

LANGUAGE CHALLENGES AND INTERNATIONALIZING ORGANIZATIONS' DEVELOPMENT DYNAMICS: IN SEARCH OF LITERATURE GAPS

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Abstract

Replaced within the field of Language in International Business, this contribution considers the impact of languages choices on the balance of power between the various internationalizing organizations and their internal and external stakeholders. Encompassing various types and sizes of organizations, we scrutinized it at the successive stages of their international progression, in the various geographical areas, building on the work by Tenzer et al.(2017).The systematic analysis of 79 articles related to Language and International Development Strategy pinpoints the 'fills' and 'gaps' of the existing literature. For each of these stages, early managerial implications are identified and further research developments suggested.

Key Words: Language choices; International Business; International Development Strategy; Internationalization stages.

Introduction

The impact of language on international business, though brought early in the fore by various authors, like Nigel Holden (1987), has, for long, been largely left aside by management literature.

It is the merit of some scholars, like, Denise and Lawrence Welch, Anne Will Harzing, together with Rebecca Piekkari, among others, to have largely contributed to associate in research Language and IB management. Special attention has been devoted mainly to MNCs, insofar as these have been fueling a large part of the international trade and investment flows, mostly from Anglo-Saxon countries. Core researches have been noticeably addressing the impact of language on relationships between headquarters and subsidiaries, on organic and external international corporate growth (e.g. international M&A). Other scholars embarked early in this research field, with either strategic lenses as entry modes, (Hutchinson, 2005) or a functional approach like IHRM, (Kassis Henderson, 2005); adopting, for some, a more linguistic oriented angle, such as the *lingua franca* and/or as business *English* as a *lingua franca* (as BELF, Ehrenreich, 2010).

Most recently, in 2017, A.W. Harzing with other scholars, contributed largely to the analysis and to the stimulation of the academic literature on this field, by presenting, beyond this initial MNC focus, a thorough review of a quickly extending field, covering a comprehensive scope of articles and giving a large set of directions for further researches.

With the growing importance of traditional and new types of smaller organizations -such as “born global” companies or “international new ventures” (Oviatt, Mac Dougal, 1995, 2005) and the steep international growth of organizations from fast growing economies (FGE)¹, new language related questions are rising and require to be systematically addressed in relation to their international development strategic and managerial challenges associated to their internationalization strategy.

Such appears the research gap to investigate, by focusing on a literature review surveying the recent publications dedicating to language diversity applying to internationalizing and evolving entities, at strategic, organizational and functional levels; considering simultaneously this impact on individuals, on groups, as well as on the organizations themselves. Hence, this approach would have to associate the linguistic dimension to some classical IB concepts and theories (such as internationalization stages, psychic distance etc.) with newer ones (like international new ventures or international champions from fast growing economies).

All the dynamic interactions, following the international progression (or regression) of the diversity of internationalizing organizations (corporations, NGOs, local communities...), encompass language issues, requiring assessing their impact, following the successive steps of their international opening and development. What is definitely at stake here, is to suggest some paths towards the identification of linguistic management, and strategies (Hurmerinta et al., 2015) for a variety of organizations, without excluding any individual and collective stakeholders involved, directly or indirectly, inside as outside them, wherever they are deploying, in order to optimize this key, though underestimated, dimension of organizations ‘international development strategy (IDS).

In such a perspective, the proposed approach of the impact of language on International development strategies and management dynamics, after reviewing the data sources and the adopted methodology, will successively consider the organizations’ geographic deployment facing the changing balance of international trade and investment flows. This would include the

¹ Combining high average rate of growth and catching up level of GDP per inhabitant (see below).

progression process of internationalizing organizations, whose pace differs from one to another, through a matrix combining the three steps of the organizations' international progression ("first landing", "go native" and "multinationalization", from Lemaire 1997, 2003, 2013), within and between the major UNCTAD geographical areas (North to North, South to South, North to South and South to North) (UNCTAD, 2016), *in search of the 'fills' and the 'gaps' of the relevant literature ('literature density'), reviewing the most and least studied 'step/area couples' of the field, as* the key language related problematics addressed by the authors. This would be leading to an identification of some likely research orientations which could stem from this analysis.

A new geographical Balance

The necessity to reconsider the geographical balance and the new international economic actors' emergence appears when addressing the language issues of international business: actually, a chronologic contrast appears in the analyses and tools developed during the previous seven decades following WW2, as far as it relates to organizations' international development. The nature and origin of the actors involved have significantly evolved, since the first part of the period (up to the late 90s and early 2000s). They were, then, still dominated by the MNCs originating from the North (USA and Europe).

The evolution of the trade and investment flows during the second part of this period, have been affected,

- first, by the accelerating extension of areas opening to international trade and investment, which can be observed, as comparing the number of member countries of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, in 1947 (23) and the present number of member countries (more than 150) of the World Trade Organization which replaced the GATT, in 1995; as well, the progression figures of international trade and investment flows are, also, impressive²;

- second, by a quick diversification of actors, mostly since the early 2000,

- stemming from the evolution of the respective economic weight of the various economic areas, which has significantly changed the balance between OECD economies and the rest of the world, associated with the emergence of new economic actors from the formerly called "third world", as the 'international champions from fast growing economies' (Matthews 2006, Bonaglia et al. 2007, Ghemawat & Hout 2007, Lemaire 2007),

Due also, to the technological upheavals, which have been stimulating the 'born global' companies or 'international new ventures' (Oviatt & McDougall 1994 and 2005, Meier & Meschi 2010), which multiplied in the sectors largely impacted by new technologies and reaching, for some of them, amazing sizes within a few years, like the famous GAFAM, which rank, nowadays among the largest capitalizations of the financial markets and deploy their networks in the whole world; their group, enlarging constantly, offers a benchmark for a larger and larger set of startups, whose economic model exposes them, since their inception, to the international competition –if not offering them, at least, virtually, a large scope of opportunities everywhere.

Consequently, MNC and North-to-North relationships, as literature's priority focus, has remained important until a recent period, but cannot be sufficient to cover the essential of

²Following the UNCTAD report, *Key statistics and Trends 2016, a bad year for world trade* p.14: "The increase in world trade between 2004 and 2014 was largely driven by the rise of trade between developing countries (South–South). By 2014, the value of South–South trade had reached almost \$5.5 trillion, a magnitude close to that of trade between developed countries (North–North)." To note that, while the South-South trade was representing \$ 5.5 trillion, North-North, represented about \$ 6 trillion, North-South, about \$2.5 trillion and South-North, about \$ 4trillion. which demonstrate, the already established importance of actors from the South.

language issues related with organizations' international development strategies and management. It seems, then, necessary to consider:

- on the one hand, smaller internationalizing entities, whose turn over can reach, at short notice, the highest levels, while their structures can spill over all over the world and confront them to collateral strategic and managerial challenges, including language ones;

- on the other, the traditional MNCs' geographical playground's extension, diversifying their linguistic and cultural exposure, combined to the quick and paradoxical evolution of their geo-political (e.g. the raise of protectionism combined to opening of previously less accessible areas) and economic environment (e.g. raising competition from the fast growing economies' international champions), which could affect, directly or indirectly, the trade and investment flows and, consequently, their activities and development.

In such a perspective, language raises a new set of challenges, which would significantly differ from an activity to another:

- In the services and B to C activities, outsourced production of traditional industries, necessitating proximity to customer or cost reduction (like textile, toys), or highly regulated activities (as distribution, telecom..) would lead to more 'localization' and, as a matter of fact, would be confronted to necessary language compromises and flexibility, in order to properly serve the local customers or relate more effectively to local authorities, local providers or local opinion leaders;

- Conversely, for standardized products, B to B and highly technological activities, already well established MNCs, for long largely geographically deployed, would be submitted to less pressing linguistic challenges, as they would rely on a wider and, often, international enduring experience. *A priori*, these would more easily adopt a *lingua franca* model. Most of times, English –Business English as a Lingua Franca, BELF- would be of current practice for most of their higher and intermediate staff, with access to networks and data centers supposed to serve a diversity of users. However, other languages could still challenge such dominance (Chanlat, 2014), as enlarged reverse innovation³ (Peltokorpi, 2015), could possibly impose, in the future, the use of other languages, imposed by the new technologically dominant companies coming, for instance, from the South.

Revisiting international stages theory

Shifting from the macro economic environment dynamics, another dimension could help to segment the language IB related academic contributions, from a more micro economic point of view, relating to the International organizations, themselves, using the theory of stages, inspired by some classical authors, like Douglas and Craig (1989). This theory adopts a sequential approach of internationalization, distinguishing successive phases, steps or stages which are still commonly followed in a perspective of progressive international expansion, often starting with proximity –geographic or cultural- target areas, to, progressively, evolve towards

³ As popularized by Vijay Govindarajan and Chris Trimble as well as by General Electric's Jeffrey Immelt (as soon as Oct. 21, 2009, How GE is disrupting itself, *Harvard Business Review*), reverse innovation or trickle-up innovation is an innovation seen or used first in the developing world, before spreading to the industrialized world. Beyond this definition, could be noted that companies like the two Chinese leaders of the world telecom infrastructure sector, Huawei and ZTE, have, during the past years, taken the lead of patents deposits and became technology leaders, as the new standard designer in the world technical organizations ruling the activity. This could question progressively in the future the linguistic dominance of English, at least in some technological area (Lemaire, 2013).

more and more distant areas, capitalizing on the increasing international experience of the organizations.

Lemaire's three stages approach to international corporate development strategy (1997, 2003, 2013) fits our purpose to classify literature articles, by distinguishing levels of corporate engagement abroad, at different distances –geographic and/or cultural. It conveys, also, at each stage, respectively, diverse types of internal and external relationships. They are crucial for success, in the country of origin as well as in the target country/ies, at the highest levels of their progression; within the extensive business multicontinental network they have set up.

Following this model:

The “first landing” phase (SI-1),

At an initial stage of internationalization, the organization will discover other national, cultural, linguistic contexts, often through imports or through occasional exports, often without already structured plan for further internationalization. It could also correspond to the exploration of new areas: without previous international experience, the organization considers going abroad as a necessity, for instance to balance its activity's cyclicity, in its area of origin. At this stage, no language policy would be clearly defined and the few people in charge of occasional import or export are often selected in accordance with their basic knowledge –frequently limited- of international trade procedures and with their practice of the language of foreign providers or customers (if these would not master, themselves, the language of the early internationalizing organization). For systematic exploration, preliminary to a more structured internationalization, the organization will rely on specialized and experienced competences –if any-, from inside, or hired at this occasion, or on external support services which will fulfill this kind of mission. As far as the ‘psychic distance’ is one of the major and one of the earliest commented determinants of the internationalization decision (Vahlne, Wiedersheim-Paul, 1973), language flexibility and adaptability could be considered as leading to success. The practice of the local language of each target area/country could better secure –even more than a regional or a world lingua franca- the access to local information, local contacts, as to further local developments. This could explain the choice of many organizations to privilege geographical and/or cultural proximity (which can include language). At this early stage of internalization –as, possibly, later-, language could be a discriminant orientating the choice of target countries retained for occasional trade or for exploration and, for more, if a real potential and access are identified (Welsh, Welsh and Marschan-Piekkari, 2001). Hence, the resulting language challenges would be still rather limited in terms of trust, misunderstandings, frustration, or conflicts, as far as the relationships would be still limited and, often, the priority would be given to a cultural and/or geographical proximity limiting the language exposure.

The “go native” phase, (SI-2)

At the more advanced second stage, when regular trade and/or, even, investments have been already established, within a specific entry mode (e.g. sole venture, through organic or external growth, joint venture, or, at a lighter level, through licensing or distribution agreements), actually, the major challenge, would be, often, the foreign new comer's acceptance by the local authorities, the local staff, the local customers, providers and subcontractors, opinion leaders etc., all concerned, internally and/or externally, by the laws or taxes compliance, the sales, the production or the supply chain of the organizations.

Each corporate function staff –H.R., marketing, production, finance, control...- has to possess the language skills corresponding to their respective missions: with a dominance of local language for the ones which would be related to the local stakeholders, and, conversely, with a dominance of the language of the country of origin or of a lingua franca, for those which would be more interacting with the headquarters, or would be regularly related with other mother

company's foreign subsidiaries, partnerships or contracting entities (Harzing and Feely, 2007). From this stage, the formulation of a language policy becomes more and more crucial, especially if the de-located structures are being established in a diversity of countries/areas. At this "go native" stage, the organization's priority is to become locally accepted and the local language becomes, then, a must, even if the point of adopting a 'lingua franca', similar -or even different- to the country of origin's language, can already be raised. Along with the local language, it would be used, in parallel, respectively, with specific sets of internal as external stakeholders, individuals as groups and organizations, local staff or expatriates, with justification of their differentiated personal/professional background and missions. In order to avoid a multiplication of misunderstandings, frustrations and conflicts, it seems, then, necessary to define, as soon as reaching that stage, a real language policy. This would become, even, more a necessity at the ultimate stage of internationalization.

The "multinationalization" phase (SI-3)

This third stage of internationalization concerns a diversity of organizations, of various sizes –often, large- which could be established, either in a limited set of countries, concentrating in a limited area (e.g. proximity area), or with a more extensive geographic distribution (at continental, multicontinental or global scale).

However, all of these would be conscious of the necessity of seeking, beyond the more or less extensive locations network,

- a better coordination of their activities (in order to become more effective, to be less cost consuming, to more effectively diffuse, internally, their information as their good practices etc.),
- a better harmonization of their procedures (in order to ensure quality, to facilitate control, to speed up the industrial, financial and marketing processes..),
- as a permanent concern for optimization of the corporate value chain and resources repartition, adjusting permanently the structure of their organization, of their production flows, as well as their HR (Davoine, 2012), technological, industrial and financial functions.

For them, the language issues are manifold and could lead, from a MNC to another, from an area to another, to a large set of language policies: such as including common corporate language (a *lingua franca*, either the home's country or another one), or adopting a limited set of shared languages, with or without a hierarchy among them, or accepting a large flexibility (Reiche, Harzing and Pudenko, 2015). These can be questioned since the organization would be confronted and submitted to abrupt changes, as it is often the case when occur mega-mergers and acquisitions, critical strategic adjustments related to changes in the shareholders base, in the competition, or, more permanently, in the political-regulatory, economic and social as technological environment (Lemaire, 2013).

Beside the geographical corporate activities display, these Stages of Internationalisation can provide a second convenient axis to address the language challenges.

The methodological approach

Such twofold approach "IT&IF/SI" –combining geographic International Trade and Investment Flows with Stages of Internationalization-, aims, then, at exploring present and promising research areas, of this fast-growing field, 'Language challenges and internationalizing organizations'. It focuses, more specifically, on literature "fills and "gaps", referring mostly to the period following the WTO creation and relies essentially on the Tenzer, Terjesen, Harzing (2017) recent and comprehensive review of literature. Encompassing 264 journal articles on

language issues over the last thirty years, in extensive international business contexts, it provides a reference base for reviewing the pertinent contributions on these issues.

This ‘literature review’ will “feed” a matrix combining two dimensions –the four major types of geographic International trade and investment flows (IT&IF), within and between the “North” and the “South” with the three internationalization stages (IS) previously mentioned. It will lead to split the diverse ‘linguistic exposure’ situations in 12 boxes, in order to apprehend, first, the linguistic challenges associated to each of them and, then, to measure to what extent they have been explored by the recent existing literature.

Hence, some of the 12 ‘boxes’ of this matrix will appear largely filled with key literature references related to linguistic issues, while some others would focus on ‘gaps’, requiring more in depth identification of language issues to address, as well as to precise the research process to apply, in order to generate some future pertinent answers.

The review of International Development Strategy literature is sorted considering:

- first, the sectors and areas, to which it could likely apply from the observation of the recent evolution, distinguishing the sectors through their global/local level (Lemaire, 2013), as the evolution of their respective geographical environment, following the four geographical areas proposed,

- second, the organizations themselves, considering the strategic behavior which would stem from their sector’s maturity, their size and their area of origin, in order to sketch their organizational constraints which would suggest hypotheses about their linguistic challenges,

- third, a first assessment of the accessible literature relating linguistic issues to each of the ‘stage/area couples’, referring to the existing literature, especially for the most explored ones (e.g. North to North and MNCs); relying more on assumptions, for the most recently developing areas and organizations (the three other T&I F areas), as the more recently involved organizations, -born global as organizations from FGE- whatever their respective stage of internationalization.

From these would stem the language related major international strategic and management problematics and challenges, following the organizations’ international development process, providing:

- for scholars, possible avenues for further researches, identifying from this specific IT&IF/SI angle, less explored internationalization contexts and situations, as their related language challenges, and sketch out their drawbacks for the organizations and their various stakeholders in the different areas they operate,


- for corporates, beyond the validation of these academic research contributions, some analysis grids for a better identification of possible language strategies and decisions applying to the diversity of constantly evolving contexts -both, internal (headquarters, subsidiaries, partnerships.) and external (home/local customers and providers, home/local authorities and opinion leaders etc.); leading to progressively improve and fine tune their existing or possible, ‘language policy’.

Internationalization stages/trade and investments flow matrix

A first Matrix pinpointing the geographic and stages challenges IT&IF/IS, combining areas international trade and investment flows with corporate internationalization stages (Table 1), will review the geographic flows’ characteristics and evolution trends in each of the 12 IT & IF/SI ‘couples’ or ‘boxes’, related to the size and the origin of the organizations involved in each of them.

Table1: The Geo Stages International Challenges Matrix {IT&IF/IS}

Combining areas of international trade and investment flows/corporate internationalization stages

Trade & investment flows (T&IF) → (orientation & density)	North		South	
	North-to-North (Nt n) (for long most intense and dominant and enduring flows while losing progressively their relative weight to StN and StS)	North-to-South (Nt s) (also established for long, still important flows but losing progressively their relative weight to the benefit of StN and StS)	South-to-North (St n) (part of the flows established for long but steeply growing at NtN and NtS expense, with significant change of nature)	South-to-South (St s) (more recently established but steeply growing at NtN and NtS expense with significant evolution of nature)
Stage of internationalization (SI) (organizations concerned & language and/or IB literature intensity) 				
SI 1: First landing	<p>*Corresponding to early inception of proxy and progressive cross-border to distant relationships (e.g. within EU, between EU and US,</p> <p>→ concerns mostly SMCs for occasional trade with limited available language competences, could be larger companies for systematic exploration with more language resources</p> <p>→ Refers to the most ancient IB literature and to the 'psychic distance' to which language issues largely contribute</p>	<p>*For long, largely rooted to the colonial and post-colonial economic relationships (e.g. between Europe, Africa, Latin America, India.)</p> <p>→ as for NtN with regular preference for MNCs to rely on European affiliated regional headquarters to initiate operations (e.g. EMEA)</p> <p>→ Refers to international economics and cultural proximity literature and to an enduring practice of the former colonial State language</p>	<p>*For long, at that stage, import flows piloted by Northern organizations from the former colonial State and extending from there to the RoW (similar areas as NtS)</p> <p>→ organizations concerned initially comparable to NtS, but quickly evolving towards a quite differentiated pattern, with MNCs from FGE involved</p> <p>→ Refers partly to a similar literature, as of NtS, but has still to expand in order to clarify the impact of the evolution of T&IF and of their language impact</p>	<p>*More recent area of T&IF expansion, it relates mostly to FGE, resource or/and market seeking, to less advanced emerging countries</p> <p>→ involves largely MNCs from FGE in certain quick developing sectors, but, also regional SMCs envisaging proximity/regional development</p> <p>→ Refers to a new type of IB literature (e.g. on international champions from FGE) and on case studies of early development of emerging countries SMCs or MSCs</p>

<p>Table 1</p> <p>SI 2: Go native</p>	<p>*Will depend on the time to market /pace dictated by the competition in the local sector the organization targets and of the commercial and regulation evolution (e.g. in EU, US...)</p> <p>→ Concerns all types of companies from SMCs to MNCs, with differentiated approaches (decentralization v. centralization choices) impacting on language choices with significant stress on local language</p> <p>→ Referring for long to an abundant set of literature, often case based, which would relate, for instance, to CSR, with occasional connections to language issues</p>	<p>*Will largely depend on macro-economic local issues and bilateral country of origin/target country relationships and of the level of support of the governmental world or regional organizations.</p> <p>→ Concerns all types of companies from SMCs to MNCs, but with differentiated approaches (decentralization v. centralization choices) impacting on language choices with significant stress on local language</p> <p>→ Refers to a rather abundant set of literature, often case based, privileging focused approaches on projects or supply chain with occasional connections to language issues</p>	<p>*For long largely related to subcontracting/ de-locating policies of Northern MNCs, it tends more and more to evolve towards conquest strategies of FGE MNCs (as on access protection of Northern countries)</p> <p>→ Concerns mostly companies from the North but, more and more, from the South, with significant impacts on trade and on investments, raising new issues, especially for the FGE companies including for language choices</p> <p>→ More abundant references on delocations, with a growing number of articles/case studies dedicating to FGEs' MNCs and occasional connections to language issues</p>	<p>*Without a really significant assessment of its real consistency, due to the rather recent developments of these flows, some few geo strategic or punctual issues are currently considered or visible</p> <p>→ Involves largely MNCs from FGE in certain quick developing sectors, but, also SMCs envisaging proximity/ regional development with still limited approaches on language choices</p> <p>→ Less references on StS FGE companies than on their StN expansion, although some slowly progressing contributions, especially case studies and occasional language issues considered</p>
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<p>Table 1</p> <p>SI 3: Multinationalization</p>	<p>*Applies for N to n flows, to the most global sectors (with high R&D, industrial, marketing. levels of investments, with fierce competition inside and among the most affluent areas in the world; with the recent emergence of the 'digital sectors'</p> <p>➔ Concerns essentially MNCs but, also recently appearing 'born global' becoming global giants (e.g.GAFAM) of contrasted sizes, originating not only from the North but, more and more, also, from FGE, integrating EU/US into their organizational network</p> <p>➔ Referring for long to a abundant MNC literature covering a comprehensive set of functions and issues, concentrating a large proportion of existing publications on language but necessitating to be more developed on new types of digital organizations</p>	<p>*N to s flows remain still important from mature economies, eager to take advantage of, both, fast developing local demand and still low production costs; however, challenged by local constantly improving technology and quality offer and progressing StS flows</p> <p>➔ Concerns essentially MNCs, eager to diversify their geographic risk portfolio and to step into high potential markets to boost their growth; being conscious that all would be depending on the acceptance of local stakeholders (authorities, opinion leaders, customers., as, of course, local and FGE competitors)</p> <p>➔ Even relying on an expanding literature, the recent changes would create new language issues to address associated to Northern MNCs' selected penetration strategies, both, in the new and in the quickly evolving traditional Southern target areas</p>	<p>*S to n flows striking progression not only has been steep but, also, has profoundly changed of nature, with the Northern industries' supply chain re-deployment, as, due to the more and more growing flows from FGE aiming at expanding North to take advantage of their innovation and quality improvements.</p> <p>➔ Concerns as well major Northern MNCs (as even, smaller sized ones), efficiency seeking, through cost cutting, as MNCs from FGE, market or strategic asset seeking, both to rely on a large set of entry modes (including M&A, partnerships, organic growth) , all raising coordination, harmonization and optimization issues.</p> <p>➔ If IB literature is quite well developed, and North rooted, the organizations' challenges addressed are often on a par with Northern MNCs operating NtS; language differentiated impact between business model would deserve attention, as the language challenges of MNCs from FGE more recently involved</p>	<p>*S to s flows are the less well known among the T&IF, as far as they have been recently developing in a double perspective, regionally, on a cross border basis, as far as economic zones (like ASEAN or Mercosur were offering such possibilities) and/or on more a more intercontinental perspective, for instance from Asia to Africa</p> <p>➔ Concerns mostly FGE MNCs of major or of intermediary size in areas of comparable economic, social, technological maturity where they can more easily challenge Northern MNCs; they can adjust better than them their approach of more comparable customers, providers, and regulation systems..., notwithstanding the culture and language gap they have to fill up.</p> <p>➔ Beyond the relative scarcity of IB literature, few references would be available on language challenges, case studies and academic analyses on entry strategies, on organizations' structuration in these areas as their functional policies, including their culture and language local approach and relations with their headquarters would be almost un-existing.</p>
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It would introduce the related language literature of the second table, "The literature intensity matrix" (Table 2), displaying among the 12 boxes the key literature references, their number, using their quotation index if available, as a complement and a validation tool, upon the basis of the existing 'Language in I.B. literature' (referring to Tenzer, Terjesen, Harzing's 264 retained articles). Such matrix would allow to better assess the 'fills' and 'gaps' of the related literature and facilitate the identification of research related areas to explore as to test the priority issues and problematics interesting the organizations' international Strategy concerns.

Trade & Investment Flows/	North EU countries, North America and Japan		South Africa, Latin America India Korea/ Eastern Europe/ Turkey/ BRICS		To world
Stage of Internationalisation	North to north (13)	North to south (4)	South to north (3)	South to south (5)	From/to, both, North and South
SI 1: First Landing Total = 10	- Swift, J. S., & Wallace, J., 2011 - Fidrmuc, J., & Fidrmuc, J. 2016/ Peltokorpi, V. 2015 - Hurmerinta, L., Nummela, N, Paavilainen-Mantymäki 2015	- Tan, H., & Gartland, A. (2014).	0	- Evans, S. 2013. - William, D.A 2011	- Isphording, I. E., & Otten, S. 2013 - Oh, C. H., Selmier, W. T., & Lien, D. 2011/ - Lien, D., Oh, C. H., & Selmier, W. T. 2012
SI 2: Go Native Total = 15	- van den Born, Peltokorpi 2010 - Harzing, A. W., Koster, K., & Kroon, D. P., Cornelissen, J. P., & Vaara, E. 2015 - Magner, U. 2011/	- Boussebaa, M., Sinha, S., & Gabriel, Y. 2014 - Yamao & Sekiguchi, 2015 - Zhang, L. E., & Peltokorpi, V. 2016/	- Kankaanranta, A., & Lu, W 2013 - Du-Babcock, B., & Tanaka, 2017/	- Demirbag, M., Glaister, K. W., & Tatoglu, E. 2007.	- Olson-Buchanan, J. B. 2013. - Ku, H., & Zussman, A. 2010 - Lopez-Duarte, C. & Vidal-Suarez, M. M. 2010 - Voss, J., Albert, I., & Ferring, D. 2014. - Slangen, A. H. L. 2011 - Joshi, Amol. M., & Lahiri, Nandini. 2015/.
SI 3: Multinationalisation Total = 12	- Melitz, J., Toubal, F. 2014 - Ehrenreich, S. 2010 - Cuypers, I. R., Ertug, G., & Hennart, J. F. 2015 - Tenzer, H., & Pudelko, M. 2015./	0	- Zhang, L. E., & Harzing, A. W. 2016		- Jeanjean, T., Stolowy, H., Erkens, M., & Yohn, T. L. 2015/. - Harzing, A. W., & Pudelko, M. 2014 - Sweden-Lauring, J., & Klitmoller, A. 2015a. - Kedia, B. L., & Reddy, R. K. 2016. /Hinds, P. J., Neeley, T. B., & Cramton, C. D. 2014. - Selmier, W. T., & Oh, C. H. 2013 - Kedia, B. L., & Reddy, R. K. 2016/ .
Other: Multi stages Total = 6	- Sauter, N 2010/ - Rogerson-Revell 2010/			- Cayla, Bhatnagar 2017 - Devaer, Lee, Lee 2013 /	- Selmier, Oh, 2012/ - Tenzer, Pudleko 2015/

Towards validation of the IB / language analysis

The above IB/language analysis framework requires, then, to be validated by a more precise reference inventory, referring to the 2017 language and IB literature data base, through the identification, for every box of this matrix, of the articles which would refer to the area/stage on focus (see Chart #5 & Chart#6 Literature references repartition matrix): it would provide:

- a selection from the 264-reviewed article by Tenzer et al. (2017) in relation to each box,
- retaining the top articles, identified through their quotations index (above 49).

This would contribute to corroborate the first assessment of the ‘fills’ and ‘gaps’ of the language and IDS related literature, as the early conclusions, stemming from this ‘literature intensity matrix’. It would, then, lead to better engage in the process of identification of the international language challenges and of the likely language strategies to adopt. It would require, refining the scope of the existing literature, to select more precisely the articles which could be retained and positioned on the boxes of the Literature intensity matrix.

The first step was to define the scope of the issues, by selecting full length articles relating to international management language (linguistic distance, corporate language implementation, cost of language..), international human resources management (expatriation, global teamwork and languages..), as well as entry modes (export and trade, market expansion, merger and acquisition..). Were included studies on language in a strictly national context, as far as national language reference is core for the SI-1 “first landing” and for the SI-2 “Go native” stages; and, in a wider geographical context, for all three stages, especially in relation to SI-3 “Multinationalization” stage, with topics relating to native target countries language versus HQ language or Lingua Franca and BEFL, Corporate versus local language, etc.. See below the table Chart 2 topic summary.

Chart #1 Main Topics of Reviewed articles on Language and IB (2010 to mid-2017))

International Human Resources strategy	International Development strategy	Role and impact of Language in a National Context	Transversal Impact
Expatriation	Merger and Acquisition, and Alliances	Native language advantage	Resistance and Accommodation
Global Team Work	Export and Trade and FDI	BEFL & Corporate language	Social identity/ Social capital
Linguistic Competence impact	Cost of language	Linguistic distance	Linguistic Costs and Risks Cultural Cost and Risks
Local vs Non-Native Power relations	HQ /Subsidiary relations and Power	Intra -Country language and Power Relations	Balance of Power relations Symbolic Violence
Perspective: Individual level and Group level	Perspective: Firm level	Perspective: Country level	Perspective: Multilevel
GAPS : Missing Topics	Born global Company and language: does not appear on the listing of reference Choice of Mode of Internationalization and Language: only indirect references		

The selection stems from the 264 articles reviewed over a thirty-year period (1987 to 2016), in the article by Tenzer, Terjesen and Harzing (2017). Were excluded review editorials, research notes, books and book chapters, as well as papers on marketing and those related to translation issues and research methodology. Their synthesis of that corpus provides the geographic distribution of the data; the theories and methodologies, as well as a summary of the core findings, for each one. From there, is proposed a future research agenda suggesting more cross-disciplinary collaboration (psychology, linguistic, neuroscience) as well as multi-level cross national research collaboration – and, potentially, new data sources.

For the retained purpose, articles were selected from the most prolific period of publication: 2010 to mid-2017, which amounted to 202 articles, providing a basis for further selective steps leading to the final selection of 79articles, which constitute the basis for this IDS focused literature review.

- The current paper selection relies on this review, providing a sound basis for the investigation.
- Such technic of secondary level exploration of a published literature review is not unusual, and it has been implemented by some authors (asChurch-Morel and Bartel-Radic, 2013⁴).

Tenzer et al. review gives an historical perspective on how language has evolved over the last thirty years, as a research subject in international business. Then, from their initial list of 264 articles, annexed to their article, were selected those published between 2010-2017, leading to a shorter list of 202 articles, from which have been identified recurrent topics on the influence of language on the more focused on IDS topics, as summarized following the three phases previously mentioned.

Chart # 2 Classification of internationalization stages

Phases of Internationalisation and Language Influence studies	
Stage of Internationalization 1: First landing	Occasional import/export, exploration, ➔ Local Language prevailing
Stage of Internationalization 2: Go native	Joint-Ventures, HRM, Alliances, Subsidiary Management, ➔HQ language to balance with local language
Stage of Internationalization 3: Multinationalization	M and A, local subsidiaries network deployment ➔.HQ language/corporate lingua franca v. local languages

⁴Following the same logic as Amy Church-Morel and Anne Bartel-Radic (2013) who presented a literature review at Atlas AFMI 2013 conference, based on articles extracted from Adler and Harzing (2014) list, and, then, proceeded to complete it with other journal articles in “Language diversity in International Business Research : a state of the Art in Six Images”.

As a second step of selection, was applied to all the 202 articles, researching key words that could be related to the IDS topics, such as: “export”, “international”, “decision”, “ trade”, “strategy” , “HQ”, “Corporate”, “Subsidiary“, “Expatriation”, “Lingua Franca”, “Merger and Acquisition». One title could have 2 or more key words⁵ -cf. summary table (Chart 4) below.

The recurrences of words in the titles give a first indication of the key topics covered, regrouped here: general management (22), from a corporate level (12), with combined issues associating Trade and Power (16), as associating Headquarter and Expatriation.

Chart #3: Titles’ Key Words Recurrence

Key words	Number articles
Management	22
Corporate	12
Trade, FDI	8
Power	8
HQ/ Subsidiary	7
Expatriate	7
Lingua Franca	7
M &A	6
Strategy	5
Decision	4
Leadership	4
China	4
Conflict, tension, Friction,	3
Cost	3
Export, Prospecting	2
Trust	1

This search leads, then, to a selection of 73 articles (i.e.35% of the 202 titles), constituting the basis for the focused review of literature on language impact on the internationalization strategy. This, in itself, gives an indication of this topic relative weight among language/general IB items literature. During the reference period (2010-2017) could be observed a steady increase of the number of publications: 28 articles between 2010/2013 and 35, since 2014.

As a third step, using Google Scholar, were collected their quotation indexes,in order to evaluate their level of diffusion and impact on the field⁶ : 7 articles are rated between 150 and 282 and 10 have an index of 80 to 110, while the remaining 53are under 80. However, the most relevant articles to IB Strategy have a very low quotation index (between 5 and 15). This list of 73 articles, selected upon the analysis of their abstracts (Church Morel 2013) has been completed with another 6 articles⁷, to reach 79 articles for the review (list provided in annex),these were then classified into the literature intensity matrix (See Chart 5).

⁵These key words were taken from the international strategy literature (Lemaire 1997, 2010, 2013) and the international human resource management (Harzing 2007).

⁶Based on Harzing’s methodology (2017:6) Google Scholar was used here rather than Scopus or Web of Science as it has a better coverage in the Social Sciences domain.

⁷ Reference articles were identified because they were recurrently referenced by our referenced articles.

Then, the corresponding leading articles (below 80 quotations) could be identified within the 12 boxes from Table #1 (in Annex), showing a rather unequal balance (some of these boxes remaining empty or poorly filled, which can be interpreted as being research ‘gaps’).

The geographical display among the four geographical oriented flows categories, had to be completed with an additional column for articles applying to the “world level”. As well, some articles would cover two or, even, the full set of the three stages which required adding a line corresponding to this more holistic category.

Chart # 4 Literature intensity matrix

Trade & investment flows (T&IF) → <i>orientation & intensity</i>	North: EU countries, North America and Japan		South Africa, Latin America India Korea/ Eastern Europe/ Turkey/ BRICS		To World
Stages of internationalization (SI) (<i>organizations concerned</i>)	North to north	North to south	South to north	South to south	From N and S.
SI 1: First Landing Total= 10	4	1	0	2	3
SI 2: Go-Native Total =15	4	3	2	1	6
SI 3: Multinationalization Total= 12	3	0	1	0	7
Others: multi stage Total = 6	2	0	0	2	2

This table displays a total of 43 articles from a data base of 79. Thus, almost half of the articles reviewed could not fit in this matrix: some were not relevant to the subject of IDS and management; others would have required a finer analysis of their content – which would be done at the next step. This is a limitation of the work presented today. However, hopefully, this matrix could still be a good indicator of a more general trend, in term of researched ‘gaps’ and ‘fills’ (yet to be confirmed). From this preliminary attempt of classification, a slight domination of SI-2 topic -‘go native’ strategy- can be observed. This might be justified by the fact it includes the topic of culture which is a much-researched field.

Problematics addressed by the key authors, related to language challenges

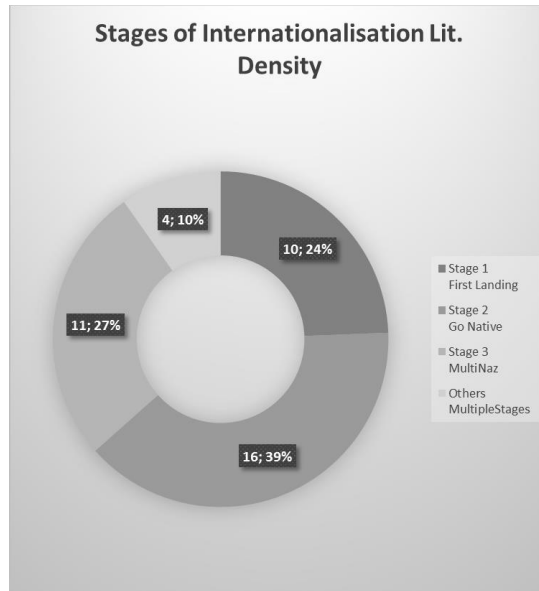
Hence, in terms of impact of language on IDS, these 43 articles (indexed in the full 79 articles bibliography annexed) can be ordered *ex ante* and *ex post* the start of the internationalization process.

- *Ex ante*, the point would be to address the language influence on the decision to go abroad and on the entry strategies to envisage (stage 1).

- Then, *ex post*, once the firm has developed an international presence, at local, multi-local (stage 2), or multinational level (stage 3), the linguistic impact on management is central, addressing different issues: How do multinational teams work together? What are the linguistic challenges of relationships between foreign establishments and corporate headquarters? What is the role and contribution of expatriates? Etc.

- Eventually, a third category of contributions can relate to linguistic issues of miscommunication, accommodation and resistance, which can be addressed at each of the three stages.

Chart # 5 Stages of Internationalisation Literature Density



Language and entry strategies

First phase of Internationalization, “First landing stage

During this stage, the ability to communicate directly, i.e. without translators or other intermediaries is an essential quality to develop internationally. Thus, *during the first phase of Internationalization, “First landing stage”*, sharing a Common Spoken Language (CSL) is proven to be more important than developing trust, sharing ethnicity or, even, sharing a common native language (Melitz, Toubal, 2014). This ‘*lingua franca*’, very often English (Nickerson, 2005; Boussebaa, Sinha, & Gabriel, 2014; Jeanjean et al.2014) plays an especially key role as an international business language.

For example, Williams (2011) found that, for Jamaican entrepreneurs mastering English language, the decision to engage in exporting is based on firm’s size and industry. Williams stresses the importance of taking the context into account of linguistic studies as did Egger and Lassman (2015). Since, in this case, English language as a managerial resource was not found to be a significant factor in influencing exporting decision. Conversely, Lautanen’s work (2000, cited in Williams 2011), based on Finnish firms from the manufacturing sector, concluded that it was the language skills of the entrepreneur that mattered most in the decision to export, and not the financial risk, the lack of experience related to exporting or the education level of the white-collar workers. The debate remains open.

Fidrmuc and Fidrmuc (2016) demonstrated that pairing two randomly chosen individuals in two different countries who were able to communicate directly in English improved the probability to do business abroad. Frankel and Rose (1998) (cited in Fidrmuc 2016) found that two countries that share the same official language tend to have 1.8 times more trade than two others without a common language; an effect that is similar in magnitude to having a common border; which confirm Melitz and Toubal (2014).

Language capacity seems to develop at each stage of Internationalisation and the usage of Business English can provide an accommodating space without becoming the only one, leaving space for host, native and other common languages (Kankaanranta 2013). However, language skills can create a “knowledge corridor” (Hurmerinta et al 2015) which, either, encourages or prevents decision makers from seeing a number of international opportunities if they are to centrically focus on their own organizations. Although a specialized language improves the efficiency of communication, it also implies costs; since communication with those who do not speak that language becomes more difficult. Therefore, “*specialized languages should only be used when most appropriate; i.e., when the gains are largest or in a complex, non-routine environment*” (Debaere et al. 2013). The emergence of English as business language along with digitalization has improved linguistic efficiency – regardless of cost consideration.

At first, IB was concerned mostly with geographical distance. However, when it could not fully account for European trade patterns, Beckerman (1956: 38 cited in Dow et al. 2016) suggested that it should be accompanied with psychic distance, which he considered, partly due to language difficulties.

Psychic distance is defined in the first Uppsala model of Internationalization by Johanson and Vahlne (1977) as “*the sum of factors preventing the flow of information to and from the market*” (1977: 24, cited in Dow et al 2016). These factors included “*differences in language, culture, political systems, level of education, and level of industrial development*” (Johanson & Wiedersheim-Paul, 1975: 308 in Dow et al. 2016).

Referring to these differences, Dow et al. (2016) advance that linguistic proximity is a criterion that supports investment decisions. They looked at the equity stake taken by foreign acquirers in local targets, studying acquisitions in 69 host countries from a multinational based in 67 countries. They found that linguistic distance has a negative impact on the equity taken by acquirers in targets: a lower equity stake is taken when the linguistic distance and difference of lingua franca is high. They conclude that “*language has an impact on managerial decisions that is to separate from that of culture and from that of other dimensions of psychic distance*” (Dow et al. 2016). This linguistic distance effect is particularly proven to be true for US based firms, except in the cases of Korea and Japan, because of their particular shared history going back to World War II (Debaere et al. 2013).

In terms of transaction cost, speaking a common language has more impact on FDI than on trade (Oh, Selmier, Lien, 2011): fluency in a common language reduces linguistic distance. It is considered as a key to successful internationalization strategy; by giving access to a level of tacit local information, which would, otherwise, be difficult to reach. Therefore, reducing linguistic distance should be “a driver” in the choice of entry modes (Dow et al. 2016). For example, by considering working with local partners through a joint venture rather than starting from scratch a wholly owned subsidiary, or by opting for a foreign franchise rather than for a direct implant. However, the topic of language impact on governance choices remains very scarce as indicated by Dow et al. (2016) who referred only to two relevant journal articles.⁸

Does English Language deserve its place as the most common business language? Researchers Oh, Selmier and Lee’s (2011) transaction cost analysis and empirical results confirm that speaking a common language increases substantially FDI and, to a lesser level, trade. More precisely:

Speaking a common official language increases bilateral imports by 43% -*ceteris paribus*, and if either country in a pair speaks English, bilateral imports increase by 95%.

⁸One article is about Spanish firms entering foreign markets from Lopez-Duarte & Vidal-Suarez, 2010 and one is about foreign firms entering Turkey, from Demirbag, Glaister & Tatoglu, 2007; these articles were subsequently added and taken into account for our own literature reference list (see Annex).

Speaking French marginally increases imports by 13%; however, the increased transaction costs of Spanish and Arabic reduce imports by 10% (...) in the trade model, English (143%) and French (79%) increase inward-FDI flows “(Oh et al.2011).

The same researchers, focusing on the impact of language on bilateral trade, studied 58 economies sharing one of the ten most influential global languages in the world, and they represented altogether 79% of the world's GDP. Albeit lower than the effect of geographic distance, sharing a common language has a definite impact on bilateral trade (Ly cited in Pudelko et al.2014). From a transaction cost perspective, English language has the lowest cost, followed by French: meaning that individuals will get higher benefits by learning either one, over Spanish and Arabic (Oh, Selmier, Lien 2011).

Overall, avoiding language barriers is THE key element for developing international trade because they are “*obstacles to effective communication, which arise if interlocutors speak different mother tongues and lack a shared language in which they all have native proficiency*” (Reiche et al.2014) and affect intra and inter-unit communication barriers (Barner-Rasmussen & Aarnio, 2011).

The indirect cost of Language barriers has been estimated to be equivalent to a 7 percent non-tariff tax (Ku and Zussman 2010). Learning English language, followed by French language, seem to be the most cost-efficient solution to improve trade and FDI. More generally, it is the ability of speaking directly, using a common language that matters, and not necessarily one's native language. In fact, “*proficiency in a common non native language can help overcoming historically determined language barriers*”, and in today's world, English language has this role, although not in China (Ku, Zussman 2010).

International Ventures Management

In the second stage of Internationalization, “Go Native stage”, the research focus is mostly on language policies and their implementation at the level of human resources practices, team management, communication flows and relations between headquarters and subsidiaries.

The first challenge is that language policies are not always clearly defined; the corporate language (CL) could be of three sorts: the mother companies', the local language, or a third language, foreign to everyone. Each option has different consequences on international venture management.

A recent study of multiple acquisitions originating from the USA, finds that high linguistic distance has negative effects on post-acquisition performance (Keddia and Reddy 2016). Also, a lack of alignment of language policies with strategic orientation, between the home country and the local host country, generates separation rather than cooperation (Van den Born and Peltokorpi 2010): “*intergroup boundaries may arise, causing expatriates and local employees to be divided in groups and out-groups*”.

Expatriates, who are reluctant to learning the local language have a negative impact on the work relationship (Zhang, Harzing 2016; Zhang, Peltokorpi 2016; Freeman Olson-Buchanan, 2013), as it is in the case of host country employees who resist speaking the corporate language (Reiche et al. 2015). In general, refusing to share a common language has a negative managerial impact. Conversely, HQ employees who are fluent in host-country language influence positively the level of knowledge transfer and the level of information with headquarters (Peltokorpi, 2010). When there is some reluctance to engage in communicating with the language that has been chosen as the corporation's official language, Luring and Klitmoller (2015) make three suggestions: avoid telephone meetings, keep CL for formal exchanges only, and do not try to use CL in an informal way to develop informal relationships. In short CL is for business. A common language to work together being a necessity, some hybridization tends to occur, for example,

because of contextual reasons in host countries (Van den Born and Peltokorpi, 2010). In the case of English language, even if native speakers are aware of the need to accommodate to non-native speaking English, there are unable to do so efficiently (Sweeney, Hua, 2010).

Language and Globalisation

At the level of Multinationalization, it is essential to develop a global language strategy (Neeley, T. B.2012), and to implement it throughout the organization. According to Van den Born and Peltokorpi (2010):

Language policies in MNCs should be aligned with HRM practices and strategic orientations for control, coordination, and communication purposes in terms of ethnocentricity (i.e., home country orientation), polycentricity (i.e., host country orientation), or geocentricity (i.e., international orientation).

Multinational organizations can make use of a Corporate language (CL), that could be the Headquarters', although English seems to be the most cost efficient, while capitalizing on their employees sharing common languages and respecting the variety of working languages. MNCs may use two or more languages in internal communication and leave the issue of formal corporate language ambiguous, in order to avoid negative reactions from non-native or non-fluent CL speakers groups (Van den Born, Peltokorpi 2010). One interesting strategy of resistance from the part of subsidiaries, to HQ corporate language imposition is through translation (Melitz, Toubal,2014; Logemann, Piekkari 2015; Zhong, Chin 2015), as a way to exercise power over meanings:

Headquarters exerted control over “mindsets” and practices, while subsidiaries responded by resisting these meaning systems” with local managers proposing different translations into local language to fit with local meaning (Logemann, Piekkari2015).

Eventually, being able to communicate directly, using what could be named an International Managerial Language -IML- (Martin O'Brien, 2017)⁹, in whatever language fits best, is essential to the success of International Strategy Development and management.

Miscommunication Issues

The advantages of a shared corporate language are multiple: knowledge transfer with HQ is enhanced (Peltokorpi 2010), implicit knowledge and communication improves and contributes to a shared identity (Reiche et al 2015).

On the other side, the influence of language differences, can be a source of negative emotion, such as anxiety (Tenzer, Pudenko, 2017), as they would be in post-merger acquisition situations, for example:

We define perceived anxiety as typical fears and worries expressed by our informants as a result of the change brought about by the merger. This included fear about one's own job, general integration tensions and perceptions of uncertainty as to what the merger would mean for them, as well as for the company. Status attribution is the result of how informants see their status being affected or changed relative to their colleagues and counterparts (Kroon, Cornelissen and Vaara 2015).

⁹International Managerial Language, IML, is an inclusive proposition for all the variations of Business languages studied in the organization, sometimes as a lingua Franca, as BEFL, or Corporate Language, and Link language. See Martin-O'Brien, GEML Conference 2017: The impact of International Management Language on Indian Manager.

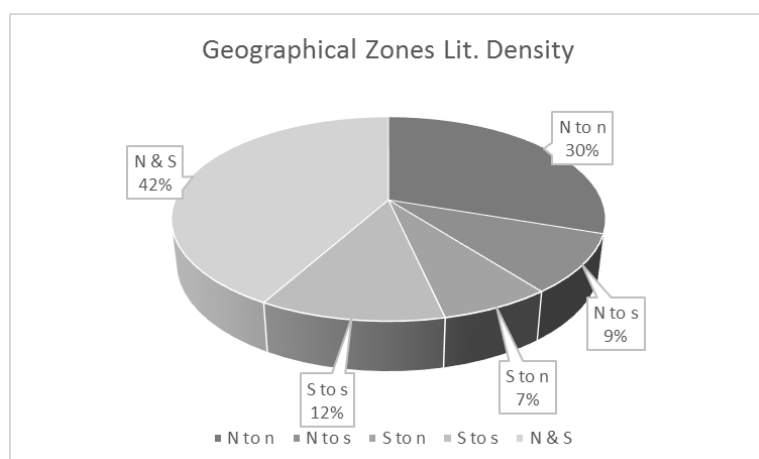
It can also be the source of other-directed resentments (Tenzer, Pudelko 2013, 2015), resulting from the generation of an imbalance of influence and power. Differences in ways of speaking or interacting can lead one party to believe that the other is either intellectually incompetent or deliberately uncooperative or combative (Rogerson-Revell, 2010). A lack of language skills can falsely create an intense sense of professional incompetence. Inversely, professionals with a high proficiency may claim expert power (Tenzer, Pudelko 2017; Sliwa, Johansson, 2014). Those who are not so proficient tend to remain silent, rather than appearing incompetent or stupid and team may develop a sense of “we” versus “them” attitude (Hinds et al. 2014).

Diverse strategies of accommodations are developed such as: parallel information networks development (Harzing 2014), or some normalization strategies such as “let it pass,” and ‘lack of other repair’, which focus on message content, rather than its form and speech and including the avoidance of high-context language, which results into being too implicit for nonnative speakers (Rogerson 2010). It is only when individuals have developed strong relations amongst themselves that communication avoidance is reduced (Lauring 2015). And trust is increased amongst international team members, which results in better collaboration (Tenzer, Pudelko 2014). Native Language domination takes a powerful turn when it reaches board level. For example, Ehrenreich (2010) advances that German firm by instating the use German language for board meetings, rather than corporate English language, while demanding that English was spoken by newly hires, meant to keep full control of the strategy and the future.

Identification of the ‘fills’ and ‘gaps’ and managerial implications

These literature repartition matrix (Chart # 4) and key references repartition matrix (Chart # 6), aim at pinpointing, from a geographical approach of trade and FDI flows combined with a stages of internationalization approach, the ‘fills’ and the ‘gaps’ of the language related to IDS challenges, leading to some early results.

Chart #6 Geographical zone repartition



Not surprisingly, as presumed, *North-to-North* flows would come first, not only for their still dominating share of the international trade flows which is however decreasing. Actually, in terms of ‘literature intensity’, this area appears as particularly well ‘literature filled’: as the most frequently analyzed, including language and IDS related subjects, at each of the three stages of the organizations’ internationalization, especially, at the Multinationalization stage (Reiche, Harzing and Pudelko, 2015). This could be explained by the long-lasting influence of the academics from the ‘North’, and by their proximity to the organizations of their area of origin

operating from this part of the world. Among these, following Tenzer et al. (2017), the US scholars, as citizens of the parent country of the most ancient and powerful MNCs, have been the most prolific; often focusing on the Multinationalization phase (stage 3).

On their side, Northern European scholars' analyses have applied to more diversely sized companies, at each of the three stages of the internationalization, with a special emphasis on SMEs' international expansion challenges (including language, see Marschan-Piekkari, Welsh and Welsh, 1999), as far as their smaller countries' organizations had to become international to survive. In addition, has to be noted that 'first landing' focus is largely represented in the IB foundation literature of the 70s.

As described on Annex #1, the relative weight of these North to North organizations' category of flows has decreased, due to the steeper growth of other categories, notably South-to-North and South-to-South. So, the hypothesis which can be retained, in terms of language strategy, is that cultural and language distance reduction, would be, for each organization operating in this category, at most of the stages, to adopt the most accessible language: e.g. organization's HQ language, or a *lingua franca* largely spoken in the Northern area, like business English (Kankaanranta and Planken, 2010). The limitation would be to keep flexible the linguistic relationships with the different local stakeholders, as well, external (regulators, opinion leaders...), as internal (less qualified and educated staff), as far as their language would be different from the organization's chosen common language.

History and anteriority of *North-to-South flows* evolution can explain that this category of flows orientation would still rank rather high. One could, however, notice the renewal of research items related to this category of T&I flow, shifting from the international project and international supply chain focus, with few mentions of language challenges, to subjects related to the changes of accessibility of many Southern countries, especially since their adhesion to the WTO; hence, for the Northern organizations, the necessity to overcome the language challenges related to these new opportunities. They would have to improve their language effectiveness, as well, especially facing FGE regional competitors, whose comparable culture and language practices could facilitate their approach of local stakeholders: taking more into account local language preferences, they could prove to be more effective, both, externally, at first landing stage (S1), for instance when negotiating, and, internally, at 'go native' stage 2, when managing local staff, as to limit the turnover and increase the positive effects of the staff motivation, (Peltokorpi, 2015), or in relation with their local customers and providers.

Paradoxically, the increasing importance of *South-to-North* flow, results simultaneously from initiatives from the North and from the South, and has inspired new themes for further literature.

For example, it would apply to Northern organizations' operations in the South (like in China and in other areas, for long, 'closed' to trade and investment), through relocation of facilities or subcontracting to produce locally, 'efficiency seeking' (Dunning, 1994). This can lead to encourage the use of the mother country's language in the internal relationships with the local subsidiaries or contractors; as well, at the executive levels, notwithstanding the difficulties to be always understood by their local counterparts, at lower levels of the hierarchy (Sweeney & Hua, 2010), as by the other local stakeholders (authorities, providers etc.).

On the other hand, organizations from FGE, as soon as they are sound enough in their country and region of origin, would be eager to break into the Northern areas, still the most affluent in the world. Markets and strategic asset seeking (Dunning 1994), they would multiply partnerships, M&A, if not organic growth, being ready to pay the price of adopting, at least,

there, the local language(s), notwithstanding the adoption by the headquarters –if strategically justified- of the language of some major foreign subsidiary¹⁰.

In the last and more recently developing category of *South-to-South flows*, less explored by the IB literature, organizations from FGE would have a definite advantage, as far as they have a closer maturity level to the area's and to its stakeholders –either, political and regulatory, economic, social, and technological- than their competitors from the North. They could have, notably at the early stages of their international development, the possibility to balance the use of their country of origin language with their target countries language(s), overcoming more easily 'linguistic' or 'language' distance (Hutchinson, 2005; Vidal-Suarez, Lopez-Duarte, 2013); especially if these have more cultural proximity with theirs.

Literature appears then, with a rather unbalanced repartition, among these various categories of flows, even if the language/IB literature has been significantly taking off during the last decade. It seems, however, still under the influence of reference publications which apply to a largely or partially, outdated environment, even if their analysis can still be useful. In any case, it needs to be refreshed, updated, completed and, even, renewed in depth, as already demonstrated by some IB authors – like Johanson and Vahlne did from 1977 to 2009¹¹; this, in turn, leading to sketch out some avenues for further research.

Concluding Remarks

As previously observed through the 'fills' and 'gaps' of the matrix, there are, then, some areas largely opened to further research on the topic of language and International development strategies.

Beyond the traditionally studied MNCs operating in the North, following the traditional progressive international development schemes, it concerns first, the new areas where trade and FDI flows tend to intensify steadily, with some new strategic challenges, together with related linguistic issues to deal with.

But the most pressing research needs would stem from new categories of actors, such as:

- the '*international champions*' from FGE, whose ambition, since the early 2000, tends to cover all geographic areas of international trade and FDI flows, whose share is to increase more and more, following the abrupt changes of the balance of economic weight between North and South,

- the '*born global*' enterprises, which result of the technological, digital and communication upheaval, which affects economic models and corporate organization schemes. Amongst them, some organizations have already demonstrated their capacity to grow amazingly fast, skipping the usual stages of the internationalization process, thus renewing the categories of the used matrix.

More generally, there is a need for studying language effect *on smaller firms venturing* abroad in the wake of the important contribution of the Northern European IB research, as most

¹⁰ Which has been the case of a Chinese computer and digital devices designer, Lenovo, at the occasion of successive major M&A, mostly in the US, adopting quite early, a few months after the acquisition of its first major US company, English as its corporate language (Lemaire J.P., 'The Lenovo Way: Overcoming strategic, marketing and multicultural challenges from China to the Rest of the World', Atlas AFMI conference: Paris, 2018).

¹¹ When questioning the initial (1977) so called "Uppsala model" applying to corporate international development, to propose a new version taking into account the changes of the international environment as it could be observed in 2009.

existing work is still mainly concerned with MNCs. One line of research in relation to international strategy is being opened with quantitative studies based on the gravity model, to measure the linguistic distance and trade decisions. Also, qualitative research on this subject could be an interesting introduction or complement, with, for example, a comparative study of interviews with international managers/ decision makers, to learn more precisely about their decision process to venture abroad.

Until now, the theme of International Development Strategy and management usually appears secondary, compared to the other issues addressed by researchers emphasizing inter and intra firm relations with a major focus on HQ and subsidiary relations. Further research could also be focusing on linguistic risk management – using the linguistic Risk Index – and building on the Uppsala model and psychic distance, as a key variable of international strategy development.

The three stages model of Strategy of Internationalization (Lemaire 1997, 2003, 2013) could be used to address the issue of power and language, which has already been done, in term of the domination of English, as a spear carrier for American power (Lien, Oh, Selmier 2012). It could be further explored to gain a deeper understanding of how language issues impact each of the 3 phases (Sweeney, Hua 2010; Boussebaa et al. 2014; Tenzer, Pudelko 2017; Hinds et al 2014; Wright et al 2001; Lobeman, Piekkari, 2015). And could benefit from an original perspective provided by the framework of Pierre Bourdieu applied to the international field, using its key concepts of ‘capital’, ‘symbolic violence’ and ‘habitus’ . This outlook upon Internationalization could open interesting perspectives of research (Vaara et al. 2005).

A tentative contribution of this article is to connect bodies of literature that do not often converse, using language as a common variable between Language and Internationalization Strategy.

Overall, relatively little is known about the use and role of what could be called an international managerial language (IML¹²) as a tool of adaptation to globalization and for Internationalization development strategy and implementation. A reason might be that language being a trans disciplinary subject; another is that the dominance of English language in research has created a veil around the issue of English language as an influence factor for Internationalization process. Here, we exemplified the usage and transfer in practice. More research is needed to look systematically to the nature and implications of IML in multinationals and SMEs (including Born Global). Maybe this will open a line on the topic of the power of language in management, as a variable of importance.

¹²This IML term is a proposition to include the many variations of Business language in the organisation, sometimes as a lingua Franca, as BEFL, or Corporate Language, and Link language.

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Annex

Full bibliography of reviewed articles On Language in International Development Strategy

Note : Starting with a total of 79 articles reviewed, at the end only 43 *articles appear listed on Chart# 6, as having Language related to international development. The unlogged 35 articles were not related to IDS focus. This is an indication of opportunity for new research topics on the subject of Language.

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