forms of plurilingual speech and the parallel use of two or more languages in the same communicative event.

All these forms of habitual language behaviour constitute what we called at the beginning of this subchapter a localised communicative culture or, rather, different kinds of communicative cultures that exercise an influence on the doxa and on localised language management measures even if they might remain without impacting the endoxa determined by the company's global management. The results are the mentioned polyphonic social representations. As stated above, the notion of 'measures of language management' covers all forms of intervention in the linguistic repertoires and language use of employees. In this sense, Jamal H., addressing Mara S. in German and allowing German in his team meetings, and Nathalie D., recruiting only French-speaking people for her laboratory, adopt measures of language management at their level of the hierarchy as Tobias B. does at his. In this sense, recurrent language practices certainly do influence language management measures.

What emerged from our analysis is that language users are aware of the language capital represented by their plurilingual repertoires and that its management – from the global level of international business communication to micro-management at the level of working groups as well as individual choices concerning communication strategies – belongs to the shared responsibility of all participants. Despite the obvious fact that top-down language management measures do influence individual's linguistic behaviour and perceptions (for example with respect to the role of English as corporate language), the observations regarding who speaks with whom, in what language, for what reason, in what way and at what time frequently obey other rationales and may even seem to be subversive with respect to the endoxa.

3.2 Interactional negotiation of linguistic heterogeneity: Accommodation practices in intercultural hotel service encounters

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3.2.1 Hotel service encounters and front-desk real work

The development of the service sector is a generalised phenomenon and has had a profound impact on labour conditions in the past several decades (Boutet, 2008, 85). Service encounters have been the subject of a relatively large number of studies addressing various situations of service in terms of actual practices provided as well as the experiences of professionals themselves in real work contexts (e.g. Aston, 1988;

Joseph, 1988; Relieu, 1991; Zimmerman, 1984; Jeantet, 2003; Dubois, 1999; Weller, 1999; Knight, 1999; Filliettaz, 2004).

Since the pivotal work of Erving Goffman (1959) in particular, who first contributed to delineate service encounters as a field of research, other perspectives have emerged regarding service interactions highlighting the "real" collaborative work done by professionals and service-users. By focusing on the interactional level of analysis, perspectives such as ethnomethodology (Coulon, 2002; Fornel et al., 2001), cognitive sociology (i.e. Valléry, 2004; Gadrey and Zarifian, 2002; Falzon, 1997; Gadrey, 1994) and interactional linguistics (e.g. Mondada and Oloff, 2011; Filliettaz et al., 2008; Filliettaz, 2006) have contributed to highlighting the complex nature of service interactions and the multitude of tasks that are performed and their diverse nature (i.e. contractual, technical, relational, ritual). These perspectives point to the fact that the professional skills that are mobilised in the workplace are less procedural-driven and more a form of competence and expertise which is both individually and collectively produced and fundamentally inseparable from the situated context of its implementation (Filliettaz et al., 2008; Filliettaz, 2006). Thus, beyond purely technical or procedural skills, customers – with their various needs – tend to mobilise relational competences along with politeness and manners in service interactions (Joseph, 1988; Aston, 1988). According to this, it appears that service encounters are strongly composed of *language and communication work* (e.g. Félix-Brasdefer, 2015) and moreover are penetrated by power relations (Gadrey, 1994) that are not unilaterally separated. Indeed, in a business context, clients tend to exert a significant influence on the situation (Callahan, 2006).

Although service interactions between "hosts" and "guests" are definitively considered to be a major managerial challenge and decisive in the success of trade in the hospitality sector (Solomon et al., 1985; Bitner et al., 1990; Fisk et al., 1993; Keaveney, 1995; Mattila and Enz, 2002; Harris et al., 2003), sociological dimensions and interactional aspects in front-desk service interactions, that are likely to arise in a tangible manner, remain largely unexplored. The hotel industry invests significant financial and human resources in the optimal management of customer-staff interactions (Wang and Mattila, 2010, 328) and countless procedures and models have been designed and implemented to improve and optimise service encounters (e.g. Price et al., 1995; Chebat and Kollias, 2000; Harris and Ogbonna, 2006; Coelho and Augusto, 2010; Melton and Hartline, 2010; Gwinner et al., 2005). Despite this, the study of service interactions in the hotel industry from a perspective that is based on the analysis of *actual* practices as they occur in real work situations is thus lacking.

Yet, the purpose of understanding the real relational work in service encounters is even more solicited when focusing on front-desk service encounters involving linguistic and cultural diversity between service providers and customers. How do front-desk service providers display and mobilise professional competences which

are expected in order to meet their clients' requests? What professional communication skills do receptionists engage in with customers? How is language used to build professionalism and expertise? How do front-desk service providers interactionally deal with the diversity of clients? What real practices do they use to deal with 'otherness' (perceived or manifested)? How do linguistic (and cultural) aspects become relevant in service interaction and how are they handled by both staff and clients? By adopting an interactional perspective (Filliettaz et al., 2008) and by taking into account verbal dimensions, this chapter aims at highlighting the interactional and communicative work that service providers and customers jointly accomplish in order to achieve successful service transactions in intercultural and multilingual service encounters.

3.2.2 Linguistic and cultural heterogeneity

In the hotel industry, and particularly in international front-desk contexts, much attention is paid to linguistic diversity. In fact, linguistic-related issues strongly intervene at two levels at least: first, in terms of the commercial transaction (a mutual understanding of information, content exchange) and, second, in terms of the interpersonal relationship between the exchanging parties (the professional competence of the employee, care-taking of the client). Furthermore, languages are often seen as particularly visible cues through which people are 'identified' as well as categorised and associated with cultural and/or national backgrounds.

In relation to this, scientific research on intercultural service encounters tends to consider *culture* as a salient variable. Furthermore, culture mediates interaction and actors' practices and provides successful service encounters and transactions (Moufakir, 2011; Sharma et al., 2009). This is also made visible in the idea of a culture-based competence (also 'intercultural communication competence' as highlighted in Section 1.4.3) that service providers should be able to display in interactions (Angouri, 2010). In this sense, specific training programs that exist in the hospitality service industry provide standardised procedures for the way in which employees should interact with international customers. These programmes address intercultural dispositions (Gudykunst et al., 1977), cultural dimensions (Hofstede, 1980; Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012), cultural competences (House et al., 2004) and also cultural intelligence (Thomas, 2009; Livermore, 2011) that service providers should be aware of while dealing with customers.

In intercultural hotel service encounters, however, scientific research is still in its early stages (Wang and Mattila, 2010). Indeed, studies tend to focus on management issues such as resource optimisation as well as conditions of customer satisfaction including in intercultural situations (e.g. Eiglier and Langeard, 1977; Parasuraman et al., 1988; Sergeant and Frenkel, 2000; Gremler and Gwinner, 2000; Sharma et al., 2009;

Wang and Mattila, 2010; Mouffakir, 2011; Grandey et al., 2011; Evanschitzky et al., 2011) and far less on how the participants contextually use and mobilise language and communicative resources to accomplish desk transactions and tasks. Besides this, when research actually turns to considering the participants' communicative practices, as Kidwell (2000) says:

> concern centres not so much on the participants' difficulties in understanding or producing words or sentences that may result from their limited linguistic proficiency in a common language, but rather on difficulties that may result from what researchers call their lack of 'shared background' (...) a range of cultural and socio-pragmatic issues that may affect participants' communication (p. 17).

In other words, cultural aspects and intercultural skills are particularly relevant elements in the hospitality service. At the same time, there is also a risk of considering the cultural dimension as an *a priori* explanatory variable which determines peoples' behaviour (Blommaert, 1998). In the hotel industry, such a risk tends to become reality when considering 'intercultural communication'. According to Piller (2011, 8), intercultural communication focuses on how groups communicate, in other words, on how groups have specific communicative practices in the case of "cross-cultural communication" (p.8). Indeed, this approach postulates "an assumption of cultural differences between distinct groups" (Piller, 2011, 8). As suggested by Piller (2011), such an assumption of cultural differences between groups is mostly based on stereotypes and generalisations that are "nothing more than an instantiation of banally national ways of seeing" (p.73). In other words, national stereotypes and generalisations tend to smoothen traits and to avoid taking into account other social categories (i.e. gender, class, and age) or interactional aspects likely to influence or intervene in situations of contact between social actors or groups. As Blommaert (1998) points out:

> The emergence of 'ethnically' or 'culturally marked' aspects of communicative behaviour is most often dominated by factors other than cultural ones such as, frustration and anger, powerlessness or a feeling of threat may trigger ethnic style (p. 8).

In line with the subjects just discussed, in this paper we consider intercultural or cross-cultural hotel service encounters less in terms of difficulties or breakdowns due to presumed different cultural backgrounds – a "problem approach" following Kidwell (2000). Rather, according to the same author, we intend to adopt a "success approach" that "has its aim explicating the resources that *enable* participants to accomplish their communicative tasks" (Kidwell, 2000, 18). In such a way, the question we want to answer – in line with Vickers (2004) – is why are linguistically and culturally diverse encounters relatively trouble free?

3.2.3 Front-desk language negotiation: Communicative practices and accommodation work

Despite the great amount of linguistic, national and likely cultural heterogeneity, what becomes strikingly visible when we observe front-desk encounters in hotels is the fact that transactions between employees and clients are somehow mostly 'peacefully' achieved. As Vickers (2004) suggests:

> Intriguing is the fact that we live in an increasingly global and intercultural world, which means that people from different cultural backgrounds engage in communication with each other quite frequently, and many of these encounters must be relatively trouble free because tasks are accomplished, deals are made, treaties are brokered, technical problems are solved. In short, people from different cultural backgrounds engage in and succeed in negotiating (p. 13).

That means that the participants have to handle their diversity interactively (whether perceived or manifested) and work together to achieve a *shared definition of the situation* in which they are involved. Such interactive activity is primarily realised through all sorts of verbal and non-verbal communicative practices, including language use and in particular language negotiation. Indeed, according to Gumperz (1982), language choice as well as alternation phenomena from one language to another (code-switching) allow the participants to make visible or signal "contextual information equivalent to what in monolingual settings is conveyed through prosody or other syntactic or lexical processes. It generates the presuppositions in terms of which the content of what is said is decoded" (p. 98). In this regard, then, we need to consider how the actors themselves negotiate language use and language choice (a concept introduced in Section 1.4.2), throughout interactions since language alternation's semantic efficiency comes from the effect of contrast produced by the consecutive transition from one language to another. To identify modalities and practices through which actors negotiate and make intelligible to each other their language use and choice, we will draw on an interactional analysis perspective considering language negotiation as a locally emergent and relevant collective achievement between interactants.

Auer (1984; 2013) defines language negotiation as "the transition from divergent to convergent language choices (i.e. the moment where one common language-of-interaction is found)" (2013, 8). Such a negotiation implies sequential, moment-by-moment, switches from one language (or variety of language) till a common language is explicitly or implicitly adopted among participants. As hotel reception encounters are typical institutional situations "characterised by a power differential as well as a desire to please the interlocutor" (Callahan, 2006, 31) in which specific roles, complementarity and commercially-oriented activities are somehow expected, language negotiation practices could be analyzed as mere forms of adaptation or "accommodation" to

hotel customers. Indeed, according to the Communication Accommodation Theory (originally Speech Accommodation Theory) elaborated by Giles, Bourhis and Taylor (1977), interlocutors may adopt language choices in a way that their speech nearly converges or better adapts to that of an interlocutor in order to please him or get his or her approval (see also Giles and Powesland, 1997).

However, if commercial deference is a central aspect orienting the way hotel employees interact with clients and language adaptation undoubtedly becomes a useful methodology in this context, therefore language negotiation is not purely reflecting the participants' preferred choices. Following Neville and Wagner (2011), language switches are rather strongly involved in the development of the interactional order as "instances of locally emerging and contingent alignments between participants" (p. 214). More generally, transitions from one language to another thus participate in the local achievement of different interactional objectives such as, for example, identity and membership claiming and positioning (Gafaranga, 2001; Cashman, 2001; Sebba and Wootton, 1998). Moreover, according to Mondada (2007a), language use, and in particular language negotiation, could be considered as privileged interactional resources contributing:

> ...to multiple recognisable orientations to recipients and to participation frameworks. As such, they achieve the way in which participants themselves shape, distribute and reconfigure relevant categorisation devices, by orienting the speakers in terms of paired categories, such as (...) 'expert'/'trainee'. Moreover, these orientations build groups, alliances, hierarchical positions and (a) symmetries through the ways in which either they align, assemble and unify the participants so categorised or oppose, distance and rank them.
>
> (Mondada, 2007a)

In other words, through language choice and language use in general participants not only negotiate and converge towards a certain common language but, more specifically, they also adjust to each other in order to align to a common, understandable definition of what is going on in the here and now. Such fine-grained communicative work from the participants as part of an encounter is accurately described and explained with the notion of "*interactional accommodation*" elaborated by Vickers (2004) and inspired by the Speech Accommodation Theory (SAT) mentioned above. Following Vickers (2004), interactional accommodation differs from SAT in that the focus is less on "linguistic features of style and register" (p. 21) but more on the relationship between the speaker and addressee and the way in which they jointly construct "a shared interpretative frame" (p. 21) of the ongoing situation. As such, interactional accommodation is understood in the present paper as:

> ...a process in face-to-face interaction in which people discover what it is that the other knows and what is shared so that they can communicate effectively; it is the process of assessing each other's knowledge of the world in the process of interaction, making meaning and creating interactants' roles through the interaction. (Vickers, 2004, 22)

The Subchapter will show some empirical illustrations in which language use and language negotiation in particular are mobilised by participants in intercultural hotel service encounters in a way that contributes to "establishing intersubjectivity in face-to-face interaction" (Vickers, 2004, 14). Furthermore, we will argue that it is by means of such a form of interactional work that linguistic and cultural heterogeneity is interactionnally managed and communication along with commercial transactions are labelled as relatively trouble free.

3.2.4 Investigating interactions at receptions: methodology and data

By adopting an interactional approach to multilingual and intercultural service encounters at hotel receptions, we draw on a range of different methodological tools derived from various disciplinary orientations. We consider them as sufficiently complementary to be used in the analysis of front-desk service interactions. Indeed, these currents have the same epistemological orientation, based on an empirical approach to language and interaction, as an ethnographic-driven perspective.

We consider front-desk encounters to be situations in which service providers and customers exert influence on each other. With respect to this, the contribution coming from *Interactional Sociolinguistics* is fundamental to understanding the contextual influences on an individual's behaviour in face-to-face interaction and their subsequent language production. In particular, Gumperz (1982) emphasises the contextual dimension determined not by external aspects but rather constructed by actors themselves through "contextualisation cues" that manifest to others how the ongoing encounter is understood.

By adopting this approach, authors such as Rampton (1995) and Heller (2002) analysed the identity and linguistic practices of groups in multilingual settings (i.e. young adolescents, Francophones and Anglophones in a Montreal brewery). They highlighted the relationship between ways of speaking and using language varieties (i.e. code-switching and crossing) and ways of showing ethnicity and claiming cultural membership. Such an ethnographic approach to communication makes it possible to account for the influence of the institutional context and how it is made more or less salient by actors.

To describe in detail the ways through which actors shape their relationship and negotiate a joint understanding of the local context in which they engage we also draw on *Goffman's microsociology*. Two concepts are of particular importance. First, the notions of face and face-work (Goffman, 1959; 1981) illuminate how individuals in face-to-face interactions are bound to the symbolic recognition they will afford one another and to the need consistently to work out their self-impression. According to Goffman, people in social encounters display a certain valuable image of their selves and are permanently working to orient the impression they make on other participants. Second, the notion of social "frames" (Goffman, 1974) highlights the idea that

individuals tend to draw on ordinary representations and images to interpret and make sense of the ongoing social reality and consequently adapt their behaviour. Nonetheless, such social frames are neither fixed nor socially shared but have to be negotiated locally and accomplished among participants in order to achieve a common interpretation of the situation and avoid misunderstandings.

Finally, by assembling methodological tools from different analytical orientations, *Interactional Linguistics* allows us to focus on language practices as interactional resources (e.g. Mondada, 2007b; Filliettaz, 2006; Filliettaz et al., 2008) and to understand how speech and language use convey meanings, which are necessarily situated and emerging, and shape the ongoing interactive process. It also allows us to consider utterances and language generally as acts of speech (Austin 1962; Searle, 1969) that fall within the action and induce action as well. For instance, it is through speech acts and their inductive force that the relational positioning between interlocutors is negotiated.

The empirical materials used in this chapter are part of a larger research project supported by funds provided by the HES-SO, University of Applied Sciences and Arts of Western Switzerland,[6] aimed at investigating the actual work that occurs in the reception area of hotels through an ethnographically-informed approach to intercultural communication in the workplace. Ethnographically-based data have been collected through an *in situ* observation of front-desk encounters in two luxury hotels in the Geneva area (Switzerland). In particular, reception-centred interactions between hotel receptionists and customers were audio-recorded weekly over a period of more than three months. In addition to audio-video and ethnographic observations, other empirical information was collected, consisting of field notes, research interviews conducted with the observed employees and various written documents. Particular attention was paid to language use and the communicative practices of the receptionists when they were interacting with customers. For each hotel, we observed between two and five employees, mainly young women between 20 and 30 years of age. For this chapter, we are using data from only one of the two hotels.

3.2.5 Examples of language negotiation

We focused on check-in and check-out encounters as privileged moments in which the relationship between reception employees and customers takes place and where the participants must accommodate each other in order to achieve a certain level of mutual understanding and eventually negotiate their diversity.

6. Sagex n°32756: *Construction et circulation des compétences interculturelles dans les relations de service front desk: le cas de l'hôtellerie*, (2012–2014).

After introducing the peculiarity of check-in/out opening moments, three empirical examples will be provided showing how language negotiation is mobilised locally by participants and helps interactional accommodation.

3.2.5.1 *Check-in/out openings*

By adopting an ethnographic stance on front-desk encounters, we observed that check-in/out moments tend to be characterised by a certain amount of challenges that workers and clients have to face. In turn, such insights provide researchers with detailed contextual information which enhances data analysis. In general terms, we observed that the reception staff is constantly confronted with internal diversity due to turnover, but also due to the composition of the team as the experienced workers are in contact with newcomers. Furthermore, the observed front-desk encounters are characterised by a high interactional complexity because of the clients' diversity (e.g. numerical, linguistic, cultural, generational, educational, personal), multiple overlapping interactional foci, multitasking and multimodal activities (e.g. parallel interaction with clients and computer screens by checking or entering data), as well as local forms of communicative scripting and other local/global institutional constraints.

With regard to this, we observed that reception tasks and activities tend to solicit different types of work ranging from communication work (structuring the transaction, coordination, information relay), relational work (managing client relationships), cognitive work (financial transactions, room attribution, reservations, computer tasks, etc.) to training/learning work (supervision of trainees, supervision, coaching, demonstrations) as well. Moreover, front-desk staff members are confronted with transactional challenges such as building customer loyalty to the hotel, up-selling rooms when possible, keeping transactions with clients quick and easy, eluding tensions or conflicts during service encounters as well as avoiding additional work or even freeing up time to tackle pending work (avoiding the accumulation of tasks).

Such features comprise front-desk activities and, more specifically, shape an understanding of communicative and relational moments involving clients, i.e. check-in and check-out interaction is the core of front-desk work. Front-desk workers are mindful of the fact that these check-in/out activities have to be worked out in a certain expected way and as such they represent micro challenges that have a direct impact on the way front-desk workers communicate and interact with clients. In other words, check-in/out moments could be considered to be "activity types" (Levinson, 1992) in which participants not only recognise expected activities and tasks but also the related local roles, rights and duties.

During check-in/out encounters we observed in particular moments where the interaction begins. Within such moments, also referred to as "openings"

(Schegloff, 1968),[7] the participants have not yet built up – or have done so only partially – a shared knowledge of each other, while intersubjectivity also has to be settled. Such a moment could be even more of a defining moment in linguistically and culturally heterogeneous encounters. Indeed, according to the literature on cross-cultural and multilingual service encounters, linguistic and cultural features are usually addressed by the participants at the beginning of an interaction (Mondada and Oloff, 2011). It is usually during the greeting that mutual identification and alignment are elaborated (Zimmerman, 1992). Let us now have a look at three empirical examples of hotel check-in/out intercultural interactions in greater detail.

3.2.5.2 *Convergence with the client's language*

According to our research topics, we would like to make explicit the way participants negotiate their linguistic diversity during interaction. As it appears within such an example, language use and language negotiation in particular develop into interesting interactional resources used by the participants not only merely to exchange information, but rather to accomplish very local interactional tasks jointly.

The following sequence of interaction (Example 3.12) outlines a female French-speaking receptionist (REC) who is greeting two German-speaking male clients (CLI1 and CLI2) who have just arrived to check in.

Example 3.12

1	REC:	**Bonjou::r/** good afternoon
2	CLI1:	**bonjour** good afternoon
3	REC:	**bonjour/** good afternoon
4	CLI1:	**SENDERS KURT**[8]
5	REC:	**oui::/** yes
6	CLI1:	**bugatti**
7	REC:	**monsieur senders:..vous parlez français ou anglais/**
8	CLI1:	**no**

7. From a pragmatic point of view, Kidwell (2000) shows that even if service encounters could vary greatly they tend rather to follow a regular pattern of sequential organisation that could be outlined through the following "slots": 1) "Opening", 2) "Request for Service", 3) "Optional Interrogative Series", 4) "Provision or not, of Service", 5) "Closing" (Kidwell, 2000, 20–21).

8. Fictive name.

9 REC: **non/[allemand\]**
no, german

10 CLI1: **[inglé-] allemand**
engli-german

11 REC: **un peu\ moi[::]**
a little me

12 CLI1: **[oua::]**

13 REC: **ein bisschen**
a little

14 CLI1: **oké/**
okey

15 REC: **so ich nehme ihre passport oder ein ausweis bitte/mit hei:n ihre credit karte\nummer**
so, I need your passport or an ID card please and your credit card number

16 ((CLI1 + CLI2 giving her the requested documents))

17 REC: **danke schön/**
thank you

In broad terms, the sequence shows how – through the language negotiation process ending with the choice of the client's preferred language (German) – the receptionist (REC) displays adaptation and deference in relation to the client (CL1) as well as professional availability. Such a process is visible from the beginning. Indeed, REC is facilitating the client by giving him a language choice (*...do you speak French or English?*, line 7) and then suggesting to him what she considers to be the client's preferred choice (*no, german*, line 9). CL1 is thus categorised as "German-speaking" and he aligns himself with such a categorisation (*german*, line 10). The requirement for deference is intensified also because in commercial encounters the client has a privileged status and tends to expect such an accommodation, especially in hospitality settings.

It is interesting to note the contrast effect engendered by the receptionist (REC) between "performing as a non-proficient in German" (*a little me*, line 11) and the effective German language use (*ein bisschen*, line 13 and especially in line 15: *so ich nehme ihre passport oder ein ausweis (...)*), displaying not only professional availability but competence as well.

In addition to displaying deference and availability as well as professionalism, through language choice (German) the receptionist (REC) also contributes to activating and maintaining an expected "check-in frame". Indeed, by initiating the turn (15) and marking the beginning of the new interactional sequence with (*so*), REC takes the lead and thus control of the check-in or reception interactional order. Moreover,

by continuing to speak in German (lines 16 and 17) she maintains such a frame and pushes the client towards fitting in interactionally.

3.2.5.3 *Lingua franca as a client's support*

In this second example, the encounter takes place in the same 3*hotel in the Geneva area as with the previous example. The sequence covers the situation in which a Spanish-speaking male receptionist (REC) greets a Croatian-speaking group of clients composed of three people (one woman and two men) who approach the reception desk to check-in.

As with the previous example, here again language use, and language negotiation in particular, appear to play an important role in accomplishing both identity work and interactional order.

Example 3.13

1	REC:	**bonjour** good afternoon
2	CLI1:	**hallo**
3	CLI2:	**buongiorno** good afternoon
4	REC:	**buongiorno** good afternoon
5	CLI1:	**eh::: possiamo parlare l'italiano/** could we speak italian?
6	REC:	**eah:: capito un poco** *I understand a little*
7	CLI1:	**un poco\ abbiamo riservato:: al nome di:: merem riccardo merem**[9] **o son neanche sicura neanch'io** a little, we booked in the name of merem riccardo merem I'm not sure either
8	REC:	**oké riccardo/** okey riccardo
9	CLI1:	**si\. tre camere/** yes, three rooms
10	REC:	**merem/**
11	CLI1:	**yes:**

9. Fictive name.

12	REC:	**necessito um passaporto o (?) y una tarjeta de credito por cada habit-po::r cada camera** I need a passport or (?) and a credit card for each room
13	CLI2>CLI1:	**dai dai carta** ((laughs)) give give a card
14	CLI1>REC:	**una per la camera** one for the room?
15	REC:	**si** yes
16	CLI2>REC:	**(?) per ogni camera una carta di credito** a credit card for each room?
17	CLI1:	**mhm/**
18	REC:	**mhm/. y na:: carta de identidad** mhm and an ID card
19	CLI2:	**si** yes

In general terms, as it appears in lines (4) and (6), by agreeing to adopt the client's local, preferred language choice (*could we speak Italian?*, line 5) the receptionist (REC) facilitates[10] the clients. Here, Italian is considered to be the *lingua franca* (see in Section 1.4.1) by the participants, CLI2 first (line 3), and then CLI1 as well (line 5)), since it is not their first language. Moreover, by converging with the client's preferred language, REC also shows that he is 'making an effort' to accommodate the client, particularly since he categorises himself as being weak in Italian (*I understand a little*, line 6) and keeps himself aligned with the language choice of CLI1 (*oké riccardo*, line 8). By considering his role as the hotel receptionist, such a positioning contextually helps to display a form of professional authenticity and engagement.

It is also interesting to note how both the receptionist and the clients accomplish interactional "normality" jointly (Firth, 1996) by framing the *lingua franca* performance of the receptionist (REC), in particular, as somehow normal or expected. Indeed, REC mixes languages indifferently producing a form of "pan-roman" speech (for example, in line 12: *necessito um passaporto o (?) y una tarjeta de credito por cada habit-po::r cada camera*, but also lines 14, 15, 18). Accordingly, CLI1 and CLI2 align themselves with such language use by framing it as unmarked, as exemplified in line 13: *give give card*, and the following lines (14, 16, 17, 19). The client's clarification requests (in lines 14 and 16) are less metalinguistic than referring to specific content

10. A form of facilitation described by Alber et Py (1985) as "hétéro-facilitation".

(verifying if one card for each room is what is really needed although they are "one" group). In other words, in this case again, language use and language choice provide the participants with the possibility of keeping the ongoing reception frame salient and, thus, keeping the commercial transaction quick and fluent.

3.2.5.4 *'Foreigner talk' as a facilitation of the client*

In this third and last example, a Russian-speaking male client (CLI1) – jointly with two other people (one female and one male) – is involved in the check-out process interacting with the Spanish-speaking, female, receptionist (REC).

Example 3.14

1 **REC:** **oké**
2 **CLI1:** **(?) finish** ((giving the card key to REC))
3 **REC:** **thanks he::m/**
((REC starts to prepare the clients' check-out. She checks if there are mini bar
charges and/or additional charges. After a while she shows the invoice to the clients))
4 **REC:** **oké\ hu::m this/ this/ and this** ((pointing at each item on the invoice))
5 **CLI1:** **mhm/**
6 **REC:** **so:: cocktail cocktail/. a::nd city tax\.. cocktail cocktail [city tax]**
7 **CLI1:** **[mhm/]**
8 **REC:** **hu::m parking\ hm parking\. so this is**
9 CLI1: ((starts to check the invoice with the other members of the group))

As in the previous examples, language use seems to play an important role both as an identity device and as an interactional organiser. Indeed, the sequence accounts for the way the receptionist (REC) displays facilitation and adaptation to the client. Nevertheless, it is slightly different compared with the previous sequences; in this case, such a facilitation process (Alber and Py, 1985) occurs through the adoption of English as the *lingua franca* in extremely simplified speech form commonly called "foreigner talk" (Ferguson, 1971; Hinnenkamp, 1982; Mühlhäusler, 1997). Such an oversimplification is visible in lines (4), (6) and (8), where REC tacitly categorises CLI1 as essentially "not proficient in English". Interestingly, by adopting such a language use REC correspondingly positions herself in a way that shows expertise and professionalism. This represents categorisation and positioning to which the client (CLI1) aligns himself, as it appears in lines (5), (7) and (9). According to the reception context, through such

language use the receptionist is thus displaying facilitation and transparency towards the clients.

In this case as well, language use not only contributes to identity construction and positioning. It also contributes to the control and orientation of the interactional order. By considering language use as an interactional resource that participants may exploit, it becomes quite visible how such a way to speak (English *lingua franca* through foreigner talk), occurring at the precise moment of the explanation of the invoice to the client, helps to convey an expected check-out reception frame. If this were to take place in other contexts, the foreigner talk would have been taken for an over-accommodation with the risk of patronising the client, whereas here it seems legitimate and even expected when it comes to terminating the accounts. This somehow helps the participants to frame and put emphasis on the situation as a check-out moment.

3.2.6 Concluding remarks: Accomplishing intersubjectivity and controlling work communication

By looking at language use processes, the analysis of hotel front-desk interactions in this Subchapter contributes to highlighting the extent to which front-desk work is fundamentally and profoundly a jointly-accomplished task. The three case studies selected show how employees at a hotel reception work to produce – together with clients – an important amount of interactional work in terms of micro mutual adaptation and alignment. It appears that plurilingual speech in general and language negotiation in particular are exploited by the participants as central resources. More precisely, participants' language negotiation practices, which occur during the greeting process in particular, contribute a great deal to the construction and achievement of intersubjectivity, which therefore contributes to the participants' convergence toward a common definition or interpretation of the ongoing social situation in which they are involved.

In particular, throughout language negotiation and locally pertinent and legitimate language choices the receptionists and customers activate and make explicit to each other the way they interpret and understand the situation of interaction, in this case 'check-in' and 'check-out' moments. As we showed, through particular forms of speech accommodated to the clients, such as convergence with the client's language and other forms of facilitation (*lingua franca*, foreigner talk), hotel employees in particular make visible and display the expected and valorised facets of their role: deference, professional availability, engagement and authenticity as well as transparency. In such a way, the participants engage in expected interactional frames and consistently endorse situated identities and roles according to the frame in which they define the situation.

In terms of linguistic and cultural heterogeneity, our case studies show that participants deal with it in a particularly pragmatic way. Here again, language negotiation

plays an important role. In fact, it is through language that 'diversity' (or what is categorised as such by participants) is rendered accountable by the participants (e.g. by producing a form of facilitated speech), but it is also through language negotiation that this diversity is negotiated and somehow managed. Indeed, since local language choices and forms of speech facilitation are embedded and commonly accepted then diversity is somehow mastered and appears to be implicit for the participants. This is also the case because, as mentioned before, the participants' actions are interpreted through a specific interactional frame (hotel check-in/out) and rely on what is formally or institutionally expected in such a situation. In other words, hotel front-desk participants tend to draw on their knowledge about what they think a front-desk moment is supposed to be rather than in terms of language and cultural diversity (see also Kidwell, 2000).

Finally, when considering the local front-desk hotel work as we reported here, it is interesting to note how the language practices adopted by the receptionists have to be interpreted and understood within the workplace context in which they take place. Indeed, according to the 'real' constraints to which employees are subject (e.g. the requirement to build customers' loyalty, keep transactions quick and easy, avoid task accumulation), it appears that they permanently struggle to reach a balance between what we call "commercial deference" and "professional distance". In other words, on the one hand, receptionists have to be "looking good and sounding right" (Williams and Connell, 2010) (i.e. be polite and available, akin to servants) and, on the other hand, they have to avoid "servitude", which means they must work emotionally to maintain personal and professional dignity, stay focused on doing their job and maintain control of the interaction by fitting the client into the reception format… over and over again. Given such a working environment, language is thus their best friend and their best weapon.

3.3 Language regime in the Swiss armed forces between institutional multilingualism, the dominance of German, English and situated plurilanguaging

Georges Lüdi

In the past, the multilingualism of the Swiss army was, in a way, enshrined in the Swiss constitution. Each language region recruited its own troops; companies and battalions were therefore essentially monolingual. Thus, the necessity of formulating explicit rules aimed at the management of this 'monolingual multilingualism' was not felt. As Kurz (1961) stated:

> In Switzerland, multilingualism also runs right through the armed forces without any formal structure. The army has always got along with the language

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