Leading Across Language Barriers:

Managing Language-induced Emotions in Multinational Teams

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ABSTRACT

Based on 90 semi-structured interviews in 15 multinational teams (MNTs), this study shows which negative emotions language barriers can provoke among MNT members and investigates how MNT leaders can successfully mitigate these detrimental effects. Multilingual teams constitute a leadership context of paramount importance in today's organizations, which prior leadership research has neglected. Our study contributes to the literature on MNT leaders' emotion regulation strategies by investigating the specific challenges they face in this setting. We advance research on leadership and position power in teams by exploring successful leadership strategies geared towards addressing language-induced emotions and by demonstrating the positive outcomes of MNT leaders leveraging their power in this context. Our study also contributes to the fast growing research stream on language barriers in multinational corporations by introducing the interplay of language-induced emotions and leadership to this area. Furthermore, it contributes to emotion-sensitive organizational studies by specifying previously established emotion management models particularly for multilingual environments. On this basis, we draw conclusions for the development of future MNT leaders.

Keywords: multinational team leadership – language barrier – emotion management – multinational corporation

INTRODUCTION: MOTIVATION OF THE STUDY

Given that most multinational corporations (MNCs) are also multilingual (Harzing, Köster, & Magner, 2011; Luo & Shenkar, 2006), the management of language barriers constitutes a key leadership challenge in these companies (Zander, Mockaitis, & Butler, 2012). Despite the fact that languages are "the basic means of communication in organizations [and] the basis for knowledge creation" (Vaara, Piekkari, Tienari, & Säntti, 2005: 595), language barriers have surprisingly long been neglected both by researchers and practitioners (Harzing et al., 2011; Harzing & Pudelko, 2013). Only recently have management scholars started to explore the multifaceted role of language in MNCs (Brannen, Piekkari, & Tietze, 2014). A particularly active sub-stream within this emerging area is concerned with the impact of language barriers on multinational teams (MNTs). Given that teamwork "has become the contemporary 'modus operandi'" in MNCs (Zander & Butler, 2010: 258) and considering that MNTs depend on the interaction between members speaking different mother tongues, the effective management of language barriers in these contexts is very important. The task of bridging linguistic boundaries in MNTs is mostly assigned to MNT leaders (Butler, Zander, Mockaitis, & Sutton, 2012; Zander et al., 2012), but there is a paucity of specific guidelines on how they can address the challenges of language barriers.

The negative emotions language barriers can trigger among MNT members present a particularly acute leadership challenge. Recent studies indicated that language-induced emotions can erode collaborative efforts and lead to losses in productivity and performance of MNTs (Hinds, Neeley, & Cramton, 2014) or even on the MNC level (Harzing & Feely, 2008; Neeley, Hinds, & Cramton, 2012). Whereas management studies have only recently taken a "linguistic turn" (Tietze, 2008: 2), the "affective revolution" in organizational behavior research (Gooty, Connelly, Griffith, & Gupta, 2010: 979; Gooty, Gavin, & Ashkanasy, 2009: 833), which turned scholars' attention to the impact of employees' emotions on organizational outcomes, already started in the late 1990s. Ever since, the investigation of emotions has taken center stage in organizational behavior (Gooty et al., 2009). Positive emotions are seen as "the wellspring of human motivation" (Salovey, Detweiler-Bedell, Detweiler-Bedell, & Mayer, 2008: 540), but recent studies particularly highlighted the disruptive potential of negative emotions and the need to understand and control them (e.g. Kulik, Cregan, Metz, & Brown, 2009; Little, Kluemper, Nelson, & Gooty, 2012; Mooney, Holahan, & Amason, 2007; von Glinow, Shapiro, & Brett,

2004). Consequently, the management of employees' emotions emerged as an important component of effective leadership (Kaplan, Cortina, Ruark, LaPort, & Nicolaides, 2014; Thiel, Connelly, & Griffith, 2012).

The pioneering studies on the emotional outcomes of language barriers mainly focused on analyzing the problem of language-induced emotions in multinational work environments, but did not provide a detailed account of possible solutions. Consequently, we still know very little about how MNT leaders can manage emotions triggered by language barriers. To address this gap, we conducted an inductive study investigating successful leadership measures to mitigate language-induced negative emotions in MNCs.

In our qualitative investigation, we conducted semi-structured interviews with 15 leaders and 67 members of 15 multinational and multilingual teams as well as 8 superordinate managers in three MNCs, allowing us to triangulate different perspectives on language-induced negative emotions and their management through MNT leaders. Our article will first reveal that MNT members' various emotional reactions to language barriers fall into two discrete categories: self-directed anxiety and other-directed resentment. Second, and more importantly, we will systematically investigate strategies to mitigate the emotional impact of language barriers. Consequently, the main thrust of this article lies in exploring the measures MNT leaders have at their disposal to manage their subordinates' negative language-induced emotions. As we will show, these measures form part of three major strategies: reducing the impact of language barriers, redirecting MNT members' attention away from language barriers, and reducing the negative appraisal of language barriers. These measures benefit the MNT through improved sensemaking, a more productive team climate and an increased willingness of MNT members to follow their leader.

Our study is the first to build on, contribute to and systematically connect research on leadership, language barriers and emotions in MNCs. As such, it contributes to research on MNT leaders' emotion regulation strategies by investigating the specific challenges MNT leaders face in multilingual settings, a leadership context which has despite its relevance been surprisingly neglected by prior studies. We advance leadership research with a fine-grained analysis of MNT leaders' cross-lingual bridge-making activities and provide an extension of leadership skills with cross-lingual competencies. We extend the growing literature on position power in teams by demonstrating the positive outcomes of MNT leaders leveraging their power through active

emotion management. Our study also contributes to the investigation of language barriers in international management by highlighting the complexity of language effects and confirming that the instrumental view of language as an easily managed, neutral code has become obsolete. Furthermore, it contributes to emotion-sensitive organizational studies by contextualizing previously established emotion management models specifically for multilingual environments. In terms of practical recommendations, our study highlights the importance of MNT leaders' emotional awareness in multilingual settings, shows that emotions need to be actively managed rather than suppressed and draws important conclusions for global leadership development.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Our study is based on leadership research in multicultural and multilingual settings, the investigation of language barriers in MNCs and research on emotions in organizations. Below we will review selected findings and models from previous studies in these areas, which indicate connections between these three streams and therefore provide core references for our study.

MNT leaders' tasks and skills

Leadership can be defined as "a process of social influence" (Parry, 1999: 134) or "the ability of an individual to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute toward the effectiveness and success of the organizations of which they are members" (House & Javidan, 2004: 15). Our study specifically focuses on formally assigned MNT leaders as the "individuals who are primarily responsible for defining team goals and for developing and structuring the team to accomplish these missions" (Zaccaro, Rittman, & Marks, 2001: 452), thus displaying leadership. This focus on vertical leadership (Zander & Butler, 2010) clearly presupposes hierarchical teams with a defined leadership role and an appointed leader. Most organizational teams have such structures. Along with Zaccaro et al. (2001), we believe that even in experienced teams in which other members may take over some leadership functions, designated leaders still fulfill boundary spanning functions.

The challenges leaders face in multinational settings are a key item on the agenda of leadership research, as leaders with global competencies and perspectives are an indispensable prerequisite for the success of MNCs (Brewster & Suutari, 2005). Not only top managers need to address the challenges of a highly diverse workforce (Levy, Beechler, Taylor, & Boyacigiller,

2007) by spanning cultural and linguistic boundaries, creating links and establishing communication between multiple groups in their organizations (Mendenhall, Reiche, Bird, & Osland, 2012; Zander et al., 2012). Leaders in the middle management, particularly the leaders of multinational and multilingual teams, are also expected to motivate and inspire, to blend diverse collections of individuals into effective teams and to leverage the creative potential of team diversity (Butler et al., 2012; Zander & Butler, 2010; Zander et al., 2012).

Whereas specific research on the competencies of MNT leaders is still quite limited, pioneering studies in the field (Zander & Butler, 2010; Zander et al., 2012) borrow from the broader stream of literature investigating global leadership skills at the top management level. This research area centers on the concept of a leader's "global mindset", which is often defined in terms of cross-cultural skills and intercultural competencies (for reviews see e.g. Bird, Mendenhall, Stevens, & Oddou, 2010; Levy et al., 2007; Osland, 2008). The majority of studies in this context focus on leaders' ability to manage differences in subordinates' cultural values as outlined by the dominant dimensional models of culture (e.g. Hofstede, 2001). We argue that this focus on cross-cultural competencies has diverted scholarly attention away from the specific challenges of other diversity types global leaders need to deal with. Considering the multilingual reality of today's MNCs (Luo & Shenkar, 2006), employees' linguistic diversity and the resulting language barriers in organizational communication also constitute very important leadership challenges, which have not yet been investigated in all their complexity. So far, scholars have only recognized leaders' own language skills as a part of their global mindset (Gupta & Govindarajan, 2002; Story, Barbuto, Luthans, & Bovaird, 2014). However, they surprisingly neglected the fact that MNT leaders also need to facilitate communication across language barriers among their subordinates.

Considering the recent proliferation of studies on the disruptive impact of language barriers on different team processes (see e.g. Hinds et al., 2014; Tenzer, Pudelko, & Harzing, 2014), it is particularly crucial that MNT leaders develop skills to help their teams build mutual understanding across such barriers (Zander et al., 2012). Our study advances the emerging research on MNT leadership by investigating specific strategies, which help MNT leaders to perform this challenging task.

The impact of language barriers on MNT members' emotions

Both management scholars and practitioners have long neglected the complex influence of language on MNCs, because many believed that the use of English as a worldwide common business language would effectively erase language barriers (Tietze & Dick, 2013; Youssef & Luthans, 2012). Only recently has management research dedicated increasing attention to the complex role of language in MNCs. Among other effects, studies published within the past years found language barriers to create power-authority distortions (Neeley, 2013), impede knowledge sharing (Klitmøller & Lauring, 2013) and the formation of trust (Tenzer et al., 2014) in multinational work environments. Language was shown to have particularly disruptive effects on MNTs, which rely on the interaction of members from different national backgrounds (Earley & Gibson, 2002) and therefore depend on the efficiency of communication between colleagues speaking different mother tongues.

In the context of multinational teamwork, team members' emotional reactions to linguistic diversity are particularly important. Previous studies linking language barriers with emotions, defined as "reaction[s] to an event" and the experiences related to these reactions (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996: 18), did so in two different ways: First, language barriers have been described to substantially aggravate already existing friction in a multilingual workforce. Considering that emotions are already very difficult to communicate, interpret and address in a common native language, this is even more so the case in a foreign language (Henderson, 2005). This makes it particularly difficult to talk things through and overcome problems effectively (von Glinow et al., 2004). Second, and more importantly, language barriers constitute a source of negative emotions in themselves. Neeley et al. (2012) found that language barriers can lead to emotional conflict between native and non-native speakers of an MNC's working language, as the latter might experience apprehension, anxiety, embarrassment, stress, shame and frustration; feel restricted in their communication skills and reduced in their professional standing; and fear negative performance appraisals or job loss (also see Harzing & Feely, 2008). Consequently, non-native speakers of the working language tend to perceive native speakers as arrogant and resent or mistrust them. They cope with these negative feelings by avoiding situations that require use of the working language and, if having to speak the working language, by frequently switching back into their mother tongue (Hinds et al., 2014; Neeley et al., 2012). As a result, native speakers of English often feel excluded, devalued, disrespected, and isolated and might

even leave meetings in protest (Neeley et al., 2012). This conflict further impedes effective communication, leads to divisive language-based subgrouping within multilingual teams (Hinds et al., 2014) and can produce, in the worst case, a vicious cycle of negative emotions (Neeley et al., 2012). Consequently, language-induced negative emotions can introduce inefficiencies, impede collaborative efforts and lead to losses in productivity and performance (Neeley et al., 2012). On a more macro level, with respect to HQ-subsidiary communication, these dynamics can even hamper strategic decision making on a global scale, impeding effective global integration and control (Harzing & Feely, 2008).

These few, above referred to studies made important contributions in bringing the emotional impact of language barriers to the fore. The present study builds on them by examining and systematizing the various negative language-induced emotions experienced by the members of multinational and multilingual teams. More importantly, however, we take the logical next step and focus on the search for solutions to these problematic emotional reactions. Hinds et al. (2014) recently explored how the members of global virtual teams cope with their language-induced emotions and found that they frequently use strategies, which impair team interactions and efficiency. We argue that MNT leaders are in a much better position than individual team members to implement truly successful emotion regulation strategies. Therefore, our study will develop leadership strategies geared towards mitigating MNT members' negative language-induced emotions.

Emotion management through leaders

Emotion management, also called emotion regulation in the psychological literature, is defined as either managing the antecedents to one's own or others' emotions or manipulating own or others' emotional responses (Little et al., 2012: 407). Whereas psychological research mainly focuses on self-management or self-regulation (for an overview see Gross, 2007), an increasing number of studies has recently been dedicated to the management or regulation of others' emotions (e.g. Niven, Totterdell, & Holman, 2009; Williams, 2007). Since employees in lower ranks of an organization usually have little scope to influence their colleagues' emotions, most of these studies focus on higher-ranking managers addressing their subordinates' emotions (e.g. McColl-Kennedy & Anderson, 2002; Ozcelik, Langton, & Aldrich, 2008). A number of

studies found that managing subordinates' emotions constitutes an important component of effective leadership (Ayoko & Konrad, 2012; Kaplan et al., 2014; Thiel et al., 2012).

Following the work of Gross (1998), a dominant model of emotion management has emerged, which distinguishes four central emotion management strategies. Different authors use a slightly varied terminology, but agree on the following typology: The first and most proactive strategy to counteract negative emotions lies in *altering the situation* (Williams, 2007) of the affected person by modifying or removing some or all of its emotion provoking elements (Gross & Thompson, 2007; Little et al., 2012: 409). The second strategy aims at *altering attention* by distracting attention away from the emotion-provoking situation (Gross & Thompson, 2007; Williams, 2007). Leaders can achieve this by redirecting subordinates' attention away from those elements of a situation that are perceived as harmful while focusing on its non-threatening aspects (Gross & Thompson, 2007; Little et al., 2012; Niven et al., 2009). A third possible strategy aims at *altering the cognitive meaning of the situation* causing the negative emotional responses. To do this, leaders may encourage employees to reinterpret the situation as being less harmful (Little et al., 2012; Niven et al., 2009; Thiel et al., 2012) or help them to positively reappraise their capacity to manage the demands of the situation (Gross & Thompson, 2007). A fourth and rather superficial strategy lies in *suppressing subordinates' emotional responses* by interrupting current emotional outbreaks, for example by encouraging the affected person to calm down or breathe deeply (Little et al., 2012; Williams, 2007).

The first three of these strategies are antecedent-focused, as they aim to remedy the problem by addressing the causes (antecedents) of emotions. Leaders typically employ these strategies before fully developed emotional responses can arise in a given situation. The fourth strategy is response-focused in that it merely aims to interrupt emotional outbreaks (responses). This strategy occurs after emotional responses have already arisen (Gross & Thompson, 2007; Loewenstein, 2007).

To date empirical research specifically on MNT leaders managing emotions in *diverse* groups is still very limited (Ayoko & Konrad, 2012). The few studies addressing this topic for multinational settings focus exclusively on the emotional challenges of cross-*cultural* cooperation and investigate cultural differences in the display of emotions (Mesquita & Albert, 2007) or culture-specific expectations towards leaders (House et al., 2004). In contrast, scholars have so far neglected the specific challenges of emotion management in multi*lingual* contexts.

Even though cultural barriers and language barriers are closely intertwined (Klitmøller & Lauring, 2013), they are still separate concepts (Harzing & Pudelko, 2014). Consequently, language barriers are likely to entail unique emotional challenges (Hinds et al., 2014; Neeley et al., 2012), which will transcend the impact of cultural value differences and, hence, require specifically tailored leadership measures to manage and regulate them.

We will develop our contribution to this field in two steps. First, we will investigate the language-induced emotional challenges on the basis of the following research question: *"Which negative emotional reactions do language barriers trigger among MNT members?"* In response to this question, our study will provide a classification of MNT members' negative emotional reactions to language barriers. In a second step, we will search for suitable leadership measures to manage these disruptive emotions. Our second and main research question therefore is: *"How can MNT leaders mitigate negative language-induced emotions among their subordinates?"* In responding to this question, we will develop specific guidelines for MNT leaders to follow.

METHOD

Research design

MNTs provide a particularly information-rich context for the specific purpose of our study. First, they typically have a higher degree of linguistic diversity compared to regular hierarchies. Second, teams constitute "cauldrons of bubbling emotions" (Goleman, 1998: 101), as their work involves "social mechanisms of sharing, accountability and managing relationships, all of which can be inherently and intensely emotional" (Stewart, Williams, Castro, & Reus, 2011: 2). Third, MNT leaders usually have a lower degree of formal authority over team members compared to superiors in traditional hierarchies (Pinto, 2000). Hence, in order to be accepted as leaders, MNT leaders in particular need to show good leadership. Finally, work teams "are the basic units in business organizations around the world, and their activities are ubiquitous within organizations" (Chen & Lin, 2013: 675). Particularly MNTs are considered at "the 'heart' of globalization" (Zander et al., 2012: 592), so research in this context is of highest theoretical and practical relevance.

Given the lack of theory development on the regulation of language-induced emotions in teamwork, we considered a qualitative, exploratory and inductive approach the most appropriate for our purpose. This research design helps us to address "how" questions such as ours (Pratt,

2009), to investigate complex subject areas (Suddaby, 2006) and to capture the mechanisms under study in the form of robust mid-range theory (Eisenhardt, 1989). Specifically for research on leadership and emotions, Gooty et al. (2010) call for more qualitative studies conducted in naturalistic settings.

Following Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007), we grounded our study in prior research, specifically theories on language effects in international business and on emotion management as a leadership challenge. Although the emotion management strategies outlined in the literature provided some focus to our data collection (Eisenhardt, 1989), we did not have any preconceived notions about how MNT leaders might enact such strategies to address the particular emotional challenges of multilingual settings. Our study's contribution lies in the specific investigation of language effects on MNT members' emotions and the related leadership strategies. We therefore follow the dominant methodological paradigm of the fast growing research stream on language in MNCs, which is seeking in-depth information about employees' subjective perceptions based on semi-structured interviews (Pudelko, Tenzer, & Harzing, 2015).

Research setting

To focus our analysis on the phenomena under study, we intended to control for industry and home country effects by conducting all our investigations in one industry and one country. More specifically, we considered German automotive firms to be particularly well suited for our investigation. Automotive companies in general have traditionally been associated with cutting-edge management practice (Barnes & Morris, 2008) due to their very complex products, their intense competition and their high degree of globalization. Due to the particular success of German firms in this sector, MNTs in German car companies seem to be particularly promising research objects. This research setting also helped to interpret interviewees' accounts in a way that preserved the authenticity of their perspectives (Langley, 1999), since both authors have a profound understanding of the German business culture and speak German as their mother tongue. For inductive investigations like ours, the researchers' ability to understand the research setting deeply can be an important advantage in the interpretation of rich data (Morgan & Smircich, 1980). We collected our data in three out of the seven major players in the German automotive industry (pseudonyms MOTORCORP, AUTOCORP and CARCORP). Two of the remaining German automakers were not included, as they form part of the same corporate group

as one of the companies already represented in our dataset. We did not consider the remaining two corporations, as they belong to American automotive groups.

Our dataset consists of in-depth investigations in 15 MNTs, five in each of the three selected organizations.[1] We included several teams in each firm to look beyond team idiosyncrasies and compared MNTs employed by different corporations to capture potential influences of the organizational context on language use, employees' emotions and leadership. Sampling multiple teams across organizational contexts strengthens our research design (Mathieu, Maynard, Rapp, & Gilson, 2008), as it allows us to probe the robustness of our emerging theory (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007).

To sample the most interesting (Myers, 2008) and information-rich (Patton, 2002) cases with respect to our research questions, we selected MNTs based on high linguistic diversity, different MNT leader nationalities and mother tongues as well as a high degree of interdependency and interaction between their members. With the exception of the bi-national team AUTO4, we selected only teams including members of three or more nationalities and mother tongues. To capture the influence of particular language practices on MNT members' emotions, we also sampled teams following different language policies. Whereas the teams MOTOR 1-4 and CAR 3-5 adopted English, the lingua franca of international business, as their working language, the teams AUTO 1 and AUTO 2 used German, the home country language. The remaining teams did not regulate language use and allowed members to switch at discretion.

To sample teams with frequent direct interaction and, as a consequence, intense emotional dynamics, we focused our study on MNTs which were primarily co-located. Furthermore, we sought out a broad range of functional areas, including R&D, cost planning, purchasing, production, sales, IT, HR and business development. Comparisons between these teams allowed us to uncover possible variations or commonalities in language-induced emotions and leadership measures across functions. Table 1 summarizes the relevant characteristics of our case study teams and interviewees.

[INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE]

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[1] As this paper is part of a major research project on language in MNTs, the same data have also been employed in the investigation of other research questions.

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Data collection

This investigation is based on 90 semi-structured interviews (conducted in 2011-2012) with the formally assigned leaders of all 15 selected MNTs, 67 of their subordinates and eight superordinate managers of the three MNCs under study. Emotions are experienced at the level of the individual MNT member and the respective measures to regulate them are performed by individual MNT leaders. Therefore, we argue that interviews are best suited for obtaining in-depth insights into the lived experiences of these distinct groups. We considered semi-structured interviews most appropriate for our theory building purpose, as they secure comparability through a certain degree of consistency in questions, but still allow informants to bring up additional issues they consider important (Myers, 2008). We designed our interviews in a problem-centered fashion, asking our interviewees to illustrate their reflections on the emotional impact of language with critical incidents (Hajro & Pudelko, 2010), i.e. occurrences from their working environment which they perceived as both problematic and significant in the context of the general topic (Chell, 2004). According to Gooty et al. (2010), critical incident techniques are well suited to capture the dynamic nature of individual emotions.

We started each interview with initial demographic questions and gathered information about team composition, language practices and policies. We subsequently continued the interviews in an exploratory fashion, asking, among others, about informants' emotional experiences related to working in a multilingual environment. We introduced this topic with rather open questions such as "How do you feel about the need to communicate in a foreign language at work?" or "How do you feel about the unequal working language proficiencies in your team?" When speaking with MNT leaders, we added the question "How do you think your subordinates feel about these issues?" Based on the emotions our informants named, we subsequently asked probing questions to capture related critical incidents: "Could you please describe a specific situation in which language barriers created anxiety / resentment in your team?" With questions such as "How do MNT members and their leader cope with language anxiety / resentment?", we explored successful measures to manage the negative emotional impact of language barriers.

In the process of interviewing, it quickly emerged that MNT leaders have a highly prominent role in the mitigation of language-induced emotions. Since the respondents we interviewed in the early phase of data gathering stressed this aspect very prominently, we

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focused our subsequent data collection even more on the MNT leader's role. At this stage, we asked general questions such as "What does your leader do to mitigate language anxiety / resentment?" and probing questions such as "Could you please describe a specific situation in which the MNT leader successfully addressed language-related emotions in your team?" When speaking with MNT leaders themselves, we adjusted the wording of these questions accordingly. We constantly compared our findings to the extant literature on leadership in MNTs, language in international business and emotions in organizations.

To triangulate different perspectives on language-related emotions and their management by leaders, it was crucial to sample informants from different hierarchical levels. First, we gathered in-depth problem descriptions by interviewing those who were most affected by language-induced emotions, i.e. MNT members. These interviewees also provided us with descriptions and evaluations of how their leaders have addressed language-induced emotions, respectively how they should have addressed them. To obtain diverse perspectives from MNT members on the issues under study, we aimed to sample interviewees from as many different nationalities and native tongues as possible. Our final sample includes team members from 19 nationalities, speaking 14 different mother tongues. With the recommendation of theoretical sampling (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) in mind, we moreover covered interviewees with varying proficiency levels in English (the working language of many MNTs) and German (the companies' home country language and the working language of some MNTs).

Considering that individual MNT leaders perform the leadership measures geared towards regulating language-induced emotions, it was also crucial to gain insights into their lived experiences. Therefore, we interviewed the assigned leaders of all 15 investigated MNTs. These informants enhanced our problem description by providing us with their understanding of subordinates' language-induced emotions. More importantly, however, they allowed us in-depth insights into their leadership experiences with and perspectives on managing these problematic issues. Including informants from Germany, Austria, the US, China and Turkey, our sample includes a broad range of national backgrounds, even for the smaller group of MNT leaders. Most of the MNT leaders we interviewed were native speakers of their team's working language or had gained high fluency through previous international experience. However, several of them still did not consider their proficiency fully satisfactory and, hence, experienced themselves first-hand some language-based emotions.

Finally, we complemented our data collection in MNTs with the perspectives of eight superordinate managers of the three automotive MNCs. These individuals disposed of extensive leadership experience in a variety of multilingual contexts and were in the position to influence management practices of lower-level MNT leaders. Consequently, they were able to provide us with comprehensive accounts of emotion management from a more elevated perspective.

As a consequence of this theoretically guided interviewee selection, we reached data saturation (Locke, 2001) after nearly two thirds of our 90 interviews, when the marginal increase in knowledge gained from each subsequent interview became quite small. Nevertheless, we conducted additional interviews, further broadening the range of informants' mother tongues and including additional MNTs into our sample, to make sure that we really achieved saturation.

We conducted the interviews with German or English native speakers in their native tongue. Informants speaking other mother tongues were interviewed in either German or English or in a mix of both languages, depending on which option they preferred. Whereas one may argue that interviewing other native speakers in their respective mother tongues as well may have optimized the rapport between researchers and interviewees, all interviewees were used to speaking either English or German in their daily team practice. The length of our interviews typically varied between 45 minutes and one hour. We digitally recorded all interviews and transcribed them in their original language.

Data analysis

We already initiated the content analysis of our interviews during the data collection phase in order to enable iterations between data, emerging concepts and the existing literature (Locke, 2001). In this first stage of analysis, we followed the process of open coding (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), in which we labeled every single passage of our interviews with codes reflecting the topics informants touched upon. During this process, we left interview transcripts in their original languages to preserve their specific meanings and only translated the quotations used for illustration in this article into English, if necessary. However, we used English coding labels across all transcripts. If interviewees used particularly compelling language, we adopted "in vivo" codes that reflected respondents' exact words. For instance, the quotation "An integrative and open leadership style is a very good approach to bring different competences together" yielded the code "integrative leadership". Whenever we noticed connections between our data

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and extant theoretical concepts, we created codes informed by the literature. For example, the statement "My purchasing manager speaks perfect English, but he keeps falling back into German" generated the code "code-switching". The qualitative data analysis software ATLAS.ti supported this coding process.

In the subsequent step of analysis, we brought together different first-order codes, which linked together through higher-order categories. We teased out these categories and examined the theoretical relationships between them using the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Parry, 1999; Rynes & Gephart, 2004). We compared different parts each interview, different interviews within each MNT, statements of interviewees on different hierarchical levels, in different teams and corporations. During this comparative process, connections between previously fragmented codes emerged. We merged similar codes into superordinate categories or linked them to form a new category. With respect to language-based emotions, for example, we collapsed the codes "language-based inhibition", "feeling of insecurity" and "fear of face loss" into the higher-order category "anxiety". Regarding leadership strategies, we merged the codes "code-switching", "speaking time" and "redundant communication" into the category "reducing the impact of language barriers", consolidated the codes "humor" and "common goals" into the category "redirecting attention" and brought the codes "appreciation" and "meta-communication" together into the category "positive appraisal of linguistic diversity". Leadership outcomes were condensed in a similar fashion. In the final step of analysis, we arranged these categories into a set of core findings. During the entire data analysis process we cycled back and forth between our data, codes and categories in an iterative fashion until no new categories emerged and saturation was reached (Locke, 2001). We also constantly recorded ideas about codes and their relationships in the form of theoretical memos (Glaser, 1978).

Upon finalization of the data collection phase, we scrutinized the validity of our findings and conclusions by sharing an eight-page summary of findings and practical recommendations with all interviewees and by conducting a feedback round with selected informants. Doing so yielded additional details that sharpened our conclusions and ensured that we captured the impact of language on MNT members' emotions and the moderating role of MNT leaders as they pervaded informants' experience.

RESULTS

To answer our first research question, we will explore MNT members' negative emotional reactions to language barriers. Based on our analysis through constant comparison, we will classify these negative emotions into two discrete categories and thereby provide a systematic problem description. To address our second and main research question, we will show possible solutions by outlining a variety of measures MNT leaders have at their disposal to counter-act language-induced negative emotions. Our content analysis has shown that we can subsume these measures under three general strategies. To highlight the relevance of these findings, we will also outline the positive outcomes of successful emotion management through MNT leaders.

Defining the problem: Two categories of negative emotional reactions to language barriers

Our critical incident investigations revealed that language barriers gave rise to substantial negative feelings, particularly at the beginning of a team's cooperation. During our iterative coding process, we discovered that we can subsume the various problems under two discrete categories. We labeled these two categories self-directed anxiety and other-directed resentment.

Self-directed anxiety triggered by language barriers: In terms of self-directed emotions, interviewees who judged their proficiency in the shared language as unsatisfactory, associated communication in a foreign language with "insecurity", "embarrassment", "feeling threatened", "showing weaknesses" and "having no self-confidence". In line with Brett, Behfar and Kern (2006) and Neeley (2013) we also found that many non-native speakers of the shared language fear to receive lower performance ratings due to a lack of proficiency:

> Many people who are excellent specialists, have extensive knowledge and are very competent just don't come across so well because of language problems. (…) In fact, I noticed that for myself. I didn't get such a good feedback because of this. (AUTO1 member 6, Greek)

Informants who lack fluency in their group's working language furthermore reported their constant fear of missing important information:

> Chinese colleagues have problems if emails are just sent to everyone in German. They don't know what it's all about and are very scared of missing something. (AUTO2 member 3, Chinese)

The distress of being unable to express oneself adequately exacerbates this strain:

You feel so STUPID! If you listen to the others and have an idea, you want to express it but don't find the words - then it is too late and they have already passed on to the next topic. You feel so helpless! (AUTO1 member 4, Chinese)

Taken together, these emotions create a pervasive anxiety triggered by language barriers. The quotations reproduced in Table 2 provide further evidence of how salient this anxiety appeared in our interviews.

[INSERT TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE]

Overall, our results corroborate Hinds et al.'s (2014), Neeley's (2013) and Neeley et al.'s (2012) recent finding that an MNC's language mandate can cause heightened anxiety among the non-native speakers of the working language. However, in contrast to these previous studies, which found that low-fluency individuals minimized their use of the working language and thereby deflected language-induced anxiety, this was close to impossible in the highly interdependent teams we investigated. Our data further suggest that an MNT member's anxiety negatively correlates not so much with his or her *absolute* language proficiency but with his or her *relative* proficiency level compared to colleagues. More specifically, informants reported feeling more secure in conversations with others who encountered similar or higher linguistic difficulties than they did. In contrast, anxieties appeared much more salient in conversations with more proficient colleagues, be they highly skilled non-native or native speakers of the shared language.

Our investigations also showed that self-directed anxiety was mostly task-related, i.e. team members were afraid to receive negative evaluations for their work, to miss important task-related information or to be unable to contribute to the team task due to limited proficiency in the team's working language. Consequently, they tried to disguise this self-directed emotion in front of colleagues and strove to sustain outward countenance. Such efforts to hide negative feelings imply a high degree of emotional labor (Hinds et al., 2014; Lively, 2000; Neeley et al., 2012), i.e. MNT members manage emotional expression to be consistent with their colleagues' expectations about appropriate emotional expression (Gooty et al., 2010). Interestingly, our findings apply not only to those MNT members whose cultures discourage the open display of emotions (particularly East Asian cultures, see Mesquita & Albert, 2007), but to interviewees from all nationalities and mother tongues. This may be explained by the similarity of anxiety to fear, which causes people to avoid rather than approach the emotion-inducing event (Gooty et al., 2009). MNT leaders therefore require a high degree of empathy to recognize the hidden language-based anxieties among their subordinates. According to Ostell (1996), employees

facing extreme anxiety may even experience a state of freezing, i.e. they become incapable of taking action. Consequently, it is of utmost importance for MNT leaders to address this negative language-induced emotion.

Other-directed resentment triggered by language barriers: In addition to self-directed anxiety, a second form of negative emotions emerged from our data: resentment towards others. Whereas we observed language-induced anxiety mostly among low- and, to a lesser degree, among medium-fluency MNT members, we found other-directed resentment to occur independent of fluency levels. However, low- and high-proficiency speakers of their team's working language tended to resent different aspects of their situation.

MNT members with low fluency levels in the working language sometimes openly displayed their resentment of the fact that they had to conduct meetings in a foreign language:

> I don't like that we have to communicate in English all day, even though the majority of people here is German and not everyone has the same level of English proficiency. That leads to tension and dissatisfaction among the German colleagues. (CAR2 member 2, German)

In line with Neeley's (2013) finding that non-native speakers of the working language resent native speakers' ease of communication, we also found low-fluency team members disliking native speakers' ability to dominate meetings. They even resented other non-native speakers leveraging their superior language proficiency. Highly proficient or native speakers of the working language remained mostly unaware of these feelings. However, they resented the fact that their less proficient colleagues frequently switched into their mother tongues during meetings. This "code-switching" (Hinds et al., 2014: 545) produced substantial frustration among those who were unable to follow and therefore felt excluded:

> When I was a beginner in Spanish [i.e. Castellano] I could follow conversations in Spanish only with great difficulties. But my Catalan colleagues even slipped frequently into Catalan. That made me mad and I said "Guys, that's impossible! I hardly understand anything anyway!" (AUTO2 leader, German)

Our results are in line with Dotan-Eliaz, Sommer and Rubin's (2009) finding that people who are linguistically ostracized by means of code-switching often feel rejected and angry towards co-workers. The quotes reproduced in Table 3 further illustrate the causes of other-directed resentment experienced by low- and high-fluency speakers of the working language.

[INSERT TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE]

In line with research on cultural norms of emotions display (Mesquita & Albert, 2007), other-directed resentment was mostly reported by informants from individualist cultures. However, indirect information like the British respondent's statement above about his Japanese colleagues allowed us to conclude that MNT members with a more collectivistic background also experienced these emotions.

In contrast to task-related anxiety, we found that other-directed resentment triggered by language barriers was almost exclusively of interpersonal nature, i.e. interviewees resented the way their colleagues used language resources to their advantage. Comparisons between teams furthermore demonstrated that language-induced resentment and resentment based on non-linguistic interpersonal conflict mutually reinforced each other. This finding not only supports von Glinow et al.'s (2004) proposition that language barriers make it particularly hard to resolve conflicts by talking them through, it also shows that team members are more resentful of language mandates, unequal language proficiency and code-switching if they are biased by conflict from other sources.

These findings once more highlight the challenge for MNT leaders to recognize their subordinates' language-induced emotions. As emphasized by Ostell (1996), negative other-directed emotions have a highly disruptive influence on personal relations within a group. Following the principle of emotional contagion (Barsade, 2002), people "catch" emotions from others, i.e. the emotion displayed by one individual is taken over by others (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2002; Gooty et al., 2010). As resentment or anger arises from a perceived insult and motivates the individual to actively correct this wrongdoing (Gooty et al., 2009), resentful team members may either approach others in an aggressive way and thereby trigger resentment from their counterparts' side or talk negatively about third persons, thus passing on own negative feelings to others. As will be shown in the following section, MNT leaders need to manage these effects carefully.

Finding solutions: Three emotion management strategies for MNT leaders

In response to our second research question, our data collection and analysis revealed a series of measures MNT leaders have at their disposal to mitigate their subordinates' negative language-induced emotions. Through our coding process, we established that these measures fall into three general emotion management strategies.

Reducing the impact of language barriers: The first and most effective leadership strategy aims to reduce the negative impact of language barriers on MNT members. MNT members are much less likely to experience negative emotions if their leader succeeds in diffusing the actual problematic situation and thereby takes away the cause of negative emotions. Our investigations have shown that language-related causes of emotions may be diffused by the following measures: moderating subordinates' code-switching, allocating speaking time to less proficient team members and enhancing understanding through frequent repetitions.

Preventing subordinates from frequent code-switching to their native tongues in the presence of colleagues unable to understand this language emerged as a very important measure in this context. Our informants considered the degree of language discipline to be an important element of a team's work culture, which the MNT leader can shape:

> It depends on the culture you introduce to your team. If you as the leader allow language switching, it will happen again and again. But if you try to control it, it won't happen so much. (AUTO2 leader, German)

Whereas our informants recognized the importance of restricting side-conversations in tongues other than the working language, they acknowledged that striving for absolute language discipline would also create emotional strain. As shown above, the mandate to use a foreign language in all workplace communication meets stress-based resentment among less proficient speakers. Leaders of multilingual teams therefore need to perform a tightrope walk between imposing a strict language discipline and granting team members the occasion to confer in their own language, particularly at occasions when they simply want to ensure they have understood arguments put forward in the working language. An American MNT leader with German proficiency highlighted the importance of his moderating role:

> It was frustrating for the American colleagues when we would break into German. You'd have to excuse and say "Hey, we got to get through this." Then as long as you in the end did a good job of summarizing what had been said, I think that being an American myself, they trusted that I summarized the previous discussions in German correctly and that everything was correctly communicated. (MOTOR2 leader, American)

The MNT leader's balancing act becomes particularly challenging if side conversations are triggered by emotional content, on the one hand reinforcing the code-switchers' impulse to discuss these sensitive issues in their native tongue, while simultaneously increasing tension among excluded colleagues. In these cases, MNT leaders should ask for summaries of side

conversations, which may help code-switchers to distance themselves from their initial emotional outbreaks:

> I have learned that strategically allowing this [code-switching] in short segments actually builds trust - as long as the mother tongue group discussion is then translated in summary form, including the emotional elements that were seen but not understood by the complete group. I have also found that repeating the emotional portion in summary form often creates humor and diffuses the tenseness of the original situation. (MOTORCORP superordinate manager 1, American)

Besides acting as a moderator for code-switching, our data suggest that the MNT leader can also reduce the impact of language barriers on subordinates by actively allocating speaking time to less fluent team members:

> The team leader helped me to integrate myself into the team. He gives me the time to talk about my issues. Because the meetings are held in English and English speakers are so fast, I cannot interrupt them. That is very difficult! The team leader has noticed my situation, so he gives me time. (MOTOR2 member 9, Japanese)

Enabling low-fluency team members to gain voice in a foreign-language conversation emerged as an effective remedy against the anxiety they experience. To complement this measure, MNT leaders also need to remind English native speakers to speak "international English" with a reduced lexical variety (Henderson, 2005: 76), avoiding slang, jargon and any particular accent they might have, and to decrease their speaking speed:

> I have to slow down our American native speakers if I notice that the speed must be too high for the others. I have to make sure that they articulate themselves clearly. (AUTOCORP superordinate manager 1, German)

Frequent repetitions and paraphrasing of important arguments by the MNT leader emerged as another important measure to enhance the clarity of communication, thereby reducing the negative impact of language barriers:

> It is really helpful to build feedback cycles into team meetings - maybe after each agenda item - and to paraphrase and check if everyone is on the same page or if there are still some misunderstandings. (MOTOR2 member 6, German)

The same interviewee, however, conceded that using this technique resembles a balancing act. If the MNT leader repeats too frequently and too obviously, some subordinates may feel patronized:

> How quickly does someone feel loss of face, how tolerant is he for mistakes? So if I explain things twice, will this be seen as support or as an insult? Along the lines of "He explains this to me so often, he must think I'm an idiot." (…) I think this is the crux of the

matter: I need to repeat until everything is clear, but mustn't overdo it. (CAR4 leader, German)

This finding coincides with Williams' (2007: 599) proposition that even well intended offers to help can lower an employee's self-esteem by implying that he is incapable of mastering a situation on his own. A experienced manager therefore recommended to save subordinates' face by taking the blame for regular repetitions:

Whoever was speaking: Regularly check if things have really come across. I sometimes act the fool a little and pretend I didn't fully understand either. I summarize what I understood and ask if this came across for the others as well. (MOTORCORP superordinate manager 3, German)

The interview excerpts reproduced in Table 4 provide an overview of leadership measures aimed at reducing the negative impact of language barriers on subordinates. Geared towards improving communication and avoiding misunderstandings, these leadership measures not only help to prevent the above-described emotional reactions to language barriers; they also enhance the team's efficiency in task fulfilment. This may explain why informants from all nationalities, who might otherwise be expected to favor different leadership styles (House et al., 2004), equally mentioned these measures as hallmarks of effective multilingual leadership.

[INSERT TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE]

By reducing incidents of code-switching, making sure that less proficient MNT members have enough time to contribute and fostering understanding through frequent repetitions, MNT leaders reduce the linguistic exclusion and misunderstandings which are likely to trigger negative emotions in the first place. If we compare our findings to the established model of emotion management (see e.g. Gross & Thompson, 2007; Little et al., 2012; Williams, 2007), the leadership measures which emerged from our study show parallels to the general strategy of altering an emotion provoking situation. Concerning team members facing language barriers, Hinds et al. (2014) found that they are often caught up in their negative emotions and frequently resort to behaviors igniting further negative emotional responses among their colleagues. Our study has shown, however, that skillful MNT leaders have the capability to approach this problem from a more rationally detached vantage point, enabling them to reduce the impact of language barriers for everyone in their teams. Going beyond previous research, we have been able to specify concrete measures of how the impact of language barriers on team members can

be mitigated. Consequently, our study supports the established and more general model of emotion management and contextualizes it specifically for multilingual workplaces.

Redirecting MNT members' attention away from language barriers: Not in all cases can MNT leaders alter the situation by diffusing the impact of language barriers on communication. In those instances where this strategy is not applicable, we found that MNT leaders still have means to mitigate the disruptive effect of language barriers on team members' emotions. One strategy towards this end lies, according to our data, in redirecting subordinates' attention away from the language barriers and their negative effects. MNT leaders may achieve this with the help of humor and joking or by focusing subordinates' attention on common goals.

According to many interviewees, the use of humor may be a successful leadership measure to relax or lighten emotionally burdensome situations produced by language barriers:

> You need icebreakers, which make people smile or laugh. (…) You need something different, something funny to relax the situation a little bit. (MOTOR2 member 6, German)

This is in line with Niven et al. (2009), who state that joking can shift people's attention. However, this emotion management measure may not always be easy to implement, since humor requires a high level of language proficiency. Reflecting this tension, MNT leaders who spoke the working language as their mother tongue frequently recommended using humor, whereas non-native speakers took a more skeptical position towards this technique. Clearly, MNT leaders should not rely on sophisticated puns, which may exacerbate the feeling of exclusion among less proficient speakers of the working language. Instead, they may target language differences as a source of humor in itself:

> I always joke about the fact that my level of German skills is similar to what you would hear from a kindergartener. So when you drop the conversation down to kindergarten level, that helps lighten the mood sometimes in a very difficult conversation. (MOTORCORP superordinate manager 1, American)

Given that laughter creates a feeling of sociability and links people together, humor may be a means to avoid a quarrel, solve a conflict, play down disagreement or help to overcome awkward situations. Following the principles of emotional contagion (Barsade, 2002), an MNT leader who frequently uses humor to lighten the mood can effectively spread positive emotions. Yet, in some cultures the use of too much humor at the workplace carries also the risk for the MNT leader of appearing an unserious person. Confining the use of humor to after-hours occasions (e.g., in

Germany or Japan) can help to lighten the emotional burden while at the same time preserving the MNT leader's authority and professionalism.

Highlighting the similarities of individual team members and their common goals emerged as a second frequently mentioned technique to redirect MNT members' attention in a positive way. MNT leaders may bring their subordinates closer together and disperse language-induced resentment by stressing similarities on the individual level:

> You need to highlight similarities and teach your staff that regardless of your language, your culture, at the end of the day we are all basically coming from the same background. Put your kids in a good school, put food on your table, save for your retirement – no matter where someone comes from, which culture or mother tongue, everyone has the same goals. (MOTOR1 leader, American)

More important than highlighting individual commonalities, however, is an emphasis on a common professional objective. If the members of a multilingual work group focus on their individual similarities and on common professional goals, language differences retreat into the background:

> We have a common goal that we want to achieve. That is what brings us together. Team members are not interested in language barriers as long as they focus on their common objective. (CAR3 leader, German)

These team-specific findings coincide with previous studies from the larger literature on global leadership. Huy (1999), for instance, believes that successful leadership requires inspiring followers with a captivating vision of shared goals. Bird et al. (2010) even define global leadership as the process of motivating different groups to work together synergistically towards a common vision and common goal (also see Mendenhall et al., 2012; Osland, 2008). If MNC employees focus on this common ground, interaction can be facilitated and negative emotions reduced (Schweiger, Atamer, & Calori, 2003).

The interview excerpts reproduced in Table 5 further illustrate the measures MNT leaders can use to redirect subordinates' attention away from language barriers. By using humor to make subordinates forget the language-induced emotional burden or by focusing team members' attention on the team's common goals, MNT leaders "distract attention away from the emotion-provoking situation" (Williams, 2007: 605). If we compare our findings with the established typology of emotion management strategies (see e.g. Gross & Thompson, 2007; Little et al., 2012; Niven et al., 2009; Williams, 2007), we find interesting parallels. Hence, our findings

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constitute a specification for multilingual settings of the general strategy of altering attention by distracting from the cause of emotions.

<center>[INSERT TABLE 5 ABOUT HERE]</center>

Reducing the negative appraisal of language barriers: Based on our interviews we found that MNT leaders can also mitigate the problematic relationship between language barriers and negative emotions by helping subordinates to perceive language barriers as less threatening. If MNT members believe that their lack of fluency in the working language impairs team efficiency or harms their personal standing in the team, they will experience intense negative emotions. In contrast, if they can be convinced that the team will effectively cope with language barriers and that individual contributions are appraised independent of fluency, they will be more relaxed. Guiding subordinates towards the latter view emerged as an important emotion management strategy from our investigations. We found evidence for two major leadership techniques to achieve this: conveying appreciation for everyone's contributions and conducting meta-communication about the impact of language barriers. We found in particular the former measure to be highly instrumental for MNT members' positive appraisals of their multilingual work environments:

> I think the first and foremost prerequisites are trust, mutual appreciation and respect. That is the most important thing, no matter which language you speak. This creates open communication – on this basis you can achieve a lot. (MOTOR5 leader, Chinese)

Supporting Niven et al.'s (2009) proposition that an individual's emotional state can be improved by explicitly valuing this person, our informants highlighted that MNT leaders need to give everyone the impression that their contribution is valued, even if it is brought forward in halting speech. Language barriers appeared much less threatening if leaders explicitly communicated positive evaluations to low-fluency speakers. This finding lends support to Neeley's (2012) recommendation to increase employee's beliefs in their language capacity through positive reinforcement.

As a second technique to reduce subordinates' negative appraisal of language barriers, MNT leaders can encourage open discussions about the effects of language differences:

> Team leaders need to say: "We have a global team here. If time permits, let's take half a day to talk about our differences. Let's understand how the others tick, let's develop a common understanding this way. Let's define clear rules for communication." (MOTOR2 member 6, German)

<center>26</center>

This meta-communication raises the capacity of individual team members to recognize their colleagues' emotions and, consequently, creates the prerequisites for jointly counteracting disruptive emotional dynamics. In many cases, open communication reduces language-induced anxiety and resentment merely by showing team members that others experience similar problems, by creating emotional solidarity and by revealing the underlying reasons of colleagues' language-induced coping behaviors such as code-switching.

Our informants' conviction that teams facing language differences need to engage in collective self-reflection through open communication is in line with previous conflict management research suggesting that sharing is an efficient means of regulating one's emotions (Salovey et al., 2008). In this we differ from von Glinow et al. (2004), who proposed that talk may not be an optimal solution to the emotional problems of MNTs. According to these authors, members of those cultures preferring to express feelings of conflict indirectly may not welcome candid talk. Moreover, they argue that so-called "hot cognitions" block the ability of emotionally agitated individuals to find the right words in a foreign language. We argue that these effects hardly impede the type of meta-communication suggested by our informants, since it is of a more general, preventive nature. It does not force team members to talk about concrete incidents and emotions, but operates like general awareness training. One informant who joined his team in the role of a cross-cultural coach proposed to discuss emotional issues in the form of anonymized case studies to avoid any face threatening implications.

Meta-communication about language barriers and their emotional implications encourages the affected individuals to understand their counterparts' feelings and motivations through perspective-taking, i.e. through imagining their thoughts, motives, or feelings from their point of view (Williams, 2007). Previous studies have shown that perspective taking reduces intergroup bias, prejudice, stereotyping and outgroup derogation (Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000). Whereas this skill is helpful in all cooperative settings (Grant and Berry, 2011), it is seen as especially important for realizing the potential benefits of diversity at the workplace (Hoever, van Knippenberg, van Ginkel, & Barkema, 2012). More specifically, our study reinforces Hinds et al.'s (2014) recent finding that perspective-taking helps to mitigate language-induced negative emotions among MNT members: if high- and low-fluency speakers of the working language try to see the situation from each other's point of view, they can define agreed-upon procedures to deal with linguistic challenges and thus prevent vicious cycles of negative emotions. To further

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substantiate the value of leadership measures geared towards reducing subordinates' negative appraisal of language barriers, we provide additional quotes in Table 6.

[INSERT TABLE 6 ABOUT HERE]

If MNT leaders enhance subordinates' beliefs in their language capacity by conveying appreciation and encourage perspective taking through open communication about language issues, they help their subordinates to reframe the multilingual workplace situation in more positive terms. If we compare these leadership measures to reduce MNT members' negative perceptions of multilingual workplaces with established general emotion management strategies (see e.g. Gross & Thompson, 2007; Little et al., 2012; Williams, 2007), we notice again parallels. This regards in particular the strategy of altering the cognitive meaning of a situation causing negative emotional responses. Whereas previous studies rather generally recommended fostering a positive reappraisal of emotion-provoking situations (Loewenstein, 2007), our investigation revealed specific techniques helping to reduce negative perceptions of language differences. According to Gross (2007), such reappraisals are very effective in that they can actually lead to decreased experience of negative emotions.

The positive outcomes of language-related emotion management through MNT leaders

So far, we have identified and described a range of strategies and specific measures MNT leaders have at their disposal to mitigate negative language-induced emotions. Beyond mitigating these emotions, the MNT leaders' emotion management also leads directly to various positive leadership outcomes. We found that successful emotion management through MNT leaders in particular improves sensemaking within MNTs, creates a more productive team climate and thus enhances subordinates' willingness to follow the leader.

Improving sensemaking within the team: Improved sensemaking in terms of "constructing meaning, interacting in pursuit of mutual understanding" (Weick, 1995: 6) within MNTs emerged as the most important direct outcome of the above outlined emotion management strategies. Considering than language barriers are usually conceptualized as "obstacles to effective communication" (Tenzer et al., 2014: 509), particularly the measures geared towards reducing the impact of language barriers improve the joint construction of meaning in MNTs. An American MNT leader explained how he secured mutual understanding by acting as a bridge-maker between language groups:

Oftentimes you would have to listen to the German speaker and interpret for the Japanese. And the Japanese speaker, you have to listen to them and interpret that for the Germans and clarify. Even if it was all done in English, you would still have to clarify different points. "Yes, they really meant this" or "No, they really meant that". (MOTOR2 leader, American)

Beyond the intuitive benefits of leadership measures reducing perceived language barriers, interventions aiming to reduce team members' negative appraisal of linguistic diversity also enhanced sensemaking:

The main advice I would have for a team leader is working in an integrative way. … If you know that someone doesn't understand so well, give him the impression that his contribution is valued, even if it gets communicated a little slowly. This is how you support mutual understanding. (MOTOR2 member 6, German)

According to von Glinow et al. (2004: 580), whenever team members experience intense emotions, their "reasoning ability … is dominated by visual imagery and sensations … including 'hot cognitions' that apparently block their ability to find words". Consequently, if MNT leaders mitigate negative language-induced emotions by encouraging a positive reappraisal of linguistic diversity, they guide their subordinates back to detached, "cool" cognitions, which leave greater cognitive resources for rational sensemaking. Thus, they improve the quality and efficacy of collective information processing in the team, which in turn constitutes a core prerequisite for team performance (Zaccaro et al., 2001).

Creating a productive team climate: Along with enhanced sensemaking, we also found that effective emotion management creates a more productive team climate. An experienced manager emphasized the importance of a productive team atmosphere, characterized by a focus on work performance and not on language proficiency:

I think when you facilitate a dialogue in a multilingual environment, the facilitator needs to create an atmosphere in which people aren't afraid to make mistakes as it relates to the language barrier. (MOTORCORP superordinate manager 1, American)

In line with Ozcelik et al.'s (2008) belief that encouragement through positive feedback improves emotional climate, we also found that MNT leaders communicating performance-related appreciation to low-fluency speakers can guide team members to a favorable assessment of MNT diversity. However, a productive climate is not only created through leadership strategies geared towards a positive reappraisal of diversity. Redirecting team members' attention away from language barriers may already suffice:

> If you regularly tell a joke or something else, something casual, to relax the situation a little bit, then you can create a climate of wellbeing over time. Then you suddenly make progress with your task again! (MOTOR2 member 6, German)

Team climate is important for team members' motivation to learn or at least appreciate the use of relevant foreign languages (Youssef & Luthans, 2012). It fosters the performance of work groups by increasing trust, cooperation and cohesion between members (Barsade, 2002; Stewart et al., 2011; Williams, 2007), by heightening organizational identification and optimism (Huy, 1999) and by encouraging risk taking among innovators (McAllister, 1995).

Increasing subordinates' willingness to follow: In close connection with the above-described effects, we found that MNT leaders who successfully manage language-induced emotions are held in high esteem among their subordinates, who appreciate and willingly follow their initiatives. A German MNT leader explained how an emotionally aware approach increased a Japanese subordinate's contribution to the team:

> In the beginning, X-San wasn't integrated into the team. He just sat there and left after the meeting. When I took over the team I started to assign jobs to him, which he can clarify with his Japanese colleagues and bring back to the team. I encourage him in this work, so he feels like an accepted team member. I can really see how he has been thriving since he started on these tasks. He is always very cooperative, fulfills his jobs very well. I think he feels good about this. (MOTOR4 leader, German)

Subordinates, who willingly embraced the culture their MNT leader aimed to inculcate in the group, shared this positive appraisal of emotionally aware leadership:

> We are adopting the "we can do it"-mentality from the Americans. I have to say that the leaders of our global functional teams do a pretty good job in rallying everyone around this culture. (MOTOR1 member 2, German)

Considering House and Javidan's (2004: 15) definition of leadership as "the ability of an individual to influence, motivate, and enable others", inspiring a willingness to follow is a hallmark of effective leaders. Thus, if the successful management of language-induced emotions enhances MNT members' preparedness to follow their leaders, it secures the prerequisite for any type of impact these leadership personalities can make. Table 7 illustrates the positive leadership outcomes of the above outlined emotion management strategies with exemplary quotations.

[INSERT TABLE 7 ABOUT HERE]

Overall, the positive outcomes of language-related emotion management through MNT leaders we identified in our study support the widespread view that effective team leadership enhances the outcomes of multicultural and multilingual teams (Zander & Butler, 2010). Zaccaro

et al. (2001: 452) even believe "that effective leadership processes represent perhaps the most critical factor in the success of organizational teams", once again highlighting the relevance of our study's topic.

DISCUSSION

To summarize and systematize the inductively generated findings from our study, we generated a model which is depicted in Figure 1. It illustrates the relationship between language barriers and negative emotions, which ultimately lead to reduced performance outcomes, but also details the moderating effect of leadership strategies geared to mitigate this relationship and presents their positive leadership outcomes. Providing a systematization of potential problems, our study revealed that MNT members' negative emotional reactions to language barriers can be subsumed under two central categories: self-directed anxiety and other-directed resentment. On this basis, we outlined a range of emotion management measures, which MNT leaders can engage in thanks to their formally assigned position power. We categorized these measures into three strategies: reducing the impact of language barriers; redirecting attention away from language barriers; and reducing the negative appraisal of language barriers. By employing these strategies and thus showing good leadership, MNT leaders not only mitigate negative emotions, but also generate sensemaking with their followers, create a productive team climate and increase team members' willingness to follow their leadership initiatives. Given that previous studies have already established the detrimental performance implications of negative emotions (e.g. McColl-Kennedy & Anderson, 2002; Mooney et al., 2007; von Glinow et al., 2004) and the beneficial impact of successful leadership on performance (e.g. Burke et al., 2006; Zaccaro et al., 2001), we indicated these relationships in Figure 1 (in grey) without explicitly investigating them again in the present study.

[INSERT FIGURE 1 HERE]

Theoretical significance

Connecting leadership, language and emotions: By systematizing language-induced emotions and exploring possible strategies MNT leaders may apply to resolve these issues, our study has established an important link between the literatures on leadership and position power

in MNTs, language barriers in MNCs and emotions in organizations. Besides providing a link between these research streams, our study also contributes to each of these areas.

Contributions to research on leadership and position power in MNTs: Our study advances the emerging literature on MNT leadership through an analysis of the bridge-making activities leaders of multilingual teams have to perform in the context of negative emotions and the skill-sets they need for these tasks. Previous studies on MNT leadership largely neglected language-induced challenges in general and even more so those in the specific context of emotions. We address this gap by suggesting concrete strategies how MNT leaders can mitigate negative emotions within their multilingual groups and act successfully as "blenders" (Butler et al., 2012: 242), who are able to integrate proficient and less proficient speakers of the MNC's working language into effective teams.

Beyond the MNT context, our study also contributes to the wider cross-cultural leadership research aiming to define a set of global leadership competencies and skills (see e.g. Bird et al., 2010; Levy et al., 2007; Osland, 2008). Whereas the literature about leaders' global mindsets has so far focused on their cross-*cultural* skills, our study highlights the need for global leaders to develop also multi*lingual* competency to recognize and address the distinctive challenges linguistic diversity entails. Independent of their subordinates' particular constellation of cultures and mother tongues, leaders need to consider both factors to ensure smooth cooperation across borders.

Due to our specific focus on vertical leadership displayed by assigned MNT leaders, our study also contributes to the growing literature on position power in teamwork (see e.g. Greer, 2014). "Whether it comes from structure or from hierarchy, access to power (especially position power) is critical to one's ability to realize leadership outcomes" (Kan and Parry, 2004: 478). The leaders of the 15 multilingual teams under study could effectively engage in emotion management also thanks to their formal appointment as MNT leaders. As such, they did not only succeed in stopping the vicious cycle of negative language-induced emotions, but also created a series of positive leadership outcomes. With this favorable assessment of position power in MNTs, our study contributes to the ongoing debate about the positive or negative effects of vertical differentiation in teamwork (see e.g. Halevy, Chou, & Galinsky, 2011).

Contributions to research on language barriers in MNCs: We contribute to the fast growing research stream on language barriers in MNCs by introducing the interplay of language-

induced emotions and leadership into this research area. In addition, our study highlights the complexity of language effects in multinational workplaces, thereby encouraging a more sophisticated concept of language diversity in international management research. Many publications in the field of international management still focus on the instrumental benefits of a common corporate language for communication, collaboration and information sharing, assuming that language diversity can be easily managed (Luo & Shenkar, 2006). However, our in-depth investigation of the emotional implications of language barriers has shown that MNCs cannot erase language barriers by simply adopting a common corporate language. These findings lend strong support to the emerging view that the traditional, "instrumental" concept of language as an easily managed, neutral code is becoming outdated (also see Janssens, Lambert, & Steyaert, 2004). Reinforcing Vaara et al.'s (2005: 596) view that "the role of natural languages in social life can hardly be overestimated", our study demonstrates that this concept needs to be replaced by a more nuanced perspective on language which gives justice to its complex effects.

 Contributions to research on emotions in organizations: Answering to the call that "theories of emotion as well as empirical research need to take into account the context wherein emotions occur" (Gooty et al., 2009: 836), our study contributes to emotion-sensitive organizational studies by contextualizing previously established emotion management models (e.g. Gross & Thompson, 2007; Little et al., 2012; Williams, 2007) to multilingual environments. Interestingly, our exploratory investigation only yields parallels to those emotion management strategies which Gross and Thompson (2007, also see Little et al., 2012) characterize as antecedent-focused. If MNT leaders reduce the impact of language barriers on communication, redirect subordinates' attention away from language barriers or encourage a more positive appraisal of language barriers, they address the causes (or antecedents) of language-induced emotions. In contrast, response-focused strategies of emotion regulation, which merely aim to manipulate emotional expressions (responses), but leave their causes unaffected, did not seem to be employed by the MNT leaders in our study. Hence, our study shows that successful MNT leaders actively address the causes of language-induced anxiety and resentment rather than merely suppressing the symptoms. Consequently, it supports the assumption that employees' emotions need to be effectively mitigated rather than repressed (Ostell, 1996), possibly also because the latter may result in job dissatisfaction and burnout (for a review see Loewenstein, 2007). Huy (1999) believes that repressing emotions is particularly harmful in fast-paced

environments, as it blocks creativity, impeding the emergence of new ideas. Given that creativity and innovative capabilities can be a key strength of multinational and multilingual teams, blocking emotions would be particularly harmful in these contexts.

Managerial relevance

Managing emotional conflict is not only of theoretical, but also of highest practical importance (von Glinow et al., 2004), as this type of conflict can distract teams from their tasks, lower decision quality and diminish employee satisfaction and performance (Mooney et al., 2007). Negative emotions may also cause risk-aversion (Reus & Liu, 2004), absenteeism and turnover (Little et al., 2012), thereby impeding MNC employees' performance potential (McColl-Kennedy & Anderson, 2002). Our investigation of leadership strategies helping to mitigate negative language-induced emotions therefore carries significant implications for leaders of MNTs, their superiors and human resource managers in MNCs.

Being aware of the emotional impact of language barriers: In terms of recommendations, our findings highlight the importance for MNT leaders to know about and reflect on the emotional impact of language differences. Particularly MNT leaders speaking their team's working language with high or native proficiently need to engage frequently in perspective taking to recognize how less fluent subordinates are affected. Since we found that MNT members of all nationalities and mother tongues tend to hide self-directed emotions, MNT leaders need to rely very much on indirect cues when monitoring their subordinates' language-induced emotions. Rather than expecting their subordinates to communicate their negative emotions directly, they need to observe team members' behavior to evaluate possible emotion regulation strategies. This requires a high degree of emotional awareness from MNT leaders. Recognizing language-induced emotions becomes even more challenging with respect to other-directed feelings, which team members display differently depending on their cultural backgrounds (Mesquita & Albert, 2007).

Managing language-induced negative emotions: Our study's core findings also highlight the necessity for MNT leaders to manage negative language-induced emotions actively, reinforcing Zander et al.'s (2012: 594) critique of "laissez-faire leadership". In agreement with Thiel et al. (2012: 518), who believe that providing leaders with the requisite knowledge and skills for emotion regulation is crucial for effective leadership and performance, we outlined a set

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of concrete measures enabling MNT leaders to address the specific emotional challenges of multilingual work environments. The language-specific emotion management measures which we presented and classified into various strategies can prevent negative emotional spirals like the ones described by Harzing and Feely (2008) or Neeley et al. (2012). However, the beneficial impact of these strategies goes beyond preventing or mitigating negative emotions. As our study has shown, the successful management of language-induced emotions through MNT leaders also improves sensemaking within MNTs, creates a productive team climate and thus increases team members' willingness to follow the designated leader. As established by previous research, these leadership outcomes have a highly beneficial impact on team performance.

Training MNT leaders for cross-lingual sensitivity: The present study also carries significant implications for leadership development in MNCs. Our findings suggest that MNCs should provide training programs geared towards sensitizing current and potential MNT leaders to the distinctive impact of language barriers on cooperation. The scope of diversity training, which has so far mostly focused on cultural, racial, generational or gender differences (Bezrukova, Jehn, & Spell, 2012), thus needs to be expanded to include cross-*lingual* sensitivity as a key qualification for MNT leaders.

Limitations and further research

Our study is subject to a number of limitations, which provide the basis for further research in this area. First, we purposefully chose to keep industry and home country constant, thus being able to focus our investigation on language-induced effects. Future research could investigate language-induced emotions and related leadership strategies in other industries and home countries to discover similarities and differences across contexts. In addition, given the focus on one home country, we had a disproportionately large number of interviewees from this country. However, given that our sample still includes MNT leaders from five different nationalities and subordinates from 19 different countries, we are confident that our data provide sufficient spread to arrive at differentiated arguments about effective strategies of managing language-induced emotions. In addition, our approach also entailed advantages related to our background as researchers. Speaking the home country language German as our mother tongue and being very familiar with German business culture helped us to make sense of informants' accounts in a way that preserved the authenticity of their perspectives (Langley, 1999).

Second, space restrictions did not allow us to discuss in detail possible cultural preferences for particular emotion management strategies. However, a large majority of our interviewees across different cultural backgrounds embraced the above outlined emotion management strategies. Consequently, we found national culture to be of little relevance for the specific language-based challenges of MNT leaders. We nevertheless encourage future studies to explore in greater depth how the solutions to language-induced emotions play out in different cultural environments.

Third, we focused in particular on emotion management as performed by MNT leaders, since this emerged to be of particular relevance to our respondents. This focus implied, however, that we did not account for team members' self-management and, hence, their contribution to emotions at work. We acknowledge the validity of Stewart et al.'s (2011) idea that entire teams actively engage in the regulation of team emotions and refer to Hinds et al.'s (2014) recent study on global virtual team members coping with language-induced emotions.

Fourth, while our interviews did not allow us to capture intra-individual variation in emotions in real time (Gooty et al., 2009), we argue that our critical incident-based interviewing technique is well suited to capture the dynamic nature of individual emotions (Gooty et al., 2010). This technique focuses informants' attention on specific events, which triggered particularly intense emotional experiences. It is therefore in line with affective events theory (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996), which posits that particular events are a chief source of emotions. Nevertheless, we encourage future research studying the intra-individual variation in language-induced emotions specifically with event-based design.

Fifth, we did not explicitly examine how language-induced negative emotions and the positive leadership outcomes of language-related emotion management influence team performance, as the relationships between negative emotions and performance (e.g. McColl-Kennedy & Anderson, 2002; Mooney et al., 2007; von Glinow et al., 2004) and between leadership outcomes and performance (e.g. Burke et al., 2006; Zaccaro et al., 2001) have already been investigated to large extents. Moreover, since team performance is a multifaceted construct with context-specific indicators (Gibson, Zellmer-Bruhn, & Schwab, 2003), we argue that general performance measures would not adequately capture the dynamics of MNT leadership. However, our study indicates the beneficial effect of language-related emotion management strategies on MNT performance by providing clear evidence for its positive effects both in terms

of mitigating negative emotions and creating directly positive leadership outcomes. We encourage qualitative follow-up investigations to examine these relationships in more depth and quantitative studies to test them statistically.

CONCLUSION

Recent pioneering work has indicated the problematic emotional impact of language barriers on MNT members, but has not explained how MNT leaders can address this problem. Our study demonstrated that MNT leaders are capable of preventing negative emotions like anxiety and resentment in the first place and have effective strategies at their disposal to mitigate these disruptive emotions when they do occur. By redirecting team member's attention away from language-induced emotions and by helping them to reappraise linguistic diversity, MNT leaders foster team sensemaking, team climate, and subordinates' willingness to follow.

Our in-depth qualitative study encourages further research at the cross-roads of leadership, language and emotion research in MNTs. Additional qualitative research should investigate language-induced emotions and related leadership strategies in further industries and home countries to discover similarities and differences across other substantive leadership contexts. Based on the relationships these studies would uncover, scholars should then generate quantitatively testable hypotheses. Ultimately, these hypotheses should be tested in a representative sample across a range of cultural and linguistic contexts.

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Table 1: Overview of investigated teams

Firm	Team	Functional area	Team size and composition	Official team language	Year founded	Interviewees	Duration recorded interviews	No. of transcript pages
MOTORCORP	--- Superordinate management ---					3 DE, 1 US	2hrs 39min	54
	MOTOR1	cross-functional	11 DE, 5 US, 3 J, 1 UK	English	2009	1 US (TL), 6 DE, 3 J, 1 UK	10hrs 14min	166
	MOTOR2	cross-functional	10 DE, 4 US, 3 J	English	2009	1 US (TL), 7 DE, 3 J	9hrs 50min	140
	MOTOR3	IT	15 J, 6 DE, 1 US	English	2003	3 DE (1 TL), 1 J, 1 US	4hrs 17min	61
	MOTOR4	IT	31 IN, 10 DE, 1 TR	English	2010	1 TR (TL), 3 DE, 1 IN	3hrs 17min	52
	MOTOR5	cost planning	12 DE, 5 ES, 1 CN, 1 IT	NR, mostly German	2009	1 CN (TL), 1 DE, 1 ES	2hrs 42min	54
AUTOCORP	--- Superordinate management ---					2 DE	1h 37min	17
	AUTO1	HR	6 DE, 1 CN, 1 HU, 1 GR, 1 ES	German	2011	4 DE (1 TL), 1 CN, 1 HU, 1 GR	4hrs 48min	74
	AUTO2	R&D	10 DE, 2 CN, 1 ES	German	2009	2 DE (1 TL), 2 CN, 1 ES	3hrs 46min	61
	AUTO3	cross-functional	15 CN, 5 DE, 1 RO, 1 IT	NR, English or use of translators	2008	3 DE (1 TL), 1 RO, 1 IT	4hrs 19min	79
	AUTO4	marketing	2 RU, 2 DE	NR, English or German	2009	2 DE (1 TL), 1 RU	2hr 06min	35
	AUTO5	sales	6 DE, 1 US, 1 ZA, 1 F, 1 MA, 1 RE	NR, English or German	2008	3 DE (1 TL), 1 ZA, 1 MA, 1 RE	2hrs 36min	43
CARCORP	--- Superordinate management ---					2 DE	1h 52min	30
	CAR1	sales	8 DE, 1 US, 1 BR, 1 SE, 1 ES, 1 F, 1 NL	NR, mostly German	2009	1 US (TL), 1 DE, 1 BR	2hrs 48min	46
	CAR2	R&D	9 AT, 6 DE, 3 IT, 3 ES, 3 US, 1 UK	NR, German or English	2008	2 AT (1 TL), 1 IT	1hr 26min	26
	CAR3	R&D	9 DE, 4 UK, 3 US, 1 ZA, 1 F	English	2009	3 DE (1 TL), 1 F	3hrs 37min	45
	CAR4	purchasing	12 CN, 5 DE, 1 F	English	2009	3 DE (1 TL), 1 F, 1 CN	4hrs 24min	79
	CAR5	R&D	6 DE, 6 US, 2 MEX, 1 AR	English	2008	4 DE (1 TL), 2 US	4hrs 31min	66

NR = not regulated; TL = team leader; Country codes: Argentina: AR, Austria: AT, Brazil: BR, China: CN, France: F, Germany: DE, Greece: GR, Hungary: HU, India: IN, Italy: IT, Japan: J, Mexico: MEX, Morocco: MA, Netherlands: NL, Reunion: RE, Romania: RO, Russia: RU, South Africa: ZA, Spain: ES, Sweden: SE, Turkey: TR, USA: US, United Kingdom: UK

Table 2: Self-directed anxiety triggered by language barriers

Japanese people are afraid of making mistakes, and they are afraid of what will happen after that. German people are better than Japanese people in speaking and listening to English, so I think they are more relaxed. If they don't understand what Japanese people are saying, they ask us many questions to clarify. Usually people cannot express exactly what they want to say. These things make us Japanese uncomfortable. (MOTOR2 member 10, Japanese)

Japanese colleagues find it dishonorable to misspeak in a foreign language. They would not want to offend the person that they are speaking to by improper use of the language. (…) I think that's where the reluctance comes from – it's not a drive for perfection, it's more a fear of saying something that would be dishonorable or upset. (MOTORCORP superordinate manager 1, American)

You notice that you lack practice and vocabulary – and that automatically creates the bad feeling that you can't communicate what you want to say and that you may come across incompetent. (AUTO1 member 5, Greek)

You don't want to disturb the general conversation, so if you aren't 100% sure how to say something you don't dare to speak up. I'm standing there, my English isn't so good, maybe I also have to argue my point – that would require excellent fluency. So lest I go under I better say nothing at all. People don't want to be vulnerable. (AUTO1 member 1, German)

The pressure created by the language mandate is extremely high. I would be particularly ashamed if the other colleagues were better in English than I am. (…) Overall, Chinese colleagues are always scared of losing face in front of the larger group. (CAR4 member 3, Chinese)

You don't feel secure in a foreign language. You are missing words, so you can't express what you like to say and don't come across as smart as if you were speaking German. (…) I'm sure many colleagues think I haven't even understood the topic, just because I can't bring it across right. (CAR3 member 3, German)

Table 3: Other-directed resentment triggered by language barriers

Experienced by less proficient speakers of the working language	Experienced by proficient speakers of the working language
I sometimes get annoyed if we have to speak in English only because one person doesn't understand German. I am annoyed that the whole three-hour meeting has to be in English. All of us only understand 80% and miss other things – just because of one person! (MOTOR5 member 2, German-Spanish)	It was really frustrating for the American colleagues when my team would break away into German. (MOTOR2 leader, American)
This dissatisfaction was all a problem of communication. (…) These are small things, but when they pile up, every day a little more, then a critical point is reached and something is bound to happen. (AUTO1 member 4, Chinese)	When we have a meeting and colleagues are speaking Chinese all the time – I made it a habit to just get up and leave right away! (AUTO3 member 4, Italian)
They [the British] were laughing their heads off when we came over, because they were talking among themselves in their slang and we didn't understand anything. I was sitting there and said "Guys, could you PLEASE talk in some kind of style that I can also understand?" (CAR4 leader, German)	When I worked in the US plant, there were three Germans in my team. Of course, whenever they met in the corridor, they talked in German. Some Americans really got steamed up about this – if they walked along the corridor, they didn't understand anything. (AUTO2 member 1, German)

Table 4: Preventing language-induced negative emotions by reducing the impact of language barriers

Moderate code-switching	Allocate speaking time to less fluent team members	Secure understanding through redundant communication
A short coordination in another language is legitimate. But afterwards this group has to state what has been discussed and that the side conversation is over. (CAR2 leader, Austrian)	The team leader needs to meet people where they stand. He just cannot let someone be silent over a two-hour meeting, if on the other side a colleague is talking like a machine gun! (CAR1 member 2, Brazilian)	I think it's my task to say: "Guys, please come again slowly for the stupid German. I didn't catch this, please explain once more." Then they change down one gear. (CAR3 leader, German)
We have one person in the team who speaks no German at all. Everyone keeps forgetting that. I must constantly say: "Hey guys, English! Stop, change back!" And then they look at me grumpily: "Ooh, ok." (MOTOR1 leader, American)	You turn to the Japanese colleagues and you say: "Well, what do you think about this?" Everyone else was polite enough to accept "Ok, now we need to listen to a Japanese colleague." Initially that was how you got them to speak. But later on, they felt more like "I'm ok to speak in this group" and "This group listens to me, this group will respect me." (MOTOR2 leader, American)	Oftentimes you would have to listen to the German speaker and interpret for the Japanese. And the Japanese speakers, you have to listen to them and interpret that for the Germans. Even if it was all done in English, you would still have to clarify different points. (MOTOR2 leader, American)
When I lead a meeting I always say "No conversations in your mother tongues, please! Everyone please stick to English, so that we can all listen." Of course, if we get down into details it may sometimes be more efficient if the team leader quickly confirms something with team members in their mother tongue. It's ok if this is announced. We quickly talk it through and then try to bring this in for the rest of the team. (AUTO2 leader, German)	I'm inhibited myself if I have to present my topics in English. If I have to ask a question to everyone, but got the sentence wrong … I think that happens everywhere. If you notice that you have such people in the team, then you should explicitly give them their speaking turns and encourage them to voice their opinions. (AUTO4 leader, German)	The team leader always has to put extra effort in speaking with those who may not have understood. So we have many meetings about the same issue to secure understanding. You have to build in redundancies. (AUTO1 member 3, German)

Table 5: Mitigating language-induced negative emotions by redirecting MNT members' attention away from language barriers

Use humor and joking	Highlight common goals
Overall, we have a good cooperation despite the sometimes rather bumpy language issues. If someone makes a joke then things look good and positive again. (MOTOR2 member 3, American)	If your team agrees that you all have the same goals, then they realize "Hey! We all go into the same direction, just use different ways!" And when they got this, I noticed, the team really comes together. (AUTO3 leader, German)
If humor comes into play you need certain sensitivity for the language. (…) The longer you lived abroad the easier you will find it to have a casual conversation. (CAR3 member 2, German)	As long as they see the common goal as the highest objective cooperation across language barriers is possible. It really helps to see the bigger picture. (MOTOR2 leader, American)
It's really difficult to make a joke in a language that isn't your own. This can easily backfire. (AUTO5 leader, German)	We have a common goal and are all working towards it. If everyone is willing to do this, then we can deal with all other problems. (AUTO5 member 1, German)

Table 6: Mitigating language-induced negative emotions by reducing MNT members' negative appraisal of language barriers

Convey appreciation of everyone's contributions	Conduct meta-communication
An integrative leadership style is important. If you know that someone doesn't understand so well, you need to go an extra round to make sure he understands. This way you give everyone the impression that their contribution is valued, even if it comes a little slowly. (MOTOR2 member 6, German)	We need joint training sessions to make all parties aware of our communication problems. (…) It is of course difficult to create the necessary interaction, because people feel inhibited. They don't want to admit that they resent what others are doing in the first place. You need to find an elegant way to talk this through. (CAR1 member 1, German)
Just don't pay attention to how long someone takes to speak or if he expressed himself correctly. If you treat foreign colleagues' contributions just like the ones of German colleagues, that does them really good. (AUTO2 member 3, Chinese)	The team needs to understand that there can be language problems in the first place, but that there are also ways to sensitize oneself and others for these effects. (MOTOR 2 member 6, German)
You must put yourself in your colleagues' shoes. What kind of communication are they used to? The most important thing for me is showing appreciation for team members. Give them responsibilities, hear their opinions, and let them speak! (AUTO4 member 2, German)	I think we need to make people conscious of the fact that our diversity is a big asset, (…) that it makes our team richer. It helps a lot if everyone internalizes that. (AUTO1 member 2, German)

Table 7: The positive outcomes of language-related emotion management through MNT leaders

Improved sensemaking	More productive team climate	Increased willingness to follow the leader
Our team leader often schedules several meetings about the same topic. This way he brings us all on the same page and ensures that everyone has understood. (MOTOR2 member 4, German)	In our team, the leader is from America, so the meeting style is very relaxed in my opinion. … Therefore, it is easy for me to talk about my items and discuss them. So this depends on the leader. (MOTOR2 member 9, Japanese)	I had everyone participate in these decisions: how do we organize ourselves? How do we communicate? Who calls whom? In the end, I secured that everyone supported and accepted this. … You have to give people the feeling that there is something in it for them - this really motivates them to contribute to the team. (AUTO1 leader, German)
If team members are talking and the leader notices that they do not understand each other because of German-English issues, then he steps in: "Wait, what exactly did you just say?" At least 10% of his job consists in mediating between groups, I think. (CAR5 member 1, German)	If the leader clearly communicates his requirements and expectations, he can change the team's culture. Then Chinese colleagues can open up, saying "Ok, the boss wants me to say what I need, so I'll do this next time." We are all flexible, after all. (CAR4 member 3, Chinese)	In functional team 2, we are quite integrated. I think it is a matter of how open the leader is. The leader of functional team 1 is also quite open now, but team 3 ... not so much. That makes it more difficult for the Japanese to integrate themselves into the functional team. So it really depends on how the leader acts. (MOTOR2 member 10, Japanese)
It is a little time-consuming for the leader, but he must take care that employees speaking a foreign language also somehow get all the information. He needs to motivate the others to address the foreigner directly and to clarify issues with him. (CAR2 member 2, Italian)	If people have the general impression that they are treated fairly, then they will forgive smaller blunders and say "He just didn't know this, he didn't mean it that way." … Fairness on the personal level is the prerequisite for a task-related discussion. (CAR3 leader, German)	A leader with empathy can achieve so much more than someone who tried the "steamroller tactics". You need a person who mediates between the different worlds to bring the team together. (CAR5 member 3, German)

Figure 1: Overview of language-induced emotions, MNT leaders' strategies to mitigate them and related leadership outcomes

Emotion management through MNT leaders

Positive leadership outcomes

General leadership strategies	reducing the impact of language barriers	redirecting attention away from language barriers	reducing the negative appraisal of language barriers
Specific measures to implement strategies	- moderate code-switching - allocate speaking time - communicate redundantly	- use humor and joking - highlight common goals	- convey appreciation - conduct meta-communication

creates →

- improved sensemaking

- more productive team climate

- increased willingness to follow the MNT leader

increase

Language barriers

mitigates

provoke →

Negative emotions

self-directed anxiety	other-directed resentment
- fear of face loss - fear of negative evaluation - fear to miss important information - distress of being unable to express oneself adequately	- resentment of the language mandate - resentment of more proficient speakers' influence - resentment of code-switching

reduce

Performance