single man army, one man army.
- ...
9. A And over there, loyalty and things like that are a big thing. You always move up the
10. ladder. He's been working for this company for this long, he's doing, he's doing a
11. good job, I can absorb him and put him up the ladder, even if he doesn't fit in there,
12. you'll train him up. Right
13. L Um
14. A Here in Australia since money is everything and money is an important factor that's
15. very rare.
16. L It's very rare that?
17. A That you get, you-you get active and move up

What Anthony is describing here is an organizational system, the Indian one where hierarchical status is still predominant and whereby role-relationships are also based on personal loyalty and mentoring. This contrasts with the money-driven Australian system which requires job-tailored skills and specificity of expertise which, in turn, leads to a more 'flattened' work system where merits and leadership at an individual level are less readily recognized.

Anthony's positioning between the 'Indian system' and the Australian one also manifests in his description of how he obtained the job at PTS whereby first, a position as a CNC operator became available and then his current one as a designer, due to his Indian colleague and friend changing jobs within the company. His colleague also trained him for these jobs. Anthony states:

Excerpt 6.20

1. A Yeah, until the last four years or something I used to be a tool maker working
2. physically on the dyes.
3. L Like Albert
4. A building dyes, yes .
5. L Yeh
6. A okay, building dyes. I think the first 6 or 7 years I was pretty much doing, working

7. on all the conventional machines
8. L Uhm
9. A and on the bench
10. L Yuh
11. A because they all need to be put together, assembled and whatever okay? So that's
12. what I used to do and then I got into CNC machines working on CNC machines and
13. in the last four years I have been designing and modelling for the CNC machines as
14. well as there's another machine called a (incomp) turret press
15. L Okay
16. A so I do programming even for that.
17. L Okay so you've changed the uhh since you came here or?
18. A Yeah, since I came into this company.

The following probing questions by the researcher reveal that Anthony has also been trained, or as he puts it, 'introduced' to the design/programming side of the job by his colleague. Additionally as further questions and the observations by the researcher reveal, the use of their 'other' languages has been significant throughout the process as it is on a daily basis:

Excerpt 6.21

1. L And so you could do the job anyway, you could do this-this different job from the
2. one you did before without having to learn it or you have learnt it?
3. A I have to get used to the software.
4. L Okay and who taught you? How did you learn I mean?
5. A the person who was here before he just introduced me into it
- ...
6. L Um, and so it, ba-basically this person trained you on this um
7. A More then trained me, he introduced me into it.
- ...
8. L Of course I mean if you, if you didn't have the back, the background like you
9. couldn't – and who, who taught you was, um, from Australia, the person who taught you?
10. A No, no he was an Indian as well.
11. L Indian as well. What language did he talk to you in? (@)
12. A (@) I would say more of English, there's a little bit of Indian, we both speak the same language as well.
13. L okay
14. A so there could have been instances where that language would have crept in
15. L So you were switching from
16. A Yeh
17. L okay. The two [inc] especially where I come from we uh (cough) quite familiar
18. with a couple of languages

It is noteworthy here that Albert's introduction to PTS followed a similar pathway which resonates with what the Tool Makers' Association stands for: a job network providing mentoring and guidance. Anthony exemplifies briefly how the 'Association's affiliation works:

Excerpt 6.22

1. L Are they all Indians?
2. A most of them, yeh, yeh
3. L Oh most of them, not all? most
4. A I would say close to 95% (incomp)
5. L And what nationalities are the others, what background are the others, the minority?
6. A Could be anything do you know what I mean? Usually what happens is like, say for
7. instance, if I had a cousin or somebody down here-
8. L yeah
9. A I would take him in there and he would become a member of that, or something
10. like that
11. L okay
12. A that's how this, few, very few people are (incomp) but otherwise they have
13. somebody in them who is a tool maker in them.

The sense of belonging provided by the Association can then be seen as a way to re-plicate the Indian organizational system whereby mentoring, personal relationships and loyalty are at the basis of the institution itself and therefore at the basis of nexuses of practice.

The recursive shifting from pre to post migration throughout the interview points to Anthony's process of adaptation to the 'new system' whose nexuses of practices are communicatively challenging. The communication he is required to carry out with 'the production people' is in fact associated to a system which Anthony finds unfamiliar – workers asking him to modify or repair tools – and obsolete – linked to old machinery and production technology. The question from the researcher, elicits the following:

Excerpt 6.23

1. L do you have um, I mean do you communicate more easily with some people then
2. with other or mm same with everyone?
3. A I can get through with most of them now.
4. L Most of them. Which one do you eh communicate with more easily? Which ethnic
5. group for example?
6. A Uh, I find it a bit hard especially when it comes to people from you know like, if
7. you're Chinese or Vietnamese or people from that sort of a community because (...)
8. they break the English very badly or it's in words rather than sentences they speak
9. and at times, and it's not the proper phrase or grammar you know, not saying that
10. I'm good at it, but at least do you know what I mean, they chop-chop and talk and
11. you know? Try to communicate. At times I listen and try to be really attentive if my,
12. I might, you might miss a few things here and there, so,
13. L Okay.
14. A so had to make sure that I'm fully on

Apart from the reference to the ethnification issue which categorizes South-East Asians as 'difficult to understand' and belonging to a separate 'community' (unskilled or semi-skilled employed in manual labour as described in Chapter 5), Anthony also points to the progress he has made in 'tuning in' with them ('I can get through with most of them now' which indicates a somewhat difficult task, 'get through', on his side. However, as pointed above, on the one hand the communicative difficulties are overcome because of the

Anthony's increasing knowledge of the work issues brought forward by the production people, on the other, these same issues are what Anthony considers 'out of his sphere' of duties and therefore partially disruptive to his tasks:

Excerpt 6.24

1. L Okay, and what are the instances for example; instructions or
2. A No like, at times like me as a tool maker I pretty much supposed to design and
3. incorporate things like say for instance I come up and say I want this, I need to do
4. this but this is not doing that so can you modify or can you, you know? Simplify
5. things or things like that so I have to manufacture things for them and going by that
6. they, find out what their job is or what is supposed to do and from there I pick it up
7. and try to(.) make the thing or design the thing or draw the thing or whatever
8. L Okay.
9. A and obviously have it (incomp) all up and have it back to them or whatever.
10. L Okay so you-you yeah so if-if something has to be modified
11. A yeh
12. L you have to explain how it has to be modified?
13. A I have to understand what is a purpose and how that is done up there and what
14. it does.
- ...
15. L Okay
16. A and see what I best can do given the circumstances where it does or what it does or
17. how it works or whatever.
18. L Um, um what's the name I'm (@) trying to understand what, uh yeah I understand,
19. and um, and how often does it [incomp]
20. A Very rarely.
21. L changes happen?
22. A Very rarely, yeah.
23. L Oh what do you mean rarely ?
24. A because my, I've got my own jobs here
25. L Yeah
26. A which is in fact well too much do you know what I mean? and I-I bought only one
27. machine up there which does most of the job there
28. L Uhm
29. A So that's already loaded up-

As lines 2–8 show, it is the nexus of practice machine-production-procedure which have become Anthony's SIK (Stock of Interactional Knowledge) that are crucial to mutual understanding and cooperation between parties who would otherwise have further problems in communicating. However, as shown by line 23 – 29, the overall system is somewhat of an impediment to a smoother flow of work. Anthony continues on the same theme by highlighting the necessity for further modernization of procedures despite the adjustments, in socio-technical terms (human resources-available technology) that have taken place across the years:

Excerpt 6.25

1. A obviously there's normal wear and tear, which we have to look into
2. L uhm

3. A alright? Other then that, there's always improvising so they can still get the job done
4. with whatever they've got there now, because this place is going (incomp) for the
5. last 30 years or whatever
6. L Yeah
7. A but with time and modernization, there's certain things which can be better
8. nowadays.
9. L Of course, yeah.
10. A So that's where I step in.

Anthony continues describing how he found a way of adjustment and consequently strategies to overcome the communicative challenges:

11. A But I always make sure that they try and understand, keep asking whether, you know
12. what I'm saying or you know, go with those (inc) standard questions so
13. whatever.
14. L So you
15. A and at one point we had to take a, guess and hopefully my messages was simple and
16. clear and they were understood, if not obviously to be shown and say for instance I
17. ask one person to do something and I explain what to do
18. L uhm
19. A and I don't just walk away, no, (inc) if I'm going that way, just I repeat and
20. make sure that everything is going according to the plans or you know?
21. L Uhm
22. A Things like that. And if there is anything and as the job is progressing, you always
23. hit upon new ideas as well. You know what I mean?

Interestingly the interactional process of asking questions to verify that the message has come across (a recurring theme in Jacobs's interviews as well), is also viewed as 'mediational' as manifested in the last two lines of the excerpt. The 'progressing' of the job and presumable the resolution of the communicative impasse through interactive discursive cooperation points to a potential 'hit upon new ideas', a transformation towards a potentially more efficient way of doing things.

The nexuses of practices involved in the tool making are also seen as conducive to and intertwined with the communicative processes aimed at implementing processes themselves and in general overcoming potential disruptions:

Excerpt 6.26

1. A Because now as a tool maker you're always taught to do the job right even if it takes
2. a bit longer or whatever
3. L Yep
4. A but make sure you do it right for the first time (incomp)
5. L Yep
6. A because our job is not repetitive.
7. L Yeh, it's not?
8. A It's not.

9. L Okay.
10. A It's not repetitive. So what happens is we have to make sure everything is done, even
11. if it takes a little bit of extra time and planning
12. L yes
13. A we've got to make sure the next chain of people who use this job
14. L uhm
15. A it should be as simple as possible,
16. L uhm
17. A as problem free as possible and so a lot of thinking was in here,
18. L uhm

The mentioning of interactional communicative processes where procedures and stages as well as ways of operating are discussed prompts the researcher to ask whether these same processes are at all carried out in a more formal way such as through meetings:

Excerpt 6.27

1. L Um, do you have meetings?
2. A Very rarely.
3. L Very rarely.
4. A Because, the way, the culture is very different like I told you the other day. The
5. culture here is very different. We are very point blank and you know, instead calling
6. up a meeting and discussing and going to a computer and (incomp) and things like
7. that, we get told what we need
8. L [incomp]
9. A yeah it's all hands on, you know? So usually what happens is my boss is not here
10. now, uh he comes up and says, Tony we've got to do this, that and that and
11. obviously you'll have to do this first and second that and third one of that or
12. whatever. So I go over and design it. Once I design it, I always try to see if I can do
13. it any different from whatever my initial concepts are, whatever. And once it has
14. come to a point where I think yeah this is what it is
15. L Uhm
16. I I just, I will brief run with him

Here Anthony describes the communicative processes between himself and his major interlocutor his direct superior, Jacob. It is clear also from what Anthony states in the excerpt below, how the familiarity both interactants have with the established work practices guarantees the effective outcome of the exchanges whereby the interaction order, the roles and respective duties and accountabilities are well defined:

- ...
17. A Yeah, so we have a, a, more then anything I enlight, enlighten him as to what I'm
18. going to do because obviously it's setting up, apart from me and if somebody else
19. asks questions
20. L Um
21. A he is answerable, you know what I mean?
22. L Yeah
23. A like you know, so just enlighten him. He's pretty much, he doesn't change anything
24. as such because he knows what I'm doing is all right at, know what I mean? Things
25. like that so uh we go by that way. So if I come in I say this is what it is, he says okay

26. fine.
 ...
 27. A Okay, we go through it like I (incomp) this is what we need to do and I enlighten
 28. him on what I need because there are a lot of standard parts that we have to buy from
 29. outside for making these sort of things.
 30. L Any communication problems?
 31. A No.
 32. L No, no-nothing?
 33. A He understands
 34. L ((@))
 35. A He understands certain people far better than I do, like when I say people from the
 36. Asian backgr – who chop, chop and talk, talk, you know that sort of thing?

It is to be noted here the reiterated use of ‘enlighten’ as a way to utilize one’s own specific expertise and pass on the necessary knowledge towards a common goal whereby the role-relationship between interactants is based on trust in the respective role and accountability in organizing.

Finally, the last two lines of the above excerpt point to Jacob’s acknowledged expertise in communicating with linguistically diverse co-workers as deriving from his knowledge of work procedures and practices and familiarity with the related nexuses established over time and yet ever changing.

The overarching themes related to Anthony’s pre and post migration experiences in organizations converge towards the end of the interview in his view of organizing as a continuous transformation towards enhanced efficiency and implementation of current practices. Particularly, after referring to the tendency ‘to stick to certain moulds’, he mentions the continuous disruptions of work flow, due, in his opinion, to the mix of old and new technology, system and personnel which have an effect on employees’ behaviour:

Excerpt 6.28

1. A Oh there are a few things I would, discipline is a big factor.
 2. L Oh can I
 3. A They stick to certain things, certain moulds, you know what I mean?
 4. L Like what for example?
 5. A For example if I start on something I tend to finish it off for good
 6. L uhm
 7. A rather then going on to something else, know what I mean?
 8. L hm
 9. A There are a lot of cases where I go half done on what I have to stop for various
 10. reasons
 11. L uhm
 12. A and obviously production is a big factor because that’s what brings the money into
 13. the company,
 14. L um
 15. A so obviously they come and say this is what is done or this is a breakdown or
 16. something like that. I mean at times we had to attend to those things. But there are
 17. certain times where (...) you’re not reaching to the maximum potential I think –
 18. L Oh okay.

19. A You know what I mean? If you push a bit more harder
20. L um
21. A value for money is even better I think.
22. L In what way, like in um technically or (.) human resource-wise
23. A human resources [human resources].
24. L What do you mean? Very interesting. This is
25. A Well the way in in every hour is being utilised
26. L um
27. A I think it's not a (incomp) potential. Like say for instance, you're working for seven hours a day, doesn't mean all the seven hours have to produce something substantial, always a little bit of fatigue, there's certain things we have to let it go, you know what I mean?
28. L um
29. A But at that point what is that difference supposed to be? How minimum can we keep
30. it? To what extent can we maximise our job output you know and what do we need
31. to do? Oh okay this guy is getting old, he has he's walking around <past> so we had
32. to make sure- that the, the sort of jobs is, (incomp), is something that maybe is
33. not physically not [incomp]

This excerpt shows how Anthony is here shifting to the contemporary organizational worldview, knowledge-based and money-driven. He sees the extent of socio-technical systems (the mutual adaptation of machines and humans) in place at PTS as a hurdle to efficiency and cost-benefit value.

The researcher's question below at line 1 regarding communication among linguistically diverse employees as possibly impacting on efficiency is somewhat misunderstood by Anthony who interprets it as referring to communication as a way to make his ideas known and therefore as a contribution to the organizing of the company. His answer to the question, underlined below, is indicative of his awareness of the limitations in participation, especially at an organization level, to decision making processes or more simply to 'having a say', a theme emerging both during observations and in other participants' interviews:

Excerpt 6.29

1. L ... And you think language has an impact in these um changes or
2. A No.
3. L like you don't think ?
4. A Not really, not really. No. But of course I can't call the shots, so my
5. ideas will never get through
6. L mm
7. A and after a certain point I will not, I will keep my, keep them to myself because
8. what's the point of just telling them if nothings happening, you know what I mean?
9. L Keep it to yourself?
10. A Yeh
11. L Your idea?
12. A Yeh, yeh. Certain things when you see something is going wrong, this person could
13. be doing better off by doing this way or that way
14. L you just, yeh
15. A yeh because I know it's not going to make any difference.

16. L mm
17. A You always have to be on your toes to be on (incomp) line. I-I supposed
18. [think most of the times]
19. L you find this in Australia or everywhere? Everywhere I think.
20. A I think it has to become everywhere, but if you go back to India it's even worse
21. because the labour is so cheap, like say for instance when I got back to my country,
22. I-I'm closer, I'm still closely in touch with the place where I used to work there.
23. Okay? So I visit them every time now and then I'm there.
24. L Oh okay.
25. A like if I'm staying there for four weeks I'll visit them at least once a week or
26. whatever okay?
27. L Uhm
28. A The moment I walk in everybody stops work, they come and have a quick chat and it
29. maybe goes for a couple of hours. Nobody is really bothered. So its even bad up
30. there, it's not that bad up here. You know what I mean?

He then refers to communication as a tool to achieve the desired efficiency outcome:

Excerpt 6.30

1. A Like I said there's certain jobs, everybody can't be fast at everything.
2. L Um
3. A no matter their supposed to do the job.
4. L Uh
5. A But we have to see what suits best and what does, I mean, just because his (incomp)
6. I shouldn't say you do that you do that you clean there, you get me that you get me
7. that, you know what I mean? He has to learn as well in the same time, so I have to
8. make sure that he's going in that, you know those sorts of things.
9. L Yeh that's a very uh, I understand what you mean. But here you have to adopt a very
10. polite approach.
11. A Yeh, yeh
12. L Which indirect, so there's sometimes
13. A yeah, yeah, yeah that's what I say we have to be specific and
14. the message has to be very clear and simple and targeted.
15. L And targeted, yes very targeted, yes.
16. A If I need a cool coffee, I should say it should be cold.
17. L (@)
18. A You know what I mean? I can't just say get a coffee.

Anthony's mention of communication as enacted in organizing work, above, is clearly linked to the implicit knowledge and learning required to perform specific tasks in the best possible way. The reference to 'discipline' as a means to organize efficiently is noteworthy here, further pointing to a mono-directional – instructing to receiving instructions mode.

The back and forth references to pre and post-migration experiences recurring throughout the interview resonate with Anthony's individual positioning towards the organization's policies and systems as a mixture of old and new through which the company has found a 'modus operandi' over time in so far as the more contemporary and computerized mutual adjustment system has accommodated for the old technology (the use of old manual or

semi-manual machines) and the ‘old’ personnel and vice-versa. Anthony’s view itself can be described as projected towards innovation and transformation (more time and cost effective use of human resources as well as clear specification of the jobs required) as he finds it difficult to adjust to ‘the obsolete’. Nexuses of practices such as the modification or repair of components for old machines also entail discursive practices with ‘production people’ which are laborious and require ‘full attention’ not only to what is being said but to the understanding of the mechanics of the tools in question. However, although resistant to the ‘old’ within PTS, his view and behaviour are still anchored to an overarching traditional organizational ‘way of thinking’ related to his experience prior to arriving in Australia. Personal loyalty, trust and mentoring are then emerging as his enacted nexuses of practices whereby he has acquired a job, improved his position, has been mentored and has taken on a mentoring role in turn.

6.5 Stan’s shifting roles and contingency jobs: ‘... Sometimes if I know the job or what I have to do then I-I-I don’t ask him I just [come to] work and do my job

This section deals with the third selected participant’s interview, Stan’s. As for Jacob’s and Anthony’s the purpose of the analysis is here to investigate the focal themes emerging from the interactional interview process and how CS are conceptualized within the themes themselves and in relation to the interviewee’s SoE and the related nexuses in which he participates. In Stefan’s case, as it will be shown below, SoEs are particularly relevant as related to his career history at PTS and his positioning towards the organization itself: the past changes of jobs and status and the current constant shifting of roles and tasks as well as his involvement in the Unions as a delegate representative.

These changes across the years are the backdrop to discourses around migration, work and the communicative practices as well the use of CS in which he has engaged. CS use in particular resonates for Stefan with his adaptability to the multiple roles he is assigned on the floor.

The shifting roles at PLP resonate with Stan’s history of migration and employment at the beginning of his living in Australia. Since the opening of the interview, the initial questions asked by the researcher regarding the L2 learning experience channel the interaction towards these themes: from Stan’s Ukrainian ethnic and linguistic identity as a resident of Poland to his first job in Australia found through an Ukrainian-Polish network and his continuous reinventing himself as a tradesman. The theme concerning his migration from Poland is linked to both his ethnic belonging (Ukrainian) to the modalities of his leaving Poland. The excerpts below signals a resistance to being identified as a Polish on the one hand and as a refugee or, at least as a certain type of refugee, on the other:

Excerpt 6.31

1. [My, my] uh, my parent they got the background Ukrainian so uhm
2. L They were sorry?

3. S The-their background is Ukrainian
4. L Oh okay.
5. S (@@)
6. L So you are? [@@] [not Polish?]
7. S [I am eh] Polish Ukrainian (@@)
8. L Ok I understand [but] where were you born?
9. S [(@)]
10. S Poland.
11. L In Poland.
12. S Yeh.
13. L Okay, but your parents were from, originally from
14. S They've been (incomp) for generation born in there, but they still keep the language.
- ...
15. L Polish okay. Do you still speak Polish at home? Or no.
16. S Um not much with the friends but I speak with my wife Ukrainian.
17. L Okay (@) (incomp)
18. S And my kids Ukrainian they doesn't know Polish.
19. L She, okay, I understand. So you speak Ukrainian at home.
20. S Yeh.
21. L Polish with your friends.
22. S Yep.
23. L Russian sometimes?
24. S Uh Russian occasionally with some friends, but uh, mix up Ukrainian Russian (@).
25. L Okay and English mainly at work [or out]
26. S [Mainly] at work.

Later in the interview Stan will further dissociated from the Polish identity when he stated:

Excerpt 6.32

1. [I tell you] I tell you the stories like um in Poland em used to be one nationality.
2. They not that, they did not accept any other nationality during that communist
3. system. [Like] um
4. L [what] do you mean no other nationality? Like
5. S M-no, they did not accept any other nations you know like eh, there was only one
6. language
7. L One language yeh yeh yeh [but then] but then there was lots of [Germans]
8. S [it was] [they discriminate] you a little bit. [Eh]
9. L [Germans] were discriminated [against]?
10. S No, no, no. Germans no probably them then. They discriminate more Ukrainian
11. people because there was a lot of Ukrainian people [in Poland] yeah.
12. L [in Poland]. Oh okay.
13. S (clearing throat) maybe they, I mean they, the-the pee, some people pick up on me
14. when I was young, you know small, particularly kids.

The theme 'Ethnicity' recurs also in relation to employment. As it is shown by the excerpt below, as a newly arrived migrant, Stan experiences first hand an ethnification process at work. Furthermore, changes in work environment often accompany job changes:

Excerpt 6.33

1. S But uhm when I come over here first thing I mixed, when I started work, I mix with
2. the Polish Ukrainian people. So I just probably for the first three years I speak only
3. Polish Ukrainian. Not much English. [And uh]
4. L [oh-oh] in the first, okay the [first years] yeh
5. S [yeh] the first three years and fter when um when uh they close the section there was
6. no eh same nationality so I ha-have to start learning English. And uh, that slowly
7. slowly. I look sometime at the book. I-I mainly learn the words. Words and after do
8. the, how to build a sentence
9. and uh, and that's it.
10. L Um, did you go to any courses?
11. S Uh, fr-from the beginning when I come over to Australia they eh, they send me for
12. two months English course but uh, I did, I don't think I learn anything because it was
13. something new and uh the way how they talk quick I couldn't get anything so
14. L uh who, when you say they sent you, who-who sent you?
15. S Um there's probably like uh C-c-centerlink you know? [Because] I was like eh, eh
16. immigrant
17. L [oh yeh yeh]
18. S I-I-I come over, um the legal way not like some people on the boat whatever.
19. L Yeah, yeh, yeh.
20. S The United Nations. I-I come from Austria. From eh

Stefan's first option as he arrived was to find a job among his country people who at that particular time were likely to have the same migration history – the early 80s Eastern Europe crisis resulting in Poland's Marshall law – English was then a non-priority until the factory-section-enclave is closed. Interestingly, despite the researcher's attempt, later in the interview, to know more about the work environment in question, no further information is provided. However, Stefan's takes the opportunity to distance himself from the 'boat people' as refugees who did not come through 'official ways' are referred to. This was the case of mainly Vietnamese refugees who arrived in Australia in the same period (see Chapter 5).

The question on the type of job Stan had, also prompted an exchange on the shifts that characterized Stan's professional life as is shown below:

Excerpt 6.34

1. L Okay. And what type of job was that? [Would]
2. S [I used] to do welding job. I used to do well,
3. become [welder]
4. L [we]. Okay yep. And um, did you learn there, did you learn [there or] you learned?
5. S [I learned] there. I learned there.
6. L Okay. Um what was your job before you came?
7. S Eh let me, (@), um I used to be like eh, when I complete my apprenticeship I go for
8. three years in the army.
9. L Okay.
10. S After when I come out after two years I become a truck driver for two years. And
11. after that I left I-I used to run a warehouse with the car parts
12. L Okay.
13. S For another two years then after that I-I just simply, I left the warehouse and uh go
14. to Austria.

15. L And go to Austria. Did um, okay so when you, when you came to Australia did you
16. learn on the job how to weld and?
17. S Yeh welding m-m, welding I learn in Australia.
18. L oh-oh okay. On the job or did you?
19. S First on the job and after I went to TAFE and uh, I did my certificate. Um, originally
20. from Poland I'm eh fitter machinist.
21. L A what sorry?
22. S Fitter.
23. L Fitter. Okay. Yep, yep, yep, yep.
24. S And uh, fitter mechanic, another machine.
25. L Okay yeh.
26. S But eh, after I flew over here I-I did eh few courses like hydraulics (incomp) and
27. I also when I did my electrical license.

Stan's frequent change of jobs, accompanied by different training courses interrelate with his history at PTS which again indicates a continuous shift in roles and tasks. Below he states that although he is not currently certified as an electrician, he is still occasionally employed as such within the company:

Excerpt 6.35

1. S I lost my license because um I used to buy my license (clearing throat) and that and
2. now I try to um retrieve my license again, [so when]
- ...
3. S I-I still do electrical job over here.
4. L Um. Oh you still do it but [yeh]
5. S [yeh but] not, n-nothing important but most of the stuff uh, if any
6. machine brake down and something is really no like uh confusable bit of electronics
7. then they call [a sub] contractor. But otherwise the rest I do everything.

To be noted above is the fact that he only works at 'nothing important' and if 'any machine break down and something is really no like uh confusable ...' 'then they call a sub-contractor.' The researcher's probing questions further highlights his changing roles:

Excerpt 6.35

1. L What is your job here in-in [particular?]
2. S [Maintenance], fitter, welder, electrician
3. m-particularly I probably I'm like, I was employed as a boiler maker/welder 18 years
4. ago but uh
5. L okay then 8 (...) 18.
6. S 18 years ago [yeh]
7. L [oh] you-you worked for [this company for 18 oh] that's a long time. Okay so
8. S [yeh yeh 18 years yeh]
9. L and did you change a lot of jobs?
10. S Um er I used to, first I-I was employed er as a boiler maker I mean eh, boiler
11. maker/welder I just did um aluminium welding that m, I had to be certified and after
12. I was (...) for probably, nearly seven years I mean there was not much aluminium
13. but uh I was in the maintenance also [there] was aluminium then I was doing
14. aluminium b-if not then I was in the

15. L [okay]

It is also noteworthy how the roles Stan lists reflect the company's contingency requirements and how he makes sense of all the jobs that at different time he had to undertake – boiler maker/welder who did aluminium and for which he had to be certified, although at a later stage because there was not much aluminium he also did maintenance. It is also interesting how he positions himself towards the roles the company assigns to him, that is as someone who can adapt to any jobs:

Excerpt 6.36

1. S I-I-I do, I do everything eh over here. Whatever they require. I'm[-I'm]-I'm the
2. handy man so
3. L [In]
4. L For maintenance?
5. S Yeh maint[enance yeh]
6. L [maintenance] okay, alright. Does anybody else work in the same job as you or
7. only you?
8. S Not really. M-I-I I think only me [@@]
- ...
9. S So all this, for all [this space] – [I'm-I'm most] of the time I'm um in the
10. maintenance. I have to like uh you see that room was made by me yeh that was
11. before, over here finish. I made the extension. Have to put windows, doors,
12. [gyprock], painting
13. L [of the]
14. L This wall? [This] room?
15. S [Yeh]
16. S Yeh.
17. L Ohh by yourself?
18. S By myself yeah
19. L Okay.
20. S I'm not a gyprocker. I'm nothing [(incomp) I mean] the-the-the second office all
21. that m-m –
22. L [(no, oh um]
23. S made by me. That whole wall is made by me. I did a lot of stuff like this.
24. L Okay. And uh-eh-uh who decides, I mean who, what has has to be done this
25. way like?
26. S Jacob He just simply ask me can you do this thing? (...) Yeh. I can try.

At a later stage Stan continues listing his tasks by stressing the casualty and the variety in preparation of accounting for his change of hierarchical status at one point of his career with PTS:

Excerpt 6.37

1. S maintenance, repairing fixing, whatever, welding. But um after that I was also
2. supervisor in the hardware I just applied for the position I
3. L Uhu
4. S I was probably for five years the supervisor and mm
5. L In the hardware?

6. S yeah that was another section down there.
7. L Okay so what is it? Hardware (clearing throat)
8. S They called it hardware the-m the section but they do most of them like eh I mean I
9. used to have **under me** um, around-around 30 people at this stage when I was there
10. mean uh casting, forging, welding and all the presses uh manufacturing that was
11. **under me**

It is interesting to note how Stan stresses the amount of responsibility and power that came with the job (lines 8-11) and the repeated use of 'under me'. The following exchange signals a critical moment between interviewer and participants as she is aware (from observations and information collected through recordings), of the shift in status that the loss of his supervisory position has caused for Stan:

Excerpt 6.38

1. L Okay so that was um the hardware section?
2. S Yeh, yeh.
3. L And now it's not there anymore?
4. S There, they still existing but I left you know I [mean] uh I used to have bit
5. difficulty with the
6. L [okay]
7. S management the (incomp) uh
8. L At that time?
9. S At that time, yeh.
10. L Okay (@).
11. S That was a bit I mean, um, it wasn't ehh easy I was working really hard and we used
12. to but, uh nobody appreciates so now they put more leading hands, supervisors and
13. less work and eh [and it's good].
14. L [less work] divided [among more people]
15. S [yeh and is good]. No one, but no one notice my job. When are
16. you working good and harder then they want more, more, more.

The critical moment is employed as a pretext by the researcher to bring the interaction back to the topic of communication without completely abandoning the backdrop theme about his supervisory role:

Excerpt 6.38

1. L [And uh] do-do-did you, did you have a lot of um people who spoke different
2. languages when you were working there, like the-the make up of the team [was]
3. mixed
4. S [um] yeah particular Asian people
5. L mixed [so]
6. S [Yeah]
7. L wh-uh-uh, was their communication easy? Was it
8. S Um-no no problem because they understand job, [just] m-m-I mean if you give them
9. him the
10. L [okay]

11. S eh the work order and they understand because most of them people, most of the
12. people they work for reasonably long time and uh, the hardest part was to give, get
13. the casuals and uh
14. L Oh
15. S To give a the job for them then you have to look after and they-they do, they did a
16. lot of stuff up and eh I have to fill up the time sheets also for them. That was hard.
17. L Yeh
18. S Otherwise the-the permanents eh people they were, eh-eh-a-a-actually I-I knew
19. which one w-which person can do what.

It is clear from the above that Stan, in his role as a supervisor, had constant communication with the workers and that, as he states, this was made easy by the work knowledge of the employees themselves as well as the long process of mutual adaptation in relation to tasks to be undertaken and interactions to be carried out among co-workers. He states:

Excerpt 6.39

1. S M-m, I mean I-I was I have to mm look after the people, pass the job, check on the
2. job, book in all the product. Uh and now I just, I'm-I'm not worry anymore. I just
3. come over whatever has to be done I do that thing. (inc) no stress simply.

This is in contrast with his current role whereby he mainly performs tasks by himself and despite being part of the Tool Room team, he moves constantly around the plant and only has social talk with his fellow workers except when he is looking for some misplaced tool or needs some specific help from others.

He identifies nexuses of practices, when something 'goes wrong', as follows:

Excerpt 6.40

1. S Then I can ask people yeh, then uh, I-I can ask sometime oh uh (...). Particular
2. sometime when I go on the drill whatever and I mm, I want some sleeves change
3. over the drill [whatever]

The researcher probes further into the current verbal interactions required of Stan by asking about his routine duties:

Excerpt 6.41

1. L [Oh it's very] interesting for me, very interesting. Um so who do
2. you, during the work day, who do talk to mostly? The supervisors I suppose?
3. S The supervisor. Eh-but-eh particular supervisor because whatever he want, n-if I
4. come to work eh um, most of the time asking what I got to do today? Do they have
5. any urgent job? And it-it
6. L The supervisor's the same as Jacob?
7. S Jacob [yeah exactly], site service manager but he's a supervisor
8. L Does this happen uh in a planned way or it's just uh every day? In the [morning]?
9. S [every day] yeh

10. L Every day? So [it's]
11. S [Uh] sometimes if I know the job or w-w-what I have to do then I-I-I don't ask him
12. I just [come to] work and do my job.
13. L [you just do]

The above excerpt highlights how Stefan and Joe have become, after a process of mutual adjustment, a system-unit and a special role-relationship has formed between the two whereby Stan's subordinate role result in an acceptance of contingent nexuses to which he is prepared. He further describe the role-relationship's interactional enactments as follows:

Excerpt 6.41

1. S What sort of uh job I've got there and eh, how I got to do it? Because, particularly
2. like my boss gives me something to-to makes so I need I said, give me a drawing
3. and uh d-dimensions, whatever [you want]
4. L [oh you he] gives you a drawing?
5. S Yeh. Some sort of sketch like [(incomp)]
6. L [oh sketch] yeh, yeh, yeh.
7. S If you, for example want to make a table or bench whatever then I want him to give
8. me a sketch, what sizes he want it on.
9. L Okay. So [you]
10. S [what material]
11. L He comes to you and gives you instructions on
12. S Yeh
13. L what to do and you know the, you talk about how and where and all this sort of
14. things. Is there anybody else that you have to talk to about work or only?
15. S Nn-not really.
- ...
16. L Um do you have miscommunication problems sometimes with, like mm
17. [problems in uh]
18. S [Not really sometimes] if I ask my boss something and uh (...) and he look at me
19. and-and because sometime I say something upside down and he said come on, come
20. on. Look at me (@) and he say come on, come on. (@@), but not really (inc) if
21. you wanted to just say hey make a bit of fun, then he do like [this yeh].
- ...
22. S [He knows] what's going on anyway. He knows what I want.
23. L Oh okay. Okay. So it's just uh
24. S Sometimes he pretending like he doesn't know what's going on but he make a joke

The above excerpts exemplifies the enactment of the system-unit Stan-Jacob as well as their respective SIK whereby they have developed their way of established communicative practices based on work knowledge and mutual position. It also resonates with Jacob's one-directional way of communicating what is required of a worker (see excerpts 6.8 and 6.11 above) although here Stan does not acknowledge the disparity in hierarchical status but rather hints at the fact that he does not need to reply or spell out what he himself wants to do or how he wants to carry out the assigned task since his interlocutor already knows.

Again the ‘drawings’ as a means to overcome communication difficulties as well as the ‘walking to the job’ as a means to have the visual understanding of the job at hand recur as nexuses of practice:

Excerpt 6.41

1. L what do you do in those (...) in those situations? I mean how can you, how do
2. you think yeee
3. S If I won't understand for example whatever then I can draw or sketch or picture
4. whatever, whatever I want, but I don't have a problem. I ne- actually I never have
5. problem.
6. L Okay.
7. S If I don't understand re-re-really what my boss talking, then I simply talking, tell
8. him, draw me a picture, whatever you want or show me the job
9. L Yeh, yeh
10. S Because sometimes he telling me something oh-oh machine has got to do this thing
11. and the technical ways which a [I never heard] about the machine I said show me
12. this things. Simple
13. L [yeh, yeh]
14. S as this [and when] I come over then I see.

Stan also mentions this practice in relation to the discursive ethnification process of which specific ethnic groups have been object over time:

Excerpt 6.41

1. L Did you have any problems? Can you remember any problems that you had when
2. using English? Probably not now but (...) previously?
3. S Emm not really because you know like um if you go on the job you understand, you
3. see this. Sometime people they don't speak English at all and there doing job oh-oh
4. very well because simple th-the drawing, like they get in-in the production, they get
5. the paperwork and that is common thing what they do every day. You just get the
6. paper and ye-email what to do. You don't have to, nobody have to talk to
7. any-anything.
8. L Um
9. S [they cannot] learn, they cannot learn better because they is, some of them they
10. do but some of them they don't because they've gotta that-that particular eh Asian
- dialect [and] they cannot [pronounce] better ways –

It is also noteworthy here how the non-necessity of talking is highlighted as pointing to the mono-direction of communication: from organizers to organized.

In conclusion, the interactional process researcher-participant emerging from Stan's interview yield two broad intertwined themes: 1) the migration and employment experience; and 2) the communicative SoEs in which Stan finds himself across the years. Stan's professional history revolves around a constant change of roles and jobs both prior to his arrival at PTS and during his employment within the company. Stan's discursive strategies revolve around his multiple SoEs and related nexuses of practices of which he becomes part of at any given task he is assigned. The continuously changing roles he takes on are connected to the contingent occurrences and requirements within the company:

break-downs, routine maintenance, refurbishing and rebuilding of sites, etc.: in turn, the ways in which he categorizes himself in relation to his tasks are shifting and emergent throughout the interview.

It is interesting to note that although he engages in different sites and with different interlocutors however, currently he views himself as interacting almost only with his direct superior whereby the interaction order is maintained and fixed: the communication is mainly mono-directional with Jacob, his superior giving instructions and Stan receiving and actioning upon them.

6.6 Conclusion

This chapter focussed on the joint – researcher/participants – identification, interpretation and explanation of CS emergence, use and role as social-institutional practices. To this purpose, initial interviews were the mediational tools through which participants and researcher's relationship as interlocutors and joint constructors of accounts of both actions and the communication required therein was established. The context of interviews also allowed orders of indexicality – the perspective peculiar to one's own position in time, space and type of engagement – to be established as a key to the interpretation of accounts themselves.

Specifically, the analytical process in question allowed the emergence of 1) broad focal themes which formed the backdrop of participants' accounts of site of engagements and the nexuses of practices in which they converged; and 2) the conceptualization of CS as constituting and constituted by the nexuses themselves. The conceptualization of CS so delineated then, also indicate the discursive processes involved in participants' description, explanation and interpretation as well as the references they construct to communicative episodes in which they took part.

Within the overall aim of organizing, CS as embedded in actual episodes are then attributed functions such as avoiding potential future problems, enhancing quality performance, repairing mistakes or unsuccessful operations, seeking/enforcing consensus. At the same time, the orders of indexicality within which they are accounted for, the relation to participants' individual position and worldviews, reveal the interaction order, their extent of participation in or authority over organizing and in contrast the extent of resistance towards power and organization.

Three key-participants' interviews were the focus of this chapter (Jacob's, Anthony's and Stan's – cf Chapter 4, Table 4.1). However, the analysis provides close references to both the other participants' interviews, the researcher's observations and the informal conversations she had during the observation period itself. The selection of these key-participants allowed the identification of their mutual role-relationships, positioning and

interaction orders both within localized communicative events and towards the organization: in a word the processes of their convergence towards nexuses of practices.

Within the backdrop of communication and specifically CS as a social practice aimed at organizing, four major themes emerged and were analysed in the three interviews: 1) pre and post-migration experiences of employment and language use; 2) ethnification discourses; 3) organizational transformation between past, present and future; and 4) adaptation and resistance to organizing.

As shown in the previous sections, all the four themes are present in the three interviews as they are inscribed within the personal experience of each individual participant. A summary of how the three participants conceptualize CS in relation to their positioning to organizing is here provided.

Jacob's managerial position and his long history at PTS across the organization's eras of technological transformation, diversification and restructuring enables him to take on a 'performative' stance towards the use of CS as one of 'his' organizing tools. In this capacity, for instance, pre and post migration experiences as well as ethnification discourses are linked to how employees from specific ethnic groups have been employed based on the skills generally associated with their country of origin. Similarly, Jacob described how his way of communicating has had to adapt to the individual merit/shortcomings (both linguistic and non) of single workers depending on his own assessment of their capabilities. It is also clear from his accounts how these communicative practices of his have remained unchanged (mono-directional and excluding the employees' participation) despite some of the trends (lean manufacturing) that the company is trying to embrace and which would require more distributed opportunities for contribution to decision making.

Anthony's conceptualization of CS is related to his views on organizing and the way he converges in the organization's nexuses of practices since his arrival to Australia. His views concern a more streamlined use of technology and human resources whereby old or semi-automated machinery should increasingly be eliminated and the personnel in charge of this possibly retrained or retrenched. The CS he employs reflect these views insofar as – if called to design a modification on an existing tool (one that is going to be utilized on an old machine) – he tries to simplify the process by acquiring and contributing information as much as possible from a more advanced technological point of view or else trying to counterbalance others' perspectives, namely the ones from the people's upstairs and, at times, Jacob's.

Similarly Stan's history within the company can be said to be intertwined with his view of communication with peers and superiors, in particular. Stan's constant changing roles and tasks, corresponding to constantly changing SoEs, are reflected in his continuous adaptation to the contingent needs of the organization: maintenance, refurbishing, welding and fitting. His discursive enactments of the nexuses that he engages in reflect this adaptability and constant adjustment whereby due to his and his co-workers 'knowledge of

the job' he has no problem in communicating despite linguistic shortcomings on both sides, whereas, in relation to his superior Jacob he adopts the role of the instructions' recipient rather than that of an interlocutor. Although there is no explicit mention of his involvement with the Unions, both researcher's observations and informal conversations within the organization as well as the recordings collected, suggest that this involvement may be the reason of both his change of status (from supervisor to 'maintenance handy man') and his choice not to engage in exchanges which may lead to explicit contrasting views on required job from his side.

As shown in Chapter 6, the red thread linking the present chapter and the next is the analysis they carry out of the process of accounting, (as delineated by Garfinkel's ethnomethodology), by participants in interviews and retrospective interviews, respectively. Then, the focal themes emerging here are further explored in Chapter 6 through the analytical focus on the selected natural interactions through which the connections between the kind of knowledge that regulate our thinking (macro) and the unconscious ways in which we enact this knowledge in talk and text in interactions (micro) (Nicolini, 2011) are identified.

CHAPTER 7

CS IN INTERACTIONS AND HOW THEY ARE ACCOUNTED FOR IN ORGANIZING

7.1 Introduction

The previous chapters (5 and 6) highlighted the process of joint identification and interpretation (researcher/participants), during the observation period and the interviews respectively, of what constitutes CS in crucial sites of engagement and their relation to nexuses of practices within the historical, physical and socio-cultural context of the organization. How CS manifest and are accounted for were also aspects dealt with. Specifically, Chapter 5 provided a linguistic ethnographic account of the workplace itself and its crucial Sites of Engagements while also providing insights on the processes of formation of nexuses of practices mainly through the researcher's observations. Chapter 6 in turn, focussed on the twofold – participants-researcher's joint identification, recognition and interpretation of CS in interviews as 1) they emerged in the accounts of nexuses of practices at work and 2) in their role of discourse strategies used in interviews themselves (by both researcher and participants) which highlighted how sense is made, emerges and intersects across time and space (Scollon & Scollon, 2004). In this way, the participants' different positioning, role and stance towards actions and across time and space, also revealed the orders of indexicality through which they discursively constructed the concept of CS and their relation to practices.

In the context of orders of indexicality, the present chapter, through a nested analysis approach, links the focal themes identified in initial interviews (Roberts & Sarangi, 2005), to the enacted – 'live' – naturally occurring interactions or communicative events as they manifest in accounted for organizational practices and specifically in critical moments contingent to those practices. Here, retrospective interviews (or post-event interviews) are analysed as the sites where participants comment on selected communicative events themselves and therefore conclude the process of sense-making of actions and related discursive practices. In this context, the role of CS within live communicative events, emerges within and is mediational to discursive frames (Goffman, 1963, Scollon, 2001, 2002, 2004) of time and space in retrospective interviews. The two dimensions of CS investigated here are: 1) the one constructing 'real time' organizing and, 2) those employed by participants in retrospective interviews with the purpose of making sense of organizing

practices. In this way, CS main function, to form nexuses as established, historical practices but also in continuous transformation, is captured ‘as it happens’ in the discourses of participants as a connection is discursively established between the localized interactional occurrences (work activities and talk), the institutional aims and the socio-political context at large.

To this purpose, reference will be made to the four macro-types of CS identified in Chapter 4, according to Scollon’s theoretical underpinnings of ‘convergence of social practices’ (Scollon 2001b; Scollon and Scollon, 2003) across times and space where time is constituted of ‘multiple overlapping timescales’ and space is more than a ‘physical place’. The four types of CS, as delineated in Chapter 4, are: 1) organizing future jobs/actions (they pertain to interactions on work to be done and course of actions to be undertaken); 2) organizing action/jobs being performed while on a task – synchronously; 3) establishing relational/social order (interactions not pertaining to any work related action task), involves recounts, requests, gossip, requests, advice, opinions, etc.); 4) re-enforcing/contrasting existing or past practices (interactions pertaining to work in general but not tasks to be accomplished at the specific moment of the event (could be comments/opinions/recounts on work – see Chapter 4).

The four macro-types of CS are seen and constructed as emerging within communicative events whereby organizing requires strategic discursive ‘moves’ to become ‘legitimized’, continue to organize and sometimes disorganize. These moves are explicit or implicit references that participants make to past, present or/and future courses of action. Discursive enactments of organizing such as coordination, goal setting, power making, decision making then, although locally realized, derive their strength and legitimation against opposed interests and resistance of contrasting worldviews from both historical and future institutional practices through individual agency (the participants’ voice): overlapping and at times contrasting discursive frames serve to validate the institutional conduct invoked across time and space.

The analysis of the excerpts in this chapter then is the analysis that participants themselves carry out of CS as they see and ‘deconstruct’ them from their enactment ‘in context’. Therefore this chapter further probes the joint investigation into CS as outlined by the two research questions:

- 1) What are communication strategies on the factory floor of the workplace object of this study?
 - a) What is their role at the intersection between language and action?
 - b) How do they enact, resist, negotiate interaction orders?
 - c) What are the ‘intercultural elements’ at play in interactions and what role do CS play in this context?

and the second one-

- 2) How do CS emerge in verbal interactions and how are they conceptualized by participants through their accounts?
 - a) Do CS take on different functions in different events with different people?
 - b) How and to what extent are CS accounted for as a social practice?
 - c) How do participants conceptualize ‘intercultural communication’ in their interactions?

This chapter is organized as follows: section 7.2 introduces the intersection between, on the one hand, focal themes as they have been identified in the linguistic ethnographic approach of Chapter 5 and the initial interviews of Chapter 6 and on the other, the communicative events in which those focal themes emerge and which have been selected for this chapter. Section 7.3 and subsections deal with the focal themes emerging in Jacob’s interviews and the communicative events which he accounts for. In sections 7.4 and 7.5 Anthony and Stan’s focal themes and the communicative events in which they take part respectively are dealt with. Finally, Section 7.6 provides concluding remarks about the nested analysis undertaken here.

7.2 Focal themes, communicative events and critical moments

As highlighted in the previous section, an integrative approach to the analysis of naturally occurring interactions is adopted here which aims at identifying links between focal themes emerging in initial interviews, analytical themes emerging in naturally occurring interactions themselves and how these interactions are discursively accounted for in post-event interviews. This analytical process highlights both CS as ‘they happen’ and as they contribute to discursively form (describe, explain, interpret) nexuses of practice in participants’ post-event commentaries.

This section specifically aims at describing the links between focal themes and the communicative events selected for analysis and the joint acknowledgement (participants – researcher) of critical moments within them. This entails a twofold perspective: 1) a reference to participants’ position to specific themes; and 2) a brief ethnographic description of the communicative events and the interactions embedded in them.

For this purpose, the three participants’ interviews analysed in Chapter 5 are taken into consideration: Jacob’s, Anthony’s and Stan’s.

Specifically, Jacob interviews’ focal themes regard his ‘transitional’ status towards retirement and the ways he discursively manages his position and agency across past, present and future systems both in terms of technology and human resources. In particular, the way he relates himself to the manpower he manages is identified here as a major focus of Jacob’s agency and nexuses of practices in which he engages. The two communicative events and related critical moments explored here are those in which Jacob negotiates this

very stance between old technological systems and the requirements of new expertise and forms of cooperation: 1) asking Anthony to modify an existing tool through the application of new technology; and 2) refusing to collaborate with another department.

Anthony's interviews reveal his stance towards the organizational practices as juxtaposed to Jacob's. His 'new expertise' puts him in a position to be relied upon by Jacob and, at the same time to accept the situation of adjustment and compromise in which Jacob himself has to work: the clash between old and new, upstairs and downstairs. The two communicative events analysed here are: the modification of an old tool at the request of a client (the same as the one analysed for Jacob, mentioned above) which Anthony inquires about; 2) the resistance to accept, from the staff upstairs, the design specifications to build a component because he considered it not functional to the purpose.

Finally, the themes emerging from Stan's interviews are considered. These themes are related to the continuous adjustment to contingencies and circumstances reflected in his multiple roles (fitter, builder, electrician and welder) which also testify to the changes of jobs he has had in his 22 years at PTS. His peculiar position as a union's delegate contributes to his stance towards co-workers and management: collaboration and adjustment respectively. The two communicative events investigated here show the way he discursively constructs this stance: the installation of a new cooling tower requiring the collaboration among himself and his co-workers; 2) the stripping, cleaning and servicing of an old machine which he reluctantly carries out in the way he is directed to do, by Jacob.

As will be shown below, the final recursive stage of the nested analysis is the investigation of how the focal themes as emerging from the communicative events are made sense of by the participants' accounts in the retrospective commentaries. In this capacity, nexuses of practice but also critical moments within the nexuses themselves are fully revealed in the process of their convergence towards action: the way they are explained and interpreted and in this way managed, is also explored below.

7.3 Claiming agency between past and present, resistance and change

In this section, a nested analysis of Jacob's interviews and retrospective interviews is carried out. As explained in Chapter 4, during the collection of naturally occurring interactions Jacob did not wear a recorder. However, he was present in many of the communicative events recorded by his co-workers in the Tool Room and being in charge of the Tool Room itself, he had knowledge of all the operations carried out therein. This made it possible for him to comment on the 'live' interactions selected by the researcher as 'analytical themes' and as enactments of the focal themes emerging from the interviews themselves.

In particular, this section will explore two major aspects of CS emergence in Jacob's descriptions of interactions and live interactions themselves: 1) how Jacob inscribes his

views on communication within his managerial role and the type of agency he discursively claims for himself, an agency which has been constructed across the years at PTS and through the different eras the company has gone through. The overarching nexus which CS construct and are constructed in Jacob's description, explanation and interpretation of communicative events is in the reconciliation of past and present ways of operating, obsolete and new technological systems, old and current behaviour and thinking. As will be shown below, this nexus will link to themes of work distribution and assignment, ethnification, trouble shooting and decision making as well as resistance and enforcement in a climate of continuous change. The two types of CS (out of the four identified in Chapter 4), emerging in the discursive enactments investigated in this section, are: 1) CS organizing operations to be undertaken and concerted among different people and in different steps: it involves exchanging information (also from past events), decision making, assigning tasks, taking duties on; 2) CS resisting and refusing to take tasks and responsibilities on.

Two communicative events are analysed here: a) the decision making process entailed in the making of a tool (the same communicative event will be commented upon by Anthony, below); and b) the refusal to cooperate with the production manager Hannah which involves Anthony as well.

The initial part of the retrospective interview starts with a summary of Jacob's role and duties as discussed in the initial interview and also sets the scenario for Jacob to position himself in relation to his 'organizing strategies' according to the organization's systems. Jacobs's has a peculiar position for two reasons: 1) he has worked for the organization for over 35 years and therefore his experience spans across several company's transformations at different levels (from technical changes to staff demographics and institutional policies and regulations); 2) his managerial role at the 'level of factory floor' which places him literally 'between upstairs and downstairs'. Both these reasons are the historical backdrop which gives Jacob accountability to organise and describe, explain, interpret the discursive strategies he employs to this purpose and the nexuses of practice that they construct:

Excerpt 7.1

1. J My role is the tooling side, the building, looking after the building and looking after
2. the mere equipment and machinery and also occupational health and safety of
3. workers and everything I design and do. I do all that, all, that's-that's my role. I'm
4. sort of ah, what they call a Site Service Manager, but I have a lot of hats, if you
5. know what I mean?
6. L Yep.

It is interesting to note, how, after this brief introduction, Jacob goes on into breaking down the organizing phases that his job entails and in so doing he implicitly explains the interactional side of all the operations: from the interactions with customers and salespeople to the quality assurance and maintenance of machines and environment and the

safety of the environment itself in a continuous cycle of mutual adjustment (see Chapter 5) and confluence of nexuses where people and viewpoints have to converge:

Excerpt 7.2

1. J Uh in the, in the way of tooling manufacturing **we-we** receive a product we need to
2. design or manufacture. **I'm involved** in that in manufacturing of a design tool.
3. L So when you say you receive a product, you receive a work order? I mean
4. [you receive uh]
5. J [well, no the] customer [wants a particular item]
6. L [yeh, yeh, like a] commission [or]
7. J [uh] to do his particular project. They come to us here, they talk to the sales people,
8. the sales people come to me and say we want you to make a tool [to do] this.
9. L [yeh].
10. J **I make** the tool, **I test** the tool with our production people and uh then **I see** the end
11. results and then we and then there might be some modifications that do that. That's
12. one part of it. The other way **I look** after the equipment that we run to make sure that
13. it is safe and-and um in good general order
14. L yeh
15. J and then if it's too old, old in age then **I-I replace** it with a new one. Uh **I look after**
16. the building basic-, basically if there is a problem, that's what I'm doing at the
17. moment, I, I'm refurbishing the toilets. I've - [uh]
18. L [All toilets or?]
19. J Oh just up here, [because they've]-they've done a lot of you can see all the carpet
20. they've
21. L [just up there]
22. J changed and all that. **[I] look** after that projects. **I also look** after the roof leaks
23. and the
24. L [oh]
25. J building and anything else that has to be done sort of comes to my direction. And
26. then I look after production to make sure that all the systems that [we to-to-to] we
27. [to work in]
28. L [the system yeh]
29. J an environment where it's safe to the operator to run but also safe to operate as
30. a machine equipment yeh?
31. L Okay so that's, that side of production you look at [like the] mainly the safety
32. uh [and the]
33. J [oh yeh] [well]
34. [the safety] is part of the-the overall umbrella.
35. L Yeh.
36. J When you design a machine or design a tool, you have to also put it into
37. manufacturing
38. L [uhu]
39. J [and] then you have to make sure that the operator is functioning that tool properly
40. but you've also got to look
41. [after] the operator so that he doesn't get injured.

In his job description Jacob strategically emphasises the agency he and the other parties take on together with their designated duties and how this agency shifts among parties according to the duties themselves. From line 1-4 in excerpt 7.1 ('My role' and 'everything I design and do. I do all that, all, that's-that's my role I'm sort of ah, what they call a Site

Service Manager, but I have a lot of hats’ and lines 1-7 in excerpt 7.2: ‘Uh in the, in the way of tooling manufacturing we-we receive a product we need to design or manufacture,’ and ‘They come to us here, they talk to the sales people, the sales people come to me and say we want you to make a tool [to do] this’.

Interestingly, when prompted by the researcher to expand on the safety side of his job, Jacob switches to ‘you’, the institutional ‘back up’ to his actions and responsibility (lines 29-41), ‘When you design a machine or design a tool, you have to also put it into manufacturing – I [and] then you have to make sure that the operator is functioning that tool properly but you’ve also got to look [after] the operator so that he doesn’t get injured’. The close association between ‘safety policies’ and institutional agency is conveyed here by the ‘comprehensive you’ indicating the collective ownership of a safe work environment.

Jacob’s agency however is currently somewhat shifting and subject to transformation. Jacob compares his situation to the communication difficulties he has with non-English-speaking-background workers whose problem, as he reiterates on several occasion is not so much at ‘language level’ rather at an ‘interpretation level’ that is, in the way they apply their views rather than the company’s (or their supervisor’s) to the task at hand. He states:

Excerpt 7.3

1. J [I have] the same problem upstairs here too you know? Not always the-the right way
2. [you know? Because] their interpretation what they ask me I-I [completely different]
3. L [that’s ri, it’s um]
4. J you know. So I have to do a bit of fishing as they say you know? [Just to make sure]

When the researcher asks him to describe an example of ‘problematic interaction’ or rather differences of views conducive to difficulties in communication, he says:

Excerpt 7.4

1. J a difference of in, the difference is there’s a big difference that I notice is-is an age
2. brack, bracket an age (..) criteria which in-in-in respect to as I’m on the retiring age
3. bracket and the young ones are just coming into the game
4. L um
5. J there’s a lot of interpretation and different views of doing things differently.
6. L For example?
7. J Uhm the computer.

The computerization of processes is a focal theme that recurs several times during Jacob’s interviews especially in relation to his constantly changing role across the company’s ways of production: from standardized, just in time and finally lean manufacturing (see Chapter 5). Jacob has experienced major role changes when computerization replaced the old ways in which work was planned, discussed and distributed in meetings. For Jacob this has meant less direct participation and, in a way, his job has become peripheral:

Excerpt 7.5

1. J ... now it's uh it's the manufacturing or the operations manager he says uh Joe I
2. need you to make or the-the costing guy who does all the costing says we're – we're
3. short a few tools. I said what are you short of? He says this, this and this and I say
4. ooh it's going to take me three months to go, no he says you've only got 3 weeks. So
5. then I have to get the red hot stick out [and] look for ways for how we can solve that
6. problem ...

As is described in Chapter 5 and above by Jacob, the organizational transformation in terms of production processes and therefore in terms of technological processes has progressively become of a 'mutual adjustment type' for PTS. The official introduction of lean manufacturing systems through the '6Ss Training' at the time of data collection, signals the last stage of this type of process as it is aimed at perfecting the mutual adjustment system itself as Jacob puts it:

Excerpt 7.6

1. J Most of this training stuff is-is to-to-to make things better, faster or smoother or-or
2. other things you know? I bo, I've been through these psychology training courses to
3. make people think differently, to make them think more cleanliness to make them
4. think more productive like you know?
5. [Wh]. We're running this, it's-it's-it's a sort of thing but they call it the success
6. package or lean manufacturing. Now lean [manufacturing, 6S], is-is a concept
7. L [the 6S, S's]
8. J that the American's are bringing in to make sure that you're product is here. You
9. take it to here. You finish it here to you move it to the next station. You clean your
10. machine and you do this and do this and make sure that it all goes. Your broom stays
11. in that corner, the pan is over here, the dust bin's is always full you clean your
12. machine and it's-it's-it's a tidy up program, you [know?]
13. L [Okay]
14. J The cleanliness and it's also safe environment so to make sure the operator doesn't
15. hurt themselves and you don't damage the machinery. The other side of it is also to
16. try and think of the operator to get some information out of him to help in
17. manufacturing to a more concept and simpler way of moving material or
18. manufacturing material and when you pay somebody peanuts you don't expect them
19. to do all the thinking for you they're going to say what do you want me to do and
20. that's what I'm going to do you know? But the idea is to try and fish some
21. information out there and take responsibility of what they're doing [so to make] it
22. more friendly environment to work in.

However, Jacob himself finds the adjustment process and the change in ways of thinking, difficult to obtain. He finds himself at the crossroad of the changing nexus especially when it comes to his role and agency. The challenge is in the institutional new requirement for the employees to share ownership of their work and therefore in the shifting of agency among all. The reconciliation between the collective, the individual and the institutional is at the core of the discursive nexuses whereby 'fishing some information' becomes a crucial social communicative practice. These discursive strategies are further exemplified below:

Excerpt 7.7

1. J It's-it's very difficult to change uh unless you-you have to I-I forcefully use it but I
2. don't push it hard enough to become a nuisance. Um I say look we've got to do this
3. because it's part of the, I know I use this as an overall umbrella concept.
4. L (clear throat)
5. J We have to do this to make sure that we keep it clean. We keep all our rubbish to
6. (incomp) [that] we know and-and you try and do that anyway before even this
7. program

As it will be shown further Jacob's tasks lie in the social practice of organizing by strategically making diverging things converge by force or otherwise but mainly through the communicative ability to communicate across floors, ages and technical systems. His historical body and mind are exemplified in one of his statements: 'I don't have the-the laptop but I do have the knowledge of the [past] you know?'

7.3.1 Agency to membership categorization: old and new staff

Within the overarching management stance, another aspect of agency that Jacob constructs for himself is his entitlement not only to assign jobs but also membership. Jacob's organizing is linked to competencies which in turn, are discursively constructed through categorization. Within his task of 'hiring', Jacob inscribes his ability to understand the new staff's listening and interpreting skills of the job to do which is a theme touched on in the initial interview as well:

Excerpt 7.8

1. J And you can tell straight away when you hire doesn't matter who it is, you can see
2. within the first few days if they've got the concept of doing what you've asked them
3. to do you know? Some-some people struggle, some people take it on straight away
4. and they know exactly what to do and you can notice that when you are hiring
5. people yeh? But that's another [side of it].
6. L [That's another], yeh that's, you used there special um, when they interpret, when
7. they interpretation is not there and – that's – that's what [you], yeh, so basically the
8. ability to understand when it's [required]
9. J [yeh][um]
10. L [it's]
11. J [The]-the most [of the] concept because depends on how I talk uh if I talk too
12. [complicated]
13. L [right]
14. or too high-hierarchy uh some of the nationalities don't comprehend that so therefore
15. I simplify it and then-then I ask the question I ask the reverse question
16. L uhu, [yeh]
17. J [do you] understand what I'm saying? And then they say yes and then I say to
18. overcome that I say well how you gonna do it?
19. L Uh, uh, uh, uh.
20. J and they explain to me how they're going to do it, then I can see by what they're
21. telling me that they do [comprehend] that, what I've asked them to do [you know]

22. what I mean]? ...

The mentioning of ‘some nationalities’ as ‘not comprehending’ especially when complicated or direct forms of communication are used (‘high hierarchy’) repropose the view of ethnification processes and the association of ethnic background with a manual workforce. This view expands on to the necessity to simplify communication with these staff and above all to make sure they have understood what to do with ‘reverse questions’. Not only communicating cannot be too complicated, it also has to be direct (not ‘high hierarchy’). This remark points to one-directionality of communication in so far as the staff that Jacob talks about are mere executors of what they are told to do despite the fact that both in the initial interview and later in the one analysed here he states:

Excerpt 7.9

1. J I think ownership is very important for every person that you interact to. If you give
2. them ownership of what they’re [doing]
3. L [they] wa, yeh
4. J uh they have a bit more of an interest. If you say I want you to drill this hole and this
5. hole and this hole that’s all I want you to do, it becomes a boring sort of eh job for
6. him but if I said to him I need to put some holes in there how would you do that?
7. Straight away he’s thinking the way he wants to [think]
8. L [uhm]
9. J and that to me is crucial because he understands what I want and then he takes
10. charge of what I’ve asked him to do and it becomes his job you [know]?
11. L [yeh]
12. J [and] that to me is crucial where you give ownership to the people and let them think
13. a little bit on their own but still come out with the same result that-that you’re asking
14. for you know? And that’s what I do with Anthony

The participation that Jacob describes here, is limited to what he himself allows his interlocutors to have, at least the ones he describes in these instances. His view of communication at work does not entail participation as a discursive established site of engagement among all the employees, rather a compartmentalized practice which occurs on a contingency basis and it mainly serves localized, immediate organizing requirements. It is also to be noted how Joe ‘accounts’ for his interlocutors’ face and in so doing he strategically ‘displays’ an awareness which may be dictated by anti-harassment and anti-discrimination policies in place in organizations.

The researcher’s probing the connection between the types of interactions in which Jacob engages and the people involved (in particular the participants to the research who are also working in the Tool Room team) prompts Joe into a detailed ‘categorization’ of his staff. The description and appraisal of their skills, abilities and weaknesses on the job is discursively related to their ability to communicate, the frequency and modality of their interactional exchanges and his own choice of CS to engage with them.

Talking about Stan, Jacob especially highlights the strong connection between his characteristics, and the way he assigns him jobs:

Excerpt 7.10

1. J [I've got] a project for h, er-er for him to do uh I'll give you an example. In the
2. manufacturing office area we have to remove some walls, take the glass wall out,
3. move a door and so forth. So I, my boss tells me what he wants done, I [give him]
4. some
5. L [uhu]
6. J suggestions or maybe some alternative suggestions and we both come to an
7. agreement. Eh I get Stan involved and I say Stan I want you to remove this wall
8. L uhu
9. J and move this glass door and put it in this position and uh m, I make sure that he
10. understands in the concept of what we-we're coming too so I ask questions in
11. reverse to make sure that what I've asked him to do that he understands that concept
12. of what I want him to move this wall here and not over to there.
13. L Uhu
14. J So I want to make sure that we're all on the same wave length
15. L [uhu]
16. J [so we] end up with the same result as-as my boss wants to do and so forth that I
17. want him to do you know?
18. L So that's one of the jobs that Stan looks af- looks after?
19. J Stan is what they call uh a maintenance fitter
20. L yeh
21. J Okay? and a welder. He-he, I know what his capabilities are and I, I open up some
22. doors for him to go out of his little comfort zone but also to open him up in a
23. different areas to expand his knowledge a little bit yeh? And he get, he's good at
24. certain things uh but he's not good at running a machine for instance, but he's good
25. at other things, like building things and so forth. [That's] just one example. So I
26. utilise him and then I also utilise to open the [some]
27. L [Uh]
28. J doors for him where he has never done this before and I guide him softly that I know
29. best as to-to try and implement [that] request you know?

Interestingly, as Jacob describes the initial phase of how the job gets organized, he points to a shared agency between his boss and himself in the decision making process (lines 2-4), a process in which Stan does not take part. Instead, Stan's engagement in the 'project' is limited to receiving instructions and the related interactions between Jacob and himself are aimed at making sure Stan understands exactly what he has to do. Jacob goes on accounting for the discrepancy between Stan's actual trade and qualifications (maintenance fitter and welder) and the jobs he is assigned (lines 18, 19) through Jacob's 'opening doors for him'. However, as seen in Chapter 5, Stan's current status of 'factory all rounder' is due to his demotion from a supervisory role and a subsequent agreement with the company negotiated through his affiliation with the Unions. The 'opening doors' then means that Stan is 'utilised' on a contingency basis also in virtue of his versatility which, in turn, results in his role having become a peripheral one. Stan works by himself for the most part and his work related interactions are mostly with Jacob. In both interviews, Stan he complains of this state of affairs as he thinks his skills would allow him to handle more

responsibilities. In this context, it is to be noted how Jacob's specifying the way in which he 'guides' Stan, 'softly' (line 28), points, in fact, to a different state of affairs.

Excerpt 7.11

1. J And that's what I do with Anthony. Now Anthony is good at it because he's a bit
2. more technical minded than Stan, but then Stan's good at putting up a wall or-or-or
3. welding something up and he can do a lot of other things [in another] way but I do
4. the same
5. L [(inc) yeh]
6. J concept with all [my men] [it's basically] it-it for-for Anthony and I because he-he
7. has to design the tool on the computer.
8. L Um
9. J So he has to know what I want.
10. L Uhm, yeh.
11. J I in turn have to know a few things what he designs so I can then think a little bit
12. differently also because I have to order material and I have to, I can't order material
13. until he designs it.
14. L Right, yep, yep
15. J And then I've got to look at the [inc], it's like baking a cake. If you bake a cake with
16. two pans, right?
17. L Um
18. J You end up with a product that you whatever design is and the middle of that pan is
19. what we call a dye line. I don't know where that's gonna be to the part we've got
20. to make. So I have to rely on him to design it first and then come back to me and
21. says this is the parting line where it's got to be and this is the thickness we have
22. to make it and then we go from there then I start getting involved again and then I
23. start ordering material to call him in and then we produce that particular tool, so it's
24. crucial that I and-and [him]
25. L [interact]
26. J [work together]

Jacob goes on describing the interactions he engages in and makes a comparison between Stan and Anthony in terms of skills and abilities despite the completely different roles of the two employees:

Excerpt 7.12

1. J Anthony is the same, it's-it's actually Anthony is a little bit more um, how can I say
2. he's a bit more switched-on in the tooling side then say for instance Stan because
3. Stan's more on the building [side]
4. L [Building] side. [Yeh].
5. J [Where] Anthony and I are more switched on in the designing side and the
6. manufacturing side you know?
- ...
7. J Stan is good in his area and Arthur is good in another area you know? or some of
8. them do interact a little bit on-on all parts. So I, [as my] as my age judgement I can
9. decide
10. L [so commu-]
11. J roughly what I know what Anthony can do and I know w-what Stan can [I sort] of,
12. push
13. L [uhm]

14. J my ideas or my projects into those directions to, capable of those two to handle ...

At another point of the interview, although he states that he ‘do the same with all my men’ meaning that he adopts the same principles of giving both Stan and Anthony instructions as to what and how to perform, and makes sure that they interpret the directions correctly by asking ‘reverse questions’ it is clear that Jacob’s relation with Anthony is one of reliance since his tasks (ordering the material) depend on the latter’s specific technical skills.

Jacob’s also describes the sequence of the communicative nexuses between himself and Anthony as well as the shifting of agency from ‘I’ to ‘we’ while ‘he’, Anthony is invested by the secondary agency of recipient of directions: ‘... he has to design the tool on the computer ... – ... So he has to know what I want ... – ... I in turn have to know a few things what he designs so I can then think a little bit differently – also because I have to order material and I have to, – I can’t order material until he designs it. –So I have to rely on him to design it first – and then come back to me – and says this is the parting line ...’.

Another of my participants and one of Jacob’s close co-workers is Arthur, in charge of maintenance and Jacob’s second in the Tool Room. Although Arthur’s position and seniority would allow him to make independent decisions in relation to the ‘site servicing operations’ of the Tool Room, his authority is confined to localized maintenance jobs even in the absence of Jacob. In the initial interview, Arthur states that he prefers Jacob to deal with external companies such as subcontractors, suppliers or even clients and he only does it if Jacob is not available. He states that he has problems understanding people and vice-versa. Jacobs’ categorization of Arthur’s is as follows:

Excerpts 7.13

1. J A-Arthur is-is-is good he’s a good worker, uh he, he hasn’t got the intellectual to go
2. up the ladder a bit more uh eh and one of the reasons he-he used to be in charge of a
3. department and he-he struggled. His, he-he just doesn’t like the pressure.
4. L In charge of which?
5. J He was in charge of, he was a supervisory position in the, in the manufacturing of
6. hardware uh for a number of, 12 months or so you know? And the pressure of push,
7. push, push of work through the door in the end he says no I’ve had enough, I just
8. want to be uh that, so that-that’s-that’s his, that’s his one of the things his-his
9. English is not the greatest
10. L N, yeh that’s
11. J but
12. L personality more than [yeh com]
13. J [he’s not] that good in writing. [Mind] you he’s been here all his life
14. L [Um]
15. J but that’s just the way it is when you mix with your own race for so long you-
16. you lose you lose the uh English language and the mother language becomes the
17. most important one, which happens to most immigrants they stay at home and
18. they speak their own language, anyway [that’s the way]
...
19. as a supervisor he hasn’t got that uh, uh how can I say it? The that, the whip
20. type scenario where he pushes the guys to say this is what I want you to do or

21. whatever.
22. L [Um]

It is noteworthy the way Jacob juxtaposes the description of Arthur's personality traits (underlined parts) and history at PTS and the ethnification discourses surrounding it (in bold): the missed opportunities to go up the career ladder being closely associated with, not only the lack of proficiency in English but also the inability to get out of the ethnic community network as is shown in the excerpt below.

Excerpt 7.14

1. J There's also wh – depends on the nationality too the, with Arthur for instance most
2. Asians cannot pronounce roll, [with the r]
3. L [oh yeh, I mean] but that's [yeh]
4. J [and that's], that's something that uh that he gets picked up [and the boys, the boys]
5. L [(@) he told me that]
6. J take the Mickey out of him, you know what I mean? And a jokingly point of view
7. and then we all have a shot at him. But he understands, he understands the concept.
8. Sometimes
9. L Yes, yes
10. J He doesn't and then he thinks about it and comes back and he says, is this what you
11. mean? And then we correct it and this is a game where ..."

In the following part, Jacob compares himself to Arthur as a supervisor whereby he invests himself of the authority to enforce ways of working:

Excerpt 7.15

1. J [Where] I have, I say look this is what I want you to do that's what I pay you
2. for, if you don't like it there's the door. Simple as that, simple as that. And that's a
3. harsh
3. decision that you have to make when you get a bit of resistance from a person who
4. doesn't want to do what he's told to do.
5. L Um, um, um
6. J If I want to do it this way that's how, that's h-has to happen because there's a reason
7. for I do this because there's a there's the other side of the coin which they don't see
8. it has to happen this way.

The theme of the 'lack of vision' on the side of his subordinates is again a recurring one whereby workers are described as lacking the necessary awareness to contribute to any decisions or take initiatives where in fact this is due to denied participation and access to information.

7.3.2 Jacob, the new recruits and the outsider: two interactions through Jacob's eyes

Jacob's description, explanation and interpretation as well as the categorization he provides of his immediate co-workers denotes a 'routinised' view of the type of interactions they engage in whereby CS are intertwined with the day-to-day required activities and communication in general is geared by Jacob himself to get the job done in the way it is requested.

By contrast, his description of the 'new recruits' and one employee from another department, in particular, reflect his resistance to organizational changes or, at least, the perception of intrusion and interference he has towards proposed modifications to his ways of organizing work. Jacob's remarks on two young skilled employees and the way they position themselves towards others and the organizational system, Adrian and Billy, (who happen to be brothers), confirm his previous comments on the difficulty of communicating with the 'new generation'. As observed by the researcher as well, the new generation are out of his 'jurisdiction': Adrian started as 'his' apprentice and he is now working as an improvement engineer, in an office upstairs, and Billy, although still currently under his supervision as an apprentice, is also likely to move on to the upper floor soon. Both speak 'computer language' and so both are likely to skip the long 'rising through the floor's ranks'. Talking about Adrian, who is supposed to be working upstairs but he is always in Jacob's office and on the floor and figures prominently in many of the recordings, he states:

Excerpt 7.16

1. J Yeh he's-he's what they call improvement engineer. Another little technical name
2. [they've] given him to try and process improvement engineer that's what they've
3. L [technical][improvement]
4. J titled him so – he doesn't work for me anyway, he was an apprentice of mine.
5. L But he's always there. Like he's [always (@)]
6. J [yeh he's-he's]-he's a pain! [(@)]
7. L sometimes it sounds and because (...) but he doesn't belong really (@) like [(incom
8. J No he doesn't] and uh he's-he fiddles around with the edges instead of fixing the
9. problem [initially] that-that's
10. L [oh he]
11. J he-he fiddles around with the edges of the table cloth rather than fix the stain in the
12. middle you know what I mean? It's a bit of a slang word there but-

Jacob's remark was solicited by the researcher who had noticed Adrian's presence in many of the interactions observed and recorded where he did not seem to have any in-depth knowledge of the jobs being discussed but in which, nonetheless he took part. On this theme, the researcher would further probe Jacob's views in regards to adopting different ways of talking and interacting with different people. Referring to Billy, Jacob states:

Excerpt 7.17

1. J It depends on the characteristics of the person. Uh some people are a little bit

2. arrogant
3. L In what way?
4. J In they I-I-I-I have an apprentice and I keep telling him I said look you'd be better
5. off selling shoes (@).
6. L Is that the same one I met, [(incomp)?]
7. J [Possibly]. He, they know everything but know nothing, you know what I mean?
8. So I take everybody on their own merit but I treat, doesn't matter position I hold,
9. I still treat them as one to one equal, I don't degrade and putting them down saying
10. you're the, you're the maintenance fitter, I'm the boss and this is what you gotta do
11. because I don't know everything and I [need], I need to suck some ideas out of
12. some ...

Interestingly, at line 5 of the excerpt, Jacob corrects himself when he switches to 'they' instead of 'he' to make his statement general rather than personal and, in this way risk to lose accountability. However, the reference to Billy is clear as it is also confirmed by the researcher's informal conversations with other employees who report of some work blunders by Billy.

Again, in the following lines, Jacob feels it necessary to maintain his accountability, in institutional mode by reiterating his attitude of equality in dealing with his subordinates whom, he claims to 'take on their own merit' in order 'to suck some ideas' out of them.

However Jacob takes on a different position towards another employee who is, hierarchically speaking, if not in terms of seniority and experience, at his level. In this case, Jacob is unable to be explicitly in a super-ordinate position and therefore unable 'to categorize' the employee in terms of her compliance with his own views. Then, he positions himself as 'territorial' by confining her to the role of 'outsider'. The researcher specifically asks Jacob to describe a problematic interaction occurred in his office whereby Hannah is bluntly refused assistance after an animated conversation which also involves Anthony. As a preamble to the actual communicative event, which, as mentioned in Chapter 4, Jacob will not listen to until the third interview, Jacob starts by describing the nexuses of practices involving his dealings with Hannah:

Excerpt 7.18

1. J [the-the] difficulties with-with Hannah is-is [another], it's-it's ano-another door. It's
2. a
3. L [okay]
4. J difficult door. She's in charge of manufacturing
5. L okay
6. J but this is not racial but she's a [woman] who's done [manufacturing] for circuit
7. boards
8. L [uhhhhm][yep][For what sorry?]
9. J [where, making] circuit boards for televisions [or radios].
10. L [okay]
11. J Okay so which is an compl-completely different scenario that we have here. And her
12. way of dealing with things, she pushes the problem on to me to fix.
13. L Um
14. J But realistically it's her problem not mine.

15. L Um
16. J So I'm trying to get her to solve her own problems rather than her say okay Jacob
17. can fix that and I-I have to fix her problems. It's-it's eh, it's an interacting where she
18. ca, and it's not her fault because I've come from a mechanical background and I
19. [can] do it, ..."

Despite the ethnic and gender related reference (line 6), it is clear from the beginning that communication failures in this instance are not primarily related to diversity in language or ethnic background rather in technical and knowledge background. The overarching frame within which the communicative event is to be read is in the political, institutional system of the organization – the ‘political hiccup’ – whereby competencies and duties overlap or clash with individual power interests (Taylor, 2011) or what constitutes what one believes to be one’s domain. Jacob’s agency emerges in the role he takes for himself as a ‘teacher’ (lines 3, 4 and 5 below) and a ‘manoeuvrer’:

Excerpt 7.19

1. J I can
2. L [um]
3. J [think] straight away what the problem is. I can see the problem and uh I want to
4. make sure that she understands the problem but she can't fix it but I can do that but
5. I want her to fix the problem so she understands so it doesn't happen again.
6. it's only a one off or two off and then I can solve the difficult problem for her and
7. then I get behind in my own work so it's a bit of, [we do a] bit of manoeuvring to
8. L [yeh it's]
9. J make sure that I-I make sure I try and make sure unless she's in a bind where I have
10. to help her.
11. L Um, [um, um]
12. J [and then] I say okay give it to me and I have to stop one of my guys to solve her
13. problems. It-it's a little bit of a political hiccup but [it] happens all the time...

Jacob continues accounting for his resistance to Hannah’s requests and this time language comes into play when he states:

1. J [it-it's the way], the way she comes at you, you must, she-she-she speaks with a,
2. [with a, with an Afghani accent] and we all take the Mickey out of her you know?
3. We-we try yeh tried to push back we it's not just [me, every-everybody] it's-it's the
4. way
5. L [(@) very persistent Jacob]
6. J she communicates with people and then [her-her] famous saying is ‘you must, you
7. must’
8. L [is] yeh, yeh, yeh that's, but that's um the Arabic [like they've got]
9. J [yeh and I] said hang on a minute, we must not, that's-th, this is all your worries.
10. You know we push, we push the shovel back the other way you know. They shovel
11. all the rubbish back.

To be noted in the first two lines is the ethnification process that Hannah undergoes as non-English-speaker and a woman in a male dominated environment which resembles the other

female worker, Connie, working as supervisor in the wiring department (see Chapters 5 and 6). In both cases, Hannah and Connie struggle to assert themselves despite their senior position and they are both regarded as a nuisance respectively ‘mother chook’ (for her screaming at the workers) and ‘Afghani’ (despite being of Lebanese descent).

Overall, the overview of the interactions provided above which Jacob engages in and the discursive frames he uses to account for them delineates the intricate nexuses of communication and actions as they happen in the workplace. Specifically, it is shown how CS are not only part of the nexuses themselves but constitute the frames within which those nexuses are formed and reformed. CS emerge as a social practice in Jacob’s accounts whereby participants’ role and tasks, personal attributes and interests as well as the institutional influence or non-influence on the participants themselves all come into play.

7.3.3 Throwing ideas at Anthony

The aim of this section and the next is to bring together the self-analysis of Jacob’s interactions and the researcher’s perspective, through an ethnomethodological approach whereby the communicative event is accounted for from different angles and with a different background knowledge and where both perspectives aim at capturing the nexuses of practice in their transformation and transformative properties of social practices.

More specifically this section deals with the analysis of two ‘live’ communicative events, accounted for by Jacob in the retrospective interview: 1) a discussion between Anthony, Jacob himself and, in a minor role, Jack, the mechanical engineer from upstairs (see Table 4.2 in Chapter 4); 2) an argument between Anthony, Jacob and Hannah, the production manager of the manufacturing section. In turn the communicative events in question are ‘mapped out’ against the focal themes emerging in both initial interview and the subsequent ones and in particular the themes revolving around Jacob’s interactions with his immediate co-workers.

The first interaction concerns a part to be re-designed and built by request of a customer: it occurs in Jacob’s side shed-office adjacent to the Tool Room among Jacob, Anthony and Jacob. The conversation is about the modification of a forging die which was originally designed differently and which has to be partially adjusted to the new customer’s requirements through a semi-manual process. Jacob is quite keen on getting it right quickly. However, he is also aware of Anthony’s scepticism about re-making of parts especially when semi-manual procedures and modifications of parts themselves are involved in the process:

Excerpt 7.20

1. J What **I was thinking** of doing here.
2. A What’s this?
3. J Got, got to bend this flat bar, that.

4. A Yeh.
5. J Now. **I'll make a tool (...)** like so.
6. A Yes. Yes. First we've got to do that and then the hangers.
7. J No, just straight like that. Top tool. Like that.
8. A Yeh (...) how particular is the diameter there?
9. Ja [inaudible]
10. A [inc]
11. J plate on here.
12. [inaudible] (phone ringing)
13. J Want to grab that Jas? [inc] do that, now what **I'll**, what **I'll do here**, **we can do** this
14. part, **we can do** of a, of an outrigger scenario and then take this over here right?
15. A Yeh
16. J and put a stop in here for the long one.
17. A yeh.
18. J So **we** can pin this, just imagine that's not in it but there
19. A yeh.
20. J Hank, Hank can bend that on a folder by himself.
21. A Don't you need a dye for that?
22. J **For this?**
23. A Yeh.
24. J No. **You** can do that with a, hand manual one. Yeh?
25. A How wide is it?
26. J 40 mil.
27. A Oh 40 mil.
28. J It's only, **I-I-I don't want you to** do anything, **I'll**, **I'll do the leg work**, **I just want**
29. to suss it out because down the track next year I want you to machine this out.
30. A Yeh okay.
31. Ja its material is uh, uh no. 1, which [is 40] by 3.
32. A [inc] yeh, oh.
- ...
33. J [inaudible] **We** can either do that, **we** can put an outrigger on here with a stop on it,
34. right? When **we** come to do the small one, which is this one
35. Ja yeh
36. J Right? I can just put a piece of steel across here
37. Ja yeh
38. J and steel across here and lay the small one in
39. A yeh
40. J so we can then bend
41. A yeh, I'm with you.
42. J Okay. That's a prop. Now I'll buy something about uh, 50 mil wide
43. Ja not the [inaudible] surface 60 or 80 so you've got some waste [inaudible] you know?
44. You don't need it
45. A ok, uhu
46. J only 40 mil wide
47. A okay
48. J why you wanna go wider for?
49. A yeh
50. J that's [inaudible], 50 is more than ample, even 40 would do the job.
51. A No, okay yeh.
52. J You know what I mean? All [you gotta] do is put a couple of lugs on here
53. A [inaudible]
54. A yeh
55. J like that
56. A yeh, [inaudible]

57. J push it again, boom.
 58. A yeh
 59. J yeh **you** can do it on a [inaudible] press, **you** can do it on a [inaudible] pressure on it.
 60. That's one of them. This ones' the same
 61. A but that's going deeper. Past the diameter.
 62. J Yeh because the reason being, one shell is like that, right? And the other one fits
 63. over the top so it's an offset.
 64. A Yeh.
 65. J Okay, this one might be a bit easier to, harder to do
 66. A no not really. Go by the same concept but have two dyes, front and back
 67. J yeh
 68. A when **you** do this, use this punch, [**you** can do that]
 69. J [**we** can do that]
 70. Ja Huh?
 71. J **We can do** that too. **We can do** it, we can do it and segment it, in other words –
 72. **we can do it**, one, one, uh to do uh that
 ...
 73. J Yep, and again then **we can do that**, that and that, the only thing **you've got to do**
 74. is- to do, **we'll have** to drill the holes first.
 75. A Um
 76. Ja Holes, there and there. And [there and there]
 77. A [(incomp) hole, yeh]
 78. J Okay? Because what happens this is an offset. **You've got** that part here as an offset
 79. so **you only got** a shallow section there. That's two tools, okay? **We [do, we do]**
 80. Ja [yeah I knew] there was going to be two tools for it.
 81. J **We do two** together and **we just go** two bits of flat steel. **We mill it up**, the only, the
 82. only thing **we've got to do** on our, on our machine, is mill the contour, right? Then
 83. **we can bolt** it all together and it becomes a simple job and then you just put in a
 84. press or a, or a crank press or a fly press or **whatever you want to do**, or, or a
 85. [inaudible]
 86. A [**What I want**] to do, **I want to** run this machine, this thing on there because they
 87. are not done in (incomp) programming, so on that [machine].
 88. J [not a problem] with that.
 89. A so **we can** try it as well, if something was wrong, [(incomp) wrong]
 90. Ja [what, what] **we need** to work out down [the track]
 91. J [**we should**] compensate the height difference to get it all together. By doing it
 92. separately and then bolting it all together or welding it together, it's, it's easy for
 93. machining purpose.
 94. A Uhm
 95. J but for the sake of, the only thing **you guys have to do**, is those two holes, those two
 96. holes and the same on those two. **You get** four holes, if you drill, drill it prior, set the
 97. job up sideways, right? And then just flap them, end, end of story. This one here, uh
 98. well that, is that, that's one piece, how, how, how'd they join this?

As seen in the previous section, Jacob describes his interactions with Anthony as aimed at exchanging information in order to 'combine forces': his own background knowledge and view of the big picture and Anthony's technical skills.

The site of engagement is set when Jacob is contacted by the sales people who tell him what the customer requires, he has to organize the making of it through his manpower and finally he has to order the material.

The ‘intermediate nexus’ the organizing of the making of a tool, in most cases, is what requires his interactions with his personnel and what this communicative event is representative of. Jacob refers to the process, and, the discursive devices he employs as ‘fishing’, ‘asking questions in reverse’, ‘sucking ideas from’ and ‘throwing ideas at (see the parts in bold). In the case of Anthony, since he is described as technically ‘switched on’ and as being on the same wave length as himself, the latter two CS apply whereby Jacob needs Anthony’s expertise to accomplish the task at hand and, at the same time win Anthony’s expected resistance to work on the modification of an existing job. As the interaction starts however, Jacob’s takes on the role of organizing the operations by investing himself with the agency of building the part (see the use of ‘I’ in the opening lines). He soon starts ‘distributing’ agency by switching to ‘we’ when the specific step he refers to requires the expertise of both (see the Underlined parts: ‘we can do this part, we can do of a, of an outrigger scenario and then take this over here right? – and put a stop in here for the long one – So we can pin this, just imagine that’s not in it but there’. By the use of ‘we’, Jacob’s also indirectly seeks approval and confirmation by a way of discursively ‘sharing responsibility’ for the course of action to take. When the discussion touches on operations which are the specific domain of Anthony, Jacob switches to ‘you’ – (‘... You can do that with a, hand manual one. Yeh?’ – The use of ‘you’ here has a twofold purpose: 1) to receive confirmation that the step proposed is the right thing to do; and 2) to indirectly request engagement and approval from the interlocutor. This request of confirmation/approval comes at a point where Anthony becomes inquisitive for the first time after providing only back-channelling (lines 4-20), specifically at lines 8, 21 and 25: ‘don’t you need a dye?’ – ‘how wide?’). Jacob perceives Anthony’s reluctance to do the job at this point and goes on by trying to minimize his intervention (lines 28 and 29: ‘It’s only, I-I-I don’t want you to do anything, I’ll, I’ll do the leg work, I just want to suss it out because down the track next year I want you to machine this out.’). What follows after this point is a sequence of statements that Jacob utters with the same purpose of obtaining confirmation and approval until Anthony confirms that he is following what Jacob is saying (line 41: ‘Yeh yeh I’m with you’).

Jack’s subsequent objections (lines 43: “not the [inaudible] surface 60 or 80 so you’ve got some waste [inaudible] you know? You don’t need it”; Anthony’s utterances in: line 61 ‘but that’s going deeper past the diameter’; line 66: ‘no not really. Go by the same concept but have two dyes, front and back’) has Jacob in a crescendo of using cues aimed at sharing responsibility and seeking approval (lines 81-84: ‘We do two together and we just go two bits of flat steel. We mill it up, the only, the only thing we’ve got to do on our, on our machine, is mill the contour, right? Then we can bolt it all together and it becomes a simple job and then you just put in a press or a, or a crank press or a fly press or whatever you want to do, or, or a [inaudible] ...’). At this point Jacob resorts to an ‘almost-plea’ to win Jack and Anthony’s resistance (lines 91-97: “but for the sake of, the only thing you guys have to do, is those two holes, those two holes and the same on those two. You get four holes, if you drill, drill it prior, set the job up sideways, right? And then just flap them,

end, end of story”). In the retrospective interview this is how Jacob interprets and explains the communicative event in question:

Excerpt 7.21

1. J and it sounds like a forging dye for Indonesia, uh for Thailand where or [could be]
2. L [forging dye?]
3. J or-or could be a forging dye, could be a forging tool or press tool and what we’re
4. doing is, I look at it, I look at the component that the customer wants
5. L yeh
6. J okay? And he’s giving me finished component. Now we have to manufacture that
7. a certain way
8. L um
9. J and what I’m trying to do there with Anthony is trying to get him and I to think on
10. the same way of how we can manufacture a tool and do it a cheapest and quickest
11. and best way without going too costly in tooling. So I’m, I’ve thinking, what I’m
12. thinking I’m throwing my ideas at him. [He] in turn takes that in consideration and
13. throws a few questions back
14. L [yes]
15. I at me and then we can come up with a solution and then we’re happy with the end
16. result and then we make it.
17. L Yes.
18. I And then we design it and so forth yeh?
19. L Very [interesting]

As observed above, lines 9 – 13 exemplify Jacob’s taking on the organizing role and the related agency of accomplishing a task according to the ‘big picture’ and consequently to the organizational directions. Knowing Anthony’s resistance to get involved into modifications and generally semi-manual procedures he craftfully uses agency switching cues (from ‘I’, signalling the taking charge of the job, to ‘we’, the implicit request to become engaged and approving of the steps to be undertaken and, ‘you’, the more explicit call for action and acknowledgement of Anthony’s expertise of specific required operations.

7.3.4 Shovelling it back to Hannah

This section deals with the second communicative event’s nested analysis concerning the production manager Hannah and her request for help from the Tool Room and specifically from Anthony. As noted above in the description that Jacob provides of the interactions occurring between himself and Hannah, he labels her ‘another door’, ‘a difficult door’, referring to the chiasm between his and her department and the intrinsic difficulty of finding viable channels of communication. In so doing he also indicates that the problematic nexuses are at the higher level of the organization. The reference to the specific event under scrutiny is also referred to as a ‘political hiccup’ which indicates that decisions have been made in relation to work to be undertaken at different times without the necessary consultations among the parties that would likely become involved. Jacob’s

implicitly refers to the difficulty of reconciling the manufacturing phase, the last processing of the product before shipping, and the servicing of facilities, machinery and tools in a 'lean manner' so that the finished product can be put 'out of the door'. In the second interview, he balances his negative remarks on Hannah's ways of managing the department by hinting at her position within the company's scheme and how she is 'to manipulate' others to get out of the impasse and gain benefits:

Excerpt 7.22

1. J [and] it's not her fault because sales say look you want one of these or were they lost
2. somewhere in transport can you make it quickly and I have to make it. If it's a small
3. volume I'll do it for her you know? So I-I back her up in certain things but I, it's
4. very difficult because
5. L (@) it was very [interesting]
6. J [But-but the-the] but the training was probably for her for her to do so er, for her
7. manipulation of some work force or something like that. You know, it would have
8. been done for her, for her benefit rather than for mine.
9. L Than, yes, yes, yes.
10. I And I didn't want to do that. I have [enough] problems of my own

The event in question takes place in Jacob and Anthony's office where Hannah shows up unannounced ('in her style', as Jacob remarks). Hannah is looking for Anthony's help to program two new machines and make them operational to produce a special batch of production. The exchange is mainly between her and Anthony but Rick (mechanical fitter in the Tool Room and soon to replace Jacob) also marginally takes part. Jacob is called on by Anthony to fence off Hannah towards the end of the conversation. Hannah enters the room and initially addresses Rick but her target is Anthony:

Excerpt 7.23

1. H Did you get a chance on Friday for tomorrow to run the [inaudible] machines?
2. R [inc] They're always running. Oh no, by hand? No. Not personally no. I wouldn't
3. imagine it's complex though.
4. J [inaudible] It's only a phone call.
5. A I've had enough. [inaudible] (...) Did you program the hard disk?
6. R No, I didn't have any, need
7. A Huh?
8. R I didn't have any time to play with them over there. Wouldn't imagine it to be
9. difficult though if you've got an understanding.
10. H Anthony you don't want to see the (inc) machines?
11. A Where here?
12. H Yeh, the (inc).
13. R After the C&C's.
14. A I can't say it's – I can't say it's – it's not easy but I've not done programming on it.
15. H But that, the training is, eh Sunny he received the same training?
16. A Long time, that I would have (inc).
17. H What long time, it's the (inc) the beginning of [inaudible]
18. A [long, more than]
19. H last year.
20. A a lot, a [long time ago]

21. H [inaudible] knowledge, you, so you can't say that.
22. A All machines are different.
23. H But you have the training already-
24. A Yeh I know, no, no
25. H Here-
26. A I know
27. H But it's better to practice, you know [what was I, what what's the purpose of] the
28. training
29. A [yeh, that's right, you've got to]
30. H Yeh that's right – you're [not applying, you're not given any benefit]
31. A [nobody gives us, nobody, no, no]-no, nobody, gives us a window, nobody gives us
32. window, definitely.
33. H I give you a window now. I give you [inaudible]
34. R [(@ @)] ...

As mentioned above although she starts addressing Rick as an 'ice-breaker' Hannah's real 'target' is Anthony. Although Rick would be able to do the job that she requires, he is soon going to replace Jacob and will therefore be in a position of authority that she does not wish to challenge. She then skilfully switches the conversation to Anthony by investing him with some agency: as if Anthony would have some interest in getting involved in the task at hand (line 10: 'Anthony you don't want to see the (inc) machines?'). After the initial tentative refusal Hannah resorts to the appeal to the institutional view of training as a benefit for the employee (lines 27 and 30: Yeh that's right – you're [not applying, you're not given any benefit]). However Anthony rebukes that they have not been given the chance of taking advantage of the benefit so far and he uses the collective 'us' (line 31: [nobody gives us, nobody, no, no]-no, nobody, gives us a window, nobody gives us window, definitely), indicating specifically himself and Rick as representatives of a separate department) to corroborate the claim.

At this point Anthony and Hannah enter into an animated discussion where both parties use sarcasm to win the argument (above at lines 31- 34 underlined parts) as well as appeal to the collective interests of the respective departments (below at lines 35-43):

35. A It should be a window that there is somebody is running a mission you know?
36. H Oh Sunny – like typical thinking that you're better than him, [but uh]
37. A [@@@]
38. H now when it comes the time you cannot do what he's doing.
39. A I tell you, you just can't do it normal, if I give you the training.
40. H When I have Sunny here, [I can give you].
41. A [relax, okay] Yeh, that's
42. H I need you when he is not around.
43. A Then, it's not, it won't work that way it can't, [inaudible]
44. H [I think [inaudible] things you don't, once you learn it, you should be able to
45. apply it.
46. A I don't think so. Probably, nah, I'm not capable enough maybe.
47. H You should be because [inaudible] you have to.
48. A [inaudible]
49. No but in the scheme of things, no matter, even if I was running that machine and if
50. I'm not touching it for x amount of time and if I am [inaudible]

51. H [Not even] 6 months, you're losing your memory in six months. What you
 52. [inaudible]
 53. A [You think it] was six months since I had that machine?
 54. H Yeh!
 55. A Oh okay.
 56. H No we [inaudible]
 57. A [oh okay, so I'm losing] my memory again ...

The discussion continues until Hannah mentions Jacob sarcastically as she knows he has the last word in this regard ('[inaudible] Rick] and **'your big boss'** and let run their ...' – line 59), to which observation, in fact, Anthony remarks: "No, wait, wait once you finish this on the phone it won't raise the [inc]. – Why? – Because he knows what it is involved in there", and, in so doing, implicitly indicates Jacob's superior knowledge and authority in the matter:

58. A Yeh I know. We should [be training, we should be]
 59. H [inaudible] Rick] and your big boss and let run their [inaudible]
 60. [yeh, yeh, yeh it's] not [inaudible] you see, you don't understand my point. It's not,
 61. it's not [inaudible]
 62. R [inaudible]
 63. A No, wait, wait once you finish this on the phone it won't raise the [work].
 64. H Why?
 65. A Because he knows what it is involved in there.

At this point Hannah also feels the need to validate her agency by stressing her experience in the field but she is not taken seriously by neither Anthony or Rick who reiterate their point:

66. H I'm work in that field for twenty-two years
 67. A (@)
 68. H and I work with a lot of technician and programmers and everyone. Once you've
 69. been trained you have the knowledge, you can apply it.
 ...
 70. A Um.
 71. R The concepts is the same
 72. H Yep
 73. R but the programming is not the same and that's the problem.
 74. H No Richard, I see that, I understand that, if you have no training on the machine at
 75. all, it was intensive training for you three guys, he was received the same training as
 76. Sunny.
 77. R Yeh but if you don't use on a daily basis, you forget these things.
 78. H After how can you use on [daily basis].
 79. A [inaudible] I've been using this software for four years okay now, okay? If I
 80. know about this work, about this or for instance let me put it this way, Lloyd upstairs
 81. has used this software. He has used on the same seat okay? And he has not used it
 82. for four years. Bring him down now. Bring him [down now].
 83. H [inaudible]
 84. A No, no, no
 85. R [inaudible]
 86. A No, no, what I'm trying, I'm trying to explain this.

87. R Yeh.
 88. A What I'm trying to say is if he comes down he won't be able to, he won't be able to
 89. do [inaudible]

From line 79 to 89, above, Anthony is strongly trying to make the point by giving the example of a colleague of his who used to work in his place and is now working upstairs. Anthony, as a last resort calls Jacob into the discussion as soon as he ends his phone call:

90. A [Jacob you want] to say something here Jacob?
 91. J What?
 92. A [She wants]
 93. H [inaudible] receive the same training as Sunny he says I can't [inaudible] approve
 94. because I can't remember. But he has received the same training as Sunny for the
 95. same job.
 96. J Yeh but he's not working there every day.
 97. H But doesn't matter, but now you can use people as the backup.
 98. J You can't.
 99. H it's [inaudible] something, [inaudible]
 100. J [That's your] problem with the backup. You've got to train [the people first.
 101. H [inaudible] make a decision, train your people as a backup. That was the decision,
 102. it's not [inaudible] my decision
 103. J [it's like getting] Sunny to run my machine it's not that easy
 104. H I understand that.
 105. J It's like driving a [Holden and a Ford].
 106. H [inaudible]
 107. J [It's your fault] for letting him go on holidays. You shouldn't [let him go] on
 108. holidays!
 109. H [inaudible][oh I cannot] hold the people here [inaudible]
 110. J [Of course you] can. You can say look you can only have one week or 2
 111. [Look Hannah]
 112. H [Only one week].
 113. A [Look Hannah]
 114. H [inaudible] one week, [inaudible]
 115. A If you want to get out of this mess the only way is, we should be able to work on the
 116. machine every now and then
 117. H [inaudible]
 118. A [other than that] it's not practical. It's not
 ...
 119. J Shifting it all on to me, it's your hiccup problems, not mine
 120. H My hiccup [inaudible]. Yes! That is my department, I think [inaudible]

 121. H You do it. And that's it.
 122. J [I've just] got one
 123. H [I ask] H I ask [inaudible] trained and [inaudible]
 124. J Well we help when we can but
 125. H yeh, [inaudible]
 126. J [inaudible] I've got bloody six rubber dyes to get out the door. You re on on my
 127. back all the time.
 128. H You told me [inaudible]
 129. J You say that [inaudible] we can if we can don't put words in my mouth.
 130. H [inaudible] you say one thing outside and then say inside [inaudible]
 131. J Come on Hannah!

(Hannah storms out of the room)

Jacob, as expected, not only comes to Anthony's rescue but he manages to reverse the situation in his favour by reversing the responsibility of the impasse to Hannah herself (lines 100-119). It is not the Site Service Department's duty, as Hannah claims, to back her up in making the machines operational but it is her fault for granting holidays to the trained people. This line is corroborated by Anthony who even takes on a patronizing role (line 115: 'If you want to get out of this mess the only way is, we should be able to work on the machine every now and then').

Hannah reiterates the duties of Jacob's department to no avail as she finds insurmountable resistance (line 129: "You say that [inaudible] we can if we can don't put words in my mouth").

What follows after Hannah storms out of the room is a final comment on what is regarded as her incompetence. Again this example can be seen as a problematic interaction or critical moment where more than personal interests and differences are at play within the organizational constraints and politics and where, instead of converging in nexuses, practices are contested, opposed to and changed. As a whole this communicative event is exemplary of the power struggle deriving from the attrition between transformative forces and those resistant to change. Hannah's attempt at seeking collaboration, in line with the new organizational trends based on collaborative systems and one which is advocated by the underlying principles of lean manufacturing, is best exemplified by the opening line of Excerpt 7.23. Here she addresses Rick (whom she knows represents the future management of PTS and possibly 'a change' in how power is exercised), in an indirect and 'collaborative' way which is preparing the ground for her request. Her caution though is justified by her SIK of Jacob's 'old guard ways'. In fact, as it later happens, from an atmosphere of potential collaboration, as she is bluntly ostracized, the interaction escalates in an argument where she ends up 'in self-defense' and unable to stand her grounds against both Anthony and Jacob. Hannah's search for collaboration is in fact, in Jacob's retrospective interview, interpreted as an attempt of manipulation with the intent of gaining personal advantage and 'getting out of trouble'. In the excerpt below, they both also justify their harsh turning down of her request of help with the fact that she is incompetent at her job (lines 9, 10, 15) and rude (lines 11, 13) and implicitly with the fact that she should not be in a managerial position. However, as Jacob states in the retrospective interview, he later 'gets her out of trouble' and in this way he displays how he prioritises the organizational interests over his personal beliefs. However, it is also evident that Jacob's resistance derives in fact from a refusal to accept 'new ways' or nexuses, those in line with a more horizontal way to conduct operations among departments whereby 'getting the job done' in cooperation has the precedence over seniority and hierarchical territoriality. Jacob's refusal to help can then be seen as a

refusal to relent his centralized control over the TR and indirectly over the operations of the whole factory floor.

Excerpt 7.24

1. A She hasn't got a clue what she is talking. Fuck.
2. J Get Richard to [come down]
3. A [And she's], and she's
4. J He'll, he'll learn quickly.
5. A And she says she's been there for 22 bloody years!
6. J She's been supervising for 24 years.
7. A Yeh I was, I was, my words [inaudible]
8. J [inaudible]
9. A Right on the tip of my tongue there. Your 22 years of experience shows up very
10. nicely you know? That was what I was about to say but then I thought, you know,
11. She's being rude at times. Isn't she?
12. R Yeh.
13. J We've got to deal with this person daily.
14. A Yeh. 22 years of experience gone then I thought. (@)
15. J Passing the buck that's all.
16. A Uh!

In the retrospective interview, Jacob accounts for it as follows:

Excerpt 7.25

1. J What-[what happened] there is, uh we have two new machines in uh, in production.
2. L [just want]
3. L Okay.
4. J We-we bought their machines and stuck them in the back. Now these are different
5. machines than what I have, completely different. It's like a Toyota and a blooming
6. Holden you know?
7. L Yeh that's [um]
8. J [What] Hannah's, what Hannah's trying to do is, she's trying to find out how to
9. program the machine to make it work. She's asking Anthony to program it. He's
10. never done it before on this particular machine. Then she says, but you should know
11. how to do the pr- she's forcing him to commit himself to do some programming.
12. He's resisting because one thing he doesn't know or he's forgotten over time and
13. secondly she-she's trying to get him to do something so she can get her production
14. out the door. [So she's] playing the
15. L [Okay]
16. J blame game.

In this last instance of description, explanation and interpretation of a critical moment, Jacob is reiterating what he already stated above in regards to Hannah's position as a representative of another department management. Here in particular his stance is twofold: 1) he reconciles his views and interests with the organizational ones (lines 4 and 5: 'We-we bought their machines and stuck them in the back. Now these are different machines than what I have ...'); 2) he emphasises Hannah's interests as being in contrast to or at least separate from the ones of the organization (Lines 11-16: "she's forcing him to commit

himself – she-she’s trying to get him to do something so she can get her production out the door – [So she’s] playing the blame game”).

As noted above, although Jacob mentions that the divergences between his views and Hannah’s are the result of a different professional and technical background, it is clear that ethnic background and gender also play a role in the clash of views and stances between the two. However, as for the other instances investigated in this work the factors contributing to communicative critical moments like the one analysed above are to be inscribed within the institutional, political frame: the respective weight and seniority of the two managers within the organization, the transformation that the company is undergoing and of which Hanna’s is a representative and finally the level of resistance/enforcement allowed through discursive strategies within the company itself, that is the level of ‘play’ allowed to organizing forces where attrition and resistance are present.

7.4 Upstairs/downstairs: ‘That was an old job. I don’t try to get in the old jobs’

This section deals with Anthony’s naturally occurring interactions and the way he accounts for the communicative events of which those interactions are part. The types of CS as a social practice in Anthony’s typical sites of engagement are related to two of the four types identified in this work and highlighted in Chapter 4. Specifically, in relation to the communicative events identified in Chapter 4, they are constitutive of the following: 1) organizing of future actions, their modalities, the projecting side of the operations involved. These communicative organizing processes entail decision making and information exchanging as well as opinion exchanging; 2) organizing in reference to past actions in order to change or rectify future plans, activities or practices or to put forward one’s point of view usually contrasting with the organization’s.

The overarching themes emerging in Anthony’s initial interview recur in the introductory part of the retrospective interview and they revolve around foreseen and unforeseen changes in the workplace. Themes related to transition in the organizational structure and systems emerge in Anthony’s interviews in connection to the partition between his pre-migration and post-migration experiences. In this capacity, his accounts of how work is managed, should be managed and the changes he predicts in the near future, involve comparisons with his job before coming to Australia. The discursive temporal and spatial frames are conveyed by the CS that he uses to refer to past and present technology and working systems, the mediational tools which make it possible to link historical bodies and machines in nexuses.

When prompted by the researcher, at the beginning of the interview, to give his opinion on the foreseen changes that Jacob’s retirement would determine, he engages in what has previously emerged as his position towards the organization’s ‘old ways’ and the management’s little commitment to modernization and real engagement in the life of the

floor. In this context he reiterates his role and related interactions (mainly with Albert) as linked to the future rather than the past of the company:

Excerpt 7.26

1. A But in most cases where, with what I do up here, I have – primarily concentrate on
2. the new jobs. I don't try to get in the old jobs. Very rarely do I get, work on it. Old
3. job
4. L Old jobs you mean maintenance or [stuff that (incomp)]
5. A [yeh maintenance] sort of yeh
6. L Yeh okay
7. A That's very little that I do. Okay? So when-when it's a new job, most of the design is
8. done here and I pass it on to Albert and you saw just Albert walk in and walk
9. out now?
10. L Yeh.
11. A So we just pass on a little info and that's about it

When the researcher asks what he has 'learnt' in terms of 'ways of talking' across the years, he frames his positioning between past and future in recounting communicative events that occurred at the time of his job interview at PTS

Excerpt 7.27

1. L [and that] you-you're obviously accommodated to and some of the things, like it
2. works both ways and you-you don't actually, you're not actually conscious but it
3. does happen.
4. A No there are certain things for they work here like, when I, when I studied certain
5. things back home I-I went through certain things only on paper, only in book I didn't
6. think those things existed.
7. L (@) me neither!
8. A Okay? I thought they were all obsolete by now, but when I come down here, when I
9. went for the first interview and I was walking along with Jacob and he said this is
10. where we do these things and I asked why? He said what do you mean why? This is
11. where we, this is what we do here, this and then I asked him why don't you change it
12. over to this system or that system? And I was, I was given a very vague answer at
13. that time, which I didn't accept but at that time, I needed the job I didn't want to
14. argue. Okay?
15. L No.
16. A Okay? And after one month or something I came back I came for the second
17. interview and we went through the same walk around in the place.
18. L So Jacob interviewed you?
19. A Yeh, yeh.
20. L Okay.
21. A I walked around the same place and again I asked Jacob to see if I can get a different
22. answer but no, okay? That didn't come up. Okay? This was like 6 years back now.
23. 5 and a half years back now okay? And he said no, no we've gone through that part
24. it doesn't work, you know? All that sort of thing okay? Fine. Okay if you've gone
25. through the part, what can I say you know? Maybe I exposure into that is maybe not
26. right, you know? I kept quiet. But in the last 2 and a half years or something like
27. that- 2 and a half years or something like that they started doing this with the new

29. technology what I suggested [to] Jacob
30. L [you]
31. A Okay? At (inc) back in Thailand.
32. L Um
33. A Okay? And it's come up so good, so effective okay? So effective they invested a
34. machine there, close to half a million dollars something like that, after that they're
35. invested one more machine and I think they are looking for the third one. So-
36. L took them (inc) but that's-
37. A but what I'm trying to say is-
38. L yep
39. A a little bit of foresight
40. L yeh
41. A is what cost us x amount of jobs here in Australia (...) Whereas me being so
42. inexperienced at that time like what I was 34/35 at that time, whereas these guys are
43. in their 60's. They didn't have their foresight what I had at that point of time
44. L Um
45. A I'm not blaming them. Their exposure was very limited and they stay within that and
46. they [perfected that]
47. L [Yes, yes]
48. A They perfected that
49. L yeh, yeh, yeh.
50. A They didn't step, they didn't look beyond a square
51. L There's uhm yeh generational change [sometimes]
52. A [Yeh] to me that was like what they are doing now and what they are doing, it was
53. really shocking. I just made up that day, the reason why I didn't meet up with you
54. last week was we were making a dye for that machine. Not, not for Thailand for
55. here, for the age old system. It works, it works I don't say (inc)
56. L Okay
57. A but it still labour oriented, it is still manual process and it is a time consuming factor.
58. It's a cheap process there
59. L Cheaper
60. A Yeh. Because no, cheaper in sense the initial investment is cheaper

As the underlined parts highlight, Anthony's attempts at receiving an answer as to why the technology used was not up-to-date are 'learning' episodes for him whereby he chooses not make remarks on the topic in the future. A strategy of avoidance is what best suits situations where 'old ways' or technology are involved and interactions pertaining the same occur.

Another probing question by the researcher confirms that Anthony has become fully aware of the extent of sensitivity of the issue to the point that he acknowledges the issue itself as a face threatening one:

Excerpt 7.28

1. L Do you think but, do you think in terms of the way you interact with people have
2. changed? Of course I mean
3. A To a certain degree yes, to a certain degree yes and a- I'd like, I'd like to shoot point
4. blank which is not very good and diplomatic at times
5. L (@)
6. A (@) but that's a fact of life you know?

7. L Yeh
8. A and people don't realise and, like I said with a casting process what they do and
9. what, I asked Jacob twice and if you ask him now he wouldn't even agree to it you
10. know?
11. L He wouldn't?
12. A He wouldn't. I wouldn't. Because again if he agrees to it, it will be a slap on him you
13. know what I mean? It's not [something that (inc)].
14. L [but I mean, I mean] Jacob is on the way out so (@)
15. A Yeh (@), no but I'm not trying to put the blame on anybody else [or anything]
16. L [Yeh, yeh, no], no. but I, yeh
17. A and again the structure of the company at that time or this time or even now is so
18. hard to get something, capital investment going
19. L Um
20. A it's not, it's not you can't blame even the managers because they, the policies are all
21. set by people upstairs or something like that.

Again the chiasm upstairs-downstairs is a recurrent one whereby although Jacob is a manager, he belongs to the floor and therefore is not in a position to make decisions.

This is illustrated by excerpt 7.20 above and the commentary that Anthony gives of the interaction in question (excerpt 7.29 below), shows how Anthony has 'adjusted' to the organizational culture by adopting different CS: from face threatening questions ('to make sense of the obsolete), to avoidance and finally questions of compliance.

As seen above this communicative event (excerpt 7.20) takes place in Jacob's office. Anthony and Jack are present. The object of the conversation is the modification of a tool which was conceived and designed differently and has now to be adjusted to be functional to the purpose it was originally designed for. Here, Jacob's description of the operations required, set the communicative event as organizing future actions and engage the people involved in the process. Throughout the interaction Jacob strategically strives to create a scenario of projection into future enterprise. However, although he seems not to call for others to participate in any decision making, the way he describes the course of actions to be undertaken and the procedural steps to follow, indicate an intent of seeking consensus or at least confirmation on how to deal with the matter also in consideration of Anthony's reluctance to be dealing with 'old jobs'.

It is interesting to note at the beginning of the interaction (excerpt 7.20 line 1), the use that Jacob makes of the personal pronoun 'I' as opposed to 'we': this first marks the stance he takes in dealing with the job. Jacob is 'taking on' the job, 'commissioned' to him from another department as he is the 'site service manager' (line 1: What I was thinking of doing here' and line 5: 'Now. I'll make a tool'. The use of 'I' throughout the excerpt, besides the emphasis on where the 'undertaking' is coming from also indicates Jacob's invested authority in taking charge of the project. Note that in lines 28 and 29, he says: 'It's only, I-I-I don't want you to do anything I'll I'll do the leg work I just want to suss it out because down the track next year I want you to machine this out.' which reiterates this authority and the fact that it is his project. In fact, despite Jacob's call for confirmation that

his reasoning is right, the level of engagement required of the interlocutors is limited to that of executors of the plan. At no point of the interaction Anthony and Jack are told about the purpose of the job (although Jack may know as the ‘commission’ came from upstairs (as is mentioned towards the end of the event) nor they are explicitly asked about their opinion. However when the operational side of the plan is introduced (what actually needs to be done) Jacob switches to a more cooperative mood by using ‘we’ and action verbs. As mentioned above, throughout the interaction Anthony’s stance is one of collaboration and compliance (line 6: ‘Yes. Yes. First we’ve got to do that and then the hangers’). The questions he asks are aimed at facilitating Jacob’s handing over the information necessary to do the job. Only at a later stage Anthony becomes slightly probing and in so doing he prompts Jacob to give justifications for his course of action (see lines 11, 24, 59, 60). However, the interaction flows in a mood of collaboration (line 41: ‘I’m with you’) and the questions are functional to acquire information and create engagement until also Anthony ‘takes’ on some agency by wanting to propose the modification of the tool through a specific machine (lines 86, 87: ‘[What I want] to do, I want to run this machine, this thing on there because they are not done in [inc] programming, so on that [machine]’). Anthony describes the communicative event in this way:

Excerpt 7.29

1. A ...about, but what I’m talking about is, one of the jobs that we need to modify or
2. something, what [they] already got in.
3. L [Okay]
4. L yeh.
5. A and we are trying to modify. That’s what I said like in-in very limited cases he is,
6. that I get a chance to work on an existing job or an old job or whatever he is running
7. or
8. L [yeh]
9. A [there’s] something that they have done (incomp) la, long, long time [ago].
10. L [time] ago
11. A They want to fix it and in a [proper way]
12. L [they want to] fix, (@) yeh, yeh, yeh.
13. A You know what I mean? So Jacob is telling this is what it does, this is what has
14. [been done]
15. L [been done]
16. A and what he can do, this or that or something like that. [You know]?
17. L In the tool room?
18. A Not in the tool [room], far end.
19. L [in]

As it is clear from the above, these type of jobs do not engage him to a great extent nor he is interested in their overall purpose since they are correction or rectification of jobs gone wrong and which require mostly manual adjustment (lines 1, 5, 6, 11, 12, 13, 14 ‘... an old job or whatever is running or’ – ‘and what he can do, this or that or something like that [You know]?’). Additionally, these jobs are a reverberation of the old system endorsed by the people upstairs.

In the same vein and as emerged both in the initial interview and at the beginning of the retrospective one he comments on the habit of the engineers. Anthony holds the view that difficulties in communication are mostly due to differences in technical knowledge, generation gaps and generally differences in adjusting to the ‘mixed-system’ of old and new, manual and automatic. People ‘who reside’ in the office, as he puts it, do not have a grip on the reality of the factory floor. In this regards Anthony comments as follows:

Excerpt 7.30

1. A Yeh because of the drawings at certain times, they send a model, there is no drawing,
2. so things like that you know what I mean? And obviously they need to know when
3. I’ll get it, what I get it, how I do it or whatever and you know? [Yeh] there is
4. interactions always.
5. L [okay].
- ...
6. A No, that’s what I’m trying to say, most of the cases when they design, they look at
7. the aesthetic part and the functional part and things like that and they just come up
8. oh this looks better let me do it this way or I’ll put a fa, like it’s like, when you are
9. doing a garment and you put a fancy button or something like that you know? But
10. maybe the button’s going on the side I mean, [when] you move your hand or
11. something it’s, so at
12. L [(@)]
13. A times they come up with very sharp corners [or certain], certain profiles is hard to
14. L [(@) yes]
15. A machine for me, so I had to look at other ways to do it
16. L [yeh]
17. A [okay] and for me to do the other ways it’ll take time and money, I have to do it fast
18. and neat and simple so for me to do that, I would say this, this, this, things are better
19. if I do it this way because that’s what they are the infrastructure for or the (inp)
20. capital of doing it, so if that’s not a functional area can we change it this way or that
21. way? If it’s a functional area and if that’s the way it has to be, no choice, we have to
22. put on with it, we have to find ways to do it.

The communicative event below further exemplifies this view. It also highlights the CS macro-dimension of spanning across time and different view points: organizing in reference to past actions with the intent to rectify or correct future plans, or to manifest one’s point of view usually in contrast with the institutional directives; The interaction is among Jacob, Anthony and Albert and it occurs near the CNC in the Tool Room. Anthony and Albert are trying to tackle the argument of creating/rectifying a tool for the Forging Department, from a purely technical/functional side. Jacob’s position is one of mediation between upstairs and downstairs although he tends to agree with Anthony and Albert:

Excerpt 7.31

1. A you know what I mean? and this corner should have a radius, it shouldn’t have any
2. sharp edges at all. And that will do the job. Probably, you might get away, you won’t
3. do that, (incomp)
4. Al that, that’s by, by changing that [inaudible]
5. A [yeh, yeh, yeh] exactly and that will do. There is (incomp) what, what we are trying

6. to do by doing so is, create a flow for the metal as it gets compressed rather than
7. forcing it into somewhere, sheering. Displacing the metal has to be a flow. Not
8. pushing only. You know what I'm saying?
9. J Yeh.
10. Al You can make it this way also like this, this way (incomp) printing half like this,
11. here you are holding the bar here and this will be the length of the bar.
- ...
12. Al We've already tried that.
13. A We tried.
14. Al You'll see it.
15. J What he's saying, I said to him, just when you crimp, when you bend the cable, the
16. cable has all different edges because of the radius, right? I said you are [inaudible]
17. he doesn't want, he wants it to be square in the inside so the cable goes in here. I said
18. well if you do that, you, you cannot, you're going to have to crimp a little bit like
19. that.
20. Al [yes]
21. A [yes] that's what I'm trying to say.
- ...
22. J So this, this [inaudible] is important and the argument they're saying oh it has to go
23. right up into a square bottom hole
24. A under what?
25. J he said if it goes too far it will sheer off and – and can fracture. I said, um, I don't
26. know about that ...

Below is how Anthony comments on the interaction:

Excerpt 7.38

1. A Again it's got to do with something problem solving
2. No, again that's got to do with where the problems are coming with the [modelling] and
3. L [yeh]
4. A coming down, because they look at it oh it's nice to do it this way it looks good and
5. things like that but at times always looking good won't be that easy to manufacture.
6. It's not that it's not possible to manufacture [but again] the time and the money and
7. whether we
8. L [but (incomp)]
9. A need it, [it's not worth] it
10. L [it's not worth]
- ...
11. A [and] yeh and another tool that we did for them and they were not getting it right.
12. L Okay.
13. A up there and they came up with their version as to what it has to be.
14. L Right.
15. A And to me, that version was not acceptable, that was not right.
16. L Okay.
17. A And I uh, I'm trying to insist and explain what it is.

As shown above from the excerpts of both interviews and natural interactions, despite Anthony's position in regard to the institutional views and systems he also has a conciliatory stance when it comes to conducting interactions with both 'production people'

and ‘office people’. At another point of the interview when the researcher asks about having Albert as his main work counterpart and interlocutor he responds:

Excerpt 7.33

1. A [I would say]be it anybody, be it anybody eventually it’ll come to a point where it
2. has to come to that working atmosphere. [Even if] it is not Albert
3. L [yeh that’s]
4. A it has to, like if somebody else because we are here working not as individuals, we
5. are working for PLP. You know? We are working for the company we are not
6. working for ourselves.
7. L Yeh [but]
8. A [You] have to come up to that point. We have to work to it.
9. L Yep.
10. A My role here as this, running this is I have to make sure that life is 1, as much easier
11. as possible at the other end. And the guy up there at the same time has to reciprocate
12. no matter what and it will happen.
13. L [yeh, yeh that’s yeh that’s]
14. A [but if you’re] smart enough and if that person up there is showing tantrums
15. L um
16. A the person up here will cover up for it, you know he’ll make sure okay, this is his
17. concerns I’ll try to do it, I’ll put him in the corner so that he should come up and say
18. oh why you doing this to me Anthony you know? (@)
19. L (@)
20. A No what I’m saying if somebody sh, I don’t think there should be an issue of that no
21. [matter] what.

Here, although not explicitly expressed by the researcher, the reference to Albert and Anthony’s ethnic and linguistic background is clear. However, Anthony’s statement, not only and specifically in terms of ethnic diversity rather in terms of hierarchical and more generally professional status points to the fact, highlighted in Chapter 2, that the concept of ‘intercultural’ communication in organizational and other contexts is to be extended to other types of diversity. In organizations, specifically, it refers to worldviews, technical, professional and role-related differences. Anthony’s communicative interactions and views show themselves the diversity of the sites of engagement that he navigates, nexuses of practices and related CS that he has come to learn, cutting across time and space, technology and manualization. In line with what was argued in Chapters 2 and 3, this view reconceptualises the notion of ‘intercultural’ as intrinsic in communication as organizing different views and positions.

Emblematic, in this capacity, is Anthony’s response to one of the questions regarding Jacob’s participation in his dealings with the designers and Albert in particular. He states:

Excerpt 7.34

1. A He doesn’t come and tell me
2. L between you and the designers for, when they [(incomp)]

3. A [no he doesn't] come in, he doesn't come and tell me to do it this
4. way or that way or do it one way this way, [follow this, this], this, that, or
5. L [um, um, um, um]
6. A something, he doesn't do that.
- ...
7. A But still I put it past to him because, you [know] what I mean?

In this instance Anthony indicates as his major reference point, Jacob, whereby as the historical body of PTS, he is at the nexus of two cultures.

7.5 Stan's cooling tower: 'because there is no Chan then I have to do it'

This section concerns Stan's nested analysis of nexuses of actions, the specific interactions associated with them and his discursive sense making of both actions and spoken exchanges with his co-workers. As it is shown below, Stan's nexuses of action are related for the most part to space and movement as his tasks span across the plant and, given his different roles, he is often called to different jobs in different parts of the plant itself. His accounting of actions and spoken exchanges reflect this constant adjustment to different spaces, interlocutors and machines: contingencies of breakdowns, servicing requirements or simply routine maintenance. The communicative events analysed here, in which Stan finds himself are constructed by and construct two types of CS: 1) CS related to future work/action interactions on work to be done and course of action to be undertaken): the nexuses are discursively constructed as contingencies which require immediate or at least quick actions. This construction of projected action in the future usually intersects with other coordinated/(inter)actions and therefore time and space are constructed as crucial. However, in the case of Stan there is no decision making rather sequences of statements and/or instructions and related requests for confirmation of action to be undertaken or already occurred. 2) CS constructing concurrent actions at the moment in which action takes place: time, space and physical actions are co-constructed discursively in interactions. Tools are central to this type of interactions as they are constituting the nexus as well.

The communicative events investigated here concern maintenance jobs in which Stan had a predominant role. The jobs are quite complex, require the work of several people and span over some time. They therefore recur in many recordings of interactions occurred over days. The jobs are: the adjustment, after the installation of a new cooling tower, the repairing of a hammer in the Forging Department, and the cleaning and servicing of a wire-forming machine in the Pre-form Department.

As mentioned above Stan is the main actor in the installation of the new cooling tower. The old one had to be replaced because it was obsolete. The following excerpt shows how Stan, by accounting for the specific event, also describes his site of engagements and the nexuses of practices resulting from this.

Excerpt 7.35

1. S Uh if anything happened, for example we installed new cooling tower. I have to
2. reconnect the electricity, I have, we-we have to basically do everything, [that] is
3. completely new uh
4. L [um]
5. S cooling tower, big one, different from the previous one and **when we install** it, the-
6. then the circuit breaker start tripping off. That mean the cooling, the-the motor start
7. going on and the moment (...) stalls. I mean uh goes off. So um eh, then after **we**
8. **have to find out** what was the problem on the-the-the angle on the blades [or]
9. because sometime if –
10. L [uh]
11. S the angle on the blades is eh too hi, too low or whatever and cause too much friction
12. or whatever [you stop the motor].

Stan accounts for the process of the nexus formation starting from when an issue arises. In this case however, in order to account for the sequence of events conducive to the cooling tower communicative event, he has to step backward in time to when a previous action had been performed: the installation of the new tower. To be noted is the use of the pronouns ‘I’ and ‘we’ according to the type of job involved: Stan is an electrician by trade so ‘reconnecting the electricity’ is his job, whereas the other tasks are to be collectively performed (‘we have to basically do everything’, ‘when we install it’, etc.) also because of the more complex steps involved and the different expertise required. Another prompt by the researcher is aimed at further understanding this nexus’ process and how it begins:

Excerpt 7.36

1. L [I understand] okay. So when so Jacob comes to you. I just want to understand how–
2. S No Jacob [didn’t] come. I come to Jacob when we have problem then we start like
3. uh simple
4. L [(inc)]
5. S eh m-m, give him the thing and he has to solve it [(@)].
6. L [Oh tell] him what’s [the problem].
7. S [yeh what is], what is the [problem].

Here, as seen in Chapter 5, ‘the walking to the job’ nexus’ strategy and the system unit which results from it is exemplified: first a site of engagement between Jacob and Stan occurs and then between Stan and Arthur:

Excerpt 7.37

1. L [So how] did you find out about the cooling tower? Did somebody come to you and
2. say this?
3. S Oh (inc) me and Arthur we have and after we have a look, we go on top of the
4. mo – oh on the cooling tower and read the specification on the motor because
5. I thought this-this exactly the same motor [but] the motor was a little bit eh higher
6. rate so we [have to]

7. L [uhm]
8. S upgrade the circuit breaker
9. L Okay so somebody told you it's not working? Somebody came to you and told you
10. or you just
11. S I—I told him because – eh I switch it on, I knew it. It's-it's cutting off.

It is like Stan is himself, a 'mobile system unit' because of his multiple roles and the way he either walks to the job, he is called or calls other co-workers to the job and reports the problem to Jacob. He further explains:

1. S [Usually some], sometimes straight away people from outside come because they
2. know I can do it, but heh I usually send them to Jacob or Arthur, Jacob [eh] I said go
3. and tell Jacob then I go in to fix it.
4. L Oh so it has to go through Jacob? [That-that]
5. S [Yeh I] can some, don't-don't necessarily I can go straight away and do it but heh,
6. I always
7. L [inc]
8. S send them to uh the high authority and after it come to me and I go to do the job.

The following excerpts show the follow up of the cooling tower's issue and some of the people involved in solving the problem over time.

Excerpt 7.38

1. S Dan!
2. D Yes.
3. S You are the man. I did talk to Jacob about eh cooling tower, you know, it's eh, what
4. happened it tripping over the motor, the circuit breaker
5. D [Yeh]
6. S [In the] [inaudible], so Jacob said ask Dan to find out the phone number of the guy
7. who supply us the
8. D yeh
9. S cooling tower and have to ask him exactly how to adjust the fans.
10. D Yeh that's Bud Ellis.
11. S Yeh. When you will – the – have the time can – get – give him the [phone] number
12. D [Hey?]
13. S Give him the phone number or
14. D I've got it, I can get it straight away [for him].
15. S [Yeh], and uh.
-
16. S I-I just got to find out how many kilowatts that it can draw and uh, [inaudible](...)
17. You know Dan I'll show you, I'm, I-I've got the vision right, I'll – I'll show you
18. how I will draw. Can we get up? Standing right position like this.
19. D Yeh, [oh yeh]
20. S [move], move it a little bit more, little more, little more uh over my way and let,
21. you've got more force, whole body, because like this you have to force your body
22. (@).
23. D Yeh it's only thin anyway.
24. S Yeh it's not that thick yeh.
25. D It's only
26. S It's no good on your, no good on your muscles, on your belly, heh(...) Cause I push

27. the whole body in, not-not-not-not muscles.

28. D Yeh. I just want a nice sitting down job.

Here Stan bumps into Dan who has also been given a task on the tower. The exchange reflects what Stan has described as the typical pattern of jobs' allocation. He told Jacob about the problem, Jacob told him to ask Dan, to ask the supplier 'exactly how to adjust the fans' before any action is taken. Stefan then engages in performing a concerted manual activity with Dan over the tower whereby they have to adjust to each other movements to be able to perform the task of troubleshooting the problem.

The next two excerpts concern a problem with a semi-manual machine, the hammer, in the Forging area. After Stan listened to the exchanges in questions other nexuses and related CS emerge in his accounts.

The first exchange is with Arthur. Again, it occurs casually on the floor and Stan is assigned a job by Arthur on the spot:

Excerpt 7.39

1. S Heh (...) Morning Jim how are you? Hello Arthur
2. J Good morning.
3. A Look at the hammer, you know the (incomp) switch playing up again? On the
4. number one. You know the main one eh, eh maybe have to check, close without,
5. it keep cutting off last Friday
6. S Eh, uh, uh, uh
7. A You know the close switch? The one we changed?
8. S Uh yeh, yeh, yeh, yeh.
9. A Coming down from the tube inside, one on the left hand, one on the right hand.
10. S Okay, I'll have a look.
11. A (inc) keep (clapping hands) forging and keep cutting out

In this example, although Arthur avoids using a strong directive or explicit instructions to Stan, "Look at the hammer, you know the [inc] switch playing up again? On the number one. You know the main one. Eh, eh maybe have to check, close without, it keep cutting off. Last Friday", rather he limits himself to describing the problem to him, this is sufficient for Stan to interpret it as the assignment of a task.

The following excerpt from the retrospective interview highlights the dynamics of the exchange in question and the type of CS at play between Arthur and Stan:

Excerpt 7.40

1. L Uh that's (inc). So do you remember this situation?
2. S Yeh I do. That was um about the hammer [inaudible] eh the hammer break down so
3. we have to fix it in, one hole blows up and uh.
- ...
4. S So the water blows up inside so we have to find out where and then (inc) the parts,
5. clean up everything. Dry it and start again.
6. L With, did you do that with Arthur or [did you?]
7. S [(inc)] I-I think, I don't remember he-he was, because he's the leading hand, you

8. know he just little bit [ehm] I Uh b-pass, delegate the job (@).
9. L From, by Jacob?
10. S Yeh, no, no, no, no, no, no. Sometime he-he just tell me and uh he muckin around I
11. do the job, I have to spend most of the time doing it.
12. L Okay so he, but he knows what to do sometimes?
13. S Oh he's on the similar basis like me you know?
14. L Um, do you have communication problems with him or?
15. S With Arthur? No.
16. L No.
17. S [No].
18. L [No]. Okay.
19. S Got a bit of Asian accent [as well] um but he's reasonably ... to understand him.
20. Arthur is reasonably good.

Although Stan refers to Arthur's trade and qualification as being at the same level as his (Oh he's on the similar basis like me you know?), he does acknowledge the difference in hierarchical status (because he's the leading hand, you know he just little bit [ehm] I Uh b-pass, delegate the job (@)), hence his understanding Arthur's description as in fact, an instruction. Stan confirms that he has no communication problems with Arthur.

The following excerpt is between Stan and Barry. It is interesting to note how Stan tries to get Barry to do the job in a similar indirect way, without explicitly asking him to do it:

Excerpt 7.41

1. S You going to the forging Barry?
2. B Oh, I'll go for a walk.
3. S Walk, [uh yes].
4. B [My part's] all done.
5. S (@) yeh that's correct, that's good. Uh they've got some sort of problem, water
6. problem in there, I don't know, something in the hammer, I'm meant to, go and have
7. a look (.) It's uh, what is the problem? All right if something break there, then
8. change over then the machine plays up little bit.
9. B It's a while to get the hammer to drop too.
10. S Yeh.
11. B I don't [know], I don't [know whether] it had a bit of air in the line or
12. S [what][what was]
13. B Uhu. Didn't want to go yeh?
14. S Didn't want to go then we changed the petal over
15. B Uhu uh.
16. S Still didn't want to go.

The 'lack of power' in this exchange, whereby no one is directing anybody is due to two main factors: 1) the similar status of both workers and 2) the fact that they are both active unions' delegates. The nexus here is constituted by way of cooperative, 'flat' language. However, Stan explains that his interlocutor's expertise, in this case comes handy and he himself delegates to others jobs he is not willing to do when the opportunity presents itself:

Excerpt 7.42

1. L [Okay]. Um. Yeh you're talking about the hammer with Barry as well. Is that, do
2. you [remember?]
3. S [Yeh Barry]-Barry is – most of that, you know he knows the hammer reasonably
4. well so
5. L Okay. He knows about the hammer?
6. S Uh heh most of the time he repairing this and then he knows a bit more. I don't like
7. the hammer because when you go there and heh your hand straight away black (@).
8. It's very greasy job, dirty heh.
9. L Oh okay. Yeh. So you have to.
10. S heh
11. L Anyway.
12. S By-pass (@).
13. L Oh huh.
14. S Delegate to someone else.
15. L Do you do that [often?]
16. S [Nah] if you, if I've got the opportunity then I do it [(@)].
17. L [(@)].
18. S Because there's no Chan then I have to do it. [Heh].

Here, the fact that Chan is acknowledged as somewhat 'lower status' and possibly one to whom 'dirty greasy jobs' can be delegated to indicates the inescapable organizational system of higher and lower statuses which attributes agency to some individuals over other ones.

The next excerpts concern the servicing of a wire-forming machine. Here the clash between worldviews, 'don't fix it till ain't break' and the replacement with a new one is exemplified in one of Jacob and Stan's sites of engagements. In the retrospective interview, after listening to the communicative event, Stan engages in a long explanation of what a wire-forming machine is and does:

Excerpt 7.43

1. S Uh they produce the-the-the stuff you know um, the cable fittings whatever they
2. how-how they (...), the way how they call it, I don't know I mean eh (...), I-I could
3. show you [personally] you will understand better what, how-how the pro-product
4. look but this is
5. L [eh oh]
6. S the section which makes money. Wire forming.

Stan's emphasis on "the section which makes money. Wire forming." is a cue to the validation of his contrasting views with those of Jacob. Given the harsh way in which Jacob addresses Stan, in the communicative event in question the researcher tries all along to maintain a light and factual tone. Below is how Stan starts describing the communicative event in question:

7. S [Uh that] is the, the in the preform, wire forming machine so we-we just simply m-eh
8. L [(@)]
9. S renovate the machine. Uh we should buy the right from beginning how I thought we
10. should be, we should replace the shaft and the bearing, but Jacob want eh different
11. thing. He want to pull out the machine from eh the spot where eh he used to stay.
12. Get outside Wash it with the pressure washing machine [and strip it. Yeh]

And later he almost justifies Jacob's ways:

13. S [He always little bit, always] argue because I want easy way and he want the hard
14. way you know? I mean
.....
15. S [(inc) hehe yeh we always] have it do it Jacob way, no matter what. Hehe, huh,
16. huhe I agree or not we always do. I'm-bah-I'm-I'm-I actually I don't argue with him
17. he wants to do it upside down I go upside down hehehe.

In the natural exchange below (to which two other employees are present – I and I2) Jacob makes the final decision after a previous interaction in which he had given Stan some leeway. As is shown, Stan strategically manages to negotiate his tasks with Jacob by relenting all agency to him: his replies to his directives (underlined) are rather requests for confirmation than objections until he takes on a completely appeasing tone to further smoothen the transaction:

Excerpt 7.44

1. J Got to fix them all up. Can we take this machine and take it outside and dis-
2. disconnect the motor? So we can give it a spray paint and then we replace this at the
3. same time or if we can?
4. S Um put it this way, um, um, um, um, um [it-it a lot]
5. J [inaudible]
6. S of work to take it outside the
7. J [I don't care how]
8. S [I-I-I can try] I can try to respray-respray over here if you want to?
9. J Okay well you've got to take all the shit off. Got to take all this off and all this off
10. and then cover it up there sort of.
11. S Yeh. Yeh that's no problem I can respray over here.
12. I [Take it outside]
13. S [I wanted] to paint the floor too
14. J Where over here?
15. S Nice and grey.
16. J No.
17. S What do you mean no? Yeh!
18. J That will be little bit overboard that. That's all right, that's why I say take it outside
19. while you clean this, you clean the floor.
20. S Or we paint around nicely that's not a big deal I will manage this thing.
21. J Shit look!
22. S But you know how much work is to-to do
23. J You've got three or four blokes, don't worry about the work. I've got a work order
24. written up. Just fuckin do it!
25. S Uh.
26. J Chan can take all the shafts and get all the shafts are new. Put all new shafts in,
27. check the [bearings].
28. I2 [inaudible]
29. S Uh?
30. I2 [inaudible] inside?
31. J Yeh they're in the cupboard. Take out the back, grab Billy if you have to, he can do
32. all the work and replace this thing.
33. I2 [inaudible]

34. J Or whatever you do
35. I2 Don't worry [inaudible]
36. J Yeh paint it yellow. Look at all the shit we've got here.
37. S This is peanuts to me, leave it to
38. I Yeh but what I want to do, I want to paint the floor too to make it look nice.
39. S It will be, will be looking it's painted everything.
40. J The floor too?
41. S Yeh.
42. J Take all the guards off, paint all this yellow.
43. S Yeh.
44. J All this yellow.
45. S Yellow?
46. J Yeh, yellow.
47. S Uhu. What about this, this one is already [blue]
48. J [That can] be left blue. Or check the bearings and just to check to see if you've got
49. bearings, you don't have bearings, we'll have to buy some or we put the old ones
50. back. Uh grab Billy, he can do some of the lug work, all right? Let's put in a little bit
51. of a modernization in the machine a bit yeh?

Below is how Stan accounts for his strategic avoidance of conflict with Jacob in the retrospective interview:

Excerpt 7.45

1. S [but it's, and] sometimes I ask him, I said okay I will do it but I want to do it your
2. way because after I don't want to do it again so in [some] cases if I
3. L [okay]
4. S want to be sure then uh I ask him.
5. L Yeh um so if you're not sure you ask him?
6. S Yeh. [Jacob is, Jacob is] the one who [always]
7. L [makes] the decision yes [but]
8. S make] the decision yeh.
9. L But that doesn't mean.
10. S That depends you know? That depend on what machine whatever. If the, if we
11. rebuilding something then Jacob is the one who is running that show.
12. L Uh, uh
13. S And uh and we have to do it (@)

Interestingly, Jacob's agency is mostly predominant where maintenance and rebuilding (or repairing) is involved. His areas of expertise and knowledge then confer him authority and 'the final decision' whereby new technology applications and replacements are to be consulted upon with the up-and-coming generation and the 'people from upstairs'.

This last section shows how CS form nexuses of practice which result from a system of continuous mutual adjustment. In the case of Stan, this adjustment is at an individual, localized level which makes Stan himself a 'mobile system unit', as observed above, able to work with different people, jobs and machines depending on the contingency at hand. His role as a union's delegate also puts him at the centre of particular nexuses of social

practices whereby CS are particularly relevant in relation to power and political agendas as well as institutional stance towards himself.

Stan is able to discursively avoid any form of conflict and adjust to any interlocutor. However as seen in Chapters 5 and 6 this has not always been the case since his historical body and historical mind has gone through many transformations both in terms of role and status whereby he himself has had to adjust to new circumstances and tasks and therefore to using new ways of communicating.

7.6 Conclusion

This chapter set out to integrate the analysis of three sets of data, namely, initial interviews, naturally occurring interactions and retrospective interviews. The aim was to capture the intersection ‘in fieri’ of nexuses and CS: the way nexuses of practices are discursively constructed and become organizing practices. Focal themes were here considered as the ground from which nexuses would stem and become enacted in ‘live’ interactions whereas post-event interviews were analysed as ‘making sense’ accounts of those interactions (or communicative events), actions and actors’ behaviour namely what is acknowledged and recognized as social practices in the organization.

In sum, the final stage of the nested analysis, the retrospective interviews, reveals how, the discourse processes emerging in the participants’ account themselves help conceptualize CS as immanent, responsive to contingencies and therefore ever changing but also transformative insofar as they enact organizing or concerted actions among parties towards a desired change. Additionally, they are also transformative due to the actors’ placing themselves at the centre of nexuses, with their individual interests and goals: how and if they want to negotiate/resist an interaction order, their roles, competencies and worldviews, comply with or contrast a course of action, participate to or disengage from decision making or more generally organizing.

As anticipated in Chapter 2 then, the analysis here then points to a stage of ‘beyond interdiscursivity (Candlin, 2006) and towards heteroglossia as Communication Strategies are embodied in contrasting voices and polyphonic noises rather than discourses which could be the result of discursive institutional planning (Iedema, 2003, 2011). Transformation, and overlapping but converging voices rather than establishment of practices is then the outcome of organizing processes.

CHAPTER 8

CS AS INDIVIDUAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL TOOLS: ENFORCEMENT, RESISTANCE, NEGOTIATION, COMPLIANCE

8.1 Investigating linguistic competence as strategic

I set out my project with the view of researching what communication skills (the soft skills mostly sought after in an employee) equated to in a specific work context which was traditionally associated with technical and manual skills rather than soft skills. My research was motivated by my professional experience working in adult education and specifically in teaching communication modules embedded in trades' certificates. In this regard, I had noted the lack of specific and systematic reference of training manuals' content to work and professional practices in situated activities and 'real contexts' (Thornborrow, 2002) which would allow an integration of personal abilities and motivations to organized work. Additionally, the specific needs of speakers of English as a second language were not sufficiently addressed. This further indicated to me a lack of acknowledgement of the links between language, work and specific context-bound (workplace/setting) practices vital for learning programs to be effectively implemented (AI Group, 2010, Billet, 2002). This 'educational' gap is all the more evident in the face of current migration policies' striving to target skills shortages in specific vocational and trading sectors (Jupp, 2002, 2007).

On the one hand, the literature suggested the existence of oftentimes insurmountable hurdles for migrants to find employment at their qualification level (Bertone, 2004; Clyne, 1994; Colic-Peisker, 2011; D'Netto, 2008; Grossi, 2012; Kim et al., 2012,) due to perceived or real lack of language skills, on the other, organizations' management lamented ever lasting communication barriers and low levels of literacy among their employees especially on the factory floor (Berman, 2008; Colic-Peisker, 2005; Creese-Wiebe, 2009; Lippi-Green, 2011). Contrary to this literature my experience suggested a long standing coexistence of a diverse workforce in various contexts and at various levels of employment whereby knowledge and work practices seemed to override language differences to the point where communication in a 'lingua franca' would become a second skin to most co-workers. It occurred to me that from this perspective communication seemed to serve work practices/activities and it was almost subordinate to knowledge and job's skills and an 'ability to interact' which almost transcended linguistic competence.

As a backdrop of this state of affairs, the manufacturing industry seems to reflect a particularly complex situation especially in relation to the progressive changes occurring in the wider socio-economic context such as the shifting of outsourcing and generally the commissioning of production to overseas companies due to cost competitiveness. Clearly, the traditional employment by the Australian manufacturing industry of migrants with low level language skills does not reflect the current economic scenario. Instead Migration Occupational lists indicate a demand for specific skills (at workshop levels) which include the communicative competence necessary to operate in the field of expertise. This situation poses the question of what is the necessary communicative competence indicated by training packages as “sought for work skills and knowledge to operate and advance professionally” (Employability Skills Framework, 2002) within a contemporary organization of the kind I had set out to explore. Given the specific setting, it also posed the question of what type of links between language and work or, more generally organized activities, would have to be explored and how. The call for an investigation of contextual factors followed: what language, spoken by whom, why and in which sites of engagement were the questions linked to what would be regarded as being communicatively competent within a specific setting such as that of a factory floor. In the face of my observation of highly conflictual interactions (rather than problematic in a broad sense), and at the same time of the falling into place of common efforts of diverse individuals towards established goals, it was immediately apparent then that rather than dealing only with connections of various type among the contextual factors mentioned above I was confronted with a complex system or even a network of systems of knowledge, communication and technologies. The notion of communication skills, as mentioned in the introduction, seemed too limiting to delineate the type of interconnections occurring within and as part of these networks. The terms communication strategies seemed on the other hand, better suited to encompass not only the organizational sets of purposive communicative phenomena but also the individuals’ goals and positioning within the organizational agenda and the connections between the two. Relevant to my study, a further and third potential analytic dimension captured by these terms was that associated more closely with the construct of strategy in contemporary organizational discourses: ‘a set of actions which are part of a complex (adaptive) system responding to contingencies and ever changing circumstances to gain revenue and remain competitive’ (Grant, 2002; Johnson, Scholes & Whittington, 2005; Pearce & Robinson, 2003) or, in brief, ‘finding the best route to desirable ends with available means’. (McKeown, 2011).

Linked to the issue of finding the most comprehensive term to refer to the phenomena I wanted to investigate was that of my objectives as a researcher who aimed at covering some of the ground constituting the divide between theory and practice. The crucial question for me was how CS could be conceptualised and therefore theorised in a way that could be translated into practical/learning tools for better managing communication in contemporary multicultural organizations. These aims took the form of three overall research objectives for this study, as discussed in the introductory chapter, namely: 1) Theoretical: to explore and problematise a set of theoretical approaches relevant to the

concepts of CS's use in Applied Linguistics in the context of multicultural organizations; 2) Methodological: to adopt a methodological and analytic framework, namely the multi-perspectival model approach, which would enable a 'laminated' perspective insofar as the different analytical view angles not only co-exist but intersect at various points through the lens of both participants' and researches' reflection upon data themselves; 3) Applied: to describe and account for the range and emergence of communication strategies that workers who speak English as a second language utilize on the workshop floor to the purpose of embedding both process of identification/description and CS' realization models in communication training materials.

As explained in chapter 1, it quickly became clear that the complexity of the setting under scrutiny would call for both a theoretical and methodological pluralistic multi-layered intertextual approach incorporating multiple viewpoints, analytic methods and data sources as illustrated in chapters 2 and 3. I further became aware of the need for a context-sensitive approach to the fieldwork (chapters 4), an inductive analysis of the large corpus of data collected (chapter 5) and a reiterative, ethnomethodological approach to the naturally occurring interactional data (chapters 6 and 7).

In line with the need to investigate the whole of the contextual factors involved in communication as well as the process through which these factors intersected in interactions, the iterative approach in particular, consisted of a nested triangulation of the data exemplifying the 'polyphony' of communicative events and associated discourses: 1) the participants' voice in conceptualizing CS in crucial sites and critical moments through their personal historical trajectories converging with or diverging from those of the organization (focal themes), 2) the emerging of CS themselves in interactions through analytical themes and 3) again the participants' sense-making accounts (retrospective commentaries) of 'already-occurred' critical communicative events. In this respect, the communicative events' polyphony is analysed through accounts as emblematic of the processes involved in nexuses of practice's formation and transformation and their strategic discursive enactments: what should/can be done, how it used to be done/it is being done, why, by whom, by whose request and according to which agenda. Within and along this reiterative process then is shown how communication strategies are used to reconcile apparently discrepant aspects of work systems, technologies and interactions, and in particular the roles of individuals within those systems. In this respect, the organizing and re-organizing purposes of communication strategies through enactments like resistance to, negotiation and compliance with the institutional worldviews and others' is also shown as a way of continuous adjustment towards achieving 'organization'.

8.2 Summary of key findings

As stated in the introductory chapter, the analysis of the data sets collected was guided by the following research questions and sub-questions (restated here for convenience):

- 1) What are communication strategies on the factory floor?
 - a) What is their role at the intersection between language and action?
 - b) How do they enact, resist, negotiate interaction orders?
 - c) What are the ‘intercultural elements’ at play in interactions and what role do CS play in regards?
- 2) How do CS emerge in verbal interactions and how are they conceptualized by participants through their accounts?
 - a) Do CS take on different functions in different events with different people?
 - b) How and to what extent are CS accounted for as a social practice?
 - c) How do participants conceptualize ‘intercultural communication’ in interactions?

As explained in chapter 1 and the previous section, at the onset of my research it became clear, both from the extant literature and my preliminary observations that a very wide range of communicative actions or features could qualify as communication strategies in one way or another. This would range from relatively straightforward examples where it appears that recognizable efforts are made to convey the content or message in objectively difficult circumstances (background noise or lack of knowledge of lexicon/topic of interactions) to less obvious cases of critical moments involving relational, face and power issues which called for specific discursive devices. However, besides the clear conclusion that communication strategies can be demonstrated to be ubiquitous aspects of the communication process especially in consideration of the peculiar context of occurrence object of my study, my focussing on the intersection of language and action also pointed to the further complexity and ‘fuzziness’ of these particular linguistic features: the potential for the need to employ linguistic strategies is always there, not only as a way of managing risks in difficult situations but also as a way to participate in or resist action.

Chapter 2 then was conceived with the idea of finding an overarching theoretical and methodological focus which captured the essence of strategic communication in organizations such as that of Communication as Organizing by incorporating in it the construct of language and action through notions such as ‘Sites of Engagement’ and Nexuses of Practice as well as interaction order and contextualization cues. Additionally, albeit its diverse focus and level of analytical approaches, the epistemological positions of much of the extant literature on workplace talk reviewed provided the basis for an ethnomethodological approach within which motivational relevancies were to guide the research process as an ‘ecologically’ viable process. In this way, the interplay between participants and researcher’s view as well as that of subjectivity-objectivity was illustrated as a joint sense-making process: ‘made up of local and more abstract senses of culture or

social organization' involving 'multiple ethnographic and/or organization settings and informants' (Cicourel, 1992, p. 305).

Within this view, chapter 3, against the backdrop of mainstream applied linguistics' studies of CS re-conceptualizes them as social practices and therefore embedded in contextual information and ethnographic knowledge at a number of different levels. The related literature reviewed here explores in detail how CS features have been identified and investigated across different strands of applied linguistics and how the differences and commonalities of perspectives are to be related to the type of relevance given to both the wider and more local context of the 'discursive fabric' in which they are enmeshed. In this respect, the perspectives adopted are linked to different discursive levels. At the level of the single 'local' interaction these might, for example, include pragmatic devices such as hedges, attenuators, boosters and intensifiers of various kinds which along with other discourse strategies such as avoidance, accommodation or supportive feedback and humour can serve to mitigate potential threats to face or even disruption to work activities. 'More macro-level' discursive resources include avoidance of confrontation of authority, negotiation of duties, different kinds of turn or sequence design, appeals to institutional procedures and processes and strategic management of different roles and identities. As we saw in chapter 5, even the possible existence of conflict-like communication can be used as a strategic resource in the management of interactions. The literature suggests, however, that these discursive resources are unavoidably inscribed in institutional 'discursive demands' and are therefore both generated by and generate intertextual and interdiscursive communicative events. Both interdiscursivity and intertextuality range from more apparent use of CS as in the case of semiotic realizations invoking institutional systems of procedures, policies and practices (chapter 5) to less obvious management of interactions across distinct planes of discourse – transactional, relational and interactional including the polyphonic complex recontextualizations of actions across time and space invoked to accomplish specific organizational agendas. In this respect, the notion of CS as embedded in inter-discourses or inter-texts reveals the extent of membership or lack thereof entitling to claim or not participation in or resistance to organizing (Mantere & Vaara, 2008). CS then emerge in the literature as immanent social practices which are employed by individual to the extent to which they choose to take part in or resist to forms of organizing depending on their individual aspirations or goals (Knights & Morgan, 1991).

Given the above, the methodological approach, dealt with in chapter 4, was conceived to capture this polyphonic aspect of organizational discourses and their strategic use within organizing. The awareness of organizations' dynamism and ever changing positioning of internal and external stakeholders translated into the need to capture CS not like 'some aberrant phenomenon' (Candlin 2006), but as 'what actually is the discursive case' and fundamentally to capture CS in this same dynamism. This approach called for a multiperspectival approach, as conceptualized by Chrichton (2010) And Candlin & Crichton (2013). The overarching framework of Linguistic Ethnography provided the backdrop of data generation from different view angles and planes, and intersecting at various points with the participants' voices in a reiterative way. Cicourel's ecological

validity, (1992, 2003, 2006, 2007) was then afforded through the staging of the research process in the following approaches: participant observations (whereby I was present and verbally interacted with actors during their work activities); initial interviews where focal themes were identified as revolving around sites of engagements and an understanding of emotional lives, history and relationships of the people who work within these settings emerged; selection and analysis of communicative events from the recording of naturally occurring interactions, where 'critical moments' are identified as perceived by the analyst's awareness of the above mentioned focal themes; retrospective interviews analysed through an ethnomethodological approach illustrating how participants accounted for and made sense of actions and discursive choices after listening to the audio-recordings of the selected communicative events.

Chapter 4 also shows how this holistic approach, aimed at integrating different methodological discourses and practices, enabled the identification of four macro-types of CS reflecting the strategic use of different planes of discourses or frames of time and space geared towards the formation and re-formation of nexuses and therefore of organized activities. These 'CS frames' also incorporated the positioning of participants towards the activities themselves whether or not in alignment with the organizational aims. Specifically, the CS types identified were: 1) concerting future work activities and actions to be undertaken; 2) managing actions concurrent to the interaction; 3) building and rebuilding relational ground across time and space; 4) invoking/dismissing established practices and policies towards organizational and interactional orders.

Chapter 5, 6 and 7 carry out the analysis as delineated in the methodology design by adopting a nested approach: the description, explanation and interpretation of language and action is enmeshed in a reflective approach to interactions-in-context by both researcher and participants which allows an analysis of the intersecting contexts involved in the use of CS.

More specifically, the findings in chapter 5 concern the ways in which nexuses of actions and practices are created and recreated discursively within the organizational system of work and technology. The focus of the analysis spans from the wider Australian socio-political context to the organizational practices and the 'localized' interactional discourses embedded in those practices observed through a linguistic ethnographic lens.

Communicative strategies' are identified at this intersection of contexts as both indicators of transformation and devices to achieve cohesiveness of intent in the face of contrasting worldviews and the co-existence of old and new technologies and practices.

In chapter 6, the analysis of initial interviews is carried out. Roles and positioning of individual participants within sites of engagement and their level of participation in the formation of nexuses of practices are explored. In particular, the focus is on participants' view of how their work practices are discursively enacted through communication in a second language and the extent to which they participate or seek to participate in nexuses of practices towards organizing. Three major themes emerged as the backdrop to this

focus: 1) pre and post- migration experiences of employment and language use; 2) ethnification discourses; 3) organizational transformation over time. In this respect, CS use emerge in relation to enforcement of/resistance to, adaptation to or negotiation and compliance with institutional organizing over time.

Chapter 7 set out to integrate the analysis of the three sets of data: initial interviews, natural interactions and retrospective interviews. The focus was on the intersection ‘in fieri’ of nexuses and CS and how they are discursively made sense of. Focal themes identified in the initial interviews, informed the selection of critical communicative events whereby the themes themselves were here considered as enacted in ‘live’ interactions: post-event interviews were the tools to analyse those interactions (or communicative events) and the way they were accounted for. The analysis here, reveals how, the discourse processes emerging in the participants’ account themselves help conceptualize CS as immanent, responsive to contingencies rather than a rational ‘product’ of consciousness from agents deliberately engaging in purposeful strategic activities. In this regard, the observed consistencies in actions and discursive sense-making of the same are explained not through deliberate goal-orientation but, instead, via a *modus operandi*: an internalized disposition to act in a way consistent with past actions and experiences: what Holt and Chia call ‘dwelling terms’ (Holt & Chia, 2006). Explaining strategy in dwelling terms then enables us to understand how it is that actions may be consistent and organizationally effective without (and even in spite of) the existence of purposeful strategic plans. On the other hand, CS are also explained in ‘transformative terms’ and therefore as aimed at obtaining a desired change whether in line with institutional guidelines or not since actors’ by accounting for practices, place themselves at the centre of nexuses, with their individual interests and goals: how and if they want to negotiate/resist or comply with an (interaction) order or otherwise, and the reasons for their choice.

The table below visually summarizes the key findings of nexus-formation/transformation and the relation it bears with strategy-emergence enacted in participants’ interactions and made sense of in their accounts (Chapters 5,6 and 7).

Table 8.1 - Nexuses transformation-participation (see tables 4.1 and 4.2, p. 102, 105, for participants' reference)

NEXUS AS STRATEGY	COMMUNICATIVE EVENT	TEMPORAL FRAME	HISTORY	SIK: HOW IT IS ACCOUNTED FOR
Paul, Stan, Jacob- 'Leaving the field': avoidance /lack/refusal of participation	Superordinate/worker exchange: disagreement or non-engagement, resistance, passive acceptance Floor Site-Manager/ high management (upstairs): lack of participation	Activities concurrent to verbal interactions on immediate action to be undertaken Concerting and responding to decisions on future activities to be undertaken	Historical highly centralized and hierarchical system Computerization era changed communication modes Middle/High Mgmt	Workers do not expect changes from engagement instead negative repercussions Necessity to adapt to new organizational/production systems
Jacob- 'Get all the guys together'- 'I stop the machine until they do it right': little participation in regards to input on tasks' procedures	Floor-managers give direct f2f collective instructions to workers based on contingency at hand especially concerning safety: mono-directional communication	Responding to contingencies to be actioned upon immediately	Workers are not generally expected to take initiatives unless prompted	Need to control that compliance procedures are followed
Jacob- 'Throw some pebbles and see how they come back'; participation is prompted	Site-Manager engages in exchanges with TR (skilled) personnel by giving instructions but also expecting feedback as to other possible ways to run activities	Instructions concern activities to be undertaken in the near future; references to activities commenced in the past and to be followed up are made	Over time Site-manager has adopted this with blue collar workers as a way to have different views on actions to be undertaken but no initiatives is expected	<u>Some expertise on the side of TR personnel is acknowledged as well a an intention to give some form of leeway/ownership over their tasks</u>

NEXUS AS STRATEGY	COMMUNICATIVE EVENT	TEMPORAL FRAME	HISTORY	SIK: HOW IT IS ACCOUNTED FOR
Jacob-‘Questions in reverse’: no real contribution is expected by manager	Site-Manager engages in long instructional exchanges with workers and ask questions to ascertain if they have been correctly interpreted and will be correctly undertaken	Instructions concern activities to be undertaken in the near future; references to activities commenced in the past and to be followed up are made	Site-Manager has adopted this interactional model as an effective one over the years	It has the function to have things done as required (top-down and to make sure they are done as required)
Jacob-‘I can give him a piece of paper’: no participation or engagement occurs from the workers	Site-Manager instructs a worker of Non-English-Speaking background (with limited language skills) on how to work on a tool/make a tool with the aid of a drawing	It refers to activities that have to be carried out at the time of the interaction or the immediate future.	This type of situations are described as practices of the past (but still current) whereby non-skilled or blue collar workers with limited language skills when more likely to be employed.	It entails f2f interactions and a mono-directional exchange whereby the recipient is expected to execute the instructions and carry out the task assigned. He is not expected to be actively involved in the exchange or to have limited involvement. Instructions and explanations have to be simple and brief.
Stan-‘give me the drawing’: no participation in decision making re way to proceed	Worker requests instructions via a drawing or sketch representing the tool to be made or to be repaired	It refers to activities that have to be carried out at the time of the interaction or in the immediate future.	This type of interactions are still on-going: the subordinate is does not want to take initiatives but prefers to perform what he is told without participating in the decision-making process.	The worker chooses not to engage in the decision-making process as he does not want to confront authority and face consequences. He also chooses to engage minimally in the interactions at hand as he thinks this would make the supervisor change his views. He rather prefers to perform the task assigned with no

<u>Jacob-‘It would be like baking a cake with two pans’: participation is expected as well as expertise contribution</u>	Exchanges between highly skilled employees and site-service manager or engineers on technical procedures, design and planning: bi-directional communication	It refers to activities that have to planned for the future and require collective decisionmaking	Parties are expected to participate due to their expertise and level of responsibility	questions asked. This practice has been on-going since the adoption of new technological equipment which have changed the system and procedures. It is still subject to changes as new personnel with ‘new skills’ are employed
<u>Albert-‘We walk to the job’: accomodation</u>	Skilled workers in the TR verbally interact with the ‘production people’ in case of break-down or modification of tool for production. The interactions take place in the production areas, ‘at the machine’. The exchanges are made as simple as possible (brief explanations, brief requests of clarification of the occurrence)	It refers to activities that have to be carried out at the time of the interaction, the immediate future but also to actions (repair or modification) to be planned for the future.	A practice started a long time ago but has become more frequent and expedite thanks to highly qualified personnel and newer technology whereby operations of this type can be done more effectively.	There been an accommodation processes from both sides (tool makers- workers) so that verbal exchange have become easier to carry out if aided by physical demonstration, ‘on site’. Production workers are expected to be able to explain what is wrong with the machine or tool and also give recommendations since they are ‘the ones who work on the machine 24/7’.
<u>Sam-‘We slowly plugged in all the loop-holes’: safety policing as imposing responsibility’ not participation</u>	Interactions between safety officer and floor personnel is mainly mono-directional. It involve instructions and reprimanding. Behaviour change is imposed via means of physical modification of the environment. Sharing of responsibility and disclaimer	Exchanges concern managing actions concurrent to speaking, actions to be planned and undertaken in the future and practices of the past.	OH&S policies have changed dramatically in the last few years with a shift towards the workers’ responsibility for their own safety and that of others sharing the environment. This led to the appointment, last year, of a	The changes are perceived a ‘formal’ rather than substantial with no ‘culture tranformation’ really taking place. The safety officer’s function is that of policing rather than engaging in people’s training. behaviour’s change and promoting contribution

	is ‘imposed’		<p>safety officer. New procedures and restructuring have followed such as committee meetings, to which, however, floor personnel are not participating.</p>	
Jaimie- ‘Everybody knows what’s going on or else it comes back to haunt us’	Exchanges among the six workers in the warehouse are on-going and there’s constant teamwork where information is constantly shared. Everybody is on the same page at all times. Exchanges of a more formal nature only occur when ‘something goes wrong’ and items are ‘lost’.	Communication regards concurrent and immediate future plans with reference to past actions when items are misplaced have to be retrieved through paperwork.	<p>The organization have gone from a ‘just-in-time’ system to a contingency basis one in the span of a few years with a more advanced level of technology. The warehouse is where ‘all comes together’ and mutual adjustment has been perfected over time.</p>	<p>There is no hierarchical form of interaction rather a mutual acknowledged inter-dependence and mutual trust among the team members.</p>
Banana time: ‘time off’, small talk and relational exchanges	Interactions pertain jocular exchanges, or issues not related to work. They usually occur among workers who are not in a direct hierarchical relation and/or ‘in good terms’. Turns are ‘casual’ as well as topics.	Conversations regard present, future and past events.	<p>It occurs during breaks or down-time (machine-breakdowns). Everyone knows ‘one’s place’.</p>	<p>It is time off whereby one is allowed to go beyond hierarchical boundaries at least among members who are not in a direct subordinate-superordinate role-relationship. It is not considered appropriate to become ‘too personal’. However jokes are carried out at the expenses of subordinates most of the time.</p>
Liam- ‘I was good in	Exchanges between the	Exchanges regard	The supervisor of the	The job is very hard and a great

<p><u>getting the boys to work and to do the job': in the meeting I just sit there and smile</u></p>	<p>forging division's supervisor and workers are constant and 'flat' no hierarchical authority is exercised. Instructions take place mainly via demonstration and exchange of information on work orders specifications. All workers are NESB</p>	<p>actions regarding forging and welding procedures and therefore actions concurrent to the exchanges themselves or pertaining operations in the near future.</p>	<p>division has been newly appointed: a new position has been created as the division has become bigger with new sub-divisions and safety issues to manage.</p>	<p>deal of hazard is involved. The workers are mainly Islanders and Indians with a high degree of solidarity. This allows an easier flow of communication than between workers and Australians. The supervisor does not get involved with decision making at all.</p>
<p><u>Anthony'I can get through with most of them now: between upstairs/downstairs, old and new'</u></p>	<p>The exchanges are between the 'more skilled' personnel of the TR, the workers across the floor and the management namely the tool makers, the production workers and the design engineers. All of interactions are conducted in terms of accommodation: the ones with the production workers require the use of a 'simplified' language given the lack of technical knowledge and language skills of the latter; and those with the engineers are of a highly technical nature whereby different views and decision levels have to be reconciled.</p>	<p>The discursive frames for interaction with production workers span across past actions (past use and functions of old tools) and actions to be undertaken in the future 'to make things work'; the interactions with the engineers regard the adjustment of design to operationalization to be undertaken as part of future planning.</p>	<p>The highly skilled floor personnel from overseas own the technical knowledge to make things function at a production level. They do own the discourses of both management and floor in so far as they have been employed because of their expertise and they belong to the globalized skilled workforce whereby technological knowledge supersedes hierarchical and cultural barriers.</p>	<p>Both nexuses (conversations with 'production people' and engineers from upstairs are newly formed. The technological advances have to be partially 'applied' to the old ways in order for the system to cohere. Whereas the technical knowledge of the floor (knowledge economy) impacts on the divide between downstairs and upstairs insofar as a 'flatter' way of communication has to be adopted.</p>

As the table illustrates, CS are embedded in nexuses of practice and come to be through a process of formation: ‘historical circumstances’ both at an individual and at an organizational level as well as ways in which they are discursively made sense of. In this sense the undelined entries above, indicate the nexuses ‘in transformation’ as they are enacted and especially as they are discursively accounted for. It is interesting to note that recent or imminent technological changes are reported in some cases as non impacting in changes in interactional practices or at least in changes of attitudes.

In sum, the overall analysis of the data and in particular the nested approach, by cutting across different planes of discourses, from the wider Australian socio-political context to the institutional and organizational practices observed in situ as well as the ‘localized’ interactional, discursive construction of those practices, attempted to reconceptualise the notion of context as one where borders and positions are blurred and continuously re-produced together with ‘interaction orders’ and how these intersect with individual/interpersonal meaning and institutionally ordered social relationships.

Communicative strategies emerge at this intersection as both transforming and cohesive of practices whereby constant reference to past, present and future practices themselves strives to create organization. Making sense of how ‘the job gets done’ is then ‘strategy work’ itself: by accounting for actions actors place themselves at the centre of actions where social practices whether contested or complied to are convened towards their view angle: hence the individual choice of how to act, what to say and why.

From the overall analysis, the use of CS in—context reveals that although the organization TPS has by and large adopted effective quality systems with a custom-tailored technology, these have not corresponded to changes towards the minimization, if not elimination of work demarcation and a rigid hierarchical set up. Transformations from a predominantly hierarchical structure to a predominantly decentralized participative structure have not taken place except for specific phases of work activities where more specialized knowledge and skills are required. This coexistence of old and new elements results in a general lack of clarity in terms of requirements/responsibilities, a low level of initiative and creativity expected of the employees and ultimately a general sceptical attitude towards the possibility of any remarkable changes in terms of participation required of the workers.

In this sense, given the coexistence of opposed and oftentimes conflictual and contradictory aspects within the organization, the thesis’ contribution to the theoretical field explicitly focuses on the need to put to use and operationalise a multi-perspectival model of data collection (i.e. collection from multiple view points and sources including the researcher’s perceptions) and data analysis (i.e. multiple theoretical lenses and application to the reading of communicative events within a historical and contextual system of working and talking). In this context, as seen in Section 8.2 below, a heuristic approach (in so far as each chapter, from both the review of the relevant literature to the analysis) highlights the underlying ‘multi-laminated nature’ of CS. In this way, addressing the different and ever changing (often contrasting) themes and interactional phenomena

entailed the use of diverse analytical angles depending on circumstances of participants and the researcher at all times during the investigation. The nature of the study, in sum, imposed that, rather than providing 'fixed' or even 'defined' methodological and theoretical pathways, for an investigator to decide 'what she was looking at 'now', she had to, on innumerable occasions, wait for future developments, which, in turn, may have well confirmed or altered what she had previously seen. Exemplary in this vein, is the initial collection of the various and rich ethnographic information, doings and talking which could only later be related to the sense and conception of a social structure (but only as it endlessly emerged and not in fixed terms). Similarly, the intended sense of an answer to a question was often later, through probings, the replies to other questions, and so on, prospectively revealed as an instance of a view belonging to a type of 'an individual' or social actor within a specific social context (but only in a continuously shifting relationship with each other and not a fixed one).

8.2 Implications, limitations and applications

As already mentioned in the previous sections the main theoretical and methodological implication of this study does also represent itself the foreground of the specific phenomena under scrutiny, namely the strategies used in workplace communication and, in particular on the workshop floor as geared to 'keep it together'. 'Strategy work' discursively enacted, is enmeshed in the peculiar characteristics of workplaces, their situated practices and their invariably 'covert' governing politics. Uncovering this 'work' calls for a holistic approach to research which strives to integrate, but at the same time, keep recognizably distinct, the participants and researcher's process of understanding of specific phenomena. In this sense this work has attempted to capture the last ten years of unprecedented changes in the way work is conducted in almost every industry sector. Financial deregulation, the removal of tariffs, restructuring, have all meant that world economies must become more globally competitive if they are to outlive the changes. These developments have also meant that the profound and fundamental changes of work practices, employment and recruitment patterns, as well as the need to develop new vocational skills have had to be 'caught in flight'. More so when the skill development needs of the workforce are specifically in skills domains that not only have not traditionally been perceived as central vocational concerns – such as language, literacy, communication and learning to learn skills – but also perceived as a threat to an established and centralized system still thought to be the only way to 'guarantee' ordered transitions and power struggles in check.

While any examples of discourse are inevitably linked to the settings in which they emerge, and these are also inseparable from the understandings and emotional lives and histories of the people who work within them, the task in researching workplaces is then all the more difficult because of this power struggles: the peculiarity of activity types and institutionally ordered relationships are both relational and 'instrumental'. The challenge

this poses is to explain this divide, or integration, as human and technology networks. Furthermore these networks are always ‘becoming’ in a continuous adjustment and re-adjustment among parts. For this reason, gathering data about the ethnographic setting and the participants’ lives, as thick and as ‘intertextual’ descriptions may be, is not enough unless the generation of data is inscribed in the perception of and characteristics attributed to both researcher and participants, and at the same time, to the broader and local social organizational conditions. This means that the analyst is to become by default an activist ‘a la Scollon’, while immersing oneself into the research process becomes herself participant and therefore accountable for not only reflecting in methodology but in unravelling her own and others’ subjectivities ‘as they happen’. As seen in the previous chapters and above, subjectivity is crucial in strategy work as strategy discourses emerge as individuals align, resist or negotiate their positions and extent of participation at any given nexus of activities where different participants position and reposition themselves incessantly, locally and organizationally. In this respect, given the sheer complexity of these phenomena and their interpenetration at different points of different contexts, the methodology adopted here, by taking as a starting point the multi-perspectival model, has attempted to encompass the research process in a heuristic and re-iterative pursuit rather than in a model-mode or consequential way: this entails the continuous adaptation, changes of positioning and directions at any given opening and closure of investigation venues according to the affordances the setting has to offer or otherwise. The pluralist, triangulated and iterative approach is proposed here as an example opposed to standardised applications of generalised theories and methods which are difficult to apply in particular setting and at best imply a reductive view of the investigated phenomena whereby the complexity of professional and work situations at large, or in Candlin & Maley’s terms, the critical moments in which ‘discursive (in)competence is at a premium’ (1997, p. xiv), are lost.

As a final consideration, it can be said that although the pluralist and multi-paradigm approach adopted in this thesis has certainly provided the kind of flexible and expansive explanatory framework for analysing actual workplace interactions this has inevitably increased the complexity of both data collection and analysis: from the difficulty encountered in accessing an adequate research site to the ‘bargaining’ required to negotiate my presence on the floor (the type of contact I was to have with participants) to the laborious selection of ‘exemplars’ of communicative event from the large corpus and the comparing and combining different approaches to the analysis itself. If this was in fact the only way in which a richer and more comprehensive analysis in the case of the present study could be yielded, it also bore a few limitations, namely the ones linked to, but not only, the scarce control on the recordings of the natural interactions at which, for the most part I was not present. These data sets then by being collected randomly by participants, required a lot of work to be placed in a viable analytical context which provided the necessary connections to the ‘whole’ as is the case for some episodes which occur over a period of time. However, as seen with some of the exemplar cases, the fragmented nature of the data did impose limitations on what could be analysed and to what level of detail

and from which angle of interpretation. For this reason, in specific cases, in particular, a more fine-grained analysis of interaction using a CA approach would have been required than time and scope of this work allowed.

As far as for the practical applications of the present work, as introduced in the introduction, chapter 2 and 3, these regard the educational and learning implications to take into account by both language practitioners and employers respectively and how these look at what is functional or desirable for communication to be successful at work. This issue is dealt with in the conclusive remarks below.

8.3 Concluding remarks: strategic skills beyond the skill-deficit view

As we have seen, there is much to learn by systematically observing how key players in the research site employ and make sense of the discourses they utilise in their interactions and the processes through which they make sense of their linguistic choices by invariably relating them to their ‘organized’ work practices. From this perspective (the players’) we also need to understand what is ‘functional’ about their way of managing what may appear dysfunctional to researchers or language practitioners alike.

Identifying processes or patterns of interaction (deemed successful or not) may prove pointless, if the purpose of modelling, rectifying and substituting them in view of what is to be ‘effective’ is pursued without considering what the costs or benefits might be of ‘fixing the problems’ and without regard to what motivates them, or to the structural and systemic influences and constraints of particular set ups.

The contextualization of learning to communicate in a second language is well established in research and in particular, the field of ESP is currently addressing the vast array of issues concerning the ‘tools of the trades’ in professional and workplace communication.

Additionally, ‘specific’ ESL workplace oriented courses such as the Workplace English Language and Literacy (WELL), communication modules attached to Trades Certificates or vocational courses in general, seem to address either general second language shortcomings or, as in the case of WELL, ad hoc requirements (mainly of a technical nature) identified by specific work industries and work settings (Industry Skill Council, 2010a, 2010b). More recently, new language and literacy training packages (General Certificate of Adult Education [CGEA]) and the Foundation Skills Training Package [FRSK]) are broadly addressing work practices and related language requirements in an integrated way by pointing at the cognitive processes required to accomplish specific tasks (Foundation Skills Implementation Guide 2013). However, in these instances the connection between language, language practices and work practices is not adequately addressed nor specific reference is made to context-specific genre-requirements and more importantly, the resources generated in this vein have a very strong, if not exclusive, focus

on productivity and therefore re-propose a deficit view of training provisions. A resource created by the ISC on core skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening) states:

Being able to communicate well improves quality output and business productivity and profitability. It will help workers to understand instructions, do tasks well, and provide feedback on workplace processes.

Raising a country's adult literacy by just 1% leads to a rise in productivity of 2.5% (Industry Skills Councils, 2010b p. 1)

Indeed, as seen in chapter 1, a series of recent reviews have started addressing quality, funding, qualification development and assessment and student satisfaction. Moreover, the policy documents of these reviews reflect concerns with productivity, labour force, inclusiveness and social inclusion as well as participation in workplace development opportunities (AI, 2007; Australian Government Department of Industry, 2013, 2014a, b). This new approach to inclusive training and development marks also an important beginning of transition from former provisions of language training which were rather aimed at targeting some form of 'linguistic gaps' rather than context-based, interactional and institutional practices requirements without targeting sufficiently the language-in-use and language-in-context links inherent in carrying out specific tasks peculiar to specific contexts with specific organizational constraints and affordances. This type of programs however, still tend not to focus on the process involved in the accomplishment of tasks and its relevance to individual and context histories but rather on the 'finished product' or, at best on discrete 'stages' of competencies.

It is also worth noting here that communication modules in vocational programs of trade certificates (designed, among others, for skilled personnel working on factory floors) although addressing at times very technical, industry-specific topics and content are not considered as professional training' and therefore are rather associated with language and literacy shortcomings. Training for professional communication as such then invariably targets management personnel and is tailored to related management requirements. On the other hand, migration visa requirements, in accordance to strong labour market demands, continue to address specific shortage skills and highly sought qualifications are those related to technical skills required at workshop levels. Surely this phenomenon would call for a shift in what is traditionally viewed as 'a professional qualification' in relation to the knowledge economy and therefore an opening to a more inclusive view of education in communication.

Interestingly, the bulk of literature concerning organizational discourses also takes management as the object of its investigation) (cfr the research on organizational change as inscribed in narratives told by 'change agents' (Vaara 2002) or those told by managerial members (Dunford & Jones 2000) whereas

ordinary organizational members remain unheard or less privileged than the dominant ones. Discursive organizational research enables polyphonic interpretations pointing to

meanings of change, but still many researchers using discourse analysis stick largely to management as their terrain of investigation.

This is again paralleled by a paucity of studies on ‘factory floor communication’ as pertaining ‘professional communication practices’. Similarly communication in a second language in the same context has been mainly, if not almost exclusively researched in terms of the ‘overly problematic’ situations posed by both cultural difference among interlocutors and/or more generally their linguistic deficits in L2. This conceptualization of ‘second language use on the factory floor’ as it is currently addressed by both training policies and the literature at large fails to ‘contextualize’ second language practices in two ways: 1) it does not consider them as entrenched in workplace practices and therefore as shaped by and shaping the organizational/institutional context within which they are enacted; and 2) it points to a view of language and communication more as an accessory or mechanical tool rather than an integrating and constituent part of people’s life within a specific setting (Tran, 2013; Vertovec, 1999).

This conceptualization of language is also ‘disengaged’ from discourses of organizational communication as relevant to members of the organization themselves such as ‘effective communication’ and its learning. Indeed within this presuppositions communication is seen as largely determined by the separate entities of existing social structures and/or individual cognitive structures (Crotty, 1998) which do not operate jointly and have no influence on each other (see the skills-based communicative competence models in vocational education and training certificates mentioned in chapter 1 and above).

If we adopt Sarangi and Roberts’s view of workplaces as: “Social institutions where resources are produced and regulated, problems are solved, identities are played out and professional knowledge is constituted” (Sarangi & Roberts, 1999: 1) it is clear that also notions of communication skills and ‘proficiency’ in a second language need reconceptualising in relation to the practices inscribed in and which inscribe the organization within the frame of a social/institutional setting and have to be intended as inclusive of not only technical knowledge but also ‘relational and institutional knowledge’.

In the changed scenario of today’s economy this becomes all the more crucial at a discourse level whereby interactional communicative requirements go hand in hand with organizational/institutional policies and practices.

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**Appendix 1(a): Flyer Requesting Participation – Original
Version by Researcher**



**REQUEST OF PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH
STUDY**

Workshop employees are wanted for a study regarding cross-cultural communication in the workplace. Potential participants will be preferably of non-English speaking background (NESB) but native speakers of English are also encouraged to participate.

If you agree to participate:

- you will take part in two informal interviews
- a researcher will do some observations of your spoken interactions during your normal activities at work (meetings, coffee and lunch breaks, etc.)
- a researcher will audio-record some of your spoken interactions at work

TOKEN OF APPRECIATION

As our thanks to you, you will be given \$50 at the beginning of the study and \$50 at the end.

For any enquiries please contact **Laura Ficorilli**:

Mob: 0438-854482

Email: laura.ficorilli@students.mq.edu.au

Appendix 1(b): Flyer Requesting Participation – Amended by HR



REQUEST OF PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH STUDY

Factory employees are wanted for a study regarding cross-cultural communication in the workplace. Potential participants will be preferably of non-English speaking background (NESB) but native speakers of English are also encouraged to participate.

If you agree to participate:

- you will take part in two informal interviews
- a researcher will do some observations of your spoken interactions during your normal activities at work (meetings, coffee and lunch breaks, etc.)
- a researcher will audio-record some of your spoken interactions at work

The study will commence on Monday 8 November. The researcher will be introduced to staff at 4pm in the AV room.

Please advise XXXXXXXX (HR Manager) by 3 November if you are interested in participating.

TOKEN OF APPRECIATION

As our thanks to you, you will be given \$50 at the beginning of the study and \$50 at the end.

For any enquiries please contact **Laura Ficorilli**:

Mob: 0438-854482

Email: laura.ficorilli@students.mq.edu.au

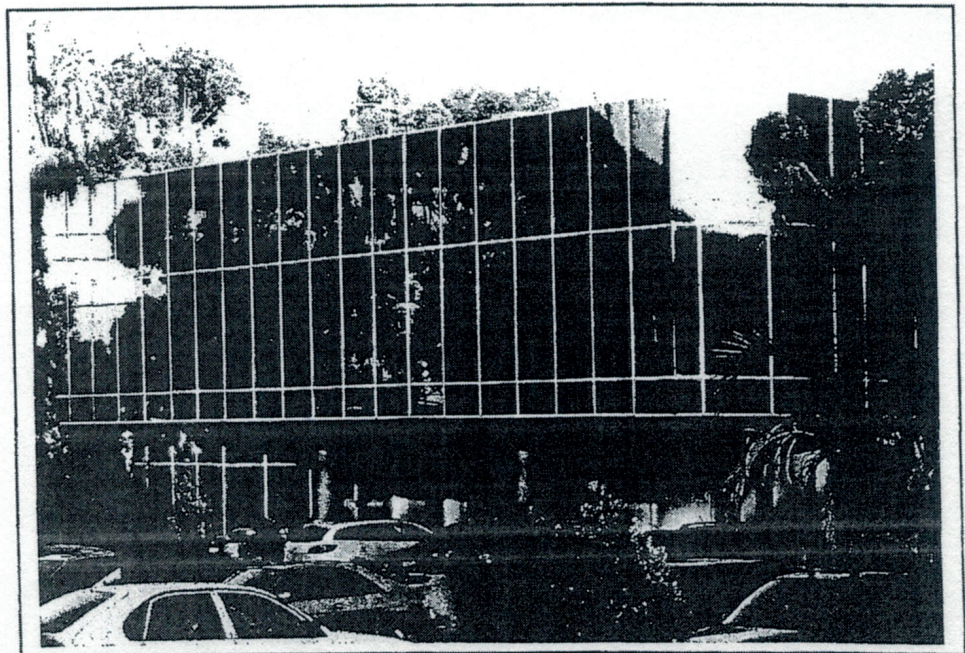
Appendix 2: Safety Induction Booklet

× × ×

(AUSTRALIA) PTY LIMITED

VISITORS

**INDUCTION
HANDOUT**



WELCOME

Welcome to X X X

(Australia) Pty. Ltd.

Please do not be afraid of questioning the 'status quo'. If you believe there is a better way to do something feel free to voice your ideas and opinions.

PURPOSE OF THE HANDOUT

This handout is produced to provide you with some of the required information to maintain your Health and Safety while visiting on site,

No handout can cover all your questions. Your site contact is always available to advise you and if necessary other members of staff are also available to assist and advise you, however this handout will endeavour to answer as many as possible.

Receipt of this handout and acceptance of the conditions contained herein must be acknowledged on the removable form at the rear of the handout.

GENERAL INFORMATION

ARRIVING & LEAVING THE PREMISES

Should you arrive on site please sign in the attendance register on entry at Reception and also sign out when leaving the premises.

This is in case of emergencies, all employees, contractors & visitors must be accounted for.

CODE OF CONDUCT

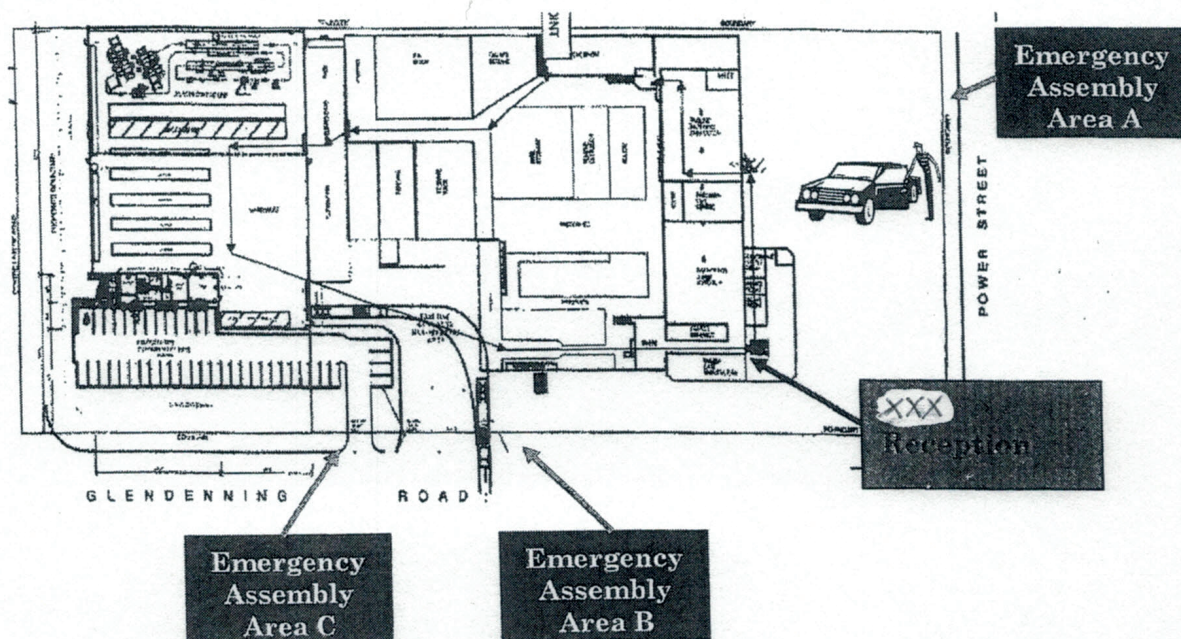
During your stay you will be required to behave in a suitable manner and follow the instructions provided for your safety and the safety of others

It is important you understand that you will be asked to comply or otherwise you may be requested to leave the site for the following breaches:

- poor behaviour/language
- disobeying company procedures/policies
- misconduct (incl bullying & harassment)
- dishonesty

SAFETY

EVACUATION PROCEDURE



On the sound of the emergency siren follow the employees and exit the building via the nearest emergency **EXIT**

Follow the employees to the nearest Emergency Assembly Areas (Glendenning Road or XXX Street) and notify the Area Warden at the assembly point on arrival.

CLOTHING AND PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

You will be expected to dress appropriately and comply with the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment requirements of the plant.

Eye Protection

Eye protection must be worn when:

- in the vicinity of operating machines, presses or air operated tools;
- eye protection signs are posted.



Foot Protection

No open toe/heel footwear to be worn in the factory. Enclosed footwear must be worn. Visitors predominantly walking in working areas within the factory must wear appropriate safety footwear.

High Visibility Clothing

High visibility clothing/vests must be worn when:

- Out side the office in the yard and remainder of the building in the vicinity of operating machines, presses or air operated tools and warehouse;
- where signs are posted

HEARING PROTECTION

Hearing protection must be worn where hearing signs are displayed.

At all times in the Turret Room and Drop Forge Section, when any designated noisy equipment (>85Db) is operating in all sections at Glendenning.

EQUIPMENT

Avoid placing any part of your body or loose clothing on or in any moving or rotating equipment

SMOKING POLICY



Australia Pty Ltd is a no smoking in the work environment. Smoking is only allowed in the designated area out side the building (reception). Please place cigarette butts in the appropriate receptacles provided.

GENERAL RULES

HOUSEKEEPING



The lunchroom and outdoors areas are provided as a clean, pleasant area for meal breaks. For Health Regulations food and drink are not permitted in the factory working area. In meal areas, all visitors are requested to leave it clean and tidy at all times. Place rubbish in bins provided.

CAR PARK



Parking is provided in several areas close to the factory. Please lock your car and ensure no valuables are visible. Although we try to maintain security, we cannot be held responsible for any damage or theft.

In General

Running is not permitted in any area of the building.

Remain in the "Green" marked walkways where possible.

Test Lab - when red light is flashing DO NOT ENTER. Testing is in progress.



Thank you for your assistance and please
enjoy your visit at X x x today.

Appendix 3: Initial Interview Questions

These are guidelines only. Other questions may be added or some omitted according to the participant's preparedness to add details and elaborate on questions asked.

Interview Information

name _____ date _____
place of interview _____ duration _____
consent form signed _____ agrees to further interviews _____

Personal Details

Name, country of origin, years in current job, education and training, previous jobs, other languages spoken

1. What work did you do in your home country?
2. What work have you done since arriving in Australia?
3. What is your role at PTS?
4. Did you learn English in your country? In what context? (English Centre, University)?
5. Can you describe how you have learned English over the years?
6. Have you studied English in Australia? In what context? (Language Centre, TAFE, AMEP or ELICOS)
7. Can you describe your experiences when looking for work in Australia? What was most difficult? How did you overcome these difficulties? Give any examples of difficulties you had and the cause of these.
8. What problems, if any, have you experienced when using English in the workplace?
9. Are you happy with the job you do now?
10. What type of communicative interactions do you engage in at work and with whom in particular?
11. Can you describe in detail the types of tasks you perform at work and the role that language plays during these activities?
12. What would you like to do in the future? What problems, if any, do you think you may have achieving these goals?
13. If you could change anything in the way jobs are carried out here what would you change?

Appendix 4: Transcriptions Conventions

INITIALS of participants/speakers:

L = Laura, the researcher

In excerpts where participants have the same name's initial, the second letter will be used to indicate the speakers e.g: 'Albert' and 'Anthony' will be indicated as 'Al' and 'An'.

I = capital 'I' – used when the speaker is unknown. It is I2, I3, etc. when there is more than one unknown speaker.

- 'Uhm' = back-channelling or acknowledgement
- /inc/ = incomprehensible word or phrase due to accent or overlap
- /inaudible/ = voice overlap or noise that prevents from hearing the word/phrase
- @ = brief laugh
- @@@ = longer laugh
- “-“ dash = follows truncated word or sentence, or false start, e.g.: “wh- wh- what’s your address?”; “ When we try- we’re reading a drawing...”
- “?” at the end of a question
- “!” at the end of an emphatic utterance (e.g.: strong emphasis as in calling out of names, cursing or other expression bearing an emotional load.
- (.) = imperceptible pause signalling end of a sentence
- (,) = shorter pause than (.)
- (...) = long pause
- [transcribed words] = voice overlap with speaker of previous or subsequent turn
- = part of an interaction or stretch of talk in an interview is missing but not relevant to the analysis. It is indicated at the beginning or at end of an excerpt
- Underlining = parts of interactions or interviews to which the analysis refers to at a conceptual level.
- Bold = parts of interactions or interviews to which the analysis refers to at a lexicon level. It is used to differentiate, (from the underlined parts), in the same excerpt, two or more points made by the analysis.

of New South Wales

Appendix 5: Ethics Approval

Ethics Secretariat <ethics.secretariat@mq.edu.au> (sent
by kay.bowes-tseng@mq.edu.au)

9/29/10

RE: HS Ethics Application – Final Approval (Ref No. 5201000910)

Dear Professor Piller,

Re: Pathways into the workplace: an analysis of ESL communication strategies at work

Thank you for your recent correspondence. Your response has addressed the issues raised by the Faculty of Human Sciences Human Research Ethics Sub-Committee and you may now commence your research.

The following personnel are authorised to conduct this research:

Professor Ingrid Piller – Chief Investigator/Supervisor

Ms Maria Laura Ficorilli – Co-Investigator

Please note the following standard requirements of approval:

1. The approval of this project is conditional upon your continuing compliance with the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)*.

2. Approval will be for a period of five (5) years subject to the provision of annual reports. Your first progress report is due on 1st September 2011.

If you complete the work earlier than you had planned you must submit a Final Report as soon as the work is completed. If the project has been discontinued or not commenced for any reason, you are also required to submit a Final Report for the project.

Progress reports and Final Reports are available at the following website:

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how_to_obtain_ethics_approval/human_research_ethics/forms

3. If the project has run for more than five (5) years you cannot renew approval for the project. You will need to complete and submit a Final Report and submit a new application for the project. (The five year limit on renewal of approvals allows the Sub-Committee to fully re-review research in an environment where legislation, guidelines and requirements are continually changing, for example, new child protection and privacy laws).

4. All amendments to the project must be reviewed and approved by the Sub-Committee before implementation. Please complete and submit a Request for Amendment Form available at the following website:

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how_to_obtain_ethics_approval/human_research_ethics/forms

5. Please notify the Sub-Committee immediately in the event of any adverse effects on participants or of any unforeseen events that affect the continued ethical acceptability of the project.

6. At all times you are responsible for the ethical conduct of your research in accordance with the guidelines established by the University. This information is available at the following websites:

<http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/>

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how_to_obtain_ethics_approval/human_research_ethics/policy

If you will be applying for or have applied for internal or external funding for the above project it is your responsibility to provide the Macquarie University's Research Grants Management Assistant with a copy of this email as soon as possible. Internal and External funding agencies will not be informed that you have final approval for your project and funds will not be released until the Research Grants Management Assistant has received a copy of this email.

If you need to provide a hard copy letter of Final Approval to an external organisation as evidence that you have Final Approval, please do not hesitate to contact the Ethics Secretariat at the address below.

Please retain a copy of this email as this is your official notification of final ethics approval.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Peter Roger
Chair
Faculty of Human Sciences Ethics Review Sub-Committee
Human Research Ethics Committee

Office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research)

Ethics Secretariat

Research Office
Level 3, Research HUB, Building C5C
Macquarie University
NSW 2109

Ph: [+61 2 9850 6848](tel:+61298506848)

Fax: [+61 2 9850 4465](tel:+61298504465)

For Enquiries: ethics.secretariat@mq.edu.au

Appendix 6: Email to HR Manager

Dear XXXXX,

My name is Maria Laura Ficorilli (Laura in short), I am a PhD candidate at Macquarie University. Attached is my profile for your perusal. I believe Mr XXXXX told you about me. My research interests focus on cross-cultural communication and English communication strategies used at work by employees who speak English as a second or additional language. One of the aims of my study is to explore the possibility of improving the fit between communication modules of Training Packages and real workplace needs. Currently, there is a lot of emphasis at a federal level, on the revision of vocational courses in terms of communication skills.

I am seeking to make contact with skilled and semi-skilled employees of non-English speaking background in order to carry out interviews and audio-recording of spoken interactions in context.

I would be very grateful if I could include your organization in my study and, at this stage, I would like to meet with you informally in this regard.

I am aware of the time constraints and commitments of organizations' work schedules so any time you have available would be fine with me. Thanks in advance for your consideration.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully,

Laura Ficorilli

Appendix 7: Individual Consent form



Participant Information and Consent Form

Title of Project: Communication strategies as tools: acquisition and use on the job

You are invited to participate in a study on the ways in which speakers of English as a second language use English at work. The purpose of the study is to explore how second language speakers manage communication in a multilingual workplace.

The study is funded by a **Macquarie University Research Excellence Scholarship**. It is conducted by Laura Ficorilli in fulfilment of a PhD in linguistics and supervised by Prof Ingrid Piller, of the **Department of Linguistics, Faculty of Human Sciences – Macquarie University**.

Contact details for further information are as follows:

Laura Ficorilli (researcher)

Prof Ingrid Piller (supervisor)

Ph: (02) 80616039

Ph:

M: 0438854482

E: laura.ficorilli@students.mq.edu.au

E:

What is required of you if you agree to participate:

- **The researcher will interview you twice at a time convenient to you.**
- **Observe your spoken interactions in the workplace during your normal activities (meetings, training, coffee and lunch breaks).**
- **Audio-record some of your spoken interactions at work.**

First interview

At the beginning of the study the researcher will interview you either at your workplace or in a public place of your choice. The interview will be audio-recorded. The interview will take a maximum of one hour and a half. It will resemble an informal chat and you can answer freely to the questions as it is NOT a test. This interview will concern general information on your English language training before and after arriving in Australia, your experiences in using a second language at work, the type of interactions/communication you engage in English and/or in other languages at work and outside.

Appendix 7: Individual Consent form



Obs
erv

ations

The researcher will observe you as you interact with your co-workers during routine activities in your workplace. She will take notes on the type of spoken interactions you engage in during while at work and she may ask you to explain technical words used for particular tasks. Some parts of this observation phase may also be audio-recorded with your approval. Observations will be carried out of other co-workers so this phase may require a few hours a day for a number of days depending on your availability, the availability of your co-workers and that of your workplace.

Audio-recording of spoken interactions

The researcher will ask you to wear a lapel microphone during your work activities so you will be free to move around while being recorded. Alternatively, if you interact with or participate in a group activity (such as a meeting) a recorder will be used. No recordings will take place without your prior permission.

Second interview

The second interview will take place at the end of the study. You will listen to a few selected parts of audio-recording of your spoken interactions and the researcher will ask you questions concerning the language you used in these interactions. The questions may concern the use of technical words, clarifications of unclear speech (due to noise), and specific strategies used to communicate with your co-workers.

Privacy and confidentiality

If you agree to participate you can decide when and where interviews and audio-recordings will take place. You can also decide, at a later date, if you do not want a particular spoken interaction to form part of the data. Additionally you can withdraw from further participation at any time if you wish to do so without having to give any reason and without any consequence.

Any information or personal details gathered in the course of the study are confidential. This is ensured by code names being used on all data records, analysis and publications. No individual will be identified or identifiable in any publication or report of the findings.

Digital audio recorded data will be downloaded as electronic files and stored on a password protected computer by the researcher. Only the researcher and supervisor will have access to the data.

You can request a review of any data by contacting the researcher. If you wish to obtain a copy of the results or would like to ask any questions regarding the study please contact the researcher.

Appendix 7: Individual Consent form



Token of appreciation

If you agree to participate, as our thank to you, you will be given \$50 at the beginning of the project and \$50 at the end of your participation.

I(block letters) have read and understand the information above. Any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this research, knowing that I can withdraw from further participation in the research at any time without consequence. I am aware that de-identified data may be made available for use by other researchers in the future. I have been given a copy of this form to keep.

Participant's Name: (block letters) _____ Date: _____

Participant's Signature: _____

Investigator's Name (block letters): _____

Investigator's Signature: _____ Date: _____

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Ethics Review Committee (Human Research). If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Ethics Review Committee through the Research Ethics Officer (telephone [02] 9850 7854, fax [02] 9850 8799, email: ethics@mq.edu.au). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.

Appendix 8: Company's Consent form



Information and Consent Form for Participating Company

Title of Project: Communication strategies as tools: acquisition and use on the job

Your consent is being sought to use your company as a site for research in a study regarding the use of English as a second language in a multilingual workplace. The purpose of the study is to explore how speakers of English as a second language manage communication at work.

The study is funded by a **Macquarie University Research Excellence Scholarship**. It is conducted by **Laura Ficorilli** in fulfilment of a PhD in Linguistics and supervised by **Prof Ingrid Piller**, of the **Department of Linguistics, Faculty of Human Sciences – Macquarie University**.

Contact details for further information are as follows:

Laura Ficorilli (researcher) Prof Ingrid Piller (supervisor)

Ph: (02)80616039 /0438854482 Ph:

E: laura.ficorilli@students.mq.edu.au E:

During the course of the research, the researcher will be interviewing speakers of English as a second language, observing and audio recording spoken interactions in the workplace.

Participants will be interviewed twice about their language learning before and after arriving in Australia and their experiences in using English at work. The interviews do not have to take place within working hours but at a time convenient to participants.

Observation will entail noting participants' tasks and the spoken interactions in the course of their working day: for example, their participation in meetings, informal exchanges, small talk.

The researcher will be interested in audio-recording participants' talk in the situations described above (i.e., work as well as other types of talk, small talk or greetings). Both observations and audio-recording may require a number of sessions to be established.

Appendix 8: Company's Consent form



The relevant/assigned manager and the participants will be informed at all times before any recording is carried out. Any information or personal details gathered in the course of the study are confidential. This is ensured by code names being used on all data records, analysis and publications. No individual will be identified or identifiable in any publication of the results. Digital audio recorded data will be downloaded as electronic files and stored on a password protected computer. The researcher's home computer is also password-protected. Only the researcher and the supervisor will have access to the data.

Even with company approval all participants will be required to give written consent before being recorded and their decision to participate or not is entirely a personal matter. All participants may decline to continue even after signing the consent form by contacting the researcher and requesting to withdraw from the study.

You can request a review of any quotes that will be attributed to you and your staff by contacting the researcher or supervisor. A written abbreviated copy of the thesis will be made available and you can request a copy when the study is completed.

If you wish to obtain a copy of the results or would like to ask any questions regarding the study please contact the researcher.

I(block letters) have read and have had explained to me and understand the information above. Any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent to the researcher using data the participants employed by my company has contributed to in this research, knowing that I can withdraw my consent at any time without consequence. I am aware that de-identified data may be made available for use by other researchers in the future. I have been given a copy of this form to keep.

Company representative's name (block letters): _____ Date: _____

Company representative's signature: _____

Investigator's Name: _____ Date: _____

Investigator's Signature: _____

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Ethics Review Committee (Human Research). If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Ethics Review Committee through the Research Ethics Officer (telephone [02] 9850 7854, fax [02] 9850 8799, email: ethics@mq.edu.au). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.