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Preface

The Linguistic Foundations of Management: Insights Across Contexts

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The 24th issue of *Discourses on Culture* brings together a collection of works that examine one of the most pressing and dynamic questions in contemporary management research: why, and how, language matters. As outlined in the Call for Papers for this thematic issue, scholarly attention to language has grown significantly, including across organizational theory, international business and critical management studies. This issue responds directly to that call by showcasing contributions that move beyond a functional perspective of institutional language use toward perspectives emphasizing inclusivity, reflexivity, responsibility, and ethical practice in multilingual and multicultural organizational contexts.

At a moment when technological change and globalization are rapidly changing the nature of communication within organizations, language is emerging as a fundamental element in dealing with the challenges these changes are bringing on both institutional and individual level. This is powerfully articulated in the opening interview with Professor Gail Fairhurst, whose extensive body of work on discursive leadership provides a conceptual anchor for the entire issue. Fairhurst reminds us that leaders “do things with words”, and that discourses furnish the repertoires through which both leadership and followership are enacted. She calls for more nuanced, mindful, and dialogic approaches to organizational tensions, particularly those arising from paradox, technological acceleration, and the rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI).

The articles that follow take up these challenges from diverse disciplinary, methodological, and cultural standpoints. Several contributions engage directly with the rapidly evolving landscape of generative AI. The opening article by Sułkowski, Chidlow, and Lehman proposes algorithmic discourse research as a new paradigm for organizational inquiry, arguing that large language models (LLMs) are now discursive actors shaping communication, sensemaking, and knowledge production.

Complementing this, Tienari and Khoreva offer a critical perspective on how management “performs” AI as magic, revealing the ideological work done through language in an era of technological hype. This theme is expanded in Philipp and Sułkowski’s analysis of Generation Z in hybrid workplaces, which highlights how AI tools mediate identity, feedback, and collaboration. Their narrative review underscores the shifting norms of workplace digital communication and illuminates the potential tension between efficiency and authenticity. These articles point to the profound linguistic and cultural realignments unfolding as AI becomes integral to organizational life.

Other contributions broaden the scope of the issue by foregrounding regional, political, and cultural contexts. Szymański and Kaltenecker map Latin American scholarship on language and management, revealing how local histories and linguistic practices enrich global debates. Neshkovska’s analysis of wartime political discourse, although focused on geopolitical crises, offers insights highly relevant to organizational crisis communication, showing how narratives of victimhood, legitimacy, and moral polarization operate through powerful linguistic choices. The role of ideas and discourse in institutional analysis is examined by

Silva and Garcé, who revisit the “argumentative turn” and argue for discourses as epistemological pillars in management studies. This attention to legitimacy and public discourse is further developed in Kunwar’s study of vernacular publics in Finland, which demonstrates how everyday online debates can destabilize institutional legitimacy through irony, affect, and boundary-making.

Several articles explore discourse in domains where culture, representation, and identity intersect. Yip’s analysis of Beatles lyrics shows how popular culture can function as a site of discursive leadership, shaping gender identities and social meanings. Intamart’s critical discourse analysis of the *Académie française* illustrates how institutional language policies work to maintain symbolic boundaries and gendered hierarchies. Gündüzalp brings the discussion back to organizational practice by demonstrating how school leaders communicate, negotiate, and cultivate a “quality culture” within educational institutions. Finally, Hoyte-West takes us into the fictional universe of *Babel*, offering an interdisciplinary reflection on the institutional management of translation and hierarchy in a colonial fantasy setting, providing a creative commentary on language and power.

The contributions in this volume offer an expansive, critical, and forward-looking perspective on language in management. They invite us to rethink how linguistic choices shape inclusion and exclusion; how discourses construct power, legitimacy, and identity; how communication mediates crises and change; and how AI challenges our assumptions about authenticity, agency, and meaning.

As Editor-in-Chief, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to all authors and reviewers who contributed to this issue. My gratitude also goes to Professor Gail Fairhurst for her illuminating interview, which sets the tone for the contributions that follow.

We hope that this issue not only advances scholarly conversations but also serves as an invitation to continue exploring how language remains central to the ethical, cultural, and strategic challenges of contemporary organizational life.

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